

EURYMACHUS' QUESTION AT *ODYSSEY* 1. 409

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τὸν δ' αὖτ' Εὐρύμαχος, Πολύβου πάϊς, ἀντίον ἤδδα·
 "Τηλέμαχ', ἦ τοι ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κείται, 400
 ὅς τις ἐν ἀμφιάλῳ Ἰθάκῃ βασιλεύσει Ἀχαιῶν
 κτήματα δ' αὐτὸς ἔχοις καὶ δώμασι σοῖσιν ἀνάσσοις.
 μὴ γὰρ ὃ γ' ἔλθοι ἀνὴρ, ὃς τίς σ' ἀέκοντα βίηφι
 κτήματ' ἀπορραΐσει, Ἰθάκης ἔτι ναιεταούσης.
 ἀλλ' ἐθέλω σε, φέριστε, περὶ ξείνιοιο ἐρέσθαι, 405
 ὁππόθεν οὗτος ἀνὴρ· ποίης δ' ἐξ εὖχεται εἶναι
 γαίης; ποῦ δέ νύ οἱ γενεή καὶ πατρὶς ἄρουρα;
 ἦέ τιν' ἀγγελίην πατρὸς φέρεי ἐρχομένοιο,
 ἦ ἔδν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος ἐελδόμενος τόδ' ἰκάνει;
 οἷον ἀναΐξας ἄφαρ οἴχεται, οὐδ' ὑπέμεινε 410
 γνώμεναι· οὐ μὲν γάρ τι κακῶ εἰς ὧπα ἐώκει."
 τὸν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ἤδδα·
 "Εὐρύμαχ', ἦ τοι νόστος ἀπώλετο πατρὸς ἐμοῖο·
 οὐτ' οὖν ἀγγελίῃ ἔτι πείθομαι, εἴ ποθεν ἔλθοι,
 οὔτε θεοπροπίης ἐμπάζομαι, ἦν τινα μῆτηρ 415
 ἐς μέγαρον καλέσασα θεοπρόπον ἐξερέηται.
 ξείνος δ' οὗτος ἐμὸς πατρώϊος ἐκ Τάφου ἐστί,
 Μέντης δ' Ἀγχιάλοιο δαΐφρονος εὖχεται εἶναι
 υἱός, ἀτὰρ Ταφίοισι φιληρέτμοισιν ἀνάσσει."

IN THE first book of the *Odyssey* Athena visits Telemachus in the form of Mentès and inspires him to take control of his life. After she leaves, the suitors marvel at Telemachus' new spirit; and one of them, Eurymachus, asks him to identify his guest. Was this guest a messenger from Odysseus, or did he come for some other reason? I translate Eurymachus' question and Telemachus' answer (*Od.* 1. 399–419, quoted above) as follows—with the exception of the phrase *ἐδν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος ἐελδόμενος* in verse 409, whose correct interpretation is the subject of this paper:

And Eurymachus, the son of Polybus, answered him: "Telemachus, truly this lies on the knees of the gods, who of the Achaeans shall rule in sea-girt Ithaca. But may you for your part keep safe your possessions and be ruler over your house. May no one come to wrest your possessions from you, overmastering you violently, so long as Ithaca exists. But I want, good sir, to ask you about your guest. Where is he from? From what land does he claim to be? Where are his people

and native fields? Does he bring some message from your returning father, or does he come on this visit *ἐδν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος ἐελδόμενος*? How quickly he is up and away, and did not wait for us to make his acquaintance. Certainly he has a by no means ignoble appearance." And the thoughtful Telemachus answered him: "Eurymachus, truly my father will never return. Therefore I no longer believe any message no matter what its source, nor take to heart any prophecy my mother asks of a prophet, having summoned him into our hall. This man is my family's guest friend from Taphos, and boasts himself to be Mentès, the son of wise Anchialus, and so is king of the oar-loving Taphians."

The word *χρεῖος* is usually taken to mean "business" (sometimes "debt" or "need"), and the phrase *ἐδν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος ἐελδόμενος* translated "desiring business of his own." Eurymachus is thus made to ask, "Did your guest come either as a messenger or as one 'desiring business of his own'?" To which Telemachus replies, "I pay attention neither to any messenger *nor to any prophet my mother calls into our hall*; this

was my guest friend Mentēs. It seems that the “neither . . . nor” (οὔτε . . . οὔτε) of Telemachus’ answer should correlate with the “either . . . or” (ἢ . . . ἢ) of Eurymachus’ question, but this is impossible if the usual interpretation of ἐὼν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος ἐελδόμενος is correct. Telemachus’ answer amounts to a denial that his guest was either a messenger or a prophet; with regard to a messenger, the response does correlate with the first part of Eurymachus’ question. But we are surprised by the denial that the guest was a prophet, as there is nothing in Eurymachus’ question, according to the usual interpretation of ἐὼν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος ἐελδόμενος, that prepares us for it.

