A STUDY OF TEARS IN THE ODYSSEY

Alexandra L. Daly

A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Classics (Greek).

Chapel Hill
2013

Approved by:

William H. Race
Owen Goslin
James O’Hara
ABSTRACT

ALEXANDRA L. DALY: A Study of Tears in the Odyssey
(Under the direction of William H. Race)

In this thesis, I argue that tears function in the Odyssey as an important index of character. I discuss the weepers in three groups: Penelope and the slaves (Chapter 1), Odysseus’ companions (Chapter 2), and Odysseus and Telemachos (Chapter 3). Tears characterize the first two groups relative to Odysseus, demonstrating loyalty to/memory of him and serving as foil for his resolve, respectively. Telemachos’ few tears link him with his father, who otherwise weeps like no one else in the epic.
For Kevin

there are no analogies
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Professor William H. Race, who has inspired and guided me throughout my first two years of graduate study and especially in writing this thesis. I hope to continue working with and learning from him in the future. I would also like to thank my readers, Professors Owen Goslin and James O’Hara, for their advice and encouragement.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter

I. PENELLOPE AND THE SLAVES ................................................................. 8
   Penelope ................................................................................................................................. 8
   The Slaves ............................................................................................................................ 25

II. ODYSSEUS' COMPANIONS .............................................................................. 29

III. ODYSSEUS ...................................................................................................................... 42
   Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 42
   Pity ........................................................................................................................................ 47
   Telemachos and Odysseus .................................................................................................... 56

WORKS CITED ............................................................................................................................... 69
INTRODUCTION

The abundance of tears in Homer is often noted, but unevenly studied. Much work has been done on individual weeping scenes (especially *Od.* 8.521-31), formal laments,¹ and Homer’s rich language of pain,² but discussion of the tears themselves tends to be simplistic, subordinate,³ and mired in modern assumptions about the motivations for and reactions to their expression. In general, no distinction is made between explicit tears and words (namely κλαίειν⁴) that may, but do not necessarily,


³ Mawet 1979, for example, seldom discusses tears; neither δάκρω(ον)/δάκρῳ nor any verb of weeping appears in her index. I note here that I have observed no difference between plural and singular tears in the *Odyssey*; in my discussion, I will not adhere strictly to the number specified in each passage.

⁴ κλαίειν in Homer seems primarily to convey a shrill wailing or sobbing. *Il.* 7.426-7 clearly shows that tears are not necessarily implied in this verb: Priam forbids the Trojans from κλαίειν, so they gather their dead shedding tears in silence (δάκρῳ θερμὰ χέοντες...σιωπῇ). See also p. 30 below on *Od.* 9.469. While acknowledging this difference, Arnould and others still tend to blur sound and tears: “Néanmoins, κλαίω peut être étroitement lié à δάκρῳ χέον, ce qui, au demeurant, est bien naturel, au point qu’il devient souvent difficile de savoir si l’aspect vocal se maintient partout ou si le verbe ne désigne pas déjà les larmes sous leurs double aspect” (Arnould 1990: 145). I will be focusing on explicit tears, with discussion of implicit tears or other expressions of grief where relevant.
imply them, nor much effort to untangle the emotions involved; tears are assumed and
psychologized as the argument demands. Arnould 1990, for instance, largely consists of
lists of examples of tears categorized by cause (\textit{douleur physique}, \textit{peur}, \textit{joie}, etc.);
interpretation is minimal, and the causes are often facile and inferred with little textual
support. Can the tearful reunions of the \textit{Odyssey} really be attributed merely to \textit{joie} (94-5)? Is that all Odysseus and Telemachos feel as they embrace, weeping like birds bereft
of their nestlings, for the first time since Telemachos was a newborn (16.213-19)?

Besides Arnould, most scholars focus on acquitting the tearful heroes of the
charges of effeminacy and ignobility lodged by such ancient critics as Plato, Dio
Chrysostom, and Zoilos of Amphipolis; with some minor exceptions, they conclude

\footnotesize
5 At worst, tears are assumed where the text gives no indication of their presence. Katz,
for instance, claims that Dolios embraces “Odysseus with tears of joy at his \textit{nostos}”
(1994: 69) in the absence of any word that could possibly imply tears.


7 οὐδ᾽ ἂν Ὅμηρον ἑπαινέσαι, ὅτι φησὶ δεύεσθαι τὰς ψαμάθους καὶ τὰ ὀπλα τοῖς
δάκρυσι τῶν Ἀχαιῶν (29.22).

8 A harsh critic of Homer, he condemned Achilles’ tears for Patroklos as unsuitable even
for a “barbarian nurse” (οὐτῶς οὖτ᾽ ἂν βάρβαρος τιτθ ἐποίησεν, \textit{FgrHist} 71 F11), that
is, the polar opposite of the noble Greek man (Föllinger 2009: 32).

9 According to Neuberger-Donath 1996, for example, τέρεν δάκρυον is reserved for
women, with the exception of Patroklos when Achilles compares him to a little girl
(16.11) and aged Peleus (19.323) as his son imagines him wasting away in his halls.
Both men are thus supposed to be feminized, exhibiting through such tears the cowardice
and infirmity proper to women. But only two women shed a “tender tear” in Homer
(Helen, \textit{Il.} 3.142; Penelope, \textit{Od.} 16.332). The collocation seems primarily to mark not
gender but helplessness and strong, especially pitiful emotion; otherwise, women shed
the same “hot” (θερμόν) or “blooming” (θαλερόν) tears as men.

Monsacré 1984: 159-84 argues for an essential difference between male and female tears
in the \textit{Iliad}: tears “dissolve” or “melt” women into helplessness but revitalize men. Her
characterization of male tears may be accurate in combat situations, but the \textit{Odyssey}’s
that Homeric tears do not discriminate by gender or by class. 10 This work has shed much new light on Homeric gender, but the cherry-picked passages and blanket statements often used to support the arguments distort the big picture, and to my knowledge no comprehensive study of Homeric tears exists.

This thesis is such a study of tears in the Odyssey. Although the Iliad dominates the relevant scholarship, the Odyssey contains far more tears and gives them special emphasis as speech introductions and conclusions 11 and as part of many of its most beautiful and intricate similes. 12 Nearly all its tears, moreover, are spontaneous; those in laments and funerals are required by the ritual context and do not necessarily reflect grief men weep mainly outside combat and often quite like women; note, for example, that both Odysseus and Penelope “melt” (τήκετο, 8.522; 19.204, 208; τήκε, 19.264). Moreover, as Holst-Warhaft 1992 and Murnaghan 1999 show, Iliadic women assert narrative control through lament, “and it is the men, rather than the women, who must be enjoined to stop weeping lest they become morbid or dangerous” (Holst-Warhaft 1992: 108).

The only somewhat gendered terms for grieving in Homer are female κωκόειν and male οἴμωζειν and groaning (Monsacré 1984: 172; Arnould 1990: 150-6), though Föllinger 2009: 21 n. 7, 8 notes exceptions. In any case, these expressions do not necessarily imply tears (cf. n. 5 above on κλαίειν). Arnould 1990: 23 brands ὀλοφυρόθαι feminine, but without consideration of men besides the pleading Lykaon; is Eumaios, for example, supposed to be feminized by his reaction (ὁλοφυρόμενος, 16.22) to Telemachos’ return?

A social distinction seems to develop only in tragedy (Wærn 1985: 228). Antinoos rebukes Eumaios and Philoitios as “stupid yokels” (νήπιοι ἄγροιται, 21.85) not for their tears per se, but for their insensitivity to Penelope’s emotional fragility (86-8).

10 For similar conclusions on tears in Attic tragedy, see Suter 2009.


12 All of the weeping similes (8.521-31; 10.407-14; 16.16-21, 213-19; 19.204-9) mention δάκρυα explicitly in some form. 23.233-240 is not as clear; see p. 23-4 below. The Iliad contains three crying similes, at 9.13-16 (Agamemnon weeps like a dark spring), 16.2-4 (Patroklos weeps like a dark spring), and 16.7-11 (Achilles likens Patroklos to a weeping girl clinging to her mother’s skirts).
for the dead. These characteristics of Odyssean tears are not, I hope to show, merely a consequence of the poem’s bittersweet theme.

Emotion in Homer is a tricky subject. Despite much criticism of the strain of scholarship introduced by Bruno Snell, many still cling to “the basic Snellian position that there is much that is fundamentally primitive and alien” in the Homeric mind. He characterized the Homeric person as an assemblage of parts utterly prey to the gods and to circumstance, lacking a concept of self and the capacity for decision-making. To account for these and other “peculiarities,” Dodds formulated a core distinction between

13 Tears may be shed as a formality or with ulterior motives. Achilles’ slavewomen, for instance, use Patroklos as a pretext to grieve for their own sorrows (ἐπὶ δὲ σπνάχοντο γυναῖκες / Πάτροκλον πρόφασιν, σφῶν δ’ ἀώτων κήδε’ ἐκάστη, Il. 19.302-3); see Murnaghan 1999: 206; Tsagalis 2004: 65, 67; Suter 2009: 60. On the “necessary distinction” between spontaneous and funereal tears, see Suter 2009: 59. van Wees uses the latter to discuss tears in general, ignoring his own caveat (1998: 47 n. 17), while others do not even note the distinction in the first place. Funereal tears proper, shed in the Odyssey only at 12.12 (Elpenor’s funeral) and 24.45-6, 61 (Agamemnon’s account of Achilles’ funeral), will not be discussed in this paper.

14 For other significant contributions to this strain, see Russo and Simon 1968: 483 n. 2; to their list add Adkins 1960.

15 Cairns 1992: 1. For thorough criticism of Snell’s views, in “welcome contrast to the prevalent tendency to dismiss [them] as counter-intuitive and preposterous” (ibid.), see Schmitt 1990: 12-71 and passim; see also the extensive bibliography at Sullivan 1988: 18 n. 46 as well as Gill 1996: passim. Sullivan herself offers concise criticism of Snell’s views on Homeric selfhood, decision-making, and the analogy between psychic terms and organs (2-10). On decision-making, see also Gaskin 1990. Williams 1993: 21-49 offers the best philosophical critique of Snell’s ideas.

16 In the same vein, Fränkel termed the Homeric person “ein offenes Kraftfeld” (1962: 88-90), lacking “structural bounds that would help separate and insulate it from the effects of forces all around it” (Russo and Simon 1968: 485). For similar views, see the bibliography at Sullivan 1988: 18 n. 48.

17 Dodds connected the Homeric tendency to externalize behavior and mental states as “psychic intervention” with that to intellectualize them (“Nestor and Agamemnon know
Homeric and modern Western culture: the former is a “shame culture,” in which the “strongest moral force [is]…respect for public opinion, aidōs,” while the “highest good is…the enjoyment of timē, public esteem.” Accordingly, the individual projects onto external sources anything that would as cause him to “lose face,” that is, would violate the status quo and thereby incur contempt and ridicule. We, as a “guilt culture,” simply cannot grasp Homeric emotions, for they are not experienced or expressed as they are by us; our emotions look inward, in “fear of god” and in hope of “a quiet conscience.”

Few now accept these theories wholesale, but the idea of a gulf between us and Homeric characters persists. de Romilly goes so far as to claim that Homer depicts characters “sans s’arrêter aux analyses, sans donner de noms à leurs sentiments, sans expliquer les enchaînements. Il montre des réactions.” Most would agree that Homeric psychology consists of considerably more than reactions, but hesitate to approach it. Alternatively, scholars close the gulf by subjecting Homeric characters to modern friendly things to each other”) and with the treatment of organs as independent (1951: 15-18).


19 Ibid.; see also Russo and Simon 1968: 485. They rightly observe that his construct is too narrow, since in Homer “virtually every kind of mental activity can be ascribed to an outside source, including the most trivial and ordinary” (497, their emphasis). Moreover, “it cannot be demonstrated that shame as a social stricture is any more consistently associated with the extensive use of projection than is guilt.”

20 Dodds 1951: 18.

psychological analysis, with varying success\(^\text{22}\)—if the couch is uncomfortable even for written creations of a single author, oral composites may refuse to lie down at all.

Homer’s characters have a human root. This is why they are so dangerous for the Kallipolis of Plato’s *Republic*: Achilles in his grief seems utterly real. It is also part, I think, of why Sokrates cannot help but love Homer.\(^\text{23}\) But this root is very hard to dig up. In my attempt to unearth something about tears, I have avoided modern psychology and kept to the text as much as I could. A given instance of tears may contain a wealth of information in the form of causes, descriptors, accompanying gestures, weepers’ and witness’ reactions, and consequences. This instance, in turn, may have connections with other tears. Through careful study of this information, I will argue that tears, one of the most conspicuous and compelling expressions of human emotion, function in the *Odyssey* as an important index of character.\(^\text{24}\) I discuss the weepers in three groups: Penelope and the slaves, Odysseus’ companions, and Odysseus and Telemachos. Tears characterize the first two groups relative to Odysseus, demonstrating loyalty to/memory of him and serving as foil for his resolve, respectively. Telemachos’ few tears link him with his

---

\(^{22}\) Penelope in particular has been deluged with psychological analysis; the bibliography is too vast to list here. Shay 1994, in my opinion, is the most successful marriage of modern psychology and Homeric characters to date.

\(^{23}\) He prefaces his criticism with an admission of lifelong love and reverence: καίτοι φιλία γέ τίς με καὶ αἰδώς ἐκ παιδὸς ἔχουσα περὶ Ὄμήρου ἀποκολούθει λέγειν (*Rep.* 595b).

\(^{24}\) As they do on occasion in the *Iliad*, e.g., when Agamemnon weeps in self-pity for his failure to capture Troy and the disgraceful return to Argos he expects (9.13-28; he is also the only one of the shades Odysseus meets in the νέκυια to weep, again in self-pity; see pp. 50-1 below). But tears do not contribute significantly to the characterization of nearly all the major characters, as I hope to show they do in the *Odyssey*.  

6
father, who otherwise weeps like no one else in the epic.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{25} Odysseus and Agamemnon greet their homelands with similar tears, but the former exercises caution; see pp. 43-4 below.
CHAPTER 1:
PENELLOPE AND THE SLAVES

Penelope

Penelope’s tears earned little love from earlier commentators, who tended to blame feminine weakness and emotional instability. Stawell pronounces her “just the kind of woman who cries herself to sleep in difficulties, and wakes up looking wonderfully plump and fresh”—escapist and vain. But even for Fenik sixty-five years later she is “feckless, lachrymose, and rather tiresome.” More recently scholars have recognized the inapplicability of modern gender norms to ancient texts, pointing out that Penelope weeps no more than male characters and generally with the sympathy of both witnesses and the narrator. But little has been said about what Penelope’s tears mean for her as a character, rather than as a representative Homeric woman. Her tears, I will argue, reflect the conflict of loyalties between husband and son in which she is mired until the couple’s reunion: according to her own formulation, if faithful to Odysseus, she deprives Telemachos of the property for which he has come of age; if fair to Telemachos, she allows Odysseus to be replaced (19.156-63, 524-34). With a few exceptions to be treated in the course of this discussion, she weeps in memory of/longing for Odysseus or fear for Telemachos. Her tears for her son, however, are consistently suppressed, while


those for her husband are flaunted and encouraged. Although she vacillates between their interests like the warbling nightingale,\textsuperscript{29} she freely expresses tears for and remains loyal to Odysseus.

