MISPRISION IN THE PARA-NARRATIVES OF *ILIAD* 9[1]

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The envoys to Achilles in *Iliad* 9 have a dilemma: to present Agamemnon's gifts in a way that honors Achilles without shaming Agamemnon. Even though Agamemnon's tribute is extravagantly conciliatory, blame cannot be leveled at him, largely because he holds out for his own superiority (9.161–62). Odysseus launches the appeal by outlining the value of the property. Achilles balks, reminding his friends of his twin fates: premature death and glory versus long life and obscurity. Phoenix is then handed the job of appeasing Achilles. Understanding that his adoptive son will not relent through argument alone, he leads Achilles through a series of realizations. Phoenix tells three stories, each ambiguous and imprecise enough to satisfy the condition that Achilles be propitiated without slighting Agamemnon. For this very reason, the stories have proved difficult to fathom, and I propose some new approaches here. As I shall point out, one wonders ultimately whether the inconcinnities of each narrative may be credited to Phoenix or to Homer.

In an important book, Maureen Alden recently settled on calling Phoenix's stories "para-narratives," alleging that "their function is artistic" (2000.13).[2] Formerly called digressions, episodes, paradigms, *exempla,* mirror stories, or metadiegetic narratives, the term para-narrative "cover[s] stories told by the poet *inside* the time of the poem, repeating in a minor key the elements of major events *within* the main narrative" (Alden 2000.15,

1 I follow Fagles' translation (2001), using the OCT text by Monro and Allen 1920 (prefaced by OCT).

2 Gaisser 1969.6–7 claims that there are about two dozen digressions in the *Iliad*.

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emphasis in original). Para-narratives are ultimately analogies. Showing how events have turned out for other people in similar situations, they *illustrate* in order to influence.[3] Deciphering a para-narrative involves comparing elements of the story to one's own situation, a strategy requiring that the story map one's personal circumstances compatibly. Just how compatibly is a vital question, for dislocations between the story and one's situation in the main narrative can invite misprision.

Alden admits she is not the first to hold that digressions in the *Iliad* should be read component-by-component in reference to the main narrative, weighing analogous events, and highlighting harmonies and discrepancies. Yet Alden is by far the most scrupulous explicator of Homer's episodes, and she weighs the comprehensive readings of Phoenix's para-narratives with considerable insight. Inconsistencies still complicate the proposed interpretations of these stories, however, and one serious confusion of focalization persists. My goal is to expose the incompatibilities and show what they mean, how they function, and why Achilles misreads the story of Meleager in particular.

It has been observed that the para-narratives of Book 9 comprise a triptych (Rosner 1976.314–15). Phoenix's first "panel" is an autobiography telling how he fled his father's wrath. This narrative so closely resembles a παράδειγμα, in which one's own "past experience . . . is frequently used as an indicator for the likely future" (Alden 2000.25), that Achilles cannot help but observe the parallels with his own situation.[4] Phoenix establishes his credibility as a man who made a choice in the past that now faces Achilles in the present. The second narration is quite clearly an αἶνος, "allegory," in which Prayers are personified. This narration not only dignifies the embassy's mission but also disguises Agamemnon's culpability, making pity the primary motivation for Achilles to accept the gifts. Phoenix's final panel, the key to his exhortation and a cardinal moment in the *Iliad*, depicts Meleager's part in the siege of Calydon. This narrative has received abundant attention, but no one has yet untangled all its referents. Furthermore, by disregarding focalization, more than a few scholars have failed to

3 Austin 1966.300: "Paradigmatic stories are devices whose intention is always persuasive; they are either hortatory (or dissuasive) or apologetic." "Persuasive" is much too strong, hence my preference for "influential" (cf. Andersen 1987.4).

4 Perhaps Phoenix's first para-narrative could be called "apologetic" in Austin's terminology (1966). On the distinctions in the genre, see Pedrick 1983, who observes four differences between Nestor's speech to Patroclus and other so-called "paradigmatic exhortations."

separate Homer's artistic parallels from those drawn by Phoenix. In other words, some aspects of the narrative quite clearly correspond to Achilles' circumstances, while others correspond to future events in the *Iliad* that Phoenix could not be aware of. These parallels are known solely to Homer and his audience.[5] The distinction suggests why Meleager's parable signifies one thing to Phoenix but quite another to Achilles.

Because some brief prolegomena to my argument may forestall immediate objections, I shall outline a few findings in advance. Many critics endorse the comparative method I use, but I observe the implicit parallels more strictly. While the strategy is plainly valid (to my knowledge, no one has ever challenged the methodology), the precision may not be. Hence many allege that the correspondences will "break down" at the microscopic levels of the analogy. I disagree.[6] In all events at least, we are not *prohibited* from scrutinizing the comparanda in fine detail. Such scrutiny shows that each of Phoenix's para-narratives includes an implicit critique of Achilles' self-proclaimed innocence. From the perspective of Phoenix as a narrator (and, perhaps, of Homer as a poet), Achilles' wrath is only partly justified, a position with which some will disagree.[7] These readers may feel it necessary to assert that Phoenix, not Homer, lays such charges against Achilles. Finally, while it is true that I imagine some ancient audiences encountering Phoenix's stories in the ways I describe, I do not propose my own readings as definitively belonging to Homer—or to Phoenix, Achilles, or any specific audience of whatever place or time.

Why Achilles does not fight again for the Greeks when Agamemnon has offered such rich compensation has occasioned more than a little controversy. I put forward Alden's interpretation, without necessarily endorsing it, that Achilles expects ἱκετεία or formal supplication. My hesitation derives from the content of Phoenix's narratives, which refer to "prayers" that are never explicitly deemed "supplication." Three explanations for this

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5 Tsagarakis 1971.274 most lucidly endorses this view.

6 Bonner's remarks (1977.236) on Servius's "sober" and "rationalistic" approach to Vergilian similes illustrate my "pedantry" from the other side of the classical ledger: "In longer similes, Servius is mainly concerned with the content to which the individual details of the comparison are 'apposite' (*congrua*) to the situation which they are supposed to parallel . . . he is evidently much influenced by the fact that many pedantic critics before him had insisted that each and every aspect of a simile must exactly correspond to the existing situation."

7 Cf Segal 1971.94. I find the complete absolution of Achilles to be wrong, but not for the reasons given herein.

ambiguity occur to me. Phoenix may be suggesting that prayers are equivalent to ἱκετεία, that he doesn't understand that Achilles expects ἱκετεία (Tsagarakis 1971.271), or that Achilles genuinely does not contemplate supplication and that some near equivalent will satisfy him. I am suspicious of the last position, if only because Achilles is so vacillating.[8] Phoenix must calmly persuade Achilles to forgo what he seems to expect: Agamemnon's *personal* capitulation (Tsagarakis 1971.261).[9] Yet many of Alden's observations hold true, for Phoenix disingenuously (but not casually) portrays the embassy as ἱκετεία.

Phoenix's narratives introduce a further problem. After Odysseus offers the gifts, Achilles decides to leave, going so far as to invite Phoenix to come with him. Odysseus reports Achilles' decision: "Achilles threatens, tomorrow at first light, / to haul his well-benched warships out to sea" (9.832–33; OCT 682–83) and "old Phoenix passes the night in camp / as Achilles bids him, so he can voyage home" (9.841–42; OCT 690–91). But, of course, Achilles does not depart. Many influential critics credit Phoenix with changing Achilles' mind (Eichholz 1953.146, citing Bassett 1938.195–99; Tarkow 1982.30), but Phoenix may have suspected that Achilles never really intended to depart.[10] Phoenix supplies a palette of justifications for staying or leaving. Again, Diomedes makes a fitting observation back at the Greek camp when he claims that Achilles will fight again: "I say have done with the man— / whether he sails for home or stays on here. / He'll fight again—in his own good time—whenever / the courage in him flares and a god fires his blood" (9.855–58; OCT 702–03). Diomedes surely thinks that Achilles will stay. Deliberately or not, therefore, Phoenix may only be offering Achilles the dignity of a mock deliberation: a way to save face without accepting a bribe and without abandoning his friends by going home.

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8 Achilles' expectation of an embassy in Book 11 may be seen to validate the remarks of Diomedes to Agamemnon at the end of Book 9: "You've only plunged him deeper in his pride" (9.854; OCT 700). Since Agamemnon failed to appear in person the first time, Achilles now *specifically* envisions supplication or ἱκετεία. On Diomedes as a discerning observer of the embassy, see Querbach 1976.62.

9 *Pace* Griffin 1995.119: "It is to over-interpret this passage [OCT 9.373–74] to suppose that Achilles only refuses because Agamemnon did not come in person"; 121: "[Achilles] seems to be complaining that Agamemnon has not come in person to grovel."

10 The absurdities of Achilles' final position (that he will not fight until the Greek ships are ablaze) are outlined in Arieti 1988.9.