I know of no other instance in Homer in which an answerer makes such a gratuitous denial; denials in answers like Telemachus’ always correspond to the wrong guesses of questioners. Two well-known examples come readily to mind. At *Il.* 6. 378 ff., Hector asks the maidservants, “Has Andromache gone to visit her sisters-in-law or to the temple of Athena to pray?” To this question one of them replies, “She has gone neither to visit her sisters-in-law nor to the temple of Athena to pray, but to Troy’s high tower.” And at *Od.* 11. 172 f., Odysseus in the Underworld asks his mother, among other things, “Did you die of a long and painful illness, or was your death blessed and swift?” She replies (198 ff.), “My death was not blessed and swift, nor did I die of a long and painful illness, but my spirit was destroyed with yearning for you.”

Furthermore, we can cite an example with marked similarities to the conversation of Eurymachus and Telemachus. In the assembly of the Ithacans at the beginning of *Odyssey* 2, the old man Aegyptius opens proceedings by asking of whoever has called them together (30 ff.), “Has he

army (ἢ ἐ τιν’ ἀγγελίην στρατοῦ ἔκλυεν ἐρχομένοιο; cf. *Od.* 1. 408), or does he have some other public business to state?” Telemachus, who has called them together, replies (42 ff.), “I have heard no message from the returning army (οὔτε τιν’ ἀγγελίην στρατοῦ ἔκλυον ἐρχομένοιο; cf. *Od.* 1. 414), nor do I have any other public business to state, but rather ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος.” (We shall have to give special consideration to the use of χρεῖος here when we come to discuss the meaning of this word.) I think that the conversation of Aegyptius and Telemachus has probably influenced that of Eurymachus and Telemachus. But if this is so, it seems all the more surprising for the latter not to conform to the type of question and answer that the former exemplifies. The answerer should reject, point by point, the wrong guesses of his questioner before telling him the truth, and should offer no gratuitous denials. We naturally expect, without supposing any special influence, that Telemachus’ answer to Eurymachus ought to follow this rule; but we are necessarily disappointed if the usual interpretation of ἐὼν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος ἐελδόμενος, “desiring business of his own,” is correct.

I suggest, however, a new and very different interpretation for ἐὼν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος ἐελδόμενος: “being desired for a prophecy of his own.” This interpretation requires (1) that χρεῖος mean “prophecy” instead of “business” (or “debt” or “need”); (2) that ἐελδόμενος be passive instead of middle; and (3) that χρεῖος be an adverbial accusative instead of a direct object. If I am right, Telemachus’ remark about prophecy does have its antecedent in Eurymachus’ question. Eurymachus asks, “Was your guest a messenger from Odysseus, or did he come ‘being desired for a prophecy of his own’?” Telemachus replies, “I pay no attention to any messenger, nor to any prophet my mother

calls into our hall; this was my guest friend Mentēs." The phrase "prophecy of his own" seems difficult, but I think we shall find that it makes good sense.

There are ten other occurrences of *χρεῖος* (*χρέος*) in Homer besides the one at *Od.* 1. 409. Eight of them seem best translated "debt." In *Iliad* 11 Nestor uses *χρεῖος* three times in his description of the successful cattle-raid he and his Pylians made against the Epeans of Elis, who had earlier plundered the Pylians and were therefore indebted to them: *χρεῖος ὀφείλετ' ἐν Ἡλιδι δῖη* (686); *Ἐπειοὶ χρεῖος ὀφείλον* (688); and *χρεῖος μέγ' ὀφείλετ' ἐν Ἡλιδι δῖη* (698). Similarly, at *Od.* 21. 17 we are told how Odysseus went after a debt that the whole people of the Messenians owed him for having stolen some of his flocks from Ithaca: *ἦλθε μετὰ χρεῖος, τό ρά οἱ πᾶς δῆμος ὀφέλλε*. At *Od.* 3. 367, Athena-Mentor excuses herself from Nestor's further hospitality by saying that she must be off the next morning to the Cauconians, where a debt is owing to her (*χρεῖός μοι ὀφέλλεται*); she apparently expects him to think that the Cauconians have raided her property and that she is honor-bound to seek compensation. Again, in *Odyssey* 8, in the song of Demodocus about the adultery of Ares and Aphrodite, *χρεῖος* is used twice (*χρέος*, 353; *χρεῖος*, 355) of the debt that Ares must pay the cuckolded Hephaestus; and we have a synonym, *μοιχάγρια*, in the expression *μοιχάγρι' ὀφέλλει* (332), "he owes the

penalty for having been caught in adultery."

The last example of *χρεῖος* meaning "debt" occurs at *Il.* 13. 745 f., where Polydamas tells Hector, "I fear the Achaeans may weigh out the debt of yesterday" (*δεῖδω μὴ τὸ χθιζὸν ἀποστήσωνται Ἀχαιοὶ / χρεῖος*). Yesterday the Trojans had advanced victoriously into Achaean territory; today it may be the turn of the Achaeans to do the same against the Trojans. The earlier victory of the Trojans thus seems comparable to the cattle-raids of the Epeans, *et al.*, and to Ares' trespassing on Hephaestus' home, in all of which instances the perpetrators incur a *χρεῖος*. What is especially interesting, however, is that Polydamas' warning seems to have a prophetic ring, which reminds one of his speech at *Il.* 12. 211 ff., where he interprets the omen of the eagle and the serpent.¹ Moreover, the verb *ἀποστήσωνται*, which apparently means "weigh out," seems to allude to scales, as Schol. T and Eustathius note;² and Björck suggests, independently of our Polydamas-passage, that early Greek prophets used scales in their predictions.³ The *χρεῖος* at *Il.* 13. 745 f. can only be translated "debt." But Polydamas seems to be speaking with the acumen of a prophet, as he does in *Iliad* 12; and he seems to allude to scales, which may have been used for prophetic as well as business purposes. We shall be arguing that *χρεῖος* (*χρέος*) means "prophecy" elsewhere in Homer, and that early Greek

