MODERN PAROEMIOLOGY AND THE USE
OF GNOMAI IN HOMER'S *ILIAD*

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GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE that the ancients themselves attached to gnomic expressions in their literature, it is surprising how little attention they have received in recent scholarship. The early Greek poets included a great many generalizing statements in their poetry, which from the fifth century onwards were collected in so-called γνωμολογίαι and read in schools or used by rhetoricians.[1] Yet, all comprehensive studies of the Greek γνώμη, or wisdom saying, date from before the Second World War.[2] These studies can now be considered outdated. Not only has our understanding of the classical authors who use gnomai substantially changed, but since the 1960s a new approach to the study of wisdom expressions has been developed in the field of ethno- and sociolinguistics. The purpose of this article is to show the fruitfulness of this new approach to the study of gnomai in classical texts, in particular Homer's *Iliad.*

Central to this new approach is the notion of context. It demands that wisdom expressions be studied in their social and linguistic surroundings. The American folklorist Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, for example, has shown how the meaning of American proverbs is dependent on the particular context in which they are used. Thus we need the situation to which a proverb like "A friend in need is a friend in deed" applies to determine if it is about someone giving or receiving friendship.[3] Greek gnomai are not the

1. See K. Horna, "Gnome, Gnomendichtung, Gnomologien," in *REA* Suppl. 6 (1935): 74–90; J. Barns, "A New Gnomologium with Some Remarks on Gnomic Anthologies," *CQ* 44 (1950): 126–37; 45 (1951): 1–19; and R. Cribiore, *Writing, Teachers, and Students in Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Atlanta, 1996), 43–47. The *Theognidea* were probably arranged for similar purposes: M. L. West, *Studies in Greek Elegy and Iambus* (Berlin, 1974), 57.

2. Most importantly T. Stickney, *Les Sentences dans la poésie grecque d'Homère à Euripide* (Paris, 1903); P. Friedländer, "ΥΠΟΘΗΚΑΙ," *Hermes* 48 (1913): 558–616; E. Ahrens, *Gnomen in griechischer Dichtung* (Halle, 1937); and K. Bielohlawek, *Hypotheke und Gnome: Untersuchungen über die griechische Weisheitsdichtung der vorhellenistichen Zeit,* Philologus Supplementband 32, Heft 3 (Leipzig, 1940).

3. B. Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, "Toward a Theory of Proverb Meaning," *Proverbium* 22 (1973): 821–27, reprinted in *The Wisdom of Many: Essays on the Proverb,* ed. W. Mieder and A. Dundes (New York, 1981), 111–21, 113. See W. Mieder, *American Proverbs: A Study of Texts and Contexts* (New York, 1989), 20–21, for more recent studies. Modern paroemiology (the study of proverbial expressions) really begins with an article by Ojo Arewa and Alan Dundes entitled "Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore," which was first published in *The Ethnography of Communication,* ed. J. J. Gumperz and D. H. Hymes, American Anthropologist 66.6 Part 2 (1964): 70–84. Previously, some anthropologists had already drawn attention to the use of proverbial expressions in different cultures, notably R. Firth, "Proverbs in Native Life, with special

same as modern proverbs, but they can be effectively studied in the same way. The importance of the occasion for Greek gnomai had been noted by Aristotle, who in his chapter on γνωμολογίαι in the *Rhetoric* observed that "people are pleased when they hear things said in general terms, which they happen to have grasped before in the particular case" (χαίρουσι δὲ καθόλου λεγομένων ἃ κατὰ μέρος προϋπολαμβάνοντες τυγχάνουσιν).[4]

Besides instructing us about the contextual nature of wisdom sayings, ethnolinguistic studies reveal that such expressions can take many different forms. Homer and the other archaic Greek poets refer to some proverb-like expressions with the words ἔπος, λόγος, or αἶνος,[5] but the problem with these terms is that they are used for a variety of speech genres. In the course of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E. some new terms for proverbial expressions were introduced into the Greek language, including παροιμία, ὑποθήκη, ἀπόφθεγμα, and γνώμη.[6] Of these four terms, γνώμη seems to be the most comprehensive. Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* defines a γνώμη as "a statement not concerning particulars, such as what kind of a man Iphicrates is, but general, and not about all things, such as that straight is the opposite of crooked, but about such things as are actions and whether they are to be pursued or avoided."[7]

Basing himself on Aristotle, Ernst Ahrens catalogued eighty-one "real gnomai" ("echte Gnomen") in the *Iliad*.[8] Some of these are, however, combinations of gnomai,[9] strings,[10] or double gnomai,[11] or they are repeated

reference to the Maori," *Folk-lore* (1926): 134–53, 245–70, and J. Messenger, "The Role of the Proverb in a Nigerian Judicial System," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 15 (1959): 64–73, but Arewa and Dundes for the first time argued for the necessity of taking such contextual features into consideration.

4. *Rhet.* 1395b5–6 Kassel. Aristotle's treatment of the use of gnomai in rhetorical speeches extends from *Rhet.* 2.1394a19–1395b19. Some classical scholars have already applied aspects of this new contextual approach to ancient Greek wisdom expressions, notably J. Russo, "The Poetics of the Ancient Greek Proverb," *Journal of Folklore Research* 20 (1983): 121–30, and Y. Z. Tzifopoulos, "Proverbs in Menander's Dyskolos: The Rhetoric of Popular Wisdom," *Mnemosyne* 48 (1995): 169–77.

5. ἔπος: *Il.* 15.206, Theog. 16, Pind. *Isthm.* 6.67, cf. E. Hofmann, *Qua Ratione* EPOS, MUTHOS, AINOS, LOGOS *et vocabula ab eisdem stirpibus derivata in antiquo graecorum sermone (usque ad annum fere 400) adhibita sint* (Göttingen, 1922), 15–16; A. Ford, "A Study of Early Greek Terms for Poetry: *Aoide, Epos,* and *Poiesis*" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1983), 173; R. P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the "Iliad"* (Ithaca, NY, 1989), 42; λόγος: Alc. frag. 360, Pind. *Ol.* 2.22, *Pyth.* 3.80 etc.; αἶνος: *Il.* 23.795, Eur. frag. 508 N², cf. T. Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte,* vol. 1 (Berlin, 1872), 363. Heraclitus (frag. B34 D.-K. / 2 M) once uses the word φάτις for what appears to be a proverb (see M. Marcovich, *Heraclitus Editio Maior: Greek Text with a Short Commentary* [Merida, 1967], 13), and Pindar also uses the term ῥῆμα: *Pyth.* 4.278, *Isthm.* 2.10.

6. See J. F. Kindstrand, "The Greek Concept of Proverbs," *Eranos* 76 (1978): 71–85; Lardinois, "Wisdom in Context," 13–19; and J. Russo, *Native Wisdom: Proverb, Maxim and Apophthegm as Oral Prose Genres of Ancient Greece,* forthcoming.

7. *Rhet.* 1394a21–26 Kassel: ἔστι δὴ γνώμη ἀπόφανσις, οὐ μέντοι οὔτε περὶ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον, οἷον ποῖός τις Ἰφικράτης, ἀλλὰ καθόλου, καὶ οὐ περὶ πάντων, οἷον ὅτι τὸ εὐθὺ τῷ καμπύλῳ ἐναντίον, ἀλλὰ περὶ ὅσων αἱ πράξεις εἰσί, καὶ αἱρετὰ ἢ φευκτά ἐστι πρὸς τὸ πράττειν. Aristotle quotes several examples from Homer and the other Greek poets: e.g., *Rhet.* 1395a13–14, 15 = *Il.* 12.243 and 18.309a, *Rhet.* 1395a16–17 = Cypria frag. 25 *EGF, Rhet.* 1394a29–30 = Eur. *Med.* 294–95.

8. Ahrens, *Gnomen,* 12–38. Ahrens refers to Aristotle in his introduction on p. 9.

9. E.g., Ahrens *Ilias* nr. 8 is *Il.* 2.291 and 297–98, and Ahrens *Ilias* nr. 73 is all the gnomai he identified in Book 21.

10. E.g., Ahrens *Ilias* nr. 28 is *Il.* 9.406–9 (= three gnomai), 497–507 (= three gnomai) and 508–12 (= double gnome), Ahrens *Ilias* nr. 75 is 23.103–4 and 315–25 (= five gnomai). See also Ahrens, *Gnomen,* 54–55, 88–91 on gnomic strings in Homer, and W. J. Slater, "Pindar's Myths: Two Pragmatic Explanations," in *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies presented to B. M. W. Knox,* ed. G. W. Bowersock etc. (Berlin and New York, 1979), 65–66 on the same phenomenon in Pindaric poetry.

11. Ahrens *Ilias* nr. 7 is *Il.* 2.204a and 204b–6, nr. 10 is 3.108 and 109–10, nr. 14 is 5.531 and 532, nr. 30 is 10.224–25a and 225b–26, nr. 31 is 11.408 and 409–10, etc. Stickney, *Sentences,* 28, has observed that

elsewhere in the poem.[12] If separated out, they provide us with no fewer than 123 gnomai for the *Iliad,* which is considerably more than Kirk's estimate of "at least thirty gnomai" for this poem.[13] Furthermore, Ahrens excluded a number of sayings because they did not fit his own preconception of what gnomai ought to be, even though they fit Aristotle's definition, such as sayings that exhibit "a gnomic form without a gnomic meaning" or expressions that are "fully applied to the situation."[14] The latter exception fails to recognize that gnomai, like proverbs, are always related to a particular situation (cf. Arist. *Rhet.* 1395b5–6, quoted above), and the former that gnomai need not express traditional wisdom but may actually contradict accepted values (*Rhet.* 1395a18–20). Staying closer to Aristotle's definition of the Greek γνώμη, I identified 154 gnomai in the *Iliad.*[15]

Considering this large body of material, one is struck by the fact that so few of these sayings are repeated verbatim in later Greek poetry, including other hexameter or elegiac poetry.[16] Instead, what we find are novel renditions of the same basic thoughts; for example, *Odyssey* 7.294: αἰεὶ γάρ τε νεώτεροι ἀφραδέουσιν ("For always thoughtless are youngsters") expresses the same sentiment as *Iliad* 3.108: αἰεὶ δ' ὁπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν φρένες ἠερέθονται ("Always flighty are the minds of young men") but in different words. I submit that Greek gnomai were, at least until the fourth century B.C.E., part of a living tradition in which every performance was a re-creation, very much like epic verse. They are, like epic verses, "coined"[17] with the help of traditional formulae and themes. A recurring element that is found in many Greek gnomai is, for example: (οὐ) χρή + infinitive. One may compare *Iliad* 2.24: οὐ χρὴ παννύχιον εὕδειν βουληφόρον ἄνδρα, *Odyssey* 15.74: χρὴ ξεῖνον παρεόντα φιλεῖν, ἐθέλοντα δὲ πέμπειν, and Phocylides frag. 5 Diehl: χρή τοι τὸν ἑταῖρον ἑταίρῳ / φροντίζειν ἅσσ' ἂν περιγογγύζωσι πολῖται.[18]

Homer likes to pair a positive formulation of a gnomic thought with a negative one, e.g., *Il.* 2.204–6; οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίη· εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, / εἷς βασιλεύς, ᾧ δῶκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω / σκῆπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας, ἵνα σφίσι βουλεύῃσι.