PHOENIX'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Achilles' "foster-father" Phoenix recounts a biographical narrative at the opening of his long address. Phoenix's father Amyntor is keeping a slave as a concubine. Incensed (for any number of reasons), Phoenix's mother supplicates Phoenix (9.549–50; OCT 451–52) to sleep with the girl, so that the slave will later have no taste for Amyntor. Phoenix does so, but his father discovers the conspiracy. Amyntor calls down a curse that Phoenix should father no sons, a curse the gods ultimately fulfil. Phoenix then intends to cut down his father—but "a god checked my anger" (9.559; OCT 459). He decides to abandon his home to avoid a "blood feud" (9.545; OCT 448; cf. Schlunk 1976.201). His friends guess his intent and feast him for nine days, hoping for his fury to cool. On the tenth day, however, Phoenix escapes, later arriving in Phthia where Peleus will give him charge of Achilles. Apparently generous to a fault, Peleus enriches Phoenix with wealth and lordship.

Phoenix's standing with Achilles complicates any reading of this rhetorical gambit. To be sure, Phoenix is a minor character, but most readers consider him esteemed as one of five captains of the Myrmidons. His age might make him a vulnerable warrior, but his captaincy is legitimate and not honorary. He acts as a judge in the chariot race, as Athena's persona in asking Menelaus to rescue the body of Patroclus, and as consoler to Achilles in his private grief over Patroclus. Phoenix shows himself to be trusted by Achilles, Nestor, and Menelaus; Nestor, in fact, chooses him to participate in the deputation to Achilles. Nevertheless, some critics have impugned Phoenix's reputation, suggesting that he exaggerates his standing with Achilles by making himself, not Chiron, the central figure of the hero's youth (von Scheliha 1943.222, Kullmann 1960.371, Schoek 1961.54, Braswell 1971.22–23, Burgess 2001.85–86 [and the references therein]).[11]

John A. Scott sees no reason to accuse Phoenix of any such distortions (1912.76). But despite Phoenix's prominence in the Presbeia, he depicts him rather uncharitably as an "unimportant participant in the action" (Scott

11 To a large extent, this position is derived from seeing Phoenix's solicitation as a fiasco, illustrated in remarks like, "the speech of Phoinix is in part a psychological and argumentative disaster" (Brenk 1986.77, 79, notes 5, 82). Readers have therefore been predisposed to find Phoenix clumsy or insignificant. These critics also stress that Phoenix is the sole purveyor of his biographical details, all or some of which may be artful dodges.

1912.77).[12] Ruth Scodel paints Phoenix in worse terms: "[his] entire story is as close to the sordid and ignominious as the epic style could permit a heroic character to descend" (1982.133).[13] Scodel's objective is to render Phoenix's biography self-consciously demeaning so as to make Achilles' choice to return home into a "parody of the heroic quarrel" (1982.133). In these terms, Phoenix reveals that his exile lacked glory and so he recommends that Achilles choose fame. The argument goes too far when Scodel calls Amyntor's curse "slightly ridiculous" and characterizes Phoenix as "gallantly evading a crowd of slave women" (1982.132, 133). Frankly, nothing clownish or naive can be found in Phoenix's character, otherwise we must accept that Nestor and Menelaus are benighted. Phoenix *can* claim Achilles' allegiance, and his integrity is a vital component in my reading of his address to Achilles.[14]

The intent of Phoenix's curious narrative remains veiled throughout, but legitimate parallels between his story and Achilles' situation can be drawn.[15] The conflict between Phoenix and Amyntor may be likened to that between Achilles and Agamemnon (Scodel 1982.131, Rosner 1976.315–17, Lowenstam 1993.93–94, Brenk 1986.84, Schein 1984.111).[16] This position derives from obvious parallels: an argument over a concubine (Chryseis, for Agamemnon),[17] Phoenix's urge to kill Amyntor, rage quelled through the intervention of a divinity, self-imposed withdrawal.[18] Of course, we

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12 Scott continues: "The presence of Nestor made it impossible for another old man of decidedly inferior rank and ability to play more than a humble part in the economy of the poem, while on the other side the prominence of Patroclus excluded him from achieving eminence as the friend and companion of Achilles."

13 Reiterated by Griffin 1995.128. Scodel has recently treated Phoenix again, but still supports a minor role for him (2002.165–72).

14 A case (contra Köhnken 1975.25–36) making my same points in greater detail is presented in Tsagarakis 1979.

15 Contrary to Hainsworth 1993.121: "The narrative of Phoinix's story is rather inconsequential."

16 The remarks of Carpenter 1946.171–72 seem mistaken: "[Phoenix's story] has nothing to do with the scene that follows."

17 Rosner wrongly sees Briseis as the concubine (1976.316), a position repeated by Schein (1984.111) and Alden (2000.220): "Achilles had quarreled with an authority figure (Agamemnon) about a concubine, but in Achilles' case, the authority figure took the concubine away from her owner, whereas in Phoenix's case, the authority figure was deprived of (the affections of) his own concubine."

18 Rosner 1976.317 reads Phoenix's incarceration differently, thereby finding other incongruities: "Phoenix's imprisonment is caused by others directly while Achilles has locked himself up and can escape at will. Second, Phoenix is closely guarded while Achilles is

must negotiate one clear difference: Agamemnon is not Achilles' father. Although an "authority figure" may be deemed a congruent surrogate, we need not manufacture inconsistencies. After all, Amyntor is still Phoenix's king, just as Agamemnon is king and leader of the Argives, including Achilles. To an unspecified degree, Achilles owes allegiance to Agamemnon, especially in war.

Amyntor's curse that Phoenix never beget a son must therefore be measured against Agamemnon's seizure of Briseis, both actions being the immediate motivations for each hero's retreat. Arguments have been made about Phoenix's zeal for his mother's plan, and some of these justifiably condemn Phoenix for acting against his father.[19] No reader observes, however, that Phoenix may have needed little coaxing to bed his father's concubine as an implicit challenge to his father's authority—as much as his mother's supplication may have conveniently mitigated his audacity. The deed expresses a deep rivalry, almost certainly one reason why Amyntor reacted so violently (Sourvinou-Inwood 1979.14–15). Correspondingly, Achilles confronts Agamemnon over Chryseis partly because of the affront to the army and partly because he pursues any semi-legitimate opportunity to challenge Agamemnon. The seizure of Briseis follows, a parallel to Amyntor's curse. Phoenix removes himself from the court while his friends try hard to make him overlook the insult, just as Achilles stalks to his tent where *his* friends arrive with a compromise (Ebel 1972.87–88). Phoenix then runs off to Phthia, an expression of Achilles' option to go back to Phthia himself.

I have mentioned one possible incongruity between the characters

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not guarded at all. Third, the atmosphere of Phoenix's prison differs markedly from that of Achilles' tent. Phoenix is surrounded by kinsmen who make noisy and repeated sacrifice and who watch him so closely that they even sleep beside him and never extinguish their fires. Achilles' tent is notable for its quiet and loneliness." The obstacle to such reasoning is that no genuine incarceration would include such entertainments made from the victim's store (9.567–69; OCT 466–69). Rosner guesses that Phoenix is imprisoned because he has threatened his father, but Phoenix only says, "I took it into my head to lay him low / with sharp bronze" (9.558–59; OCT 458). No public recognition seems warranted (as Schlunk 1976.205). The very fact that "a crowd of kin and cousins" (9.565; OCT 464) urged Phoenix to stay and that he burst his door (ῥήξας, OCT 9.476) without being heard suggest that his "escape" is rather exaggerated. He seems not to have been guarded at all! Finally, while it is true that the revelers' merriment in Phoenix's tale contrasts with the sobriety of Achilles' tent, Phoenix does not participate in the celebrations.

19 Alden 2000.218: "I am not sure that taking his mother's part helps his moral position (in Homeric terms) at all, since excessive loyalty to the mother's οἶκος is a kind of refusal to grow up (reflected in Phoenix's punishment). It also subverts the absolute loyalty owed by a son to his father."

in Phoenix's story and the Greeks he intends to portray: the relationship between Phoenix and Amyntor does not parallel that of Achilles and Agamemnon. Another more problematic incongruity is far more elusive to interpret but expresses a crucial dimension of accountability. Phoenix's seduction of his father's concubine does not parallel Achilles' humiliation of Agamemnon over Chryseis, but Phoenix tries to depict the ambiguous culpability of both Agamemnon and Achilles.[20] Phoenix and Amyntor are both justified in their actions to some pardonable extent. For Phoenix, it is crucial that he received ἱκετεία from his mother. Ignoring her supplication would have been pitiless, perhaps grievous, considering his obligation as a son and the allegory of the Λιταί that follows Phoenix's biography. Phoenix is here subjected to conflicting social obligations to his mother and father. Amyntor is king, but his mother is a suppliant. Amyntor insults his wife, and he may be possessed by ἄτη when he curses Phoenix. Caught between these opponents, Phoenix chooses to offend his father—but only accidentally, as his seduction is meant to remain discreet.

Phoenix's story, then, is a palliative meant to present Achilles' situation in metaphorical terms and to evaluate culpability in the dispute with Agamemnon. Agamemnon has the right as leader of the Argives to defend his status, but his selfish actions over Chryseis, which offend Apollo and endanger all the Greeks, compromise his αἰδώς, his respect for the will of other men. Achilles likewise has a right to defend the army, but his behavior was confrontational and perhaps self-serving. The conflicting obligations between status and duty are so finely drawn that one cannot defend either side with impunity. To be sure, the parallels are imperfect (as they are in all such narratives), since duty to one's suppliant mother is not *exactly* the same as duty to one's ἑταῖροι, "comrades," but the important element in Phoenix's story lies in defining mutual liabilities in the Phoenix-Amyntor conflict explicitly and in the Achilles-Agamemnon conflict implicitly.

