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# Epiphany in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter* and the *Odyssey*

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## Epiphany in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* and the *Odyssey*

### Introduction\*

In the following essay I investigate the *Odyssey*'s sustained engagement with the theme of epiphany.<sup>1</sup> Within the poem's own narrative, the central epiphanic moment is the recognition scene between Odysseus and Penelope, and it resonates powerfully with a series of other such moments throughout the poem, beginning with Athene's epiphany to Telemakhos in Book 1. But I also hope to show that these Odyssean scenes resonate just as powerfully with Demeter's epiphanies in the Homeric hymn to the goddess.<sup>2</sup>

At the outset, however, it is necessary to address an obvious point of methodology: epiphany properly refers to the sudden appearance (φάινεσθαι) of a god in manifest form (ἐναοργής), sometimes after initially appearing in disguise.<sup>3</sup> Many of the Odyssean scenes, on the other hand, involve human characters who are recognized by various tokens. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to treat these scenes as essentially equivalent: that is to say, an underlying structural and functional affinity has allowed the Odyssean recognition scenes to be assimilated to epiphany through echoes of parallel scenes within the poem itself and with the narrative traditions preserved in the *Hymn to Demeter*.<sup>4</sup>

In her comprehensive study of traditional themes in the Homeric Hymns, Cora Sowa distinguishes between divine epiphany and human recognition by tokens, but treats them as so closely related in formal terms that she routinely conflates them in her analyses:

The Epiphany of a God and the human theme of Recognition by Tokens share important key elements. In both, the protagonist is at first unrecognized (and perhaps mistreated); he is later identified by unmistakable signs, sometimes of a miraculous nature. As an example of how close the two types can be, the epiphany of Demeter to the women of Keleos' family in the *H. Dem.* finds its closest formal analog not in other stories of divine Epiphany, but in Odysseus' meeting and disclosure of his true identity to Nausikaa and the Phaiakians.

(Sowa [1984] 250)

As a consequence, with his 'epiphanies' in the *Phaiakis* and *Revenge*, Odysseus is made "the protagonist of a theme whose central character is usually a god" (ibid., 267).<sup>5</sup>

My point of departure, then, is that by exploiting the natural affinity between these themes, Homer portrays recognition scenes as epiphanies in order to cast Odysseus in a role otherwise played by a god in traditional Greek narratives.<sup>6</sup> His wider aim, however, is not simply to associate Odysseus with divinity in a generic sense, but to place the *Odyssey* in dialogue with the *Hymn*: the story of a king whose absence precipitates an agricultural crisis and whose return brings increase to the wider community thus emerges as the political counterpart to fertility cult.<sup>7</sup> I choose my words carefully here: for on my analysis the *Odyssey* is not simply a narrative analogue to fertility cult, but its equivalent, promising peace and prosperity to a community of listeners who willingly submit to its ideology.<sup>8</sup> Whereas all praise poetry may be said to compete with mystery religion by conferring a blessed afterlife upon the *laudandus* in the form of 'unwithering fame,' and by inspiring its audience to strive for the same, the *Odyssey* takes the competition further

with the promise of prosperity in this life as well.<sup>9</sup> This further promise, moreover, does not remain latent, but is emphasized at three pivotal junctures in the narrative.

The story of the *Odyssey* is that of a much wandering hero who returns in the eleventh hour to restore proper order to his domain. The hero's return thus underwrites the theodicy announced in the divine assembly with which the story begins.<sup>10</sup> Yet it would be a singularly hollow victory if, after suffering the severe depletion of his own estate, the hero's triumphant restoration of order signified nothing beyond the further eradication of the marriageable nobility of four islands (16.247-53). Instead, the link to fertility myth helps the return of the king to represent something far greater: just as his prolonged absence results not only in social disorder, but also in a loss of βίσιος (e.g. 1.160), the return of the ruler and what he represents heralds the return of prosperity. As Odysseus remarks to Penelope, he himself will restore many of his flocks through piracy, and the "Akhaians will give others until they fill up all my folds" (23.357-8). Moreover, his return also brings increase to the entire community: as Teiresias prophesies in the *Nekuia*, Odysseus will reach a comfortable old age and his "peoples will prosper about [him]" (11.136-7: ἀμφὶ δὲ λαοὶ / ὄλβιοι ἔσσονται). So too the *Hymn* declares that whoever is loved by Demeter and Persephone will be "enormously prosperous" (486: μέγ' ὄλβιος).

Still more telling, the disguised Odysseus compliments Penelope by comparing her to a just ruler:

. . . . σευ κλέος οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἰκάνει,  
ὥς τέ τευ ἢ βασιλῆος ἀμύμονος, ὅς τε θεουδῆς

ἀνδράσιν ἐν πολλοῖσι καὶ ἰφθίμοισιν ἀνάσσω  
**εὐδικίας ἀνέχησι**, φέροισι δὲ γαῖα μέλαινα  
πυροῦς καὶ κριθάς, βρίθησι δὲ δένδρεα καρπῷ,  
τίκτη δ' ἔμπεδα μῆλα, θάλασσα δὲ παρέχη ἰχθύς  
**ἐξ εὐηγεσίης, ἀρετῶσι δὲ λαοὶ** ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

19.108-14.

Your fame reaches wide heaven,  
just like the fame of some blameless king, who, fearing the gods,  
and ruling over men both many and mighty  
upholds righteous dealings. And so, the black earth bears  
wheat and barley, the trees are heavy with fruit  
the flocks bear young continuously, and the sea provides fish  
from his good rule, and his peoples prosper under him.

Odysseus is that ruler returned, and the king's advent represents the return of βίσιος  
itself, not simply to his own estate but to his entire kingdom and even the seas that  
surround it. The *Odyssey* thus links the theme of theodicy to the promise of fertility cult  
in the person of the returning king, whose just and righteous rule is made the source of  
the community's prosperity.<sup>11</sup>

In what follows, then, I will use the term 'epiphany' to designate scenes marked  
by the sudden and sometimes miraculous appearance of Odysseus in his true nature,  
accompanied by the revelation, or at least a more complete revelation, of his identity.<sup>12</sup>

We shall see that although Sowa speaks of a single epiphany belonging to a single traditional theme involving Demeter and Odysseus, in both cases we are in fact dealing with a series of complex themes that include partial epiphanies and culminate in a final act of full disclosure. We shall also see that other characters serve as protagonists of the epiphany theme, most notably Telemakhos, Penelope, and women related to Penelope by parallel structure and narrative function.

A second issue of methodology will not become important until we reach the *Revenge*, but since it is closely related to the first I will treat it here. Athene disguises Odysseus as a beggar so that he can circulate among the suitors and members of his own household in order to test their loyalty to his memory. The poet, moreover, reminds us that this is the point of the exercise on a number of occasions as the narrative progresses. Testing humans incognito is a role typically played by gods in a class of myth known as *theoxeny*, and such stories routinely end in epiphany as the god duly rewards or punishes his host.<sup>13</sup> Odysseus' revenge upon the suitors exhibits all the typical elements of a *theoxeny*, most emphatically including that of testing, so that the story is placed in a clear moralizing framework in accordance with the theodicy announced in the first divine assembly.

When Odysseus enters his palace on Ithake, the *theoxeny* theme is quickly made explicit. Athene herself stands beside Odysseus and urges him to beg for food, so that he can “discover who are just, and who lawless” (17.363: **γνοίη** θ' οἳ τινές εἰσιν ἐναΐσιμοι οἳ τ' ἀθέμιστοι). After Odysseus makes his rounds collecting food from the suitors, Homer says that “Odysseus would have returned back to the threshold after testing the Akhaians with impunity” (412-3: ἔμελλεν Ὀδυσσεὺς / αὐτίς ἐπ' οὐδὸν ἰὼν προικὸς

γεύσασθαι Ἀχαιῶν), but when he approaches Antinoos, the latter strikes him with a footstool. The other suitors become indignant, and one of them chastises Antinoos, pointing out that the stranger could be a god:

Ἄντινο', οὐ μὲν κάλ' ἔβαλες δύστηνον ἀλήτην.  
οὐλόμεν', εἰ δὴ πού τις ἐπουράνιος θεός ἐστι.  
καί τε **θεοὶ** ξείνοισιν ἐοικότες **ἀλλοδαποῖσι**,  
παντοῖοι τελέθοντες, ἐπιστροφῶσι πόληας,  
**ἄνθρωπον ὕβριν τε καὶ εὐνομίην ἐφορῶντες.**

17.483-7

Antinoos, you did not do well to strike the luckless wanderer,  
you're a dead man if by chance he is some heavenly god.  
And indeed, the gods, likening themselves to strangers  
take on all sorts of disguises and visit cities,  
looking upon the *hubris* and justice of men.

As Emily Kearns remarks, “when therefore some of the suitors suggest that the beggar may be a god in disguise, they are not so very far from the truth, for Odysseus will perform exactly the same function as a god. . . . Like the god in a *theoxeny* he punishes and sets to rights a moral order which has gone wrong.”<sup>14</sup>

It is thus important to note an obvious but crucial distinction: whereas *theoxeny* implies a concluding epiphany, followed by rewards or punishment, epiphany does not

necessarily imply *theoxeny*. In other words, we are dealing with two related themes, so that epiphanies can occur independently or in combination with *theoxeny*. In the *Odyssey*, epiphanies do both. Nevertheless, the underlying affinity between these themes allows epiphany scenes to be elaborated by features typical of *theoxeny*. Indeed, the only elements of *theoxeny* missing from Sowa's comparison of epiphany and recognition scenes are testing and punishment.<sup>15</sup> These elements can in fact be considered diagnostic of *theoxeny*, but by now it should be obvious that one must not distinguish too sharply between the themes: it would be better to suppose a continuum lacking clear boundaries on which epiphany and *theoxeny* converge. For our purposes, what is important is that in the *Odyssey*, as a consequence, recognition scenes are routinely assimilated to the continuum comprising epiphany and *theoxeny*.

In the restricted sense given above, *theoxeny* is largely absent from the epiphanies recounted in the *Telemachy* and it is nowhere associated with Telemakhos. Athene's initial visit to Ithake does contain some of the defining features of *theoxeny*, including the goddess' disguise, entertainment, and subsequent epiphany, but she arrives explicitly in order to inspire Telemakhos, not to test him, and her judgment of the suitors is already clear.<sup>16</sup> In the *Phaiakis*, following Odysseus' miraculous appearance in the palace, Alkinoos hints that the stranger may be a god in disguise, but once again Odysseus has no interest in testing the Phaiakes, and it is rather they who test him and reward his behavior (for his altercation with Laodamas and Eurualos, however, see below). In the *Revenge*, the theme of epiphany returns and echoes the earlier epiphanies in the *Telemachy* and *Phaiakis*, but it is now explicitly linked to a *theoxeny* involving Odysseus, so that for a



second time he is made “the protagonist of a theme whose central character is usually a god.”

As important in the present context, in thus assimilating Odysseus’ revenge to the theme of *theoxeny*, the narrative strengthens the link between the *Odyssey* and *Hymn*: Demeter’s stay among the Eleusinians can be meaningfully compared to a *theoxeny* in that Demeter assumes a disguise, is hosted by a mortal family, and reveals her identity in an scene of epiphany. The central motif of testing is also implicit in her meeting with the daughters of Keleos, to whom she tells a lying tale that is nevertheless designed to move the girls to sympathize with her actual plight and to offer assistance. As Helene Foley remarks: “the daughters pass the implicit test of hospitality (there is always a threat of failure in such scenes) to the disguised deity . . . and even note her godlike appearance.”<sup>17</sup> Metaneira initially passes her test as well by offering her son, Demophoon, for Demeter to rear, but then fails it by offending the god.<sup>18</sup> Demeter thus responds by punishing her hosts, which punishment falls on the wider community. For this, Odysseus’ revenge upon the suitors provides the only direct parallel in the *Odyssey*.<sup>19</sup>

In what follows I thus hope to establish a number of interrelated points. Odyssean recognition scenes are conflated with the theme of epiphany, and epiphany is the central theme of the *Odyssey*. This conflation of themes, in turn, assimilates Odysseus to the status of divinity. The *Revenge* is cast as a *theoxeny*, culminating in epiphany, that underwrites the theodicy announced in the first divine assembly. Although Sowa, Kearns and others have noted that Odysseus assumes a role normally played by the gods, in the *Phaiakis* and the *Revenge* respectively, the assimilation is more pointed and taken much further than has been recognized. At the same time, Odyssean epiphany scenes serve as a

nexus of engagement with the narrative traditions preserved in the Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*. As a consequence, Odysseus is assimilated specifically to the status of a fertility god who returns to bestow prosperity on the human community.

With these considerations in mind, let us now turn to the sequential deployment of epiphany scenes in the *Odyssey*. We shall see that in the *Telemachy* the parallels between Athene's visit to the palace of Odysseus and Demeter's much longer stay in the palace of Keleos extend beyond their shared hospitality theme, and that some of the features they have in common are fairly striking. My case for the *Odyssey's* direct engagement with the hymnic tradition is, however, based chiefly on the scope and detail of the parallels between the *Hymn* and the *Phaiakis*, together with their further if more diffuse echo in the *Revenge*.

