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PENELOPE AND THE POETICS OF REMEMBERING

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Women in the Homeric epics "remember" (μιμνήσκεσθαι) differently from men. This difference contributes to the distinctive quality of Penelope's *kleos* in the *Odyssey* as well as, more generally, to the characterization of the ideal wife in archaic and classical Greece. Although studies on Penelope constitute practically a sub-genre within the critical literature on the *Odyssey*, the subject of her memory (and its contribution to the poetics of the *Odyssey*) has received only sporadic attention.[1] This is surprising, especially given the explicit link that Agamemnon makes between Penelope's *kleos* and her memory (ὡς εὖ μέμνητ' Ὀδυσῆος), in a famous passage of Book 24 (lines 192–202). Is "remembering" just a synonym for constancy? To be sure, Penelope's *mêtis*, with which she deceives the suitors and even her own husband, provides more immediately gratifying food for thought. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that even within the discourse on female fidelity of which "remembering" is a part, Penelope sets her own terms, defining both memory and marital fidelity in radically innovative ways.

There are three key passages in the *Odyssey* that offer points of departure for any study of female memory, and in her discussion of Penelope as a model of ethical behavior, Helene Foley mentions all of them (1995.105):

1 The title of one recent work, in fact, could be applied appropriately to the "school" of criticism to which it belongs: Barbara Clayton's *A Penelopean Poetics*, which contains a useful overview of the earlier literature on Penelope (2004.1–19).

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> In Book 24 Penelope is awarded *kleos* in part for remembering her husband (*hôs eu memnêt' Odusêos*, 195); she elsewhere insists that even if she remarries she will, unlike other women who tend to forget the previous marriage and children (15.20–23), remember Odysseus' house in her dreams (19.581).[2]

Foley rightly acknowledges that Penelope's memory diverges from that of the female norm as specified by Athena: most wives will remember only what is contained within the physical borders of their husband's house. But Foley leaves unexplored two important questions that I will take up here. Why is a house the particular focus of Penelope's memory? And, more broadly speaking, what does it mean for a woman "to remember" something? Since in Book 21, Penelope says that she "will remember the [i.e., Odysseus's] house in her dreams" before two different audiences, there is good reason to believe that the same statement will be "heard" differently by each of them. She no doubt wishes the suitors to think that she is now relegating her marriage with Odysseus to a safely contained past world, a place to be visited only in dreams. I will argue here, however, that Penelope's words mean exactly the opposite to one who is attuned to the subtle implications of her language, as Odysseus is likely to be.

I propose that by looking more critically at the language of memory, and particularly the forms of μιμνήσκεσθαι that underpin the Odyssean wife's fidelity, we will reach a clearer sense, first, of the symbiotic relationship between the wife's memory and the material structure of her husband's house and, subsequently, of the poetic triangulation between memory, marriage, and *kleos*. I will also compare Penelope's mnemonic strengths with both the masculine ideal of memory (exemplified by the Iliadic warrior) and Helen's paradigmatic forgetfulness. These various examples and their interpretation will provide the preliminary outline for a poetics of female memory.

Marylin Katz's study, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the* Odyssey, significantly broadens our understanding of the complexity of Penelope's *kleos* by focusing on its inconsistencies. Katz's self-stated goal is to read the different narrative manifestations of Penelope's *kleos* against one another (e.g., 1991.6):

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2 The key passages are 15.20–23, 19.577–81 (= 21.75–79), and 24.192–202.

> In the study that follows, I focus on this double aspect of Penelope's renown, and in particular upon the implications of a *mêtis* that entails the appearance of her yielding to the suitors' importunities while in actuality remaining faithful to Odysseus. For although on the denotative level of meaning Penelope's *kleos* is identical with her faithfulness, I argue that Penelope's *kleos* understood connotatively and from within an explicitly interpretive framework is itself a problematic concept . . . I argue that there is a slippage between these two levels of meaning in the *Odyssey*, a disparity whereby the second, more inclusive understanding of Penelope's *kleos* destabilizes the narrower and simpler meaning, although without ever displacing it.

I agree with Katz that the definition of *kleos* as constancy is destabilized by the "more inclusive understanding" of Penelope's renown. Yet if we look more closely at what is at the foundation of the "simpler" sense of *kleos*, namely memory, we will find that it is hardly the transparent or simple term that it may at first appear to be. By privileging *mêtis* from the outset as the source of complexity for Penelope's *kleos*, Katz oversimplifies the "simple" side of that *kleos* (i.e., what has been equated with constancy) and, by implication, Penelope's memory.[3] As I will argue here, memory is perhaps the most important refuge and resource of Penelope's "doubleness," and we do it a disservice by equating it unreflectively with the rather colorless notion of constancy. Doubleness of many kinds is forced upon the wife who is expected both to remarry and to remain faithful to her current spouse, in spite of his prolonged absence. But remembering, which transcends both physical space and linear time, offers Penelope a unique solution to this dilemma and provides an anchor both for her own marriage and for the tradition of female *kleos* that follows from it. In my conclusion, I examine briefly the continuation of this tradition through the well-trained memory of Iskhomakhos's wife, as memorialized in Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*.

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3 For the record, the equation of *kleos* with constancy is made by those whom Katz criticizes (1991.5–6). But Katz herself does not look in depth at the language of memory and therefore, by default, leaves the "simple" *kleos* destabilized only from the outside, i.e., by other more problematic reports of Penelope's words and actions.

REMEMBERING THE HOUSE OF ODYSSEUS

Penelope's decision to institute a contest with Odysseus's bow, first announced in Book 19 and then carried out in Book 21, has puzzled generations of critics. The timing of this decision, which is formed in the midst of numerous signs and predictions of Odysseus's imminent return, appears arbitrary at best and irrationally perverse at its worst. Why now, when she has just had a dream that contains within itself an interpretation of her husband's arrival, would Penelope propose a contest whose goal is to select a new husband? Analysts have sought an answer to this question in the stitching together of two chronologically distinct plots, attributing contradictions in Penelope's character between the earlier and later parts of Book 19 to the unevenness of the poem's composition.[4] Unitarians condemn or defend Penelope's decision in other ways, some seeing the needs of plot as overriding exigencies of character,[5] others finding subtlety in both plot and character, and a Penelope who subconsciously or intuitively recognizes her husband and therefore acts (although unwittingly) in concert with the larger plans of Athena and Odysseus.[6] What was formerly seen as

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4 For Analysts, the footwashing scene with Eurykleia was originally to have led to a recognition between Odysseus and Penelope; in removing this recognition scene (which is now postponed until after the death of the suitors), the *Bearbeiter* has rendered Eurykleia's recognition "pointless," according to Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1884.66: "im ρ ist ein stück, das lediglich dazu da ist, die Penelopeszene vorzubereiten. Aber diese ging ursprünglich auf eine Erkennung aus. Diese hat ein Flickpoet, der Bearbeiter, abgeschnitten, und die Erkennung durch Eurykleia, die er nicht beseitigte, wirkungslos gemacht." Merkelbach 1951.6–9, Page 1955.123–24, and Kirk 1962.246–47 all see evidence of tampering with an earlier version in which Penelope and Odysseus first recognized one another and then colluded to take revenge on the suitors; the contest would, in such a version, have functioned as a ruse for placing the weapon of revenge into Odysseus's hands.