If there is a "problem" with Phoenix's narration, it lies in the inconcinnities validating the choice of running away. "Running away" in

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20 Rosner 1976.316: "Phoenix, in taking his father's mistress, acted in response to his mother's plea and a desire to preserve her honor, whereas Agamemnon acted in defiance of a father's (Chryses') plea. Unlike Phoenix, Agamemnon can offer no justification whatever for his misdeeds and has caused rather than avoided dishonor." This view is unjustifiably confusing, as Phoenix is not compared to Agamemnon, nor Phoenix's mother to Chryses; see also Schlunk 1976.205.

Phoenix's biography can be reflected in Achilles' choice of going home to Phthia, the very position that the delegates from Agamemnon want to oppose. Phoenix receives outstanding honors in Phthia: an adoptive father, a "son" to raise, rich possessions, the lordship of Dolopes. Achilles would receive even more: a natural father, kingship, biological sons. Yet Phoenix intentionally *illustrates* that this choice holds the prospect of domesticity,[21] and he wants Achilles to understand that renouncing κλέος can sometimes mean burping infants (9.593–4; OCT 488–89). Departing remains a valid alternative, however, and, in the past, that choice led to Phoenix's blessed life. *By no means* does Phoenix disparage this choice, otherwise in regretting his past, he would be casting doubt on his loyalty to, and affection for, Achilles.

Yet the view that Phoenix disparages the choice he made is just the interpretation of Phoenix's story that nearly every scholar has invoked from the time of the bT scholiast (Schlunk 1976.205). In my mind, however, these readers are inventing obstacles. Consider the position that Amyntor stands for Agamemnon and Phoenix for Achilles. Phoenix finds a generous patron, Peleus, implying that Achilles might find as much honor from a corresponding surrogate "father"—Agamemnon. Peleus may not have quarreled with Phoenix, but he treats Phoenix like a son. Furthermore, embracing the surrogate father means not having a throne back home, but some rewarding vicarious relationship may yet ensue; Judith Rosner charges (1976.318) that "in recasting Agamemnon as Peleus and specifically as a Peleus who receives Phoenix as a son and generously bestows countless gifts upon him, the aged mentor [= Phoenix] is trying to show Agamemnon in a kinder light."

These parallels between Peleus and Agamemnon and between Phoenix and Achilles make sense only if we insist that Phoenix is an inept or manipulative storyteller and Achilles a weak interpreter. To depict Phoenix as inept, however, we must resort to the naive bungler argument mentioned above (see note 11), with all its contingent Analyst implications, namely that Odysseus made the Greek case until the soft-headed Phoenix was foisted onto Book 9 by interpolation (Page 1959.297–304, Shipp 1972.269–71, March 1987.33). This position generates its own distortions: it would verge on irresponsible for Nestor to select an oaf for such an important mission. To see Phoenix as manipulative would make him compete with Odysseus—

21 This view conflicts with that of Brenk 1986.84.

hardly the way he is depicted in the poem. Finally, to imagine that Achilles equates returning to Peleus with returning to Agamemnon makes Achilles sound thoroughly witless.

Variants on the "defeatist" explanation of Phoenix's exile now prevail. Alden 2000.224 views Phoenix's story as "quite inconsistent" because she thinks that Phoenix should be trying to influence Achilles instead of gaining his trust and validating his autonomy:

> [Phoenix] wants to present the choice of departure/exile as simultaneously a bad thing, and a good thing. It was a bad thing in the case of his own departure from Hellas, in that it was an irrevocable choice involving the rupture of the succession from father to son . . . and a good thing, in that he became rich through the generosity of a stranger, Peleus, who offered Phoenix the love a father gives his son.

While nothing suggests that Phoenix's choice may be "irrevocable" (Phoenix could return home when his father died), Achilles' own parallel situation could imply as much. Thetis' prophecy hints that Achilles' return to Phthia would indeed be final. Yet how could the choice be a "bad thing" when Achilles' death in Troy would be just the kind of "rupture" for which Alden criticizes Phoenix?

These confusions disappear entirely if we understand that Phoenix recites his own life story as an affirmation, rather than as a *captatio benevolentiae* or "to establish [his] credentials" (Hainsworth 1993.119). He has two goals in representing the central moment in his own life, the first of which is to make Achilles understand the consequences of a decision to go home. The second is to gain Achilles' trust as someone who understands his predicament, explicitly sharing Achilles' situation but looking at it from the detached perspective of old age.[22] Only in lines OCT 492–95 do we

22 Stanley 1993.115 mistakenly affirms that Phoenix "serves as an example of the man who has conquered anger." Just the opposite is true: Phoenix gave in to anger and ended up in Phthia. Just as oddly, Stanley claims that Meleager had been "placated" (116). Griffin 1995.132 suggests that "these loving services entitle Phoenix to a return from Achilles," quite a common position. I would argue that such a quid pro quo is not invoked here—unless Phoenix is merely owed a hearing (see also Arieti 1988.8, alleging that Achilles "re-establishes his childhood and childlike relationship with Phoenix").

intuit that Phoenix's biography is intended to recall his loyalty, his sacrifice for Achilles, his notion that an early grief was assuaged by a "son" (Achilles) for whom he has endured exile (Griffin 1995.128). Phoenix respects Achilles' right to make either choice, an imperative that makes his appeal neutral. He declares that life will turn out well for Achilles if he should go home. One ought to be reminded, however, where that road leads before making an impetuous decision not to fight, and Phoenix casts himself as one example of a prospective outcome. On the other hand, fighting is as reasonable a choice as leaving, a choice for which there are inducements that Phoenix intends to illustrate.

Phoenix's narrative soothes Achilles' suspicion. He will *not* claim that leaving is cowardly, petulant, or selfish, but that Achilles has a right to go, just as Phoenix himself had years before. Both men share common ground, as is expressed in Phoenix's words "I made you my son" (9.599; OCT 494).[23] Phoenix does not focus at all on Agamemnon's gifts, and, in fact, Phoenix honestly evaluates his own responsibility in the confrontation with Amyntor. Knowing Achilles to be rash, Phoenix casually introduces Achilles' responsibility in the argument over Chryseis and Briseis. Shying away from Agamemnon and the gifts, he pivots next to a short allegory in which generosity and pity motivate action.

THE ΑΙΝΟΣ OF THE ΛΙΤΑΙ

Phoenix has illustrated what awaits Achilles should he go home. He has maneuvered to gain Achilles' trust by validating that choice. His next goal is to move Achilles to pity, first for himself and then for the Greeks as a whole. Setting aside his rage means that Achilles must give up his expectation that Agamemnon *personally* demonstrate submission, whether through prayers or ἱκετεία. The next moment in Phoenix's narration concerns an αἶνος or "allegory" of λιταί or "prayers," which he apparently improvises. The story deliberately screens Agamemnon and minimizes his role in the mediation. Let me follow Phoenix's allegory as such anecdotes are to be

23 Held 1987.247 proposes that "Phoinix intends his autobiographical account not primarily to supply reasons why Achilleus should grant his major plea, but rather to make . . . a plea that Achilleus recognize and resume his previous role as a son to Phoinix." My own argument could be said to square with Held's if Phoenix only *appears* to validate Achilles's choice to go home.

read, with each narrative element corresponding to particular situational contours (the same strategy employed in all of Phoenix's digressions).[24] While the αἶνος generically concerns prayers, it has a narrower application to Achilles' circumstances as well.

There are two parts to Phoenix's αἶνος, the first of which supplies an allegory, the second a sententious utterance concerning Zeus as punisher of the proud. Although Alden imagines the first part as depicting a kind of race (Alden 2000.202, Thornton 1984.118), Homer puts it more blandly as "consequence" following "action" on a path.[25] Delusion or Folly (Ἄτη) runs ahead of Prayers (Λιταί), sowing havoc. Ἄτη always entails disaster. Ἄτη may be called an act of fate resulting from a (bad) decision made in an emotional crisis, but it is most importantly something one later recognizes as delusion or error (cf. Griffin 1995.133). Yet in Phoenix's αἶνος, Ἄτη is never seen to have this realization. This circumstance is important, since Phoenix capitalizes on the ambiguous role of Ἄτη. We learn in OCT 19.91 that Ἄτη is the *eldest* daughter of Zeus, so that the Λιταί who follow must be sisters to Ἄτη. Personified here as the old, lame, ugly, slow, but nevertheless "healing" sisters, the Λιταί apparently never catch up with the perpetrator Ἄτη, although they continually make amends for her along the way.

