

## THE PARADIGMATIC NATURE OF NESTOR'S SPEECH IN *ILIAD* 11

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Nestor's speech to Patroklos in *Iliad* 11 has not excited much scholarly analysis despite—or perhaps because of—its length and position at a crucial point in the narrative.<sup>1</sup> The plan of the scene surrounding the speech is clear enough. At a critical moment in the battle, Nestor distills the danger into words of advice and presses them upon one of the two heroes able to help in the crisis. Patroklos can persuade Achilles to yield his anger, or he can go into battle in his stead. But the speech itself is an odd blend of counsel and reminiscence, including an account of an obscure Pylian border war from Nestor's youth. Precise interpretation of the speech and proper understanding of its digressions are puzzling.

The modern consensus is that Nestor's speech is a paradigmatic exhortation, offering an example from the past to bolster its argument that Achilles should give up his anger.<sup>2</sup> The old man's words contain a warning for Achilles not to waste his valor while his friends die and they teach this lesson with the paradeigma of Nestor's own deeds on behalf of his people. Achilles is to learn from his example. The extraordinary heroism for which he wishes universal recognition must be used; he cannot simply let his friends die.<sup>3</sup>

Recognition of the paradigmatic form is useful for explaining the digression into Nestor's past at such a crisis in the battle.<sup>4</sup> Achilles needs

<sup>1</sup> For the most complete study of the scene see Wolfgang Schadewaldt, *Iliasstudien* (Leipzig 1938) 76–89. See also: F. Bölte, "Ein pylisches Epos," *Rh. Mus.* 83 (1934) 319–47; Rāto Cantieni, *Die Nestorerzählung im XI. Gesang der Iliad* (V 679–762) (Diss. Zurich 1942); Karl Reinhardt, *Die Iliad und ihr Dichter* (Göttingen 1961) 258–64; Dieter Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden in der Ilias* (Berlin 1970) 70–75.

<sup>2</sup> Schadewaldt (above, note 1) 19, 82–89, esp. 87; Lohmann (above, note 1) 265–71. See also Norman Austin, "The Function of the Digressions in the Iliad," *Essays on the Iliad*, ed. J. Wright (Bloomington, Ind. 1978) 76–80. Cantieni (above, note 1) 20–22 denies that the speech is paradigmatic; his arguments are addressed below.

<sup>3</sup> On this see Cedric Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass. 1958) 194–97.

<sup>4</sup> It also answers condemnation of the scene by earlier scholars who saw in it only an ornamental summary of another epic. Schadewaldt (above, note 1) 18–21 attacks

Nestor's lesson about the human side of valor, to balance his desire for divine or absolute validation of his valor, and the lesson can be painfully reinforced by the human suffering brought into camp at this moment.<sup>5</sup> But this perception leaves the question about the significance of Nestor's Pylian adventures unanswered. What has the lesson about valor to do with Patroklos, who is there, and how can it concern Achilles, who is not?

Karl Reinhardt, with less concern for the form of the speech, prefers to talk about the effect of Nestor's words upon Patroklos.<sup>6</sup> He senses "something sinister" about Nestor's words, something otherwise than Patroklos expected which leaves him changed forever. Reinhardt points to the crossing of purposes: Achilles seeking information about the wounded Machaon, Nestor urging advice; the unimportant errand left behind by an all-important one.<sup>7</sup> Patroklos hurries from Nestor's tent, convinced of his comrades' urgent need and willing to pass on the desperate suggestion that he deceive the Trojans into thinking that he is Achilles. For Reinhardt, Patroklos' role as messenger is crucial and an ironic purpose permeates the encounter. As the poet remarks (11.604), this is the beginning of Patroklos' evil.<sup>8</sup>

Reinhardt gives a sensitive reading which imbues the whole interlude in the camp with design and meaning. But the sinister quality which he detects is unclear. At what point in Nestor's speech does it occur? Is it something the old man says or implies, or does it lie in his manner? Unfortunately, Reinhardt does not investigate further his intuition about the design and irony of the scene.

So the modern literature investigating the scene remains inconclusive. The established form—the paradeigma—seems helpful but does not illuminate meaning in the scene. Reinhardt's insight seems significant and moving but remains too elusive to admit proof. For a convincing interpretation we must combine the intuition with the form. We must look again at the paradigmatic nature of the speech. Do Nestor's words fit the categories established for the typical paradeigma?<sup>9</sup> And when they do not fit, when something is awry, what can we make of it?

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Wilamowitz. Cantieni (above, note 1) 12, 21f., holds this opinion as well.

<sup>5</sup> Whitman (above, note 3) 196–97 presents well the notion of the human side of Achilles' valor. On the effect which Nestor's words and Eurypylos' wound (806–48) have on Patroklos, at least, see Schadewaldt (above, note 1) 78f.

<sup>6</sup> Reinhardt (above, note 1).

<sup>7</sup> Reinhardt (above, note 1) 262–64.

