somewhat inappropriate use of ἐφέστιος in 234, since as West remarks Agamemnon was killed in the home of Aegisthus.[24]

Of course Telemachus cannot know that Odysseus will return, and as we have seen he implies that his father is dead with οὐκ ἂν ἐμοί γε / ἐλπομένῳ τὰ γένοιτ', οὐδ' εἰ θεοὶ ὣς ἐθέλοιεν (227–28). Athena thus admits for the sake of argument that Telemachus would be right if the fates have ordained his father's death, for θάνατον . . . οὐδὲ θεοί περ / καὶ φίλῳ ἀνδρὶ δύνανται ἀλαλκέμεν (236–37). Telemachus demonstrates his awareness that Odysseus is meant: κείνῳ δ' οὐκέτι νόστος ἐτήτυμος, ἀλλά οἱ ἤδη / φράσσαντ' ἀθάνατοι θάνατον (241–42). Athena's departure from Pylus in the manner of a bird provides graphic confirmation of Nestor's wish that the goddess love Telemachus as she had his father at Troy and adds the assurance that she will stand by him ἀναφανδά (371–72). Her very confirmation moreover serves as a kind of imperative, since the conditions have been met under which Telemachus might himself expect to oppose the suitors. A reflective Telemachus could also find in Athena's reprimand at 231–35 the further assurance that his long-suffering father will return from a distant land, after suffering many hardships, but will avoid the fate of Agamemnon.[25]

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24. West, *Commentary,* ad 3.234.

25. I wish to thank M. Edwards and A. Riggsby for their insightful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

ODYSSEY 19.535–50: ON THE INTERPRETATION OF DREAMS AND SIGNS IN HOMER

In the nineteenth book of the *Odyssey,* Penelope speaks of her troubling dilemma to the disguised Odysseus: should she continue to wait for her husband or should she marry one of the suitors? Telemachus' coming of age is making it increasingly difficult for her to postpone a second marriage, and yet she feels shame before the bed of her husband and the talk of the people. After dwelling on her dilemma in some detail, Penelope shifts direction, asking the beggar to listen to a dream and to interpret it (*Od.* 19.535–50):

ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τὸν ὄνειρον ὑπόκριναι καὶ ἄκουσον.
χῆνές μοι κατὰ οἶκον ἐείκοσι πυρὸν ἔδουσιν
ἐξ ὕδατος, καί τέ σφιν ἰαίνομαι εἰσορόωσα·
ἐλθὼν δ' ἐξ ὄρεος μέγας αἰετὸς ἀγκυλοχείλης

My interest in the question raised in this article was stimulated by a conversation between Helene Foley and my colleague, Christine Perkell. I am grateful to them both for their thoughts and owe particular thanks to Christine for her comments on the paper. I thank also C. Bannon, P. Bing, J. Pettit, and the anonymous *CP* referees for their helpful suggestions. I delivered an earlier version of the paper at the annual meeting of CAMWS, Iowa City, Ia., 1993.

πᾶσι κατ' αὐχένας ἦξε καὶ ἔκτανεν· οἱ δὲ κέχυντο
ἀθρόοι ἐν μεγάροις. ὁ δ' ἐς αἰθέρα δῖαν ἀέρθη.
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ κλαῖον καὶ ἐκώκυον ἔν περ ὀνείρῳ.
ἀμφὶ δ' ἔμ' ἠγερέθοντο ἐϋπλοκαμῖδες Ἀχαιαί,
οἴκτρ' ὀλοφυρομένην ὅ μοι αἰετὸς ἔκτανε χῆνας.
ἆψ δ' ἐλθὼν κατ' ἄρ' ἕζετ' ἐπὶ προὔχοντι μελάθρῳ,
φωνῇ δὲ βροτέῃ κατερήτυε φώνησέν τε·
"θάρσει, Ἰκαρίου κούρη τηλεκλειτοῖο·
οὐκ ὄναρ, ἀλλ' ὕπαρ ἐσθλόν, ὅ τοι τετελεσμένον ἔσται.
χῆνες μὲν μνηστῆρες, ἐγὼ δέ τοι αἰετὸς ὄρνις
ἦα πάρος, νῦν αὖτε τεὸς πόσις εἰλήλουθα,
ὃς πᾶσι μνηστῆρσιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐφήσω."

Odysseus responds unhesitatingly. He states that it is impossible to interpret the dream by bending (it) aside in some other direction (ἄλλῃ ἀποκλίναντ').[1] Odysseus himself has told her how it will be and the suitors will all be destroyed. The dream offers the key to its own interpretation, an interpretation that subsequent events reveal to be the correct one. Indeed, given how explicitly the dream enunciates its own message, Penelope's request that the beggar interpret it seems overly cautious.