5 E.g., Woodhouse argues that Penelope's character has been sacrificed (because of her unmotivated decision to hold the contest) to the needs of the plot (1930.87–88): "A stage is reached at which, if the movement of the story is to continue, if we are to get forward and reach the loosening of the knot, something must happen, some fresh element must be imported into the situation. Willy nilly, one or other of the actors in the story must do something, in order that the whole thing may go forward. If the poet cannot find in his characters what he needs in the way of motive power, he must just contribute it out of his own head."

6 Harsh 1950 defends both the artistry of the poem and Penelope's character by arguing for a conscious, but well-concealed, recognition (6): "The scene of open recognition, then, contains nothing which precludes the possibility that Penelope earlier suspected the identity of the stranger, and it reveals her as a keen and intelligent woman who cautiously weighs every conceivable possibility even when under the greatest stresses of emotion." Allione

a "collapse" in Penelope's resolve has since been re-framed as a sign of her enduring skepticism, and thus a source of unity in her character.[7]

What is surprising is not so much the diversity and cyclical nature of critical opinions on nearly everything Homeric, from the textual constituents of the poem itself to the psychological and narrative constituents of a viable poetic character, but rather the fact that not more critics have turned to Penelope's own words for clarification. I do not mean to suggest that it is simply a matter of reading closely and thereby arriving at a clear and univocal solution to all of the above dilemmas. I am, in fact, no more interested in uncovering Penelope's "true" motivations than in reconstructing an original text of Homer.[8] A different critical "blind spot" concerns me here, namely the assumption that Penelope's actions, her resolve to hold the bow contest, transparently forecast the end (whether real or fictive) of her marriage to Odysseus. Whether or not she suspects Odysseus's presence in their midst, Penelope makes a powerful statement to the suitors of her continuing loyalty to her bridal home, regardless of the potential victory of one of them. The words she speaks, first to Odysseus in private (19.577–81)

1963.93–97, Amory 1965, Austin 1975.234–38, van Nortwick 1979, and Russo 1982 all offer variations on the theme of a subconscious recognition of Odysseus, which allows Penelope actively to contribute to his revenge plans without consciously colluding. Murnaghan 1987 emphasizes the constraints imposed on Penelope by her social role as "faithful wife of a man who is absent" (138). Felson 1997 resolves some of the "irrationalities" of her actions by describing Penelope as having to participate simultaneously in multiple plot trajectories, unaware of the outcome of any of them; see, too, Marquardt 1985. Winkler 1990 makes Penelope out to be a figure of *mêtis*, who is in collusion not with Odysseus but with Homer, and who forces the audience at key moments to recognize the extent to which they (we) have been identified with Odysseus. Foley 1995, Zeitlin 1996, and Clayton 2004 follow Winkler's lead in attempting to read from a Penelopean perspective.

7 Where Woodhouse 1930.80–91 sees "collapse," Harsh 1950 and Thornton 1970.105 see "cautious conservatism" and scrupulousness. Katz 1991.94–113 gives an excellent and detailed historical survey of critical reactions to Penelope's decision. Her own approach is narrative focused rather than characterological and treats the "'problems' in the representation of Penelope's character" as "important and functional aspects of the narrative overall" (113).

8 As the wealth of literature on the subject indicates, Penelope's motivations are notoriously difficult to pin down and perhaps (to follow Felson's directive) this is the point; Felson 1997.18: "The complexity and ultimately the inscrutability of Penelope's motives for setting the contest comprise a masterful ruse of Homer for keeping his audience guessing, wondering, and involved. To understand her choices as his poetic strategy provides an appealing alternative to various, as it were, 'tidier' hypotheses . . . all of these hypotheses overlook the fundamental importance of the poet's use of Penelope's dilemma for dramatic effect." For helpful surveys (from a feminist perspective) of recent scholarly approaches to "reading" Penelope, see Doherty 1995.35–63 and Clayton 2004.12–19.

and then to him and the suitors (21.75–79), suggest that Penelope herself appeals to a different social criterion in asking to be judged, not by her physical movements (i.e., whose house she lives in), but rather in terms of the movement—or relative stability—of her mind. Penelope claims a *mnemonic* fidelity to Odysseus, and in asserting that she will remember his house even in a dream, she poses a serious challenge to the *Odyssey*'s normative standard of marital fidelity for a woman.

The complementarities between the minds of Odysseus and Penelope—their *homophrosunê*—form the bedrock of their marriage, as almost any listener or reader of the poem would acknowledge.[9] It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the wife of the man who is famous for his unsurpassable *noos* is herself superlative of mind and memory.[10] Froma Zeitlin draws attention particularly to the non-verbal expressions of Penelope's mind, in a very suggestive footnote to an essay on fidelity in the *Odyssey* (1996.44, note 56):

> Aside from explicit statements (e.g., Odysseus' mother in the underworld in response to his query, 11.177–83) fidelity is figured by Penelope's immobility in the house and her continuous weeping—another sign that she has not forgotten her husband. Fidelity is less an affair of the heart than the mind (*noos*), and infidelity is equated as much with changing that *noos* or *failing to remember* as with engaging in conscious and active deception. Hence, Penelope's epithet, *echephrôn* (keeping good sense), not only attests to her intelligence and perspicacity but also includes a capacity to remain steadfast in that *noos*, *keeping her husband always in mind* [my emphases].

Zeitlin is right to emphasize the mental rather than purely emotional foundation of Penelope's fidelity.[11] I would add, however, that Penelope's stability within the house is a sign, but not a necessary precondition, of her

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9 On *homophrosunê,* see Austin 1975 passim, Foley 1978, and Felson 1997.54–65.

10 Kirke recognizes Odysseus by his "drug-resistant mind" (ἀκήλητος νόος, 10.329); at *Od.* 1.65–66, Odysseus is described as having a *noos* that surpasses that of other mortals.

11 A noteworthy counterpoint to Penelope's noetic stability is Klytemnestra's seduction by Aigisthus after the removal of the bard (ἀοιδὸς ἀνήρ) who, a scholiast speculates, kept her faithful with songs of virtuous deeds that warded off "evil thoughts" (πονηρὰς ἐπινοίας); see further the scholium to line 3.267 (Dindorf 1962.142–44).

fidelity to Odysseus. Penelope privileges the noetic over the material when it appears that the two may be at odds with one another.