<sup>8</sup> The line is usually interpreted as a foreshadowing of Patroklos' disastrous *aristeia*; see Whitman (above, note 3) 194 and M. Willcock, *The Iliad of Homer I–XII, a Commentary* (London 1978) at 11.604.

<sup>9</sup> The paradeigma in the *Iliad* has been studied most recently by Øivind Andersen, *Paradeigmata. Beiträge zum Verständnis der Ilias* (Diss. Oslo 1975), the second part of which has been published separately: *Die Diomedesgestalt in der Ilias*, Symb. Oslo. Suppl. 26 (Oslo 1978). The first half of Andersen's dissertation examines the Meleager and

## I

Nestor's speech can be divided into two sections.<sup>10</sup> The first (656–764) is a criticism of Achilles' indifference which includes a lengthy reminiscence about Nestor's glorious exploits when the Pylians and Epeians went to war over cattle-rustling. The second part (765–803) is an eloquent attempt to persuade Patroklos to counsel Achilles, reminding him that Menoitios had given him just such a task when he left for Troy. The first part contains the paradeigma from the past, and its ring-structure—the example surrounded by complaints about Achilles—is typical for paradigmatic exhortations.<sup>11</sup> So we shall concern ourselves first with this part of the speech, leaving Nestor's final arguments for later consideration.

Comparison of Nestor's speech with the other paradigmatic exhortations in the *Iliad* reveals four material differences.<sup>12</sup> The exhortation is more implicit and is not addressed to the hero for whom it is meant. The Pylian tale itself is substantially longer than other paradeigmata and lacks close coordination with the circumstances of the person for whom the exhortation is intended. These four differences, as we shall see, signal that the paradeigma is used precariously by Nestor; his advice balances dangerously between glorious victory and disaster.

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Niobe paradeigmata. For other recent work on the paradeigma, consult Austin's (above, note 2) note 8. See also an excellent consideration of the style and nature of the paradeigma by Eva Sachs, "Die Meleagererzählung in der Ilias und das mythische Paradeigma," *Philologus* 88 (1933) 16–29.

<sup>10</sup> For more detailed analyses of the structure, see Schadewaldt (above, note 1) 83f. and Lohmann (above, note 1) 70–75; I disagree substantially with the latter: he divides the speech into three sections, but the distinction between the second (765–91) and the third (792–801) involves a highly unnatural break in thought between 791 and 792. Also, to achieve the various "rings" which he sees, Lohmann is forced to athetize lines, especially 802–3. His analysis of the Pylian narrative is also cumbersome. In particular, he misses entirely a parallelism in lines 707–26 and instead concludes that the reference to Thyroessa as the city besieged by the Epeians is present in the speech *only to coordinate it with Phoinix' speech in 9* (p. 266). See Andersen (above, note 9, 1975) 135, who criticizes Lohmann's analysis on other grounds.

<sup>11</sup> For the complaints, see 11.656–68, 762–64. On the ring structure of paradigmatic speeches see M. M. Willcock, "Mythological Paradeigmata in the *Iliad*," *CQ* n.s. 14 (1964) 142. Austin (above, note 2) 74 distinguishes two uses for paradeigmata, hortatory or disuasive and apologetic. See also Andersen (above, note 9, 1975) 9f.

<sup>12</sup> The *Iliad* contains seven other paradigmatic exhortations: Nestor's use of the Lapiths (1.254); Agamemnon's tale about Tydeus (4.370); Dione's catalogue of gods injured by mortals (5.382); Nestor's description of his duel with Ereuthalion (7.124); Phoinix' use of Meleager (9.513); Nestor's account of his athletic victories (23.626); and Achilles' use of Niobe (24.601). Austin (above, note 2) 74 states that the Briareus paradeigma (1.393) and Hephaistos' tale about Thetis (18.394) are hortatory as well as hypomnetic. See, however, B. K. Braswell, "Mythological Innovation in the *Iliad*," *CQ* n.s. 21 (1971) 17–20, who makes useful distinctions between them and the other hortatory paradeigmata. Agamemnon's exhortation should be compared to Athene's complaint to Diomedes at 5.800; see Bernard Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad* (Wiesbaden 1968) 66f.

The paradigmatic exhortation in the *Iliad* is directly linked to the listener by a comparison between him and someone else in similar circumstances.<sup>13</sup> Out of this comparison grows the paradeigma, which underscores or validates the message of the exhortation. Command, comparison and paradigmatic elaboration work together in presenting an argument and for this reason all are usually explicitly stated. For instance in 1, when Nestor urges Agamemnon and Achilles to stop quarreling, he begins with an explicit command (πίθεςθ', 1.259). Then he compares them to better leaders who used to follow his advice (259–61). This reference triggers his memory about the Lapiths' conflict (262–71). Comparison and command are then both repeated (271–74).<sup>14</sup> Sometimes the comparison is strongly implied but not actually expressed. At 24.601, Achilles orders Priam to eat, then juxtaposes the tale of Niobe's grief. Here repetition of the verb μνήσασθαι strengthens the implied comparison.<sup>15</sup>