Despite Odysseus' confident words, there is one element of the dream that has seemed to scholars to require explanation: Penelope's extravagant response to the slaughter of her geese in the dream at lines 541–43.[2] She weeps (κλαῖον) and wails (ἐκώκυον), mourning pitiably (οἴκτρ' ὀλοφυρομένην); the sympathetic action of the Achaian women in gathering around her likewise calls attention to her grief. What is the significance of this element of the dream? Why does the poet include it?[3]

Attempts to put a Freudian interpretation on the dream whereby Penelope's tears signal a repressed regard for the suitors have rightly been criticized by scholars working on dreams in antiquity.[4] Several scholars have pointed out that the modern notion of dreams as a repository of unconscious desires that are encoded symboli-

1. ἀποκλίναντ' might be taken intransitively "bending aside (oneself)," i.e., "avoiding, dodging," (A. H. M. Kessels, *Studies on the Dream in Greek Literature* [Utrecht, 1978], p. 122, n. 44), or transitively with the dream as the understood object, i.e., "twisting or distorting the meaning of the dream" (R. B. Rutherford, ed., *Homer: Odyssey, Books XIX and XX* [Cambridge and New York, 1992], pp. 195–96). In any case, the phrase must indicate some kind of evasion or distortion of meaning.

2. M. A. Katz, *Penelope's Renown: Meaning and Indeterminacy in the Odyssey* (Princeton, 1991), p. 146, offers a helpful summary of different positions held by scholars on the dream and related bibliography. For discussion of Penelope's tears specifically, see also E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1951), p. 123, n. 21; Rutherford, *Odyssey XIX and XX*, pp. 194–95.

3. Or "why does Penelope include it?", if, with Winkler and others, we wish to read the dream as a fiction concocted by Penelope to communicate covertly with the beggar. (J. J. Winkler, "Penelope's Cunning and Homer's," in *Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece* [New York and London, 1990], p. 153.) My reading does not exclude our imagining that Penelope has invented the dream.

4. For arguments for the Freudian interpretation, see bibliography cited in Kessels, *Studies on the Dream*, pp. 118–19, n. 27; also J. Russo, "Interview and Aftermath: Dream, Fantasy, and Intuition in *Odyssey* 19 and 20," *AJP* 103 (1982): 4–18 and idem, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. 3 (Oxford, 1992), p. 102. For criticisms, see Kessels, esp. pp. 93–95, and Rutherford, *Odyssey XIX and XX*, pp. 194–95. Other recent interpreters (e.g., N. Felson-Rubin, "Penelope's Perspective: Character From Plot," in *Homer: Beyond Oral Poetry. Recent Trends in Homeric Interpretation*, ed. J. M. Bremer, I. J. F. de Jong, and J. Kalff [Amsterdam, 1987], pp. 72–74, and Katz, *Penelope's Renown*, pp. 146–47) read Penelope's sorrow as affection for the suitors without invoking the notion of repression. But this line of interpretation implicitly depends on Freudian assumptions, for Penelope never acknowledges affection for the suitors and openly wishes for their death (*Od.* 17.545–47). And the *obvious* surface meaning of the text is that she mourns for her geese.

cally is entirely foreign to ancient thought about dreams.[5] It is not that dreams cannot express a dreamer's emotional state or concerns; Penelope acknowledges as much when she says that she will always remember Ithaka, in her dreams at least (*Od.* 19.581 = 21.79; cf. her description of her dream at *Od.* 20.87–90). But entirely absent is the Freudian notion of repression, which compels us to hide our feelings from ourselves by encoding them symbolically, so that they are revealed only through analysis. Therefore, though a dreamer may express an emotional state in dreaming, the emotions are neither disguised in the dream, nor unacknowledged by the dreamer. Coded dreams, on the other hand, typically convey information about the future; their interpretation leads to the revelation of external, not internal, reality. It consequently seems unlikely that Homeric poetry would use a dream to reveal Penelope's repressed unconscious.