### **Part 1: *Hymn and Telemachy***

Telemakhos has reached adulthood missing his father, and has only recently begun to understand the implications of the suitors' presence in the palace. In consequence of that recognition, he has now isolated himself from the company of the suitors as he yearns for his father to return and drive them out. As a son mourning the loss of his father, Telemakhos corresponds to Demeter mourning the loss of her daughter, and in both cases grief over a missing family member causes them to withdraw from their respective communities.

Athene herself journeys to Ithake, where she rouses Telemakhos to search for his father. Her visit includes the first of the *Odyssey's* many epiphany scenes. Athene arrives on the island disguised as a Taphian merchant, and she is met at the palace doors by

Telemakhos, the unwed son of the king. Telemakhos welcomes her inside, and provides hospitality, after which Athene tells him a lying tale in which she is sailing to Temese to exchange iron for bronze. In the *Hymn*, Demeter arrives at Eleusis disguised as an old woman, and is met at a well by the unwed daughters the king. She then tells them a lying tale involving her kidnap by pirates who intended to sell her abroad. The girls eventually escort her to their father's palace. The settings and sequence thus differ, but the story line is similar: a goddess disguised as a mortal; tells a lying tale; involving sea-travel with a commercial objective; to an unwed child of the king; who welcomes her into the palace. It may thus be significant that elsewhere in the *Odyssey* the Taphians are notorious as pirates who traffic in human cargo (14.452; 15.427-9; 16.426-7).

When Telemakhos asks after his guest's identity, Athene declares that she is a family friend named Men-tes (1.105), or 'Doer of *Menos*.'<sup>20</sup> Her stated goal in journeying to Ithake is in fact to place *menos* in Telemakhos (89: οἱ **μένος** ἐν φρεσὶ θεῖω; cf. 321), a word ranging from 'spirit,' 'passion,' to 'vital principle,' 'force,' and that here essentially amounts to 'male adulthood.'<sup>21</sup> The goddess thus imparts to Telemakhos the essence of her own assumed identity as Mentos. Demeter likewise seeks to effect change in the very nature of the son of the king so that his new identity will correspond to her own: specifically, Demeter attempts to burn away Demophoon's mortality, thereby rendering him immortal. Thanks to Metaneira's interference, however, the process is left incomplete. As a result, Demophoon corresponds to Kore and to the initiates of Demeter's cult, who enjoy a mitigated triumph over death in the form of a better afterlife.<sup>22</sup> Demeter's assumed name of Doso, or 'The Giver,' thus corresponds to her benefactions both to Demophoon and to all humankind. Athene, by contrast, fully

succeeds in placing *menos* in Telemakhos so that he has the inner strength to denounce the suitors and undertake a voyage in search of his father.

When Metaneira discovers Demeter attempting to burn away Demophoon's mortality, she complains shrilly, thinking that Demeter is attempting to kill her son. Sowa identifies this as belonging to the theme of the host's mistreatment of the guest, and though Metaneira responds as any mother might be expected to under the circumstances, the identification is justified by Demeter's angry response.<sup>23</sup> This is followed by Demeter's epiphany, instructions to Metaneira on how to propitiate her, and sudden disappearance from the palace. Afterwards, Keleos calls an assembly in which he carries out Demeter's instructions.

Each of these story elements is echoed in the *Telemachy*, although the order differs: Athene expresses outrage at the suitors' mistreatment of Telemakhos, followed by her instructions on how to rid the house of them, an act that will of course quell her own anger. She then advises Telemakhos to undertake a journey searching for news of his father, thus initiating a 'Withdrawal and Return' pattern that also structures the stories of Demeter and Persephone in the *Hymn*.<sup>24</sup> Telemachos replies that she has advised him just as a father would his son, and attempts to persuade her to remain and accept a gift of hospitality. Athene refuses the gift, declaring that he should give her something "very fine" when she returns and that he will receive its like. With this promise of return, Athene leaves the palace "like a bird" (1.320: ὄρνις δ' ὄς), which causes Telemakhos to "marvel" (323: θαμβήσεν).<sup>25</sup> In the *Odyssey*, as in the *Hymn*, divine epiphany helps ensure that the goddess' instructions to a member of the royal household are fully carried out.

After Athene departs, Telemakhos rejoins the suitors “a man equal to the gods” (324: **ισόθεος φώς**).<sup>26</sup> The epiphany of Athene is thus answered by a change in Telemakhos’ very nature announced by his comparison to a god. Noting the change, Antinoos declares that the gods themselves are instructing him in the art of bold speech (385: ὑπαγόρην τ’ ἔμεναι καὶ θαρσαλέως ἀγορεύειν). His charge is, of course, ironically quite true.

This is the initial registration of a recurring theme in the *Odyssey* in which epiphanies routinely occur in male and female pairs. The male is always mortal, but in his transformed state resembles a god, while the female may actually be the goddess Athene and if mortal is compared to Artemis, Aphrodite, or both. This pairing can be explained in intratextual terms with its significance for the scene of reunion between Penelope and Odysseus. An echo of the motif also occurs in the *Hymn*, where Kallidike likens the disguised Demeter to a god (159: **θεοεἰκέλος ἔσσι**) and the poet compares the daughters of Keleos to goddesses (108: **ὥς τε θεαί**). In this case, however, both terms of the pair are female.

Next morning, Telemakhos calls an assembly in which he demands that the suitors leave the palace and requests a ship so that he can inquire about his father at Pylos and Sparta. He thus attempts to implement the goddess’ instructions, as Keleos had done in the *Hymn*. The suitors refuse him on both points, in contrast to the Eleusinians in the parallel assembly scene. Once again, however, Antinoos inadvertently declares that Athene has succeeded in her mission by addressing Telemakhos as “bold-speaker, unchecked in your *menos*” (2.85~2.303: ὑπαγόρη, **μένος** ἄσχετε). Disguising herself as Telemakhos, Athene next secures a ship and crew, appears to Telemakhos disguised as

Mentor—another name that means ‘Doer of *Menos*’—and sets out with him for Pylos that same night.

Sowa does not herself treat the theme of Athene’s epiphany in the *Telemachy* and its relationship to the *Hymn*. Yet given the central importance of epiphany in Demeter’s actual cult as well as its prominence in the *Hymn* to the goddess, I think it significant that the first such scene in the *Odyssey* is an actual divine epiphany showcased in the first episode of the poem to transpire on earth. In short, not only does Athene’s epiphany resonate significantly with the *Hymn*, it also serves to announce that epiphany is a, or even the, central theme of the *Odyssey*.

We can take the parallel somewhat further: from an Odyssean perspective, the opening scene of the *Telemachy* uniquely combines: the arrival at the palace of a disguised goddess; who narrates a lying autobiography involving sea travel; assumes a parental role with the child of the king; and reveals that she is a goddess as she quits the palace. This combination of themes can be paralleled in the *Hymn* and nowhere else in extant Archaic Greek literature. Moreover, both narratives share: the initial situation of loss of a family member; the goddess’ transformation of the son of the king into someone of greater than mortal status; her anger over the behavior of people in the palace; and detailed instructions on what to do as a consequence; after which the king or his son calls an assembly; and seeks to implement those instructions.

A further significant nexus of contact between the *Telemachy* and the *Hymn* surrounds the journeys undertaken by Demeter and Telemakhos for news of a missing family member, daughter and father respectively. In both cases, the missing family member is initially beyond reach and is not restored to the family as a consequence of the

search, but much later through direct divine intervention.<sup>27</sup> As we shall see, this is a theme that is not shared by Odysseus in either iteration of the pattern in which he is protagonist, although he does search, and describes himself as searching, for home.<sup>28</sup>

The theme of epiphany recurs at both Pylos and Sparta, although it remains somewhat vestigial as regards Telemakhos himself. On the beach of Pylos, we have a second case of divine epiphany, when Athene declines an invitation to sleep at the palace with another false account that she promptly renders gratuitous by flying off “like a sea-eagle” (3.372: **φήγη εἰδομένη**).<sup>29</sup> Nestor immediately recognizes that the god who has been in their midst is Athene and hence that Telemakhos himself enjoys special status: instead of being the hapless and helpless son of a missing father, he is receiving direct patronage from one of the most important members of the Olympic pantheon. We thus have the same pairing as in the Ithakan narrative of an epiphany by Athene followed by a change in the way Telemakhos is perceived by those around him that amounts to an epiphany in its own right.

Before sacrificing to Athene next morning, Telemakhos is bathed by Nestor’s youngest daughter, Polukaste; and he emerges from the bath “the same as the immortals” (3.468: **ἀθανάτοισιν ὁμοῖος**).<sup>30</sup> This is the first of several scenes in which baths by Telemakhos, Odysseus and Laertes are accompanied by a transformation of appearance that renders them ‘godlike.’<sup>31</sup> Purification by various means, including bathing, plays a central role in initiation to Demeter’s cult, whereby initiates acquire new status that ensures their partial triumph over death. In the case of Demophoon, who can be seen as a symbolic first initiate, the process *consists* of being purified of mortality.<sup>32</sup> I thus consider it plausible that the repeated, parallel link between bathing and acquiring godlike status in

the *Odyssey* reflects the centrally prominent role of purification in the *Hymn* and mystery cult.<sup>33</sup>

After Telemakhos journeys to Sparta, another pair of epiphanies transpires in the arrival scene at the palace (the epiphanies thus stand in place of the identification that typically follows the provision of hospitality in such scenes). Menelaos, who can be seen as subconsciously influenced by his guest's resemblance to his father, abruptly launches into a paean of his old friend Odysseus. Telemakhos' response is to burst into tears, so that Menelaos "recognizes" (4.116: **νόησε**) his guest must be Telemakhos through a display of public grief. Telemakhos' pain thus corresponds to the use of tokens in recognition scenes, and it uniquely allows Menelaos to identify someone he has never met. Although pain is a defining characteristic of heroes generally, and appropriate to Telemakhos' identity as such, it is also highly appropriate in terms of the *Odyssey*'s own thematics that the son of Odysseus be identified by his grief over a missing family member.<sup>34</sup> But, before Menelaos can decide whether or not to allow Telemakhos to identify himself, Helen appears in another scene of epiphany, "looking like Artemis" (122: **Ἀρτέμιδι . . . εἰκνία**), and promptly identifies their guest as Telemakhos based on his physical appearance. This highly significant comparison of the queen to Artemis will return in the scenes leading up to the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus, which, given Helen's own history, it ironically foreshadows.

## **Part 2: *Hymn* and *Phaiakis***

We have seen that the affinity between the *Telemachy* and the *Hymn to Demeter* extends beyond the shared theme of Withdrawal and Return to include the pairing of a



lying tale by a goddess disguised as a mortal with a subsequent scene of divine epiphany. This specific pairing is not found in the *Phaiakis*, although epiphany itself is a prominent and recurring feature of the narrative. The three most prominent epiphanies occur when Odysseus meets the daughter of the queen at a washing hole, when he miraculously appears before the queen herself in the *megaron*, and when he finally identifies himself to the Phaiakes. Although Odysseus does not adopt a false persona, he does initially suppress his identity: whereas Nausikaa, like Kallidike in the *Hymn*, does not ask the stranger's name, Odysseus, unlike Demeter, does not volunteer one—Demeter's false name is, of course, part of her disguise—nor does he ask for Nausikaa's. Thus, despite the transferral, as it were, of the motif of concealed identity from goddess to mortal male and the lack of a lying autobiography, the characters involved, the general setting, and the structural position of the encounter in the larger narrative correspond to the *Hymn* more closely than do Athene's epiphanies in the *Telemachy*.

Sowa identifies Odysseus' meeting with Nausikaa as a multiform of the traditional theme, 'Maiden at the Well,' or as she prefers to call it, 'God Welcomed by Maidens.'<sup>35</sup> As we have seen, she also argues that the episode provides the closest parallel to Demeter's epiphany in the *Hymn* in Archaic Greek literature.<sup>36</sup> To make her case, Sowa extends the theme in both cases to include subsequent events in the palace. In fact, the parallels, which are more extensive than Sowa allows, extend to the entirety of Demeter's involvement with the family of Keleos, while in the *Odyssey* they commence when Odysseus suffers shipwreck and continue until he arrives on Ithake. The pattern then promptly repeats itself as Odysseus encounters Athene near a spring, and here too the parallels extend to subsequent events in the palace. To my knowledge, no other

instantiation of 'Maiden at the Well' is extended in this way or to this degree, and there is in fact no reason to treat the narratives as instantiations of a single theme except in order to dismiss the parallels between them as accidents of formulaic composition. Instead, we are dealing with three separate narrative sequences: 'Maiden at the Well,' 'Hero Journeys to the Palace,' and 'Hero's Reception in the Palace.' Moreover, as we have also seen, Athene narrates a false autobiography that is dissociated from 'Maiden at the Well' and takes place during 'Hero's Reception in the Palace.' The scenes from the *Odyssey* and *Hymn* are in fact the only instantiations of 'Maiden at the Well' in ancient literature that include a lying tale. The tale, which can be titled 'Hero Tests Host with False Autobiography' is thus an independent theme closely related to that of disguise. As such, it naturally belongs to *theoxeny* and can be conflated with either 'Maiden at the Well' or 'Hero's Reception in the Palace.' Finally, in the *Phaiakis* and *Hymn* we are dealing with repeated scenes of partial epiphany concluding with full epiphany. The scenes of partial epiphany are more numerous in the *Phaiakis*, but each of Demeter's three epiphanies has a parallel at the same structural juncture: the effect in the *Phaiakis*, I suggest, is that of narrative engagement with the hymnic tradition combined with intratextual amplification, the latter creating a crescendo effect that culminates in the climactic scene of full disclosure.