In keeping with the narrator’s tendency to provide in their first appearance “a sample of the character’s ἂθος that will be extended and deepened in the course of the epic,”\textsuperscript{30} Penelope débuts in her characteristic tears for Odysseus. Stirred from her chamber by Phemios’ song of the Achaians’ “sad homecoming” (νόστον…/ λυγρόν, 1.326-7), she descends to the hall with two attendants and, bursting into tears (δακρύσασα, 336), implores the bard to choose another in his wide repertoire of lays. As the grounds for her request, she cites the unforgettable,\textsuperscript{31} surpassing grief for her husband that his current song arouses (340-4):

\begin{quote}
ταύτης δ’ ἀποπαύε’ ἀοιδής
λυγρῆς, ἣ τέ μοι αἰεὶ ἐνι στήθεσσι φίλον κηρ
tεῖρει, ἔπει μὲ μάλιστα καθίκετο πένθος ἄλαστον.
τοίην γὰρ κεφαλὴν ποθέω μεμνημένη αἰεὶ ἀνδρὸς,
tοῦ κλέος εὐρύ καθ´ Ἑλλάδα καὶ μέσον Ἀργος.
\end{quote}

Now, Telemachos just complained to Mentes that the Harpies snatched away his father “without fame” (ἄκλειδός, 241): Odysseus “has gone unseen, unheard” (οἴχετ’ ἄποστος, ἄπυστος, 242), that is, incapable of achieving the recognition through burial (τύμβον, 285-9).

\textsuperscript{29} For this point of comparison “between the shifting notes of the nightingale’s warbling song (19.521) and the turning of Penelope’s thoughts to and fro in search of a solution to her problem,” see Rutherford 1992: 192-3, as well as Amory 1963: 131 n. 9 and Austin 1975: 228-9.

\textsuperscript{30} Race 1993: 79. For the “essence of the tearful Penelope, faithful to the memory of her husband, maintaining her distance from the suitors, and…confined to her own chamber,” see 88-9.

\textsuperscript{31} Following LSJ and Cunliffe’s etymology of ἄλαστος: ἄ- privative + λαθ, λανθάνω.
and song that “could keep his memory alive.” Penelope, on the other hand, proclaims his κλέος (344) and shifts the narrator’s epithet for the Achaians’ homecoming to the song about it. For her, Odysseus’ death is still an open question—she does not yet count him among the “many others” who lost their day of homecoming (354-5)—so his νόστος is not yet “sad”; what grieves her is the incorporation of his death into the poetic tradition. Unlike Nestor and Menelaus, Phemios does not hold out hope for Odysseus as the one Achaian still unaccounted for; instead, he sings the army’s “sad homecoming” as though it is a finished story and suggests that Odysseus’ story falls into this general pattern. Penelope’s suitors and even her son already believe that Odysseus is dead; she resists the canonization of this version by silencing Phemios and remembering her husband continuously.

---


33 Nieto Hernández 2008: 47. Monsacré maintains that Penelope both precludes “la célébration publique de sa mémoire héroïque” and “refuse la mort d’Ulysse” (1984: 162-3). But if Odysseus has died as Telemachos describes, then he has no κλέος for Phemios to celebrate. In any case, Odysseus is not specified as the subject of the song; see n. 35 below.

34 Menelaos knows his whereabouts from Proteus (4.555-60), but even in ignorance Nestor maintains hope (3.216-25)

35 “This brief indication [1.326-7] of the contents of the song establishes as its subject a general pattern of experience without specifying which heroes are involved” (Murnaghan 1987: 155).

36 “Such a head…of my husband” may reflect doubt that Odysseus is still alive, since this periphrasis is often used of the dead, as West 1988: 118-19 and de Jong 2001: 37 observe. Penelope, then, silences Phemios also to allay her own doubts. Her conviction of his death in the accounts of the shroud (2.96 = 19.141 = 24.131) is part of her ploy—it makes her look sincere—and cannot be taken at face value.
Telemachos does not take kindly to his mother’s encroachment on the male preserve of significant speech (μῦθος δ’ ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει, 358) and sends her back to her upper chamber and proper tasks (τὰ σ’ αὐτῆς ἔργα, 356), the loom and the spindle. The application of his primary epithet, “sensible,” to his command (μῦθον πεπνυμένον, 361) is focalized through Penelope, for she duly leaves to continue mourning Odysseus in private with her maids until Athena puts her to sleep (362-4). Telemachos is not being rude or callous to his long-suffering mother, as some critics believe; rather, he is heeding Athena-Mentes’ advice to grow up and claim his patrimony. While Penelope publicizes her memory of Odysseus and thereby sustains a measure of κλέος for him, she prevents her son from taking his rightful place as the head of the household. Antinoos later points out the discrepancy between her μέγα κλέος and her son’s dispossession (ἀυτὰρ σοὶ γε ποθήν πολέος βιότοιο), the results of her delaying schemes (2.125-6), and Telemachos seems to agree, attributing his reluctance to expel her merely to fear of her father, her Furies, and men’s indignation (130-7). Much as Telemachos may sympathize with his mother’s plight and long for his father’s return, he must accept the possibility of

37 Martin defines μῦθος in the Iliad as “a speech-act indicating authority, performed at length, usually in public” (1989: 12). Clark concludes that Martin’s definition holds at Od. 1.358, though he shows that the word has a wider range of meaning in Odyssey. Telemachos uses the same formula to exclude Penelope from the bow contest (1.356-9 = 21.350-4, substituting τόξον for μῦθος); cf. Alkinoos’ claim on πομπή at 11.352-3. For the power struggle between mother and son through μῦθοι, see Wohl 1993: 38-40; Fletcher 2008: 78-81.

38 Although only κλαίειν is used here (κλαῖειν ἐπετ’ Ὀδυσσῆα, 1.363), her tears are probably to be understood as continuing into this scene.

39 West is among the most forceful: “Certainly the favourable impression created by Telemachus’ earlier observations is quite destroyed by this adolescent rudeness, culminating in the outrageous claim that speech (μῦθος) is not women’s business, quite contrary to Homeric custom” (1988: 120). I follow Clark 2001 and Heath 2001: 139 in my interpretation.
Odysseus’ death in order to win κλέος and prove himself worthy of his patrimony. By searching in Pylos and Lakedaimon “for the conclusion to the narrative that will at once testify to his father’s life and confirm that it is over,” Telemachos will gain a twofold κλέος ἕσθλόν (1.95): he will not only recover Odysseus’, but he will also initiate his own, since once he learns for certain that Odysseus is dead, he can, as Athena-Mentes urges, set his house in order by remarrying his mother and slaughtering the suitors (289-97).

Telemachos’ dismissal of his mother constitutes the first step in his maturation: by declaring Odysseus dead and suppressing Penelope’s objections, he makes his father’s place available to himself. He immediately asserts his newfound authority by calling an assembly and rebuking the suitors, and they, like Penelope, react with stunned silence (381-2).

After Penelope learns of Telemachos’ departure and the suitors’ plan to ambush him, her tears shift temporarily to her son. Medon’s report paralyzes her physically and verbally (4.703-5):

\[ \ddot{w}z \, f\acute{a}t\zeta, \, t\acute{h}z \, \dot{d}z \, \alpha\upsilon\tau\acute{t}ov \, \lambda\upsilon\tauo\, \gamma\omega\acute{n}\acute{a}t\acute{a} \, k\acute{a}i \, \phi\acute{u}lon \, \tilde{\eta}t\acute{o}r, \]
\[ d\acute{h}n \, d\acute{e} \, m\acute{i}n \, \acute{a}mf\acute{a}st\acute{i} \, \acute{e}p\acute{e}\acute{o}n \, l\acute{a}b\acute{e}: \, t\acute{w} \, d\acute{e} \, o\acute{i} \, d\acute{d}soe \]
\[ \delta\acute{a}kru\acute{w}fi \, p\acute{l}\acute{e}s\acute{t}h\acute{e}n, \, \theta\acute{a}l\acute{e}r\acute{h} \, d\acute{e} \, o\acute{i} \, e\acute{s}\acute{h}e\acute{t}o \, f\acute{w}n\acute{h}. \]

This total surrender of one’s body outside (γούνατα) and in (ητορ) conveys overwhelming emotion, usually dread, as when Odysseus is confronted with only reefs and rocks (5.406), and when the suitors realize that Odysseus intends to kill them all, not


41 Cf. ibid.: 155-6.
just Antinoos (22.68). The enclosure of Penelope’s tearful eyes in silence further illustrates the helplessness and isolation of her fear; indeed, after Medon leaves, she sinks, engulfed in grief (τὴν δ’ ἀχος ἀμφεχόθη θυμοθόρον, 4.716) to the threshold (718), the place of those, like beggars, who have no place. Once she recovers her voice, still lamenting (γοόωσα, 721) she links the loss of Odysseus long ago (πρὶν μὲν πόσιν, 724) and Telemachos most recently (νῦν αὖ παιδ’, 727) in a succession of woes and, rebuking her slavewomen for their secrecy, goes so far as to claim that she would have committed suicide if Telemachos had left with her knowledge. Penelope thus comes close to ranking her son above, or at least equal to, her husband. Eurykleia immediately steps in to lull her grief (τῆς δ’ εὔνησε γόον, σχέθε δ’ ὑσσε γόοιο, 758) with advice to bathe and pray to Athena for Telemachos’ safety. That night, Penelope continues to fret over him, so Athena sends a phantom of her sister to stem her tears (800-1):


Penelope admits that she grieves even more for her son than for Odysseus (τοῦ δῆ ἐγὼ καὶ μᾶλλον ὄδυρομαι ἤ περ ἑκείνου, 819), given Telemachos’ immaturity: in her view, he

---

42 For the phrase λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτο used of fear, see also 5.297, 22.147. It refers not to fear only at 23.205 and 24.245, where Penelope and Laertes, respectively, react to Odysseus’ “certain signs.” At 18.212, only the suitors’ limbs loosen, and for the very different reason of sexual arousal.

43 On thresholds in the Odyssey, see Goldhill 1988: 10-11; Lateiner 1992: 147; Reece 1993: 16; Segal 1994: 79-84. Houston 1975 links Odysseus’ elevation from nameless beggar to honored guest to, finally, master of the house to his movement from threshold to δύρος to θρόνος.

44 Her description of Telemachos’ disappearance (νῦν αὖ παιδ’ ἀγαπητόν ἀνηρείσοντο θέλλαι / ἀκλέα ἐκ μεγάρων, 4.727-8) closely echoes his of Odysseus’ (νῦν δὲ μιν ἀκλειώδς ἄρπυαι ἀνηρείσατο, 1.241).
remains “a child, versed neither in the works of war nor in councils” (νήπιος, οὗτε πόνων εὗ εἰδός οὗτ’ ἄγοράων, 818), and therefore stands no chance against his many enemies. Iphthime assures her that she needn’t weep for him by confirming Athena’s protection and implies that she shouldn’t by redirecting her tears to Odysseus.

Remarriage logically follows if Telemachos takes priority; the phantom therefore reprioritizes Odysseus by refusing to reveal his whereabouts and keeping him ὀϊζυρός (832), the object of her tears. Upon his return, Telemachos shows that he too understands where his mother’s tears belong. Both he and his herald set out to allay Penelope’s fears and dry her eyes, and he sensibly (πεπνυμένος, 17.45) responds to her tearful (δακρύσασα, 38) reception with an order not to stir his emotions, but to bathe and vow hecatombs to the gods. He kept his departure from her lest she mar her complexion with crying (ὡς ἂν μὴ κλαίουσα κατὰ χρόα καλὸν ιἀπτη, 2.376 = 4.749, substituting ιἀπτης for ιἀπτη), but now that Odysseus has returned, his purpose is to preserve not her beauty (her marriageability?) but his father’s household. Accordingly, he not only

---

45 Cf. Phoinix’s description of young Achilles: νήπιον, οὗ πο εἰδόθ’ ὠμοῖον πολέμου / οὕδ’ ἄγορέων (ll. 9.440-1). This parallel and Penelope’s concern with “enemies” make the meaning “works of war,” common for πόνος, the most likely here.

46 On Telemachos’ maturation from νήπιος to young adult, see Heath 2001: passim, esp. 142 n. 23.

47 Between this vision and Telemachos’ return, we see Penelope just once, when she rebukes the suitors for their plot to kill her son. But after Eurymachos’ deceptive speech, she returns to her chamber to cry for Odysseus (16.449-51 = 1.362-4); Iphthime was successful.

48 Telemachos does not specify “fear,” but the condition on which she will stop weeping, seeing him, implies this emotion: οὐ γὰρ μὴν πρόσθεν παύσεσθαι ὅπως / κλαίσεοι τε στυγεροὶ γόμοι τε δακρύσεοι τε, / πρὶν γ’ αὐτόν με ἴδῃ (17.7-9). Fear is specified in the herald’s mission: ἵνα μὴ δείσασθ’ ἐνι θυμῷ / ἱφθιμή βασιλεία τέρεν κατὰ δάκρυον εἴβοι (16.331-2).
refuses to indulge her maternal grief, but he also turns her attention to securing divine aid in the vengeance (ἀντιτα ἔργα, 17.51) that he knows is at hand.

Besides these few suppressed tears for Telemachos, Penelope weeps only for Odysseus. Twice her tears serve explicitly to prove her constancy. As soon as he meets someone—his mother—abreast of the situation in Ithaka, Odysseus asks whether his wife has preserved his estate or wed the best of the Achaians; Antikleia emphatically confirms the former with Penelope’s endless tears, shed night and day in his halls, in withering woe (11.181-3):

καὶ λίνη κείνη γε μένει τετληότι θυμὸν 
σοίσιν ἐνι μεγάροισιν ὀἱς ὄι ἀεὶ 
φθίνουσιν νύκτες τε καὶ ήματα δάκρυ χεύσῃ.

Antikleia here denies Penelope a narrative independent of Odysseus’: in his absence, her time “wastes away,” melts into a stagnant crying pool; after all, if Penelope directed her own narrative, she would no longer be available as the space through and towards which Odysseus directs his narrative. Penelope is not entirely passive, however: she waits with an “enduring heart,” that is, committed to stagnation over easier choices such as remarriage or suicide. Eumaios uses the same lines (16.37-9 = 11.181-3) to reassure

49 Much ink has been spilled over the extent of Penelope’s subjectivity. Katz 1991 makes the most extended case for its indeterminacy, considering it emblematic of the text’s basic investment in indeterminacy, rather than specific to Penelope’s situation (192-5). Cf. Murnaghan 1986; Winkler 1990: 129-61; Felson-Rubin 1993. Foley 1995 and Holmberg 1995 both take Penelope’s motives at face value; the former focuses on her capacity to direct the narrative; the latter, on the subordination of her narrative to Odysseus.

50 One of many qualities she shares with her much-enduring husband: Odysseus grips the ram’s belly τετληότι θυμὸν (9.435) and resolves to endure (ἔτλην, 10.53) after debating κατὰ θυμὸν (50) whether to commit suicide or live on after his companions open the bag of winds.
Telemachos upon his return. Athena has hastened him home by claiming, with no support elsewhere, that Penelope is on the point of marrying Eurymachos under pressure from her father and brothers and may even walk off with some of Telemachos’ property (15.16-19). The goddess bolsters her claim with a generalization—a woman’s heart forgets her previous husband and children in favor of her new household—and advises him to entrust his possessions to the best of his slavewomen. This is the first time that Penelope’s remarriage has been represented as a threat to Telemachos, and with good reason. In preparation for their reunion, Athena now aligns Telemachos’ interests with his father’s: both want Penelope to keep waiting. As soon as he enters the hut, Telemachos asks after his mother’s fidelity and implies with disgust that she has rushed into another’s bed, since she has been gone long enough for Odysseus’ bed to become covered with “foul cobwebs” (κάκ’ ἀράχνια, 16.35). He accepts Eumaios’ testimony and sends the swineherd to reassure his mother.\

Penelope herself recognizes the significance of her tears. Eurynome approves (κατὰ μοῖραν ἔσω, 18.170) of her intention to appear before the suitors and urges her to beautify herself, namely, to cleanse her face of tears. Telemachos has grown a beard, after all (173-6):

µηδ’ οὔτω διακρύοισθι πεφυρμένη ἁμφὶ πρόσωπα
ἔρχει, ἐπεὶ κάκιον πενθήμεναι άκριτον αἰεί.
ἡδὴ µὲν γὰρ τοι παῖς τηλίκος, ὤν σὺ μάλιστα
ἡρόν ἀθανάτοις γενειήσαντα ἰδέσθαι.