Nestor's Pylian adventures, however, are only most implicitly applied to Achilles.<sup>16</sup> No specific command or request introduces the paradeigma; an exhortation for Achilles has to be inferred from Nestor's opening questions:

τίπτε τ' ἄρ' ὦδ' Ἀχιλεὺς ὀλοφύρεται νῆας Ἀχαιῶν,  
ὅσσοι δὴ βέλεσιν βεβλήαται; (11.656–57)

ἦ μένει εἰς ὃ κε δὴ νῆες θοαὶ ἄγχι θαλάσσης  
Ἀργείων ἀέκητι πυρὸς δηϊοιο θέρωνται,  
αὐτοὶ τε κτεινόμεθ' ἐπισχερώ; (11.666–68)

Nor does Nestor compare himself explicitly to Achilles. Instead, he leads into his tale by contrasting his present weakness with his former vigor.<sup>17</sup> At the close, he certainly implies a contrast between himself and Achilles:

ὦς ἔον, εἴ ποτ' ἔον γε, μετ' ἀνδράσιν. αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς  
οἷος τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀπονήσεται· ἦ τέ μιν οἶω  
πολλὰ μετακλαύσεσθαι, ἐπεὶ κ' ἀπὸ λαὸς ὄληται. (11.762–64)

<sup>13</sup> See Willcock (above, note 11) 142.

<sup>14</sup> Compare Sthenelos' response to Agamemnon's criticism at 4.404, which begins and ends with an imperative and a comparison between himself and his father. At 7.132 Nestor shames the Greek leaders into fighting Hektor by relating his youthful duel with Ereuthalion. His command—that they get up and fight—is only implicit. But he explicitly compares himself to them after his tale (158–60).

<sup>15</sup> At 24.602, 613. See 5.382ff., where Dione repeats τλᾶω; 23.627–29, where Nestor reiterates βίη . . . ἔμπεδος from ἔμπεδα γυῖα. In Phoinix' introduction to the paradeigma of Meleager no single word is repeated, but the idea of accepting gifts is; compare 9.515, 519 and 526. In 4.371–72, Agamemnon's complaint, πτώσσειν is repeated, even though the comparison is explicit; see also 1.273, 4 for πίθεςθαι.

<sup>16</sup> The point is noted by Cantieni (above, note 1) 21, but he dismisses too rapidly the idea that Nestor's speech is an exhortation. He fails to realize that in other respects it closely resembles other hortatory speeches; see Andersen (above, note 9, 1975) 135.

<sup>17</sup> A regular beginning for Nestor's tales; see 7.132; 23.627.

But this is nothing like the specific comparisons surrounding the other paradigmata. The exhortation most similar to Nestor's is Agamemnon's to Diomedes at 4.370. Agamemnon also begins with complaining questions but he directly compares Diomedes to his father.<sup>18</sup>

The absence of both command and direct comparison is not normal in paradigmatic speeches and it makes Nestor's exhortation in 11 unusually indirect. His youthful deeds in Pylos contain a lesson for Achilles on heroic behavior, summed up in the complaint at 762: Achilles is saving his valor for himself and will regret it. But the lesson has to be extracted from the tale, for the usual direct comparison and exhortation are missing.

The implicit character of Nestor's exhortation can be explained by the fact that Nestor is talking not to Achilles, but to Patroklos. The observation is obvious, but it ought to be emphasized.<sup>19</sup> The wrong person is listening to the paradigmata—something which happens in no other instance—and this fact has many consequences. For one, it explains why Nestor does not give any direct commands. Further, the fact that Patroklos hears a paradigmatic lesson meant for Achilles produces a fundamental curiosity. The lesson from Nestor's youthful exploits is clearly meant for Achilles. The complaints which frame the example make that evident.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, as Norman Austin points out, Achilles' indifference and the need to persuade him dominate Nestor's thinking throughout, even when he addresses Patroklos directly.<sup>21</sup> But Achilles is not listening. Nestor does ultimately urge Patroklos to action, but only when he reminds him of Menoitios' final injunction. So Nestor's speech contains a paradigmata meant for someone not present and an exhortation having little to do with the paradigmata, and this is a strange business.

Other scholars seem not concerned about the problem and the reason for their attitude is perhaps best explained by Wolfgang Schadewaldt:<sup>22</sup>

Man sieht: weil in der Gestalt des Achilleusboten Patroklos die Gestalt des Achilleus mit zugegen ist, wird die Nestorrede in ihrem Hauptteil zu einer Ansprach an Achilleus, und nur ihr Schluss gilt dem Patroklos im besonderem.

Patroklos is seen as a surrogate; his later attempt to "become" Achilles, symbolized by the donning of his friend's armor, is to be anticipated here. If we are simply to understand Achilles to be listening, we can talk about the paradigmata for Achilles without further hesitation. Doing so yields a

<sup>18</sup> For more on the similarity between these two speeches, see below, p. 61f.