For Phoenix, Ἄτη refers obliquely to Agamemnon, whose rancor "bring[s] mankind to grief" (9.616; OCT 507). In this allegory, Achilles has suffered Agamemnon's insult. Evidence seems to confirm the parallel, for Agamemnon confesses to ἄτη more than once, and Achilles is never said to be possessed by it. He might be possessed, however, if he refuses Agamemnon's gifts, and few doubt that declining the gifts could be under-

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24 Alden 2000.32: "The bT scholiast on Il. 23. 652 explains αἶνος here as . . . 'the cryptic and diagrammatic story', suggesting that an αἶνος is a kind of diagram in narrative of the elements of the situation to which it corresponds." I cannot follow Hainsworth 1993.128: "Ἄτη first acts spontaneously, then is sent by Zeus, and her victim would offer restitution, not prayers, to the injured party. If the allegory is applied to the present situation, it implies that the seizure of Briseis was the result of ἄτη, that the offer of restitution is an appeal, and that the consequence of the rejection will be more ἄτη. Only the first of these implications is demonstrably true; the second is false, and the third is sustainable only by special exegesis."

25 Thornton 1984.118–19 disagrees: "The causal relation between a man being in serious trouble through his own wrong action and the supplication which must follow is not represented as a consequence, but as the interplay of different divine powers competing." Thornton errs, since the man is not "in serious trouble through his own wrong action" but innocently victimized by *someone else* suffering from Delusion.

stood as an act of ἄτη—though it need not be.[26] The Prayers then come on the scene to make up for the damage caused by Ἄτη. In Phoenix's αἶνος, the Λιταί correspond to Odysseus, Ajax, and Phoenix. The Prayers address themselves to the injured, which is rather like suggesting that the embassy expresses λιταί to Achilles, but not necessarily or exclusively on behalf of Agamemnon. The sisters of Ἄτη cannot be called disinterested, because they make amends for one of their own family. In the same way, Agamemnon's captains hope to be reconciled with their comrade. This is a remarkable congruency, similar in its delicate misalignments to the explanations provided above of Agamemnon's and Achilles' respective roles in their dispute. Phoenix explains the affiliation between Agamemnon and his soldiers in terms of family.

Achilles expects Agamemnon instead of a delegation, since he imagines an embassy to denote insincerity, an unsatisfying capitulation. Yet Phoenix suggests that Λιταί, as sisters to Ἄτη, can be said to have a duty to compensate someone their oldest sister has harmed. The close family relationship entitles them to intervene because they suffer a collateral shame and corresponding responsibility for their sister's wrongs. While the younger sisters with lower status cannot force their senior to make amends face-to-face, they can bring their own λιταί. The parallel compares sisters to comrades-in-arms, who can, by extension, legitimately entreat on behalf of their absent general. While it is true that Ἄτη does not submit prayers in person just as Agamemnon does not, family and friends who share a dishonor may atone for it—with the expectation of forbearance.

This scenario bears an obvious, if largely neglected, parallel with the Chryses affair. In the αἶνος, Phoenix states that the gods themselves pity a man who "oversteps the mark" (9.608; OCT 9.497) when appropriate prayers and offerings are made (Thornton 1984.113–15, Hainsworth 1993.127, Rabel 1997.115).[27] He means Apollo. Agamemnon offended Apollo by repudiating Chryses, an act he later ascribes to ἄτη. Apollo dispatches plague as a punishment. Agamemnon relents, giving up Chryseis, but he does not perform the sacrifices to Apollo *in person*. Instead, he sends delegates: Ajax, Idomeneus, Odysseus. In fact, Agamemnon proposes sending

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26 My position contradicts that of Hainsworth 1993.129, Arieti 1988.4 ("when Achilles refuses the *Litae* in Book 9, he is in the grip of *Atê*"), and many, many others. In fact, this is a highly significant, unresolvable ambiguity.

27 Thornton also suggests that Homer's audience would draw a parallel between Achilles and a god (1984.116).

Achilles, at which moment Achilles explodes in rage (OCT 1.148 et seq.). He thinks Agamemnon ought to take responsibility for his own affront by offering the hecatombs *himself*. Most relevant here is how Agamemnon does not perform the sacrifices in person, yet Apollo still accepts them. What is more, Gregory Nagy (1979.142–43) demonstrates Apollo's "ritual antagonism" towards Achilles: "The god and the hero mirror each other." The observation compares Achilles' intransigence to the leniency of his divine counterpart. If a god shows pity when entreated by proxies, then surely Achilles can do as much.

By this reading, two views of "responsibility" in Phoenix's allegory are possible. In the first, no "punishment" or humiliation afflicts the "Agamemnon figure" (῎Ατη), who barrels onwards destructively, and neither concession nor acknowledgment of fault is ever volunteered. In this event, the Λιταί have no communication with ῎Ατη. All the moral flexibility (in this case, forbearance) therefore rests with the afflicted, merely because the guilty party is or was deluded. Of course, those injured by ῎Ατη may or may not have invited it, although the allegory implies that the injured are innocent. Consider what Phoenix may be proposing then: having suffered innocently, the plaintiff must nevertheless accept not a reconciliation with the perpetrator but a "blessing" from well-born beggars collaterally dishonored by the affliction he endures. Surely the "blessing" here denotes Agamemnon's gifts, presented as if the Λιταί themselves conferred them! This position follows logically from the opening conditions of the αἶνος. Because ῎Ατη does not acknowledge her fault, she cannot possibly offer amends. Of course, this reading of the allegory contradicts Odysseus's actual offer of Agamemnon's treasure, bestowed not by some third party (the vague "blessing" of some allegorical "Prayer") but by the perpetrator himself. Nonetheless, in this reading, Phoenix clearly distances Agamemnon from the reconciliation, putting all the emphasis on the pity one should feel for the abject Prayers, the purveyors of the settlement. He makes it seem that they alone are agents of concord.

In an alternate reading, Phoenix merely neglects to say that ῎Ατη offers the reconciliation, that the Λιταί bear the regret of ῎Ατη along with her gifts. In this case, the Prayers are approved by ῎Ατη but not offered in person. Yet the victim in the allegory is never said to expect that ῎Ατη will acknowledge her fault, directly or indirectly. This situation parallels Agamemnon's case, in which his shame is not, and cannot be, admitted to Achilles. Achilles expects a personal solicitation from Agamemnon, either prayers or ἱκετεία. In the allegory, however, ῎Ατη seems just as incapable of

face-to-face supplication as she does of face-to-face prayers. At least, only the Λιταί are depicted as conciliators. Even by this reading, Phoenix still distances Agamemnon as a conciliator by failing to mention him explicitly as the source of the gifts, and he emphasizes the Prayers alone as pitiable but worthy negotiators. I find this second solution to the αἶνος less satisfying than the first because it assumes an unstated initial condition (that ῎Ατη has commissioned the Λιταί) and because the "blessings" come explicitly from the Λιταί, not from ῎Ατη. But in both readings, at least, ἱκετεία is never brought up (Scodel 1989.93, note 12).[28]

Phoenix spotlights the motivation of pity in the αἶνος by consciously depicting the Λιταί as wretched and pitiable. He has previously warned: "Beat down your mounting fury" (9.601; OCT 496) just before mentioning how the "gods themselves can bend and change" (9.603; OCT 497). The women are old, slow, "squint-eyed,"[29] lame, wrinkled daughters of Zeus, probably to be viewed as unmarried. No doubt Phoenix wants to depict them as vagabond wise women boasting venerable wisdom.[30] As beggars, they *ask for a boon*, typically something trivial: food, drink, a coin. Because the "Prayers" represent beggars in the allegory, it seems logical that "accepting prayers" would mean offering ξενίη to them, even after one has been injured by their kin (Yamagata 1991.3–4). ξενίη creates moral indebtedness, and, in fact, Achilles has just bestowed extraordinary hospitality on the delegation (though not ξενίη).[31] Turning someone away, no matter one's own circumstances, would be a grave offence.

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28 The point has been carefully elaborated in Aubriot 1984.3: "Il semble donc impossible de retenir cette idée, que l'action de λίσσεσθαι et la supplication puissent être regardées comme superposables." I disagree with Aubriot's extended comparison, however, since Hesiod's Δίκη dispenses justice, while the Λιταί do not. Homer is much less explicit.

29 Suggestions for the relevance of this detail are made by Fränkel 1975.63, Thornton 1984.117, Arieti 1988.3, Aubriot 1984.22–23.

30 Yamagata 1991.3–5, esp. 3: "A ἱκέτης is αἰδοῖος (to be respected) and also apparently under some divine protection, more specifically, the deities of food and hospitality" (the author, however, uses the term λιταί for ἱκετεία interchangeably throughout his discussion of the αἶνος). Gould 1973.95 brilliantly observes that the Greek for beggar, πτωχός, metaphorically describes the position of a suppliant. Thornton 1984.117 suggests that the old crones' features "[express] the lack of honour and the shame experienced by a suppliant making a supplication."

31 Austin 1966.310; Gould 1973.91: "The rules of ξενία are all but absolute: hospitality must be offered and must be accepted, and once accepted a permanent tie is created." Note also Gould's remark (88) that there exists "an association in Greek sensibility between the behaviour of suppliants and that of women and children."