51 In the ensuing conversation, Telemachos shows more sympathy for Penelope’s fidelity than he has previously. For the first time, he formulates her dilemma in the same terms as she does (16.73-7), then he sets the suitors’ violence against his property and himself in the lap of the gods (129).
Penelope soon makes the connection between his maturation and her own remarriage explicit: Odysseus Troy-bound instructed her to mind his household until their child grew a beard (γενειήσαντα, 269) and then to marry whomever she wished. Leaving implicit a δέ clause encouraging her to remarry, Eurynome obliquely reminds Penelope that this time to exchange loyalties has come (ἡδη). Penelope refuses on the basis that her beauty left with Odysseus (180-1):

\[\text{ἀγλαΐην γάρ ἐμόί γε θεοί, τοὶ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν, ἐγκατεστάθηκαν, ἐξ οὖν κείνος ἐβή κούλης ἐνὶ νησίν.}\]

She reiterates and expands this self-effacement first with the suitors, after Eurymachos exalts her above all women (245-9), then with the beggar, after he likens her to a blameless king whose land and people prosper under his leadership (19.108-14). To accept these compliments would be to admit Odysseus’ replaceability: she can still attract a new husband or even rule in his stead. Penelope rightly demurs, locating all her excellence, both mental and physical (ἐμὴν ἀρετὴν ἀδός τε δέμας τε, 18.251 = 19.124), in Odysseus and claiming delinquency and incompetence in royal duties (19.134-5, 309-16, 325-34) out of longing for him (ποθέουσα, 19.136). His return would increase her κλέος by confirming her fidelity (18.254-5 = 19.127-8); in the meantime, she maintains her grief (νῦν δ’ ἄχομαι, 18.256 = 19.129) as proof.

Twice Penelope describes her life as a constant state of mourning and longing for Odysseus. She awakens from Athena’s makeover with a prayer for death (18.202-5):

---

52 On the implication in the beggar’s compliment that Penelope has replaced Odysseus, see Murnaghan 1987: 44.

53 “It is Penelope’s métis to make her excellence and praise ultimately take the shape of her husband’s” (Bergren 2008: 218).
Rather than specify tears, Penelope uses the broad verb ὀδύρεσθαι, which indicates continuous action and includes both emotions and their expression, to make a general characterization of her existence. Athena may have washed her face with beauty itself, but Penelope’s grief runs deeper than skin: “waste” has become a way of life. Penelope thus reaffirms her fidelity just before extracting gifts from the suitors. As the bow contest dawns, she starts from sleep and, sated with crying (κλαίουσα κορέσσατο, 20.59), again prays for death, so as to keep Odysseus before her eyes (Ὀδυσῆα / ὀσσομένη, 80-1) and avoid a lesser husband. Her “evil” (κακά) dreams of Odysseus have made her suffering unbearable, depriving her of the peace that sleep should grant from daily anguish (83-5):

ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν καὶ ἄνεκτὸν ἐχει κακόν, ὀππότε κέν τις ἦματα μὲν κλαίῃ, πυκνῶς ἀκαχήμενος ἦτορ, νύκτας δ᾽ ὑπνος ἔχησιν.

Before, Athena would eventually shed “sweet sleep” (ὕπνον / ἡδύν) over her crying eyes (1.363-4 = 16.449-50 = 19.603-4). Now, as the possibility of remarriage approaches, her husband consumes all her time, even when her eyes cannot weep.

54 On these aspects of ὀδύρεσθαι, see Spatafora 1997: 15-18.

55 The gift-extraction scene has generated much debate. Hölscher’s interpretation is the simplest and most consistent with the text: νὸος δὲ οἱ ἄλλα μενοῖνα (283), he argues, means not that “she has something else up her sleeve,” but that she wants something else, i.e., the return of her husband, even as she accepts gifts in preparation for remarriage. On the merits of his argument, see Emlyn-Jones 1984: 11.
A change comes over Penelope in the course of the Homilia. The first Kretan tale elicits tears worthy of Odysseus’ pity ( ἐλέαιρε, 19.210) and the snow simile (203-9):

她的肉成为哭泣的源泉，那雪融化为奔流的山溪：冻在佩内洛普的脸上，对奥德修斯的记忆在最轻微的触碰下，在提到他（哪怕是在可能的背景下）时流泻而出。那些“肯定的迹象”进一步增加了她对哀歌的渴望（249-50）。但在这首诗中第一次，她流了痛哭的眼泪（τάρφθη πολυδακρύτοιο γόοιο, 213 = 251），她对第一则故事足够信服来要求证实那乞丐对奥德修斯的相识（215-19）和第二则来尊重他（φίλος τ᾽ ἔσῃ αἰδοῦς τε, 254）。到这时她仍然坚持奥德修斯不会回来（257-8），但乞丐的誓言削弱了她的信念。他开始请求她停止哭泣：没有人会因为哀悼这样一位神一样的丈夫而被责备，他说话了，奥德修斯会回来的；进一步哭泣意味着屈服。她不仅听他的，而且她希望实现誓言（ἀγαρτοῦς τετελεσμένον εἰ, 309）和怀疑，而不是否认，奥德修斯会回来： ἀλλά μοι ὃδ᾽ ἀνὰ θυμόν ὅτεται, ὡς ἔσεται περ᾽ / ὦτ᾽ Ὀδυσεύς ἔτι οἶκον ἐλεύσεται (312-13).56

56 Contrast Eumaios’ unqualified futures after the same oath: ὥ γέρον, ὦτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐγὼν
Her speech after the footbath supports this impression of hope. However boundless (πένθος ἀμέτρητον, 512), her pain apparently does not prevent her from doing her part to sustain the household (513-14):

ἤματα μὲν γὰρ τέρπομ’ ὀδυρομένη, γοῦσα, ἐς τ’ ἐμὰ ἔργ’ ὀρόσα καὶ ἀμφιπόλων ἐνὶ οίκῳ.

In contrast to others’ and her own claims elsewhere, here she does not live in grief, but incorporates it into her daily routine. Only at night do the cares come thick and fast, as she wavers between her husband’s bed and her son’s birthright. This is not a long-standing conflict, however, but a recent development (vōv, 532), now that Telemachos has reached adulthood and, anxious for his property, prays for her to leave. The possibility of Odysseus’ death does not figure in her deliberation as formulated here. Penelope thus presents herself as the best wife possible in her circumstances: she remembers her husband but does not forget her duties, and she considers remarriage in light of their son’s, not her own, interests.

---

57 This is not to say that she enjoys it. Stanford 1959 ad 513-15 takes ὀρόσα closely with τέρπομαι and reads the first two participles separately, as “her fixed condition.” Alternatively, she may mean τέρπομαι ironically. My point is that here her grief is manageable. Elsewhere it is portrayed as all-consuming (esp. 11.181-3; 13.336-8; 16.37-9; 18.202-5; 20.83-5), even to the point of hindering her productivity. For example, she twice returns not to her proper tasks, as Telemachos commands, but to crying for Odysseus (1.356-64; 21.350-8).

58 Previously, he forbade her from leaving: παῖς δ’ ἐμὸς ἦν, ἐν ἴην ἔτι νήπιος ἦδε χαλίφρων, / γῆμασθ’ οὗ μ’ εἶα πόσιος κατὰ δόμα λιποῦσαν (530-1).
At this point she turns abruptly to her dream. Those who read Penelope’s sorrow for her geese as subconscious or suppressed affection\(^{59}\) for the suitors ignore the logic of the dream as well as its function in her speech. She mourns the geese as her pets. However obvious the equation geese = suitors might seem to modern interpreters, Penelope has no reason to make it at first: the number of geese does not match that of the suitors,\(^{60}\) nor do the birds eat in a very suitorly manner—rather, they warm her heart (\(iαίνωμαι, 537\)). The eagle then *consoles* her—“take heart” (\(θάρσει, 546\))—by clarifying their identity. Upon waking, she searches (\(παπτήνασα, 552\)) for the geese to confirm the dream, but finding them still alive, she cannot help but doubt the eagle’s assertion of its reality and fulfillment (\(οὐκ ὄναρ, ἄλλ᾽ ὑπάρ ἑσθλόν, ὅ τοι τετελεσμένον ἔσται, 547\)).\(^{61}\) The dream thus further justifies her indecision: not only is time running out, but an

\(^{59}\) Devereux was the first to advance this reading, and he presents it as self-evident: “it is hard to understand how literary critics could have overlooked the obvious fact that a rapidly aging woman, denied for some twenty years the pleasures of sex and the company and support of a husband, would inevitably be unconsciously flattered by the attentions of young and highly eligible suitors” (1957: 382). Many have since concurred, e.g., Rankin 1962: 617-24; van Nortwick 1979: 276 n. 22; Clayton 2004: 45. Others, e.g., Felson-Rubin 1987: 72-4 and Katz 1991: 146-7, see overt, not suppressed, affecction. But as Pratt points out, “Penelope never acknowledges affection for the suitors and openly wishes for their death (\(Od. 17.545-47\))” (1994: 148 n. 4). I add that she weeps in glee upon learning of their death: \(ὡς ἔφαθ᾽, ἥ δ᾽ ἐχάρη καὶ ἀπὸ λέκτρου θοροῦσα / γρη ἀπευπλέχθη, βλεφάρων δ᾽ ἀπὸ ἄκρυνον ἤκε (23.32-3)\). For arguments for a Freudian interpretation, see the bibliography at Kessels 1978: 118-19 n. 27; for criticism, see esp. 93-5. For a summary of the various readings of the dream and bibliography, see Katz 1991: 146. My reading is indebted to those of Kessels 1978: 91-110, Marquardt 1985: 43-5, and Pratt 1994: 148-50.

\(^{60}\) On this point, see Pratt 1994: 150-1.

\(^{61}\) Marquardt 1985: 43-4.
alleged sign of Odysseus’ return is far from straightforward. Although the beggar fails to allay her doubts, she does not fall back into despair. Time is forcing her hand, but she does not deny that Odysseus is alive and may return. She lays the contest as a test: if Odysseus really is the eagle, if he really will return in time to string the bow, then she is saved; if not, then at least she will buy herself more time, for no one else can string his bow. In parting from the beggar, she uses the bed tear-soaked since Odysseus’ departure (εὐνή] αἰεὶ δάκρυς’ ἐμοὶ πεφυρμένη, ἔξις οὐ Οδυσσεὺς / ὀξὺτ’, 19.596-7) to remind him that her adherence to what is “right” (θέμις, 14.130) for a wife is not an isolated incident, but a habit, which she resumes after their interview (19.602-4 = 1.362-4). But in drying her eyes and testing his oath and her dream, rather than rejecting them outright, she expresses hope, and thereby passes a test suggested to Odysseus by Athena. As she reintroduces him to Ithaka, Athena ostensibly deploys the image of weeping Penelope to the same end as Anticleia and Eumaios. But she prefaces it with praise for Odysseus’ caution: unlike Agamemnon, he will test his wife before the welcome party (13.333-8):

62 As bird-signs go, it is a strange one: normally the interpretation confirms the audience’s initial emotional reaction (Pratt 1994: 151 n. 12), and no other bird acts as its own interpreter.

63 So Austin: “[t]o institute a contest in which the event and the instrument are both the peculiar property of Odysseus is to elicit Odysseus’ epiphany. Penelope has read the signs but she needs some confirmation that her senses are reading true. The contest will be definitive proof, either of her folly or of her intelligence” (1975: 230). Cf. Marquardt 1985: 41, who emphasizes her cunning in laying the contest.

64 She uses the same lines to lay claim to Telemachos’ knowledge of Odysseus from his journey to Pylos and Lakedaimon (17.101-6).

65 According to Eumaios, it is θέμις for women to weep for their dead husbands: καὶ οἱ ὀδύρομένη βλεφάρον ἀπὸ δάκρυα πίπτει, / ἡ θέμις ἐστὶ γυναικὸς, ἐπὶν πόσις ὀλλοθ’ ὀληται (14.129-30).
If Athena intends Penelope’s tears as proof of her fidelity, why propose the test in the first place? Why not end her suffering and enlist her help, as Amphimedon assumes he did (24.167-9)? The following lines provide the answer. Athena asserts her own unshaken conviction of Odysseus’ homecoming (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ τὸ μὲν οὔ ποτ’ ἀπίστευν, ἀλλ’ ἐνὶ θυμῷ / ήδε’, ὃ νοστήσεις, 13.339-40) in contrast to Penelope’s constant weeping. She does not mean to reassure Odysseus at all, but by recasting the emblem of his wife’s fidelity into one of her despair, to call her endurance into question. Penelope’s heart may remain with Odysseus, but she encourages the suitors (379-81)—is she weaving more wiles or, as the likelihood of his return dwindles, keeping her options open? Her hopeless tears and grief for his homecoming (νόστον ὀδύρομένη, 379) certainly suggest the latter, and Odysseus expresses relief not at his wife’s devotion, but at his narrow escape from Agamemnon’s fate (383-5). Not that she would have betrayed him—to impugn Penelope’s intentions, as Agamemnon did and Athena will do with Telemachos, would be too simplistic, not to mention cruel and counterproductive. Rather, Athena pushes Odysseus to test the depth of his and Penelope’s like-mindedness: can she, like him, steel her heart, or has she given up? Is she still his wife in spirit as well as in name?

Once Odysseus passes the bed test, Penelope bursts into tears (δακρύσασα, 23.207). Her apology heightens his desire for lamentation, and he cries, holding the wife
fitted to his heart (κλαῖε δ’ ἔχων ἄλοχον θυμαρέα, 232) in one of the poem’s most famous similes: he is as welcome to her as land to a shipwrecked sailor. As many have observed, this equation of their experiences reaffirms the ὠμοφροσύνη on which Odysseus bases the ideal marriage (6.180-5). The couple then grieves (ὁδυρομένωσι, 23.241) until what would be dawn without Athena’s intervention. The combination of ἰμερος γόοιο and the motif of grief that could have continued until sunset/sunrise recurs elsewhere only in Telemachos and Odysseus’ reunion (16.215), marking these two moments as the most intensely emotional in the epic. But unlike father and son, husband and wife grieve separately until after the simile, which brings them together emotionally as well as physically.