1. Ael. *NA* 8. 5 mentions Polydamas as a prophet along with Tiresias. According to Schol. A *ad Il.* 12. 211 (Dindorf, I, 424), and Eust. *ad Il.* 12. 228 (p. 859. 15, Stallbaum), Polydamas' father Panthous, who was an interpreter of the Delphic oracle, taught him the art of prophecy.

2. Schol. T (Maass, II, 52) *ad Il.* 13. 745; Eust. *ad Il.* 13. 745, p. 958. 20. See also A. R. Sodano, ed., *Porphyrus Quaestionum Homericarum liber I* (Naples, 1970), pp. 118 f. MS authority favors *ἀποτίσωνται* over *ἀποστήσωνται*; but, as Leaf notes on *Il.* 13. 745, the lengthening of the *o* in *ἀποτίσωνται* is "intolerably harsh, and there seems to be no choice but to accept the variant *ἀποστήσωνται*."

3. G. Björck, "Die Schicksalswaage," *Eranos*, XLIII (1945), 58 ff. A male figure holding a pair of scales in front of

two men on a chariot is depicted on a Mycenaean vase from Enkomi. Björck, following S. Eitrem, "Schicksalsmächte," *Symb. Ost.*, XIII (1934), 57, n. 1, thinks that this figure represents a prophet taking the omens for men who are about to set out on a journey; but M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*³ (Munich, 1967), pp. 366 f. and pl. 25. 1, thinks that it represents Zeus, though (p. 367, n. 1) "mit meiner Deutung stimmt wohl überein, wenn das Schicksalswagen einem Divinationsverfahren nachgebildet ist, wie G. B. Björck meint." B. C. Dietrich, "The Judgment of Zeus," *RhM*, CVIII (1964), 122 ff., dismisses all interpretations of the Enkomi vase as being too conjectural; see esp. p. 124, n. 143, for his criticisms of Björck.

prophets thought of their prophecies as debts to be paid in the future. I should like to believe that these prophets used scales in determining their prophecies, and that Polydamas' words reflect this procedure.

In the eleventh book of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus goes to the Underworld to consult the prophet Tiresias and is told, we might note, among other things, that he and his men are headed for disaster if they plunder the cattle of the Sun. At *Od.* 11. 479 f., he describes his mission as follows: ἦλθον Τειρεσίαιο κατὰ χρέος, εἴ τινα βουλὴν / εἴποι, "I have come κατὰ χρέος of Tiresias, if he might say some counsel." Ebeling interprets this χρέος as *oraculum*, *consultatio*;⁴ the translation "debt" is clearly impossible. Others take it to mean "need" or "business."⁵ I am convinced that it means "prophecy," and would translate *Τειρεσίαιο κατὰ χρέος* "for the prophecy of Tiresias." The χρέος here is apparently connected with χρείων (χρέων), "prophesying," and χρησόμενος, "to consult"; the phrase ψυχῇ χρησόμενος (-ον, -ους) *Θηβαίου Τειρεσίαο*, "to consult the soul of Theban Tiresias," occurs four times in the *Odyssey*.⁶ Furthermore, I think that the use of χρέος in close association with βουλή at *Od.* 11. 479 f. is a reason for connecting it with χρείων and χρησόμενος, for βουλή appears with χρείων and χρησόμενος, with reference to the

oracle of Apollo, at *Od.* 8. 79 ff. and at *Hymn. Hom. Ap.* 252 f. and 292 f. That χρεῖος (χρέος) can mean both "prophecy" and "debt" is confirmed by an examination of the words χρησμός, χρῆσις, and χρήστης, which seem closely related to χρεῖος. The word χρησμός usually means "prophecy," but Hesychius gives another meaning: τιμωρία, "retribution," "penalty."⁷ Similarly χρῆσις means both "prophecy" and "loan,"⁸ and χρήστης means both "prophet" and "debtor" or "creditor,"⁹ that is, "he who has to do with a debt." A prophet is thus someone who has to do with debts: he is a spokesman for the justice of the gods; he announces what retribution will be exacted, what debt must be paid. Ebeling suggests *consultatio* as an alternate to *oraculum*; and LSJ, comparing *Τειρεσία χρησόμενος*, suggests that the κατὰ χρέος at *Od.* 11. 479 means "to consult."¹⁰ I think, however, that the parallels of χρησμός and χρῆσις, which never mean "consultation," are strong reasons for not taking χρεῖος (χρέος) to mean "consultation." Moreover, the translation "consultation" is not, I believe, fairly to be derived from χρησόμενος. Although χρησόμενος seems best translated "to consult," I have found no word for "consultation" that is connected with the same root. The only words I have found for "consultation" in Greek are ἐπερώτημα, ἐπερώτησις, and πίστις.¹¹