Moreover, critics of the Freudian interpretation have pointed out that in the dream Penelope weeps before the eagle offers his interpretation. Indeed, his interpretation is offered in response to her tears, as a way of comforting her. He checks her tears and says "take heart" (θάρσει). Therefore, these scholars have argued, persuasively I think, that when Penelope weeps in the dream, she cannot yet perceive the true significance of what she has seen; she does not initially make the equation suitors = geese.[6] Their alternate reading of Penelope's sorrow as simply a natural response to what she imagines in her dream-state to be the real destruction of her pet geese is possible.[7] Nonetheless, the extravagance of Penelope's reaction and the detail in which it is described seem disproportionate to the (dreamed) loss of the geese. The sympathetic action of the Achaean women in gathering around her in particular seems extraneous, a violation of the narrative's economy, if the point is only that Penelope does not at first read the sign's meaning. Given that Penelope introduces the dream with a command to interpret it and seems to be worrying throughout the discussion about the meaning of a dream that has seemed all too obvious to other interpreters, we need to be particularly alert to possible significances that are not evident on the narrative's surface.

I suggest therefore that Penelope's strong reaction points to an alternate, more negative interpretation of the slaughter of her geese, one that competes with the eagle's optimistic prediction. The possibility of an alternate interpretation to the sign of the eagle and the geese in the dream would explain both Penelope's asking the beggar to interpret the dream in line 535, an act that seems unnecessary in view of the explicit enunciation of the sign's message by the eagle,[8] and also Odysseus'

5. Kessels, *Studies in the Dream,* pp. 91–98; J. J. Winkler, *Constraints,* pp. 23–43; S. R. F. Price, "The Future of Dreams: From Freud to Artemidoros," in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World,* ed. D. M. Halperin, J. J. Winkler, and F. I. Zeitlin (Princeton, 1990), pp. 365–87.

6. Kessels, *Studies in the Dream,* p. 94; Rutherford, *Odyssey XIX and XX,* pp. 194–95; Felson-Rubin, "Penelope's Perspective," p. 72, suggests that Penelope questions the equation suitors = geese only after she awakes and sees the real geese alive (*Od.* 19.536–37).

7. For the keeping of geese as pets in antiquity, see D. W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (Hildesheim, 1966), p. 329 and F. Olck, "Gans," *RE* 7 (1910): 709–35. G. Herrlinger, *Totenklage um Tiere in der antiken Dichtung* (Stuttgart, 1930), esp. pp.1–28, preserves ancient evidence for strong emotional response to the death of pets, though his real-life examples concern dogs and horses. The two epigrams dedicated to a goose are modern and satirical.

8. But for debate on the meaning of ὑπόκριναι, see Kessels, *Studies on the Dream,* pp. 28–35 and discussion and bibliography cited by Sullivan on κρίνω in the *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos,* vol. 2 (Göttingen, 1991), coll. 1542–45.

response to her request at lines 555–58 in which he rejects the possibility that another interpretation might be put on the dream by bending it aside in another direction (ἄλλῃ ἀποκλίναντ'). In so saying, he seems to recognize that she may construe the dream differently, while dismissing any alternate interpretation as a perversion of the dream's clear message.

The eagle's interpretation is so successful in terms of the narrative that scholars have never considered that there could be any other significance to the destruction of the geese; the text clearly authorizes this interpretation.[9] And yet the context, in which Penelope asks the beggar to interpret the dream and reflects on the potentially deceptive nature of dreams (19.560–69), seems to demand that we think about problems of interpretation. Although Penelope's well-known remarks on the difficulty of responding to dreams do seem to me, as they have to most scholars, to be more concerned with the validity of the dream's message than with its significance, her characterization of dreams as ἀκριτόμυθοι ("hard to interpret") suggests that she is concerned also with the difficulty in reading the dream's ambiguous signs.

But what else could the eagle's slaughter of the geese possibly signify? The geese who sit feeding on barley make a highly appropriate symbol for the greedy suitors. How could Penelope—and the Homeric audience, who would presumably have to recognize the possibility of an alternate interpretation to be able to follow the narrative logic I'm proposing—see anything in the slaughter of the geese other than what the eagle bodes?

In answering this question, it is essential to recognize the Homeric category into which the sign of the eagle and the geese falls. It is not a symbol of the kind moderns associate with dreams, a symbol that encodes secret, unrecognized emotions. Rather it is a kind of symbol that would be very familiar to the Homeric audience, though not associated with dreams elsewhere in Homeric poetry: it is a bird-sign.[10] And, if we consider ancient responses to bird-signs, there is a detail in the sign that might point to an alternate significance: there are twenty geese. Numbers tend to have significance in bird-signs. There are not twenty suitors.[11] But twenty is a significant number in the *Odyssey,* for it is said repeatedly that this is the twentieth year that Odysseus has been away. Moreover, we know from Calchas' interpretation of the omen of the birds destroyed by a snake at *Iliad* 2.308–20 that the number of creatures destroyed may represent not the number of the dead, but rather a period of years. If Penelope and the audience were to follow Calchas' strategies for the interpretation of bird-signs, they might well see in the destruction of twenty geese the end of a twenty-year period. And from Penelope's perspective,