66 For the normal restriction of this quality to male relationships, see Bolmarcich 2001.

67 The “desire for lamentation” recurs at 4.113 (Telemachos), 4.183 (Menelaos’ court), and 19.249 (Penelope). The reunion with his faithful maids arouses an expanded variation in Odysseus: τὸν δὲ γλυκὸς ἰμερος ἤρει / κλαυθμοῦ καὶ στοναχής (22.500-1).
The Slaves

The household slaves shed tears similar to Penelope’s. She (21.55-7), Eumaios, and Philoitios (82-3, 86) all weep upon seeing Odysseus’ bow, a token of their lord and the means, as they fear, of his replacement. Both Eurykleia (19.361-2) and Philoitios (20.204) note the beggar’s resemblance to Odysseus, then weep and offer a memory: the nurse, of his thankless sacrifices to Zeus (19.363-8); the cowherd, of his own appointment to the herds by Odysseus (20.209-10). In a tangle of χάρμα and ἄλγος, Eurykleia again wells up as she recognizes Odysseus by a physical manifestation of her memory, the scar (19.471-2). But unlike Penelope’s, the slaves’ tears do not suffice to prove their loyalty. Only after Eurykleia and the herdsmen have pledged verbal and physical support, respectively, does Odysseus take her into his confidence and reveal himself to Eumaios and Philoitios.

The slaves also differ from Peneloipe in that they, as the property of the male line, are not conflicted between Odysseus and his son. Eumaios and Eurykleia are singled out as the most loyal to both. Their loyalty to Telemachos is parental, and they anticipate his real parents in tearfully welcoming him home. So surprised as to drop his wine bowls,

68 Cf. Eumaios’ citation of Odysseus’ sacrifices to the fountain nymphs at 17.240-6.

69 She offers silence and information about the other slave-women (19.492-8). Odysseus here declines but later requests (22.417-18) the latter.

70 αἱ γὰρ τούτοι, ξεῖνε, ἔπος τελέσειε Κρονίων· / γνοίης χ’ οὐ ἐμὴ δύναμις καὶ χεῖρες ἔπονται. / ὡς δ’ αὕτως Εὔμαιος ἐπεύξατο πάσι θεοῖσι / νοστῆσαι Ὀδυσῆα πολύφρονα ὁνὲ δόμονδε (20.236-9; cf. 21.200-4).
the swineherd heads straight for his young master and showers him with kisses. A “blooming tear” falls as Eumaios embraces him like a father embraces his only son, back from a nine-year absence in a faraway land (16.16-21):

Eumaios does serve as a father figure for Telemachos: in the ensuing conversation, they address each other as “dear child” (φίλον τέκος, 25) and “father” (ἄττα, 31), and earlier the swineherd described “his many pains” for the boy in parental terms. But ultimately a figure, a simile, is all Eumaios can be, so he does not threaten to replace his father: the slave’s affection for Telemachos is an extension of his loyalty to Odysseus. “By far the first” in the palace to notice Telemachos, Eurykleia bursts into tears (δακρύσασα, 17.33) and, abandoning her fleeces, hurries towards him. Her tears are maternal, but her devotion belongs not just to Telemachos, but to the entire family: Laertes bought her quite young, and she nursed both Odysseus and his son.

---

71 Acting as the subject of a verb only here and at 14.129 and 18.204, tears take over for Penelope and Eumaios. For the usual syntax of tears, see Arnould 1990: 130-1.

72 See de Jong 2001: 352 on 15.174-84.

73 He is well-disposed to plural masters: ἀνάκτεσιν ἦπια εἰδώς (15.557).

74 Above all, Eurykleia is the slave of Odysseus (Scott 1918: 75-9; Fenik 1974: 189-91). For her role as a doublet for Odysseus’ mother, see Murnaghan 1987: 41.
The disloyal slavewomen are usually laughing, like the suitors. They weep only once, as they emerge to dispose of their lovers’ corpses and clean the hall before their own unclean death. The juxtaposition of Odysseus’ charges (22.444-5) and their vigorous tears (θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέονσαί, 447) suggests a causal relationship: even if they are out of earshot in the women’s quarters, they know that they are in danger for remembering Aphrodite instead of their master. They may grieve terribly (αἴν’ ὀλοφυρόμεναι) for their lovers, but this verb need not take an implied object and, in light of their own impending execution, primarily conveys fear for their own lives. These tears undermine any pity that their hanging may rouse by demonstrating, in contrast to the faithful slaves’ loving welcome of Odysseus (498-501), their misguided

---

75 The suitors weep only once. Colakis argues that their hysterical laughter at 20.346-7 reveals a “total inattention to reality” consistent with their character and portentous of “their well-deserved death” (1986: 141). If their laughter thus reflects their muddled wits (παρέπλαγξεν δὲ νόημα, 346), then their simultaneous tears and thoughts of lamentation (ὁσσε δ’ ἀρα σφέον / δάκρυσιν πίηζάντο, γόαν δ’ ὠίζετο θυμός, 348-9) constitute the appropriate reaction to the blood-spattered meat: proleptic self-mourning. Indeed, both γόας and Theoklymenos’ οἰμωγή (353) are generally used of the dead. For γόσω/γός as “spécialisé dans le deuil,” designating “la lamentation traditionelle,” see Arnould 1990: 147; Mawet 1979: 260 connects them to tragic threnody. For οἰμωγή as the masculine counterpart to feminine κωκυτός in funereal contexts, see Arnould 1990: 155. The prophet foresees the suitors’ slaughter in the bleeding walls and ghost-filled courtyard. They can only emit, not sense their foreboding, however, for after his vision they continue their damning sweet laughter (ἡδὸν γέλασσαν, 358).

76 Telemachos is to stab them “until they forget Aphrodite”: εἰς ὁ κε...ἐκλελάθωντ’ Ἀφροδίτης (22.443-4).

77 The combination ἀνά ὀλοφύρεσθαι appears only here in Homer.

78 Cf. Kirke (ὁλοφυρομένη, 10.324) when Odysseus rushes her with his sword.
loyalty—to their lovers and to themselves—just before they are punished as a warning to the rest of the household.  

79 For the slavewomen as “scapegoats for anything improper that was done in Ithaka while Odysseus was away,” see Fulkerson 2002.
CHAPTER 2:
ODYSSEUS’ COMPANIONS

Odysseus’ companions weep, wail, or lament (or want to, but he prevents them) in connection with nearly every one of the adventures. Scholars tend to defend their tears as the normal, socially acceptable reaction to their “difficult and apparently hopeless” circumstances, citing the frequency with which their own commander and other noblemen weep. 80 I agree—after all, Odysseus never rebukes his men for effeminacy or impropriety—but I believe that a real difference between his and their tears has been overlooked, in large part because of the conflation of implicit and explicit tears. Nearly all the companions’ tears are merely implied in various expressions of distress, and these implicit tears include most of those shared with or condoned by Odysseus.

The men mainly “wail” and “grieve” at the loss of companions, and Odysseus usually joins them: he insists on the triple ritual cry for those killed by the Kikones (9.64-6) 81 and grieves at heart with the others (πλέομεν ἀκαχήμενοι ἣτορ) for them, as well as for the Laistrygones’ and Kyklops’ victims (9.62-3 = 565-6 = 10.133-4). For their one recoverable casualty, Elpenor, Odysseus provides full funeral rites, weeping vigorously


with the others: θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες (12.12). If Odysseus does not participate, he at least commiserates. After a meal, the men’s first action on Thrinakia is to remember and mourn those “dear companions” devoured by Skylla: μνησάμενοι… φίλους ἐκλαίον ἑταῖρους (12.309). Odysseus himself considers these deaths the most pitiful sight of all he saw in his travels (οἶκτις τὸν δὴ κεῖνο ἐμοῖς ἵδον ὀρθαλμοίσι / πάντων, 258-9) and, before cautioning them against Thrinakia, acknowledges the survivors’ trauma: κακά περὶ πάσχοντες ἑταῖροι (271). He never suppresses their mourning, and he curtails it just once, for strategic reasons. As his crew groans for the six in the Kyklops’ belly (τοὺς δὲ στενάχοντο γοῦντες, 9.467), he forbids them only from wailing (ἀλλ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰὼν…/ κλαίειν, 468-9), which would give away their position; hence his silent gesture, a nod (467-8), and abstention from taunts until they are nearly out of earshot (473-4).

With the exception of these examples for the dead, grief figures in a contrast that Odysseus develops between himself and his men. As the sole survivor of their adventures, he can depict himself in whatever light he chooses, and black and white morality has little appeal for the hero of many wiles. As many have observed, his

---

82 For the communalization of grief as standard practice in the Iliad, see Shay 1994: 55-68. These tears are not related to those in Book 10 that I discuss below (pp. 36-40), but required by the funereal context (see n. 13 above).

83 His nonparticipation on Thrinakia reflects the rift just opened between himself and his men: they united against him (ἤ μάλα δὴ με βιάζετε μοῦν ἐόντα, 12.297) in favor of disembarking.

84 The epithets “wretched” (9.65) and “dear” (9.63, 566; 10.136) not only evoke pity, but also indicate the dead companions’ value to the living.

85 For mute signs such as nods as characteristic of Odysseus, see Montiglio 2000: 275.
account does not bear out the main narrator’s condemnation of the men *en masse* for the consumption of Helios’ cattle (1.6-9): 86

ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὤς ἑτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰὲμενὸς περ:
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίσιν ὅλοντο,
nήπιοι, οἱ κατὰ βοῦς Ὡπερίονος Ἡλίοιο
ησθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖς ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἠμαρ.

The majority in fact perishes at the hands of the Laistrygones, who sink all but Odysseus’ own ship, that is, eleven out of twelve. His responsibility here is debatable, but elsewhere beyond question. 87 When Odysseus returns safe and sound to summon the men to Kirke’s, Eurylochos foresees mass destruction and spits the narrator’s words back at his commander: “She’ll turn you all into beast-slaves! Remember how our friends died at the hands of the Kyklops because of *his* wickedness?” (τοῦτον γὰρ καὶ κεῖνοι ἀτασθαλίσιν ὅλοντο, 10.437). Odysseus nearly decapitates him not in spite but *because* of the truth in his words, 88 which could well be applied more broadly. Although Odysseus protects his men with exemplary courage and cunning, he repeatedly fails to keep them out of trouble in the first place and even drags them to their deaths on a few

86 “Why does the *narrator*, the poet himself, single out felonious feasting on Sun-brand beef as the cause of six hundred deaths, when at least 550 are already dead?” (Shay 2002: 102); cf. West 1988: 71-2. The culpability of the men even on Thrinakia is controversial; see Fenik 1974: 212-15 and Rutherford 1986: 153. Segal rightly stresses their “serious transgression of the boundaries between human and divine” (1994: 215).


88 Cf. Rutherford: “Although Odysseus draws his sword in fury and has to be restrained by his more timid friends…we may well feel that there is some truth in what the rebellious Eurylochus says” (1986: 151).
occasions. He is careful to separate the innocent and the guilty,\textsuperscript{89} and he does admit fault at times.\textsuperscript{90} Once he commits just the kind of god-blaming that Zeus deplores in Aigisthos: his sacrifice of Polyphemos’ ram must have been a failure, since the son of Kronos was plotting the destruction of all his ships and trusty companions (9.552-5). Blame in the \textit{Apologoi} slips, slides, perishes, decays with imprecision, will not stay in place—this much Odysseus acknowledges.

He crafts this world of moral chaos, populated by amoral beings and unmoored from moral forces, in order to showcase his \( \mu \textit{ηπίς} \). Whoever is to blame for a given crisis, Odysseus stands out from his companions for his perseverance and resourcefulness, for his ability to take effective action in the thick of disaster; they, on the other hand, become paralyzed with fear and despair.\textsuperscript{91} This is not to say that he is unfeeling. As they watch Polyphemos demolish his first pair of men, Odysseus and the others, wailing, raise their hands in futile prayer, and helplessness seizes their hearts (9.294-5):

\begin{quote}
\begin{quote}
\( \eta \textit{μείς δὲ κλαίοντες ἀνεσχέθομεν Δί χείρας, σχέτλια ἔργ᾽ ὀρώντες· ἀμηλανίθ δ᾽ ἐχε θωμόν}. \end{quote}
\end{quote}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{89} Shay is incorrect that Odysseus considers all six hundred deaths “their own damned fault” (2002: 43); he never subsumes the others under his impious crew, and he generally portrays losses with pity and regret.

\textsuperscript{90} The companions plead with him to make off with some cheeses and livestock before the cave’s owner returns (9.224-7), but he does not listen, though this would have been far better (\( \alphaλλ᾽ \textit{ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην, ἦ τ᾽ ἄν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦν}, 228 \)); likewise, they plead with him not to taunt the Kyklops (494-9). They must remind him of his homecoming as he languishes with Kirke (10.472-4). He terms the loss of the winds “\textit{our folly}” (\( \eta \textit{μετέρη ματῆ}, 10.79 \)).

\textsuperscript{91} Cf. Rutherford: “Odysseus survives not because he is pious or guiltless or devoid of vices, nor even because he does not make mistakes, but because he is able to learn from them, to adapt, to use what help he can get from others and stay on top” (1986: 153).
At this moment, they are utterly at the mercy of the merciless Kyklops, incapable of rescuing their friends or protecting themselves from the same fate; stabbing the monster will trap them in the cave, so they resign themselves, groaning (στεναχόντες, 306), to a night of waiting—for morning and two more deaths. They express similar despair while approaching Skylla and Charybdis. Although Odysseus and his crew sail up the strait with different fears—he of Skylla, his secret, they of Charybdis— they bewail their entrapment together (12.234-5):

ήμείς μέν στεινωπὸν ἀνεπλέομεν γοῦντες·
ἐνθὲν μὲν Σκῦλλη, ἐτέρωθι δὲ δῖα Χάρυβδις.

The difference lies in Odysseus’ recovery time: as soon as Polyphemos leaves, he conceives a plan for vengeance, and he keeps the ship on course, then arms for Skylla, determined to save his men in defiance of Kirke. Indeed, he rallies so impressively that the companions rarely express anything but gratitude and relief, and he can even exhort them with their escape from the Kyklops as a triumph of his “courage, counsel, and intelligence”: ἐμὴ ἀρετὴ βουλὴ τε νόῳ τε (12.211). They and the reader easily forget that most of his triumphs began as salvage operations.

The companions’ grief is not to their discredit, however, for with prompting they prove obedient and capable. They cooperate in fleeing the Laistrygones (οἱ δ’ ἄµα πάντες ἀνέρριψαν, 10.130) and “quickly” (ὃκα, 12.222) adopt the course Odysseus prescribes for the strait of Messina. Despite their ill-timed grief for Polyphemos’ victims, they “immediately” (αὕρ’, 471) fulfill his commands, and they soon demonstrate better strategy, urging silence after he provokes the Kyklops. On three occasions, Odysseus

---

92 To be precise, her waves (12.202); they have not yet seen Charybdis herself.
shines as a saving light for men incapable of anything but grief. While he and his crew sail away from the Kyklopes’ island, the others sit around the ships lamenting and awaiting them always: ἀμφὶ δ’ ἐπαίροι / ἡμὰς ὀδυρόμενοι, ἡμέας ποτιδέγμενοι αἰεὶ (9.544-5). Under orders to remain on Goat Island and, anyway, ignorant of Odysseus’ precise location, these men can do nothing but hope for the best and expect the worst; their lamentations and posture reflect their powerlessness and dependence upon their commander, as do the cries of the lotos-eaters forced to remember their homecoming (κλαίοντας ἀνάγκη, 9.98) and of the pigs penned in the sties (κλαίοντες, 10.241).