At the end of a speech in which Penelope has relegated her dream to the gates of ivory—the category of dreams that deceive (οἵ ῥ' ἐλεφαίρονται, 19.565)—she tells the beggar-Odysseus that she will hold a bow-contest. She repeats the same five lines (verbatim) in a speech before the suitors in Book 21, immediately after which the contest actually begins (19.577–81 = 21.75–79):

> ὅς δέ κε ῥηΐτατ' ἐντανύσῃ βιὸν ἐν παλάμῃσι
> καὶ διοϊστεύσῃ πελέκεων δυοκαίδεκα πάντων,
> τῷ κεν ἅμ' ἑσποίμην, νοσίσσαμένη τόδε δῶμα
> κουρίδιον, μάλα καλόν, ἐνίπλειον βιότοιο,
> τοῦ ποτε μεμνήσεσθαι ὀΐομαι ἔν περ ὀνείρῳ.[12]
>
> Whoever most easily strings the bow in his hands and shoots an arrow through all twelve axe heads, he is the man I will follow, after leaving this the house of my marriage. It is especially beautiful, full of livelihood, a house that I expect *I will always remember*, even in my dreams.

If these words are assumed to signify Penelope's desire to remarry, it is hard to explain the beggar-Odysseus's positive response to them. For he encourages her to avoid all delay and hold the contest as soon as possible. Odysseus, he says, will be back before one of the suitors can string the bow (19.583–87).

Marylin Katz suggests that Odysseus "willfully disregards" the implication of the bow-contest (1991.147):

> Penelope's disbelief (in her dream), and the consequent decision to set the bow-contest, have in the end the effect of assimilating her decision to a repudiation of Odysseus. Odysseus himself, however, appears willfully to disregard the implication of her decision, and to misread them as assurances of faithfulness.

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12 All *Odyssey* citations are from the OCT edited by Thomas W. Allen; translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

But two points contradict this interpretation. First, as mentioned elsewhere in the poem, Odysseus gave Penelope instructions to remarry when she should see Telemakhos bearded (18.265–70).[13] Since twenty years have passed since Odysseus's departure—more than enough time for a beard to grow—Penelope's decision can be seen as a fulfillment of her husband's advice, an act of marital fidelity.[14] Second, Penelope shows signs of conforming to a mnemonic model of marital fidelity that is explicitly praised elsewhere. Penelope says that she will follow "whoever most easily strings the bow in his hands and shoots an arrow through all twelve axe heads." Her wording leaves open the possibility that Odysseu*s* will be that man. Furthermore, she says that she will "remember" his house, even after she has left it for another one. When the suitors hear this in Book 21, they no doubt think that Penelope will remember her marriage with Odysseus as an event securely in her past. The same words, however, encourage Odysseus in the belief that Penelope will remain his wedded wife. For if a wife's memory is one of the strongest indicators of marital fidelity, then Penelope is here strengthening her ties to Odysseus even while making plans for her next marriage. The interesting possibility arises that Penelope might still be considered faithful to Odysseus—so long as she continues to remember him—even in the event of marrying another man.

In Book 15, Athena encourages Telemakhos, who is visiting Helen and Menelaos in Sparta, to return home to Ithaka immediately. The goddess warns him that his mother is facing pressure to marry Eurymakhos, the best of the suitors. Stressing the urgency of the situation, Athena correlates houses and memory with the fickleness of the female heart (15.20–23):

> οἶσθα γὰρ οἷος θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι γυναικός·
> κείνου βούλεται οἶκον ὀφέλλειν ὅς κεν ὀπυίῃ,

13 Hölscher 1967 and Thornton 1970.105 both take seriously the importance of Odysseus's parting words to his wife as a factor in her decision to hold the contest. Tolstoi 1934.266–67 notes the folkloric parallel for specifying the amount of time that a faithful wife must wait before finding a new husband. Hölscher 1967.31–32 draws attention to the many other textual cues for Telemakhos's coming of age, in addition to his beardedness.

14 Foley 1995.102–03 underlines the importance of the timing of Penelope's action, rather than the decision itself, since "both to remarry and not to remarry are potentially acts of moral fidelity to Odysseus" (102). Zeitlin 1996 takes a less optimistic view, suggesting that Penelope could not avoid the stigma of remarrying in spite of her "right" to do so: "Her perfectly legitimate choice, urged upon her from every side—to go home to her father or accept one of the suitors—is continually undermined by the intimation that to do so would constitute a betrayal of Odysseus, whose fate is still unknown."

> παίδων δὲ προτέρων καὶ κουριδίοιο φίλοιο
> οὐκέτι μέμνηται τεθνηότος οὐδὲ μεταλλᾷ.
>
> For you know what the heart in the breast of a woman is like; she wants to care for the house of that man, whoever marries her. But she no longer *remembers* her own wedded husband when he has died nor the children from her first marriage, nor does she inquire after them.

The norm, according to Athena, is for a woman's memory to confine itself to the physical boundaries of her current husband's house. She cares for that man's house and consequently does *not* remember her former husband or her children from that marriage. The housewife is contained—both literally and figuratively—by the material limits of her husband's house, a space that proscribes the movements of her mind as well as her body. In contradistinction to this negative (but normative) exemplum, Penelope fashions herself as constrained in memory rather than material space by the boundaries of Odysseus's house. The fact that Penelope says that she will remember her former husband's house marks her already as different from the female norm as configured by Athena. The manner in which she says this, especially the form of the verb she uses, makes her exemplary.

Penelope does acknowledge that she will have to leave the house of her marriage to Odysseus (νοσφισσαμένη τόδε δῶμα, 19.579 = 21.77). To the suitors, no doubt, this is a clear statement of her intention to remarry. They need not dwell on the reference to Odysseus's house. For what harm can come of the occasional memory, in a dream, of a previous marriage? There would be no harm, certainly, if the memory were only occasional. But Penelope intimates more than casual recollection in her diction. Penelope's language represents her as faithful in spite of actions that would seem to suggest the contrary. For the act of remembering, she uses a future infinitive formed on the reduplicated perfect μέμνημαι, which conveys an on-going or omnitemporal aspect: τοῦ ποτε μεμνήσεσθαι ὀΐομαι ἔν περ ὀνείρῳ (19.581 = 21.79).[15] Such verbal forms (based on μέμνημαι) occur at other

15 The use of περ in the phrase ἔν περ ὀνείρῳ (19.581) makes even more explicit the extension of Penelope's remembering to *all* aspects of her sleeping and waking existence, as explained by Bakker 1988.246: "The phrase functions as a pragmatic superlative in a non-factual (futural) environment: 'till in my *dreams*.' The phrase evidently represents the high point of a scale: someone who remembers something in his/her dreams will *a fortiori* do

places in the poem and are associated with a long-term, or uninterrupted, activity.[16] Translated into English, Penelope says something like: "I expect I will at any given point (ποτε) always have in mind/remember" the house of my marriage.[17] When read this way, her statement commits her to the permanent activity of remembering Odysseus even while living in another man's house.[18]

