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# HOW THE SHROUD FOR LAERTES BECAME THE ROBE OF ODYSSEUS

This paper[1] builds an argument against R. D. Dawe, who believes that one of the most famous of all stories is inauthentic and badly told. In his notes on 'When she showed the robe, after weaving the great web, washing it so that it looked like the sun or moon, then it was that an evil spirit brought Odysseus from somewhere', Dawe remarks that the web story 'hardly belongs' in the *Odyssey*, and asks: 'Why "showed"? And to whom? Why the otiose addition of "after weaving the great web", as if we had not just been talking about that very thing?'[2] Answers to these questions will be given in my final paragraph.

To look closely into the epics, and if possible behind them, I will say a word about distinguishing the pre-text from the text. First, oral poets would enlarge and otherwise reshape their material, not always with flawless technique. It may be true but cannot be proven that one such poet, more than any other, created the *Iliad*, and that the same one, or a different one, more than any other, created the *Odyssey*. Secondly, the poetry was all written down somehow (consider Jer. 40:1 in the Revised Standard Version, 'The word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he

[1] Certain ideas that I have offered before are here mustered combatively.

[2] R. D. Dawe, *The Odyssey, Translation and Analysis* (Sussex, 1993), notes on 24.147. In the course of his destruction, Dawe (82, 832) scorns Combellack and Erbse more than anyone else whom he takes seriously. To me, Combellack makes a good deal of fault-finding look like mischief-making, and Erbse tows a number of 'analytical' arguments to the junkyard. Dawe speaks elsewhere as an advocate against the detractors of Aeschylus and Sophocles, just the opposite of how he here speaks about Homer.

*CQ*'s careful, generous referee suggested that I also assess the arguments of S. West, 'Laertes Revisited', *PCPhS* 35 (1989), 113–43. What did Aristarchus and Aristophanes Byz. mean in saying, and were they right, that *Od.* 23.296 was the end of the poem? The paper thoughtfully decides that the 'epilogue' is not so deeply embedded as the Cyclops episode, but would all the same have satisfied its patron well. Dawe notes that at least some of the epilogue was regarded as authentic by Plato and Aristotle. I allow that to my eyes a mutilated corpus of Homer would be a hateful sight. (There exists a first draft of 'Lycidas', but I would not look at it for the earth.)

In the woodland of the *Odyssey* some trees are exotic and others appear propagated from over yonder. Borrowing a chain-saw from Kirchhoff, the analysts fell whole stands, so as to reach the forest primeval. I myself see strange growths, and have my own glimpses of an *Urwald*, but would not condemn a sapling. It is wrong to think that a storyteller or dramatist, let alone his personnel, such as Odysseus and Clytemnestra, will tell the whole truth with detachment. I do not agree with B. Niese, *Die Entwicklung der homerischen Poesie* (Berlin, 1882), 47, see 38, that the poet must be ignorant of a matter if he does not speak of it when he might appropriately do so. Is Achilles unaware in *Il.* 11.608 and 16.55–9 that the return of Briseis had been offered in 9.274? I find no contradiction out of character and accordingly cannot follow G. P. Goold, 'The nature of Homeric composition', *ICS* 2 (1977), 10, in believing that books 11 and 16 must have been fixed before book 9 in its present form was composed. A storyteller or dramatist should ordinarily be regarded as a master whose art we are dull to appreciate. It was a long while before I saw what is asserted in my title, or realized that when Aegisthus arrives in *Choe.* 838 it is with his bodyguard, contrary to what had been indicated in line 771.

There is also the question whether anomalies are not to be found in authors the world over. Fifteen years ago Bryan Hainsworth wrote to me of one in *Moby Dick*: 'How did they steer Pequod? A tiller (Ch. xvi with some picturesque detail, and Ch. cxxiii) or a wheel (Ch. lxi and Ch. cxviii)?' And the eyes of Emma Bovary, are they blue or brown or black? (On this matter from Enid Starkie, and others from John Sutherland, see D. Zalewski in *Lingua Franca* [Oct. 1997], 17–18.) Hamlet usually seems to be around eighteen, but we learn from the gravedigger that he is

wrote these words in a book at the dictation of Jeremiah').[3] Thirdly, editors then enlarged and otherwise reshaped their material, not always with flawless technique. Again, it may be true but cannot be proven that one such, rather than several, was the chief maker of the *Iliad*, and similarly for the *Odyssey*. The stitching of song was done not by illiterates only, but by literates as well, though what proportion by the one, and what by the other, is moot.