His grief surpasses theirs and overwhelms him only once. As the winds burst from Aiolos’ bag and sweep them away from Ithaka, the men wail (κλαίοντες, 10.49), but Odysseus first contemplates suicide, then lies down on the deck wrapped in his cloak: καλυψάμενος δ’ ἐν νηῇ / κείμην (53-4). Homeric characters prostrate or veil themselves in their moments of deepest sorrow and surrender, and these gestures are combined nowhere else in the Odyssey. In order to live on, Odysseus must come to terms not only with his men’s folly, but also with the breakdown of trust for which he, as their

93 For sitting as a sign of helplessness, cf. 4.101, 539; 5.82, 151; 10.497, 567; 20.58; 21.55.
94 On this use of veiling, distinct from women’s regular veiling in public, see Cairns 2009.
95 The Iliad provides two parallels, albeit inexact. In mourning for Hektor, Priam sits veiled and caked in dung from rolling in it (II. 24.159-65). After Antilochos informs him of Patroklos’ death, Achilles is veiled not in a garment but in “a black cloud of grief” (ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα, 18.22) and lies in the dust (ἐν κονίῃ... / κείτο, 26-7). On these passages, see Cairns 2009: 49-52.
commander, is to blame. Odysseus acknowledges that this is his greatest personal failure by isolating himself from his men, both visually (with his cloak) and vocally (with his silence). This isolation continues after Aiolos turns him away. He and his men may share the blame (ἡμετέρη ματίη, 79) and grieve their easy νόστος together (πλέομεν ἀκαχήμενοι ἦτορ, 77), but he “groans deeply” (βαρέα στενάχοντα, 76) at his failure to set things right.

Odysseus redeems himself on Aiaia. As with Polyphemos and Skylla, he distinguished himself during the Laistrygones’ attack by cutting the moorings and ordering his distraught companions to their oars (10.126-30). Now, he is just as demoralized by the devastation of their fleet, for they all spend the first days and nights on Kirke’s island eating out their hearts with pains and exhaustion: κείμεθ’, ὀμοῦ καμάτῳ τε καὶ ἀλγεσὶ θομὸν ἔδοντες (143). But on the third morning, he sets out to reconnoiter and returns with a great stag. He attributes the lucky catch to a god, who in pity sent the beast into his path. This blessing prefigures the aid he will receive on the way to Kirke’s: both reward his initiative, the uniqueness of which Odysseus emphasizes here by connecting the god’s pity to his own isolation: ὀλοφύρῳτο μοῦνον ἐόντα (157). At this point, he still sympathizes with his companions, heartening each with “gentle words”

---

96 Cf. Segal: “[t]he Aeolus episode is perhaps the most painful failure of trust between Odysseus and the companions” (1994: 34). Shay 2002: 51-9 is perceptive on the combination of distrust and fanaticism in Odysseus’ secrecy and monopolization of the rudder.

97 See Cairns 2009: 41 on Thetis’ (Il. 24.93-4) and Priam’s (cited in n. 95 above) veiling as signs of their alienation from the other gods and his sons, respectively. For the “increasing privacy” of Odysseus’ adventures, see Segal 1994: 35.

98 An expression of profound sorrow, used elsewhere only of Odysseus on Ogygia (4.516 = 5.420 = 23.317). βαρό...στενάχοντας occurs only after the first (8.95) and third (534) songs of Demodokos, as Race 2012b: 2 observes.
(μελιχίοις ἐπέσσι, 173) and quelling their fears of death (174-7); indeed, they have veiled themselves (καλυψάµενοι, 179) as much in anticipation of their own deaths as in mourning for the dead.99

The first explicit tears fall the next morning, and they flow throughout and exclusively in the Kirke episode. Here and only here, Odysseus succeeds in spite of his companions, as his action and their inaction become diametrically opposed. Tears, then, mark the most extreme manifestation of the contrast, elsewhere marked by general distress, between his and their reactions to adversity. Though sensitive to their suffering (189 = 12.271), he proposes further exploration of the island as a μῆτις to regain their bearings.100 His own preliminary observation of smoke rising in the center, a sign of habitation, promises success. But this detail reminds (μνησµένοις, 199) the men of their sufferings at the hands of the Kyklops and Laistrygones, and, in expectation of the same, their hearts break and they wail, weeping vigorously: κλαῖον δὲ λιγέως, θαλέρόν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες (201). They react even more intensely to their impending νέκυια: their hearts again break and, sitting on the beach, they tear out their hair, a gesture associated

99 Cairns suggests that their veiling “is perhaps an expression of their resignation to what appears to be an imminent death” (2009: 53. 26). On the veiling of those about to die, see 52-4 and Llewellyn-Jones 2003: 303. Dramatic irony lurks in Odysseus’ wording, for they soon will “go down to Hades”: οὐ γάρ πω καταδυσόµεθ’, ἀχνόµενοι περ, / εἰς Αἴδαο δόµους (10.174-5).

100 For “his claim to be bankrupt of ideas” as “mere pretence,” see Heubeck 1989: 54. “[I]n reality the grounds he gives (γάρ, 194) for his alleged perplexity (including the report of his own reconaissance) indicate his own μῆτις, without explicitly stating it.” This indirection may indicate that he expects resistance from his men.
with mourning ritual\(^{101}\) and therefore appropriate for those who are about to “die” (566-7):

\[\dot{\text{w}}\text{z } \dot{\text{e}}\text{rā''mēn, tōsīn dē katekλά'sē fīlōn 邯tōr,}
\text{èzōmenō dē kat’ āuθi gōsōn tīllontō te xai'ata.}\]

In both cases, Odysseus considers their behavior unproductive (\'āl.lʼ oū ĝāp tīc prē'ēs ēgī'ne'tō muromē'nōsīn, 10.202 = 568)\(^{102}\) and takes the lead, dispatching a scouting party and commencing the voyage. He does include himself as the two groups cry in parting (208-9):

\[\text{bē d’ iēnai, āμa tō gē dōw kai ēkos’ ētā'roī kлаίōntes’ kата d’ āmē līpōn gōōntas ὅπισθεν.}\]

But he has formulated a plan, and Eurylochos’ group is on its way to implement it. They are active, if apprehensive; note that Odysseus does not specify the tears probably implicit here. And, though he reacts quite like his men to Kirke’s instructions,\(^{103}\) he satiates himself with wailing and wallowing (κλαίων tē kūlīndō'mēnoz τ’ ēkōrē'sēn, 499), and he joins them in weeping only while they are already in the process of going to

---

\(^{101}\) For this association, cf. \textit{Il.} 22.78, 406; 24.71 and see Alexiou 2002: 28-9, 33, 91, 96, 163. Kirke later calls them “twice dying” (δισθανέ'ēs, 12.22) for their living journey to Hades.

\(^{102}\) The participle μυρομέ'nōsīn indicates that tears are involved in both. On the practical inutility, but psychological utility of tears in Homer, see Arnould 1990: 108-10.

\(^{103}\) His heart breaks, and he sits on the bed wailing: \(\dot{\text{w}}\text{z } \dot{\text{e}}\text{φατ’}, \text{āut'ār ēmoi ’gē katekλά'sē fīlōn 邯tōr’ / kлаίōn d’ ēn lechē'sēsi kαθή'mēnōs (10.496-7).\)
the ship\textsuperscript{104} and embarking for the underworld.\textsuperscript{105} Even at the horrible prospects of losing more men and facing Hades, Odysseus can subordinate emotion to action, while idle tears mark their inability, or unwillingness, to do so.

This gap between Odysseus and his men widens when Eurylochos returns from Kirke. Charged with reporting his companions’ “cruel fate” (\textit{ἀδευκέα πότιον}, 245), he wells up and struggles to articulate the horror (246-50):

\begin{quote}
oὐδὲ τι ἐκφάσθαι δύνατο ἕπος, ἱέμενός περ,
κηρ ἁχεῖ μεγάλῳ βεβολημένος· ἐν δὲ οἱ δόσε
δακρυόφιν πίμπλαντο, γόνον δ’ ὡτε τὸμ ἰμίκος.
ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ μὴν πάντες ἁγασάμεθ᾽ ἐξερέοντες,
καὶ τότε τῶν ἀλλῶν ἐτάρων κατέλεξεν ὀλεθρον.
\end{quote}

Between his arrival and his speech, the others’ “fate” becomes focalized through him as “destruction,” which he infers from their disappearance. His mistaken grief, highlighted by tears, serves as foil for Odysseus’ extraordinary reaction: he immediately arms and orders Eurylochos to lead the way. Still lamenting (\textit{ὀλοφυρόμενος}, 265), however, Eurylochos clasps his knees, obliging Odysseus to spare him, and begs to escape while they still can. Odysseus condemns not his terror \textit{per se}, but the blithe desertion and outright selfishness that he urges because of it (266-9). In his finest moment of the \textit{Apologoi}, Odysseus resolves to rescue his companions at any cost, even that of his own life: “by all means, keep glutting yourself by the ship; I will go” (271-3). And this

\textsuperscript{104} ἐπὶ νῆα θοὴν καὶ θίνα θαλάσσης / ἡμεν ἀχνύμενοι, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες (10.569-70).

\textsuperscript{105} ἂν δὲ καὶ αὐτοῖ / βαίνομεν ἀχνύμενοι, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες (11.4-5).
initiative—Hermes appears just before he reaches Kirke’s house\textsuperscript{106}—earns him divine aid.

The rescue produces three reunions, but only that between Odysseus and those on the beach involves tears.\textsuperscript{107} These men are not helpless, like the victims, but like the companions who shed tears elsewhere, unwilling to help: they held back with Eurylochos, leaving Odysseus to face Kirke himself. But rather than resent them, Odysseus pities them (οἴκτρ’ ὀλοφυρομένους, 409) as they mourn under the assumption that he and the rest are dead. He then likens them to calves gamboling around their mothers as the herd returns from pasture (408-15):

εὗρον ἐπειτ’ ἐπὶ νη ἑρῆρας ἑταῖρους
οἴκτρ’ ὀλοφυρομένους, θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντας,
ὡς δ’ ὃτ’ ἄν ἄγραυλοι πόριες περὶ βοῦς ἀγελαίας,
ἐλθοῦσας ἐς κόπρον, ἐπὶν βοτάνης κορέσωνται,
πᾶσαι ἄμα σκαίρουσιν ἐναντία· οὔδ’ ἐτι σηκοὶ ἱσχοῦσ’, ἀλλ’ ἀδίνον μυκόμεναι ἀμφιθέουσι
μητέρας· ὃς ἔμε κείνοι, ἐπεὶ ἰδον ὀρθαλμοῖσι,
δακρυόεντες ἔχοντο.

He blurs their emotions by launching immediately into the simile, postponing the action in which they resemble the calves, their congregation around him, until the very end.

Their tears belong grammatically to grief, but structurally to joy as the opening of the

\textsuperscript{106} ἀλλ’ ὃτε δὴ ἅρ’ ἐμελλόν ἰδὼν ἱερὰς ἀνὰ βήσσας / Κύρκης ἱζεσθαι πολυφαρμάκου ἐς μέγα δῶμα, / ἔνθα μοι Ἐρμείας χρυσὸρραπτίς ἀντεβόλησεν / ἐρχομένῳ πρὸς δῶμα (10.275-8).

\textsuperscript{107} Both reunions with Kirke’s victims focus on sound—the house resounds with wails and groans (ἀμφὶ δὲ δῶμα / συμερδαλέων κονάβιζε, 10.398-9; κλαῖον ὀδυρόμενοι, περὶ δὲ στεναχίζετο δῶμα, 454)—that seems to include Odysseus. In the first reunion, “desired lamentation came upon everyone”: πᾶσιν δ’ ἰμερόεις ὑπέδω γόος (398). Odysseus uses third person verbs in the second, but then says that “our proud hearts obeyed” (ἡμῖν δ’ αὐτ’ ἐπεπείθετο θημὸς ἀγήνωρ, 466) Kirke’s command to stop lamenting (μηκέτι νόν θαλερὸν γόον ὄρνυτε, 456) and enjoy her hospitality.
ring that frames the simile. This joy gives rise to an equation between his return and their homecoming to Ithaka, “where they were born and raised” (415-21):

δόκησε δ´ ἄρα σφίσι θυμός ὡς ἔμεν ὡς εἰ πατρίδ’ ἱκοῖατο καὶ πόλιν αὐτὴν τρηχείς Ἰθάκης, ἵνα τ´ ἔτραφεν ἢδ´ ἐγένοντο· καὶ μ´ ὀλοφυρόμενοι ἐπεα περέσεντα προσηύδων. “σοί μὲν νοστήσαντι, διοτρεφές, ὡς ἐχάρημεν, ὡς εἰ τ´ εἰς Ἰθάκην ἀφικοίμεθα πατρίδα γαῖαν· ἀλλ´ ἄγε, τὸν ἄλλον ἑτάρων κατάλεξον ὀλεθρον.”

But they continue to grieve throughout their winged words and close the outer ring by returning to their original source of tears, the demise of their missing companions. Only his “gentle” (μᾶλακοίς ἐπέσσι, 422) assurance of safety and hospitality restores their hope. On Aiaia, Odysseus resembles a parent in that he singlehandedly sustains his men, filling their bellies, lifting their spirits, and wrestling them from the jaws of death. The resemblance is made explicit as he returns to those who neither act nor hope without him. These two similes show just how completely they have relinquished control to and become dependent upon Odysseus.

Odysseus provides a parallel for his companions’ tears in his account of the Trojan horse. He contrasts the behavior of the other generals and Neoptolemos as parallel processes: while they were wiping their tears and trembling in their limbs, he, restless for battle, bent on harming the Trojans, fiddled with his weapons and pled to go out. A ring of tears isolates their terror and the denial of his involvement from his valor (11.526-32):

ἐνθ´ ἄλλοι Δαναῶν ἡγήτορες ἢδ´ μέδοντες δάκρυα τ´ ωμόργυντο τρέμον θ´ ὑπὸ γυία ἐκάστου· κεῖνον δ´ οὐ ποτὲ πάμπαν ἐγὼν ἴδου ὀρφαλμοῖσιν
οὔτ᾽ ὀχρήσαντα χρόα κάλλιμον οὔτε παρείδων
dάκρυ ὁμορξάμενον· ὃ δὲ μὲ μάλα πόλλ᾽ ἰκέτευν
ιππόθεν ἐξέμενα, ξίφος δ᾽ ἐπεμαίετο κόπην
καὶ δόρυ χαλκοβαρές, κακὰ δὲ Τρώεσσι μενοίνα.

Odysseus himself was waiting for the signal to open the hatch (524-5), but only
Neoptolemos showed the necessary resolve; the others stalled. If Neoptolemos felt any
fear, he was able to overcome it and focus on the task at hand, just as Odysseus does with
his companions. To the great pride of his father, Neoptolemos shines as the very best of
the “best of the Achaians” (Ἀργείων οἱ ἄριστοι, 524).
CHAPTER 3:  
ODYSSSEUS 

Introduction 

Besides Penelope, Odysseus sheds the most tears in the epic. Many confuse quantity with quality, however, in their attempts to resist modern gender stereotypes.\(^\text{108}\) Foley and van Wees are typical:

I think all critics put too much emphasis on Penelope’s constant weeping. Odysseus, Menelaus and Telemachus weep frequently also.\(^\text{109}\) 

The narrative [of the *Odyssey*], in fact, does not suggest that women cry more easily than men. Penelope may spend all her days weeping for her lost husband, but during his seven-year stay with Kalypso, Odysseus behaves much like his wife.\(^\text{110}\)

I do not think my emphasis on Penelope’s tears is misguided or excessive, for her tears embody her conflict between the two most important men in her life, as I hope I have shown in my first chapter. In any case, Homeric men and women do not necessarily weep the same tears just because the epics do not associate greater proneness to tears

\(^{108}\) Some studies show that these stereotypes are changing in the United States: in particular, the stigma against male tears may be diminishing. Vingerhoets et al. 2000 offer a helpful summary of the psychological literature on tears. 