The difficulties surrounding Odysseus' arrival on Skherie have no parallels in the *Odyssey*, but they do have a significant echo in both the *Hymn* and in Demeter's cult. In the first stage of her journey, Demeter does not eat or bathe for nine days as she wanders the earth.<sup>37</sup> Related to this is the nature of her disguise as an old woman past child rearing, and the position she seeks and obtains as servant. Each of these narrative

elements belong to the theme of mortification, which plays a central role in Demeter's cult in the fasting, mourning and sexual abstinence of its initiates.<sup>38</sup>

These elements also resonate significantly with the *Phaiakis*, and in both cases they occur in the context of the hero's transitioning between realms, specifically from the divine to human.<sup>39</sup> The theme of Odysseus' enforced fasting and squalor is dramatized as he approaches the island and later supplicates Nausikaa: he swims for three days without eating or sleeping after Poseidon destroys his raft; and he arrives on Skherie exhausted, filthy, and hungry. When Odysseus first approaches Nausikaa, her maidservants all scatter because he has been so disfigured by the sea (6.137: *σμερδαλέος δ' αὐτῆσι φάνη κεκακωμένος ἄλμῃ*). His initially foul appearance on greeting Nausikaa thus has a parallel in Demeter's refusal to bathe and her disguise as an old woman. Even though he has now suffered a four day physical ordeal without eating or drinking, Odysseus does not ask Nausikaa for food, in contrast to the parallel scene from Book 13 in which he hints to Athene that he could use a bite to eat. Nevertheless, once Odysseus bathes and his appearance is restored, he breaks his fast, eating "greedily, for he had gone long without tasting food" (250: *ἀρπαλέως· δηρὸν γὰρ ἐδητύος ἦεν ἄπαστος*). In his later quarrel with Eurualos, Odysseus again raises the issue of his involuntary fasting when he voices concern that one of the Phaiakes could beat him in a foot race because his food was depleted long enough before the wreck to weaken him severely (8.232-3: *οὐ κομδὴ κατὰ νῆα / ἦεν ἐπηετανός· τῶ μοι φίλα γυῖα λέλυνται*).

As in the *Telemachy*, the theme of the hero's deceitful tales would be inappropriate in the *Phaiakis*, at least in the sense that the theme lacks obvious motivation. The issue of false identity is more complex, however, and the narrative can

be seen as engaging with it in more than one way: most obvious is that whereas Demeter adopts a false persona, Odysseus does not reveal his identity until after he is mistreated by a member of the royal household: this is the same structural juncture at which Demeter reveals herself to Metaneira and Odysseus subsequently reveals himself to the suitors. In the latter two cases, of course, the revelation is followed by scenes of punishment, which the stranger's mistreatment serves to motivate. As significant, by asking Nausikaa for rags to wear Odysseus in effect requests a 'false' social identity analogous to the one that Demeter adopts as part of her disguise (we will return to this momentarily).

When Demeter arrives at Eleusis, she takes her seat in the shade of an olive tree by the Parthenion well. Although Sowa seems to treat the well simply as part of a traditional theme, Persephone is closely associated with springs, at Eleusis and elsewhere, and scholars typically assume that the *Hymn* refers to an actual well at Eleusis.<sup>40</sup> There she is greeted by the daughters of the king, including most prominently Kallidike. Odysseus, in turn, sleeps by a washing hole in the shelter of an olive tree from which he emerges next day to greet the daughter of the king, Nausikaa. Thus, even though Demeter and Odysseus are both strangers, it is the daughter/s of the king who is/are described as arriving at the scene to meet them.<sup>41</sup> Demeter and Odysseus are thus: beneath an olive tree; with their appearance disfigured and disguised; when they encounter a band of maidens; including one or more daughters of the king; near a body of fresh water; to which the girls have come to perform a domestic chore. They both relate a tale of woe designed to elicit sympathy from the girls; and after thus relating their sorrows they ask

for assistance and for the name of the land they have reached (in Demeter's case, of course, the questions are part of her disguise).

Demeter's tale of abduction by pirates is 'false,' whereas Odysseus here offers a true account of his recent voyage and shipwreck.<sup>42</sup> Demeter and Odysseus thus both tell stories in which they suffer hardships at sea, though Athene and Odysseus' lying tales on Ithake are in many respects closer to Demeter's tale than Odysseus' true account is here. Odysseus then concludes his tale of woe by explicitly asking Nausikaa to take pity on him (6.175: **ἐλέαιρε**), since he has come to her first and knows no one else who lives in the city or countryside (175-7: **σὲ γὰρ . . . / ἐς πρώτην ἰκόμην, τῶν δ' ἄλλων οὐ τινα οἶδα / ἀνθρώπων, οἳ τήνδε πόλιν καὶ γαίαν ἔχουσιν**), by pointing out the town and giving him rags to wear. This request is followed by the wish that the gods grant her every desire, namely a husband and home (180-81: **σοὶ δὲ θεοὶ τόσα δοῖεν, ὅσα φρεσὶ σῆσι μενοινᾶς, / ἄνδρα τε καὶ οἶκον**).<sup>43</sup>

Each of these elements recurs in the *Hymn* and in nearly the same sequence: Demeter concludes her own tale of woe by declaring she has arrived ignorant of the land and its inhabitants (133-4: **οὕτω δευρὶ ἰκόμην ἀλαλημένη, οὐδέ τι οἶδα / ἢ τις δὴ γαῖ' ἐστὶ καὶ οἳ τινες ἐγγεγάασιν**), and wishing that the gods grant the girls husbands and children (135-6: **ἀλλ' ὑμῖν μὲν πάντες Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες / δοῖεν κουριδίους ἄνδρας καὶ τέκνα τεκέσθαι**), followed by a request that the girls take pity on her (137: **ἐμὲ δ' αὐτ' οἰκτεῖρατε**) and tell her to whose home she might go to find work.

Kallidike admonishes the stranger that it is necessary for mortals to "endure" the gifts of the gods (147-8: **Μαῖα θεῶν μὲν δῶρα καὶ ἀχνύμενοί περ ἀνάγκη /**

**τέτλαμεν** ἄνθρωποι· δὴ γὰρ πολὺ φέρτεροί εἰσιν). To Odysseus' similar request, Nausikaa likewise responds that the stranger must “endure” what Zeus has given him (6.188-90: **Ζεὺς δ' αὐτὸς νέμει ὄλβον** Ὀλύμπιος ἀνθρώποισιν, / ἐσθλοῖς ἠδὲ κακοῖσιν, ὅπως ἐθέλησιν, ἐκάστω· / καί που σοὶ τὰ γ' ἔδωκε, σὲ δὲ **χορὴ τετλάμεν** ἔμψης). Both scenes thus exploit the same irony of having a maiden daughter to a king, that is a character most unlikely to have experience of grief and suffering, voice a cliché to a parental figure in pain on the necessity of enduring whatever the gods might send.

Whereas Demeter requests, and is granted, the role of domestic servant, Odysseus asks to be given rags to wear: Odysseus thus asks for an identity that reverses his true status in human society as king in the same way that Demeter reverses her own status in the cosmic hierarchy as goddess. In two senses, then, his request corresponds to the disguise that Demeter assumes in the *Hymn*, both as a foreshadowing of the actual disguise that he later adopts on Ithake, and as a request for an identity opposite and opposed to his true self. Finally, it is important to note that when Odysseus first meets Nausikaa, his initial appearance amounts to a disguise that closely corresponds to Demeter's false identity: while a goddess of fertility appears as a mortal who can no longer produce children and then requests the status of servant, Odysseus, a mortal of heroic stature who is ruler of an island kingdom appears to the maidservants as a wild animal (6.130-8). Note too that Demeter's assumed role as a servant takes the role reversal created by her false identity a step further: whereas the divine ‘Giver’ of life disguises herself as both mortal and barren, her role as a domestic servant places her near the bottom of the human hierarchy. Odysseus' initially disfigured state, by contrast, reduces him still further, from the status of mortal ruler to that of animal. His requested

role of beggar thus elevates him back, as it were, to the level of human, albeit one located even further down the social hierarchy than that of servant.

When Nausikaa's maidservants provide him with clothes and oil for bathing, Odysseus proceeds to bathe himself, from which he emerges restored and with his appearance enhanced by Athene. Nausikaa immediately remarks the change in his appearance, at which she marvels (6:237: **θηεῖτο** δὲ κούρη), and then compares Odysseus to a god (243: **θεοῖσιν ἔοικε**; cf. 6.280-81). It is clear that the stranger is not who he first appeared to be, and not simply in a physical sense: in other words, Athene's make-over is not simply physical but a visible sign of divine favor willing to work miracles on the stranger's behalf. Thus, for a second time, and far more emphatically than in Book 3, bathing is accompanied by a change of status that renders the hero 'godlike.' His rejuvenation thus corresponds to the 'hint of divinity' that commonly occurs when gods appear to humans in disguise, and that in the parallel scene from the *Hymn* leads Kallidike to compare Demeter to a goddess.<sup>44</sup>

In the scene that precipitates her encounter with Odysseus, Homer likens Nausikaa to the goddess Artemis (6.102: **οἴη Ἄρτεμις** εἶσι κατ' οὔρεα **ιοχέαιρα**), and Odysseus himself furthers the comparison (6.149-52: **Ἀρτέμιδί σε . . . εἴσω**; cf. 7.291: **εἰκνία θεῆσι**). We thus have another of the *Odyssey's* paired epiphany scenes, one that like the earlier simile comparing Helen to Artemis foreshadows the reunion of Penelope and Odysseus. Their encounter is also the first of five scenes of partial epiphany in the *Phaiakis*, leading up to the scene in which Odysseus fully reveals his identity in Book 9.<sup>45</sup>

A second partial epiphany, in the *Phaiakis* as in the *Hymn*, coincides with the hero's entrance into the palace. Both narratives, moreover, follow the same trajectory: a

sudden and miraculous transformation coincides with the hero's entry; this causes amazement in those present; is followed by a lengthy and awkward silence; after which the issue of proper seating for the guest is raised; a subordinate character corrects an initial misstep by the king or queen; and the hero is given a formal relationship with the royal household.

Thus, when Demeter steps across the threshold, her head reaches the roof and she fills the doorway with her divine radiance, at which “awe and wonder, and green fear seize” Metaneira (190: τὴν δ' αἰδῶς τε σέβας τε ἰδὲ χλωρὸν δέος εἶλεν).<sup>46</sup> Odysseus enters the palace and walks up to Arete still surrounded by Athene's disguising mist, but the moment he puts his hands on her knees in supplication, the mist disperses and “they grow silent throughout the house as they look at the man, and they marvel as they look” (7.144-5: οἱ δ' ἄνεω ἐγένοντο δόμον κάτα, **φῶτα ἰδόντες, / θαύμαζον δ' ὀρόωντες**).

After he completes his supplication, Odysseus sits upon the hearth in the ashes, and “they all grow quiet in silence” (7.154: οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο σιωπῆ).<sup>47</sup> Ashes, of course, concretely represent his grief, and in taking his seat at the hearth Odysseus can also be seen as requesting adoption into Alkinoos' household and the community he leads.<sup>48</sup> But fire is also a central feature in Demeter's cult, where it plays a complementary role to water as a purifying agent. This is echoed in the *Hymn* when Demeter attempts to immortalize Demophoon by “hiding” him in a “large fire” (239: κρύπτεσκε; 248: πυρὶ ἐνὶ πολλῷ). It is left unsaid what fire is meant, but a child is initiated ‘from the hearth’ during the Mysteries, and it seems safe to assume that hearth-fire is meant here as well.<sup>49</sup>



In the *Phaiakis*, Ekheneos admonishes Alkinoos that it is unseemly for the stranger to sit on the ground, and that he should seat him on a silver-studded *thronos* instead. Alkinoos promptly seats Odysseus in the throne occupied by his own son, Laodamas (7.167-71).<sup>50</sup> After Demeter enters the palace, Metaneira attempts to seat the stranger in her own *klismos* (191), but Demeter declines to be seated until Iambe intervenes to provide her with a jointed *diphros* covered with a fleece (196-8). The partial epiphanies of both Demeter and Odysseus are thus immediately followed by demonstrated concern over appropriate seating for a grieving guest; and in both cases the king or queen instinctively offers a seat appropriate to the guest's true station, which is moreover the same type of seat.<sup>51</sup> The fleece covered stool on which Demeter sits also plays an important role in her Mysteries: the ram skin was thought to purify the initiates, who apparently sat on it veiled while they were further purified with a winnowing-fan or burning torch.<sup>52</sup> As we shall presently see, Odysseus is identically seated during his interview with Penelope in Book 19. In both scenes, seating is thus used to negotiate and establish identity, and in both the guests choose a seat that concretely expresses their grief, but that also carries connotations of ritual purity.