Can the pre-text be distinguished from the text by marks of insertion? Both speaking and lettered poets, when they mortised timeworn blocks, were apt to allow a roughness now and then. It was easier for poets of both kinds to leave a creaking hinge where the tense changed than to alter words that had been used before. Though partly a mystic, a creator is also a workman. A converse question is whether a story without flaws must have come from a single maker. I myself believe that works of harmony, even on the grand scale, may be produced by a coterie. The Authorized Version, in one idiom, was made by three committees, each of which reviewed what the others had done.

Cannot then the pre-text be distinguished from the text by sifting the wheat for chaff? Analysts in Homer have condemned as spurious: (i) self-contradictions, (ii) low-quality enlargements, and (iii) utterances against nature. I find far more grievous examples of (i) self-contradiction, when the Prince of Denmark, though the ghost of his father is surely on his mind, speaks of 'The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn / No traveller returns' (*Hamlet* 3.1.79–80); (ii) low-quality enlargement, when the Moor of Venice tells of himself as 'of one whose subdu'd eyes, / Albeit unused to the melting mood, / Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees / Their med'cinable gum' (*Othello* 5.2.348–51), which would be better without the 'Albeit . . . mood'; and (iii) utterance against nature, when Siward, learning how his son and heir died valiantly, makes wordplay, 'Had I as many sons as I have hairs, I would not wish them to a fairer death' (*Macbeth* 5.8.48–9). There are no diseased limbs in the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* that need cautery so much as these do.

Early can once in a while be distinguished from late by seeing which element must have preceded another. The law that you should not uncover the nakedness of your father (Lev. 18:7) would seem to lie behind the curse upon Ham, who 'saw the nakedness of his father' and told his brothers he had done so (Gen. 9:25). From the word פסח, understood as 'pass over', it was remembered how the Lord would pass over the houses smeared with blood (Ex. 12:13),[4] and from *πάσχα*, the LXX rendering of פסח, the *πάσχειν* of Jesus was remembered as having been at the time of the passover.

thirty: see Hermann J. Weigand, 'Hamlet's consistent inconsistency', in Herbert M. Schueller (ed.), *The Persistence of Shakespeare Idolatry* (Detroit, 1964), 137–72.

[3] This is the best evidence, if that is not too strong a word, for how the poetry of Homer became lettered. But whether the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are more truly oral poems or written ones is hardly to be decided. In favour of the former see Richard Janko, 'The Homeric poems as oral dictated texts', *CQ* 48 (1998), 1–13. Dawe would seem to agree at least partly ([n. 2], 873): 'To the layman blood is a thick red liquid, best left undisturbed. Put it under a microscope and you find it is in constant motion, its constituent elements incessantly joining together and separating. For Homer, multiple oral versions of the same episodes, being fused and unfused, best account for the never-ending sequence of inconsistencies.' I would add that after the poems had been written down, fragments may have been fused and unfused, not just by a guild of editors, but now and then by a single poet who modified his story as ideas came to him, and in doing so left a sequence of anomalies that are once in a while, though not always, the better for being at odds with what we expected.

[4] J. B. Segal, *The Hebrew Passover* (London, 1963), 95–106, penetrates deeply into the ultimate sense of פסח.

The names *Isaac* 'laughter', *Jacob* 'he who takes by the heel', and *Moses* 'I drew him out (of the water)' are older than the stories that make sense of them (Gen. 18:12, Gen. 25:26, and Ex. 2:10). Older, too, is the name *Odysseus* than the passage explaining it from ὀδύσσομαι (*Od.* 19.407–9, cf. 1.62). *Penelope* is 'she who peels the weft': πήνη 'weft' + λοπ- from λέπω 'peel' (with the same ablaut as in φορά from φέρω).[5] If the story of her undoing the web, to put off remarriage, is thought a late insertion into inhospitable contexts, it is the contexts that have the lower claim to priority.