<sup>19</sup> The distinction is not often discussed; neither Austin (above, note 2) nor Lohmann (above, note 1) alludes to the anomaly. Cantieni (above, note 1) 21 notes the fact as the cardinal reason why the tale is not a hortatory paradigmata but simply a reminiscence.

<sup>20</sup> The structure is similar to other exhortations where the surrounding material—command, comparison, or complaint—pertains to the person addressed.

<sup>21</sup> Austin (above, note 2) 75.

<sup>22</sup> Schadewaldt (above, note 1) 87; see also his p. 19.

nice interpretation. We observe one dissuasive paradeigma tried by Phoinix directly to Achilles in 9. With its failure another attempt seems futile, but the disastrous battle in 11 makes another effort necessary.<sup>23</sup> So a positive, hortatory paradeigma is offered, but obliquely, through Patroklos, foreshadowing the incomplete transformation later to take place in 16.

If we accept this interpretation without further questioning, however, we may miss something subtler. The errand to Nestor's tent is the moment when Patroklos stands alone, before he submerges himself in Achilles' destiny, and it is said to be the beginning of his evil. We should not project the meaning of that remark forward to Patroklos' *aristeia* without considering what it can mean here. Nor should we merely replace Patroklos with Achilles once the paradeigma begins. Instead, we should consider a more disturbing question: what happens when the wrong person listens to a paradeigma?

Two further features of Nestor's tale itself are distinctive. It is unusually long for a paradeigma—longer even than the Meleager tale, in a shorter speech. That Nestor should speak at such length at this critical moment is not suspicious. The Greeks are in bad straits on the battlefield and in need of persuasive eloquence to work on Achilles.<sup>24</sup> But besides its length, the paradeigma is also remarkably unsuited to Nestor's point. Nearly all the paradeigmata "fit" their subjects better than the Pylian adventure fits Achilles' situation.

The hortatory example is useful in so far as it demonstrates to the listener how someone else behaved in a similar situation. So a paradeigma is chosen for its aptness and the speaker mentions or stresses the details which are most salient to the exhortation. The best example of this procedure is Nestor's use of the Lapiths at 1.262. His point is that Agamemnon and Achilles should listen to his advice because better men have done so; and in illustrating this, he stresses in particular how great the ancient Lapiths were (1.262, 266–67, 271–72). He does not bother with details about the war or his individual exploits—he barely identifies the Lapiths' enemies. It has also been well demonstrated that many hortatory paradeigmata show signs of alteration or addition to the usual myth which enhance the connection between the example and the listener's situation. The Meleager tale and the Niobe myth provide the clearest evidence of such alteration.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> The association of these two exhortations is common; see Lohmann (above, note 1) 265ff., and Andersen (above, note 9, 1975) 135–43.

<sup>24</sup> Austin (above, note 2) 78–80, 83 comments well on the tendency of epic to mark moments of drama or danger with lengthy digressions, though it is not always so. At the moment of *greatest* crisis (Austin identifies books 9 and 11 as these), Patroklos is poignantly brief in his arguments to Achilles (16.21–45).

<sup>25</sup> Willcock (above, note 11) and Andersen (above, note 9, 1975) have done the most comprehensive studies.

Nestor's tale about Pylos shows no such tailoring. The "lesson" for Achilles is to be drawn from the largest outline of the story:<sup>26</sup> Nestor fought for his people in their hour of need and won glory, so should Achilles. But Nestor's adventures are nothing like the setting of Achilles' anger, and the background material explaining the conflict between Pylos and Elis has little pertinence.<sup>27</sup> To see how little the tale "fits" its paradigmatic subject, one need only compare the Meleager paradiigma in 9, which is also long and has much background material.<sup>28</sup> Close inspection reveals that most details in the background mirror what is on Phoenix' mind, and Meleager's basic situation—the war, his anger and withdrawal, the repeated appeals for his return—is closely analogous to Achilles'.

Another hortatory paradiigma which only loosely fits the speaker's point is Agamemnon's tale about Tydeus, used to scold Diomedes (4.370). Tydeus' adventures do not really suit Agamemnon's initial point—that Tydeus never cowered in battle, unlike his son. The story details solitary deeds during an embassy and ambush.<sup>29</sup> This exhortation shows other similarities to Nestor's speech. Both begin with a question that is a complaint. Both digress after introducing the subject of the paradiigma: Agamemnon explains how Tydeus came to Mycenae and was refused help; Nestor gives the background of the border hostilities. Further, the Theban account is narrated in considerable detail for a speech of its length; in fact, in greater detail than in any other paradiigma except the one in 11.