Metaneira recognizes that her guest is well born, and likens the modesty and grace in her eyes to that of kings who administer the law (214-5: αἰδῶς / καὶ χάρις). This does not, however, explain why she deferentially offers her seat as, whatever the stranger's birth, she has ostensibly fallen to the status of mere servant. Metaneira is, moreover, herself a queen who would not be expected to defer in this way to someone of merely equal rank: she thus intuitively recognizes that her guest is not simply well born but a god, and she responds accordingly. Alkinoos, by contrast, openly hints that Odysseus

may be a god (7.199-206).<sup>53</sup> We are probably meant to imagine him suspecting that the stranger is in fact Hermes, to whom the Phaiakian elders were pouring libations when the stranger arrives (137).<sup>54</sup>

Metaneira and Arete both grow suspicious about the guest's designs on their children. After approving Odysseus' supplication, the Phaiakian elders depart for home, leaving Alkinoos and Arete alone with the stranger. Arete recognizes the mantle and tunic as clothing she herself had made, and she asks the stranger who he is and from where, and who gave him his clothing (7.237-39). Arete thus knows that Odysseus and Nausikaa met while the latter was washing these very clothes, is concerned that the stranger may have had inappropriate dealings with her daughter, and asks her question in such a way as to give the stranger every opportunity to entrap himself in a lie. In the *Hymn*, Metaneira sees Demeter secretly hide Demophoon in the fire and complains about Demeter's treatment of her son. In both cases, then, the queen perceives a threat that the guest may take her child from her: Demeter is in fact attempting to abduct Demophoon by rendering him immortal, although Metaneira thinks she is killing him, while Arete suspects Odysseus of having improper relations with Nausikaa, which could involve seduction, rape, murder or making her his wife. All three of the latter scenarios would correspond to what Hades has in fact done by abducting Persephone.<sup>55</sup> Whereas in Arete's case, the epiphany leads to her question, in Metaneira's case, her complaint leads to the epiphany.

Odysseus answers Arete's question by speaking of his yearning to leave Ogygia despite Kalupso's offer of immortality, his subsequent shipwreck at Poseidon's hands, and the care shown him by Nausikaa. He thereby repeats his desire to return home—a

goddess did not tempt him and neither does Nausikaa— while simultaneously complimenting Arete on her child-rearing. When Alkinoos replies that Nausikaa had, in fact, behaved incorrectly in failing to bring Odysseus home with her, Odysseus responds to a second, potentially threatening question so skillfully that Alkinoos offers him Nausikaa’s hand in marriage! His offer thus corresponds to the equally striking offer of Metaneira to entrust her only son to a complete stranger.

The entire next day on Skherie is taken up with a celebration in honor of the stranger, during which three partial epiphanies provide an increasingly clear purchase on his identity, followed by a final and complete revelation of that identity. At dawn the next morning, Alkinoos escorts Odysseus to the *agorē*. Athene, meanwhile, ranges throughout the city impersonating Alkinoos’ herald and summoning the leaders and counselors to assembly. Many are said to “marvel as they look” at Odysseus, on whom “Athene pours down marvelous grace” (8.17-19: **ἐθηήσαντο ἰδόντες** . . . Ἀθήνη / θεσπεσίην κατέχευε **χάριν**) in a transformation that echoes his earlier epiphany to Nausikaa (cf. 6.235-7). Alkinoos then announces the stranger’s return, requesting that a new ship be launched for the occasion and that fifty-two youths be selected as its crew.

During the banquet in the palace that follows, Demodokos sings about a quarrel between Akhilleus and Odysseus that causes Agamemnon to rejoice (8.73-82). Odysseus’ response, however, is to weep, and he hides his tears by drawing his mantle down over his head whenever Demodokos sings (83-92). Odysseus escapes the notice of the rest, but Alkinoos “notes and recognizes him” (8.94: **μὴν . . . ἐπεφρόσατ’ ἠδ’ ἐνόησεν**), for he was seated nearby and could hear his heavy groaning. Just as Menelaos “recognizes” (4.116: **νόησε**) Telemakhos when the youth cries at an encomium to his father, Alkinoos

recognizes not simply the fact of Odysseus' tears but their significance: his guest has a powerful emotional connection to the Trojan War, and, like Telemakhos, he cries in grief over personal loss. After entering the palace of Keleos, Demeter likewise holds a veil before her face as she sits "grieving in silence" (198: ἄφθογγος τετημένη) over the loss of a daughter.

To spare his guest further grief, Alkinoos proposes athletic competitions, which precipitate a second partial epiphany. When Laodamas challenges Odysseus to compete, Odysseus accuses Laodamas of taunting him. Eurualos then openly insults Odysseus, who responds to the insult with a rebuke. Such rebukes by the stranger after suffering mistreatment are a common feature of divine epiphany scenes, where they routinely follow the epiphany rather than lead up to it as here.<sup>56</sup> It is thus noteworthy that Demeter also rebukes Metaneira before she reveals her identity. Among Odyssean epiphanies, moreover, such rebukes are confined to the present scene, the *Mnesterophonia*, where the rebuke reveals his identity, and the scene in which Eurukleia recognizes his scar, where it follows her recognition. Whereas the present scene serves to foreshadow the *Mnesterophonia*, we shall see that the interview with Penelope, in which Eurukleia's recognition is embedded, is a *mise en abyme* of the entire *Revenge*, so that it too occurs at the same structural juncture in the narrative (I identify 23.166-72 as a test rather than as a rebuke, though note the echo of 97-103). Conversely, the narrative pull of the *Revenge* that relates the Phaiakian youths to Penelope's suitors has momentarily drawn the episode from Book 8 into the pattern of *theoxeny*.

After thus rebuking Eurualos, Odysseus enters and wins the discus toss, thereby revealing his heroic stature. He furthers the identification with an expansive boast in

which he lists other events in which he would be willing to compete, letting slip in the process that he had also fought at Troy (8.219-20). Alkinoos responds by approving the stranger's speech and obliquely acknowledging his heroic stature, for which he freely acknowledges that the Phaiakes are no match (236-49). In the scenes in which Odysseus listens to Demodokos' song and participates in athletic competition we thus have complementary images of the stranger as a passive man of suffering and as an active man of anger that reveal him as a traditional hero, together with his more specific identity as a Trojan war hero.<sup>57</sup> Just as Metaneira's mistreatment causes Demeter to reveal her true identity in anger and to demand that a temple be built to propitiate her, Eurualos' mistreatment causes Odysseus to reveal his heroic identity in anger, after which Alkinoos instructs Eurualos to make amends with words and a gift (396-7). Eurualos responds by offering the stranger a bronze sword with a silver handle and ivory scabbard, and wishes that the gods grant him to see his wife and paternal land (403-11). Eurualos thus makes amends with a gift appropriate to the stranger's true identity, just as Keleos attempts to do on Demeter's behalf.

After Eurualos conciliates Odysseus, everyone returns to the palace.<sup>58</sup> There follows a clear echo of his earlier epiphany scene at the washing basin: Odysseus is bathed by Arete's handmaidens, and when he rejoins the festivities Nausikaa stands by a "pillar" (8.458: **σταθμόν**) upholding the roof, and marvels at him (459: **θαύμαζεν**).<sup>59</sup> The bath's transformative effects are thus again focalized by Nausikaa. When she then asks the stranger to remember her after he returns home, Odysseus replies by promising to pray to her every day "as to a god" (8.467: **θεῷ ὡς**). The comparison echoes Nausikaa's earlier epiphany at the washing basin, and thereby completes the pattern of

paired epiphanies that we have seen to be a ruling leitmotiv of the poem. Following as it does on Odysseus' success in an athletic event, the scene also foreshadows the recognition scene with Penelope in which Odysseus again bathes after he wins the archery contest and kills the suitors.

Odysseus then gives Demodokos a cut of pork-loin as a portion of honor and asks him to sing about his own greatest triumph in the Trojan War, the trick of the wooden horse. Whereas Odysseus provides a further 'hint of identity,' the Homeric narrator is also foreshadowing the *Mnesterophonia*. When Demodokos sings the tale, Odysseus again weeps and Alkinoos again "notes and recognizes him" (533). On this occasion, however, Alkinoos announces the guest's grieving to all present and asks Odysseus to declare his name, where he is from, the lands he has seen, and why he weeps as he listens to the fate of the Greeks and Troy. Odysseus now finally does reveal exactly who he is and follows with a four-book account of his wanderings after the war.

In the *Hymn* and *Phaiakis*, the hero's departure from the palace of the king thus follows a similar trajectory: when Metaneira complains about Demeter's treatment of her child, Demeter rebukes Metaneira for mistreating her, identifies herself, and demands that the Eleusinians build a temple to appease her. She then quits the palace in anger. The next morning, Keleos calls an assembly and bids the Eleusinians to comply with the goddess' demand. When Demeter hides away in the temple, disaster follows as drought threatens to annihilate the human and divine communities. The gods themselves then attempt to appease her by offering gifts and whatever divine honors (τιμὰί) she might choose.

When Arete becomes suspicious of Odysseus' treatment of her child and demands where he got his clothes, Odysseus reaffirms his desire to return home. Next morning,

Alkinoos calls an assembly in which he instructs the Phaiakes to comply with the stranger's request. After being mistreated by Laodamas and Eurualos, he partially reveals his identity in anger, and then fully in grief, and leaves Skherie the following evening. Afterwards, Poseidon protests to Zeus of his own mistreatment by the Phaiakes. The god's wrath leads to disaster: when Poseidon turns their ship to stone on its return from Ithake, Alkinoos calls another assembly in which he instructs the Phaiakes to appease the god with sacrifice before he annihilates the city (the further threat is known to them; cf. 13.177). For obvious reasons, Odysseus cannot angrily withdraw from Skherie, but his withdrawal nevertheless motivates the theme of divine wrath and punishment of mortals who offend the god.

### **Part 3: *Hymn and Revenge***

As noted above, the narrative patterns we have been considering are more diffuse in the *Revenge* than in the *Phaiakis*, and as a consequence the sequential concatenation of theme and motif that permitted direct linear correlation between the *Phaiakis* and *Hymn* is not as straightforward. There are two obvious reasons for this: first, the *Revenge* is over four times longer than the *Phaiakis* and many times longer than the Demeter's Eleusinian narrative in the *Hymn*. Nevertheless, the narrative still follows the same basic pattern: 'Maiden at the Well,' including 'Hero Tests Host with False Autobiography,' followed by 'Hero Journeys to the Palace' and 'Hero's Reception in the Palace.' Contributing to, and in consequence of the narrative's much longer dimensions, Homer multiplies the theme of the hero's reception, yielding no less than five lying autobiographies and seven full epiphanies of Odysseus alone. This prevents the underlying structural pattern from

emerging with the same clarity as in the parallel narratives, but it belongs to the same strategy of amplification that we observed in the *Phaiakis*. It is as if, having already established the pattern in the *Phaiakis*, the poet now feels free to proliferate its most important elements in order to create another of the poem's crescendo effects.

Nevertheless, there remains only one iteration of 'Maiden at the Well' and both it and the recognition scene with Penelope occupy the same structural positions in the narrative as the parallel scenes from the *Phaiakis* and *Hymn*. Despite the poet's many expansions, the basic structure of the overarching narrative remains intact. Not only are the epiphanies that Sowa investigates in the *Phaiakis* and the *theoxeny* that Kearns investigates in the *Revenge* two convergent aspects of the same thematic complex, but the underlying narratives are also structurally cognate.