12. Ahrens *Ilias* nrs. 14 (*Il.* 5.531–32 = 15.563–64), 19 (7.282 = 7.293), 34 (11.793 = 15.404), 35 (11.801 = 16.43 and 18.201), 55 (16.688 = 17.176), 57 (17.32 = 20.218). Add *Il.* 2.24–25 (= 2.61–62) and 6.492 (= 20.137). I consider these gnomai to be different because they are applied to different situations.

13. G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge, 1962), 174. I can accept all 123 gnomai that Ahrens identified in the *Iliad,* except *Il.* 18.107–10, which Ahrens himself describes as a "gnomischer Wunschsatz" (*Gnomen,* 31). I would also regard the "gegensätzliche Gnomenresponsion" at *Il.* 24.529–33 (Ahrens nr. 81) as an expansion of the previous gnome rather than as two separate sayings.

14. Ahrens, *Gnomen,* 38–39.

15. I have added the following sayings to Ahrens' collection of gnomai in the *Iliad:* 1.278–79; 2.24–25; 61–62, 292–94; 4.235; 5.383–84, 407–9, 873–74; 6.488–89, 492–93; 7.101–2; 9.309, 312–13, 318, 319, 320; 11.390; 12.212–14; 14.80, 81; 15.208–10, 511–13; 17.251; 18.362–63; 19.81–82, 227, 228–29; 21.184–85, 379–80, 485–86; 23.670–71; 24.46–48, 463–64. I have also identified 153 gnomai in the *Odyssey* and will discuss some examples from this poem in the footnotes. For a printed list, see Lardinois, "Wisdom in Context," Appendix A.

16. The only exception is Simonides frag. 19.2 West² = *Il.* 6.146, which is, however, explicitly presented as a quotation of "the man of Chios" (Χῖος ἔειπεν ἀνήρ). See on this quotation most recently D. Sider, "As is the Generation of Leaves in Homer, Simonides, Horace, and Stobaeus," *Arethusa* 29 (1996): 263–82.

17. This is Aristotle's term for the formation of gnomai: γνωμοτύποι, *Rhet.* 1395a7; cf. Ar. *Thesm.* 55, *Eq.* 1379, *Ran.* 877, *Nub.* 952. Aristotle, however, also refers to a practice, perhaps becoming more frequent in his day, of "using frequently quoted and common gnomai" (χρῆσθαι . . . ταῖς τεθρυλημέναις καὶ κοιναῖς γνώμαις, *Rhet.* 1395a10–11).

18. Other examples are Hom. *Il.* 9.309, 11.409 (χρεώ), 19.228, Phoc. frags. 14 and 15 Diehl, Alc. frag. 335.1, Theog. 179, 303, Xenoph. frag. 1.13, Pind. *Pyth.* 2.34, 3.59–60, Epich. frag. 263 K (quoted as a gnome by Arist. *Rhet.* 1394b13).

Such patterns help the speaker to create a saying on the spot and, at the same time, the listener to identify a statement as gnomic.

Besides structural patterns there are certain themes around which similar gnomai are created. For example, the shortest formulation of the idea that suffering brings learning is Aeschylus' πάθει μάθος (*Ag.* 177). The one word, as it were, conjures up the other in certain contexts. They form the nucleus around which every rendition of this thought is built, but, like Homeric formulae, this nucleus can be "telescoped" (i.e., expanded or shortened) or "reshaped."[19] A more elaborate version of πάθει μάθος is *Agamemnon* 250–51: Δίκα δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσι μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει.[20] An example of reshaping is when one of the nuclear terms is replaced by an equivalent term; one may compare Pindar *Isthmian Ode* 1.40b: ὁ πονήσαις δὲ νόῳ καὶ προμάθειαν φέρει, which the scholiast glosses as ὁ παθὼν καὶ τῷ νῷ προμηθὴς γίγνεται.[21] At *Iliad* 17.32 and 20.198, both terms are replaced, but the root παθ- still makes its presence felt: the infinitive παθέειν is deployed in the preceding sentence, referring to the same action as ῥεχθὲν in the gnome: πρίν τι κακὸν παθέειν· ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω.[22]

Another example is the thought that "men are a city's best defenses." Sayings expressing this idea appear to be built around a word for "men," "city," and some term for defense work. The theme is fully displayed in Alcaeus frag. 112.10: ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλιος πύργος ἀρεύι[οι], or Plutarch *Lycurgus* 19.12: οὐκ ἂν εἴη ἀτείχιστος πόλις, ἥτις ἀνδρείοις καὶ οὐ πλινθίνοις ἐστεφάνωται (cf. *Apo. Lac.* 228e). Sometimes, however, one of the three terms is left out,[23] replaced by a synonym,[24] or a circumlocution.[25] In fifth-century Athens, significantly, ships are added to the equation: ὡς οὐδέν ἐστιν οὔτε πύργος οὔτε ναῦς / ἐρῆμος ἀνδρῶν μὴ ξυνοικούντων ἔσω (Soph. *OT* 56–57); ἄνδρες γὰρ πόλις, καὶ οὐ τείχη οὐδὲ νῆες ἀνδρῶν κεναί (Thuc. 7.77.7).[26] This shows that even the underlying themes can be subject to change.

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19. Cf. Martin, *Language,* 215. Technically speaking, these "themes" could be called formulae as well, if one defines a formula as "a pair or group of words connected by mutual expectancy": Martin, *Language,* 64, following J. B. Hainsworth, *The Flexibility of the Homeric Formula* (Oxford, 1968). I prefer to use the word "theme" for the semantic content of gnomai in order to make a distinction with the structural patterns that determine the shape of the gnome, such as χρή + infinitive, for which I reserve the term "formula."

20. Other examples in H. Dörrie, *Leid und Erfahrung: Die Wort- und Sinn-Verbindung* παθεῖν - μαθεῖν *im griechischen Denken* (Wiesbaden, 1956).

21. A. B. Drachmann, *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina,* vol. 3 (Leipzig, 1927), 206, cited by E. L. Bundy, *Studia Pindarica* (Berkeley, 1986), p. 52, n. 44.

22. In Hes. *Op.* 218 we find the same saying with παθεῖν in place: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω. I am not arguing that πάθει μάθος or sayings with both terms are somehow older or more authentic than *Il.* 17.32 or Hes. *Op.* 218, which prefer to reshape one or two of the thematic terms. The nuclear theme, underlying all expressions of this thought, is only an "ideal type" that is always varied in some shape or form.

23. E.g., Aesch. *Pers.* 349: ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ὄντων ἕρκος ἐστὶν ἀσφαλές (but note the word πόλις in the previous line).

24. Dio Cass. 56.6: ἄνθρωποι γάρ που πόλις ἐστίν, οὐκ οἰκίαι. Here the original thought is changed from "men are a city's defenses" to "they are a city's structures in general." This may also account for the change from "men" to the more generic "human beings."

25. τὸ χαλκᾶ καὶ σιδηρᾶ δεῖν εἶναι τὰ τείχη μᾶλλον ἢ γήινα, anonymous poet, cited by Pl. *Leg.* 778D7.

26. Cf. Hdt. 8.61 where Themistocles says that Athens will be a city as long as it has two hundred ships filled with men (cf. Plut. *Them.* 11.1). The Spartans, by contrast, are associated with the land version: Pl. *Leg.* 778D7 is applied to Sparta, as is Lycurgus' version (Plut. *Lyc.* 19.12, *Apo. Lac.* 228e). Compare also Plut. *Apo. Lac.* 210e (attributed to Agesilaus) and 217e (attributed to Antalcidas).

The closest parallel I found for such a creative formation of wisdom expressions is the so-called wise words of the Western Apache. Keith Basso has shown how these "wise words" are constantly being generated, especially by the elder men and women of the villages, according to a strict syntactical scheme.[27] However, he was also told that sometimes a particularly good "wise word" would be picked up and used by others in the village.[28] This suggests that some re-created sayings can become established. The close similarity between Hesiod *Opera et Dies* 218 (παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω) and *Iliad* 17.32 and 20.198 (ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω) seems to indicate that this saying was more or less "fixed," at least within hexameter poetry. Such "fixed" sayings would approximate what we refer to as proverbs. In the case of Homer's gnomai we probably have to assume that we are dealing with a variety of sayings, ranging from more or less "fixed" ones, such as ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω, to new inventions by the poet, with most sayings falling somewhere in between both extremes.

Finally, modern paroemiological studies can provide us with new interpretive models that take into account the context in which such sayings occur. The American folklorist Charles Briggs has studied the discourse context in which New Mexican Spanish proverbs are performed, while Peter Seitel developed a model for the analysis of wisdom sayings in their social context, and Roger Abrahams and Barbara Babcock examined the use of proverbs in literary texts.[29] In the remainder of this article I will demonstrate the usefulness of their approaches to the analysis of gnomai in the *Iliad.*

I. THE DISCOURSE CONTEXT OF GNOMAI IN THE *ILIAD*

Charles Briggs, in a celebrated article,[30] has criticized the narrow focus of previous generations of scholars on the proverb text (i.e., the saying itself) at the expense of its linguistic setting. Briggs tried to counter this trend by studying closely the linguistic context of Spanish proverbs in northern New Mexico. He distinguishes eight possible elements in the discourse surrounding the performance of these proverbs: a tying phrase, the identity of the owner of the proverb, a quotation-framing verb, the proverb text, a special association, a statement about the general meaning or hypothetical situation of the proverb, relevance to the context (or "explanation"), and validation of the performance. As an example, I print below one of the

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27. K. Basso, "'Wise Words' of the Western Apache: Metaphor and Semantic Theory," in *Meaning in Anthropology,* ed. K. Basso and H. Selby (Albuquerque, 1976), 93–121, 98–99.