\(^{109}\) Foley 1978: 23 n. 9. 

with women or tears, as a feminine attribute, with weakness. Close reading does reveal differences between male and female tears in Homer. Tears of homecoming, for instance, are exclusively male. This observation may seem trivial—after all, men do most of the traveling in the Homeric world—but such tears rank among their strongest, more so than those of pain or fear. Hence Odysseus’ companions liken his return from Kirke, the greatest joy conceivable in their present circumstances, to their own homecoming, the absolutely greatest joy. Agamemnon sheds the first happy tears in the *Odyssey* as he sets foot on Argos (4.521-23):

"Hot tears" are shed elsewhere only by Eurykleia as she laments her lost master (19.362) and by the Achaians as they bury Achilles, their finest warrior (24.46). These and the few Iliadic examples are situations of hopelessness and profound loss; here the adjective reflects the depth of Agamemnon’s relief at his “painless homecoming” (νόστος

---

111 *Il.* 16.7-11 is not an exception, if read carefully. Achilles is neither mocking (van Wees 1998: 14) nor rebuking (Monsacré 1984: 82, 219 n. 18) Patroklos; he pities him (ὁκτηρε, 5). Both he and the little girl weep out of helplessness and dependence; there is no indication that such tears are characteristically female. Föllinger 2009: 30 n. 20 interprets 2.289-90 along the same lines.

112 Of those who can hope for a homecoming, that is. Captive women travel to their new masters’ homes, of course, but they have lost their homecoming.

113 Cited above, pp. 40.

114 The Trojans gather their dead, weeping in silence (7.426); Patroklos, weeping like a dark spring, approaches Achilles as the Achaians battle around the ships (16.3); Achilles’ horses (17.437), Antilochos (18.17), and Achilles (18.235) weep for Patroklos.
ἀπήμων, 519), so different from many Achaians'. Oblivious to the scout lurking in the next line, he overflows with joy, repeatedly kissing and prematurely welcoming his homeland. His incaution is foil for Odysseus’ circumspection on Ithaka: he conceals his initial delight (γῆθησεν.../ χαίρων ἦ γαίη πατροή, 13.250-1), openly rejoicing and kissing the earth (κύσε δὲ ζείδωρον ἄρουραν, 354) only after Athena has cleared his wife of suspicion and the island of mist. Both men, however, experience νόστος with the deepest emotion: it is ecstasy if secure, agony if lost.

On Ogygia Odysseus weeps not for Penelope, as is commonly claimed, but for Ithaka. Kalypso seems to attribute his tears to memory of/longing for Penelope when she warns him that if he knew the extent of his coming anguish, he would stay despite his desire for his mortal wife: ἱμερόμενός περ ἰδέσθαι / σὴν ἄλοχον, τῆς αἰὲν ἐέλδεαι ἥματα πάντα (5.209-10). He responds by admitting Penelope’s inferiority to the goddess and subsuming his desire for her beneath that for his entire homeland (219-20):

agnosis

Husband and wife do not weep the same tears because they do not have the same significance for each other. In weeping for Odysseus, Penelope preserves her entire social identity. But she constitutes just one, albeit one quite important, part of his role as βασιλεύς. His tears keep the memory not just of Penelope, but of Ithaka alive in the one situation where he cannot actively pursue, and therefore runs the risk of forgetting, his νόστος. Each time his seaside tears are described, the narrator cites compulsion (ἀνάγκῃ,

115 Perhaps the adjective also anticipates the true nature of his homecoming, which came to resemble the other situations involving θερμὰ δάκρυα. For the irony in ἀσπασίως, see Taaffe 1990: 134-5.
4.557, 5.154; οὐκ ἔθελων, 5.155) and/or his inability to return (οὐ δύναται ἦν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἰκέσθαι, 4.558; νόστον ὀδυρομένῳ, 5.153). His tears do resemble Penelope’s in that they become his way of life. When Hermes comes to Ogygia, he does not see Odysseus at first, for he is sitting on the shore in his accustomed spot: ἀλλ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἀκτῆς κλαῖε καθήμενος, ἐνθα πάρος περ (5.82). This is how Kalypso finds him, in his constant state of gazing over the sea, wracked with pains and homesickness (151-8):

Tears frame the image, first in litotes, then as the object of a positive participle. δάκρυα λείβων (158) is anticipated by the unique phrase κατείβετο δὲ γλυκὸς αἰών (152), in which his life flows away like tears. When he fails to recognize Ithaka at first sight, Odysseus again plunges into despair (13.198-200):

ψυχοζέν τ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔπειτα καὶ ὦ πεπλήγετο μηρώ χερσὶ καταπηνέσσ᾽, ὀλοφυρόμενος δ᾽ ἔπος ηὔδα· “ὦ μοι ἐγώ...”

And, convinced of the Phaiakians’ treachery, he can manage only to count his treasure and drag himself, buried in grief, along the shore (219-21):

116 κατείβειν denotes the shedding of tears at Od. 21.86 and Il. 24.794 and the flowing of water at Od. 5.185 = Il. 15.37 and Il. 21.261. Kalypso uses a more conventional verb for passing time in her plea: μηδὲ τοι αἰών / φθινέτω (5.160-1).
ὁ δ᾽ ὀδύρετο πατρίδα γαῖαν
ἔρπυζον παρὰ θὴνα πολυφλοίσβοι θαλάσσης,
πόλλ᾽ ὀλυφυρόμενος.

Without Athena’s intervention, the much-enduring Odysseus may well have given up here—so potent is νόστος among male emotional experiences. Most women have no access to this experience, and the one female νόστος, Helen’s, receives scant mention.117

As this example and my previous two chapters show, we must take far more than quantity into account to do Homeric tears any justice. As we shall see, Odysseus does not weep at all like his wife until their reunion or, for that matter, like anyone else except Telemachos (who weeps quite seldom, pace Foley). I will discuss Odysseus’ tears in two groups: those of pity and those shared with Telemachos.

---

117 Menelaos speaks of his, not her, homecoming: διδόσαν δὲ μοι οὖρον / ἀθάνατοι, τοῖς μὲ ὅκα φίλην ἐς πατρίδ᾽ ἔψεις (4.585-6). Helen does say that she rejoiced when Odysseus, disguised as a beggar, slaughtered droves of Trojan men, “since by that point my heart had inclined to go home”: ἐπεὶ ἢδη μοι κραδὴ τέτραπτο νέσσθαι / ἂν οἶκόνδ᾽ (260-1). But we do not actually see her return. This is not to say that νόστος is insignificant for her—in the Iliad, she expresses her longing for home quite poignantly (3.139-42, 172-6; 24.764-6)—but it is not emphasized in the epic of homecoming as it is for the men.
Pity

Tears of pity are shed only by Odysseus and contribute to his characterization as the supreme endurer, who moves through rather than succumbs to suffering: he is the pitier, not the pitied.\textsuperscript{118} He weeps for the most pitiful of his φίλοι, the dead and the two closest to death, Argos and Laertes. In the νέκυια, these tears mark turning points: the first shade, the first in the catalogue of women, and the first of the Achaians’ finest. Elpenor’s corpse lies unwept and unburied (ἄκλαυτον καὶ ἄθαπτον, 11.54), the worst fate imaginable in Homer,\textsuperscript{119} after a drunken tumble from Kirke’s roof. In their haste, the others either missed or forgot him—and no wonder, for he had “little of the heroic about him”:\textsuperscript{120} he was the youngest, and “in no way very valiant in war nor well endowed with intelligence”: οὔτε τι λίην / ἄλκιμος ἐν πολέμῳ οὔτε φρεσίν ἦσιν ἀρηρῶς (10.552-3).

The mass of nameless dead from every stage of life struck Odysseus with “pale fear” (χλωρὸν δέος, 11.43), but the sight of “this feeblest and most worthless of his companions” floods him with pity (τὸν μὲν ἐγὼ δάκρυσα ἱδῶν ἐλεησά τε θυμῶ, 55), initiating a psychological process observed by Segal:

\textsuperscript{118} The two exceptions at 8.531 and 16.219, where he sheds a “pitiful tear” (ἐλεεινόν δάκρυαν), are discussed below, pp. 62-4, 66-8.

\textsuperscript{119} Cf. the fate that Aigisthos would have suffered, had Menelaos returned in time: τῶ κέ οἱ οὐδὲ θανόντι χυτὴν ἐπὶ γαῖαιν ἐχειν...οὐδὲ κέ τίς μιν / κλαϊσεν Ἀχαϊδάων (3.258-61). On non-burial as a denial of status in Homer, see Redfield 1975: 167-223 and Griffin 1980: 160-1. For a summary of funerals, see Morris 1989: 46-7.

\textsuperscript{120} Segal 1994: 41.
The formulaic repetition [of line 55 with Anticleia at 87 and Agamemnon at 395] not only creates a forward-moving rhythm and sense of accumulating grief, but also helps mark the continual deepening of [Odysseus’] compassion and sorrow as he sees the ravages of death on those closer to him.121

Emerging from the generic billow of death, Elpenor confronts Odysseus with “the immediate experience of death close at hand, in a companion but recently seen alive.”122 To remind his commander of the connection they had in life, he invokes Odysseus’ living kin, specifying his wife, the father who reared him, and Telemachos left alone in the halls, and their shared memories of wandering, embodied in the oar with which he rowed among his companions (τῷ καὶ ζωὸς ἔρεσσον ἐὼν μετ’ ἐμοῖς ἐτάροισιν, 78) and which he asks Odysseus to plant on his tomb. By burying him, by acknowledging his ties and fulfilling his obligations to such a minor φίλος, Odysseus shows exceptional humanity and responsibility.

Bringing death closer to home and stinging her son with pity, Anticleia approaches next and unexpectedly, for she still lived when Odysseus left for Troy: τὴν ζωὴν κατέλειπον ἱὼν εἰς Ἰλιὸν ἱρήν (86). Elpenor and Agamemnon too were unexpected at the time, but Odysseus introduces them with a notice of their deaths (53-4, 388-9), downplaying his shock and associating his tears with their present state. As for his mother, he weeps instead at the hole she has left in his life. By keeping her death a mystery until her own account, he recreates in the narrative the tension he felt as he waited through Teiresias’ words. In his eagerness for interaction with Anticleia, Odysseus coolly accepts his own fate as the gods’ spinning and asks the prophet how she

121 Ibid.
122 Ibid.: 40.
can recognize her son.¹²³ After drinking the blood, she reciprocates with her own
eagerness and surprise—she addresses him first¹²⁴ and asks how he, still living, has
managed to enter the darkness—and this shared reaction between mother and son evokes
tender pathos. When at last he learns her fate, Antikleia provides the cruelest
demonstration of the household’s dependence on Odysseus—she literally died of longing
for him (σός...πόθος, 202)—and, as the only member whom he can pity openly,¹²⁵ an
outlet through which to recognize that dependence. But she does not allow him to
wallow in his pity. As he fails three times to reach her and “delight together in chill
lament,” his grief mounts: does Persephone send this phantom as a special torment? No,
Antikleia explains, for every soul flits away insubstantial as a dream. By thus

¹²³ In particular, he asks Teiresias to explain her failure to look at or address him: οὐδ᾽ ἐὼν ύλὸν / ἐτλη ἐσάντα ἰδέν σοῦ δ᾽ ἐτιμοθήσασθαι (11.142-3). Note also the strong
adversative at 88: ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὃς ἐἰόν προτέρην, πυκινὸν περ ἄχευον. He would address
her, as he does Elpenor and Agamemnon, but for his more pressing task. Elpenor seems
capable of recognition and speech without drinking the blood because he is not yet a full
member of Hades.

¹²⁴ Unlike Elpenor and Agamemnon, who respond to Odysseus.

¹²⁵ To keep his cover, he must suppress his tears for Telemachos (ὁς ἄρα φωνήσας ύλὸν
κύσε, καὶ δὲ παρειὼν / δάκρυν ἦκε χαμαξε: πάρος δ᾽ ἐχε νολέμεξ αἰεί, 16.190-1) and
Penelope, hardening like horn or iron as she melts (ὄφθαλμοι δ᾽ ὃς εἰ κέρα ἐστάσαν ἥ
σιδήρος / ἀτρέμας ἐν βλεφάροισι· δόλῳ δ᾽ ὃ γε δάκρυα κεύθεν, 19.211-12). On Argos
and Laertes, see pp. 51-5 below.

Telemachos picks up this strategy as the suitors abuse his father: Τηλέμαχος δ᾽ ἐν μὲν
κραδή μέγα πένθος ἀείε / βλημένου, σοῦ ἄρα δάκρυ χαμαί βάλεν ἐκ βλεφάροι, / ἀλλ᾽ ἀκέων κίνησε κάρη, κακὰ βυσσοδομεύων (17.489-91).
contextualizing Odysseus’ deepest loss in the universal “way of mortals” (ἄλλα ἀοτὴ δίκη ἐστὶ βροτῶν, 218), she allows him to let go, to return to the world of the living.\textsuperscript{126}

Agamemnon approaches after Odysseus resumes his tale and Persephone disperses the female shades. Once he drinks the blood and recognizes his old comrade-in-arms, he preempts and surpasses Odysseus in crying (391-4):

κλαῖε δ’ ὃς λυγέως, θαλερὸν κατά δάκρυον εἴβον, πιτνάς εἰς ἐμὲ χεῖρας, ὑμέξασθαι μενεαίνων· ἀλλ᾽ οὐ γὰρ οἱ ἔτ’ ἤν ἐς ἐμπέδος οὔδε τι κίκυς, οὔτε πέρ πάρος ἔσκεν ἐνι γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι.

The collocation κλαίειν + λυγέως is rare in the Odyssey and elsewhere combined with θαλερὸν δάκρυον only at 10.201. None of the other shades, moreover, weeps\textsuperscript{127} or seeks embrace; what emotion does Agamemnon express so acutely here? His account of his own murder makes clear that these are tears of self-pity, of mourning one’s own misfortune and demise. He lays the pathos on thick: like an ox in its stall—helpless, unsuspecting—he “died a most pitiful death” (ὡς τὸς τε κατέκτανε βοῦν ἐπὶ φάτνη. / ὡς θάνον οἰκτιστῶ θανάτῳ, 11.411-12), as did his companions, slaughtered like pigs for a banquet; he heard “the most pitiful cry” (οἰκτροτάτην…δόπα 421) from Kassandra as he writhed around Aigisthos’ sword, supplicating the infernal powers for vengeance.\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{126} In closing, she urges him to hasten to the light and convey his newfound knowledge of the “way of mortals” to Penelope: ἀλλὰ φόρωμε τάχιστα λιλαίεο· ταῦτα δὲ πάντα / ἵσθ’, ἴνα καὶ μετόπισθε τῇ εἴπησθα γυναικί (11.223-4).

\textsuperscript{127} Elpenor “wails” (ὁιμώξας, 11.59); Anticleia “laments” (ὅλοφυρομένη, 154).