In the arrival scene on Ithake, Odysseus encounters Athene at the head of a harbor near an olive tree and a sacred cave with an "ever flowing spring" (13.109: ἐν δ' ὕδατ' ἀενάοντα). We thus have a second Odyssean iteration of 'Maiden at the Well,' in which the combination of an olive tree near fresh flowing water by the sea shore reproduces the setting of his earlier encounter with Nausikaa, while that of an olive tree and spring reproduces Demeter's encounter with Kallidike and her sisters.<sup>60</sup>

In this setting, the virgin goddess Athene greets Odysseus "in body like a young man, a herder of flocks, all delicate, such as are the sons of kings" (13.222-3). She is thus also apparently a native of the island. In the *Phaiakis*, Odysseus is greeted by Nausikaa, the virgin daughter of the king, who is said to resemble the virgin goddess, Artemis. An even closer parallel can be drawn to the *Hymn*, where Demeter reverses her status as the fertility goddess by masquerading as a mortal woman past child rearing, while Athene



reverses her status as the goddess of civilization by becoming a mortal male engaging in a culturally marginal activity associated with characters opposed to civilized values:

Poluphemos and Melanthios.<sup>61</sup>

When Odysseus awakens on the shores of Ithake, he does not recognize it at first because Athene “poured a mist round about . . . so that she could make him unrecognizable and tell him everything, lest his wife, townsmen and friends recognize him before the suitors repaid their every transgression” (13.189-93: ὄφρα . . . ἄγνωστον τεύξειεν . . . μή μιν πρὶν ἄλοχος γνοίη). In other words, Athene hides Odysseus in a mist so that she can later disguise him as a beggar, with the further result that the island is disguised from Odysseus. When Athene herself appears disguised as a shepherd, Odysseus begs her to save him and his possessions, declaring that he prays to her “as to a god” (231: ὣς τε θεῷ). He follows this request for assistance by asking what land he has reached, just as he had earlier concluded his tale of woe to Nausikaa, and Demeter concluded her tale to Kallidike. When Athene informs him that he has arrived on Ithake, Odysseus rejoices, but responds with a lying autobiography in which, like Demeter, he hails from Crete. At this, Athene smiles: Odysseus has thus implicitly passed her test, consisting of his ability to restrain his emotions, disguise his true identity, and refrain from rushing home to his wife and son (cf. 333-8).<sup>62</sup>

Athene now assumes her true form in the first of the scene’s several epiphanies and teases her favorite for failing to recognize her. Odysseus, however, pretends that he is not convinced he has reached Ithake, so Athene parts the mist, allowing him to recognize the island. Ithake thus has an epiphany of its own, to its mutable ruler, Odysseus.<sup>63</sup> This same act also exposes Odysseus to view, and it echoes his earlier epiphany when he

miraculously appears to the Phaiakian rulers, though in the present case no one save Athene is present to witness the event. We thus have another of the poem's paired epiphany scenes, with an epiphany of the island thrown in as a bonus.

Whereas Odysseus was lying and Demeter was sitting beneath an olive tree when Nausikaa and Kallidike arrive, Odysseus and Athene now take their seat "by the trunk of a sacred olive" (372: *ἱερῆς παρὰ πυθμὲν' ἐλαίης*) to plot their revenge on the suitors. When Odysseus next asks Athene to "weave a *mētis*" for him, the goddess transforms him into a beggar. She thereby reverses her earlier transformation of Odysseus from disfigured to 'godlike' in the parallel episode of 'Maiden at the Well' from the *Phaiakis*. It is thus by a reversal of epiphany that Athene brings about a reversal of Odysseus' social status analogous to the disguise that Demeter assumes when she encounters the daughters of Keleos. This same reversal introduces a *theoxeny* theme culminating in a further reversal that restores Odysseus to his original status as godlike hero. A pattern thus extends from books five to twenty three in which Odysseus oscillates between antithetical identities: all-but-immortal living with a divine consort on an island of the blessed, Odysseus is then reduced to the appearance of wild animal by Poseidon's storm, rendered 'godlike' by Athene on the shores of Skherie, reduced again to the status of mortal beggar on the shores of Ithake, and finally reclaims his true identity as a 'godlike' hero during the *Mnesterophonia*.

The Cretan origin of both Demeter and Odysseus in their lying autobiographies is notorious, but it remains unclear whether this is because one account has influenced the other or because Crete itself had become associated with such accounts. What can be said, however, is that there are no other examples of 'Cretan Tales' in extant archaic

literature, while the famous claim that “all Cretans are liars” is first made by Epimenides quite possibly under the influence of these two scenes.<sup>64</sup> More significant, however, is that Demeter and Odysseus employ similar rhetoric in telling their stories. Demeter, as we have seen, communicates to Kallidike in code, so that although false her story communicates a true message about her plight that causes the maiden to respond appropriately. Odysseus here also tells a false tale in a code designed to elicit the response he deems appropriate to his present circumstances. The underlying message, moreover, accurately characterizes Odysseus, although the response he hopes for is anything but sympathetic: instead he seeks both to warn the shepherd that he is capable of defending his possessions, and to win the shepherd’s support by suggesting that he would be richly rewarded for providing it.<sup>65</sup>

The actual details of the story have little in common with Demeter’s—the stranger is a Cretan, who arrived at his destination involuntarily on board a foreign ship—but given his rhetorical objectives this lack of concord is unsurprising. The setting, however, closely reproduces that of Demeter’s encounter with Kallidike and Odysseus’ own earlier encounter with Nausikaa. In all three cases, a royal youth approaches a stranger; near a body of fresh water; the stranger’s appearance is disguised; and he narrates an autobiography designed to elicit an appropriate response from the listener. In the present scene, moreover, the tale is also false, as in the *Hymn* and in contrast to the *Phaiakis*. Afterwards, Athene transforms his appearance to that of an aged beggar so as to disguise his identity, while Demeter disguises her own identity by transforming her appearance to that of an aged servant. Based on analogy to the parallel narratives, we would then expect Odysseus to proceed to the palace; be welcomed by the royal family; and offered a

special relationship with a prince (*Hymn*) or princess (*Phaiakis*); suffer mistreatment; reveal his identity in anger (*Hymn* and *Phaiakis*) or grief (*Phaiakis*); after several partial epiphanies; and rebuke and punish those who mistreat him. Although the process is interrupted by the interlude with Eumaios, and further complicated by a proliferation of themes in the palace, this is exactly what does in fact occur. There will even be an encounter between the queen, stranger and aged wet-nurse in which the nurse is accused of attempting to kill her charge.

His encounter with Athene includes the first of five ‘Cretan Tales’ that Odysseus relates, and since they repeat the theme of ‘Hero Tests Host with False Autobiography’ I will treat the others in sequence here. In each case, Odysseus tailors his account, so that a false story nevertheless communicates an underlying truth with a persuasive goal that also provides a test of hospitality and of loyalty to his memory (the sole exception to the test of loyalty is the story told to Antinoos). Thus, when he tells the story to the swineherd Eumaios, a slave born to a noble family, Odysseus fashions himself the son of a slave by a Cretan aristocrat (14.199-359). Like Eumaios, moreover, Odysseus was able to raise his station through his own efforts and native ἀρετή (excellence). Unlike Eumaios, however, his ἀρετή consists of martial prowess and he pointedly remarks that he does not care for farming (thus tacitly explaining to the swineherd that he will not remain on the farm). As a consequence, he and Idomeneus were chosen to lead the Cretan contingent to Troy. Afterwards he led an ill-fated expedition to Egypt, in which his “trustworthy companions” (249: ἐρήρηδες ἑταῖροι; cf. 259) “yield to their *hubris* and follow their *menos*” as they set about pillaging the countryside (262: οἱ δ’ ὕβρει εἷξαντες, ἐπισπόμενοι μένει σφῶ). Next morning, men from the city counter-attack and enslave

his companions, but Odysseus saves himself by tossing aside his weapons and seeking the king's protection.

After prospering in Egypt for seven years, he eventually falls in with a “deceitful” and “greedy” Phoenician (288-9), who seeks to abduct and enslave him, but he escapes to Thesprotia when Zeus strikes the ship with a thunderbolt. In Thesprotia, the son of king Pheidon, ‘The Sparing,’ finds him “undone by cold and exhaustion” (318: αἴθρῳ καὶ καμάτῳ δεδμημένον) and leads him to the house of his father, who provides him with clothing. There he learns that Odysseus is at Dodona consulting the oracle to determine whether he should return home openly or in secret (327-30). Pheidon sets him on board a ship bound for Doulikhion, but the crew again seek to sell him into slavery, in the process replacing his clothes with the rags he is now wearing. He, however, escapes when they put in at Ithake to take their dinner by the shore.

As is well recognized, his fictional autobiography is largely a multiform of the Kikonian adventure set in Egypt.<sup>66</sup> He departs from it, however, in his account of tossing aside his weapons and seeking protection from the king. This is the same strategy he had just employed on Eumaios when he was attacked by the swineherd's dogs.<sup>67</sup> Odysseus then follows with a version of the *Phaiakis*, in which Nausikaa is replaced with the son of the Thesprotian king in order to avoid the apparent absurdity that the beggar could win the favor of a maiden princess.<sup>68</sup> Here as well he departs from the story to add the contextually significant detail that Odysseus is not only alive but trying to determine whether he should return home in secret. This bit of intelligence begs the issue of whether the beggar is Odysseus in disguise, and indeed Odysseus will continue to play such games with Eumaios throughout their time together.<sup>69</sup> The theme of recognition is thus

raised only to be left unfulfilled: years of denial have left Eumaios unable to harbor such suspicions. Nevertheless, Eumaios has clearly passed the test of hospitality and of loyalty to Odysseus' memory. In keeping with the *theoxeny* theme, Odysseus will soon identify himself and reward Eumaios for his help punishing the suitors (21.188-225).

This account is of particular interest in that it combines the motif of attempted abduction by a Phoenician who hopes to sell the stranger into slavery with that of a second such attempt by a Thesprotian crew from whom he escapes while they take their supper on the shore.<sup>70</sup> In all, six different elements of Odysseus' account recur in Demeter's lying autobiography: abduction; by sailors; to sell into slavery; eventual escape; while the others are eating; after they come ashore. The decision to double the motifs of abduction and attempted enslavement comes at the cost of plausibility, and can be explained by a desire to emphasize the motifs themselves and to include mention of Odysseus' presence on Dodona. The motif of abduction, though not that of escape, is also clearly meant to win the sympathy of Eumaios, who was likewise abducted by Phoenicians. But the motif should not be dismissed as a simple intratextual echo, since Homer could have given Eumaios a different biography to which 'Odysseus' could have then adjusted his story: in other words, Eumaios' own life story can be seen as reproducing a prominent feature of Demeter's lying autobiography precisely in order to facilitate Odysseus' echo of it, and thereby also to emphasize the echo through significant repetition. It is thus noteworthy that Eumaios himself was abducted due to the betrayal of a parental figure, his Phoenician wet-nurse. For this, Persephone's abduction, arranged by her father, Zeus, supplies a parallel.

In sum, whereas the narrative of Book 13 corresponds to the encounter between Demeter and Kallidike more closely in terms of setting and character, that of Book 14 corresponds more closely in terms of Odysseus' disguised appearance and the actual details of the story he relates. Odysseus thus crafts a fictional autobiography based on his participation in the Trojan War, the Kikonian adventure, *Phaiakis* and his subsequent arrival on Ithake. But his story also corresponds to Demeter's as a lying autobiography meant to conceal his true identity and, unlike his earlier tale to Athene, to win the sympathy of his listener. Whereas the false autobiographies of Demeter and Odysseus and the true autobiography of Eumaios all share the motifs of abduction by sailors to be sold into slavery, Odysseus' account also shares with Demeter's the motifs of the stranger's Cretan origins and escape when the crew make landfall to take their meal on the shore, while Eumaios' account shares that of abduction through the betrayal of a parental figure. Finally, the beggar's story includes direct hints that he could be Odysseus in disguise, much as Demeter's physical appearance suggests that she could be a goddess disguised as a mortal. Such hints raise the prospect of an epiphany that in the *Hymn* is realized in the *megaron* of Keleos' palace and that serve to foreshadow Odysseus' subsequent epiphanies in his own palace *megaron*.

When Odysseus next tells his life story to Antinoos, he transforms it into a much condensed warning that echoes the theme of *theoxeny*. The scene begins when Odysseus enters the palace and sits on the threshold within the doorway to the *megaron*, leaning against a *stathmos*, or doorpost, of cypress (17.340). In contrast to the *Phaiakis* and the *Hymn*, where the hero's entry is accompanied by a partial epiphany, the poet calls attention to Odysseus' disguised appearance, "like a wretched beggar, and an old man,

leaning on a staff, and wearing miserable clothes about his flesh” (337-8: **πτοχῶ λευγαλέῳ ἐναλίγκιος ἠδὲ γέροντι**, / σκηπτόμενος· τὰ δὲ λυγρὰ περὶ χοροὶ εἴματα ἔστο). Athene then stands beside Odysseus and urges him to collect scraps of food. The other suitors respond with pity and give him food, but Antinoos abuses him verbally and even threatens him with a footstool. Odysseus nevertheless approaches him and uses his cover-story to explain why Antinoos should give more than the others.

He begins with a version of his Egyptian narrative to Eumaios, declaring that he once was prosperous and dwelt in a wealthy home (419-20: οἶκον . . . ἔναιον / **ὄλβιος ἄφνειόν**), to which he now attaches an implicit moral by declaring that he often gave to wanderers, whatever their circumstances and need.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless he went to Egypt “with some much wandering pirates” (425: ἅμα ληιστῆρσι πολυπλάγκτοισιν), implicitly as their leader. The account of how his men bring ruin on themselves because they “yield to their *hubris* and follow their *menos*” is taken largely verbatim from his story to Eumaios (17.427-41 ~ 14.258-72). If the just ruler can bring prosperity to his *laos*, then an unjust *laos* can be responsible for a loss of prosperity, as the state of Odysseus’ own household can attest. Moreover, even the relatively innocent can suffer as a consequence, as Odysseus knows full well and as Amphinomos and Leiodes will soon discover. Odysseus concludes with a further departure from his earlier account, with the implication that Eumaios cannot be imagined as hearing him.<sup>72</sup> In this version, he is again captured by Egyptians, but given to a guest-friend named Dmetor, son of Iasos the king of Cyprus, to take back home (442-3). This further departure thus reemphasizes the importance of hospitality and observance of its laws.