28. Basso, "Western Apache," 118.

29. C. I. Briggs, "The Pragmatics of Proverb Performance in New Mexican Spanish," *American Anthropologist* 87 (1985): 793–810, rewritten as chapter 4 in Briggs, *Competence in Performance: The Creativity of Tradition in Mexicano Verbal Art* (Philadelphia, 1988), 101–35; P. Seitel, "Proverbs: A Social Use of Metaphors," in Mieder and Dundes, *Wisdom,* 122–39 (see n. 3 above); "Proverb and the Structure of Metaphor among the Haya of Tanzania" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1972); "Saying Haya Sayings: Two Categories of Proverb Use," in *The Social Use of Metaphors: Essays on the Anthropology of Rhetoric,* ed. J. D. Sapir and J. C. Crocker (Philadelphia, 1977), 75–99; R. D. Abrahams and B. A. Babcock, "The Literary Use of Proverbs," *Journal of American Folklore* 90 (1977): 414–29.

30. See previous note.

proverbs that Briggs recorded in his study with some of its accompanying discourse features.[31]

Por eso te digo (1), por eso dice él	*That's why I tell you* (1), that's why he says
que "dondequiera se cuecen habas." (2)	that *"horse beans are cooked everywhere."* (2)
Como decían antes, (3)	*Like they used to say in bygone days,* (3)
en Truchas se cosechaban	*in Truchas they used to harvest*
muchas habas. (4)	* a lot of horse beans.* (4)
Y decía un viejito de antes,	*And an elder of bygone days used to say,*
de Truchas, (3)	* from Truchas,* (3)
"Sí. No, no más aquí se cuecen habas,	*"Yes. No, they don't just cook horse beans*
donde las cosechamos; en	*here, where we harvest them, but*
dondequiera, en todo el mundo." (5)	*everywhere, all over the world."* (5)
Y es verdad, (6)	*And it's true,* (6)
es cierto (6)	*It's certainly true* (6)

1 = tying phrase; 2 = proverb text; 3 = identity of the owner; 4 = special association; 5 = a statement about the general meaning of the proverbs; 6 = validation

Most of these discourse features are optional in the performance of New Mexican proverbs, as they are in the case of Homeric gnomai. The only two features that always seem to accompany the presentation of gnomai in the *Iliad* are the "proverb text" (the actual gnome itself) and "an explicit statement of the manner in which the general meaning of the proverb applies to the present situation," what other paroemiologists call the "explanation" of a saying.[32] Such explanations are comments that make explicit to which concrete case the saying is referring.

The explanations of Greek gnomai often contain words that are also used in the saying itself, thus firmly linking the two.[33] A good example is the gnome that Calchas speaks at *Iliad* 1.80–83, which is preceded by an explanatory sentence containing several terms that are repeated in the gnome itself (1.78–80): ἦ γὰρ ὀΐομαι ἄνδρα χολωσέμεν, ὃς μέγα πάντων / Ἀργείων κρατέει καί οἱ πείθονται Ἀχαιοί· / κρείσσων γὰρ βασιλεὺς ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ. Such word repetitions do not have to consist of exactly the same terms, but can also be synonyms (such as χολωσέμεν, χώσεται), word suggestions (κρατέει, κρείσσων), or even antonyms (ἄνδρα . . . ὃς μέγα . . . κρατέει, ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ).

Proverbs either precede or follow their explanation and this can change the meaning of the whole expression. Peter Seitel, for example, observed that sayings of the Haya people in Tanzania usually follow their explanation, but they can also be placed before their application, in which case

31. Briggs, *Competence,* 110–13. An older woman is speaking to Briggs about the ubiquitousness of bad teenagers.

32. Seitel, "Haya Sayings," 91 and B. Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, "The Concept and Varieties of Narrative Performance in East European Jewish Culture," in *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking,* ed. Richard Bauman and Joel Scherzer (Cambridge, 1974), 283–308, 303, who discusses a similar phenomenon in East European Jewish parables and proverbs. The quotation is from Briggs, *Competence,* 122.

33. This phenomenon was noted by G. Nagy, "Review: D. Fehling, 'Die Wiederhohlungsfiguren und ihr Gebrauch bei den Griechen vor Gorgias'," *AJP* 92 (1971): 730–33, 731, who cites as examples *Il.* 7.282, 13.72, 24.354 and Hes. *Op.* 352.

they open up the discussion and are considered to be more friendly.[34] It is difficult to determine what the precise effect of such positioning in the case of Homeric gnomai might be, since we have no native speakers whom we can ask, but there are some indications that in the *Iliad* too, letting the gnome precede its explanation makes the statement more friendly and less authoritative. At *Iliad* 4.235, for example, Agamemnon speaks a gnome that he subsequently explains to the soldiers who are eager to fight; he "heartens" them (θαρσύνεσκε, 233), while at *Iliad* 5.529–32, by contrast, he "commands" (κελεύων, 528) the troops and makes a double gnome that follows its explanation.[35]

Another way in which an explanation may follow a gnome is to elaborate on an identification already made in the preceding explanation. At *Iliad* 6.261, Hecuba suggests to Hector that she will bring him a cup of wine so he can pour a libation, and she continues: "you can profit from the wine yourself if you drink (= explanation 1). *Wine fosters great strength for a tired man* (= gnome), even as you are tired from defending your friends (= explanation 2)." (ἔπειτα δὲ καὐτὸς ὀνήσεαι αἴ κε πίησθα. / ἀνδρὶ δὲ κεκμηῶτι μένος μέγα οἶνος ἀέξει, / ὡς τύνη κέκμηκας ἀμύνων σοῖσιν ἔτῃσι).

In still other cases the second explanation following the gnome is used to introduce a possible second referent. At *Iliad* 6.492, Hector holds up to Andromache the thought that "War will be the concern of men" as a negative argument for her to stop interfering in the war effort and, instead, to stick to her woman's tasks. In the next line, however, he positively applies the gnome to himself: ". . . of all men, but most of all me, among those who dwell in Troy."[36] In short, the explanation of Homeric gnomai can fulfill various pragmatic functions. It usually precedes the gnomic expressions, but it can also follow them in order to produce a friendly, less authoritative effect, to expand on a previous explanation, or to switch to another referent.

Other discourse features may be inserted into the gnomic statements themselves, showing the great flexibility of the shape of Homeric gnomai in comparison to New Mexican Spanish proverbs. Thus, instead of elaborate tying phrases that "signal the status of the succeeding discourse as an explanation of what preceded it,"[37] we often find conjunctions at the beginning of gnomai, for example at *Iliad* 1.80, quoted above: κρείσσων γὰρ βασιλεὺς ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ.[38] Such conjunctions indicate that the

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34. Seitel, "Haya Sayings," 91–92.

35. One may compare Nestor's friendly address of the vigilant guards at *Il.* 10.192–93, which is also said to be a "heartening" speech (θάρσυνε) and one he made while being glad (γήθησεν, 10.190). Similarly, Antilochus "smiles" (μειδιόων, 23.785) and Priam is said to be glad (γήθησεν, 24.424) when they deliver their gnomai with following explanation (23.787–88, 24.425–26). Homeric gnomai, like Haya sayings, generally follow their explanation.

36. *Il.* 6.490–93: ἀλλ' εἰς οἶκον ἰοῦσα τὰ σ' αὐτῆς ἔργα κόμιζε / ἱστόν τ' ἠλακάτην τε, καὶ ἀμφιπόλοισι κέλευε / ἔργον ἐποίχεσθαι (= explanation 1)· πόλεμος δ' ἄνδρεσσι μελήσει / πᾶσι (= gnome), μάλιστα δ' ἐμοί, τοὶ Ἰλίῳ ἐγγεγάασιν (= explanation 2).

37. Briggs, *Competence*, 106; for example, the phrase "That's why I tell you" in Briggs' example quoted above.

38. Cf. *Il.* 1.63, 589; 2.292; 4.235; 5.383, etc. Other explanatory conjunctions in gnomai include: δέ (used as γάρ): *Il.* 2.196, 3.108, 5.178 (cf. J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*³ [Oxford, 1954], 169); ἐπεί: *Il.* 1.274, 278; 5.441, etc.; τώ: *Il.* 14.484, 15.741, 21.190.

gnome provides an argument for the preceding remark. If the listener accepts the use of these conjunctions as valid, he or she also acknowledges the applicability of the gnome to the present situation. Similarly, validations of the truthfulness of the saying can be inserted into the gnomic statement in the form of different particles.[39]

The biggest difference between New Mexican Spanish proverbs and Homeric gnomai is the use of phrases identifying the so-called owner of the proverb. These are either specific persons or more generally "the elders of bygone days."[40] In New Mexican proverb performances such phrases are obligatory because they provide a saying with its necessary legitimacy. In the *Iliad*, by contrast, the use of introductory sentences identifying the original owner of a gnomic expression is extremely rare. Moreover, we sometimes find statements identifying the speaker as the source of the gnome, as at *Iliad* 6.488–89, where Hector says to Andromache: "*I declare* that no man has ever escaped his doom, be he a coward or noble, once he has been born,"[41] or at *Iliad* 11.408, where Odysseus says: "*I know* that they are cowards who leave the battlefield" (οἶδα γὰρ ὅττι κακοὶ μὲν ἀποίχονται πολέμοιο).[42]

Odysseus once cites a gnome of Peleus (*Il.* 9.256), and in two other cases the addressee is supposed to know the gnome already: at *Iliad* 15.204, Iris says to Poseidon: "*You know* that the Erinyes always follow the elder" (οἶσθ' ὡς πρεσβυτέροισιν Ἐρινύες αἰὲν ἕπονται), and at *Iliad* 23.589 Antilochus tells Menelaus: "*You know* what sort of transgressions a young man commits" (οἶσθ' οἷαι νέου ἀνδρὸς ὑπερβασίαι τελέθουσι). In attributing the statement to another person or by suggesting that it is well known, the speaker shifts the responsibility of the content of the saying away from himself. The use of the phrases φημί or οἶδα, on the other hand, gives the speaker full responsibility for what he says; they are typically used by superiors speaking to inferiors or by those who want to claim such superiority: in the two examples quoted above Hector is speaking to Andromache (*Il.* 6.488) and Odysseus to his θυμός (*Il.* 11.408). With Homeric gnomai the speaker therefore has a choice. He or she can emphasize the originality of the saying or its traditionality, depending on the situation in which he finds himself, but in most cases this is left in the middle. This brief survey of some of the discourse features surrounding the use of gnomai in Homer's *Iliad* corroborates Briggs' contention that "reference to [such] features is

39. The most common affirmative particle is ἦ, which is attested by itself and in various combinations: ἦ: *Il.* 8.144, *Od.* 12.109, 16.89; ἦ μήν: *Il.* 2.291; ἦ ῥά: *Il.* 23.103, 24.425. Another is τοι, which when used with gnomai, "forces the general truth upon the consciousness of the individual addressed": Denniston, *Greek Particles*, 542–43 with examples.