<sup>26</sup> One anomalous detail which is said to "fit" Achilles' situation is Neleus' forbidding his son to go to war because he fears his inexperience (11.717–19). But Nestor has already distinguished himself in a livestock raid (682). The contradiction is generated, it is explained, in order that Nestor fight despite his father's order in contradistinction to Achilles' refusal to fight although his father urged him (11.783–84). Lohmann insists that this is the only explanation (above, note 1) 75. See Andersen (above, note 9, 1975) 137. The contrast is neat, but Neleus' reluctance is not really so anomalous. Throughout the early stages of the story Nestor's youth and his value as Neleus' only surviving son have been stressed. See Cantieni (above, note 1) 39f., though his reconstruction of the scene between father and son is fanciful. Structurally the detail is also useful, for it balances the comment that the Moliones fought for the Epeians although they were also still very young and inexperienced (11.710). Other apparent anomalies in the narrative are discussed by Cantieni (above, note 1).

<sup>27</sup> Lohmann (above, note 1) 266 notes that the background material could be omitted without being missed. I disagree, however, with his conclusion that it is added to correspond structurally to the background in the Meleager tale; see also Andersen (above, note 9, 1975) 136.

<sup>28</sup> The structure of the background material is a point of close correspondence between the two paradiigmata which has been much discussed. See Schadewaldt (above, note 1) 84ff.; Cantieni (above, note 1) 23ff.; Lohmann (above, note 1) 266. Sachs (above, note 9) 24 has an excellent description of the narrative style employed here. Andersen (above, note 9, 1975) 104–34, Willcock (above, note 11) 148–53, and Judith Rosner, "The Speech of Phoenix: *Iliad* 9.434–605," *Phoenix* 30 (1976) 314–27 have good recent comparisons between the Meleager paradiigma and the anger of Achilles.

<sup>29</sup> See Andersen (above, note 9, 1978) 34.

Most importantly, although Diomedes is listening, Sthenelos answers, insisting that Tydeus is not better than his son. Diomedes then reprimands his friend for speaking against the king, although he later agrees that Agamemnon had been wrong (9.34–35).

In both speeches we find a complaint, a loosely fitting paradigm and a reaction by a best friend. Sthenelos' answer is ironically both right and wrong: he and Diomedes are better than their fathers, but one must not reprimand a king doing his duty. Patroklos does not answer Nestor's exhortation, but he later follows the old man's advice with results which are disastrous for himself and Achilles, but in the end, right for the Greeks.

While Agamemnon's complaint has little further consequence, Nestor's advice to Patroklos proves crucial. We have already seen one significant anomaly in his paradigmatic exhortation: he addresses the wrong person. To understand fully the consequences of this, we must consider more closely the second curious feature of his paradigm. We must ask why the Pylian narrative suits Achilles' situation so little.<sup>30</sup>

## II

The paradigm about the Pylian border war is more than just the story of a local dispute; it describes Nestor's excelling heroism in a particular way at a particular moment.<sup>31</sup> Throughout the background to the conflict (671–707) two ideas are emphasized: Pylos was in an impoverished, weakened condition at this time; and Nestor brought them invaluable aid. The details about Pylos accumulate. The spoils from Nestor's raid are divided unusually, among the many who have suffered.<sup>32</sup> All the best warriors are dead and the Epeians continue to offer violence and personal insult to Neleus.<sup>33</sup> Neleus has even lost all his sons but one. Nestor stands forth at this crisis, though he is very young. His successful raid against the Epeian flocks and his killing of one of their chieftains take on new consequences. Though these are mighty feats for one so young, we sense that now he must provide such aid to his people, for the best warriors are gone. Even his being the last remaining son, though it makes him precious, also puts a responsibility upon him which he embraces.

<sup>30</sup> Notice that it in no way suits Patroklos' either.

<sup>31</sup> The narrative is divided most usefully into two parts: the first gives the causes of the war (671–707) and the second describes the main battle (707–61). Lohmann (above, note 1) 73–75 unnecessarily argues for a three-part division.

<sup>32</sup> The normal procedure is to divide the spoils among the greatest warriors; see Cantieni (above, note 1) 32–33.

<sup>33</sup> The personal insult (696–702) may be an interpolation. Cantieni (above, note 1) 63–66 argues that it interrupts the flow of the conflict; moreover, he notes that the relative in 703, while having no connection to the preceding lines, fits well with 695. Lohmann (above, note 1) 73, note 126 agrees. See, however, Willcock (above, note 8) at 703.



The second part of the narrative describes the Epeian's counter-attack (707–61). When the opposing sides marshal their forces and the battle begins, Nestor performs outstandingly. The Pylians completely rout their enemy. So much we expect, but the detail in which the fight is narrated invites further consideration. The deeds Nestor claims here are all typical of the battles fought elsewhere in the *Iliad*, as has long been observed.<sup>34</sup> Closer inspection reveals that his deeds are not common. They are the feats of the greatest warriors during that moment of inspiration and valor known as an *aristeia*.<sup>35</sup>

According to Tilman Krischer, the *aristeiai* of the greatest warriors in the *Iliad* are made up of specific scenes which occur in a set order. Certain kinds of similes also appear at predictable points in the narrative, partly to enhance the warrior's glory, partly to signal to the audience that an *aristeia* is in progress.<sup>36</sup> Variations in emphasis upon the events or in the use of the similes distinguish the performance of each warrior; nevertheless the fundamental form remains, giving all the heroes their moment of testing and glory. Perhaps because Nestor's *aristeia* does not occur on the Trojan battlefield, Krischer omits consideration of it from his study. If we examine the old man's performance, however, we quickly see that it conforms to the scheme, though in the compressed narrative some details or scenes are omitted.<sup>37</sup>

The Iliadic *aristeia* is usually preceded by an arming scene; Agamemnon's, Patroklos' and Achilles' are all elaborately described. For Nestor, there is a variation: he comments that as the Pylians prepared for war, his father refused to let him arm (717f.), forcing him to capture his equipment in battle (743f.). The detail enhances his glory, for he performed remarkably even as a footsoldier (720f.).