Now, the relationship between ξενίη and ἱκετεία is indisputable, as John Gould 1973.92 shows: "In examining the code of proper behavior towards a ξένος we cannot fail to be aware of the parallelism with the proper treatment of a suppliant: indeed in one sense the distinction between stranger and suppliant is a distinction of circumstance only." Phoenix subtly inverts the situation, making Achilles *offer* "hospitality" to the Prayers by *accepting* them, an action he depicts as a modest but socially essential concession. Most remarkably in this αἶνος, Phoenix equates accepting prayers with receiving ἱκέται. He underscores the incommensurate stature of Achilles relative to λιταί, effectively giving him the duty and honor of being generous. While Phoenix intends to highlight the social conditions under which prayers ought to be accepted, he disguises λιταί as ἱκετεία. This is not the first time he tries to magnify—or one might say distort—Agamemnon's submission.

Phoenix invokes a tacit, but robust, social obligation that calls for only a minor expense, especially when the beggars are vulnerable women offering amends for their sister. Moreover, the Λιταί are owed additional respect because of their lineage. One does nothing for them alone but for their old father Zeus as well. Zeus's part in the αἶνος has been overstated, but Naoko Yamagata clarifies the issue of his protection of ἱκέται, which applies to anyone seeking hospitality: "Respect for suppliants is a well-established moral obligation among human beings, expected, even if not imposed, by divine authority."[32] According to Phoenix, if the injured party shows reverence to the Λιταί, he *will* be blessed, and Zeus will be inclined to hear his prayers. If not, he *may* be cursed with the same ἄτη that afflicts the perpetrator.

Let me be clear: the Λιταί *will* ask Zeus for punishment, but Phoenix ultimately fails to report Zeus's reaction. Both Victoria Pedrick and Yamagata demonstrate that Zeus ἱκετήσιος is not an *avenger* of suppliants, as much as he expects suppliants to be well-treated. Moreover, the Λιταί do not *supplicate* in Phoenix's allegory, thereby making Zeus's judgment much more indefinite.[33] Because the Prayers have only an uncertain right to

32 Yamagata 1991.4 (in response to Pedrick 1982). Again, Yamagata does *not* refer to λιταί in this case.

33 Contrary to the views of many, including Stanley 1993.116: "For prayers are the daughters of Zeus, and there is no escape from the *ate* they call down from Zeus when they are denied"; see Gould 1973.91: "The significance of the ritual increases in direct proportion to the sanction to be imposed upon a breach of it."

acceptance, Zeus need not exact a punishment. Phoenix recognizes a central ambiguity of Achilles' situation. Like going home, rejecting the Prayers is a valid option, but it could make Achilles look contemptuous. Phoenix implies that he cannot evaluate the justifications for either choice. On the one hand, by accepting the Λιταί, Achilles will receive blessings. On the other hand, by rejecting them, he *may* be committing a punishable violation of goodwill. Phoenix simply evaluates Achilles' options and their ramifications. One could not say that the αἶνος conveys a threat, but a "warning" would adequately reflect Phoenix's caution. Phoenix would be foolish to threaten Achilles, who is sensitive to any kind of coercion.

To this point, Phoenix has appealed directly to Achilles' expectations, however self-serving. He establishes a rapport by identifying with Achilles—but not in any condescending way. In his allegory, he implies that Achilles will not get supplication from Agamemnon but that the prayers from his comrades could be said to deserve recognition, for which Achilles will earn appropriate rewards. Pity, not grudges, should move him, since no further capitulation could be expected. At this moment, Phoenix has reached a turning point in his argument. Having established his own authority and gained Achilles' trust, he justifies why representatives may offer prayers and why the prayers ought to be accepted. His next goal is to demonstrate what could happen if the prayers were declined, and for this he turns to the story of Meleager.

THE ΠΑΡΑΔΕΙΓΜΑ OF MELEAGER

The commonest type of para-narrative in the *Iliad* is the παράδειγμα ("exemplum," "paradigm," or "parable"), comprehensively defined by Alden as an extended analogy. She summarizes: "A narrative paradigm is a λόγος ἀρχαῖος, a story from the past. It is told to explain or illustrate an argument, or to influence the listener to act or not to act in a way resembling the events described in the story" (Alden 2000.23).[34] A generation earlier, M. M. Willcock described the παράδειγμα more generally as "a myth intended for exhortation or consolation" (1964.142). Years before Willcock, R. Oehler had outlined the literary situations in which later

34 Alden also remarks: "Paradigms have much in common with digressions: they illustrate the present in terms of the mythical 'past,' which appears to be quarried for mythical examples of the pattern the auditor is expected to see in the present" (2000.14). The paradigm includes other types, such as αἶνος and νεῖκος; see also March 1987.34.

Greek authors used paradigms: warnings, requests, consolations, wishes, comparisons, and amplification (Oehler 1925). Many of these contexts are relevant for Homer.[35]

In Alden's scheme, the past may be mythological, legendary, or historical; if historical, it may be ancient (verging on legendary) or relatively recent. "Historical" stories can be drawn from personal experience or from the experience of others. Narratives of any type may be either positive (describing actions to be emulated) or negative (describing actions to be avoided). In all events, the narrative is meant to predict how a character's future may unfold, for better or worse, should he follow or avoid a course similar to that taken by his counterpart in the story (Austin 1966.303). For this reason, the most serious challenge in reading Homer's *paradeigmata*, including that of Meleager, lies in discerning how closely paradigms map the central action and whether they model actions to be emulated or shunned.

Yet the congruence between past and present in the *Iliad* bears two meanings for two different audiences. The first audience exists inside the poem: Achilles and his comrades with their limited intuitions of the future. The second audience lies outside: Homer's own listeners with their proleptic knowledge of the Trojan War. Narratives of the past therefore generate asymmetric understanding. In other words, rifts between the perception of Homer's audience and that of his characters engender dramatic ironies. Other complications follow from this position. Unavoidable inconcinnities mean that listeners, whether in the external or internal audience, may be seen to misconstrue narratives. Indeed, all para-texts are liable to misprision, an effect of the historical, intellectual, and emotional attitudes of teller and hearer. Ancient Greek readers understood this interpretative polyvalence, and Homer exploited it as a means of giving depth to characters and philosophical detachment to his narrator.[36] In simplistic terms, one might say

35 Sometimes, as Willcock observes, the παράδειγμα simply "consoles," but this function seems to have come from the generation of critics represented by Erich Auerbach (1953), who saw digressions merely as interludes or verbal scenery. With no exceptions I know of, all *paradeigmata* are predictive and minatory to some degree. In fairness to Willcock, one might say that the context of the paradigm is emotional and that one of its functions is to disclose *personal sentiment* in a public setting.

36 One such discrepancy is documented by Scodel 1989, but in this instance, she observes dislocations between two different audiences in the diegesis only. Many similar dislocations are explored in fine detail in Nagy 1979.105–12. The same effects can be found in the *Odyssey*; see Pucci 1987.50–75.

that Phoenix is just too coy and Achilles too stubborn. To be fair, modern critics, who represent one kind of external audience affected by misprision, have devised their own ingenious readings, too.[37]

Few moments in the *Iliad* have been more scrutinized than the παράδειγμα of Meleager, and for good reason. Meleager's parable exemplifies the function and fitness of legendary allusion (Griffin 1980.95–96), suggesting how and why conjunctions and disjunctions in narrative betray feelings, predict behavior, and camouflage authorial opinion. Phoenix tells a story centered on Meleager, not a "legendary" hero by any means, but a man known to have lived in recent times. He describes how Meleager's father, Oeneus, failed to offer first fruits from his vineyards and orchards to Artemis. She retaliates by sending a mammoth boar to uproot the crops. Many are killed before the Aetolians, led by Meleager, and their allies the Curetes slay it. However, a squabble ensues over division of the spoils, and the Curetes declare war on the Aetolians, laying siege to the capitol Calydon. Meleager enjoys a dazzling success in the war until (apparently) one of his maternal uncles is killed. Blaming Meleager for the act, his mother Althaea curses him, and he withdraws to his chamber with his wife Cleopatra. He refuses to fight, even when generous compensation has been promised. The elders, priests, his own father Oeneus, his sisters and mother, and his dearest friends—in that order—beg him to act. They fail. Only when Cleopatra bemoans the abuses of slavery for women and children does Meleager decide to commit himself to the action. He ultimately saves Calydon, but by the time he rescues the city, the offer of compensation has been withdrawn.

Even the ancient scholiasts saw that Phoenix's para-narrative compares Achilles' situation in the Agamemnon feud to that of Meleager in the conflict between Aetolians and Curetes. Yet no other Meleager story known from ancient sources agrees comprehensively with the *Iliad* version. Some critics attribute the substantial interventions to Homer, who, they claim, harmonized the details in the digression with those in epic as a whole (Willcock

37 Incongruities in the *comparanda* have been explained by *Ungenauigkeit*, a literary principle of vagueness, or by "developing ring composition," or by artistic license; cf. respectively, Schadewaldt 1987.140 (and Stanley 1993.22); Gaisser 1969.5, 18–19; cf. Swain 1988.275: "The parallelism of the two stories is not complete . . . But the extent to which Homer has been able to exploit and remodel an earlier version shows he was content with the imperfect match."