40. Briggs, *Competence*, 106–7.

41. *Il.* 6.488–89: μοῖραν δ' οὔ τινά φημι πεφυγμένον ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν, / οὐ κακὸν οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλόν, ἐπὴν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται. Cf. *Od.* 8.138: οὐ γὰρ ἐγώ γέ τί φημι κακώτερον ἄλλο θαλάσσης, 9.5–6: οὐ γὰρ ἐγώ γέ τί φημι τέλος χαριέστερον εἶναι / ἢ ὅτ' ἐϋφροσύνη μὲν ἔχῃ κατὰ δῆμον ἅπαντα, κτλ.

42. There are outside of the Homeric corpus several instances of Greek sayings being attributed to the "elders of bygone days" or other authoritative figures. A clear example occurs in the Herodotean story about Gyges and the wife of Candaules, on which see Russo, "Poetics," 126–28. One of the sayings Gyges speaks to Candaules is introduced by the following words (Hdt. 1.8.4): πάλαι δὲ τὰ καλὰ ἀνθρώποισι ἐξεύρηται, ἐκ τῶν μανθάνειν δεῖ· ἐν τοῖσι ἕν τόδε ἐστί, σκοπέειν τινὰ τὰ ἑωυτοῦ ("Of old, good things have been discovered by men from which we should learn. Among them is this one: Let everyone look after his own things.").

thus requisite to providing an adequate definition of the genre and to grasping the meaning of individual performances."[43]

II. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF GNOMAI IN THE *ILIAD*

In the preceding section I remarked that one of the criteria for the selection of particular discourse features, such as the introductory phrase, is the social position of the speaker and the addressee. This shows how important it is to pay close attention to the social context in which gnomic sayings are used. The relationship between the speaker and the addressee determines, at least in part, the particular form gnomai take, and they in turn can illuminate these relationships, for example when Achilles insults Aeneas by addressing him directly with a gnome at *Iliad* 20.196–98, or when Odysseus speaks to Achilles in a highly circumspect manner both at the time of the embassy (*Il.* 9.256) and when in Book 19 he tries to persuade Achilles to eat. Our understanding of the speeches of the heroes is greatly enhanced by a consideration of the different gnomai they employ.

In the following paragraphs I will examine the social position of speakers and addressees of gnomai in the *Iliad* using a model that Peter Seitel developed for the analysis of Haya sayings in their social context.[44] Seitel distinguishes three basic types of sayings, depending on their relationship to the speaker or the addressee. He refers to them as first, second, or third person sayings, which can be singular or plural.[45] These designations have nothing to do with grammatical numbers, but they refer to the person or persons to whom the saying pertains. Thus, according to Seitel's model, a gnome that applies to the speaker is a first person saying, one that applies to the addressee is a second person saying, and a gnome that applies to a third person, either present or absent, is a third person saying.

It is important to note that the same gnome can be used as a first, second, or third person saying. At *Iliad* 11.793, for example, Nestor says to Patroclus that "the persuasion of a friend is good" (ἀγαθὴ δὲ παραίφασίς ἐστιν ἑταίρου). As Nestor's preceding remarks make clear, this gnomic statement refers to the desired persuasion of Achilles by Patroclus and therefore constitutes a second person saying because it applies to the addressee; it is Patroclus who is to do the persuading of his friend. When Patroclus later repeats the same gnome to the Greek hero Eurypylus at *Iliad* 15.404, it still pertains to his imminent persuasion of Achilles, but now it constitutes a first person saying because it applies to the speaker. An example of a third person saying is *Iliad* 9.116–17, where Agamemnon says to the other Greek commanders about Achilles, "worth many hosts is a man whom Zeus holds dear in his heart" (ἀντί νυ πολλῶν / λαῶν ἐστιν ἀνὴρ ὅν τε Ζεὺς κῆρι φιλήσῃ).[46]

43. Briggs, "Pragmatics," 794. I discuss more discourse features associated with gnomic expressions in my dissertation, "Wisdom in Context," 60–81.

44. Seitel first published this model in a 1969 article entitled "Proverbs: A Social Use of Metaphors," reprinted in Mieder and Dundes, *Wisdom*, 122–39. See also Seitel, "Haya Sayings," 75–99.

45. Seitel, "Proverbs," 129; "Haya Sayings," 78.

46. Other examples of first person gnomai in the *Iliad* include: 5.873–74 (Ares about himself), 6.267–68 and 488–89 (Hector about himself), 7.101–2 (Menelaus about gods setting the limits of victory for him),

I further refined Seitel's basic model of first, second, and third person sayings in order to account for the many subtle ways in which characters in the *Iliad* can speak to one another. It is possible not only to say something directly about the addressee, through a second person gnome, but also indirectly. This is well illustrated by a conversation that Basso reports in his study of the Western Apache. One of his informants told him the following story:

> One time my mother was sick and went to the hospital in Whiteriver. It was before my older sister got married. She was supposed to look after us, cook for us. She did all right, but then one day she took off with my two [female] cousins and they went where some people were getting ready for a dance. They stayed there all morning. Then they went to another camp to drink beer with some boys. Then they went to another camp. At night they went back to the dance. Finally, they came home. My grandmother had come to take care of us, and I guess she knew that my sister had been running around. When my sister came in my grandmother didn't say anything at first. Then she said *to my older brother,* "Butterflies are girls and one of them just flew in." My sister knew what it meant, I guess, because she started feeling bad. . . . That's how they use "wise words," these old people—when they want to say something bad about someone.[47]

In this case the grandmother switches addressee in order to say something indirectly about her granddaughter. She pretends to treat the girl as a third person and her brother as the addressee, although the real target of her message is the girl herself. Similarly, at *Iliad* 9.632–36 Ajax speaks a gnome to Odysseus that is intended for Achilles. Besides switching addressee, one can also change the speaker, pretending to quote the words of someone else, or use a first or third person gnome that could apply at the same time to the addressee. I identified five types of indirect second person address in the *Iliad:* (1) a first person plural / indirect second person gnome, (2) a first person singular / indirect second person gnome, (3) a third person singular or plural / indirect second person gnome, (4) an indirect second person gnome with substitute addressee, and (5) an indirect second person gnome with substitute speaker. All these types, furthermore, can be varied by (6) the use of singular or plural topics.

1. At *Iliad* 11.469, Menelaus wants to persuade Ajax to relieve Odysseus, who is wounded and surrounded by Trojans, and so he tells him: "Let us go through the host; for it is better to help out" (ἀλλ' ἴομεν καθ' ὅμιλον· ἀλεξέμεναι γὰρ ἄμεινον). The imperative ἴομεν, which according to Briggs' discourse analysis is part of the "explanation" of the gnome, shows that Menelaus is applying the saying both to himself and to Ajax. Menelaus, however, presumably had already decided that he would try to help Odysseus, and the gnome is therefore really directed at Ajax.[48] Menelaus' use of

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409–10 (Agamemnon about himself), 9.318–20, 341–42 and 406–9 (Achilles about himself), 11.408–10 (Odysseus about himself), etc.; second person gnomai: see pp. 222–29 below; third person gnomai: 3.109–10 (Agamemnon about Priam), 4.235 (Agamemnon about Trojans), 5.407–9 (Dione about Diomedes), 9.158–59 (Agamemnon about Achilles), 15.208–10 (Poseidon about Zeus), 16.52–54 (Achilles about Agamemnon), etc.

47. Basso, "Western Apache," 106–7. For other examples of indirectly addressed proverbial expressions, see Firth, "Proverbs in Native Life," 141, 142, and 144.

48. The narrator says that, after he spoke, Menelaus led the way (*Il.* 11.472a): Ὣς εἰπὼν ὁ μὲν ἦρχ'.

a first person plural / indirect second person gnome makes his request sound more friendly, just as his use of a first person plural imperative does in the first half of the line.[49]

2. A second possibility is to make a gnome about oneself (first person singular) that applies to or has consequences for the person addressed as well. A good example is *Iliad* 1.218. Here Achilles says to the goddess Athena, "whoever obeys the gods, to him do they listen best" (ὅς κε θεοῖς ἐπιπείθηται, μάλα τ᾽ ἔκλυον αὐτοῦ). This gnome appears to be a first person gnome, which applies to the speaker, because Achilles is the one who must obey.[50] However, the line has clear implications for Athena as well, because she is expected to grant Achilles' wishes in the future. He never says so explicitly and, we might add, the plural θεοῖς helps to leave open exactly to whom of the gods Achilles is referring,[51] but the implication of Achilles' words is nevertheless quite clear.

In other cases a person can speak a gnome about himself (first person singular) that applies to the addressee as well. An example of this type of "first person singular / indirect second person" gnome is *Iliad* 6.339, which is spoken by Paris to Hector. Hector has just rebuked his brother (νείκεσσεν, 6.325) for staying away from the war. Paris replies that he will no longer avoid the fighting but follow Hector's example; after all, he says, "victory shifts from man to man" (νίκη δ᾽ ἐπαμείβεται ἄνδρας). The implication of Paris' words is that he, once a loser, may turn out to be a winner, but at the same time that Hector, before the winner, may subsequently suffer defeat. Hector feels the sting and, like Diomedes when insulted by Agamemnon in Book 4, does not reply.[52] Instead, Helen replies and she points out to Hector (and to Paris who hears her words too) that Paris has no respect and lacks understanding (6.351–53).

3. Another type of indirect second person saying is when someone makes a gnome about a third person, which at the same time is applicable to or has consequences for the person addressed. When the army runs to the ships and threatens to leave for home in Book 2 of the *Iliad,* Odysseus orders the soldiers to sit down with a direct second person gnome (2.204a), but to his fellow chieftains he is more polite and speaks a gnome not about them but about their leader Agamemnon (*Il.* 2.196–97):

> θυμὸς δὲ μέγας ἐστὶ διοτρεφέων βασιλήων,
> τιμὴ δ᾽ ἐκ Διός ἐστι, φιλεῖ δέ ἑ μητίετα Ζεύς.

> Proud is the heart of kings, fostered by Zeus,
> and his honor comes from Zeus, and wise Zeus loves him.