The same discerning between early and late applies to some of the epithets, those elements that more than any other are a hallmark of Homeric style. Usually they need no comment: the sea not only now but always, and not this sea only but any, is as dark as wine. Not just Penelope's hand (*Od.* 21.6) and Athene's as well (*Il.* 21.403, 21.424), but anyone's, is plump (at the third joint of the thumb), rather than skin and bones. Sometimes a comment is helpful, however, to illustrate or exemplify or justify. How can the shield of the greatest shield-warrior be of seven oxen? It really was made of seven ox hides (*Il.* 7.219–23). Why is the spear of the greatest spear-warrior called Pelian? It belonged to his father, Peleus; it was made of ash from Pelion; and no one else is able to wield it, πάλλειν (*Il.* 16.141–4 = 19.388–91). When clear-voiced heralds do not shout (*Il.* 9.10–12), nor howling dogs howl (*Od.* 16.4–5), it must be told why not. The same is true for the dog of Odysseus, which once was as fast as could be (*Od.* 17.315), but now does not have the strength to budge (303–4). At the beginning of the passage (292 and 300), ἀργός must be taken as an epithet (cf. κύνες ἀργοί *Il.* 1.50, 18.283, *Od.* 2.11, 17.62, 20.145). Only in the immortal closing lines, which I regard as an interpolation, or else as a sudden afterthought by the primary maker, is it a name.[6]

The epithet being illustrated need not be at hand. Was it not from ῥιγεδανή that Helen was given to say there was no one left who did not shudder at her (*Il.* 24.775)? On the other hand the epithet may actually be near by. Was it not from νεφεληγερέτα that the poet caused Zeus to gather a golden cloud to hide his love-making from the eye of the sun (*Il.* 14.341–50)? The idea that Artemis the arrow-pourer brings death to women lies behind the passage about Niobe (*Il.* 24.605–6, cf. 6.428). One might take ἰοχέαιρα as chosen for the happening, but actually the happening was brought to mind by the epithet. The same is true for πολύτλας when Odysseus is overcome by fatigue (*Od.* 6.1), and (with seeming irony) for φιλομμειδής when Aphrodite is not smiling but being comforted (*Il.* 5.370–75, but cf. 21.491–3 where Hera smiles as Artemis cries). If now and then an epithet is apt, that is not because it was used with care, but because its meaning had led the poet to create episodes where, if for the sake of the metre it were used, it would *be* apt. In *Iliad* 23 alone, a number of epithets, though they may not there be uttered, have had their effect: Diomedes ἱππόδαμος wins the chariot race,

[5] E. Wüst in *RE* 19.1: 461 (with a reference to Benseler) offers this etymology among others; L. P. Rank, *Etymologiseering en verwante verschijnselen bij Homerus* (Assen, 1951), 66, does not find the others worth mentioning.

[6] M. L. West, ed. Hesiod, *Works and Days* (Oxford, 1978), 368–9, brings forward, from J. Chittenden and R. Carpenter, the idea that ἀργειφόντης, an epithet of Hermes, means 'dog-slayer'. The history could be: (i) that the epithet ἀργός became the name of Odysseus' dog, thanks to a truly Homeric inspiration; (ii) that 'Argus' consequently, or else independently, became the name of many another dog; (iii) that it afterwards meant 'dog' all by itself; and (iv) that ἀργειφόντης with the sense 'dog-slayer' was created for Hermes, seeing that a god of thievery would kill any guard dog he encountered. In my opinion the first step is more than likely. The second is rather unlikely, and the third, highly unlikely. It is as if 'Traveller', the name of the horse of the Confederate general Robert E. Lee, came to be the name, at least in Virginia, of other horses as well, and then came to mean simply 'horse'. Step (iv) is remotely possible, but ask yourself, if you wanted to say 'dog-slayer', would you use the word ἀργός at all?

ἱππότα Nestor gives counsel on steering horses, Ajax the τελαμών or huge column of support is brought down by Odysseus the πολύμητις, Achilles is said by a prize-winner in the foot race to be the πόδας ὠκύς *par excellence*, Agamemnon is an ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν who should have a prize without competing, ἑκάεργος Apollo favours the archer who remembers him. In this company, περίφρων for Penelope—'cautious, oblique, knowing'—has equal place. Does not the web story, which tells the truth about her name, justify her epithet besides? Here if ever, matter at the heart of the poem developed from traditional elements of the epic diction.