1964).[38] These interpreters credit Phoenix with little truthfulness, although Bryan Hainsworth paraphrases Willcock in his Cambridge companion to the *Iliad*: "In this case the poet will have shielded himself against criticism of his veracity by having Phoenix introduce his reminiscences with ἐπευθόμεθα" (1993.132).[39] The position barely affirms Phoenix's reliability as a narrator, but it coincides with a perennial confusion that Irene J. F. de Jong (1987) explicates in her work on narratology. Simply put, Phoenix's paradigm must work on two levels, first, in its relevance to Achilles, and second, in the aesthetic context of the entire *Iliad*. If Homer has changed details in the Meleager incident, should we attribute the innovations to him, to Phoenix, or to both?

The structural contacts between Achilles' situation and Meleager's have been thoroughly plotted (Lord 1965.241–48, Lohmann 1970, Nagy 1979.104, Bannert 1981.69–94, Scodel 1982, Schein 1984.112, March 1987.29–46, esp. 30, note 6, Swain 1988). Henry Ebel suggests that the war between Aetolians and Curetes "both parallels and inverts the situation at Troy" (1972.90). For example, both Achilles and Meleager stymie their enemies, and both exhibit impetuous wrath. Ebel suggests that Artemis' dispatch of the boar should be likened to Apollo's dispatch of the plague (1972.89–90). "Meleager 'is Achilles,'" he concludes. "He is supreme in battle; he receives a triple supplication to return . . . he refuses them all . . . he succumbs to the supplication of his wife, but it is too late . . . he gets no presents at all" (1972.90). Some aspects of this reading are germane and some are not, particularly the loose definition of "supplication." Meleager's father seems to supplicate his son, but he and the other parties (including Cleopatra) are never *said* to do so.

Like many before and after, Ebel invokes E. Howald's ingenious suggestion that Homer invented the name "Cleopatra" for Meleager's spouse as a syntagmatic anagram of "Patroclus" (Κλεο + πάτρη = Πάτρο

38 An influential argument has been derived from the "ascending scale of affection." Kakridis 1949 laid out a pattern by which individuals supplicate others. He showed that the supplication of Meleager diverges radically from the expected order and suggests that *Homer* changed the expected pattern to match that of the supplication of the ambassadors to Achilles. Lohmann 1970.258–59 suggests the same, but offers different correspondences. Homer appears to alter many of his *paradeigmata*, including (most famously) that of Niobe and Priam (cf. Lang 1983). Willcock 1964.142–46 offers seven examples. It has even been suggested that Homer modeled the entire *Iliad* on a putative "Hesiodic" epic *Meleagros* (see Alden 2000.238, note 148 and March 1987.34–46).

39 Hainsworth 1993.127: "Phoinix is suiting his doctrine to his argument."

+ κλος, 1924.411).[40] Ebel contends that Homer was implicitly comparing Cleopatra's promptings to Patroclus's death as incentives for the respective heroes to fight. In short, Meleager's wife corresponds to Achilles' friend. But Howald's argument, now widely respected, unintentionally wrenches the narrative from Phoenix and consigns it to Homer. Ebel, then, means to suggest that *Homer* had aesthetic reasons to include Cleopatra's lament over her potential enslavement as a counterpoint to Patroclus's death.[41] Scodel makes much the same point when she affirms that "confusion has resulted from a failure clearly to distinguish Meleager as a model for what Phoenix wants Achilles to do and not do as a model for what he does" (1982.128–36). Any external "reader" of Phoenix's narrative familiar with Patroclus's death might perceive Homer's "prophecy" as dramatic irony, but neither Achilles nor Phoenix is prescient. They remain ignorant of the Greek advocate to whom this "Cleopatra" might correspond.

Judith A. Rosner followed up Ebel's analysis; her work was extended by Alden.[42] Rosner's method is comparative, and she saw in the fight between Aetolians and Curetes some parallels between Greeks and Trojans. Among parallels between Meleager and Achilles, Rosner alleges the following (adapted from Rosner 1976.325):

1. The fight over the boar's hide: Curetes and Aetolians
   = the fight over Briseis: Achilles and Agamemnon.[43]

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40 See also Nagy 1979.102–05; March 1987.32–33 accepts the anagram but adds: "It might even have been a word-play simply to please the poet himself" (33).

41 Ebel (1972.94–95) theorizes, too, that "Marpessa wailing over the daughter whom Apollo has made away with reminds us that when Patroclus meets his doom it is Apollo who strikes him from behind and stuns him for the slaughter, and that when Achilles learns his companion has been killed 'he cried out / terribly, aloud, and the lady his mother heard him / as she sat in the depths of the sea' . . . As images in a solution, the stages of the parable attain a level of gnomic prophecy more applicable to Achilles and Patroclus than the mere events at Calydon suggest." Rosner (1976.326) exposes a significant problem in this view: Apollo actually rapes Marpessa, Cleopatra's mother.

42 Alden 2000.235 concludes: "The story as it is told in the *Iliad* is fairly closely analogous to Achilles' circumstances in book 9: like Meleager, Achilles has had a quarrel over division of spoils, as a result of which he will not fight for his community; like Meleager, he remains shut away with a single companion; and like Meleager, Achilles receives visitors who offer him gifts if only he will lay aside his anger and fight in their defence."

43 Citing Apollodorus, Alden (2000.233) suggests a specific reason for the war between Aetolians and Curetes: "Meleager killed [the boar], and gave the spoils to Atalanta, but his relatives re-appropriated them"; see her note 135 on the story as told in Apollodorus. Alden further claims that Achilles' situation mirrors Agamemnon's refusal to ransom Chryseis. Should he refuse Agamemnon's gifts now, Achilles, too, may be forced to give Briseis up for nothing.

2. War's cause: slight to a goddess = war's cause: slight to two goddesses.
3. Sorrow over Cleopatra (Alcyone) = sorrow over Patroclus / Briseis (?).
4. Supplication by elders and priests; gifts offered = embassy; Odysseus offers gifts.
5. Supplication by family (father, mother, sisters) = supplication by Phoenix (as father, mother).
6. Supplication by friends = Ajax's claim on Achilles' friendship.
7. Fire in Calydon = fire at the Greek ships.

Rosner inconsistently discriminates between Homer's audience and Phoenix's. That Meleager fought when Calydon was burning has no bearing *for Phoenix* on whether Achilles will fight when the Greek ships are burned. The burning of the Greek ships is a future moment unknown to all the *characters*, even while the *audience* recognizes Homer's parallels. Phoenix is not a soothsayer and must have a different reason for recounting the Meleager narrative in these terms. As I have stated, Phoenix believes that Achilles intends to stay, no matter how much he threatens to sail. Phoenix therefore proposes that, since he will undoubtedly fight to defend his αἰδώς, Achilles should accept the embassy and receive a reward. Achilles, however, means to prove his supreme worth to the Greeks, and from his position, Meleager's parable suggests instead a spectacular heroic rescue. I explore this reading in greater detail after my discussion of other intricacies in the parable.

Two additional problems in Rosner's reading of the παράδειγμα concern Briseis. The suggestion that Briseis corresponds to Cleopatra poses an asymmetrical analogy, attributable either to Phoenix or to Homer.[44] On the one hand, since the slave Briseis could not be returned to Achilles unless Agamemnon's tribute were accepted, Briseis cannot "urge" Achilles to fight, except perhaps by the feeble assertion that she is vicariously "enslaved" to Agamemnon and Achilles should fight to "free" her. But the παράδειγμα explicitly states that he would get no gifts! Just as baffling and inconsistent, the proposal equating Briseis with Cleopatra would mean

44 See also Lowenstam 1993.95, Brenk 1986.84. Nagy 1979.107–08 reasons that Ajax deems Achilles to hold Briseis higher in φιλία than his comrades.

that Briseis would have to have been returned to Achilles, but Meleager-cum-Achilles never accepts any gifts. I see no other solution to this problem other than abandoning the notion that Briseis stands for Cleopatra in the Meleager episode.

The second complication lies in Rosner's proposed parallel between the causes of war as slights to goddesses. The Curetes of Pleuron and Aetolians of Calydon are different tribes vying for rights to Artemis' boar, a prize impossible to compromise over (March 1987.36–37).[45] They represent Greeks and Trojans fighting for Aphrodite's "Helen," another such prize, and not Agamemnon and Achilles competing for Briseis.[46] This position entails a second modification to Rosner's equation, "fight over the boar's hide: Curetes and Aetolians = fight over Briseis: Achilles and Agamemnon." In fact, the analogy calls for Agamemnon's and Achilles' dispute to be figured in the conflict between Meleager and his mother. Homer *specifically* states that Althaea's curse made Meleager quit the war. Briseis plays no corresponding role in the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon. In this case, it is not hard to see a war fought over a disputed prize (boar/Helen), during which a squabble erupts between two allies in the same party (Meleager/Althaea and Achilles/Agamemnon).