4. H. Ebeling, *Lexicon Homericum* (Leipzig, 1885), s.v. χρεῖος.

5. Ameis-Hentze on *Od.* 11. 479: χρέος = *Bedürfnis*. Merry-Riddell on *Od.* 11. 479 are more cautious: "κατὰ χρέος, generally rendered 'on business with,' as κατὰ πῆξιν *Od.* 3. 72, or 'in need of.' But perhaps, because of the frequent phrase ψυχῇ χρησόμενος, we ought to translate 'for consulting with.'" In later literature (*Hymn. Hom. Merc.* 138; *Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 3. 189, 4. 530; and *Arat. Phaen.* 343) κατὰ χρέος apparently means "according to necessity," "duly." We might also take note of the κατὰ τὸ χρεῶν in Anaximander *Frag.* 1D.-K., on which C. H. Kahn, *Anaximander and the Origins of Greek Cosmology* (New York, 1960), p. 180, comments: "The phrase κατὰ τὸ χρεῶν may contain a secondary allusion to the idea of retribution as a debt, since χρέος, χρέως, 'debt', is of course from the same root. But the primary force of χρεῶν combines the ideas of right and necessity: death succeeds to

birth in the course of time, because it must. In Anaximander's phrase κατὰ τὸ χρεῶν we have the most impersonal Greek formula for Fate."

6. *Od.* 10. 492, 565; 11. 165; and 23. 323.

7. Hsch. s.v. χρησμός; reported by LSJ, *Suppl.*, s.v. χρησμός (B). The following oracles in H. W. Parke and D. E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle*, II (Oxford, 1956), are concerned with vengeance: Nos. 17, 51, 74, 81, 93, 108, 136, 139, 150, 201, 236, and 365.

8. LSJ, s.v. χρῆσις II and III; and *Suppl.*, s.v. χρῆσις II.

9. LSJ, s.v. χρήστης. On χρήστης meaning "creditor" and "debtor" see esp. *Harp. s.v. χρήσταις*.

10. LSJ, s.v. χρεῖος III. See also Merry-Riddell (n. 5 above) on *Od.* 11. 479.

11. The corresponding verbs are ἐπερωτάω and πυνθάνομαι. At *Od.* 1. 416 ἐξερόμαι, "ask of," is used of Penelope's consultations.

We have finally to discuss the important *χρεῖος* that occurs in Telemachus' answer to Aegyptius at *Od.* 2. 42 ff.

οὔτε τιν' ἀγγελίην στρατοῦ ἔκλυον ἐρχομένοιο,
 ἦν χ' ὑμῖν σάφα εἶπω, ὅτε πρότερός γε πυθοίμην,
 οὔτε τι δῆμιον ἄλλο πιφαύσκομαι οὐδ' ἀγορεύω,
 ἀλλ' ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος, ὃ μοι κακὸν ἔμπεσεν οἴκῳ— 45
 δοιά· τὸ μὲν πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἀπώλεσα, ὃς ποτ' ἐν ὑμῖν
 τοῖσδεσσιν βασιλεῦε, πατήρ δ' ὡς ἡπιος ἦεν·
 νῦν δ' αὖ καὶ πολὺ μείζον, ὃ δὴ τάχα οἶκον ἅπαντα
 πάγχυ διαρραΐσει, βίον δ' ἀπὸ πάμπαν ὀλέσσει.

Neither have I heard any message from the returning army, which I might tell you truly, having learned of it first, nor do I have any other public business to reveal and announce, but rather *ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος*; for an evil has fallen upon my house, a twofold evil: first, I have lost my noble father, who was king over you gathered here and gentle to you like a father; but now a much greater evil has befallen my house that soon will entirely demolish it and utterly destroy every bit of my property.

Telemachus has assembled the Ithacans in order to declare a "*χρεῖος* of my own." Two evils have fallen upon his house, the loss of his father and the reveling of the suitors that threatens to destroy all of his property. It is clear that he mentions the first of these evils only as the precondition of the second, which he describes as being much greater. He knows that if Odysseus were at home the suitors would not dare to destroy his property: his cattle, sheep, goats, and wine (55 ff.). His speech seems on the whole a rather weak performance, since he apparently wavers between a desire to be bold and a feeling of helplessness, and breaks off finally in an angry burst of tears. The suitor Antinous then tries to justify the prolonged reveling of the suitors by blaming Penelope. Whereupon Telemachus, after a brief but decisive rejection of this plea, pronounces, at *Od.* 2. 138 ff., the following words:

ὑμέτερος δ' εἰ μὲν θυμὸς νεμεσίζεται αὐτῶν,
 ἔξιτέ μοι μεγάρων, ἄλλας δ' ἀλεγύνετε δαΐτας
 ὑμὰ κτήματ' ἔδοντες ἀμειβόμενοι κατὰ οἴκους. 140
 εἰ δ' ὑμῖν δοκεῖ τόδε λωῖτερον καὶ ἄμεινον

ἔμμεναι, ἀνδρὸς ἐνὸς βίον νήποιον ὀλέσθαι—
 κείρετ'· ἐγὼ δὲ θεοὺς ἐπιβώσομαι αἰὲν ἔοντας,
 αἳ κέ ποθι Ζεὺς δῶσι παλίντιτα ἔργα γενέσθαι.
 νήποινοί κεν ἔπειτα δόμων ἔντοσθεν ὀλοισθε." 145

If you have any shame of these things in your hearts, get out of my hall and attend other banquets, devouring your own property as you visit in each other's homes. If, however, this seems *preferable and better* (λωῖτερον καὶ ἄμεινον) to you, to destroy the livelihood of one man *without giving compensation* (νήποιον), then tear away. But I shall call upon the everlasting gods, if Zeus may grant *works of requital* (παλίντιτα ἔργα). Then would you perish in my house *without right to be given compensation* (νήποινοί).