The same kind of perfect stem future tense can be found on inscriptions of funerary monuments and statues. For instance, the epigram that accompanies the statue of a young woman (a κούρη) named Phrasikleia reads as follows:

> σῆμα Φρασικλείας κούρη κεκλήσομαι αἰεί,
> ἀντὶ γάμου παρὰ θεῶν τοῦτο λαχοῦσ᾽ ὄνομα.
>
> I, Phrasikleia's σῆμα, *shall always be called* girl [κούρη], having received this name from the gods instead of marriage. (trans. Svenbro 1993.17)

The σῆμα or tombstone of this young unmarried girl proclaims, with a reduplicated future form of the verb καλέω, that she/it will *always be called* girl. The adverb αἰεί ("always" or "on each occasion" that the inscription is read) intensifies the sense of permanence—"I shall *always*

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so while awake." Cf. the more traditional understanding of the phrase and its context as expressed by Katz 1991.150: "Here, as earlier, the marriage with Odysseus is consigned more and more to the realm of dreams, and Penelope accommodates herself ever more thoroughly to marriage with another."

16 Very often the reduplicated perfect indicative and participles of μιμνήσκεσθαι occur together with adverbial expressions of duration (αἰεί, ἔτι, ἤματα πάντα): e.g., *Il.* 5.818, *Il.* 9.527, *Od.* 1.343, *Od.* 4.592, *Od.* 8.431, *Od.* 10.464.

17 I take the ποτε to mean that Penelope's continuous remembering will start at the (indefinite) point when she leaves the house of Odysseus to marry another man; until that point in time, her memory does not need verbal articulation or activation, since it is implicit in her physical presence within the house.

18 In contrast to the durative sense of the reduplicated present and perfect tenses, the aorist forms (μνησ-) of the verb usually refer to singular occasions and actions; to remember (in the aorist) an object in the genitive is sometimes even equivalent to performing that grammatical object as an action, e.g., "let us remember food" (μνησόμεθα βρώμης, *Od.* 10.177) is equivalent to "let us eat"; "they remembered sleep" (κοίτου τε μνήσαντο, *Od.* 16.481) is equivalent to "they slept." For further examples and discussion of this performative conception of memory as expressed with the aorist, see Bakker 2002.70, notes 11 and 12.

be called"—that is conveyed in the form of the verb κεκλήσομαι by itself.[19]

Penelope's expression for remembering the house of Odysseus evokes the same kind of constancy and permanence that belongs to both the material form and verbal inscription of funerary monuments. Along these lines, it is also worth noting that the house that Penelope will remember is described as exceptionally beautiful (μάλα καλόν) and full of livelihood (ἐνίπλειον βιότοιο). Yet on numerous occasions we are told that the suitors are literally eating it.[20] For years, Penelope has done her best to guard the house against their continuous feasting. The house itself cannot be in the condition in which Odysseus left it. In her memory, however, the house of Odysseus is full of wealth and beauty. She memorializes the house in its prime. Just as the funeral epigram celebrates the greatest achievement of a mortal life, so, too, does Penelope's memory act as living testament to the glory of her marriage to Odysseus.[21]

Human memory, as we know from much later ancient sources, was given both locative and locomotive analogues. It was compared to a thesaurus of images, and could be activated by a walk, real or imaginary, through public or private spaces, home or city, even a gallery of paintings.[22] The Greek poet Simonides was generally recognized in antiquity as the inventor of a memory technique based on visualizing the fixed order of a sequence of images or likenesses (*effigies*), a detailed description of which

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19 Cf. *Hermes Hymn* 292 (κεκλήσεαι ἤματα πάντα); also κεκλήσεται at Eur. *Hel.* 1674 and *Her.* 1330, indicating an uninterrupted future state of affairs. For other examples of the perfect tense on grave inscriptions, see Peek 1955 (numbers 440 and 484). On the durative effect of the perfect tense in archaic/epic Greek, see Herington 1970.42 (with reference to Wackernagel 1904.4).

20 E.g., *Od.* 1.248, 1.250–51, 2.48–49, 2.237–38, 15.11–13, 16.125, 16.127–28, 16.431, 19.133, 21.332–33, 23.8–9. In Book 21, Eurymakhos tries to prevent the beggar-Odysseus from taking his turn at the bow, fearing that if the beggar succeeds, he and all the other suitors will be humiliated. Penelope retorts that those who have taken part in eating Odysseus's house have no claim to nobility (21.331–33): Εὐρύμαχ', οὔ πως ἔστιν ἐϋκλεΐας κατὰ δῆμον / ἔμμεναι, οἳ δὴ οἶκον ἀτιμάζοντες ἔδουσιν / ἀνδρὸς ἀριστῆος· τί δ' ἐλέγχεα ταῦτα τίθεσθε; ("Eurymakhos, there is no glory for men who dishonorably eat the house of a man of the best kind; why then do you count this as a source of shame?").

21 The funeral epigram celebrates the warrior at the height of his glory. Compare Andromache at *Iliad* 6.460–61, who is destined to become a kind of living σῆμα ("monument") to her dead husband's glory. By analogy, Penelope's memory acts as a σῆμα of the *aristeia* of Odysseus's house and their marriage.

22 E.g., Quintilian 11.2.20 and 11.2.21: "quod de domo dixi, et in operibus publicis et in itinere longo et urbium ambitu et picturis fieri potest"; Aug. *Conf.* X.8.

can be found in Cicero's *de Oratore* 2.351–54.[23] The housewife's memory could be archival in function: Penelope possesses the key to the storeroom where Odysseus's bow is kept among the κειμήλια (*Od*. 21.6–15). But her memory also takes on monumental aspects that are not easily reducible to keeping track of objects in space.

Penelope's weaving has long been associated with her *mêtis*, and therefore viewed as a means to the end that is fidelity; a recent interpretation, however, sees in the repetitive activity of weaving itself a physical expression of remembering. Barbara Clayton (2004.44) observes that "when judged from within and on its own terms Penelope's non-time (i.e., her weaving time) becomes the equivalent of memory. The feminine space she carves out by means of this non-time is a space of remembering, and in this space Odysseus is kept alive."[24] The *Odyssey* plays on the idea of Penelope as alternately melting in tears and "harder than stone," a criticism that both Odysseus and Telemakhos level at her because of her refusal to recognize the stranger as Odysseus.[25] Penelope's memory, too, takes on both fluid and monumental aspects: an obsessive weaving and reweaving intended to forestall both time and remarriage, and the impression of stolidity that this generates. There is certainly a danger that she may choose a reunion with her husband in Hades rather than continue to keep his memory alive above the earth (20.79–82). Penelope seems at times to have taken over the function of a σῆμα—a living sign or tombstone—of her husband.[26] At the very end, however, her role shifts to a more active testing of *his* memory of σήματα ("signs"). Most significantly, she tests his memory of the construction of their marriage bed, a *sign* that only her true husband would know and that also signals her own fidelity.[27] The *kolossos*, a type of Greek

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23 A variant of the same story can also be found in Quintilian 11.2.11–16. This appears to be the same memory technique that Iskhomakhos teaches his wife in Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*, which I discuss in the last section. On the art of memory in Greece, see Yates 1966.27–49, Carruthers 1990.16–32, and Small 1997.81–94.