When Antinoos responds with further insults, Odysseus reminds him that the food he is eating is not even his, whereupon Antinoos strikes him with a footstool, just as he had threatened to do. There follows a scene of pointed non-epiphany, as Antinoos fails to recognize the plain implication of his failure to knock the old beggar flat; and Odysseus for his part has to refrain from revealing his identity despite the provocation.<sup>73</sup> As we have seen, however, the other suitors immediately link the scene to *theoxeny*.<sup>74</sup>

Whereas Odysseus' 'Cretan Tale' to Antinoos is an explicitly moralizing version of his Egyptian narrative to Eumaios, the larger narratives in which they are embedded likewise complement one another in thematic and structural terms. These are the two individuals tested who are not members of Odysseus' immediate family. While Eumaios is rewarded for being a good host with incorporation into the household on an equal basis with Telemakhos, Antinoos seeks incorporation with the status of Odysseus himself, and he is punished with death for his abuse of the household and stranger. Moreover, the scenes in which Odysseus tests Eumaios and Antinoos with a false autobiography both serve to preface his epiphany during the *Mnesterophonia*. Once the archery contest gets under way, Odysseus quits the palace and reveals his identity to Eumaios with the promise that he will reward the swineherd's loyalty if he himself survives the coming struggle. Odysseus then reenters the *megaron* and announces the coming slaughter with a demonstration of his heroic stature as he strings the bow and shoots an arrow through the axe heads. Bow in hand, he then leaps upon the threshold, the site of Demeter's partial epiphany in the palace, and strikes Antinoos in the throat with an arrow.<sup>75</sup> Scenes of reward and punishment thus bracket the scene in which Odysseus wins an archery contest for Penelope's hand in marriage.<sup>76</sup>

Odysseus delivers his final Cretan tale before the *Mnesterophonia* in the course of his interview with Penelope in Book 19. Their interview also prominently features Eurukleia, former nurse to both Odysseus and Telemakhos, which is Demeter's role in the household of Keleos. The scene begins as Penelope emerges from her chamber "like Artemis or golden Aphrodite" (19.54: Ἀρτέμιδι ἰκέλη ἢ χρυσοῦ Ἀφροδίτη).<sup>77</sup> This striking comparison has an echo in her appearance to the suitors earlier that same evening (17.37). It well captures the ambiguity of her visual impact, alluring yet chaste, to the suitors a seeming Aphrodite, though in reality an Artemis, while remaining a paradoxically chaste and loyal Aphrodite to her husband. The scene in which Odysseus encounters Nausikaa likewise begins with her comparison to Artemis, and it continues with a partial epiphany of Odysseus to Nausikaa that can be compared to Penelope's own astonished recognition that the beggar is far more than he first seemed. The scene from Book 19 thus contains another of the poem's paired epiphany scenes, and it will conclude in a complete revelation of his identity to the nurse Eurukleia.

Penelope takes her seat by the fire in a special throne (κλισίη), inlaid with spirals of ivory and silver. The throne's special status is further emphasized with mention of its maker and an attached footstool covered with a fleece (19.55-58). Melantho, who had already scolded Odysseus once that evening, now tells him to leave the palace or he will do so after being struck by a firebrand (69: δαλῶ βεβλημένος). Odysseus responds by repeating his earlier warning to Antinoos about the fragility of life, followed by his earlier threat that Telemakhos will punish Melantho, to which he now adds the possibility that Odysseus might himself return and do so (70-88; cf. 18.321-39). Whereas in keeping with his present audience Odysseus softens his earlier claim that Telemakhos will cut her

limb from limb, Penelope herself now silences Melantho with a death threat (note that Melantho's subsequent departure from the *megaron* is not explicitly described).

Penelope's vehemence is explained by the earlier scene in which Melantho scolds the stranger: Homer there introduces her to the poem with the remark that Penelope had raised Melantho as a daughter, thus rendering her betrayal of the household particularly egregious (18.322-3; cf. 4.735-6).

After silencing Melantho, Penelope instructs Eurunome to provide the stranger with a fleece covered stool (δίφροϛ), in conformity with the apparent difference in their station. It also reproduces the seating arrangement of Metaneira and Demeter in the *Hymn* (19.96-102). She then addresses him as "stranger" (104: ξείνε), and asks who he is, and where are his city and parents. Rather than deflect the question, Odysseus openly demurs on the grounds that doing so would cause him further grief. When Penelope presses her request, however, Odysseus replies with the fourth of his 'Cretan Tales.'

As in his tales to Athene and Eumaios, he again hails from Crete, but in his present company he gives himself a promotion to the rank of younger brother to Idomeneus (this is consistent with the *Iliad*'s portrayal of Idomeneus as one of the older Greek fighters). As the younger brother, he remained on Crete when Idomeneus set off to fight in the Trojan War. Odysseus subsequently arrived on the island after being driven off course on his way to Troy, and "declared he was a guest-friend to [Idomeneus], both dear and revered" (191: ξείνον γάρ οι ἔφασκε φίλον τ' ἔμεν αἰδοῖόν τε). As a consequence, the stranger hosted Odysseus (194: ἐν ἑξείνισσα) along with his companions for twelve full days before they departed. He concludes his tale without

mention of the Egyptian adventure, or indeed any account that would explain his present circumstances.

Whereas Odysseus refrains from naming himself in his story to Eumaios, in Penelope's case he gives himself a name, Aithon, or 'Flash' (19.183).<sup>78</sup> This self-styled man of light later guarantees that Odysseus will return during the next *λυκάβας* (306), a term that, whatever its precise meaning, would seem to point to light and motion, most plausibly that of the moon's passage from old to new.<sup>79</sup> Odysseus will thus return when "the light has gone," and Theoklumenos makes just such a prediction during an ecstatic prophecy on the following morning (20.350-57). Moreover, Odysseus gives himself this name immediately after he has twice been associated with light, symbolizing his own and Athene's protection of his household (18.306-19.52). This is a point to which we will return. For the present, note that Odysseus gives himself a speaking name appropriate to his actual identity, just as Demeter's name of 'Doso' reflects the essence of her divine nature. Although allusion to a character's true identity through an assumed speaking name may seem unsurprising, the story he tells Eumaios, in which he is the son of 'Beaver, grandson of Barksalot' (14.204: Κάστωρ Ὕλακίδης), shows that there is no reason why such names must be significant in their immediate context.<sup>80</sup>

Throughout the story, Penelope has been silently weeping, but now she demands that the stranger prove he entertained her husband by indicating the clothing he was wearing and describing the men who accompanied him (she could have asked this question at the beginning of her interview, but Penelope needs her pain to keep Odysseus alive to her, and indeed to remain wedded to a man of pain). Odysseus feigns difficulty remembering, but then proceeds to describe his clothing in exact detail, together with a

companion who was especially dear to Odysseus. He also feigns ignorance as to whether Odysseus brought these clothes from home or some companion or guest-friend (19.239: **ξείνος**) had given them. This allows him to add that he himself had given Odysseus a purple, double-folded mantle and tasseled tunic, thereby reemphasizing his own hospitality, and, tacitly, Penelope's obligation to reciprocate.

When he thus identifies Odysseus by tokens, Penelope collapses in another fit of weeping. At a stroke, the beggar's identity changes and with it the meaning of *xeinos*, which no longer describes him as 'stranger,' but as 'guest-friend': "Now indeed, oh *xeinos*, although before you were pitiable in my eyes, in my halls you will be both dear and revered" (253-4: νῦν μὲν δὴ μοι, **ξείνε**, πάρος περ ἐὼν ἐλεεινός, / ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐμοῖσι **φίλος τ' ἔση αἰδοῖός τε**).<sup>81</sup> Her words, and with them her guest's standing, exactly reproduce the relationship that 'Odysseus' is said to have claimed for himself with Idomeneus. Odysseus' 'Cretan Tale' is thus again a coded message and its persuasive goal is precisely to cause Penelope to change the meaning of *xeinos* as it applies to him from 'stranger' to 'friend.'

Odysseus seeks to stanch Penelope's tears by continuing with a version of his Thesprotian narrative in which king Pheidon tells him that Odysseus had arrived earlier, but was presently in Dodona to ask the oracle whether he should return openly or in secret.<sup>82</sup> Penelope, however, denies that Odysseus will return. Even though she now recognizes that the beggar is more than he at first seemed, she fails to take the hint that he may be her own husband in disguise. As was the case with Eumaios, years of denial, her chief defense against being deceived, has foreclosed this further act of recognition.<sup>83</sup>

At first it seems as if the issue of a more complete epiphany has once more been raised only to remain in suspense. But Penelope then instructs the maidservants to wash her guest and prepare a bed for him, with the promise that in the morning he will dine at Telemakhos' side. Odysseus again demurs, declaring ironically that comfortable beds have remained hateful to him ever since he left his home. The refusal to accept physical comforts can be paralleled in Demeter's refusal of food and a *klismos* on account of her own grief over loss. He quickly adds, however, that he would accept a footbath from an aged servant, in hopes of seeing Eurukleia, his former wet-nurse. Yet in making the request, he inadvertently engineers a scene of recognition by tokens, since Eurukleia "immediately recognizes the scar" (392-3: ἀντίκα δ' ἔγνω / οὐλήν; cf. 467-8) he received while hunting wild boar in his youth. Homer then launches into a seventy-four verse account of how Odysseus acquired both the scar and his name, thereby closely associating the scar with his identity as well as establishing it as a sure means of establishing that identity.<sup>84</sup> Once again, bathing leads to recognition. Thus, the epiphany scene implied by the internal logic of *theoxeny* narratives is displaced from the queen who is tested onto a maternal figure whose status as such Odysseus emphasizes when he rebukes her (482-3).<sup>85</sup>

Odysseus' 'Cretan Tale' to Penelope has little in common with Demeter's except for his Cretan origins and a speaking name that alludes to his true identity. The setting, on the other hand, corresponds to the narrative inside the palace of Keleos on a number of points. Most generally, the focus of the narrative is the stranger's interactions with the queen. After suffering repeated mistreatment, including in this very scene, he then reveals

that he is not simply a hapless vagabond, but a man of noble character who knew Odysseus. This is followed by a complete revelation of identity by tokens.

The interview with Penelope is thus a *mise en abyme* of the entire sequence, 'Stranger's Reception in the Palace,' encompassing Books 17-23. Like the larger sequence, it completes the pattern initiated by the 'Maiden at the Well' theme in Book 13 in a way that reproduces the principle features of Demeter's Eleusinian narrative. The stranger's epiphany in this episode is thus geminated in scenes of partial and complete revelation, as in the *Hymn*.<sup>86</sup> Metaneira's role, in turn, is distributed among three different women: Melantho, Penelope's surrogate daughter, mistreats the guest; Penelope, his wife, incorporates him into the household in a special relationship with her son; and he is recognized by his surrogate mother, Eurukleia. Whereas Metaneira accuses Demeter, Demophoon's wet-nurse of killing her charge, Odysseus accuses his own former wet-nurse of trying to get him killed. Demeter then reveals herself in anger to Metaneira, while an emblem of pain reveals Odysseus to Eurukleia and he responds to her angrily (as we have seen, in the *Phaiakis* Odysseus partially reveals himself in anger and then fully in grief). The characteristic pairing of a preliminary and 'lesser emotional response' after a partial epiphany with an 'intense emotional response' after the full epiphany is thus likewise distributed among Penelope and Eurukleia.<sup>87</sup> As a result of the latter displacement, mother thus becomes reunited with long absent child, just as Demeter is reunited with Persephone. As in the case of Eumaios, however, the scene of Penelope's own recognition has been deferred, so that Eumaios' recognition serves to introduce the *Mnesterophonia* while that of Penelope concludes it.

To this larger pattern, we may add some additional motifs that the interview with Penelope has in common with the *Hymn*. In both accounts, attention is paid to the seating arrangement, and the interview with Penelope comes after the scene in the palace of Alkinoos where proper seating is emphasized as a central concern. In the present case, Penelope herself is responsible for an arrangement that reproduces the seating of Demeter and Metaneira in the *Hymn*, with Penelope seated on a throne and Odysseus on a fleece-covered *diphros* that also plays an important role in cult. So too, Odysseus' refusal of physical comforts and embrace of suffering corresponds to Demeter's comportment in the *Hymn*. His assumed identity as a man of light has important echoes in Demeter's entry into and departure from the palace of Keleos and with the central scene of reunion during the Mysteries. While Demeter reveals her identity when Metaneira spies on her at night in the light of the fire used to purify Demophoon, Odysseus' identity is revealed to Eurukleia at night by the light of the fire from the hearth. Melantho's threat that Odysseus will be struck by a fire brand can be seen as a perverse echo of the role of fire and its light in the *Odyssey*, *Hymn* and Demeter's cult.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, Penelope herself becomes aligned with Demeter when memories of a missing loved one cause her to grieve.