Immediately, in answer to these words, Zeus sends the omen of the eagles, which the prophet Halitherses then interprets to portend the arrival of Odysseus and the slaying of the suitors—an interpretation that meets with scorn from Eurymachus. Telemachus rests his case (210 f.): "I no longer ask these things of you, nor speak of them, for now the gods and all the Achaeans know them."

I think that Telemachus' words at *Od.* 2. 139–45 are the expression of his *χρεῖος*, for they also appear—the very same words—at *Od.* 1. 374–80, where he tells the suitors why he is calling a meeting of the assembly. "Tomorrow let us all convene and hold a session of the assembly," he tells them at *Od.* 1. 372–74, "in order that I may command you to get out of my hall: attend other banquets . . ." The rest, *Od.* 1. 375–80, is word for word the same as *Od.* 2. 140–45, quoted above. We expect Telemachus to repeat these (or very similar) words in the assembly, and so he finally does, after holding us in suspense with his first weak-kneed speech which ends in tears. He boldly commands the suitors to get out of his hall. He underscores the injustice of their continuing to revel at his expense by a play on the word *νήποινος*, first in an active sense, "not giving compensation," then in a passive sense, "not to be given compensation," and

also by the expression *παλίντιτα ἔργα*, "works of requital." His demand has the sharp religious bite of the man who speaks in righteous indignation. We can compare *νήποιος* with *ἀνάποιον* in the prophecy of Calchas at *Il.* 1. 99, and *παλίντιτα ἔργα* with the *ἄντιτα ἔργα* in Penelope's prayer to Zeus at *Od.* 17. 60. As for the pleonasm *λαῦτερον καὶ ἄμεινον*, which I translate "preferable and better," Shipp notes that it is "clearly an adaptation for the metre of the *λώϊον καὶ ἄμεινον* which is a technical phrase in the language of oracles."¹² Although this phrase sometimes appears in the oracles themselves, it is typically used, as shown by Shipp's references, in the consultations of oracles. The person consulting an oracle asks whether it is "preferable and better" to do this or that. Telemachus concludes his speech to the suitors by saying, "If you think it 'preferable and better' to destroy my property, I shall appeal to Zeus." He makes what is in effect an appeal to Zeus, which Zeus answers with the omen of the eagles. He knows that the validity of his case depends upon the will of Zeus. We cannot, however, translate the *χρεῖος* at *Od.* 2. 45 as "consultation": Telemachus does not call the Ithacans to assembly in order to consult Zeus, but rather to state his demand against the suitors for just compensation. His *χρεῖος* is a demand for compensation that he rightly believes is sanctioned by Zeus and therefore destined to be paid. There are good examples in the orators of *χρεός* meaning "demand for payment." In Demosthenes (49. 42), for instance, a son tells how his father bequeathed him a legacy in *χρέα*, "demands on debtors for future payment," that is, "uncollected debts," "credits."¹³ A debt, from the creditor's point of view, is a

demand for payment. Accordingly, we must discard the usual jejune translations of *χρεῖος* at *Od.* 2. 45, "business" and "need." I suggest "just (or righteous) demand," but even this seems barely adequate.

We are now ready to consider the *χρεῖος* at *Od.* 1. 409. We have argued that elsewhere in Homer *χρεῖος* should be translated either "debt (=just demand)" or "prophecy," which are closely associated ideas, and that the translations "business" and "need" are colorless and inadequate substitutes. The *ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος* at *Od.* 2. 45 is authority for translating the *ἐὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος* at *Od.* 1. 409 not "business (or need) of his own" but "debt (=just demand) of his own."¹⁴ And the reference to Tiresias at *Od.* 11. 479 is authority for translating our phrase not "business (or need) of his own" but "prophecy of his own." Supposing a Homeric audience to be given this choice, why would they interpret the *χρεῖος* at *Od.* 1. 409 to mean "prophecy" instead of "debt"? I think they would be led to this interpretation by the emphasis placed upon Athena's inspiration of Telemachus in *Odyssey* 1. She actually speaks to him as a prophet at *Od.* 1. 200 ff. (*αὐτὰρ νῦν τοι ἐγὼ μαντεύσομαι . . .*) and predicts the return of Odysseus. After her departure Telemachus shows himself to his mother and the suitors as the spirited, self-assertive master of the house. He sends the amazed Penelope back to her women's quarters, and announces to the suitors a convening of the assembly at the earliest possible moment for the purpose of stating his just demand. The suitors are surprised that he speaks so boldly. Antinous sarcastically remarks (1. 384 f.), "Truly the gods themselves teach you to speak

12. G. P. Shipp, *Studies in the Language of Homer*² (Cambridge, 1972), p. 318 and n. 1. We can add Xen. *An.* 7. 6. 44 and *Lac.* 8. 5 to the references in Shipp's note.