\textsuperscript{128} I follow Stanford 1959 and Heubeck 1989: 102-3 on the difficult lines 11.423-4. If ἐγὼ ποτὶ γαίη χεῖρας ἀείρων / βάλλον means “raising my hands I beat them on the ground,” there are parallels for this gesture as a method of invoking the infernal powers for vengeance (Il. 9.568, 14.272; Hymn to Aphrodite 333).
Refusing him even the final service of closing his eyes and mouth, his bitch wife showed no pity in committing that most vile and shameless of outrages. In case the expected response is at all unclear, Agamemnon maintains that Odysseus would have felt the greatest pity at the sight of their corpses strewn among the tables: ἀλλὰ κε κεῖνα μᾶλιστα ἰδὼν ὀλοφύρων θυμῷ (418). The ennervation of this once great warrior moves Odysseus to his own tears of pity (395), but by the end of the conversation his pity has gained an additional dimension. Agamemnon reaches for Odysseus not only as a lost loved one, like Achilles for Patroklos\textsuperscript{129} and Odysseus for Antiklea (205-8), but also as a lost self, as the man fortunate in homecoming and in marriage whom he failed to become.

Without caution, Odysseus could well meet the same fate, "since women are no longer to be trusted" (ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι πιστὰ γυναιξίν, 456).\textsuperscript{130} Agamemnon and Odysseus recognize their equivalence as they share a “blooming tear” (ἐστάμεν ἄχυμενοι, θαλερόν κατὰ δάκρυ χέοντες, 466), mourning the death they could have shared.

The first member of his household whom Odysseus sees upon reaching the gate with Eumaios is Argos. The dog senses their presence, but the narrative suspends his recognition with an extensive description of his abject state: plagued by pests (κυνοραιστέων, 17.300) and denied twenty years of vitality and happiness with Odysseus (οὐδ᾽ ἀπόνητο, 293), this well-bred hound wallows in shit and neglect: δὴ τότε κεῖτ᾽ ἀπόθεστος ἀποχομένῳ ἀνακτὸς, / ἐν πολλῇ κόπρῳ (296-7). But his love for Odysseus endures: he alone recognizes his master through the years and rags first and without

\footnote{129} ὡς ἄρα φονήσας ὄρεξατο χερσὶ φίλησιν / οὐδ᾽ ἔλαβε· ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς ἧπτε καπνὸς / ὄχετο τετριγυῖα (II. 23.99-101).

\footnote{130} For a detailed discussion of the function of the Agamemnon stories in the Odyssey, see Olson 1990.
tokens, by his voice. His gestures of helpless joy—wagging his tail, flattening his ears—and inability to reach Odysseus bring the pathos of the scene to a head; having noticed the dog in turn, Odysseus wipes away a tear, concealing it from Eumaios for the purely strategic reason of self-concealment. The swineherd goes on to extol Argos’ former build and abilities (313-15):

εἰ τοιόσοδ’ εἶη ἡμὲν δέμας ἢδὲ καὶ ἔργα
οἷν μιν Τροίηνδε κιών κατέλειπεν Ὀδυσσεῦς,
αἰνὰ κε θηήσαιο ἱδὼν ταχυτήτα καὶ ἄλκίν.

These, like Penelope’s beauty, have withered in Odysseus’ absence (νῦν δ’ ἔχεται κακότητι), for the slavewomen disregard the dog, along with the rest of their duties (318-21). Many read Argos as an embodiment of the entire household: without his master he has no purpose or protection and has fallen into disrepair. At this first sight of his derelict estate and disrespected family, Odysseus weeps in pity and perhaps in shock.

Odysseus next weeps for the last family member with whom he reunites, Laertes. Again their meeting is delayed, this time by Odysseus’ failure to find Dolios and his sons.

---

131 He pricks up his ears and raises his head at Eumaios and Odysseus’ conversation (17.290-1), and knows that Odysseus is near (ἐνόησεν Ὀδυσσέα ἐγγὺς ἐόντα, 301). Dolios and his sons recognize Odysseus immediately (24.391), but he is no longer in disguise at this point.

132 Perhaps the canine equivalent of human reaching for embrace. On the human treatment of Argos, see de Jong 2001: 421. She notes that his “solemn death formula” (17.326) is used of dying warriors in the Iliad (5.83; 16.334; 20.477).

133 αὐτὰρ ὁ νόσφιν ἵδων ἀπομόρξατο δάκρυ, / ἐθεία λαθὼν Εὔμαιον (17.304-5). The formulation of his question about Argos’ identity (308-10) is also part of this strategy: he gives twice the length and the second position to the “table dog” alternative, which he knows is incorrect.

(24.222-5), and again the wretchedness of the object of pity is described at length: he finds his father alone (οἶνον, 226), run ragged by old age (γήραϊ τειρόμενον, 233), “increasing his grief” (πένθος ἀέξον, 231) with toil and self-neglect. And again Odysseus sheds tears out of sight: στὰς ἄρ᾽ ὑπὸ βλασθημήν οιγχην κατὰ δάκρυον εἶβε (234). The idiosyncratic construction of his ensuing deliberation, in which the first alternative is expressed by an infinitive, and the second is introduced by ἦ, has baffled scholars (235-8):

μερμήριζε δ᾽ ἐπειτα κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν
cόσσαι καὶ περιφόραι ἐόν πατέρ’, ἤδε ἐκαστα
eἰπέν, ὡς ἔλθοι καὶ ἱκοτ’ ἐς πάτρια γαῖαν,
ἤ πρῶτ’ ἐξερέοιτο ἐκαστά τε πειρήσαιτο.

I offer a tentative interpretation of this construction through Odysseus’ psychology at this moment. Unlike with Argos, he has not yet managed to wipe away his tears, and he is so overcome with emotion that he initially chooses reunion, expressing it with the infinitive and with twice as many lines as the second alternative; the optative projects the test into a remote, less likely future.

Ultimately, he does go through with the test. As critics of his deception protest, Laertes’ loyalty is not subject to doubt.135 An extensive discussion of this difficult passage exceeds the bounds of my paper, but I read the test as an attempt to lift his father out of the misery that effectively disguises him.136 Laertes has abandoned every aspect of his identity, exchanging society for solitude, wealth for poverty, “fine fabrics for ashes and leaves, growth for decay, order for dissolution. He has descended from the human

135 For a concise summary of approaches to the test, see Scodel 1998: 9-10.

136 For Laertes’s misery as a disguise, see Murnaghan 1987: 26-30.
level to the animal and even to the vegetable.”

He prays to die (Δι δ᾽ εὐχέται αἰεὶ /
θυμὸν ἀπὸ μελέων φθίσθαι, 15.353-4) and is all but dead from longing for his son: “I too
died that way” (οὔτω γὰρ καὶ ἐγὼν ὀλόμην, 11.197), Anticleia explains. Odysseus
therefore encourages his father to reassert his true identity by deliberately misidentifying
him as a slave and representing himself as a guest-friend of Odysseus: as the king he
seems to be (βασιλῆι...ἀνδρὶ ἔοικας, 24.253), Laertes should react with indignation and
offer hospitality. But Odysseus underestimates the depths of his father’s despair.
Laertes says nothing about his own condition and simply calls the stranger’s gifts
“wasted,” since Odysseus can make no return. Like Penelope, he weeps (κατὰ δάκρυον
eἴβων, 280) at the first mention of Odysseus, and presumably these tears persist in the
background, since later Odysseus bids him cease his “tearful lament”
(γόοι...δακρώστης, 323). But unlike her, he shows no hope: he is so convinced of
Odysseus’ death that he grieves only the return of his body, which surely fed fishes and
beasts; he has ceased even to wish for a living Odysseus. The second lie confirms his
conviction, and he reacts with gestures of mourning, covering his head with dust and
groaning vehemently (315-17):

ως φάτο, τὸν δ᾽ ἄχεος νεφέλῃ ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα·
ἀμφοτέρησι δὲ χερσὶν ἐλῶν κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσαιν
χεῦατο κὰκ κεφαλῆς πολιῆς, ἀδίνα στεναχίζων.

137 Austin 1975: 102.
139 Odysseus supposedly left the stranger five years ago with good omens, but he has yet
to return.
At this sight, Odysseus abo

ting the test and reveals himself. After the “certain signs,”

Laertes’ knees loosen and, like Penelope, he embraces Odysseus, but then, in the

emotional climax of the reunion, he faints into his son’s arms. This is a kind of death—to

faint is to “breathe out one’s spirit” (ἀποψύχοντα, 348)—that like Argos and Antikleia’s

illustrates the household’s dependence upon Odysseus. But if the sight of Odysseus

fulfilled Argos (αὐτίκ’ ἵδόντ’ Ὄῳσῆ α ἑκοστὸ ἐνιαυτό, 327), his return breathes new

life (ἐμπνυκτό, 349)\textsuperscript{140} into Laertes.

\textsuperscript{140} Cunliffe connects this form with πεπνῦσθαι, which, along with πνυτός and

πεπνυμένος, tends to be dissociated from πνεῖν. But see Heath 2001: 133-4 n. 11 for

arguments in favor of association.
Telemachos and Odysseus

The Telemachy is generally read as an education in “the manners of the civilized world” and “the models of the heroic life.” Above all, his father is held up for imitation as a consummate warrior and strategist, and Telemachos takes this lesson to heart. Many have observed how he gradually acquires Odyssean characteristics like cunning and endurance, and from Book 17 success hinges on the young man’s ability to put them to use in an ongoing deception: he must “endure” (τετλάτω, 16.275) his father’s mistreatment, sweet-talk the suitors, and keep the rest of the household in ignorance (299-305). Telemachos of course passes his final exam with distinction. But one must first gain admission to higher education, and Telemachos does so with raw talent: by the time he leaves for Pylos, we have caught enough glimpses of the Odyssean essence of his character that we have no doubt of his paternity and potential.

His “maiden-speech” at the Ithakan assembly tends to be excluded from these glimpses, largely because of his emotional reaction: enraged, he hurls the scepter to the ground and bursts into tears, reducing all the people to pity and silence (2.80-3):

---

141 Austin 1969: 56; see also Clarke 1963.

142 For Telemachos’ Odyssean characteristics, see Austin 1969. For the dependence of success on him, see Jones 1988: 504-5.

143 His reception of Athena-Mentes, like all first appearances in the Odyssey, lays the foundation for his ἥθος. See Race 1993: 80-3 and Reece 1993: 47-57.
These “sudden, passionate” tears are usually attributed to his immaturity and/or ineffectuality.¹⁴⁴ In the last gasp of his childhood, he is supposed to be “whining… about his genuine powerlessness and inexperience: ‘For no man is found here, such as Odysseus was, to ward off destruction from the house’ (2.58-9).”¹⁴⁵ Given the general absence from Homer of our stigma against adult male crying, however, we cannot simply assume here that “big boys don’t cry,” and tears at other assemblies tell against this interpretation. Aigyptios and Eupeithes each address the Ithakans as the first speaker and in tears for a son: τοῦ ὃ γε δάκρυ χέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπε (2.24 = 24.425).¹⁴⁶ With two sons at home, one among the suitors, and one in the Kyklops’ belly, Aigyptios constitutes a cross-section, a typical representative of the Ithakan people. His tears serve as a visible representation of their shared memory (ἀλλ᾽ οὖν ὃς τοῦ λήθετ’, 2.23) of and grief for the missing army, news of which takes priority among public business (30-1). As for Eupeithes, he unites “more than half” (ἡμίσεων πλείους, 24.464) the Ithakans

---

¹⁴⁴ Stanford 1959 ad. 2.81. Wærn 1985: 225 and Chaston 2002: 3-4 attribute his tears to his failure to persuade the assembly.

¹⁴⁵ Heath 2001: 150; cf. 140: “[h]e is still innocently direct and poignantly ineffectual in his speech as he tries in vain to prove his maturity” and Clarke: “we feel that this is clearly not the kind of speech his father would deliver, and whatever faint effect it might have had on the hard hearts of the Suitors is dissipated when he concludes his words with a sudden burst of tears. […] Once again Telemachus’ attempt at oratory has been abortive and ineffective” (1967: 33). His speech is directed not at the suitors, however, but at the people, and succeeds in securing their compassion.

¹⁴⁶ Odysseus is in some way responsible for the deaths of both sons, though Aigyptios is unaware of his son’s fate.
against Odysseus, who, he claims, has made a career of wronging Achaians: first he lost his “many good” (πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλοῦς, 427) men at sea; now he has murdered “by far the best of the Kephallenians” (Κεφαλλήνων δέχ’ ἀρίστους, 429). Eupeithes’ strategy consists of convincing the Ithakans that his “unforgettable pain” (ἄλαστον...πένθος, 423) is just as much theirs as his and therefore warrants collective vengeance; the tears framing his speech serve the vital function of securing pity (ὥς φάτο δάκρων χέων, οἶκτος δ’ ἐλε πάντας Ἀχαιοὺς, 438), which prevails over “pale fear” (χλωρὸν δέος, 450) and guilt. If Aigyptios’ tears represent solidarity, Eupeithes’ conduce to it.

Telemachos’ tears should be read in this light. He introduces the matter for discussion as private (Ἄλλ᾽ ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ χρείος, 2.45), not public (οὔτε τι δήμουν).

Aigyptios indeed gave the impression that the βασλεύς is of little consequence to civic order: any man with need (χρειώ, 28) can issue a call to assemble, but no one has for the past twenty years. If Ithaka can operate smoothly without Odysseus, why should his household be a public concern? In the course of his speech, Telemachos argues that his personal situation is, in fact, the Ithakans’ concern, appealing alternately to pity, righteous indignation, loyalty, and guilt.147 Through a common bond with Odysseus, ethical code, and fear of the gods, he attempts to unite the Ithakans with himself, throwing the scepter to indicate the violation of θέμις, the set of expectations and values underpinning their society; Achilles uses the same gesture (ποτὶ δὲ σκῆπτρον βάλε γαίη, Il. 1.245) to denounce his deprivation of due honor.148 Telemachos’ arguments carry such force that no one dares respond with their own harsh words; but for the suitors’

147 For the structure of his speech, see de Jong 2001: 48.

blame-shifting and threats, he may well have carried the day. The pity of the people does not reflect poorly on his rhetoric or their ethics; as with Eupeithes, it means that he has won over their hearts. His tears, then, are a rhetorical tool for cohesion and persuasion, not the final tantrum of “one so recently a boy.” Like his father, he knows how to manipulate an audience with his own emotions.

In the course of his education, Telemachos learns about Odysseus not only through the anecdotes of his hosts, but also through his own miniature Odyssey. The parallels between the experiences of father and son—journeys far from home, fraught with obstacles and temptations—have enjoyed much discussion and need not be recited here. The connection between the recognition scenes at Lakedaimon and Scheria, in

\[\text{As West thinks: “Telemachus has not succeedeed in inspiring any feeling of outrage at the suitors’ behaviour, much less any general desire to help him” (1988: 136).}\]

\[\text{Stanford 1959 ad 2.81.}\]

\[\text{As the beggar, Odysseus himself twice uses tears to secure pity. In the backstory he tells Eumaios, the Egyptian king preserves him, weeping, through a gauntlet of angry spearmen:  \(\delta \delta \epsilon \rho \gamma \sigma \zeta \alpha \kappa \iota \mu \varepsilon \lambda \epsilon \zeta \nu \sigma\), / \(\epsilon \zeta \delta \iota \rho \rho \rho \delta \varepsilon \mu \iota \sigma \zeta \alpha \gamma \iota \kappa \delta \kappa \nu \chi \epsilon \nu \tau \alpha\) (14.279-80). In the Homilia, he begs off questions about his homeland with a vivid description of the tears that would ensue (19.115-22). Penelope asks anyway—perhaps the tears piqued her curiosity instead. Perhaps Odysseus intended them to do so. His language is distinctive:  \(\mu \rho \rho \zeta \sigma \theta \alpha\), though fairly common in the Iliad, occurs in the Odyssey only here (\(\mu \rho \rho \zeta \sigma \theta \alpha\), 19.119) and at 10.202-568, while \(\delta \alpha \kappa \rho \rho \zeta \lambda \omega \varepsilon \nu\) (19.122) is a hapax.}\]

\[\text{For the deliberate use of tears, see also n. 13 above on laments and funerals.}\]

\[\text{On the shared experiences of father and son, see Rose 1967; Fenik 1974: 5-60; Austin 1975: 181-200; Powell 1977: 50-6. Apthorp 1980 treats in particular the common obstacles to their returns. Reece 1993 offers a summary of the parallels (73-4), and himself focuses on the theme of detention (71-6).}\]
particular, has been recognized since antiquity. What I hope to add to this body of scholarship is a fuller interpretation of the role that tears play in this “sympathetic harmony” between father and son. Both, I will argue, confront their pasts through tears and prepare to move forward, Odysseus to his homecoming, Telemachos to adulthood. In other words, both undergo a kind of therapy.