49. On this type of first person plural imperative in Homer, see J. Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax*[2], vol. 1 (Basel, 1926), 43. Wackernagel points out that such commands are friendly and he even speaks of "homerische Höflichkeit" ("Homeric courtesy") in this regard.

50. Achilles applies this gnome to himself in the preceding two lines (1.216–17): χρὴ μὲν σφωΐτερόν γε, θεά, ἔπος εἰρύσσασθαι / καὶ μάλα περ θυμῷ κεχολωμένον· ὡς γὰρ ἄμεινον ("One must heed your words, goddess, / even when angry at heart; for such is better").

51. On the significance of the grammatical numbers of personal topics in gnomai, see below, pp. 225–27.

52. *Il.* 6.342: Ὣς φάτο, τὸν δ᾽ οὔ τι προσέφη κορυθαίολος Ἕκτωρ. Cf. *Il.* 4.401: Ὣς φάτο, τὸν δ᾽ οὔ τι προσέφη κρατερὸς Διομήδης. On the contempt this silence may entail, see G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary, Vol. II: Books 5–8* (Cambridge, 1990), 204, and Martin, *Language,* 71.

The implication of this saying is that the Greek commanders should obey their leader and stop running away. This is not said directly, however, but only implied. Furthermore, while the preceding "explanation" indicates that Odysseus applies this gnome primarily to Agamemnon, whose mind the Greek commanders misjudged and who may become angry with them (2.192–95), his words could carry still another meaning, namely that his fellow commanders, who are after all βασιλεῖς as well, should be careful not to jeopardize their own honor.[53]

This brings us to another form of address allowed by this type: one can also make a saying about a third person that at the same time applies to the addressee. A good example of this type of "third person / indirect second person" gnome is *Iliad* 19.162–70. Here Odysseus speaks an extended double gnome to Achilles about a man not being able to fight without having eaten, "not even when eager for battle":

> οὐ γὰρ ἀνὴρ πρόπαν ἦμαρ ἐς ἠέλιον καταδύντα
> ἄκμηνος σίτοιο δυνήσεται ἄντα μάχεσθαι·
> εἴ περ γὰρ θυμῷ γε μενοινάᾳ πολεμίζειν,
> ἀλλά τε λάθρη γυῖα βαρύνεται, ἠδὲ κιχάνει   165
> δίψά τε καὶ λιμός, βλάβεται δέ τε γούνατ᾽ ἰόντι.
> ὃς δέ κ᾽ ἀνὴρ οἴνοιο κορεσσάμενος καὶ ἐδωδῆς
> ἀνδράσι δυσμενέεσσι πανημέριος πολεμίζῃ,
> θαρσαλέον νύ οἱ ἦτορ ἐνὶ φρεσίν, οὐδέ τι γυῖα
> πρὶν κάμνει πρὶν πάντας ἐρωῆσαι πολέμοιο.

Odysseus applies these two gnomai to the army in statements preceding and following these lines,[54] but, as several commentators have noted, he really wishes to persuade Achilles to eat.[55] Odysseus finds it important that Achilles heed his advice, and this may account for the elaborate form of the gnome and his use of a singular topic (ἀνήρ, 162, 167).[56]

4. It is not only possible to manipulate the referent of the gnome, but also its speaker in a form of address that I have called an "indirect second person gnome with substitute speaker." Odysseus adopts this strategy at *Iliad* 9.252–56, when he repeats to Achilles the words Peleus supposedly spoke to his son when he left for Troy:

> ὦ πέπον, ἦ μὲν σοί γε πατὴρ ἐπετέλλετο Πηλεὺς
> ἤματι τῷ, ὅτε σ᾽ ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπε·

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53. One may compare *Il.* 17.251, where Menelaus reminds the Greek leaders of their honor and glory stemming from Zeus (ἐκ δὲ Διὸς τιμὴ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ).

54. *Il.* 19.160–61: ἀλλὰ πάσασθαι ἄνωχθι θοῆς ἐπὶ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιοὺς / σίτου καὶ οἴνοιο, *Il.* 19.171–72: ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε λαὸν μὲν σκέδασον καὶ δεῖπνον ἄνωχθι / ὅπλεσθαι.

55. E.g., W. B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero*² (Oxford, 1963), 68; M. W. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary, Vol. V: Books 17–20* (Cambridge, 1990), 253.

56. The size of gnomai in the epics seems to be governed, at least in part, by the Homeric principle that "bigger is better" (cf. Martin, *Language,* 224). One may compare Norman Austin's comment about another type of wisdom expression in Homer, the paradigmatic tale: "The length of the anecdote . . . is as relevant as its content. The expansion of the anecdote is a form of *amplificatio,* or what Greek rhetoricians later called αὔξησις, a heightening of the subject, and so itself a form of persuasion. . . . In paradigmatic digressions the length of the anecdote is in direct proportion to the necessity of persuasion at the moment" ("The Function of Digression in the Iliad," *GRBS* [1966]: 295–312, 306). On the use of singular or plural topics in gnomai, see below, pp. 225–26.

> τέκνον ἐμὸν κάρτος μὲν Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ "Ηρη
> δώσουσ' αἴ κ' ἐθέλωσι, σὺ δὲ μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν
> ἴσχειν ἐν στήθεσσι· <u>φιλοφροσύνη γὰρ ἀμείνων·</u>

> My friend, truly your father Peleus admonished you
> that day, when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon:
> "My son, strength will Athena and Hera give you
> if they so desire, but you curb your proud spirit
> in your breast, *for gentle-mindedness is better.*"

Odysseus repeats Peleus' words to Achilles because gentle-mindedness is precisely what he needs from Achilles at this moment in the poem.

5. Instead of the speaker, one can also change the addressee of a gnome by telling the saying to another person in the presence of the person to whom it refers, as we have seen in the case of the Apache grandmother speaking to her grandson about her granddaughter. I call this type of expression an "indirect second person saying with substitute addressee." An example from the Homeric epics is the gnome that Calchas speaks to Achilles about Agamemnon in Book 1 of the *Iliad*. Calchas is asked by Achilles why Apollo is killing off the Greek army, but before Calchas gives him an answer he asks Achilles if he is willing to protect him in case Agamemnon will become angry with him. Calchas justifies his fear of Agamemnon with the following gnome in *Iliad* 1.80–83a:

> κρείσσων γὰρ βασιλεὺς ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ·
> εἴ περ γάρ τε χόλον γε καὶ αὐτῆμαρ καταπέψῃ,
> ἀλλά τε καὶ μετόπισθεν ἔχει κότον, ὄφρα τελέσσῃ,
> ἐν στήθεσσιν ἑοῖσι·

> For powerful is a king when he is angry with a lesser man,
> for even if that same day he swallows his anger, till it is vented
> he holds a grievance in his breast.

As the narrator indicates in lines 68 and 73, Calchas is not speaking these words just to Achilles, but he stands up in the assembly and speaks publicly.[57] Calchas therefore can count on the fact that Agamemnon, who is present, hears his gnome too. While this is technically a third person saying (to Achilles about Agamemnon), it is at the same time an indirect second person address of Agamemnon.[58]

6. There is one more element of a gnome that can be manipulated, besides the speaker, the addressee or the intended referent, and that is the grammatical number (singular or plural) of the personal topic in a gnome.[59]

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57. 1.68–69: τοῖσι δ' ἀνέστη / Κάλχας Θεστορίδης οἰωνοπόλων ὄχ' ἄριστος, 1.73: ὅ σφιν ἐῢ φρονέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν.

58. This form of address is very obvious when the speaker after uttering the gnome turns directly to the intended referent, for example at *Il.* 2.297–98, where Odysseus speaks to Agamemnon about the Greek army, or at *Il.* 9.632–36, where Ajax speaks to Odysseus about Achilles.

59. There are three examples of duals in gnomai in the Homeric epics, which in all three cases apply to two persons: *Il.* 10.224–26 (referring to Diomedes and Odysseus), *Od.* 6.182–85 (referring to Nausicaä and her future husband), and 16.243–44 (referring to Telemachus and Odysseus). The personal topic of a gnome need not always be expressed, for example in *Il.* 12.243: εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης, the text of the gnome does not specify who should defend the country (ἄνδρα, ἄνδρας, τινα?).

By "personal topic" I mean any category of person(s) mentioned in the gnome, for example βασιλεὺς and ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ in *Iliad* 1.80, quoted above.[60] As a rule, a singular personal topic is used only to apply to a singular person, whereas a plural can apply either to a number of people or to one individual. For example, βασιλεὺς and ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ in *Iliad* 1.80 apply, respectively, to Agamemnon and Calchas, while ἀνδρῶν in *Iliad* 3.108 applies to all of Nestor's sons but in *Iliad* 6.488 only to Hector.[61] Because a plural topic can apply to one or more persons, a speaker can exploit this feature to include the addressee in what otherwise would appear to be a straightforward first or third person saying. This appears to be the case at *Iliad* 4.320. Agamemnon has just referred rather tactlessly to Nestor's old age which, he says, prevents Nestor from fighting as he should (4.313–16). To this Nestor replies (4.318–20):

> Ἀτρεΐδη μάλα μέν τοι ἐγὼν ἐθέλοιμι καὶ αὐτὸς
> ὣς ἔμεν ὡς ὅτε δῖον Ἐρευθαλίωνα κατέκταν.
> ἀλλ᾽ οὔ πως ἅμα πάντα θεοὶ δόσαν ἀνθρώποισιν·

> Son of Atreus, I myself would wish
> that I was such as on the day that I killed noble Ereuthalion,
> *but in no way do the gods give to humans (plural) all things at the same time.*

Nestor goes on to say that he now fights with his wits, while younger men, who put their faith in brute strength, fight with spears (4.321–25). Agamemnon is such a young man and in the *Iliad* the spear fighter *par excellence.* By his use of the plural topic ἀνθρώποισιν Nestor therefore may be suggesting that the gods have not given all things at once to Agamemnon either, who may be a good spear fighter but generally lacks wit.[62]

These different types of gnomic address are all used in different social contexts. Among the Haya of Tanzania a direct second person saying, which is applicable to the addressee, is considered a serious statement and is therefore restricted to certain members of the community in certain situations.[63] We find the same restricted use of direct second person sayings in Homer's *Iliad,* where they are primarily used by speakers who are in a po-

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60. For my use of the term "topic," see D. Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*[3] (Oxford, 1991), 354–55: "The topic of a sentence is the entity (person, thing, etc.) about which something is said. . . . [It] often coincides with the subject of a sentence (e.g., *A lady* is coming to the door), but it need not (e.g., There's *the lady* who gave you a lift) . . ."; cf. S. Slings, "Written and Spoken Language: An Exercise in the Pragmatics of the Greek Sentence," *CP* 87 (1992): 95–109, 98. The adjective "personal" specifies my interest in the person(s) who are talked about.