Finally, there is the story that Odysseus tells his father in Book 24. This only qualifies as a 'Cretan Tale' in the sense that it is another fictional autobiography designed to test his listener, since he now declares that he is from Alybas (304), a fictional place with a speaking name that could be rendered as 'City of Wanderers.'<sup>89</sup> The episode begins as Odysseus, Telemakhos, Eumaios and Philoitios arrive at Laertes' farm armed to do battle with the parents of the suitors. Odysseus gives his own gear to his slaves and



sends the three of them to the farmhouse to prepare dinner. He thus arranges to meet Laertes alone, declaring that he intends to test his father to see if he recognizes his long absent son (24.216-8; cf. 221). In a striking scene of role reversal, Odysseus now approaches the orchard with kingly attire and rejuvenated appearance to discover Laertes “wearing a filthy tunic, patched and unseemly . . . as he sought to increase his suffering” (227-31: ῥυπόωντα δὲ ἔστο χιτῶνα, / ῥαπτὸν ἀεικέλιον . . . πένθος ἀέξων). Odysseus cries as he looks at him “distressed by old age, with great pain in his heart” (233: γήραι τειρόμενον, μέγα δὲ φρεσὶ πένθος ἔχοντα). Whereas Demeter assumes the disguise of an aged, mortal servant in concrete expression of grief over an absent daughter, and Athene disguises Odysseus as an aged beggar with filthy clothes so that he can suffer mistreatment by the suitors, Laertes compounds the discomforts of a very real old age by donning clothes unfit for a slave in his grief over an absent son. Thus, what is for Demeter and Odysseus mere disguise becomes Laertes’ actual and assumed identity.<sup>90</sup>

In keeping with that identity, Odysseus now approaches Laertes and, pretending to take him for a servant, criticizes Laertes’ master for failing to take better care of him. He then asks Laertes directly whose servant he is, and whether he himself has reached Ithake. In particular, he would like to know if a *xeinos* of his is still alive, who boasted he was of Ithacan stock, the son of a certain Laertes, for no *xeinos* had come to his house who was more dear (266-70). As a consequence, he provided his guest with abundant hospitality (271: ἐν ἑξείνισσα) and presented him with suitable guest-gifts (273: καὶ οἱ δῶρα πόρον ξεινήια, οἶα ἐφ’κει), including seven talents of gold, a silver mixing bowl engraved with flowers, twelve cloaks, coverlets, mantles and tunics and his choice of four attractive women skilled at domestic work.

Laertes affirms that the *xenos* has indeed reached Ithake, but adds that he gave his gifts in vain, though his former guest would have certainly reciprocated “if you had reached him alive, that is, in the land of Ithake” (284: εἰ γάρ μιν ζῶόν γε κίχεις Ἰθάκης ἐνὶ δήμῳ).<sup>91</sup> Laertes then demands to know how long ago he “hosted that man, your ill starred guest-friend, my son” (288: **ξείνισσας** ἐκείνον, / σὸν **ξείνον** δύστηνον, ἐμὸν παῖδ’), and who the stranger himself is (298). Odysseus responds as he had to Penelope, by providing a name as well as parentage and homeland. He is, he declares, Eperitos, son of Apheidas, son of Polupemon (305-6). Each of these names can be understood as alluding to the *Mnesterophonia*: Apheidas transparently means ‘Spares Not’ and can be understood as alluding to his refusal to spare any of the suitors, even the hapless Leiodes. As such, his name is thematically opposed to that of the Thesprotian king Pheidon in his ‘Cretan Tales’ to Eumaios and Penelope. If we assume that the other names continue the reference, then Eperitos would most naturally be taken to mean ‘Man of Eris’ (competitive strife), and refer both to the folk-etymology of Odysseus’ name as ‘Man of Hatred’ and specifically to the archery contest and slaughter of the suitors. Polupemon, in turn, would mean ‘Man of Great Pain’ in reference both to his status as a traditional hero and to the pain he suffered and inflicted in his *eris* with the suitors. On the other hand, by the same genealogy Laertes is himself a child of suffering, and his patrimony is on plain view in this very scene, in which his grief is further compounded by his ‘unsparing’ son. If this interpretation is correct, then once again his genealogy makes a specific reference to the Odysseus of Odyssean tradition, just as Demeter’s false name of Doso points to her essential nature in myth and cult.<sup>92</sup>

When Odysseus then declares that he had hosted Odysseus only five years ago “a black cloud of grief enshrouds [Laertes] and taking the dark dust in both hands he pours it down over his gray head, with incessant sobbing” (315-17: τὸν δ’ ἄχρεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα· ἀμφοτέρησι δὲ χερσὶν ἐλὼν κόνιν αἰθαλόεσσα / χεύατο καὶ κεφαλῆς πολιῆς, ἀδινὰ στεναχίζων). Odysseus immediately embraces his father, identifies himself, and declares that he has punished the suitors. When Laertes demands a clear sign as proof, Odysseus shows his father the scar that had earlier identified him to Eurukleia and Eumaios, to which he now adds a catalog of the trees of the orchard that Laertes gave him as a child. In response, Laertes’ “heart and knees are loosened on the spot . . . and much enduring, godlike Odysseus clasps him to himself in a dead faint” (345-8: τοῦ δ’ αὐτοῦ λύτο γούνατα καὶ φίλον ἦτορ, / . . . τὸν δὲ προτὶ οἶ / εἶλεν ἀποψύχοντα πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς).

Now that Laertes has recognized his son, it is he rather than the ‘guest’ who takes a bath, an act that symbolizes his renunciation of mourning.<sup>93</sup> The symbolism is further reinforced by pointed echo of the earlier baths taken by Telemakhos and Odysseus: “Athene stood near [Laertes] and increased the limbs of the shepherd of hosts, making him bigger than before, and sturdier to look upon. And when he stepped out of the bath his son marveled as he saw him standing there like the immortal gods” (367-71: αὐτὰρ Ἀθήνη / ἄγχι παρισταμένη μέλε’ ἤλδανε ποιμένι λαῶν, / **μείζονα δ’ ἠὲ πάρος καὶ πάσσονα θῆκεν ιδέσθαι.** / ἐκ δ’ ἄσαμίνθου βῆ· **θαύμαζε** δέ μιν φίλος υἱός, / ὥς **ἶδεν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιον** ἄντην). We thus have another of the poem’s paired epiphanies, on this occasion uniting parent and child. Moreover, Laertes’ rejuvenation echoes Odysseus’ own earlier transformation from aged beggar to his true self when he

bathes during the recognition scene with Penelope. Afterwards, Athene further augments Laertes' strength, allowing him to make the sole kill described in the battle that follows, when he strikes Eupheides, father to Antinoos, Odysseus' first victim in the *Mnestrophonia*.

In sum, a general pattern thus emerges in which the disguised Odysseus narrates a false autobiography designed to test members of his household and manipulate their feelings towards him, followed by scenes of epiphany in which the auditor's demonstrated loyalty is rewarded. Athene may be included under this rubric as she remains very much a palace goddess, whose support is passed down from father to son, and Odysseus' story follows the pattern of the other lying tales even though he does not recognize her. Odysseus' encounter with Athene is especially significant because its setting and structural position duplicate Demeter's encounter with Kallidike, and it similarly includes disguise and a lying autobiography in which the narrator hails from Crete. The sole exception to the pattern is thus Antinoos, who belongs to the wider community, is punished, and dies in ignorance. Eumaios, in contrast, is rewarded with his promotion from the status of slave belonging to the household to that of Telemakhos' brother. Collectively, the false autobiographies repeatedly emphasize as such a central element of the theme of Demeter's disguise in the *Hymn*. Moreover, they employ similar rhetorical strategies to those of Demeter in her tale to Kallidike; and in the story he tells Eumaios the similarities extend to include a number of prominent motifs.<sup>94</sup>

Two further paired epiphanies involving Athene and Odysseus lack a lying tale designed to test the listener. The first of these, in which Odysseus reveals himself to Telemakhos, can be read against the scene with Laertes as paired scenes of reunion

between father and son.<sup>95</sup> The narrative begins with Telemakhos' arrival at the hut, where the audience has reasons to expect that father and son will be reunited (13.404-15; 15.36-42). A scene of reunion does immediately follow, but it is Eumaios who greets Telemakhos "like a loving father who lovingly receives his son, having come from a far off land in the tenth year, an only son, dearly beloved" (16.17-19). Eumaios then hugs and kisses the youth and lamenting addresses him as "my child" (25: φίλον τέκος). Telemakhos responds in kind, addressing Eumaios as "Papa" (31: ἄττα). Odysseus attempts to yield his seat, but Telemakhos refuses and has the swineherd spread out green brushwood and mantle it with fleeces (46-8). We again encounter a concern with proper seating that is a central element of Demeter's arrival in the palace; in the present case, sitting on fleeces and sitting on strewn brushwood can both be paralleled in Demeter's cult.<sup>96</sup> When Telemakhos asks who the stranger is, Eumaios offers a four verse summary of Odysseus' false autobiography, declaring that he is from Crete, has wandered greatly, and is newly escaped from a Thesprotian ship. The summary thus occupies the place of the Cretan tale in Odysseus' other epiphany scenes.

After they eat, Telemakhos sends Eumaios to inform Penelope of his return. A paired epiphany scene then follows. Athene draws near "appearing to Odysseus, but Telemakhos did not see her facing him, nor did he recognize her presence, for in no way do the gods appear to everyone in manifest form" (159-61: Ὀδυσῆι φανείσα· / οὐδ' ἄρα Τηλέμαχος ἴδεν ἀντίον οὐδ' ἐνόησεν, / οὐ γὰρ πῶς πάντεσσι θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναοργεῖς). Odysseus leaves the hut to meet with Athene, who instructs him to "reveal a word to your son" (168: σὺ παιδὶ ἔπος φάο), that is, to 'reveal' himself with speech, so that they can plot to kill the suitors. She then touches Odysseus with a golden wand,

placing a clean mantle and tunic on him and augmenting his body and youthfulness so that his skin bronzes and his cheeks grow taught, and his beard regains its color.<sup>97</sup>

Afterwards, she simply departs.

When Odysseus reenters the hut transformed, his son “marvels at him” (178: **θάμβησε** δέ μιν), just as Nausikaa did after his earlier transformative bath and just as Odysseus will himself do after Laertes bathes; but he also “takes fright and averts his eyes, lest he be a god” (179: **ταρβήσας** δ’ ἐτέρωσε βάλ’ ὄμματα, **μὴ θεὸς εἴη**). Telemakhos then declares, “truly now, you are some god, of those who hold broad heaven. But be propitious, so that we may give you pleasing sacrifices and wrought golden gifts, and spare us!” (183-5: **ἦ μάλα τις θεὸς ἔσσι**, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσιν. / ἀλλ’ ἴληθ’, ἵνα τοι κεχαρισμένα δώομεν ἱερά / ἠδὲ χρύσεια δῶρα, τετυγμένα· **φείδεο** δ’ ἡμέων; cf. 181: ἀλλοῖός μοι, ξεῖνε, **φάνης**). Odysseus protests that “I am not, I assure you, some god; why do you liken me to the deathless ones?” (187: **οὐ τίς τοι θεὸς εἰμι· τί μ’ ἀθανάτοισιν εἴσχεις**;). Yet, coming as it does after the *Kuklopeia*, where Odysseus adopts the trick name of **Οὐτις**, or ‘Nobody,’ his words could also be understood to mean “I am, I assure you, the god Nobody.” He continues, moreover, with deliberate word play, adding “rather, I am your father” (188: ἀλλὰ πατὴρ **τεός εἰμι**), in which *teós* (your) occupies the same position in the line as *theós* (god) in the verse preceding, so that his words again suggest the alternative meaning of “I am your father, a god,” or even “I am the father god.”<sup>98</sup>

Similar ambiguity obtains when one notes that the phrase denying his divinity recurs in a parallel passage from the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*. Aphrodite approaches a hut belonging to cowherds remote from the city of Troy. She there finds Anchises

alone, and disguises her appearance “so that he would not be frightened” (83: **μή . . . ταρβήσειεν**). Anchises nevertheless “marvels” (84: **θάμβαιεν**), and addresses her as a goddess, promising to “build her an altar and perform noble sacrifices” (101: **βωμὸν ποιήσω, ῥέξω δέ τοι ἱερὰ καλά**) and asking her to “be kindly minded” (102: **σὺ δ’ εὐφρονα θυμὸν ἔχουσα**). Aphrodite, however, replies: “I am not, I assure you, some god, why do you liken me to the deathless ones?” (109: **οὐ τίς τοι θεὸς εἰμι· τί μ’ ἀθανάτησιν εἴσχεις**). In this case, of course, Aphrodite is in fact a goddess.