13. For other examples of *χρεός* meaning *Forderung*, cf. Thalheim, s.v. *χρεός* b, *RE*, III (1899), 2448. 55 ff.

14. Two translators who eschew the weak "business" in favor of the more specific and vigorous "debt" are George Chapman ("Or for dues / Of moneys to him made he fit re-paire?") and Alexander Pope ("Did he some loan of ancient right require . . . ?").

brashly and boldly." Then, after a brief altercation between Antinous and Telemachus on the subject of the kingship in Ithaca, we come to Eurymachus' speech. Eurymachus apparently believes that the guest may be the cause of Telemachus' inspired behavior. He asks, "Was your guest a messenger from the returning Odysseus?" Such a messenger would explain Telemachus' inspiration.¹⁵ "Or was he a ———?" A prophet, certainly. A prophet is the very embodiment of inspiration and is able, by his prophecy of a better future, to instill a new spirit in those who are downcast. (Someone seeking the payment of a debt usually produces just the opposite effect: he tends to be a dispiriting influence.) I submit that a Homeric audience, impressed by the inspiration of Telemachus and the amazement it causes in Penelope and the suitors, would feel compelled to interpret the *χρεῖος* at *Od.* 1. 409 as "prophecy" instead of "debt."

The phrase "debt (=just demand) of one's own" is easy to understand. But how are we to understand "prophecy of one's own"? Why of one's own here? I think we can find the answer to this question by comparing the conversation of Eurymachus and Telemachus with that of Aegyptius and Telemachus. Aegyptius asks, "What public business does the convener of this assembly wish to state?" Telemachus replies, "I have no public business to state, but rather 'a

just demand of my own' (*ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος*)." He uses the words *ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ* to distinguish his private, personal *χρεῖος* from any public business. I suggest that the similar words *ἐὸν αὐτοῦ* in Eurymachus' question serve a similar purpose. Eurymachus asks, "Did your guest bring some message from Odysseus, or did he come with 'a prophecy of his own' (*ἐὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖος*)?" He uses *ἐὸν αὐτοῦ* to contrast the prophecy that the prophet gets from within himself with the message that the messenger gets from somebody else.¹⁶ The prophet's inspiration is the same as the poet's which is described by the bard Phemius at *Od.* 22. 347 f.: *αὐτοδίδακτος δ' εἰμί, θεὸς δέ μοι ἐν φρεσὶν οὔμας / παντοίας ἐνέφυσεν*. The prophet like the poet is *αὐτοδίδακτος*, "self-taught" or perhaps better "spontaneously taught," and this is another way of saying that the gods inspire him.¹⁷ *ἐὸν αὐτοῦ* at *Od.* 1. 409 thus emphasizes that the prophet's message is god-inspired in contrast to messages that come from strictly human sources. I submit that a Homeric audience would feel this contrastive force of *ἐὸν αὐτοῦ*, and would not take *χρεῖος* to mean "debt," since they would see no significant contrast between the ideas of debt and message.

The syntax of the proposed interpretation of *χρεῖος ἐλδόμενος*, "being desired for a prophecy," is difficult. We must take *ἐλδόμενος* in a passive sense and *χρεῖος*

15. So Ameis-Hentze-Cauer on *Od.* 1. 408: "Die erste Möglichkeit wird durch Telemachs überraschende Haltung nahe gelegt."

16. We can further compare *Od.* 4. 643 f.: *Ἰθάκης ἐξαιρέτοι ἦ εἰοι αὐτοῦ / θῆτες τε δμῶές τε*, where the *εἰοι αὐτοῦ* is used to contrast Telemachus' servants with the best men of Ithaca. My argument for the contrastive force of *ἐὸν αὐτοῦ* at *Od.* 1. 409 is not affected if the *πατρός* in *ἡ ἐν τιν' ἀγγελίην πατρός φέρει ἐρχομένου* at *Od.* 1. 408 is taken, as it often is (so *Lfgre*, s.v. *ἀγγελίη* 1, 50. 56 ff.), to mean "concerning your father": the message of a prophet is still being contrasted with the message that comes from a human source, this source perhaps being the messenger himself who, like Eurylochus at *Od.* 10. 244 f., has only witnessed what he reports. But *πατρός* is better taken to mean "from your father." It seems to go with *φέρει* as well as with *ἀγγεῖν*. We can compare the

words of Iris at *Il.* 15. 174 f.: *ἀγγεῖν τινά τοι, γαῖοιχε, κυανοχαῖτα, / ἦλθον δεῦρο φέρουσα παρὰ Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο*. Also, *στρατοῦ* in *ἡ ἐν τιν' ἀγγελίην στρατοῦ ἐκλυεν ἐρχομένου* (*Od.* 2. 30 ≈ 2. 42), a verse very similar to *Od.* 1. 408, should be translated not "concerning the army" but "from the army." We can compare the *Φθίης ἐξ* at *Il.* 16. 13: *ἡ ἐν τιν' ἀγγελίην Φθίης ἐξ ἐκλυες οἶος*.