24 See further Papadopoulou-Belmehdi 1994 on weaving as an external expression of the internal and poetic activities of female characters, a "récit métonymique de leurs pensées et de leurs destins" (21).

25 Telemakhos at 23.103: σοὶ δ' αἰεὶ κραδίη στερεωτέρη ἐστὶ λίθοιο, and Odysseus at 23.172: ἦ γὰρ τῇ γε σιδήρεον ἐν φρεσὶν ἦτορ.

26 Athena disguised as Mentes advises Telemakhos, in Book 1, to search for his father and, if he learns that he has died, to establish a σῆμα for him and give away his mother: σῆμα τέ οἱ χεῦαι καὶ ἐπὶ κτέρεα κτερεΐξαι / πολλὰ μάλ', ὅσσα ἔοικε, καὶ ἀνέρι μητέρα δοῦναι (*Od*. 1.291–92).

27 See Zeitlin 1996 (with further bibliography) on the sign of the bed.

statue known for its immobility, is described in the words of one scholar as "a peculiar and ambiguous presence that is, at the same time, a sign of absence."[28] The same could be said of Penelope's dogged memory of Odysseus. She remembers him precisely because he is absent but, through the act of remembering, makes him present, keeping alive the possibility that the "original"—the man remembered—may one day return.

Helene Foley remarks (2001.139) that in remembering Odysseus, Penelope, in a sense, preserves his "vanished kingdom" by "reminding others to conform to the standards he once enforced."[29] By remembering, more specifically, the house of Odysseus, Penelope also contributes to its posterity within the genre of epic. William Moran suggests that μιμνήσκεσθαι carries the semi-technical sense of reciting epic verse. Although it would be inaccurate to compare Penelope directly to the bard every time she "remembers" Odysseus, Penelope's remembering does enable the bardic performances of others.[30] For in remembering Odysseus's house, Penelope actively ensures the *Odyssey*'s own existence—that there will, in fact, be a house to which Odysseus will return, and therefore a tale of *nostos* for the bard to sing. Penelope's fundamental role in creating the poetics not only within but also of the *Odyssey* itself is obliquely acknowledged in the second *Nekuia*.

At the end of the *Odyssey*, the ghost of Agamemnon—one of marriage's harshest critics—gives a laudatory account of Penelope's acquisition of *kleos* to her husband in the underworld (24.192–98):

> ὄλβιε Λαέρταο πάϊ, πολυμήχαν᾽ Ὀδυσσεῦ,
> ἦ ἄρα σὺν μεγάλῃ ἀρετῇ ἐκτήσω ἄκοιτιν·
> ὡς ἀγαθαὶ φρένες ἦσαν ἀμύμονι Πηνελοπείῃ,
> κούρῃ Ἰκαρίου· ὡς εὖ μέμνητ᾽ Ὀδυσῆος,

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28 Vernant 1983.307; see Aesch. *Agamemnon* 416–19 for one of the most famous literary references to the *kolossos*, perhaps here referring to Helen. Women in mourning, e.g., Sophocles' Electra (*Electra* 147–52), who considers Niobe (turned to stone) a god, are drawn to statues; see further Steiner 2001.147–49 on the statuesque quality of mourners in general.

29 Yet the failure of the λαός to follow Penelope's mnemonic exemplum is mentioned twice: ὡς οὔ τις μέμνηται Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο / λαῶν, οἷσιν ἄνασσε, πατὴρ δ᾽ ὡς ἤπιος ἦεν ("Since not a single one of the people whom he ruled remembers godlike Odysseus, and he was like a father to them," 2.233 = 5.11).

30 Moran 1975.206: "When a character uses a form of μιμνήσκομαι in connection with epic material, he is using a word typical of the bard's function of remembering formulas and telling a tale."

> ἀνδρὸς κουριδίου. τῷ οἱ κλέος οὔ ποτ᾽ ὀλεῖται
> ἧς ἀρετῆς, τεύξουσι δ᾽ ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἀοιδὴν
> ἀθάνατοι χαρίεσσαν ἐχέφρονι Πηνελοπείῃ.
>
> Blessed son of Laertes, clever Odysseus, truly you have acquired a wife with great excellence, since blameless Penelope, the daughter of Ikarios, had a good mind, since *she has remembered well* Odysseus, her wedded husband. Therefore the *kleos* of her excellence will never die. But immortals will sing for mortals a pleasing song about Penelope of the strong mind.

Praise of the wife's excellence is expressed directly to the husband; (her) *kleos* may, in fact, belong entirely to him.[31] In any case, it is the wife's memory of her husband and his house that has merited praise. In the light of Agamemnon's and Athena's statements, Penelope's claim that she will remember Odysseus's house (in Books 19 and 21) seems even more than ever to signify her commitment to her marriage with Odysseus. In addition to preserving his physical house, she has guarded, and will continue to guard, the space in her memory devoted to it. Unlike the hypothetical wife mentioned by Athena, Penelope's memory is not contingent upon the material survival of her wedded husband's house. Had she married another man, her speech implies, her memory would still have preserved in its pristine form the physical monument to her marriage with Odysseus, an achievement that (like all actions worthy of *kleos*) does not come easily. In one of our first views of her, Penelope begged the bard Phemios to sing any other song than the *nostos* of the Achaeans, citing her own weariness as the reason for her request. While the λαός of Ithaka in general, and Odysseus's *oikos* in particular, are afflicted by his absence, Penelope bears the brunt of the pain (ἐπεί με μάλιστα καθίκετο πένθος ἄλαστον, 1.342). She will also, in due course, earn a proportionate share of the *kleos* for always keeping in mind (μεμνημένη αἰεί, 1.343) the man whose own "*kleos* is widespread

31 Nagy 1979.37–38 interprets both the *aretê* and *kleos* as belonging to Odysseus, whereas Edwards 1985.88 concedes that the *kleos* may belong to Penelope but that the *aretê*, as part of the prepositional phrase σὺν μεγάλῃ ἀρετῇ (24.193), must be taken adverbially with the verb ἐκτήσω rather than adjectivally with Penelope. For discussion of these iconoclastic readings, see Katz 1991.21.

throughout Hellas and Argos" (τοῦ κλέος εὐρὺ καθ' Ἑλλάδα καὶ μέσον Ἄργος, 1.344).