While many questions about the paradigmatic correspondences have been settled, other central ones have gone unanswered or have been ambiguously resolved. The strategy is sound, however: Meleager's παράδειγμα corresponds person-for-person and moment-for-moment to the action of Book 1. My own reading of the Meleager episode relies on the same approach. The conflict between Curetes and Aetolians approximates the Trojan War, in which event the "spoils" of the boar hunt may crudely express Helen—not Briseis (see Rabel 1997.129). Althaea's curse prefigures Agamemnon's abduction of Briseis, acts providing reasons for the heroes' withdrawals. But how are we to comprehend this equation? Is killing your maternal uncle in war an offence comparable to publicly berating your royal

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45 March alleges that Althaea's brother was not killed in the war, a solution in serious conflict with the reading I propose here. She reasons that if Althaea were from the Curetes, she would want Meleager out of the war, in favor of Pleuron. Why, then, would she beg at Meleager's chamber? It must be noted, however, that Althaea *cannot* call back her curse, no matter how much she begs. Furthermore, if compelled by fear of slavery or death (not a likelihood, if her people are Curetes), Althaea's laments are insincere. If compelled by Aetolian threats (from her husband's family), her laments are hypocritical.

46 See also Swain 1988.273–74, Lowenstam 1993.95, Hainsworth 1993.134: "[Atalante] would not . . . be parallel to Briseis as the cause of strife."

leader? In fact, just as in Phoenix's biographical narrative, both episodes evaluate attributions of blame. Phoenix seems to have equated two social misdeeds at the same time that he apportions responsibility for them. The killing of one's maternal uncle must be viewed as shameful, but war sometimes justifies such deeds.[47]

Importantly, however, details of the offense are omitted from the παράδειγμα. We may assume that Meleager's uncle fought with the Curetes, but Meleager may or may not have killed him directly. If he had, the text could support an accidental killing. But even if the killing were deliberate, the expedience of war partially exonerates Meleager. Hysterical and unthinking, Althaea curses her son, thereby setting her kinship above the safety of her husband's πόλις and family.[48] One might see ἄτη in this reaction, as women, too, can be possessed by such delusion. By this reading, Agamemnon stands accused of setting his prestige and greed above his duty to the troops as well as his objective, the defeat of Troy. Achilles' words were insulting to the royal office, both sanctimonious and harsh, but in reaction to Agamemnon's egotism, he may have been justified in defending the officers and army from their field marshal's rapacity. The parallels in Phoenix's address perfectly harmonize with the origins of the strife between the two parties, and the paradigm lays charges against both Achilles and Agamemnon. We recognize the gambit from Phoenix's biography, which silently exposed Phoenix's own complicity in the feud with Amyntor.[49]

The correspondences become blurred, however, when the embassy entreats Achilles. Most scholars suppose that the Meleager incident parallels Achilles' circumstances, implying that at this moment in the narration, Achilles is expected eventually to return to the Achaeans with diminished honor and no gifts. Sanctioning this consensus, Alden scrutinizes the dominant reading of this part of Meleager's παράδειγμα. Some incongruities still assail her reading, and I shall raise them as I present it.

Right from the start, Alden identifies three contingent issues, the first of which involves identifying the correspondences between the παρά-

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47 In contradiction to the reasoning of Lord 1965.243: "[Althaea] has invoked [the curses] upon [Meleager] because of her grief over the killing of her brothers *at the time of the tumultuous division of the boar's head and hide*" (my emphasis).

48 Remarks by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood 1989.137, 139–40 on kin structure and family dynamics in *Antigone* are entirely relevant here.

49 March 1987.35 also remarks that Althaea's role was prompted by the recent reminiscence of Phoenix's mother, but she is baffled to explain why. Phoenix is searching for a scenario in which blame may be distributed.

δειγμα and the embassy. Five parties beg Meleager to help the Aetolians: elders and priests, father, sisters and mother, friends, wife. In a modification to the important views of J. T. Kakridis, Dieter Lohmann proposes that Phoenix thought of Odysseus as an "elder," himself as a surrogate "father," and Ajax as a "friend" (1970.258–63). If so, who represents the priests, sisters, and mother? Perhaps a trivial modification can resolve this apparent disjunction. Odysseus can be seen as representing elders and priests (the statesmen who offer the tribute), Phoenix more generally as "family" (father, sisters, mother) and Ajax as "military comrades" (friends) (March 1987.31).[50] Such a parallelism squares adequately with Achilles' situation, with two exceptions. As the perpetrator of Meleager's withdrawal, Althaea should be compared to Agamemnon, and it seems incongruous to lump her with "family" when Agamemnon neither belongs to Achilles' family nor *in propria persona* begs Achilles to fight. There is likewise a problem with the identification of "family": can a surrogate father (Phoenix) meaningfully stand for one's biological father (Oeneus)?

Alden's second issue concerns ἱκετεία. The question is whether any party, including Oeneus, *supplicates* Meleager. The answer is "possibly." Unless we can project the actions of Oeneus onto the others who beg outside Meleager's door, only Oeneus seems to be a suppliant. Although never said to offer ἱκετεία, he alone "kneels" outside the chamber (γουνούμενος υἱόν, 583) and offers prayers (λιτάνευε, 581) (Gould 1973).[51] Citing Gould, Alden reads the passage as an example of ἱκετεία, but this reading is admittedly incongruent with the embassy, since *no one* formally "supplicates" Achilles, let alone a "father," whom Kakridis says is represented by Phoenix. What is more, *if* a congruent supplication is shown in the parable, the suppliant should be Althaea, the "Agamemnon figure" who actually cursed Meleager. Yet she appears in context with Meleager's sisters, who are specifically entreating Meleager with prayers (ἐλλίσσονθ', 585), not (apparently) ἱκετεία. In my view, the issue of supplication here has been overemphasized. Strongly doubting that Achilles will go home, Phoenix confronts Achilles' chosen—but as yet unacknowledged—fate: death and glory. No matter the outcome of the "supplication," Althaea's fatal curse cannot be lifted, and Meleager's death is *certain*. This parable appeals sympathetically to Achilles' circumstances and downplays the gifts.

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50 The elders and priests offer the restitution, a large estate, which may be compared to Odysseus's offer of Agamemnon's gifts.

51 Griffin 1995.140 ("the father supplicates his son").

Phoenix recognizes that he stands before a doomed man offering a bribe in exchange for a hero's life. No amount of begging from any party can buy the commitment that the embassy demands. But while Phoenix regards Agamemnon's treasures as inconsequential to Achilles, they are crucially important for the Greeks. Accepting them will not just give the army hope but also honor Achilles' ἑταῖροι by disposing of Agamemnon's insult.

The supplication of Meleager is deliberately disorienting for another reason. According to Gould, ἱκετεία must *unequivocally* include *touching* someone else's knees or chin (or beard): "If no contact can be made, then no completed act of ἱκετεία is possible" (Gould 1973.85 and passim). Kneeling is not enough for ἱκετεία to be unambiguous, but because Oeneus is kneeling, he may arguably be trying to supplicate Meleager. Significantly, however, Meleager does not know exactly what Oeneus and the rest are doing. After all, Meleager's door is *closed*, Oeneus's desperation shut out—Phoenix's own situation just before running away. The obstinate Meleager therefore deflects any *opportunity* for ἱκετεία.[52] This reading may explain why Oeneus and the other parties (elders and priests, etc.) are not said specifically to be "supplicating" Meleager—it reproduces Meleager's condition of not knowing and of not caring to know.[53] Phoenix exploits the ambiguities of the scene, suggesting that Achilles wilfully shuts out the Greeks' desperation, too, even if ἱκετεία were to be offered. Phoenix implies—accurately or not—that Achilles is compromising his αἰδώς, "the due reaction of the receiver of suppliants to the suppliants themselves" (Tsagarakis 1971.87).[54]

Accepting that Oeneus supplicates Meleager, Alden argues that Phoenix uses the episode to make two deliberate dodges. The first is to confuse λιταί with ἱκετεία. For the parallel between Oeneus's "supplication" and the embassy's λιταί to coincide, Phoenix must be pretending that the λιταί he and his comrades present are equivalent to supplication.[55] As I have argued, however, ἱκετεία is not necessarily present in the scene of

52 See Gould 1973.84–86 (Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Medea*).

53 Tsagarakis 1971.259: "The fact also that Achilles orders the ambassadors to go . . . before listening to all of them, indicates that he is not interested in any discussions about the point at issue."

54 Here the remarks of Cairns 1993.93–95 about competing values (*aidōs* and *timē* in respect to *philoi*) are crucial. The ambiguities are beautifully underscored.

55 Alden suggests just this reading (2000.245), except that she trains her attention only on Oeneus and Phoenix as father-figures.

Oeneus outside Meleager's apartment, so I find the correspondences to the embassy less emphatic. Yet Alden's case coincides perfectly with the allegory of the Prayers, in which Λιταί characterize the behavior of suppliants (ἱκέται) seeking hospitality. The second dodge is to detach responsibility ("supplication") from the perpetrator of a misdeed. Instead, the father-figure Phoenix (= Oeneus) offers "supplication,"[56] by which analysis Phoenix has written Agamemnon out of the narrative. Although this perspective perfectly coheres with the Allegory of the Prayers, it still fails to accommodate Althaea's presence as one of many petitioners. Phoenix may be suggesting that her prayers should not matter as much as others' but that Meleager may not care who offers him prayers anyway.