61. *Il.* 3.108: αἰεὶ δ᾽ ὁπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν φρένες ἠερέθονται, *Il.* 6.488–89: μοῖραν δ᾽ οὔ τινά φημι πεφυγμένον ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν, / οὐ κακὸν οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλόν, ἐπὴν τὰ πρῶτα γένηται.

62. Other instances where we possibly find such manipulations of a plural topic to include the addressee in the saying are *Il.* 2.196–97 (Odysseus about the spirit and honor of kings, such as Agamemnon and the other chieftains: see above), 6.146–49 (Glaucus about his own family and, implicitly, the family of Diomedes), 6.339 (Paris about himself and implicitly Hector: see above), 19.91–94 (Agamemnon about himself and implicitly Achilles); cf. *Od.* 4.197–98 (Pisistratus about himself and, indirectly, Menelaus), 14.124–25 (Eumaeus about other beggars and implicitly the beggar/Odysseus), 19.591–92a and 592b–93 (Penelope about herself and implicitly the beggar/Odysseus).

63. Seitel, "Haya Sayings," 84.

sition of authority over the addressee or who wish to claim such authority. Of the forty-three direct second person sayings I identified in the *Iliad*,[64] thirty-four are spoken by persons in a position of authority over their addressees, including old to young,[65] king to soldiers,[66] parent to child,[67] god to man,[68] teacher to pupil,[69] and herald to heroes.[70]

The nine other instances of direct second person gnomai in the *Iliad* can be explained by plausible sub-hypotheses. One can, for example, always pay someone a compliment through a second person gnome, because the friendly content of the saying precludes the addressee from taking offense. This seems to be the reason why Idomeneus can say to Meriones that he is like the good man who eagerly takes his place among warriors in an ambush (13.279–86), or why Menelaus can tell his fellow chieftains that they are such men as "the honor and glory of Zeus attend" (ἐκ δὲ Διὸς τιμὴ καὶ κῦδος ὀπηδεῖ, 17.251).[71] Another exception is close kin. At *Iliad* 15.140–41, Athena uses a direct second person gnome to discourage her brother Ares from joining the fighting against the will of Zeus. Ares wants to rescue his son Ascalaphus, who is about to be killed on the battlefield, but Athena stops him and tells him, "it is impossible to save the lineage and

64. *Il.* 1.274, 278–79; 2.24–25, 61–62, 204a; 5.383–84, 441–42, 531, and 532; 6.261; 7.282; 8.143–44; 9.63–64, 249–50, 256, 497–501, 508–9, and 510–12; 11.390, 793; 12.270–71; 13.279–83 and 284–86; 15.140–41, 203, 207, 563, and 564; 16.630; 17.32, 251; 18.128–29; 19.79–80; 20.198; 21.184–85, 379–80, 485–86; 23.315–25; 24.130–31.

65. *Il.* 1.274 (Nestor to Achilles and Agamemnon), 278–79 (Nestor to Achilles in the same speech), 2.24–25 and 61–62 (Dream in the guise of Nestor to Agamemnon), 8.143–44 and 9.63–64 (Nestor to Diomedes), 9.497–501 (Phoenix to Achilles: see also below under "teacher to pupil"; Phoenix bases his authority over Achilles at least in part on his advanced age: *Il.* 9.446, cf. 432, 607), 11.793 (Nestor to Patroclus), 15.207 (Poseidon to Iris); cf. *Od.* 2.276–77 (Mentor to Telemachus), 15.78–79 (Menelaus to Telemachus), 18.174 (Eurynome to Penelope, whom she addresses as "child," τέκος, 170).

66. *Il.* 2.204a (Odysseus to soldiers), 5.531 and 532 (Agamemnon to soldiers), 12.270–71 (both Aiantes to soldiers), 15.563 and 564 (Telamonian Ajax to soldiers), and 19.79–80 (Agamemnon to soldiers).

67. *Il.* 5.383–84 (Dione to Aphrodite), 6.261 (Hecuba to Hector), 9.256 (Peleus to Achilles, as reported by Odysseus), 18.128–29 and 24.130–31 (Thetis to Achilles), 21.379–80 (Hera to Hephaestus), 485–86 (Hera to Artemis), and 23.315–25 (Nestor to Antilochus). A relationship like that of father and son is also suggested by Nestor when speaking to Diomedes in Book 9 (9.57–58, with a second person gnome in ll. 64–65) and by Phoenix when he speaks to Achilles (9.494 with second person gnomai in ll. 497–512).

68. *Il.* 5.441–42 (Apollo to Diomedes). One could add to this example the appearance of Dream to Agamemnon in *Il.* 2.24–25, although he takes the guise of Nestor, and Thetis' various instructions of Achilles (*Il.* 18.128–29, 24.130–31), although she stresses above all her parental relationship to him (τέκνον, 18.128, τέκνον ἐμόν, 24.128).

69. In *Il.* 9.497–512, Phoenix, whom Peleus had assigned to be Achilles' teacher (9.442), embarks on a complex series of gnomai, several of which are direct second person sayings, including the first one, in which he tells his pupil to curb his anger and not to cherish a ruthless heart, "for even the gods themselves are mollified, despite their greater excellence, majesty and strength" (στρεπτοὶ δέ τε καὶ θεοὶ αὐτοί, / τῶν περ καὶ μείζων ἀρετὴ τιμή τε βίη τε, 9.497–98).

70. At *Il.* 7.282, Idaeus instructs Hector and Ajax to suspend their duel, because it is already night and, "it is good to obey the night" (ἀγαθὸν καὶ νυκτὶ πιθέσθαι). Idaeus can speak to the two heroes in such an authoritative manner because of his position as κῆρυξ, which is clearly marked in the text (7.273–78); on the important function and high status of heralds in Homer, see R. Mondi, "The Function and Social Position of the κῆρυξ in Early Greece" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1978), esp. 1–17. One could add to this example *Il.* 2.24–25 and 61–62 (Dream is sent by Zeus to talk to Agamemnon), 9.249–50 (Odysseus delivers Agamemnon's message to Achilles), and 15.503 (Iris to Poseidon).

71. This turns out to be less of a compliment when Menelaus in the following lines suggests that, as a consequence, they should be ashamed of the way they abandoned Patroclus' body (17.254–55). Pindar also includes a small number of direct second person gnomai that complement the victor in his epinicians: *Pyth.* 1.85, 99–100; 2.56, 63b–64a; 3.85–86, 114b–15; 4.273–74; 5.1–4, 12–13; 8.88–92a, 92b–97.

offspring of all men" (ἀργαλέον δὲ / πάντων ἀνθρώπων ῥῦσθαι γενεήν τε
τόκον τε). Similarly, in tragedy there are some examples of siblings who
speak to one another directly in second person sayings.[72] These family re-
lationships are perhaps considered so close that they can dispense with the
normal rules of propriety.[73]

Finally, there are five cases in the *Iliad* where second person gnomai are
used to insult the addressee by suggesting that they are socially inferior. At
Iliad 17.32, Menelaus addresses a Trojan fighter with the saying, "only a
fool learns by suffering" (ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω), which is repeated by
Achilles to Aeneas at *Iliad* 20.198. In both cases the Greek heroes pretend
to give an order (κελεύω, 17.30, 20.196), although they have no real author-
ity over their opponents, and Menelaus' speech is explicitly said to be spo-
ken in anger (μέγ' ὀχθήσας, 17.18). These second person addresses can be
interpreted as deliberate attempts by Achilles and Menelaus to insult their
opponents, which is also the interpretation of Aeneas, who compares this
kind of discourse to that of two women fighting with words in the street
(20.251–55). In this case the pretentious form of the second person address
combines with the unflattering content of the saying to produce a strong in-
sult.[74] We can therefore conclude that in Homer's *Iliad,* just as among the
Haya people of Tanzania, direct second person gnomai are associated with
authoritative discourse, except when they are used to complement a person
or when they are spoken between close kin.

The different indirect second person addresses are used in different social
contexts as well. Menelaus at *Iliad* 11.469, quoted above, probably chooses
to address Ajax with a first person plural / indirect second person gnome be-
cause he would have offended Ajax, who is his social equal, if he had
addressed the gnome directly to him. This type of gnome is the preferred
form among social equals and friends in the *Iliad* (the Greek and Trojan
heroes among themselves).[75] First person singular / indirect second person
gnomai are used predominantly in polite conversation, as in Achilles' ad-

72. E.g., Soph. *Ant.* 92 (Ismene to Antigone), *El.* 398 (Chrysothemis to Electra), Eur. *Or.* 234 (Electra to
Orestes).

73. One may compare the use of the personal pronoun "tu" in French, which is ordinarily used for social
inferiors but also for close friends and siblings.

74. Other examples of second person gnomai spoken in anger and/or as insults, are: *Il.* 11.390 (Di-
omedes replies to Paris' insults), 16.630 where Patroclus "reprimands" Meriones (ἐνένιπε, 626), and 21.184–
85 where Achilles "exults" (εὐχόμενος, 183) over the slain body of Asteropaeus; cf. *Od.* 2.244–45 (Leocri-
tus to Mentor), 8.147–48 (Laodamas to Odysseus, interpreted by Odysseus as "mockery": κερτομέοντες,
153), 167–75 (Odysseus to Euryalus, spoken in anger: ὑπόδρα ἰδών, 165, χωόμενος, 238), 16.423 (Penelope
to Antinous, spoken as "rebuke": ἐνένιπεν, 417), 17.218 (Melantheus to Odysseus and Eumaeus, meant as an
insult: νείκεσσεν ἔπος τ' ἔφατ' ἔκ τ' ὀνόμαζεν, / ἔκπαγλον καὶ ἀεικές, 215–16), 18.19 (Odysseus to Irus,
being spoken in anger: ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν προσέφη, 14), 287 (Antinous to Penelope), and 21.331–33 (Penelope to
Eurymachus).