At the beginning of the *Odyssey*, Penelope presents herself as the wife who remembers her husband's *kleos* and suggests also that she has already grown weary in her remembering. By the end, we see what rewards her mnemonic toils have earned her: she still remembers her husband, but by now she has also won a *kleos* of her own. As I have tried to show, it is a *kleos* that is rooted in a particular place: the house of Odysseus. One might go even further and situate the *kleos* in Odysseus's bed, which functions not only symbolically but also materially as the site of his marriage and contains the sign that seals his *nostos*. But beyond any particular material site, the *kleos*, like the marriage to which it refers, is a product of Penelope's memory.

HELEN AND THE POETICS OF FORGETTING

The idealized role of the classical Greek wife, as outlined at Demosthenes 59.122 (*Against Neaira*), could very well have been scripted with Penelope in mind.[32] Looking more closely at the wife's designated function in this context, we see that she is described in Demosthenes as τῶν ἔνδον φύλακα πιστήν ("trusty guardian of the things inside"), a phraseology that comes very close to Odysseus's own queries in the underworld about Penelope.[33] During the first *Nekuia*, Odysseus asks his mother whether Penelope "remains beside her son and guards everything steadfastly" (ἠὲ μένει παρὰ παιδὶ καὶ ἔμπεδα πάντα φυλάσσει) or if she has already married another man (ἦ ἤδη μιν ἔγημεν Ἀχαιῶν ὅς τις ἄριστος, 11.178–79). The either/or syntax of Odysseus's question reinforces the normative sense of wifely fidelity as spatial immobility that we have been examining: *either* Penelope has kept everything steadfast in her husband's house *or* she herself has moved on to another marriage, another household. But as we have seen suggested in Penelope's own words, memory itself may constitute a

32 Demosthenes 59.122: τὰς μὲν γὰρ ἑταίρας ἡδονῆς ἕνεκ' ἔχομεν, τὰς δὲ παλλακὰς τῆς καθ' ἡμέραν θεραπείας τοῦ σώματος, τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας τοῦ παιδοποιεῖσθαι γνησίως καὶ τῶν ἔνδον φύλακα πιστὴν ἔχειν ("*Hetairai* we keep for pleasure, *pallakai* for the daily care of our body, and *gynaikes* to procreate children legitimately and to have a trusty guardian of the things inside").

33 See also Xen. *Oik.* 7.42 on the wife's honor being connected to her role as οἴκου φύλαξ.

parameter that transcends this simple either/or binary opposition, especially once Telemakhos is fully grown and no longer dependent on his mother's care. Odysseus's parting words to his wife, as quoted by her to the suitor Eurymakhos, lend support to this thesis (18.267–70):

> μεμνῆσθαι πατρὸς καὶ μητέρος ἐν μεγάροισιν
> ὡς νῦν, ἢ ἔτι μᾶλλον ἐμεῦ ἀπονόσφιν ἐόντος·
> αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν δὴ παῖδα γενειήσαντα ἴδηαι,
> γήμασθ᾽ ᾧ κ᾽ ἐθέλῃσθα, τεὸν κατὰ δῶμα λιποῦσα.
>
> C*ontinue to remember / be mindful* of my father and mother in the palace just as you are now, or even more when I am far away. But once you see your son bearded, marry whomever you like, after leaving your home.

There seems to be a close connection between certain uses of the verb μιμνήσκεσθαι (as in the above passage) and the notion of tending to or overseeing that is suggested in the verb φυλάσσειν, used at Demosthenes 59.122 and *Odyssey* 11.178. As we shall see also in the case of Iskhomakhos's wife in the *Oikonomikos*, memory goes hand in hand with the successful performance of housekeeping duties; these are, in essence, what constitute the role of both epic and classical Greek wives—housekeeping of both physical and mental environs. In her steadfastness and mindfulness, as well as her superlative housekeeping, Penelope stands in sharp contrast to another female exemplar: Helen.

Helen in her Homeric, and especially Sapphic, incarnations is embedded within a similar triangulation between memory, marriage, and motherhood. But she is celebrated for *not* remembering. If we compare now Sappho LP16 to the lines of the *Odyssey* just cited, we will see that Helen is Penelope in the negative. She is the wife who has *not* remembered (16.7–11):

> [ὠ] ϶Ελένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα
> τὸν [πανάρ]ιστον
>
> καλλ[ίποι]σ᾽ ἔβα ϶ς Τροΐαν πλέοι[σα
> κωὐδ[ὲ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων
> πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη.

> Helen, having left behind the best of all husbands, sailed to Troy; and she did not *remember* at all either her own dear parents or her child.

Taken out of context, the verb "remember" might appear somewhat strange here. Certainly, Helen is not struck with amnesia as soon as she leaves home. But in the light of the connections that have already been sketched between the physical space of the house and the wife's memory, it becomes clear that not remembering is the cognitive correlative of Helen's departure from her husband's house. Her refusal to remember (οὐδὲ . . . ἐμνάσθη) characterizes Helen as the wife who violates the first principle of marital fidelity (to guard the husband's house), and confirms, once again, the cultural dictum (as expressed most cogently by Athena) that a woman's mind goes where her body is.

Sappho's Helen chooses for herself a role that belongs properly to the male warrior. She sails to Troy and leaves behind a house untended. But at the same time, her choice—to pursue what *she* desires—and the manner in which this choice is expressed undermine the very meaning of the Homeric hero's code of honor.[34] The paradoxical quality of Helen's actions comes through strongly in the language of memory, once again. Sappho's description of Helen's lack of memory closely mirrors lines of the *Iliad* that speak to the importance of the warrior's memory on the battlefield.[35] Nestor at one point urges the Achaeans to "be men" and "remember" (μνήσασθε, 15.662) each his children, wife, property, and parents.[36] This is not an imperative to extract long-unused concepts from mental storage bins, but rather, as Egbert Bakker recognizes, to physically experience in the here and now the cognitive presence of one's own memory (2002.69): "Memory in Homer is not a retrieval of stored facts but a dynamic cognitive operation in the present, a matter of consciousness, or more precisely, of the *activation* of consciousness." That the "activation of consciousness" of one's domestic

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34 Sappho's transformation of Helen from object into subject of erotic pursuit is well explicated by both Stehle 1981 and du Bois 1978.

35 Cf. *Il*. 15.662 and 21.587, *similes loci* noted by Voigt 1971 ad loc.

36 *Iliad* 15.661–64: ὦ φίλοι, ἀνέρες ἔστε, καὶ αἰδῶ θέσθ' ἐνὶ θυμῷ / ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων, ἐπὶ δὲ μνήσασθε ἕκαστος / παίδων ἠδ' ἀλόχων καὶ κτήσιος ἠδὲ τοκήων, / ἠμὲν ὅτεῳ ζώουσι καὶ ᾧ κατατεθνήκασι, "Oh friends, be men, and feel shame in your heart before other men, and each of you remember your children, wives, possessions, and parents, whether they are alive or dead."

possessions—human and material—is crucial to performing heroic deeds gains further support from a passage in Book 21, where Agenor explains the Trojans' supposed invincibility to Achilles (586–89):

> ἐν γάρ οἱ πολέες τε καὶ ἄλκιμοι ἀνέρες εἰμέν,
> οἳ καὶ πρόσθε φίλων τοκέων ἀλόχων τε καὶ υἱῶν
> Ἴλιον εἰρυόμεσθα· σὺ δ' ἐνθάδε πότμον ἐφέψεις,
> ὧδ' ἔκπαγλος ἐὼν καὶ θαρσαλέος πολεμιστής.
>
> For we in [Troy] are many and strong men, who also defend Troy by fighting in front of our own parents and wives and sons; but you will encounter death here, although you are such a terrifyingly bold warrior.