At first περίφρων may have been used not merely with Πηνελόπεια but with any name of appropriate length. Sooner or later the phrase περίφρων Πηνελόπεια was used in a context where the epithet was not clearly relevant, and here περίφρων suggested that foresight and insight had some enduring connection with Penelope. All poets began to use the phrase περίφρων Πηνελόπεια, not for the epithet but merely as a metrical variant of the name; they associated the sound of the epithet with the sound of the name and the meaning of the epithet with the person referred to by the name. As a consequence of its affinity with Penelope, περίφρων was virtually restricted to her alone. Episodes illustrating the shrewdness of Penelope were exceptionally likely to be created and to survive: for this reason περίφρων Πηνελόπεια can be said to have influenced the shape of the epic matter. The epithet thus came to have greater contextual relevance than would have been the work of chance, and became more than ever true to the special nature of Penelope. Such is my hypothesis, and it seems to me reasonable, *mutatis mutandis*, for any of the chief figures in Homer. But for Penelope her name is a special factor. I should say that περίφρων either caused or sustained the etymologizing of Πηνελόπεια, and that the entire phrase περίφρων Πηνελόπεια lay behind the story of the web, with its climax, the enrobing of Odysseus.

It must be allowed that Penelope is not alone in being περίφρων; Eurycleia is twice so described, instead of as φίλη τροφός. Telemachus is not alone in being πεπνυμένος; Antilochus is once πεπνυμένος instead of μενεχάρμης; and for both Telemachus and Antilochus the epithet is commented upon (*Od.* 1.361 = 21.355, *Il.* 23.570, cf. 23.440). Were περίφρων and πεπνυμένος, then, becoming more generic, more promiscuous? Parry thought so, arguing that the personal epithets tended *en masse* to be shared to an ever greater extent, and accordingly to become increasingly devoid of meaning.[7] I myself would argue the opposite, since late in the tradition, rather than early, was the

[7] In the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as they are, the basis for choice among the epithets—ξανθὸς Μενέλαος or βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Μενέλαος? μείλινον ἔγχος or δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος?—was not meaning but metre. For this elementary, though overwhelmingly important, observation the credit is owed to H. Düntzer, *Die homerischen Beiwörter des Götter- und Menschengeschlechts* (Göttingen, 1859), 7: 'So bildete sich die epische Dichtung für besonders bedeutsame Gegenstände eine Anzahl verschiedener stehender Beiwörter, unter welchen der Dichter nach Bedürfniss des Verses und der Abwechslung frei wählte, ohne sonst auf den Inhalt der betreffenden Stelle Rücksicht zu nehmen.' What Parry—*L'Epithète traditionnelle dans Homère* (Paris, 1928), see esp. 50–1—added, also elementary though overwhelmingly important, was an emphasis upon the formula *type*: γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη, λευκώλενος Ἥρη, and δολόεσσα Καλυψώ can combine with the same predicate; θέα γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη, θέα λευκώλενος Ἥρη, and Καλυψὼ δῖα θεάων can combine with another.

Where I regard Parry as mistaken is in saying that the epithets were more narrowly restricted each to a single person, and more truly apt in their contexts, early in the tradition than later. A. Heubeck in *Gymnasium* 89 (1982), 420, agreed with me that Parry's sequence 'particularized → distinctive → ornamental → generic' ought for at least many instances to be exactly reversed. Parry (239) held that Diomedes, often described as ἱππόδαμος, could just as well be ἀντίθεος. That is untrue for the *Iliad*, though it might have been true for an earlier stage of the epic tradition, before Diomedes had become characterized as the breaker of horses *par excellence*.

time when the poet had the resources to create differences and refinements. In my view an epithet—such as *πόδας ὠκύς* or *πολύμητις* or *περίφρων*—was becoming ever more restricted (in the entirety of the poetry and not in a single epic alone) to one person only, was being more and more often exemplified or illustrated in memorable episodes, and was consequently becoming ever more true to individual character (or appearance or destiny). At the end of the tradition, when the poems had reached their present form, Hector was to a greater, not to a lesser extent than before, the man distinctively described as *κορυθαίολος*, and also the man whose helmet would frighten his little boy. It is true that Eurycleia is twice *περίφρων*, that Antilochus among others is *πεπνυμένος*, that Eumelos among others is *ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν*, and that Ares is once *κορυθαίολος*; the epithets were not yet absolutely restricted each to one person only; but they were becoming so, and sometimes momentously so.