75. Examples are: *Il.* 12.243 (Hector to Poulydamas), 326–27 (Sarpedon to Glaucus), 412 (Sarpedon to
Lycians), 13.115 (Poseidon in guise of Calchas to Greek heroes), 237 (Poseidon alias Thoas to Idomeneus),
14.63 (Nestor to Agamemnon), 80 and 81 (Agamemnon to Nestor), 15.511–13 (Ajax to companions), and
741 (Ajax to other Greeks); cf. *Od.* 1.370 (Telemachus to suitors), 12.341–42 (Eurylochus to crew), 13.15
(Alcinous to Phaeacians), 15.49–50 (Pisistratus to Telemachus), 400–401 (Eumaeus to beggar/Odysseus),
16.401-2 (Amphinomus to suitors), 17.176 (Medon to suitors), 18.19 (beggar/Odysseus to Irus), 404 (one
suitor to another). This type of gnome is also frequently used by the sympotic poets when addressing their
friends: Archil. frag. 13.5–7a, Mimn. frag. 2.5–16, Theog. 277–28 (≈ Solon frag. 13.71–72), 315 (≈ Solon
frag. 15.1), 985–88, 1048, Alc. frag. 335.1.

dress of Athena at *Iliad* 1.218, or, by contrast, to insult someone.[76] Similarly, "indirect second person gnomai with substitute addressee" are used either to praise or to blame someone. For example, Ajax tries to insult Achilles at *Iliad* 9.632–36 by addressing a gnome about him to Odysseus, while Antilochus praises Odysseus after the foot-race by speaking a gnome about him to the assembled Greeks (*Il.* 23.787–88).[77] This surprising correspondence between polite and abusive forms of address supports the claim of Marcel Detienne and others that there exists a fundamental kinship between praise and blame styles in early Greek discourse.[78]

So far we have distinguished six types of address that a speaker can use to make a gnome about his addressee: a direct second person gnome, a first person plural / indirect second person gnome, a first person singular / indirect second person gnome, a third person singular or plural / indirect second person gnome, an indirect second person gnome with substitute speaker, and an indirect second person gnome with substitute addressee. All six types can further be varied by the use of singular or plural personal topics. The particular situation to which the saying applies dictates the selection of one type of address over another. The relative social positions of the speaker and the addressee are very important, but they are not the only determining factor; for example, most direct second person gnomai are spoken by persons with authority over the addressee (elder men, kings, parents, gods, teachers) or other groups being permitted a certain freedom of expression (heralds, siblings), but they can also be used to express anger or to make a false claim of superiority. Furthermore, when the gnome is meant as a compliment, greater liberty is allowed.

III. THE NARRATIVE CONTEXT OF GNOMAI IN THE *ILIAD*

A fundamental question facing the literary critic (and I am including oral poetry in my definition of literature) is how far wisdom expressions in literature can be compared to, and analyzed as, statements in real life. Both Briggs and Seitel based their analysis of proverbial expressions on real life conversations, while Homer's gnomai are part of a fictional narrative. Research on this question has been encouraging: it appears that, at least in

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76. Examples of polite addresses are: *Il.* 1.218 (Achilles to Athena), 589 (Hephaestus to Hera), 6.146–49 (Glaucus to Diomedes), 22.71–73 (Priam to Hector). Examples of insults: *Il.* 3.65–66 and 6.339 (Paris to Hector), 4.320 (Nestor to Agamemnon), 9.309 and 312–13 (Achilles to Odysseus), 13.730–34 (Poulydamas to Hector), 19.90 and 91–94 (Agamemnon to Achilles), 20.242–43 (Aeneas to Achilles).

77. Other examples of "indirect second person gnomai with substitute addressee" used as insults are: *Il.* 3.108 (Menelaus to two armies about sons of Priam), 13.636–39 and 17.19 (Menelaus to Zeus about his enemy), *Od.* 8.351 (Hephaestus to Poseidon about Ares) and 17.246 (Eumaeus to Nymphs about Melantheus). Examples of praise are: *Il.* 23.787–88 (Antilochus to Greeks about Odysseus), *Od.* 6.207–8 (Nausicaä to maidens about Odysseus) and 8.479–81 (Odysseus to herald about Demodocus). This type of gnome is also the preferred form in epinicians by Pindar, who often addresses a god, his lyre, or another member in the audience when speaking about the victor: e.g., *Ol.* 8.10–11 (addressed to Olympia), *Pyth.* 1.59 (addressed to the Muse), 10.21–22 (addressed to Apollo), etc. Note that Antilochus' gnome is spoken in the context of an athletic victory as well.

78. M. Detienne, *Les Maîtres de vérité dans la Grèce archaïque* (Paris, 1967), 18–27; G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore, 1979), 222–75; Martin, *Language*, 75, 110.

functionalist terms, literary texts do not represent speech-acts very differently from their analogs in real life.[79] This is understandable because such texts would otherwise be very difficult for readers or listeners to comprehend. Nevertheless, one has to be aware of possible manipulations of the system: literature can expand the rules of linguistic performance in ways that are still understandable, yet hardly ever occur in real life.[80]

One of the differences between the conversations recorded by Briggs and Seitel and speeches that are reproduced in literature is that the latter are embedded in a second discourse, the narrative discourse between the author and his or her audience.[81] This means that proverbial expressions in literature have to be studied from this perspective (or context) too, as Roger Abrahams and Barbara Babcock have argued.[82] Proverbial expressions in literature can fulfill many different functions, in part depending on the reputation of the speaker and the seriousness with which such statements are treated in the society at large, but they all share one basic characteristic: because of their generalizing quality and their demand to be applied, proverbial expressions can easily operate at different levels, inviting the reader or listener to apply the saying not only to the characters in the poem but also to their own situation outside the text. The author, furthermore, can speak to his audience through the narrator or the characters in the story.[83]

There are in the *Iliad* three gnomai spoken in the narrator's voice (16.688–90, 20.265–66, and 21.264), which is not very many if one compares it to the number of similes in the narrator's voice or the more than 150 gnomai in the speeches. All three sayings are applied to a particular character in the poem, but there are indications that the poet, through his narrator, may have wanted to apply them to his audience as well.[84] The topics of the gnomai are consistently put in the plural, even though in all three cases the character to whom the saying is applied is singular. I submit that Homer is making a move similar to that of Nestor in *Iliad* 4.320, who manipulates the

79. T. A. van Dijk, "Pragmatics and Poetics," in *Pragmatics of Language and Literature*, ed. T. A. van Dijk (Amsterdam, 1976), 23–57, 52; cf. H. Jason, "Proverbs in Society: The Problem of Meaning and Function," *Proverbium* 17 (1971): 617–23, 617; and E. Dickey, *Greek Forms of Address from Herodotus to Lucian* (Oxford, 1996), esp. 30–33 (with bibliography). Seitel in his first study of African proverbs compared the way proverbs were presented in the novels of the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe with their use among the Ibo people and discovered no deviations (Seitel, "Proverbs," 125).

80. Cf. J. T. Irvine, "Strategies of Status Manipulation in Wolof Greeting," in Bauman and Scherzer, *Explorations*, 167–91, 179 (see n. 32 above).

81. T. Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (Cambridge, 1990), 22; cf. van Dijk, "Pragmatics," 36.

82. R. D. Abrahams and B. A. Babcock, "The Literary Use of Proverbs," *Journal of American Folklore* 90 (1977): 414–29. See also J. M. Foley, "Proverbs and Proverbial Function in South Slavic and Comparative Epic," *Proverbium* 11 (1994): 77–92, on some special ways in which epics can use proverbial expressions.

83. For an exemplary study that discusses these different narratological levels and their significance for the interpretation of Homer's *Iliad*, see I. J. F. De Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (Amsterdam, 1987). See also S. L. Schein, "Narratology and Homeric Studies," *Poetics Today* 12 (1991): 577–90.

84. De Jong, *Narrators*, 41–45, is correct in distinguishing between the poet/performer and the narrator's voice in the text. However, as shown by the many similarities between the poet/performer and the narrator, who is presented as a professional poet, the poet/performer wants the audience to identify him with the narrator, just as he wants the audience to identify itself with the internal addressee (on which, see De Jong, *Narrators*, 53–60). *Il.* 16.688–90 is applied to Patroclus, 20.265–66 to Aeneas, and 21.264 to Achilles.

grammatical number of the personal topic of his gnome in order to match it with the number of the intended referents.

The first gnome that the narrator of the *Iliad* speaks in his own voice occurs in Book 16, just before Patroclus' death. He says that if only Patroclus had listened to Achilles he would not have been killed, and then continues:

> ἀλλ' αἰεί τε Διὸς κρείσσων νόος ἠέ περ ἀνδρῶν,
> ὅς τε καὶ ἄλκιμον ἄνδρα φοβεῖ καὶ ἀφείλετο νίκην
> ῥηϊδίως, ὅτε δ' αὐτὸς ἐποτρύνῃσι μάχεσθαι·

> But the mind of Zeus is always stronger than that of men,
> who even puts to flight a stout man and robs him of victory
> very easily, but another time he himself urges him to fight.[85]

The same gnome is repeated by Hector at *Iliad* 17.176, but he leaves out the plural ἀνδρῶν because he is only speaking about himself. Instead we find in our text: ἀλλ' αἰεί τε Διὸς κρείσσων νόος αἰγιόχοιο ("But always stronger is the mind of aegis-bearing Zeus").[86] It is interesting that this should be the first gnome in the poem spoken in the narrator's voice. It occurs at a crucial juncture in the poem, just before Patroclus' death, and recalls the famous fifth line of Book 1, which says that in the war Zeus' will was being done (Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή).

The other two gnomai in the narrator's voice also deal with man's limited resources with respect to the divine, and, like *Iliad* 16.688–90, they use a plural topic even though their immediate referent is singular. At *Iliad* 20.264–66, in response to Achilles' fear that Aeneas might pierce his new shield, the narrator remarks:

> νήπιος, οὐδ' ἐνόησε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν
> ὡς οὐ ῥηΐδι' ἐστὶ θεῶν ἐρικυδέα δῶρα
> ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι δαμήμεναι οὐδ' ὑποείκειν.

> The fool, he did not understand in his mind or heart
> how the glorious gifts of the gods are not easily
> broken by mortal men, nor do they give way.

The narrator is speaking about the gifts not giving way to men (plural), even though in the immediate context the saying refers only to Aeneas. Likewise, at *Iliad* 21.264, as Achilles tries in vain to escape the onslaught of the river Scamander, the narrator says:

> καὶ λαιψηρὸν ἐόντα· θεοὶ δέ τε φέρτεροι ἀνδρῶν.

> even though he [= Achilles] was swift; gods are stronger than men.

