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The Earliest Quotation of the *Iliad*?

OLIVER TAPLIN

MUCH work on the *Odyssey* these days accepts that it presupposes and responds to the *Iliad*, and that appreciation is enriched by a prior awareness of the values and tendencies of the poem of the Fury of Peleus' son Achilles. But interplay, let alone intertextuality,¹ is much weaker than quotation, which I would define in terms of the consciousness not so much of the poet as of the audience. Is there any passage in the *Odyssey* whose significance for the audience is transformed by a recognized awareness of a specific passage of the *Iliad*?

Book 14. 156f. is a candidate. The disguised Odysseus assures Eumaeus that his master will come home before long. To show his confidence, the 'beggar' will claim no reward until his prediction is fulfilled:

ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος ὁμῶς Ἀἶδαο πύληϊσι
γίγνεται, ὃς πενίῃ εἰκὼν ἀπατήλια βάζει.

This is not an outstanding sentiment, but the only other place in Homer where similar phrasing occurs certainly is: at the beginning of Achilles' reply to Odysseus' message from Agamemnon in *Il.* 9. 312f. we sense the imminence of a key passage. He will reply bluntly, he says:

ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κείνος ὁμῶς Ἀἶδαο πύληϊσιν
ὃς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθῃ ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἴπημι.

The far-reaching applications of this couplet include an aspersion on Odysseus, the past master at saying one thing while thinking another.

Of course the shared line might have been a commonplace in the oral tradition; and it might be claimed that this deprives the duplication of any significance. Whether the *Iliad* (and the *Odyssey*) stood within the tradition or stood out above it is one of the great open questions of modern Homeric scholarship.² The fact remains that the line survives in only these two places, and that if it is perceived as some kind of citation, there is a nice irony in that Odysseus is for once telling the truth. At the same time he is not telling the

¹ The application of the concept of intertextuality leads to interesting observations by P. Pucci, *Odysseus Polytropos* (Ithaca, 1987).

² G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* (Baltimore, 1979), 42 n. 3 and *passim*, takes this question to have been settled once and for all by Milman Parry. In Homer, he insists, 'it is not justifiable to claim that a passage in any text can refer to another passage in another text'. His approach is fundamentally incompatible with mine.

whole truth, and there is still an element of deceit in his words. Again, it is not poverty that motivates him but *μητις*. So there may well be a subtle interaction with the *Iliad*, subtle yet tenuous. I think I may have a better candidate for a proper quotation.

First, however, let me spell out the elementary point that, in order to establish an allusion or parallel, poetry, unlike scholarship, does not have to be as accurate and precise as possible. Indeed, over-exactness may well be detrimental to the rich possibilities of poetry. One of the clearest cross-allusions in all Homer illustrates this well. At *Od.* 23. 233 ff. Odysseus and Penelope weep in each others' arms:

ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἂν ἀσπάσιος γῆ νηχομένοις φανήη,
ὥν τε Ποσειδάων εὐεργέα νῆ' ἐνὶ πόντῳ
ραΐσει, ἐπειγομένην ἀνέμῳ καὶ κύματι πηγῶι·
παῦροι δ' ἐξέφυγον πολυῆς ἀλὸς ἥπειρόνδε
νηχόμενοι, πολλὰ δὲ περὶ χροῖ τέτροφεν ἄλμῃ,
ἀσπάσιοι δ' ἐπέβαν γαίης, κακότητα φυνόντες·
ὥς ἄρα τῇ ἀσπαστὸς ἔην πόσις εἰσορώσῃ.

In view of Poseidon's smashing of the vessel, the swimming, the salt-coated skin, it would be perverse to deny an allusion to Odysseus' approach to the land of Scherie back in book 5, especially as that carried an elaborate simile of family life with the same scaffolding of *ἀσπας*- words (394 ff.).³ At the same time the plurality of sailors in the simile are very different. Had the simile said, however, 'as a solitary hero on a raft . . . and yet more ordeals await him . . .', such pedantry would have been too laboured to be poetry.

The same applies to another Odyssean simile and its allusion to the *Iliad*. At 8. 499 ff. Demodocus sings of the wooden horse and of Odysseus' finest and grimmest hour at the sack of Troy (the words *κεῖθι δὴ αἰνότατον πόλεμον φάτο τολμήσαντα νικῆσαι* come to my mind when I recall how Kenneth Dover completed the Dover Report in May 1983!). The still anonymous stranger weeps (523 ff.):

ὥς δὲ γυνὴ κλαίῃσι φίλον πόσιν ἀμφιπεσοῦσα,
ὅς τε ἔης πρόσθεν πόλιος λαῶν τε πέσῃσιν,
ἄστει καὶ τεκέεσσιν ἀμύνων νηλεὲς ἡμάρ·
ἣ μὲν τὸν θνήσκοντα καὶ ἀσπαίροντα ἰδοῦσα
ἀμφ' αὐτῷ χυμένη λίγα κωκύει· οἱ δὲ τ' ὅπισθε
κόπτοντες δούρεσσι μετάφρενον ἡδὲ καὶ ὤμους
εἴρερον εἰσανάγουσι, πόνον τ' ἐχέμεν καὶ οἷζύν·
τῆς δ' ἐλεεινοτάτῳ ἄχεϊ φθινύθουσι παρειαί·
ὥς Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐλεεινὸν ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυον εἶβεν.