Two typical components are now omitted: the description of the weapons with an attendant simile about their shine,<sup>38</sup> and preliminary, indecisive battle.<sup>39</sup> Instead, as soon as battle is joined, Nestor begins his

<sup>34</sup> Cantieni (above, note 1) 53; Fenik (above, note 12) 113f. has a list of the battle's typical features.

<sup>35</sup> Cantieni (above, note 1) 55f. calls Nestor's performance an *aristeia* and compares it to Diomedes' or Agamemnon's, but looks no closer at the details with that in mind.

<sup>36</sup> T. Krischer, *Formale Konventionen der homerischen Epik*, Zetemata 56 (Munich 1971). His study continues the work of R. Schröter, *Die Aristie als Grundform epischer Dichtung und der Freiermord in der Odyssee* (Diss. Marburg 1950), who analyzes the component scenes, and Marion Müller, *Athene als göttliche Helferin in der Odyssee* (Heidelberg 1966).

<sup>37</sup> Krischer (above, note 36) 14f. distinguishes two types of *aristeiai*. The first involves the greatest warriors: Diomedes, Achilles, Agamemnon, Patroklos and Hektor. Nestor's performance conforms to theirs. The second is used to illustrate the valor of lesser heroes.

<sup>38</sup> Omitted also in Diomedes' and Hektor's *aristeiai*; the simile is omitted in Patroklos'. See Krischer (above, note 36) 24, 29, 31.

<sup>39</sup> Omitted in Patroklos' and Achilles' *aristeiai*.

aristeia by killing Moullos, the son-in-law of Augeias (738–43). All the major aristeiai begin with the slaughter of “several” specific victims.<sup>40</sup> The next stage is breaking the enemy ranks with indiscriminate killing.<sup>41</sup> Here, Nestor captures fifty chariots, dispatching both men in each (747–49), until Zeus encourages all the Pylians and they rout the Epeians. Nestor leads the charge and kills the last man (753–59). At 747 Nestor briefly compares himself to a dark tempest; this kind of simile and its position before the indiscriminate slaughter are regular.<sup>42</sup>

The great Iliadic aristeiai normally continue with the wounding of the hero, his restoration by a god, and his final duel with an enemy warrior. The subsequent battle over the corpse establishes a boundary for the hero’s glory since he is regularly prevented from capturing it (or in Achilles’ case, forced to ransom it) by a god. Nestor’s glory, however, culminates in complete victory over his enemies—something which none of the Iliadic warriors can achieve. His aristeia does not need to continue beyond the rout. But we identify the form of the first half of the scheme described by Krischer.

Further evidence strengthens the association between Nestor’s performance and the other chief aristeiai. Certain maneuvers in battle are performed only by the greatest warriors while they are in their aristeia, and Nestor achieves these. For instance at 11.744 the Epeians are thrown into confusion at the death of their leader Moullos. Troops are commonly panicked by their commander’s death in the *Iliad*, but only when he is killed by a warrior in his aristeia.<sup>43</sup> Diomedes and Achilles both achieve this; Patroklos even scatters troops twice.<sup>44</sup> Nestor also kills fifty pairs of men in chariots.<sup>45</sup> Killing two men in (or from) the same chariot is a cardinal feat of a warrior in his aristeia.<sup>46</sup> Diomedes does so twice (5.13, 160) and faces another pair at 5.239, where he kills Pandaros and almost kills Aineias. Agamemnon also dispatches three pairs of men in chariots (11.93, 102,

<sup>40</sup> Krischer (above, note 36) 36, 81 considers Achilles’ initial frustration with Aineias separately.

<sup>41</sup> Diomedes and Patroklos do not perform this feat.

<sup>42</sup> See 11.172; 15.323; 16.364, 384.

<sup>43</sup> Nestor’s slaying of Itymoneus during the earlier livestock raid had the same effect (11.676).

<sup>44</sup> See 5.27–29; 21.206; 16.290, 659 (Sarpedon’s troops). Idomeneus scatters the Trojans during his aristeia (13.361), though he has killed no leader.

<sup>45</sup> The number fifty is an exaggeration commonly associated with an older generation of heroes. See 4.393; 6.244; 23.147; 24.495.