The third and final issue related to the supplication and prayers Meleager receives concerns how to read "Cleopatra." The social order of persons making entreaties to Meleager (elders and priests, Oeneus, sisters and mother, dearest friends, wife) indicates to Kakridis an "ascending scale of affection" in which the "friends" have been transposed to fit the contours of Phoenix's story (1949.22–23). His logic has been largely accepted. As I have mentioned, Lohmann proposes that Odysseus stands for an "elder," Phoenix a "father," and Ajax a "friend." Because Achilles ultimately fights to avenge Patroclus, Kakridis thinks that Cleopatra designates Patroclus. Cleopatra does *not* supplicate Meleager, but she does make prayers, she "begged [λίσσετ'] him, streaming tears, recounting all the griefs / that fall to people whose city's seized and plundered" (9.719–20; OCT 591–92). This is just the case of Patroclus, who names the injured and urges pity in OCT 16.25–35.[57]

The problem with this reading, however, concerns focalization. The proposed correspondence functions only from Homer's omniscient perspective, since from Phoenix's position Achilles has no wife. It would violate decorum to imagine Patroclus as a "wife" lamenting death and slavery. On the contrary, the gratuitous scenes of Achilles' and Patroclus's heterosexual encounters *immediately* after the embassy (OCT 663–68) confute any inference that Patroclus is Achilles' homosexual partner or "wife."[58] Homer

56 This seems just like the strategy proposed above in the Allegory of the Prayers. However, in that case, Phoenix is saying that perpetrators do not generally offer prayers directly. In the present case, Alden claims that Phoenix is deceiving Achilles.

57 For another relevant point, see Nagler 1974.135.

58 Swain 1988.274 downplays the sexual component: "The parallel is simply one of affection." Nagy 1979.104–12 features the authorial connections between Patroclus and Cleopatra.

may propose that Patroclus's death will move Achilles, but Phoenix actually submits that Meleager had a reason to fight that Achilles lacks: pity for a spouse.[59] If Achilles will not fight when his "dear friends" beseech him, he most certainly will not find cause elsewhere. The kind of disaster that Cleopatra only predicts for Calydon will then surely afflict the Greeks. By a counter-illustration, *Phoenix* has predicted that Achilles cannot be moved by pity, but in leading his audience to substitute Patroclus for Cleopatra, *Homer* reveals how Achilles can be moved. The death of Patroclus, who is *contrasted* with Cleopatra in the paradigm, engenders inflexible feelings of vengeance instead of the tender ones Achilles has forsworn (Lloyd-Jones 1971.21–22).

An identical problem of focalization concerns Meleager's death, arguably relevant to the characters, to Homer, and to his audience. There are difficulties in the precise comparisons because Homer does not describe the death, of which two depictions have come down to us. The first is Hesiodic, the "heroic variant": Meleager dies at the hands of Apollo (March 1987.35, note 31).[60] The second derives from the folktale in which Althaea burns the brand (the "folktale variant").[61] It has been prophesied that Meleager will die when a firebrand is consumed. His mother cares for the brand, but when she is finally angered, throws it into the fire. By a similarly indirect method, Homer's Althaea, who curses her son, earns the same black reputation as the mother in the folktale version. For the "heroic variant," on the other hand, March observes a clearer concordance (1987.41):

> For Meleagros to die at Apollo's hands, just as Achilles himself was later to do, was not only a suitably glorious end for a great hero, but also, being known to the audience who listened to the bard singing Phoinix's tale, would have been another—silent—parallel in the *paradeigma* of Meleagros, matching Achilles' own future death at the same hands.

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59 See Rabel 1997.130 for an alternative view: "Phoinix wishes to persuade Achilleus that in time of grave civic crisis and need duty to one's fellows overrides all but the claims of a wife, the nearest and dearest."

60 See the remarks and references of Burgess 2001.219, note 103.

61 Unlike March 1987, I see no reason to imagine that the folktale version was later, since competing narratives often exist side-by-side. What matters most is the availability of each narrative to Homer's audience.

Both Meleager and Achilles are doomed, but because of their stature, it would take a god to destroy them. These parallels seem certain. By contrast, Phoenix's other expectations about Achilles' death move us into the realm of speculation, but he seems to acknowledge its imminence in the Meleager parallel. Phoenix implies that Meleager died after the Curetes had at least repulsed the nearly catastrophic assault: "And so he saved them all / from the fatal day . . . he beat off that disaster" (9.725–29; OCT 597–99).[62] This implication may be nothing less than a claim about Achilles' famous prophecy. Phoenix understands that Achilles expects to die at Troy. How and when are another matter, but Achilles imagines dying gloriously in combat. Yet Phoenix suggests that Achilles could just as easily turn the tide of battle and learn later what it is like to gain nothing exceptional for one's exceptional efforts. The Meleager parallel therefore befits one special reading of Achilles' circumstances, and it explains why Phoenix insists that Achilles take the gifts. If it is not a matter of empty profit, perhaps it may become one of nagging shame.

Nothing suggests that Meleager would ultimately fail to help his family, friends, and allies. He does not express the option of leaving, and staying put is suicidal. Apparently, the "right motivation" for Meleager to fight had to be entertained and accepted. For Phoenix, then, Achilles will also fight—with the proper justification. Alluding to Meleager's fate, Phoenix suggests that, if Achilles does intend to fight, the prophecy may be fulfilled after the Trojans have been routed, when gifts would affirm Achilles' honor publicly. The Meleager narrative encodes Phoenix's impression that Achilles may be "misinterpreting" the prophecy, for Meleager lived on after the Calydonian war. He does not ignore Achilles' death, which he confronts squarely in his parable. Rather, he suggests that recognizing the unpredictability of one's fated death makes accepting Agamemnon's gifts a social gesture related to Achilles' honor.

Yet this subtle clash over the prophecy is not the only example of Achilles' misprision. Reflecting on the hero's egotism, Henry Ebel highlights the tenor of Achilles' stubborn misreadings of Phoenix's parables (1972.97–98):

> Between what Achilles has "picked up" from Phoenix's supplication and what he is able to articulate there is a

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62 Burgess 2001.220, note 103: "Apparently Meleager dies in fighting as a result of Althaea's curse."

> terrible gap. The intuition knows that something dreadful and threatening has been conveyed, something that involves lamentation and grief, while the mind can only rummage through the stale warehouse of its grievances. Here and elsewhere in the poem . . . Achilles is unable to reconcile his inner and outer hearing.

Ebel observes how obsession has blinded Achilles, who answers Phoenix's long paradigm with the laconic remark: "Stop confusing / my fixed resolve with this, this weeping and wailing / just to serve his pleasure, Atreus' mighty son" (9.745–47; OCT 612–14). To what is Achilles referring? A solution can be found in his word ὀδυρόμενος (OCT 9.612), a direct reference to Cleopatra's tearful lament (ὀδυρομένη, 9.591). She envisions the Curetes' victory; Cleopatra's prospect of "the men slaughtered, citadel burned to rubble, enemies / dragging the children, raping the sashed and lovely women" (9.721–22; OCT 592–94) suggests by analogy that Achilles should yield to pity. Yet Achilles controverts the paradigm. Disregarding the prayers and gifts, he makes Agamemnon's humiliation his objective and views pity as a weakness that would frustrate it. Achilles has misread the paradigm, although he does not dismiss it out of hand. Instead, he finds in it another way to prove his indisposability.

Agamemnon will offer neither λιταί nor ἱκετεία in person, but Achilles does not want to abandon his friends.[63] How might he still humiliate Agamemnon and prevent catastrophe for his comrades? Achilles gathers from Meleager's situation that if he waits long enough, he could rescue the Greeks dramatically without looking bribed. The Meleager episode suggests to him that he could stay and fight at the very last minute, when Hector reaches the Myrmidons (9.795–98; OCT 650–55). Cedric H. Whitman made this case cogently in 1958.191, and it deserves the recognition of orthodoxy (see also Sale 1963.99; Redfield 1975.18; Scodel 1989.93, 96–97; Rabel 1997.116, 133; Scodel 2002.171). Achilles' decision does not merely distort Phoenix's position; it reverses the intent of the παρά-

63 Eichholz 1953.142–43 makes the case that "Achilles rejects the offer . . . not because it was improper in itself, but because it was made in the wrong spirit at the wrong time . . . without the slightest expression of sympathy or friendship." Achilles does not seem to want sympathy or friendship but for Agamemnon to express a servile apology over the perceived insult leveled at Achilles. Moreover, Phoenix expresses a degree of sympathy (as above, p. 313), and Achilles does not lack friends.

δειγμα by making Achilles expect to answer to his own vanity and *cause* maximum suffering. As we know, however, he will endure considerable pain for his egotism.

Of course, my argument does not invalidate the claims made by many critics, including Howald. Incapable of predicting the future, Phoenix cannot know that the Greek ships will be burned, that Patroclus will die, and that Achilles will re-enter the conflict for vengeance. But Homer's audience does know Achilles' personal history, and they appreciate the relevance of Phoenix's narration. Once we recognize the dramatic irony in the situation, we perceive both the limited speculation of Phoenix and its unexpected resolution.[64]

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