17. See M. L. West, *Hesiod: Theogony* (Oxford, 1966), p. 166, n. 32 and pp. 182 f., n. 83, on the common inspiration of prophets and poets; Parke and Wormell, *op. cit.* (n. 7), I, 15 f., n. 37, on the presence of inspirational prophecy in Homer. On *αὐτοδίδακτος* = "god-inspired" at *Od.* 22. 347 f., see M. P. Nilsson, *Homer and Mycenae* (London, 1933; repr. New York, 1968), p. 207, and E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 1951), p. 10.

as an adverbial accusative. Two general considerations, for which I use Jankuhn¹⁸ and Shipp,¹⁹ should predispose us to the possibility that *ἐλδόμενος* is a passive. First, all of our passages illustrating *χρεῖος* are late (they contain late forms), and passives tend to occur in late passages. Second, although passives are infrequent in Homer, several undisputed examples occur in our *χρεῖος*-passages.²⁰ We can thus believe that Eurymachus' speech might easily yield a passive. Jankuhn does not include *ἐλδομαι* among the verbs for which he detects passives in Homer, and he would presumably consider the *ἐλδέσθω* at *Il.* 16. 494 to be intransitive: *νῦν τοι ἐλδέσθω πόλεμος κακός*. Others, however, take it as a passive, and they are probably right, though this is an instance where it seems hard to make a clear decision between passive and intransitive.²¹ At any rate, the *ἐλδέσθω* at *Il.* 16. 494 should again predispose us to the possibility that *ἐλδόμενος* at *Od.* 1. 409 is passive.

We can give two arguments for *ἐλδόμενος* as a passive on its own merit. To begin with, *ἐλδομαι* in a middle sense should take a genitive and not an accusative. If this is so, the accusative *χρεῖος* at *Od.* 1. 409 cannot be the direct object of *ἐλδόμενος* and *ἐλδόμενος* must be treated as a passive.²² The genitive is found with *ἐλδομαι* at *Il.* 14. 276 (*Πασιθέην, ἧς τ' αὐτὸς ἐλδομαι*), *Il.* 23. 122 (*ἐλδόμεναι πεδίοιο*), *Od.* 5. 210 (*σὴν ἄλοχον, τῆς τ' αἰὲν ἐλδεαι*), *Od.* 14. 42 (*ἐλδόμενός*

που ἐδωδῆς), and *Erga* 381 (*σοὶ δ' εἰ πλούτου θυμὸς ἐλδεται*). Chantraine, however, thinks that *ἐλδομαι* sometimes (not at *Il.* 23. 122) takes a neuter word like *χρεῖος* as direct object.²³ He cites what he considers to be two other examples of this construction. We find at *Il.* 5. 481, *καὶ δὲ κτήματα πολλά, τὰ τ' ἔλδεται ὅς κ' ἐπιδευής*; and at *Od.* 23. 5 f., *ὄφρα ἴδῃαι / ὀφθαλμοῖσι τεοῖσι τὰ τ' ἔλδαι*. But it is possible, I believe, to explain the accusatives in these examples as the direct objects of easily understood complementary infinitives. At *Il.* 5. 481 the infinitive *κτᾶσθαι* is easy to supply from *κτήματα*. We might note that there are two other ellipses of verbs in this verse: *καὶ* stands for *κατέλιπον*, and *ἔησι* must be understood after *ὅς κ'*. Likewise at *Od.* 23. 5 f. the infinitive *ιδέσθαι* is easily supplied from *ἴδῃαι ὀφθαλμοῖσι τεοῖσι*. And we can cite the following examples of complementary infinitives used with *ἐλδομαι*: *εἶναι* at *Il.* 13. 638, *ιδέσθαι* (!) at *Od.* 4. 162, *ἐλθέμεναι* and *ιδέσθαι* (!) at *Od.* 5. 219 f., and *ικέσθαι* at *Od.* 15. 66. There is thus no sure evidence that *ἐλδομαι* takes an accusative of the direct object in Homer, and I suggest that a Homeric audience, expecting the genitive with *ἐλδομαι* and being given *χρεῖος ἐλδόμενος*, would treat *ἐλδόμενος* passively.

My second argument is that elsewhere in Homer, when someone arrives, the participle *ἐλδόμενος* is not used to describe him as desiring something, but rather to

18. H. Jankuhn, *Die passive Bedeutung medialer Formen untersucht an der Sprache Homers* (Göttingen, 1969).

19. Shipp, *op. cit.* (n. 12), investigates late linguistic features in Homer.

20. Jankuhn, *op. cit.* (n. 18), recognizes the following passives: *δηῖοντο*, *Il.* 13. 675 (introduction to Polydamas-passages); *δοθείη*, *Od.* 2. 78 (Telemachus' speech); and *πισθείς*, *Od.* 8. 336 (song of Demodocus). Shipp, in his review of Jankuhn, *Gnomon*, XLIV (1972), 119, would add *βεβλημένοι οὐτάμενοί τε*, which occurs at *Il.* 11. 659 (Nestor's Elean war) and *Il.* 13. 764 (sequel to Polydamas-passages).