<sup>46</sup> Fighters of the second rank require assistance dispatching the henchman of a team (5.578; 13.383). Even the greatest, when not in their aristeia, may have difficulty. Diomedes kills Eniopeus at 8.119, but cannot kill the fighter in the chariot, Hektor; see 8.312. Again, Patroklos kills Kebriones but not Hektor. Krischer (above, note 36) 30 notes that Patroklos is no longer in his aristeia when he encounters Kebriones.

127).<sup>47</sup> Patroklos kills one team at 16.399 and, more important, another beginning at 16.462, where he kills Thrasymelos, Sarpedon's henchman, and then Sarpedon himself. Achilles kills a team at 20.484.<sup>48</sup>

Nestor faces one last team, the Moliones. These he would have killed, but Poseidon prevents it by rescuing his sons (750–52). Aphrodite saves Paris from his duel with Menelaos (3.373); otherwise divine rescues occur only during *aristeiai*, especially in Diomedes' and Achilles' (5.22, 311; 20.289, 443; 21.596).<sup>49</sup> Two other incidents seem to be related to this motif. At 16.431 Zeus considers saving Sarpedon from Patroklos but does not, and at 11.182 he does remove Hektor from Agamemnon's path by a warning. The divine rescue in an *aristeia* underscores the warrior's valor, since it is a god who interrupts his rampage, and it balances the divine inspiration which a warrior usually receives as he begins his *aristeia*.

At 11.721 Nestor says that he performed outstandingly, even though he went to battle as a footsoldier, because Athena arranged it. This suggestion of special divine help or inspiration is reminiscent of Diomedes' *aristeia* in 5, or of Achilles' victory over Hektor in 22, the culmination of his *aristeia*. Idomeneus achieves a minor *aristeia* in 13 when Poseidon directly encourages him and gives him help (13.215, 434). If we consider that a fighter achieves an *aristeia* only after special inspiration, be it divine or not, then we may think of Patroklos' peculiar status of leading a fight in the guise of another and for his benefit.

Nestor's description of his performance in battle is shaped as an *aristeia*, recalling the *aristeiai* of the greatest Greek warriors at Troy. The plan to his story becomes clear. In reflecting on his own youthful career, he focuses on a critical moment for his people. Then he describes how with a god's help he met their need with a special burst of valor accorded to few warriors. That capability is now long gone for Nestor, who cannot help the Greeks at Troy with arms. Yet the narration of this ancient border war illustrates that the old man was once a great warrior. This effort to establish his own value accounts for the absence of the customary paradigmatic signals linking his story to Achilles.<sup>50</sup> The tale might teach Achilles much by example, but it is not designed merely to reflect his situation. First and foremost it is about Nestor's excellence as a warrior.

<sup>47</sup> Two pairs are explicitly in the same chariot (*εἰν ἐνὶ δίδωρῳ ἑόντας*: 103, 127); one I infer to be so because Oileus is called *πλήξιππον* (93) and Bienor is said to jump from his chariot to face Agamemnon (94).

<sup>48</sup> Since Achilles has the specific goal of killing Hektor, his *aristeia* does not emphasize the feat of dispatching pairs.

<sup>49</sup> Cantieni (above, note 1) 76 points out that those men enjoy divine rescues who are known to have other destinies in the epic tradition. That accounts for Paris in 3, Aineias and the Moliones. It does not explain the others, however; see Fenik (above, note 12) 39.

<sup>50</sup> Even Meleager's tale is not depicted in such detail; see Sachs's description of its style (above, note 9) 24.

Nor is the anecdote inserted merely as a gesture of that epic tact which exalts each Greek leader to the best of his ability, even an old man who can no longer fight. Nestor's role is now that of counsellor—the best that the Greeks have.<sup>51</sup> The great heroes, however, are both doers of deeds and speakers of wisdom. Nestor's heroic performance in battle, even in the dim past, validates his counsel.

The presence of an *aristeia* in the midst of Nestor's speech becomes crucial as we reflect upon the scene and its context. Nestor has just left a battle which has taken a dreadful turn. Agamemnon's *aristeia* has failed, and in its aftermath four other major heroes have been wounded. Even Aias has yielded to Zeus' pressure. The Greeks need an *aristeia* at this moment and, to Nestor's mind, Achilles is the man to perform one, if he would but give up his anger. His speech recalls how such a crisis came upon him once and how he gloriously accepted the challenge. His exhortation for Achilles comes from this memory.

But the Homeric narrative works on several levels. If we shift our focus from Nestor's concerns to the entire structure of 11, we are startled to see that just when the Greeks need a champion to step forth, when Aias and Eurypylos must retire, an *aristeia* occurs. A brilliant young warrior embraces his people's need and completely routs the enemy. It is a moment of grim irony, for we are not on the Trojan battlefield, but in the quiet of a tent, listening to an old man's voice. His *aristeia* is intoxicating, but it only underscores how desperate the Greeks' plight is. Their one victorious moment that day is there, their hope of relief as fleeting as the past—unless the tale teaches its paradigmatic lesson on heroic responsibility.