Agenor implies in these lines that boldness cannot compensate for being in a foreign land, far from the watchful eye of friends and relatives. By fighting before the gaze of kin, the Trojans have a tremendous advantage over their Greek rivals who must conjure by means of memory their own wives and parents and sons (whether living or dead).[37] Without the imaginary—but experientially real—presence of their kin, the Achaeans have no chance of "being men" on the battlefield, no chance, therefore, of reaching the heights of heroism to which the Trojans challenge them.

Memory takes on a particularly performative dimension in the preceding two examples. Warriors must bring into being, through acts of memory, their own kin. This particular kind of performance is short but intense; it need last only so long as the men themselves are fighting. Whereas men "remember" in the aorist and their memory acts as catalyst to deeds of manly strength (e.g., ἀλκή) and virtue, female memory occurs in the perfect tense, which suggests that it is not an activation but a durable state of being, a monument rather than a single act. Penelope "remembers" always with a perfect stem of the verb μιμνήσκεσθαι.[38] She wins *kleos*, according to Agamemnon, because she "has remembered Odyssey well" (ὡς

37 See previous note.

38 Of remembering with a perfect stem in the *Iliad,* Bakker 2002.70, note 14 writes: "The only cases where Homeric Greek comes close to a modern "scientific" notion of remembering involve the perfect stem of the verb, denoting a permanent state in the present, e.g., *Il*. 6.222–23: Τυδέα δ' οὐ μέμνημαι, ἐπεί μ' ἔτι τυτθὸν ἐόντα κάλλιφ', 'I don't remember Tudeus <anymore>, because he left me when I was still little.'"

εὖ μέμνητ' Ὀδυσῆος, 24.195); Penelope says in Book 1 that she is weary because of "always remembering" her husband (μεμνημένη αἰεί, 1.343); when, as we saw, she announces the contest of the bow, she says, in a perfect stem future infinitive, that she thinks she "will remember" Odysseus's house (μεμνήσεσθαι ὀΐομαι, 19.581 and 21.79). And she is exhorted by Odysseus to "be mindful of" (perfect infinitive) his mother and father in his—Odysseus's—absence (μεμνῆσθαι πατρὸς καὶ μητέρος, 18.267). These verbal forms are no accident; rather, they attest to the omnitemporal quality of the remembering expected of Penelope, and of female memory more generally.

Helen, on the other hand, confounds these neat distinctions between domestic and heroic memory by violating the norms of each gender. She makes a parody out of Iliadic forms of remembering kin—the kind of memory valorized by both Nestor and Agenor—because, as a woman, she has no business sailing to Troy and *not* minding her child and parents. The similarity of Sappho's phrasing to the Iliadic imperatives serves only to remind us of how the male model of remembering during battle is being perverted for a woman's (Sappho's and Helen's) poetic purposes. In a different way, Helen also violates the Penelopean model of memory by escaping from husband and house, removing herself both physically and mnemonically from her situation as the wife of Menelaus. Helen does not remember according to either the male or the female paradigm, but in the process of transgressing these norms, she illuminates some of the complex interconnections between the arts of memory and poetry.

The Iliadic Helen is also an author of her own *Iliad*. She is represented within the *Iliad* as weaving the contests (ἀέθλους) of the Trojans and the Achaeans, thereby mimicking the very activities of the poet on her loom (3.125–29).[39] In the *Iliad,* she memorializes in her weaving the *kleos* of heroes. But in the *Odyssey,* she practices the art of forgetting, an art that she perhaps hopes will induce forgetfulness of her own less honorable Iliadic past.[40] The Odyssean Helen mixes into the drinks of Telemakhos and Peisistratos a drug that takes away painful sorrow, but in so doing, threatens a loss not just of personal but also cultural memory. Anyone who swallows

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39 Bergren 1983.73: "Early Greek thought draws an analogy between woven fabric, poetry, and *mêtis* by making each the object of a verb 'to sew' or 'to weave,' the object, that is, of the woman's sign-making art."

40 Austin 1994.1: "Helen's scandal may be softened in the *Odyssey*—it seems to be almost a thing of the past—but it is never entirely erased."

this drug is invulnerable for a day to suffering of any kind, even if he should see his closest relatives die (4.222–26). The drug makes one forget—it is ἐπίληθον, 221—in the same way as the lotus plant and Kirke's drugs.[41]

Helen's drug, however, negates pain for a limited period of time, and it does not interfere with anyone's *nostos.* The kind of forgetting it produces is comparable to that of poetry, which replaces the listener's present with deeds of the past.[42] One "forgets" one's own sorrows by "remembering" those of others (detailed in song). In itself, the mildness of this drug is a tribute to the power of the *Odyssey* to contain Helen. Shown in her domestic setting, with her husband Menelaos in Sparta, she plays the ideal host who only tantalizes her guests with stories of the war and the pleasure of brief forgetfulness, nothing more serious.[43] She is not a Kalypso who delays Odysseus for seven years, nor a Kirke whose φάρμακα also aim to make men forget their homeland (10.236).[44] The *Odyssey* is essentially Penelope's poem. Helen steps into the spotlight only briefly to remind us of that other world for which husbands left their houses, their wives, and their children in the first place. Forgetting can be pleasurable, she seems to warn, but if taken in too large a dose, also extremely dangerous.

Even as we leave the world of epic behind, we encounter instances elsewhere of the material and literary significance of the wife's memory. An episode of Herodotus's *Histories*, for instance, details the encounter between the ghost of Melissa (wife of Periander of Corinth) and her husband's henchmen, who have been sent to an oracle of the dead in order to try to retrieve from Melissa information about a precious deposit (παρακαταθήκη) whose whereabouts Periander has forgotten.[45] Melissa discloses this information only after heaps of clothes have been burnt in her honor; more to the point than her shrewd bargaining, however, is the notion that wives carry with them to the grave the secrets of their husband's households—that without his wife's memory (living or dead), even a tyrant will be helpless to manage

41 Cf. 9.93–97, 10.234–36, and Cook 1995.57–59, on the enchanted realm (59): "While it attempts to rob Odysseus of his *kleos*, that is, culture's memory of him, it successfully effaces the crew's memory of culture."

