

SHORTER NOTES

'GOING ALONE' AT *ILIAD* 24.198–205

In a short speech in Book 24 of the *Iliad* (194–9), Priam tells Hecuba of his intention to visit the camp of the Achaeans in order to attempt to ransom the body of Hector. Hecuba responds with predictable consternation to this dangerous proposition (203–5):

πῶς ἐθέλεις ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν ἐλθέμεν οἶος,
 ἀνδρὸς ἐς ὀφθαλμούς ὃς τοι πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλοὺς
 υἱέας ἐξενάριξε; σιδήρειόν νύ τοι ἦτορ.

Colin Macleod, almost alone among commentators on the *Iliad*, finds Hecuba's use of the word οἶος at line 203 puzzling: 'It is as if Hecuba had heard part of Zeus's command (148,177). The character is made to know something the poet has told us: thus in 1.380–1 Achilles knows that Chryses has prayed to Apollo, because the poet said so in 1.35: see further Bowra in *CH* 70.'¹ Bowra lists four additional instances of this projection 'device' in Homer, but does not mention Hecuba's utterance at 24.203. In fact, of the commentators cited by Macleod, only Martinazzoli calls attention to this peculiar use of οἶος.² The scholiasts, Eustathius, and the other modern commentators presumably found nothing unusual in this use of the word, or at least overlooked its troubling presence.

Macleod's interpretation assumes, of course, that Priam, in 197–8 has not explicitly told Hecuba that he intends to go to Achilles' encampment alone. However, Priam's speech at 198 does in fact give Hecuba reason to think that this is his intention:

αἰνῶς γάρ μ' αὐτόν γε μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἄνωγε
 κείσ' ἵεναι ἐπὶ νῆας ἔσω στρατὸν εὐρὺν Ἀχαιῶν.

Although Macleod's application of Bowra's insight is plausible in this context (as is, for that matter, Martinazzoli's psychological reading), the problem that he claims to have resolved is in fact not a problem at all. Hecuba has clearly taken αὐτόν to mean 'by myself' or 'alone'. This sense of the word αὐτός is common in Homer, as Cunliffe, LSJ and Chantraine all attest (cf. *Il.* 5.880, 8.99; *Od.* 1.52, 14.171, 15.311; see also Hes. *Th.* 924).

Macleod's note to line 198 claims that 'αὐτόν stresses the spontaneity of what is done (cf. 218, 360, 560). Neither Priam's nor Achilles' actions (cf. 157–8) in this book are mere obedience to a divine command.' Although this interpretation reveals great sensitivity to the modern debate about agency and overdetermination in Homer, it is less satisfying as an account of Homer's language in the immediate context of the poem. Compare this to Macleod's treatment of 24.519–21, where Hecuba's lines at 203–5 are repeated by Achilles with only slight variation. There he provides the following substantive if overwrought justification of the presence of οἶος: 'Though Achilles is later aware of it (563–7), here he ignores Hermes' presence on the journey. That represents the first flush of astonishment at Priam's coming, it also emphasizes

¹ C. W. Macleod, *Homer, Iliad: Book 24* (Cambridge, 1982), p. 105, 'CH' is A. J. B. Wace and F. H. Stubbings (eds), *A Companion to Homer* (London, 1962).

² F. Martinazzoli, *Omero, Iliade Libro 24* (Rome, 1948). Martinazzoli is most interested in the poetic effect of the word's placement at the end of line 203: 'The word is isolated at the end of the line, representing thus, emphatically, the thought that terrifies Hecuba: Priam, alone, in the enemy camp.'

that the gods' support does not make the old man's enterprise any less extraordinary: cf. 181–7n.' Once again Macleod takes such pains to emphasize the autonomy of Homeric characters that he misses a simpler, less convoluted explanation: Achilles sees only Priam in his tent, and concludes hastily from observation that he is alone. Rather than ignoring Hermes' role initially, he infers it later, after reflection upon Priam's nonetheless courageous mission.³

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NOCHMALS THE AUTHENTICITY OF *ODYSSEY* 10.475–9

It is gratifying to see the authenticity of *Od.* 10.475–9 defended anew by the late Professor Alfred Heubeck;¹ in 1974 I put forward a rather similar defence of the lines myself.² However, Heubeck's correct conclusion – that the passage is genuine – stands in startling contrast to some gross exaggerations, in both the Italian and the English versions of his work, about the extent of the manuscript evidence against the passage.

The apparatus criticus in Heubeck's 1983 Italian edition states, correctly, that the passage is omitted by 'several' MSS. ('om. nonnulli'). But the commentary in this same edition states, wrongly, that the lines are missing in 'many' ('molti') MSS.; and the 1989 English commentary takes the exaggeration one step further by alleging, 'The lines are missing from most MSS' (my emphasis). The error, it seems, *mobilitate viriget adquiret eundo*.

What is the source of this bizarre distortion? I conjecture that the original (unpublished) German of the manuscript of Heubeck's commentary stated that the lines were missing 'in mehreren Handschriften', i.e. 'in several MSS.', but that, mesmerized by the connotations of the syllable 'mehr-', the Italian publishers' translator rendered 'mehreren' as 'molti' and the O.U.P. translator rendered it as 'most'.³ *Traduttore, traditore*.

However, publishers' translators certainly cannot be blamed for another error at this point – Heubeck's false allegation, in both the Italian and the English commentaries, that these lines 'are missing from ... Eust.'. This is an error which has been passed on from one scholar to another over many generations. The first hint of it, as far as I can discover, came in 1760, when J. A. Ernesti, in rejecting the two lines *Od.* 10.476–7, mistakenly declared that there was no trace of them in Eustathius.⁴ Later the statement was extended to the whole passage 475–9, in which form it has

¹ *Omero, Odissea* iii (Milan, 1983), p. 251 (commentary), cf. p. 86 (text and app. crit.); A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey* ii (Oxford, 1989), p. 68.

² Pp. 23–34 of 'Some Textual Problems in *Odyssey* 10', *Acta Classica* 17 (1974), 11–34; see also my *Manuscript Evidence for Interpolation in Homer* (Heidelberg, 1980), p. 30 n. 4.

³ For the use of 'mehrere' in this context cf. G. Beck, *Philologus* 109 (1965), 17 n. 4, 'Diese Verse fehlen ... in mehreren Hss.': Heubeck's own note on 475–9 directs the reader to Beck, pp. 17–18. Moreover, the same mistake has evidently occurred in the translation of Heubeck's comment on *Od.* 10.482: 'mancante in molti Mss.' (1983 edn.), 'missing from most MSS' (1989 edn.): in fact omitted by only a few.

⁴ 'Nec est vestigium horum versuum apud Eustathium': S. Clarke and J. A. Ernesti (edd.), *Homeri opera omnia*, iii (Leipzig, 1760), *ad loc.*