The Pylian *aristeia* is only part of a larger performance, however. Like all the best warriors at Troy, Nestor has been given his chance, at the appropriate moment and in the fashion at which he excels, to stop the Trojans—by persuading those who can help.<sup>52</sup> When Patroklos comes to his tent, he first holds himself up as an example of how valor is best used. Then he goes on to counsel. He chooses a compelling moment to recall—when a father bids his warrior son farewell and gives him final advice. For Achilles the reminder would have underscored Nestor's earlier lesson, for Peleus told him always to excel—*αἶεν ἀριστεύειν* . . . (784). But Achilles is not listening, so Nestor must mold his advice to suit his friend. For Patroklos, his plans are riskier: if he cannot persuade Achilles, he must try to turn back the Trojans himself by fooling them into thinking that he is Achilles (799–800).<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> The poet is very clear about this; see 2.370; 11.627.

<sup>52</sup> For Krischer (above, note 36) 76–78, it is a cardinal principle of the *aristeia* that each major warrior have a test and validation of his heroic worth.

<sup>53</sup> Nestor does not urge an *aristeia* upon Patroklos; he sees him as providing a moment's respite (11.800). That Patroklos does perform one is a measure of his assumption of

## III

Reinhardt's perception of something sinister about Nestor's speech is coming into clearer focus. The old man has a paradigmatic message, but it is meant for someone else besides Patroklos. The advice he must give instead recognizes the limits of Patroklos' ability, since he urges him to disguise himself as Achilles, but such a plan is dangerously intoxicating for the young man after the account of an *aristeia* at such a moment of need. The full irony of the moment, however, becomes clear only from another perspective. The implications of what the scene means for Patroklos are best understood when we consider what it means for his friend Achilles.

When Achilles first spots Nestor driving into camp, he remarks to Patroklos that this may be the moment when the Greeks gather round him in supplication, so great is their need (11.609–10).<sup>54</sup> Then he sends his friend on the errand which has been called the beginning of his evil. At the end of the embassy in 9, Achilles has told Aias that he expects the Myrmidons' ships to be under attack before he relents (9.650–53). The present remark reveals that he also anticipates another supplication for his help by the Greeks. He now senses the Greeks' desperation and his excitement over the crisis exposes his expectation. Achilles always senses a shift in the battle, a new turn which affects him. Each time the narrative swings from the battlefield to him, as it does twice more, it finds him brooding over his intuitions. At 16.17–19, he speculates that Patroklos is specially grieved for the Greeks; at 18.6–14, he senses that his friend is dead. Neither Patroklos' appeal nor the news of his death is unexpected. So, too, Achilles senses that Nestor's emergence from battle signifies a grave crisis and, he imagines, another appeal for his help.

Suddenly we see the full irony of the scene. Achilles is right—there was to be another appeal from the Greeks, from the best Greek of all at persuasion. That is why Nestor is brought out of battle at this moment, when arms have failed and the best warriors are all wounded or distressed, to perform his *aristeia* in words. But the appeal was not to be as Achilles imagined it; the Greeks are not coming to him in supplication. Once they sent Phoinix with the gloomy lesson of Meleager, but now Nestor is waiting in his tent with an exhortation. The appeal was to be a challenge from a mighty hero, and the example a glorious *aristeia*, to recall the human truth about valor—that it cannot be saved without grief.

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Achilles' role in 16. On Patroklos' ability to perform great deeds only if he assumes Achilles' role, see Dale Sinos, *Achilles, Patroklos and the Meaning of Philos* (Innsbruck 1980) 32ff.

<sup>54</sup> The lines have been roundly denounced as ignoring the Greeks' embassy in 9; see Walter Leaf, *The Iliad* (London 1900–1902) at 609. Willcock (above, note 8) at 609 has a sensible explanation.

But Achilles misses this truth, for he does not go to hear it himself but sends his best friend. Patroklos goes and learns the lesson meant for someone else. It is his imagination which is fired by the paradeigma and his soul which is struck by the suffering he hears about and witnesses, in Eurypylos. And it is to him that the decisive exhortation comes: if you cannot persuade him, go into battle yourself. When the appeal Achilles expected finally comes, it is simply a choice from Patroklos: relent and go yourself, or send me.<sup>55</sup> But Achilles has not heard what he must in order to choose correctly and he learns the lesson in another, more grievous way.

Thus we have the sinister at work in the scene: an inscrutable moment when Achilles misreads the crisis, expects the appeal to *come* to him and therefore sends his best friend on an unimportant errand. We perceive the full force of the scene when we recognize the manipulation of the paradigmatic exhortation: the example is not simply a tale carefully molded for the listener's edification. It is an *aristeia* meant to remind an angry hero of his responsibility and to inspire him to his own glorious performance. Ironically, the paradeigma works—on the wrong hero. Patroklos does not pass on the lesson to his friend; instead he attempts his own *aristeia*.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>55</sup> See Reinhardt (above, note 1) 262.

<sup>56</sup> I would like to thank Dale Sinos and *TAPA*'s anonymous readers for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.