9. Not only do subsequent events validate the eagle's interpretation but the description of the geese eating seems to echo Penelope's description of the suitors at line 534. Moreover, earlier in the poem (*Od.* 15.160–81), Helen interprets an eagle's carrying off a goose to signify Odysseus' return and the suitors' destruction, though in this context too questions of interpretation arise. Helen volunteers her services as an interpreter only after Nestor and Menelaos display uncertainty over the sign's meaning, and she herself offers two slightly different interpretations of the sign (176–78). (For other Homeric passages that discuss the difficulty of interpreting bird-signs and acknowledge the possibility of alternate interpretations, see *Od.* 2.178 and *Il.* 12.232–50). In any case, I do not dispute that the eagle's interpretation is correct, but suggest only that the characterization of Penelope permits our imagining her interpreting the sign differently.

10. Other examples in Homeric poetry of an eagle's appearance are consistently interpreted as signs from Zeus, requiring interpretation. Identification of the symbol as a bird-sign is important, because the anomaly of a symbol used within a Homeric dream has compelled scholars to turn to modern categories for assistance in interpreting the dream's symbols (see, e.g., Russo, "Interview and Aftermath," p. 102).

11. At *Od.* 16.245–53 Telemachus says that there are not ten suitors or even twice that many, but many more.

this is a highly ambiguous moment. It means the end of her waiting for Odysseus, but, as she has just pointed out in her speech immediately preceding the dream, this might mean either that Odysseus has returned or that she should stop waiting for her first husband and take another. When she weeps in the dream, Penelope seems to have chosen the more negative interpretation.[12] Therefore, I suggest that Penelope's tears signal to the Homeric audience that for her the twenty geese initially represent twenty years of faithful waiting for her husband, twenty years in which she takes a certain pride (ἰαίνομαι), twenty years wasted, destroyed by the eagles sent by Zeus.[13]

This interpretation seems justifiable in terms of ancient responses to bird-signs. For however appropriate we may find the barley-eating geese as symbols for the voracious suitors once the equation has been drawn, we cannot assume that the details of the sign that appear more significant to us were of primary significance to a Homeric interpreter. None of the three other bird-signs in the *Odyssey* that predict Odysseus' destruction of the suitors mention the defeated bird's eating; it is simply the action of the eagle destroying the other bird that signifies the suitors' destruction (*Od.* 2.145–54, 15.160–65, 20.242–43). Nor would Penelope and the Homeric audience necessarily think of the suitors in connection with geese, for geese have at least two alternate significances that might be felt particularly strongly in association with Penelope.

Penelope's geese might be taken as symbols of her marital fidelity. Citing ancient Chinese folklore and literature, Kretschmer argues that the etymological and mythological connection between Penelope and the penelops, a kind of duck or goose (the two are not perfectly distinguished), should be explained by their shared reputations for marital fidelity. He suggests that the association of geese with Penelope here also reflects a traditional folklore conception of geese as loyal, lifetime mates.[14] Greek literature does not explicitly give to geese and ducks this character, although the frequent association of geese and ducks with Aphrodite and Eros, particularly in art, may reflect this traditional conception of them as faithful lovers.[15] Better attested in Greek literature is the association of geese, particularly domestic geese, with the prudent guardianship of the house. Aristotle, for example, gives to the goose the character of a prudent guardian (their ἤθεα are αἰσχυντηλὰ καὶ φυλακτικά, *HA* 488b20). In a Hellenistic epigram, a goose appears on a woman's gravestone to represent, so the epigram claims, "her careful guardianship of

12. My reading supposes that Penelope has already within the dream perceived the bird-sign and its negative significance. This structure conforms to a typical Homeric pattern whereby a bird's appearance is immediately followed by the audience's emotional response (see *Od.* 15.160–81, *Il.* 12.200–229, 10.274–77, 24.314–20). An interpretation, when offered, succeeds the emotional response; however, normally the interpretation confirms the prior emotional reaction. P. Bing suggests that it is more plausible to suppose that Penelope recognizes the bird-sign and interprets it only upon awakening. Though by modern standards of plausibility this reading may be easier, I find it more difficult to imagine how the narrative would generate this reading for an ancient audience. In any case, Penelope narrates the dream having already inquired into its significance; her waking narrative of the dream shapes audience perception of the significance of her dreamed reaction.