21. Ebeling, LSJ, Leaf, and Ameis-Hentze take *ἐλδέσθω* as a passive. I should like to treat *τοῖ* as a dative of agent and translate *νῦν τοι ἐλδέσθω πόλεμος κακός* as "now let

grievous war be desired by you." An example of a translation that takes *ἐλδέσθω* intransitively is Andrew Lang's: "now let baneful war be dear to thee."

22. I think we can rule out the possibility that *ἐλδόμενος* is intransitive, since Eurymachus is asking for an explanation of the guest's arrival. The guest must have come either because he desired something or because he was desired by someone for something. Eurymachus is not asking, "Was your guest a person who is desirable if someone should happen to want to hear a prophecy?"

23. P. Chantraine, *Grammaire Homérique*, II (Paris, 1953), 46 and 54. So too E. Schwyzler and A. Debrunner, *Griechische Grammatik*, II (Munich, 1950), 105.

describe other persons as desiring his arrival. This is well illustrated by the simile at *Il.* 7. 4 ff.: "As god gives a fair breeze to sailors desiring (ναύτησιν ἐελδομένοι-σιν) it, when they are wearied from beating the sea with their well-polished oars and their limbs are exhausted with toil, so these two [Alexander and Hector] appeared for the Trojans desiring (Τρώεσσιν ἐελδομένοισι) them." We can also cite *Od.* 21. 209, where Odysseus tells Eumaeus and Philoetius, "I know that I come for you desiring me" (γινώσκω δ' ὡς σφῶν ἐελδομένοισιν ἰκάνω); and *Od.* 24. 400, where Dolius tells Odysseus, "Dear one, since you have returned for us desiring you greatly . . ." (ὦ φίλ', ἐπεὶ νόστησας ἐελδομένοισι μάλ' ἡμῖν . . .).²⁴ I think that the poet of *Od.* 1. 409 probably has this use of ἐελδόμενος in mind, and that he is thinking of Telemachus' guest as coming for someone who desires his arrival. This is so, however, only if ἐελδόμενος is passive. The above arguments for ἐελδόμενος as a passive in accordance with my interpretation of Eurymachus' question are confirmed by Telemachus' remark about prophecy. Eurymachus asks, "Or does he come on this visit *being desired* (ἐελδόμενος) for a prophecy of his own?" And Telemachus replies, "I do not heed any prophecy my mother asks of a prophet, *having summoned* (καλέσασα) him into our hall." The active participle καλέσασα, "having summoned," answers to the passive participle ἐελδόμενος, "being desired." Prophets do come into his hall, Telemachus admits, being desired by Penelope: she summons them. He takes ἐελδόμενος as a passive and supplies the agent, Penelope.

If ἐελδόμενος is passive, χρεῖος must be what I call, for lack of a better term, an adverbial accusative. We might perhaps

classify it as an accusative of respect, for accusatives of respect frequently occur with intransitive and passive participles; but they usually designate the part affected, as at *Od.* 10. 247: κῆρ ἄχει μεγάλην βεβόλημένος, "being struck with great grief in his heart." I suggest that we can best explain our χρεῖος as being similar to the retained accusatives which are used with the passive participles of verbs of asking and demanding. We have, at *LXX Wi.* 15. 8, an example of this construction with χρεός meaning "debt": τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀπαιτηθεὶς χρεός, "having been asked for the debt of his soul" (i.e., having been asked by God for his life which was lent him). With it we can compare *Hdt.* 8. 111, αἰτηθέντες πρὸς Θεμιστοκλέος χρήματα, "having been asked by Themistocles for the tribute money"; and *Thuc.* 8. 5. 5, ὑπὸ βασιλέως . . . πεπραγμένος τοὺς ἐκ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ἀρχῆς φόρους, "being demanded by the king for the tribute of his province." Our "being desired for a prophecy" seems very similar to "having been asked for the debt." But if, as we have argued, ἐελδομαι—unlike verbs of asking and demanding that usually take a double accusative²⁵—does not take an accusative of the direct object in Homer, we cannot legitimately call χρεῖος a retained accusative, and must, I think, be satisfied with the general term adverbial accusative.

I conclude that the proposed interpretation of *Od.* 1. 409 has much to recommend it. Its syntax, though difficult, seems unavoidable. The gain in meaning it gives us over the usual interpretation is great. Eurymachus' question becomes much more significant and pointed, and Telemachus' remark about prophecy is no longer gratuitous.²⁶

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24. We might also note that at *Od.* 12. 438 f. Odysseus' mast and keel, which Charybdis has sucked down, come up again for him desiring them: ἐλδομένω δέ μοι ἦλθον.

25. πράσσω is used in this construction with χρεός meaning "debt" at *Pind. Ol.* 3. 6 f. (στέφανον / πράσσοντί με τοῦτο

θεόδματον χρεός) and *Pyth.* 9. 103 f. (ἐμὲ δ' ὦν τις δοιδᾶν / δίψαν ἀκείονον πρᾶσαι χρεός).

26. I wish to thank Joe Park Poe for criticizing a draft of this paper.