42 E.g., Hesiod *Theog.* 94–103, on the forgetfulness of pain produced by poetry.

43 Telemakhos's inability to take pleasure in the stories is, of course, a sign of his relationship to Odysseus. The Trojan War is not for him distant poetry but a very personal story without an ending.

44 But it is not clear whether the drugs achieve this effect, since the *hetairoi* retain a secure *noos* in spite of their physical transformation into swine (10.239–40).

45 For the request and initial refusal, see Hdt. 5.92η2.

his social and economic affairs. Such economic codependency is, in fact, one of the larger themes of Xenophon's dialogue, to which I turn now for a fitting conclusion to the present survey of house, memory, and marriage.

MEMORY AND THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY IN XENOPHON'S *OIKONOMIKOS*

In Xenophon's *Oikonomikos*, Iskhomakhos explains to Socrates that he began training his wife in the art of household management when they first married. She became so skilled in her role as guardian of the domestic sector that this part of his estate came to be managed under her surveillance alone. But the transition to autonomy was not smooth at every turn. In particular, his wife needed to be trained in the indispensable art of memory. Iskhomakhos makes a point of saying that nature (ὁ θεός) has given men and women an equal capacity for memory (μνήμη) at birth: τὴν μνήμην καὶ τὴν ἐπιμέλειαν εἰς τὸ μέσον ἀμφοτέροις κατέθηκεν (*Oik.* 7.26).[46] In addition to her natural aptitude, however, the wife must still be trained to adapt her mind to her domestic chores.[47] Iskhomakhos recalls for Socrates one particular occasion when he asked his wife for something and she could not find it. Her failure caused her to blush with embarrassment (*Oik.* 8.1). For Iskhomakhos, this incident serves as a segue into his discussion of order (τάξις) and its relevance to memory.[48] Each thing must be kept in a fixed place so that it can be found at a moment's notice. If something is stored in its proper place, Iskhomakhos continues, then the "place itself will indicate what is missing, and a glance will detect anything that needs attention."[49]

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46 See Pomeroy 1994.275 on Xenophon's use of the terms *theos*, *nomos,* and *physis*. Cf. Arist. *Historia Animalium* 608b11–14, which attributes to the female of the species a naturally superior memory amidst other less desirable qualities: ἔστι δὲ καὶ δύσθυμον μᾶλλον τὸ θῆλυ τοῦ ἄρρενος καὶ δύσελπι, καὶ ἀναιδέστερον καὶ ψευδέστερον, εὐαπατητότερον δὲ καὶ μνημονικώτερον, "The female of the species is moodier and more despondent than the male, also more shameless and insincere, but better at deception and at remembering."

47 Cf. *ad Herennium* (3.16.28) on the two types of memory: "sunt igitur duae memoriae: una naturalis, altera artificiosa."

48 Purves 2004 makes the interesting observation that the careful ordering of elements within the *oikos* "leads to a spatial system that is reflected in the *psyche* or mind of its guardian." In general, I am indebted to her discussion of the role of place within the memory system that is taught to Iskhomakhos's wife.

49 *Oik.* 8.10: ἡ γὰρ χώρα αὐτὴ τὸ μὴ ὂν ποθήσει, καὶ ⟨τὸ⟩ δεόμενον θεραπείας ἐξετάσει ἡ ὄψις.

The embarrassment of Iskhomakhos's wife when she fails to locate the object her husband has requested suggests that more is at stake here than finding the object itself. She blushes because she has not performed well in her duty as guardian of the domestic space. To give a good performance in this role requires the arts of memory and spatial organization that her husband subsequently teaches her. Here already we see the convergence of two facets of memory that characterize also the orator's *ars memoriae*: from one perspective, memory is a tool employed to keep track of objects in space, whether they are the material things of the house or the orator's rhetorical tropes.[50] But this mnemonic function quickly merges into the harder to define area of social roles and performances.

Playing the good wife is not *exclusively* about being able to remember where things are; but memory is an indispensable instrument in the performance of this social role. Socrates confirms that Iskhomakhos's wife has attained the epitome of female virtue: he compliments Iskhomakhos on his wife's "masculine intelligence" (ἀνδρικὴν διάνοιαν),[51] once again, an appropriation of both female space and female memory for the performance of masculinity (Iskhomakhos's, in this case).[52] Even in the role of housekeeper, the Greek wife must be trained to become as much like a man as possible.[53] But we also see, from the examples of Penelope, Melissa, and the wife of Iskhomakhos, that what begins as a rather mundane ability to impose order on one's material environs can quickly be elevated to a subject worthy of cultural and poetic memory.

While the orator can imagine any house at all for his rhetorical purposes, the wife must focus on the concrete particularities of her own house. And for women in ancient Greece, the economy of praise and blame is subordinated to the economics of marriage. In Xenophon, the wife is never praised directly (she is not even named); rather, her husband is complimented for having trained her successfully. But as we have seen in the case of Penelope, there are still ways for female characters to win poetic

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50 Kennedy 1972.124 identifies memory as a formal division of rhetoric by the late second century B.C.E., but Shrimpton 2003 suggests that memory may also have been a field of Greek rhetoric much earlier.

51 *Oik.* 10.1: Νὴ τὴν Ἥραν, ἔφην, ὦ Ἰσχόμαχε, ἀνδρικήν γε ἐπιδεικνύεις τὴν διάνοιαν τῆς γυναικός.

52 But Iskhomakhos suggests that his wife's honor might even surpass his own at *Oik.* 7.42–43.

53 Murnaghan 1988.15: "The elimination of difference between wife and husband leads also to the elimination of difference between household and city."

fame (*kleos*). I do not wish to trivialize the pervasive misogyny of either epic or later Greek texts. For, in the end, the gender ideology of the *Odyssey* remains fundamentally conservative.[54] Women are praised for moving as little as possible—in their bodies as well as in their minds. Nevertheless, the persistence of memory in the face of numerous temptations to forget—a memory on which the future of Odysseus's house as well as his fame depends—is no small feat, and no less worthy of praise than the heroic actions on the battlefield in return for which epic also bestows everlasting fame.

Agamemnon translates Penelope's devotion to the memory of Odysseus's house into *kleos* within the poem; at another level, the performance of the *Odyssey* itself is testament to Penelope's monumental memory. She is represented as adapting what is earlier cited as a cultural norm by Athena—for women's memories to adhere to the physical limits of their houses—to a new model of fidelity, one that privileges the mnemonic over the material. The art of memory for which Penelope is celebrated is, as I have tried to suggest here, in itself a cultural commodity worth appropriating; verbal artists, orators and poets throughout the ages, have used and codified memory techniques that no doubt existed even before Simonides' "invention." Penelope herself will be remembered for remembering. For women in ancient Greece, it is the art of memory that produces the song (ἀοιδή) for future generations, remembering that begets memory.[55]

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54 See Wohl 1993 for an excellent treatment of the *Odyssey*'s normative sexual ideology.

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