Race has already offered a persuasive reading of Odysseus’ sojourn with the Phaiakians as his “rehabilitation…through the provision of basic physical necessities, socialization, and physical and psychological therapy.” Contrary to the prevailing view of Alkinoos as a “bungling host,” he argues that the Phaiakan king is a “perceptive mind-reader” and “skilled therapeutic facilitator,” who gradually eases Odysseus into the last step, facing and verbalizing what he calls his “grievous woes” (ἐµὰ κῆδεα…στονόεντα, 9.12-13). Demodokos’ three songs punctuate the second day: one at the morning meal, one outside after the athletic competition, and one at the evening feast. Though introduced as the “glories of men” (κλέα ἀνδρῶν, 8.73), the first ends with the ugly truth of war, as “the beginning of woe was rolling down on the Trojans and Danaans through the counsels of great Zeus” (81-2): whoever won, both sides suffered.

---


154 Reece 1993: 76.

155 Race 2012a: 1. The following two paragraphs owe much to this manuscript and to Race 2012b.

As detached listeners, the Phaiakians can “delight” (τέρποντ᾽, 91) in such a song as pure entertainment,\(^{157}\) but Odysseus, who came to know that truth first-hand, reacts by weeping and drawing his cloak over his head in shame (8.83-6):

\[
\text{ταύτ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἄοιδός ἑιδεῖ περικλυτός· αὐτάρ Ὀδυσσεὺς πορφύρεον μέγα φάρος ἐλών χερσὶ στιβαρῆς κὰκ κεφαλῆς εἴρυσσε, κάλυψε δὲ καλὰ πρόσωπα· αἰδετὸ γὰρ Φαίηκας ὑπ᾽ ὀφρύσι δάκρυα λείβων.}
\]

During intermissions he regains composure, wiping his tears and uncovering his head, only to retreat back into his cloak each time the bard resumes (87-92). Alkinoos alone takes note of his exceptional suffering (93-5):

\[
\text{ἔνθ᾽ ἄλλους μὲν πάντας ἐλάνθανε δάκρυα λείβων, Ἀλκίνοος δὲ μιν οίος ἐπεφράσατ᾽ ἡδ᾽ ἑνόησεν ἡμενος ἄγγ᾽ αὐτοῦ, βαρὺ δὲ στενάχοντος ἄκουσεν.}
\]

But for now, “with no public acknowledgement of Odysseus’ grief, Alcinous bids the party go outside for sports, thereby buying time and [in the form of athletics and the second song] relief for Odysseus.”\(^{158}\) At first, Odysseus is “too depressed to exert himself,”\(^{159}\) his mind too immersed in sorrows (154); his display of excellence with the discus restores his self-confidence to the point that he boasts of his prowess with the bow and reveals that he was with the Achaians at Troy (219-20). He then enjoys the song of the adultery of Ares and Aphrodite along with the Phaiakians.

\(^{157}\) For detachment as a condition of enjoying tragic poetry, see Macleod 1983: 8-12 and, on Odysseus in particular, 10-11.

\(^{158}\) Race 2012b: 2.

\(^{159}\) Race 2012a: 10. For the athletic competition as “abuse therapy,” see 10-12.
This self-confidence follows him back to the hall. At dinner Odysseus sends Demodokos a hefty tip, slices of pork chine, and praises him “above all mortals” for his accurate portrayal of the Achaians’ fate, “as though you yourself had been present or heard it from someone else” (487-91). He then requests a song on the Trojan horse, his own contrivance and the vehicle of Troy’s destruction. He seeks, I think, straightforward glorification—note his self-flattery with the epithet δίος (494)—and the sack of the city, the end as opposed to the beginning, seems a safe bet. In the song, Odysseus is indeed “glorious” (ἀγακλυτόν, 502), the “very image of Ares” (ἡὕτ’ Ἀρη, 518), and he triumphs in a “most terrible battle” (αινότατον πόλεμον, 519) against Deiphobos. Why, then, does he again break down in tears? Race, I believe, is correct that the song stirs up a whole complex of emotions, designated by the “general term ἄχος,” including Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, survivor guilt, and pity for his victims. But the song’s emphasis on the Trojan perspective—their ill-starred deliberations form half and the center (505-13)—and the simile describing Odysseus’ reaction suggest that pity hits him the hardest. He melts like the widow of a sacked city (521-29):


As many have observed, this woman can stand “for all the widowed women of Troy, all those who suffered in the sack, and suffered at Odysseus’ hands.” But why does the poet choose a captive widow, in particular, to represent all this suffering? Such women arguably suffer the most in war. Unlike the men, they must live with its consequences: Hektor can hope to die before hearing Andromache’s cries as an Achaian drags her away, but she will live on as a slave, at the loom and in the bed of the enemy. And unlike the unmarried girls, widows must endure the replacement of husbands by captors, who may well have killed those husbands. In the simile, then, Odysseus identifies with his most pitiful victim, and through her, all his victims. Victor and vanquished unite in weeping, but her suffering is acknowledged as the greater. His cheeks are wetted with a “pitiful tear,” but hers are wasted with “most pitiful grief” (530-1):

τῇς δ᾽ ἔλεεινοτάτῳ ἄχει φθινόθουσι παρειαί·
ὦς Ὀδυσσέως ἔλεεινόν ὑπ᾽ ὀφρύσι δύκρυον εἶβεν.

Alkinoos again notices and silences the bard, but this time he announces that the entertainment has been grieving the guest. What has changed since Demodokos’ first song? Odysseus regained his heroism in the athletic competition, and now he has reevaluated it through the eyes of his enemy—in other words, he has internally processed his past as much as he can. The next step is to narrate, to share his experiences with this sympathetic audience, and he indicates that he is now ready by not concealing


163 For the importance of treating the enemy as human, see Shay 1994: 103-19.

164 Race 2012a: 16.

165 On the role of narrative in healing trauma, see Shay 1994: 188-93.
himself in his cloak of shame. His narration, albeit painful, is vital to his recovery in that it puts the past behind him once and for all.

Telemachos’ therapy also begins with a sensitive host. When his herald leaves Telemachos and Peisistratos waiting on the threshold, Menelaos “indignantly” (µέγ’ όχθήσας, 4.30) rebukes him as a fool for his failure to understand the reciprocal nature of hospitality: just as they received much hospitality on their grievous journey home, so too should they offer it to these visitors. He then proceeds to treat the young men to one of the longest and most lavish receptions in the poem. Attentive and alert, he overhears (ξόνετο, 76) Telemachos’ effusions of wonder, though he has leant in close to Peisistratos for secrecy: ἄγχι σχῶν κεφαλῆν, ἵνα μὴ πεσθοίαθ’ οἱ ἄλλοι (70). Menelaos explains that grief for the casualties of Troy tempers any delight he might take in his wealth, singling out Odysseus as his greatest loss, a constant source of “unforgettable pain”: ἐμοὶ δ’ ἄχος αἰέν ἀλαστον / κείνου (108-9). Telemachos reacts by casting a tear to the ground and holding his cloak before his eyes (113-16):

 долгий грустный, \( \delta \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \delta’ \) \( \δάκρυ δ’ ἀπὸ βλεφάρων χαμάδις βάλε πατρὸς ἀκοῦσας, |,

χλανίναν πορφυρένην ἄντ’ ὀφθαλμοῖν ἄνασα χερσίν ἀμφοτέρησιν χερσί: νόησε δέ μιν Μενελάος...

---

166 I disagree with Cairns 2009: 44 that the cloak is to be understood in Odysseus’ reaction to the third song.

167 The next time he tells this story, both he and Penelope “take delight”: τερπέσθην μυθοί (23.300).

168 On “Eteoneus’ impropriety...as a foil for Menelaus’ magnanimous hospitality,” see Reece 1993: 78.

169 See ibid.: 77-99.
Menelaos notices his guest’s reaction and debates whether to confirm his intuition or allow Telemachos to mention his father himself. In waiting to ask questions, Menelaos not only follows etiquette, but also respects the privacy of memories. He has just described how “remembering” (μνημένω, 106) Odysseus spoils his sleep and appetite. For Telemachos to mention his father would be to make his own memory of Odysseus public. Telemachos, I think, veils himself not only because he is shy, as Peisistratos explains, but also because he, like Odysseus after Demodokos’ first song, is not yet ready to take this step. Menelaos knows that communalization should not be forced, and he subtly chides Helen for her insensitivity in identifying Telemachos outright. He greets the identification as a revelation—“now that you mention it, I do see the resemblance (οὗτω νῦν καὶ ἐγὼ νοέω, 148)—” but then hints that he already made it based on Telemachos’ reaction to his reminiscing about Odysseus (μεμνημένος ἄμφ᾽ Ὄδυσση, 151). Helen stays on the surface; Menelaos looks deeper, into his guest’s mental state, and therefore knew to hold back.170

Menelaos initiates the next step of Telemachos’ therapy by reducing the entire company to tears with his shattered hopes for a lifelong friendship with Odysseus. Each reminded of their own losses, Helen, Telemachos, and Menelaos successively “wail” in a priamel that culminates with Peisistratos (184-9):

κλαῖε μὲν Ἀργείη Ἐλένη, Διὸς ἐκγεγενία, κλαῖε δὲ Θηλέμαχος τε καὶ Ἀτρείδης Μενέλαος, οὐδὲ ἄρα Νέστορος υἱὸς ἀδικρύτω ἐχεν ὅσσε· μνήσατο γὰρ κατὰ θυμὸν ἀμύμονος Ἀντιλόχου, τὸν ὅ Ἡνὸς ἐκτεινὲ φαείνης ἀγλαὸς υἱὸς· τοῦ δὲ γ’ ἐπιμνησθεῖς ἔπεα πτερόεντ’ ἀγόρευεν.

170 Cf. Nestor, the great orator of the Achaians, who upon learning Telemachos’ identity likens him to his father on the basis of language: ἦ τοι γὰρ μοθοὶ γε ἐοικότες (3.124).
Parallelism indicates that the third clause expresses the same idea as the two anaphoric clauses (κλαίε μέν...κλαίε δέ) in litotes, i.e., that κλαίειν here does involve tears. But Peisistratos’ are the most important and therefore specified. Why does he take center stage over Telemachos? As he does throughout their journey, Peisistratos provides Telemachos with a model, in this case, for managing grief. In his speech, Peisistratos extends mourning to all the dead as their due tribute and cites his brother as an example, reminding Telemachos that others besides Odysseus lost their homecoming (195-9):  

υμεσσομαι γε μὲν οὐδὲν
κλαίειν ὡς κε θάνησι βροτῶν καὶ πότιμον ἐπίστη.
tοῦτό νῦ καὶ γέρας οἶον ὀξυροίσι βροτούσιν,
κείραται τε κόμην βαλέειν τ᾽ ἀπὸ δάκρυ παρειῶν.
καὶ γὰρ ἐμὸς τέθνηκεν ἀδελφεός…

But dinner, he explains to Menelaos, is not the time to mourn: for the living, life must go on. Peisistratos thus allows Telemachos to see his own loss in the wider context of the mortal condition and shows him by example how to move beyond it.  

Accordingly, Telemachos never again weeps for his father; he weeps next and for the last time in the epic with Odysseus, as together they cry more intensely than vultures or eagles whose nestlings have been stolen by countrymen (16.213-21):

ῶς ἄρα φωνῆσας κατ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἔζετο, Τηλέμαχος δὲ
ἀμφιχυθεῖς πατέρ᾽ ἐσθιὸν ὄδυρετο, ὀδίκως λείβοιον,
ἀμφοτέροις δὲ τοῖς ὑφ᾽ ἱμεροὶ ὄρτο γόοιο.
κλαίον δὲ λυγέως, ἀδινώτερον ἢ τ᾽ οἰονοί,

171 Menelaos fixates on Odysseus: ἄλλα τὰ μὲν ποι μέλλεν ἀγάσσεσθαι θεός οὐτός, / ὃς κεῖνον δύστην ἀνόστιμον οἰον ἔθηκεν (4.181-2).

172 Although he praises Peisistratos for wisdom proper to a son of Nestor and complies with his request, Menelaos cannot teach this lesson himself. He, like all of Lakedaimon, is chained to the past, incapable of recovery and regrowth.
This simile, though greatly admired in antiquity, has suffered at modern hands. Analytic critics condemn it as the sorry work of a Bearbeiter. Stanford sees shrillness and intensity as the only points of comparison; “otherwise it is curiously inept.” A few have equated the nestlings with Odysseus and Telemachos’ lost years, but only in passing. This track can be pursued further. After Odysseus reveals his identity to Telemachos, he kisses his son releases and the tear he witheld in Eumaios’ presence. But Telemachos does not believe him at first. He just related to the beggar how his father left without enjoyment of his newborn and only child: μοῦνον ἐμ’ ἐν μεγάροις τεκὼν λίπεν οὐδ’ ἀπόνητο (120). Telemachos therefore shares no “certain signs,” no memories with Odysseus; unlike the rest of the household, he must accept his father on faith. Like the birds, then, Odysseus and Telemachos have lost something that they should have fledged together: a relationship as father and son. The comparison of both to parents reflects the shared nature of this loss, as well as the analogy between their experiences drawn throughout the poem and just underscored. In the simile of Eumaios and Telemachos’

---

173 Both Aischylos (Ag. 48-59) and Vergil (G. 4.511-15) imitate it.


175 Eisenberger 1973: 226; de Jong 2001: 397; Konstan 2009: 313. Rood 2006 concludes her discussion on the implications of vengeance in the simile by equating the nestlings with Telemachos’ childhood. This, however, does not account for the comparison of both father and son to parents. Her observation that τέκνα in the Odyssey is otherwise reserved for human children is well taken.
reunion, the son’s ten years in a faraway land evoke Odysseus’ twenty of wandering, while the father’s “many pains” evoke those suffered by Telemachos during his father’s absence (cf. 4.164 and 16.188-9).\textsuperscript{176} Now, during the only reunion in which both parties weep together,\textsuperscript{177} they confront their empty nest and begin to fill it by collaborating in the following books.

\textsuperscript{176} de Jong 2001: 389.

\textsuperscript{177} Otherwise, only the one who waits (Odysseus’ companions, Eumaios, Eurykleia, Laertes) weeps; on Penelope and Odysseus’ reunion, see pp. 23-4 above. Odysseus sheds a tear before approaching but not with Laertes. Another preserve of father and son is the adverb “to the ground,” used only of Telemachos (χαμάδις, 4.114; χαμαί, 17.490) and Odysseus (χαμάζε, 16.191).
WORKS CITED


Clark, M. 2001. “Was Telemachus Rude to His Mother?” CP 96.4: 335-54.