Can it be confirmed from other evidence that the diction was tending towards specialization, describing one man as *πόδας ὠκύς* and another as *πολύμητις*, though either of these words might have done for both since they are identical in rhythm? That the *ἀσπίς* is *πάντοσ' ἐίση* while the *αἰγίς* is *θυσσανόεσσα*, though not confirmation, is at least corroboration, since the two nouns could have shared either of the epithets between them. And in another way *ἀσπίς*, together with *σάκος*, does go far towards proving that early simplicity was becoming late complexity. The words are synonyms, both of them referring to the body shield as well as to the round shield, and since no form or phrase of the one has the same metre as any form or phrase of the other, they must once have been a single set of alternatives that were chosen from in accordance with metrical need, like *δόρυ* and *ἔγχος*. But as things are now, at the end of the tradition, *ἀσπίς* is consistently the word for the shields of certain warriors only, and *σάκος* the word for those of others,[8] a matter contrary to expectation. Without the distinction, the shield warfare between Hector and Ajax in the seventh book of the *Iliad* could hardly have been told. Instead of what was the simpler—to keep *ἀσπίς* and *σάκος*, in all their forms and phrases, as synonyms—the poet created what was the better. And so with the personal epithets, as they tended to differ from each other, and tended each in its way to leave a mark on the epic content. Among these marks, the one left by *περίφρων*, with the name of its owner, is as famous as any.

Penelope wove by day a web as a shroud for Laertes, and unravelled it by night (*Od.* 2.96–102 = 19.141–7 = 24.131–7). Her phrase *ἐγώ δὲ δόλους τολυπεύω* (19.137) is a figure of speech and a literal truth. The shroud itself was a *φᾶρος*. And so was the garment that a handmaid put upon Odysseus, 'and threw about him a fine robe and a tunic' *ἀμφὶ δέ μιν φᾶρος καλὸν βάλεν ἠδὲ χιτῶνα* (*Od.* 23.155), replacing the rags that had kept even Penelope from recognizing him (22.487, 23.95, 23.115, 24.158). The passage about the shroud occurs three times without change, and so does the line about the robe. Are they two different words, the *φᾶρος* meaning shroud and the one meaning robe? Did Jael hammer a spike into Sisera through his *sleep*? ('und schlug ihm den Nagel durch seinen Schlaf', Judges 4:21, Luther). No, the two words *Schlaf* are homonyms (they are now *Schlaf* and *Schläfe*), but the two *φάρεα* are the same word. The recurring single line refers once to Odysseus, once to Telemachus (*Od.* 3.467), and once to the corpse of Hector (*Il.* 24.588). That is, at the close of the *Iliad* (as we did not foresee from 231 and 580) a robe becomes a shroud. At the close of the *Odyssey*, by my reading, the shroud becomes a robe. In both epics, and especially in the two together, the death cloth for a prince is such as he might have worn alive. Nor was what happens

[8] J. G. Tayler, 'Some notes on the Homeric shield', *CR* 27 (1913), 222.

an eleventh-hour inspiration (as when, in the synoptic gospels, the bread of the passover, Exodus 12:17, becomes the bread of betrayal, Psalms 41:9). We did not foresee what would become of the shroud, but the poet planned everything from the beginning, and so (we may think) did Penelope.

There are other φάρεα in the *Odyssey*. Calypso wears one and so does Circe (5.230 = 10.543). Nausicaa's maids leave one for Odysseus (6.214); Arete recognizes it (7.234); Odysseus weeps within it (8.84–6). Alcinous and Arete give him many φάρεα as gifts (8.392, 8.441). Telemachus wears a φᾶρος (15.61, cf. 3.467, the repeated ἀμφὶ . . . βάλεν line). Athene puts a φᾶρος about Odysseus when she transfigures him before Telemachus (16.173). And there are even more χλαῖναι, robes seemingly less sumptuous than the φάρεα. After being bathed and anointed, Odysseus is clothed in a φᾶρος, but Laertes in a χλαῖνα (*Od.* 23.155, 24.367). In the main narrative or in his stories Odysseus is clothed or covered in a χλαῖνα again and again (among the more significant lines are 5.229, 8.455, 10.542. 14.520, 20.4). Penelope promises him a χλαῖνα if he speaks the truth (17.549–50) or if he strings the bow (21.338–9). It is as if the enrobing that would be done at the close were a constant underthought in the mind of the poet.