13. In later dream interpretation, an eagle represents the current year (see Artem. 2.20), though Artemidorus connects this with a non-Homeric spelling (ἀετός = α + ετος).

14. P. Kretschmer, "Penelope," *Anz. Akad. Wiss. Wien* 82 (1945): 80–93. On Penelope and the penelops, see also J. A. K. Thomson, *Studies in the Odyssey* (Oxford, 1914), pp. 48–49 and E. Wüst, "Penelope," *RE* 19 (1937): 461–63. For alternate etymologies of Penelope, see discussion and material cited by Russo, "Interview and Aftermath," p. 81.

15. On geese and the erotic, see Olck, "Gans," coll. 722, 729–32, and references in Thompson, *Greek Birds*, p. 329.

the house" (δόμων φυλακᾶς μελεδήμονα, Antip. Sid. 7.425.7).[16] Thus, the geese can be taken to represent Penelope's faithful guardianship of the house, violently destroyed after a twenty-year period. If Penelope's geese were traditionally given either or both of these possible significations, their loss carries a powerful message.

For the Homeric audience, Penelope's response to the bird-sign might signal that she at first sees in the slaughter of her geese the loss of her first husband and household. For in her dream Penelope does not merely weep, but is engaged in what would seem to be full mourning. The strong language of the passage, particularly the verb κωκύω and the phrase οἴκτρ' ὀλυφυρομένη, is elsewhere associated closely with the loss of family members.[17] The action of the Achaian women in gathering around her is likewise a motif frequently associated with mourning in Homeric poetry.[18] Thus, in his analysis of *Iliad* 24, John Miles Foley argues that the participation of ancillary women in typical scenes of mourning, "by itself not a 'necessary' or 'logical' detail—assists in defining its structural identity as a cognitive category. Indeed, the chorus provided by these minor players is clearly not essential to the individual act of mourning; rather, the fact that they are institutionally included betrays the nominal quality of the typical scene."[19] Thus, details that may seem to the modern reader minor and insignificant help the Homeric audience to see that, within the dream, Penelope reacts to the bird-sign as though it means that her husband is dead; the familiar gesture of public support for a person in sorrow signals to the audience, learned in the traditional σήματα, that the dream-Penelope mourns for her husband.

Penelope's request that the beggar interpret the dream for her thus proceeds directly from her description of her current dilemma, a dilemma that plagues her throughout the *Odyssey*. As Nancy Rubin comments, "she is unremittingly vexed by the question: 'Am I moving irrevocably toward new union or toward reunion?'"[20] The problem of the dream-sign's interpretation seems to embody precisely this uncertainty. By one interpretation, she should hold out, for Odysseus will soon come home and slay the suitors. By the other, her twenty years of waiting have come to nought; she must mourn her husband and take a new one. That Penelope seems to doubt the interpretation of the bird-sign offered within the dream by the eagle and to fear another, less positive interpretation is typical of her skeptical and cautious approach in the final books of the *Odyssey*.

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16. See also L. Stephani's suggestion (*Compte-rendu de la commission impériale archéologique pour l'année 1863* [St. Petersburg, 1864], pp. 21–22) that in art the goose symbolizes the prudent housewife; other passages in Thompson, *Greek Birds*, p. 329.

17. κωκύω is used four times in the *Odyssey*, three times to describe women wailing for their dead husbands (*Od.* 4.259, 8.527, 24.295), the fourth to describe Eurykleia's reaction to Telemachus' announcement that he is going on a journey, in which she states her fear that he will soon die (*Od.* 2.361). In Homeric hexameter, the word is consistently used to describe a woman's expression of grief over her dead husband, son, or brother, or her fears for their mortality (*Hymn. Hom. Cer.* 245, *Il.* 18.37, 18.71, 22.407, 22.409, 22.447, 24.200, 24.703). The phrase οἴκτρ' ὀλοφυρόμενος occurs at *Od.* 4.719, where Penelope mourns the (imagined) loss of Telemachus and Odysseus; at *Od.* 10.409, where Odysseus' companions mourn him, believing him dead (they are compared to calves crying for their mothers); and at *Od.* 24.58–59, where the Nereids mourn Achilleus.

18. J. M. Foley, *Immanent Art: From Structure to Meaning in Traditional Oral Epic* (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1992), pp. 157–59. For this action in connection with mourning, see *Od.* 4.719–20, 24.58–59, *Il.* 18.37, 22.407–9.

19. Ibid., pp. 158–59.

20. "Penelope's Perspective," p. 63.