For anyone with the *Iliad* in mind there is one woman above all whose husband

³ As well as the complex of *ὥς δ' ὅτ' ἀσπάσιος . . . φανήη . . . ἀσπασίων δ' . . . ὥς . . . ἀσπαστὸν* notice also 5. 397 *θεοὶ κακότητος ἔλυσαν* ~ 23. 238 *κακότητα φυνόντες*.

falls defending his city and people, and whose enslavement on the day of sack is vividly foreseen. Yet the parallel is not too close: this man, unlike Hector, has fallen on the day of defeat, and his wife clasps his body on the battlefield. The differences from Andromache allow the simile to refer to her while also including all the victims whose suffering accompanies a glorious military victory. Odysseus' response evokes the whole of the *Iliad*'s ambivalent vision of war.

All this implies (*contra* Nagy and others) that the *Iliad* was known to the audience of the *Odyssey* in something like its present form, and furthermore that it stood out from the general run of epic poems of the day. My alleged quotation relies on this hypothesis—and, with inevitable circularity, may confirm it—since it presupposes that the first line of the *Iliad* would have been especially celebrated and familiar.

The first of Demodocus' poems sung while Odysseus is on Scherie picks up the *οἴμη* at a particular point (8. 73 ff.):

Μοῦς ἄρ' ἀοιδὸν ἀνῆκεν αἰδόμεναι κλέα ἀνδρῶν
οἴμης τῆς τότε ἄρα κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἴκανε,
νεῖκος Ὀδυσσεὺς καὶ Πηλεΐδῃ Ἀχιλῆϊ,
ὥς ποτε δηρίσαντο θεῶν ἐν δαιτὶ θαλεῖνι,
ἐκπάγλοις ἐπέεσσιν, ἄναξ δ' ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων
χαῖρε νόωι, ὃ τ' ἄριστοι Ἀχαιῶν δηριόωντο.
ὥς γάρ οἱ χρεῖων μυθήσατο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων
Πυθοὶ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ, ὅθ' ὑπέρβη λάϊνον οὐδὸν
χρησόμενος· τότε γάρ ῥα κυλίνδετο πῆματος ἀρχὴ
Τρωσί τε καὶ Δαναοῖσι Διὸς μεγάλου διὰ βουλὰς.

In response Odysseus weeps, unnoticed by anyone except Alcinoos. The fact that this quarrel was not found anywhere else in the ancient sources surely indicates, as argued by Marg, that it is *ad hoc* invention, an *Augenblickserfindung*.⁴ The significance given to the Delphic oracle also indicates a latish date for this invention.

Why, then, this particular instance of the *κλέα ἀνδρῶν*? First, the selection of an *Iliad*-like battle of words between two Achaeans, rather than an encounter of enemies on the battlefield, is suggestive. Yet this is both like and unlike the *Iliad*. Obviously Odysseus is one of the antagonists because this is the *Odyssey*; but why should the other be Achilles rather than, say, Agamemnon or, most eligibly, Ajax? I suggest that this is in order to introduce the quarrel with a genitive formula for Achilles in the last part of the line. In other words (*νεῖκος Ὀδυσσεὺς καὶ*) *Πηλεΐδῃ Ἀχιλῆος* is in the full sense of the word a quotation⁵ of (*μῆνιν αἶειδε, θεά,*) *Πηλεΐάδῃ Ἀχιλῆος*.

⁴ W. Marg, in *Navicula Chiloniensis* (Festschrift Jacoby) (Leiden, 1956), 16 ff., an excellent discussion; cf. C. Macleod, *Homer, Iliad, Book XXIV* (Cambridge, 1982), 2 f.; K. Rüter, *Odysseeinterpretationen* (Göttingen, 1969), 248 ff.; J. S. Clay, *The Wrath of Athena* (Princeton, 1983), 102 ff. (For 'ad hoc invention' see M. Willcock, *HSCP* 81 (1977), 41 ff.)

⁵ Marg, op. cit. 24–9, comes close to this, especially at the end, where he calls this passage 'das älteste Zeugnis für die Wirkung der *Ilias*'. Cf. Pucci, op. cit. 220, on the 'quotational aspect'.

There are two objections which might still be raised even by those not opposed on principle. First, *Πηλεΐδεω* and *Πηληϊάδεω* are not metrically equivalent, not even, in Parry's terms, the same formula. This need not be any barrier to the *audience's* perception of the phrase as a quotation—it is a matter of how it was perceived. The other complaint would be that since *Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος* was a formula in the oral tradition, it could not bear any cross-referential weight. Those who have defied the barrier of such an indiscriminate blanket prohibition, and have recognized the importance of context in relation to formulaic composition, are those who have produced the most interesting work in recent Homeric scholarship. *Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος* comes six times in the *Iliad* and twice in the *Odyssey*. At *Od.* 11. 467, the encounter with the ghost of Achilles in the underworld, it might well be perceived as an echo of the first line of the other poem. *Πηλεΐδεω Ἀχιλῆος* opens a line three times in the *Iliad*, but ends a line only here. Shive in his thorough study of Achilles, both with and without epithets, expresses surprise at its rarity.⁶ It is placed here with a purpose.

It would have been too crude—however convenient for solving our scholarly doubts—had the poet said, 'then Demodocus sang of the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon over Briseis, and of how Achilles withdrew from the fighting, etc. etc.' Instead there are similarities—Achilles, verbal dispute, the impending fall of Troy, the *Διὸς βουλή/βουλὰς*; and there are differences—the feast, Agamemnon's delight, the oracle from Delphi.

If there is anything to this argument, and even if I have pressed the notion of direct quotation too hard, it should encourage further interpretation of the *Odyssey* in the light of the *Iliad*. It also contributes to literary history a case for holding that the *Iliad* stood out already in its own day; and that right from its composition in its present form (or something getting on for it), it was celebrated and memorable, even quotable.

⁶ D. Shive, *Naming Achilles* (Oxford, 1987), 65 and n. 23.