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85. *Il.* 16.688–90. Lines 689–90, which form an expansion of the basic gnome in 16.688, are disputed, because omitted in some papyri and some good codices, but they are rightly defended by M. van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the "Iliad,"* vol. 2 (Leiden, 1964), 27–29, and R. Janko, *The "Iliad": A Commentary, Vol. IV: Books 13–16* (Cambridge, 1992), 398. The virtual repetition of these lines by Hector in 17.176–77 is highly significant and there is no reason to reject them: Edwards, *Commentary,* 79–80.

86. There is no reason to believe with van der Valk (previous note) that Aristarchus emended an original ἠέ περ ἀνδρῶν to αἰγιόχοιο. Hector applies the gnome only to himself, whereas Homer wishes to apply it to more than one man. Most manuscripts in fact read ἠέ περ ἀνδρός (singular) here, which is a possible variant.

The topic of man's limited ability with regard to the divine is arguably one of the central themes of the *Iliad*. The fact that the narrator reiterates this theme in the only three gnomai he speaks in the poem strongly supports this contention. The use of plural topics in these gnomai further suggests that the poet wants his audience to believe that what held true for the old heroes applies to them as well.

In the *Odyssey*, there are two gnomai in the narrator's voice (*Od.* 5.79–80 and 16.161). They both deal with the issue of the recognizability of the gods and, like their Iliadic counterparts, they employ a plural personal topic although they apply to singular characters in the story.[87] *Odyssey* 5.79–80 states that "the gods are not unknown to each other, not even if they live in houses far apart" (οὐ γάρ τ' ἀγνῶτες θεοὶ ἀλλήλοισι πέλονται / ἀθάνατοι, οὐδ' εἴ τις ἀπόπροθι δώματα ναίει). The narrator applies this saying to Calypso's recognition of Hermes, who has come to her cave. At *Odyssey* 16.161, the narrator says, "not in any way do the gods appear in manifest form to all" (οὐ γάρ πως πάντεσσι θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς), to explain why Telemachus cannot see Athena when she appears in Eumaeus' hut while Odysseus does. These two sayings, the only ones in the narrator's voice in the *Odyssey*, support Pietro Pucci and Sheila Murnaghan's contention that "disguise and recognition" are central themes in the poem.[88] Furthermore, if performed at the Panathenaea, the narrator's gnome at *Odyssey* 16.161 would have carried special significance, because Athena was supposed to be present at this festival in her honor.[89]

Besides speaking his own gnomai through the narrator, the poet can also adopt the voice of one of his characters. It has been argued that some of the paradeigmata in the *Iliad* have two distinct functions, one at the level of the characters and the other at the level of the poet and his audience. For example, the story of Meleager that Phoenix tells in Book 9 of the *Iliad* is, at the level of the characters, a protreptic paradigm, but its negative ending, with Meleager's refusal to give in to Cleopatra (a possible anagram of Patroclus' name) and others until it is practically too late, can best be explained as an attempt by the poet to reveal the extent of Achilles' wrath and to foreshadow some of the events to come.[90] Gnomai can be used in

87. The phrasing of *Od.* 16.161 is particularly striking in this regard: οὐ γάρ πως πάντεσσι θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς.

88. P. Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos: Intertextual Readings in the "Odyssey" and the "Iliad"* (Ithaca, NY, 1987), 83–97; S. Murnaghan, *Disguise and Recognition in the "Odyssey"* (Princeton, 1987), esp. 176–80.

89. On the presence of the gods at festivals in their honor, see Detienne in G. Sissa and M. Detienne, *La Vie quotidienne des dieux grecs* (Paris, 1989), 198–99; on the *Odyssey*'s connection to Athens, see most recently R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual: Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-State* (Oxford, 1994), 144–54; E. F. Cook, *The "Odyssey" in Athens: Myths of Cultural Origins* (Ithaca, NY, 1995); G. Nagy, *Poetry as Performance: Homer and Beyond* (Cambridge, 1996), 110–11, 153–86, and *Homeric Questions* (Austin, 1996), 42–43, 65–112.

90. Ø. Andersen, "Myth, Paradigm, and 'Spatial Form' in the *Iliad*," in *Homer: Beyond Oral Poetry*, ed. J. M. Bremer, I. J. F. De Jong, and J. Kalff (Amsterdam, 1987), 1–13, esp. 3–7. For Cleopatra as an anagram of Patroclus' name, see M. M. Wilcock, "Mythological Paradeigma in the *Iliad*," *CQ* 14 (1964): 141–54, p. 150, n. 4, with earlier references. See also N. Felson-Rubin, *Regarding Penelope: From Character to Poetics* (Princeton, 1994), 125–44, on the meta-poetic aspect of bardic and spectacle scenes in the *Odyssey*, and Bruce Heiden's article, "Shifting Contexts in the *Iliad*," *Eranos* 89 (1991): 1–12, on the recognition of the multivalence of certain statements in the *Iliad*.

exactly the same way. They are uniquely qualified to fulfill this double function because they transcend by definition the particular situation to which they are applied.

Of course it is very difficult to determine where the voice of the poet or the narrator intrudes in the speeches of the gods and heroes. As with the paradeigmata, one must distinguish two levels in the use of gnomai in character speeches. The first level pertains to the characters themselves and usually can be determined from the narrative context. The other level, between poet and audience, is always a matter of speculation, as it must have been to a degree for the original audience as well. The ancients themselves, however, had no qualms in identifying gnomai that are spoken by characters in the poem with the voice of Homer and they may have found the basis for this in actual performances of epic poetry.[91]

I have selected one passage from the *Iliad* where the poet may be speaking through one of his characters. I have referred a number of times to the gnome that Calchas speaks to Achilles in Book 1 of the *Iliad* (1.80–83a): κρείσσων γὰρ βασιλεὺς ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηϊ· / εἴ περ γάρ τε χόλον γε καὶ αὐτῆμαρ καταπέψῃ, / ἀλλά τε καὶ μετόπισθεν ἔχει κότον, ὄφρα τελέσσῃ, / ἐν στήθεσσιν ἑοῖσι. Calchas, in the preceding explanation (1.78–79), applies this saying to his fear of incurring Agamemnon's anger in the near future, but the irony of the situation is that in the course of Book 1, and the rest of the poem, Achilles will turn out to be the βασιλεύς who is angry with a "lesser man" (Agamemnon).[92] The poet therefore may have introduced this gnome not only so that Calchas could comment on his own situation, but also to foreshadow the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon. I do not want to argue that every gnome in the *Iliad* has reference beyond the immediate situation in which it is used, but for *Iliad* 1.80–83 perhaps a better than usual case can be made. The speaker is, after all, a seer who "knows all things that are now, the things to come, and the things past" (ὃς ἤδη τά τ' ἐόντα τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα, *Il.* 1.70), a quality he shares with the poet.[93]

IV. CONCLUSION

In an attempt to show the fruitfulness of a contextual approach to wisdom expressions in classical literature, I have examined the discourse, social, and narrative context of gnomai in the *Iliad*, based on models developed

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91. On the epic poet's impersonation of the voices of his characters in performance, see C. J. Herington, *Poetry into Drama: Early Greek Tragedy and the Greek Poetic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1985), 13–14, and Felson-Rubin, *Regarding Penelope,* 137–38. The oldest example of a gnome of a character being taken as an expression of the ideas of the poet is probably Simonides frag. 19 West[2], who quotes Glaucus' saying about the generations of men being like leaves (*Il.* 6.146) as spoken by "the man of Chios" (Χῖος ἔειπεν ἀνήρ). Compare Heraclitus (frag. A22 D.-K. / 28c[2] M.), who according to Aristotle (*Eth. Eud.* 7.1.1235a26–28) blamed Homer for wishing that "strife might vanish from among gods and men," even though these words are spoken by Achilles at *Il.* 18.107, and Pind. *Pyth.* 4.277, who seems to quote Poseidon's words at *Il.* 15.207 as a ῥῆμα Ὁμήρου. For later examples, see J. Teufer, "De Homero in apophthegmatis usurpato" (Ph.D. diss., Leipzig, 1890).

92. Compare *Il.* 1.139, 217, 224; 9.110, 525, 646, 675, 679, etc.

93. Cf. Hes. *Th.* 32. Andrew Ford has pointed to this and other similarities between Calchas and the narrator of the *Iliad* in *Homer: The Poetry of the Past* (Ithaca, NY, 1992), 48.

by modern paroemiologists such as Charles Briggs, Peter Seitel, Roger Abrahams, and Barbara Babcock. First, however, I have defined a Greek gnome, following Aristotle, as a generalized expression that is used to argue for or against a particular action. I have also argued that such gnomic expressions were at least until the classical period part of a living, oral tradition in which they were created in performance using traditional formulae and themes.

Charles Briggs identified eight discourse features surrounding the performance of New Mexican Spanish proverbs, several of which accompany Homeric gnomai as well, most importantly the explanation preceding or following the saying. They help to shape the form and the interpretation of a gnomic expression. Peter Seitel developed a model for the analysis of proverbial expressions in their social context, in which he distinguishes three basic types of sayings: first person (applying to the speaker), second person (applying to the addressee) and third person (applying to another person than the speaker or the addressee). I further refined these three categories in order to account for the many subtle ways in which the epic heroes address one another. The use of second person sayings in the *Iliad* seems to be restricted to persons in a position of authority over the addressee, unless they are spoken in praise, by close kin, or in anger. Other speakers resort to various indirect forms of address when wishing to apply a piece of gnomic wisdom to their addressee. The same holds true for the poet, who sometimes seems to speak to his audience through gnomai that the narrator first applies to characters in the epics, and sometimes through gnomai spoken by the characters themselves.

This analysis of the use of gnomai in Homer's *Iliad* could be supplemented in various ways. First of all, it could be broadened to include more of Greek literature. I am thinking not only of other narrative texts (history, tragedy, comedy, the novels), where the use of gnomic expressions can be measured against the narrative context, but also of texts spoken directly by the author to his audience. I have included in the footnotes some references to sympotic poetry and to Pindar's epinicians, which seem to use gnomai in ways very similar to those in the *Iliad*.[94] Another way to broaden the study would be to include other wisdom expressions, such as similes and paradeigmata. Characters can use these wisdom expressions in the same way as gnomai, and a particular gnome is often accompanied by a similar type of simile or paradigmatic tale.[95] I hope to pursue some of these questions at another time, but for now I hope to have shown how fruitful modern paroemiology can be for the interpretation of texts like the *Iliad*.

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94. Nn. 71, 75, and 77.
95. Odysseus, for example, pairs a simile with two third person gnomai about the army in *Il.* 2.289–94.