That the one φᾶρος becomes the other is not manifest, though. Evidence in favour or against would be welcome. A bright thread in the fabric of the *Odyssey* is the contrast between the homecomings of Odysseus and Agamemnon, and between Penelope and Clytemnestra. So it is right, and grave, that the Homeric ceremony, and the wording ἀμφὶ δέ μιν φᾶρος καλὸν βάλεν ἠδὲ χιτῶνα, should be inverted in the *Oresteia*, as Fraenkel (on *Agam.* 1382) remarks. In the epic, a man is bathed and then clothed in a robe or a cloak. In the play, while Agamemnon is still in the bath, the φᾶρος (*Choe.* 1011, *Eum.* 634, cf. *Il.* 2.43, *Od.* 8.221)—the 'throw-about' of the ἀμφὶ . . . βάλεν formula, the ἀμφίβληστρον—turns into a net for prey (it must even be the garment he had been wearing, for otherwise the two death tableaux would differ). In the *Oresteia*, as in the *Iliad*, a robe becomes a shroud, as to my mind the shroud in the *Odyssey* becomes a robe; and I believe the dramatist saw what I am seeing, and immeasurably more of course.

In restricting a major epithet to one major figure, and in maintaining a distinction between the ἀσπίς and σάκος as words, the diction was becoming more specific. In other ways it was becoming more generic. On the one hand, περίφρων and πολύμητις were largely kept each for one person alone; on the other hand, περίφρων Πηνελόπεια and πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς were used without variation in any context whatsoever. Words, phrases, lines, and passages were being polished by abrasion, and were becoming more and more stereotyped; the faculty of creation was being aided more and more by the faculty of memory; anything could be said (or written) more and more fluently than before. If a line recurs, it may each time have been made afresh from familiar elements, like τὸν δὲ μέγ' ὀχθήσας προσέφη ξανθὸς Μενέλαος, or it may have been recalled as a single element, like πᾶσαι δ' ὠΐγνυντο πύλαι, ἐκ δ' ἔσσυτο λαός, or to some extent the one may be true and to some extent the other. And where a given line was originally used cannot ordinarily be laid down. In the epic tradition, rather than in the *Iliad*, was Hector's (22.363) or Patroclus' (16.857) or someone else's soul the first to fly away ὃν πότμον γοόωσα λιποῦσ' ἀνδροτῆτα καὶ ἥβην?

Sometimes, though, one of the surviving instances does seem to have been the source of the others. Dawe (on *Od.* 24.40) is right that κεῖτο (κεῖσο) μέγας μεγαλωστὶ λελασμένος ἱπποσυνάων is better for the charioteer Cebriones (*Il.* 16.776) than for Achilles. The sequence that follows is not to be proven, but all the same I regard it as

beyond doubt. (i) The line *ἀμφὶ δέ μιν φᾶρος καλὸν βάλεν ἠδὲ χιτῶνα* was used at an early time for the enrobing of Odysseus in the shroud woven for Laertes; (ii) only afterwards was the line used for Hector, perhaps with, perhaps without, a sense of contrast between the two epics; (iii) afterwards also, and without heed for Odysseus, it was used for Telemachus; (iv) the less grandiose *χλαῖνα*, and the line *ἀμφὶ δέ μιν χλαῖναν καλὴν βάλεν ἠδὲ χιτῶνα*, were for less grandiose occasions.

If the shroud for Laertes is seen to have become the robe of Odysseus, that explains what happened to the web once it was completed and shown to the world as shining like the sun and the moon, just when some cruel god had brought Odysseus home (*Od.* 24.147–9). As her name and epithet say she was born to do, Penelope—*περίφρων Πηνελόπεια*—has woven and unwoven, not just for a delay but for a homecoming ceremony. It is a triumph in storytelling, prepared for by the poet but unforeseen by us the listeners and readers. True, that the one *φᾶρος* becomes the other is not told with fanfare, but neither is the discovery by the Trojans that the man in the armour of Achilles is Patroclus, nor the irony that the suitors should be slain by bow and arrow on the feast day of Apollo (*Od.* 20.276–8, 21.258). It may be that *in the stories as we have them some things that had been said once did not need to be said again*. That the shroud becomes the robe is still implicit, though no longer evident to every newcomer. In the latest retelling, the poet, for the greater good of the whole, does not pause to say what nearly everyone knows.

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