It is thus noteworthy that the phrase in which Odysseus denies his divinity recurs in the lying autobiography of a fertility goddess who appears disguised as a mortal to a royal youth in the same setting as that in which Odysseus now appears to Telemakhos. But whatever the relationship between these passages may be, the fact remains that if the verse is a traditional ‘denial formula’ used by gods in *theoxeny* scenes, then its referential force again suggests that Odysseus is indeed a disguised god falsely protesting that he is mortal.<sup>99</sup>

After thus identifying himself, Odysseus for the first time lowers his defenses, kisses his son and begins to cry. Telemakhos, however, still does not believe that the stranger is his father and accuses him of being a god who is attempting to charm him so that he will grieve still more (194-5). The inference Telemakhos draw here is made all the more natural by his having twice witnessed Athene disguise herself as men who transform into birds, although he quickly allows that whereas a mortal could not “devise this with his own mind” (196-7), a god could make easily make someone old or young. Odysseus seizes on the opening Telemakhos provides and responds with the one point that will convince his son: Athene, whose support of their family Telemakhos has

experienced first hand, is responsible for his changed appearance. Odysseus then relates his disguise to a commonplace that remained latent when Athene first transformed him into a beggar, but becomes explicit in his subsequent moralizing to Antinoos and Melanths: “but it is easy for the gods . . . to magnify a man, and to bring him low” (211-2). The irony is that while this is offered as a true statement on the nature of human existence, his wretched appearance in the present scene is a mere disguise that will allow Odysseus to ‘bring the suitors low.’ He will do so, moreover, not simply with divine assistance, but as their agent while assuming the role of a god in *theoxeny* narratives. The fates of Antinoos and Eumaios thus serve to illustrate the contrasting aspects of a theological maxim that Odysseus voices to his son before declaring that he has “come here on Athene’s advice so *we* can devise death for our enemies” (16.233-4; my emphasis).

The scenes in which Odysseus is reunited with Laertes and Telemakhos thus complement one another. In both cases parent becomes reunited with child, and in both cases it is the absent child who returns and is restored to the parent, as in the *Hymn*. These scenes further resemble the reunion of Demeter and Persephone in that the parent has isolated himself from his community, which in Odysseus’ case also belongs to his strategy for revenge, while Laertes is explicitly grieving over his son’s absence. Having Telemakhos return to his father comes at the cost of leaving him stranded in Sparta for over a month despite the urgency of the situation at home. One reason for this is the programmatic need to have Telemakhos experience a delayed return after falling under the allure of a seductive female, so that his journey from Ithake reproduces the blueprint



of his father's life in miniature. A second and by no means exclusive explanation, however, is the primacy of the theme 'Child Returns to Grieving Parent.'

Whereas a Cretan tale precedes the epiphany to Laertes, in conformity with a pattern linking their reunion to Odysseus' other epiphanies in the *Revenge*, the epiphany to Telemakhos does not include such a story—although Eumaios' epitome serves as a placeholder—which Athene's own epiphany in fact forestalls. The omission renders Odysseus' epiphany abrupt, thereby communicating its impact on Telemakhos, but the dramatic effect is not all that is accomplished here. As we have seen, in all his other accounts, Odysseus adjusts his story to its audience, but in the present case he knows little about his son that would allow him to do so. It is just his loss of shared experience, never to be compensated, that father and son will presently bewail like a pair of eagles robbed of their chicks.<sup>100</sup> Complementary to this, Telemakhos has no first hand knowledge of his father, and in particular none of the insider knowledge that would make possible a recognition by shared experience or physical tokens. What he does know, however, is that Athene loves Odysseus and his family, for she has herself twice appeared to him in disguise and then revealed her true nature through epiphany.<sup>101</sup> It is thus Odysseus' own ability to disguise his identity and then appear transformed, in short his ability to have an epiphany, that confirms to Telemakhos that the stranger is indeed his father. For the polutropic Odysseus, mutability thus paradoxically confirms, and indeed is, identity.

The second double epiphany not prefaced by a lying tale involves a pair of scenes that close Book 18 and begin Book 19. It begins, moreover, as a mock-epiphany that continues as a true, divine epiphany in which Athene does not appear *ἐναογγής* but as a

numinous presence that manifests itself as sacred light. As noted above, these scenes also prepare for the role of light in the interview with Penelope by associating Odysseus with fire symbolizing his own and Athene's protection of the household.

In the first scene, the suitors set up three braziers "to make light" (18.308: ὄφρα φαείνοιν), with interspersed torches (310: δαΐδας μετέμισγον), and the maidservants light them (310: ἀνέφαινον). When Odysseus orders the maidservants to go to Penelope's chambers, declaring that "I will provide light for all these men" (317: ἐγὼ τούτοισι φάος πάντεσσι παρέξω), he is rebuked by Melanthe. It is here that Homer relates how Melanthe was a surrogate daughter to Penelope so as to underline her perfidy. Odysseus scatters the maidservants with the threat that Telemakhos will cut them to pieces, and then "takes his stand by the blazing braziers, shining as he looked at all of them" (343-4: αὐτὰρ ὁ παρ λαμπτήρσι φαίνων αἰθομένοισιν / ἐστήκει, ἐς πάντας ὀρόμενος). The language here is striking: as Joseph Russo notes, Odysseus is described as "himself illuminating the room (φαίνων) as if he were a light, . . . suggestive of his growing power and forthcoming triumph. This description achieves the bright clarity of an epiphany."<sup>102</sup> Athene then incites Eurymakhos to taunt Odysseus (350: κερτομέων). In a pointed echo of the suitors' earlier warning that the beggar could be a god in disguise, Eurymakhos declares that "not without divine support has this man reached Odysseus' house—why, there seems to me a blaze of torches from his very being, right from his head, since there's not a hair on it, not even a little!" (353-5: οὐκ ἄθεεῖ ὄδ' ἀνήρ Ὀδυσῆιον ἐς δόμον ἵκει / ἔμπης μοι δοκέει δαΐδων σέλας ἔμμεναι αὐτοῦ / καὶ κεφαλῆς, ἐπεὶ οὐ οἱ ἔνι τρίχες οὐδ' ἠβαιαί).<sup>103</sup> The irony, of course, is that Odysseus has indeed reached his home with Athene's support, and Eurymakhos has

unwittingly identified the light emanating from Odysseus' head as proof. Homer thus prepares for and calls attention to this by describing Odysseus himself as producing the light by which he witnesses the suitors' crimes.

This scene, in which the 'secular' light of braziers is jokingly compared to a divine aureole, is then balanced by a scene in which Athene herself assists Odysseus with light in punishing the suitors. When the suitors quit the palace for the evening, Odysseus instructs Telemakhos to help him stow the battle gear lining the walls to the *megaron*. As the two of them begin to carry the gear to the storeroom, "before them, Pallas Athene with a golden lamp makes a light of surpassing beauty" (19.33-4: πάροιθε δὲ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη / χρύσειον λύχνον ἔχουσα **φάος περικαλλὲς** ἐποίει). This is, notoriously, the only lamp in Homer, and Analysts have predictably condemned the passage on this basis, even though it has been carefully prepared for by the preceding scene.<sup>104</sup> In the present case, the light from her lamp both symbolizes and quite literally represents Athene's continuing support of Odysseus and his household. With characteristic, youthful impetuosity, Telemakhos expresses awe at this encounter with religious mystery:

ὦ πάτερ, ἦ μέγα **θαῦμα τόδ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρῶμαι**

ἔμπης μοι τοῖχοι μεγάρων καλαί τε μεσόδμαι

εἰλάτιναί τε δοκοὶ καὶ κίονες ὑψόσ' ἔχοντες

**φαίνοντ' ὀφθαλμοῖς ὡς εἰ πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο.**

**ἦ μάλα τις θεὸς ἔνδον, οἱ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσι.**

19.36-40

Father! truly do my eyes witness a great marvel here,  
why, the walls of the *megaron*, and the lovely tie beams,  
and roof beams of fir, and the pillars standing aloft,  
they are shinging in my eyes like blazing fire!

Truly, some god is inside, of those who rule broad heaven.

Odysseus, however, replies with “Silence! Restrain your thought, and do not question. This is the way of the gods who rule Olympus” (42-3: σίγα καὶ κατὰ σὸν νόον ἴσχανε μηδ’ ἐρέεινε· / αὕτη τοι δίκη ἐστὶ θεῶν, οἳ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσιν). In an earlier study, I remarked that his words sound “like an injunction from cult observance,” noting that the scene contrasts strikingly with the open and even familiar tone in which Odysseus and Athene interact elsewhere in the *Revenge*.<sup>105</sup> There I explained the scene as alluding to Athene’s lamp-cult in the Erechtheion, where it represents Athene’s protection of Athens and the city’s continued survival and prosperity. This may explain the presence of the artifact, but the association of miraculous, interior light with divine epiphany is also one of the most important and distinctive features of Demeter’s myth and cult. In the *Hymn*, Demeter “fills the doorway with her divine radiance” as she enters the palace of Keleos (189: πλήσεν δὲ θύρας **σέλαος θείοιο**), and then during her epiphany as she departs “the house is filled with brilliant light like lightning” (280: **ἀύγη**ς δ’ ἐπλήσθη πυκινὸς δόμος **ἀστεροπῆς ὥς**). In cult, the highpoint of the mysteries at Eleusis is reached when the hierophant emerges from the *anaktoron* in a blaze of light and then summons Persephone with a gong to be reunited with her mother.<sup>106</sup> The use of light to symbolize victory in the *Iliad* can be seen as an extension of its use, central in mystery religion, to

symbolize life, return, and renewal. This broader range of associations is clearly applicable to Odysseus, and it can significantly enrich our understanding of the scene in which Athene illuminates Odysseus' home with her divine radiance.<sup>107</sup> Such imagery prepares not simply for Odysseus' speaking name during his interview with Penelope, but more significantly for his near complete assimilation to the status of divinity in the *Mnesterophonia*.

I thus conclude by returning to the *Mnesterophonia*, the climactic scene of epiphany and punishment that completes the *theoxeny* theme in the *Revenge*.<sup>108</sup> Once again, we are dealing with paired epiphanies, involving Odysseus and Penelope, that serve to bracket the entire episode and that, as I have suggested, assimilate both to the status of gods. In Penelope's case this can be seen as the culmination of a series of epiphanic moments creating a crescendo effect analogous to that achieved by the partial epiphanies of Odysseus in the *Phaiakis* and *Revenge*. On four occasions, Penelope appears to the suitors while standing before a *stathmos*, or pillar upholding the roof, and flanked by two handmaidens (1.333; 16.415; 18.209; 21.64). The image of Penelope flanked 'heraldically' by maidens while standing before a pillar is iconographically arresting: it simultaneously identifies her as the figurative 'pillar of the house,' and associates her with divinity, while the flanking figures also affirm her social rank and chastity.<sup>109</sup> Her first such appearance in Book 1 thus occurs in the context of demonstrating her continued fidelity and loyalty to Odysseus' memory when she asks Phemios to sing about something else than the *nostoi* (returns) of the Greeks. She appears for a second time in Book 16 to rebuke Antinoos for attempting to kill her son in another display of loyalty to the house. In the next book, Penelope is compared to Artemis and

Aphrodite on leaving her chamber to greet Telemakhos before the suitors arrive at the palace (17.37). Afterwards, she appears to the suitors for a third time standing before a *stathmos* and flanked by attendants, on this occasion to rebuke Telemakhos for allowing the suitors to abuse the stranger, and additionally to extract gifts from the suitors that will help restore the palace's depleted wealth (18.209). When she makes her appearance, Homer says that the suitors' "knees were loosed on the spot, and in their hearts they were spellbound by desire (ἔρω), and all of them prayed to lie beside her in bed" (18.212-3).<sup>110</sup> Her beauty figuratively kills the suitors, and will soon do so literally. Finally, Penelope is again compared to Artemis and Aphrodite on leaving her chamber to greet her disguised husband after the suitors leave the palace for the night (19.54). We thus have a series of scenes distributed across Books 16 through 19 in which Penelope's appearances to the suitors implicitly associate her with divinity, alternating with appearances to her son and husband in the suitors' absence in which she is explicitly compared to Artemis and Aphrodite.

As we have seen, Artemis and Aphrodite are an antithetical pair that represent the ambiguity of Penelope's status vis-à-vis Odysseus and the suitors.<sup>111</sup> The ambiguity is further reinforced by linking Penelope to the adulterous Helen and the virginal Nausikaa through their comparison to Artemis in the books preceding. As such, the comparison to Artemis *and* the pairing of Artemis and Aphrodite both resonate with alternative traditions surrounding Penelope that portray her either as chaste (as in the *Odyssey*) or as promiscuous. Penelope then echoes these same alternative traditions in the climactic scene of epiphany that follows the *Mnesterophonia*, when she suggests that their marriage bed could be moved: since the bed was built on the living stump of an olive

tree, if this were true then someone has indeed been in her bedroom in Odysseus' absence and Penelope is no Artemis. In other words, by echoing the traditions in which she was not chaste, Penelope provokes a response from Odysseus that allows her to prove the truth of the tradition that she was. It is thus highly interesting that the ambiguous imagery evoked as she stands upright before a tree trunk literally upholding the house is then resolved by the status of a living tree stump on which she and her husband used to lie and on which she conceived and bore their son. By calling its status into question, she provokes a response that allows her to affirm that she has remained an Artemis in her relation to other men.<sup>112</sup> Indeed, in typical Artemis-like fashion, she has helped bring about the death, by the bow, of young men who sought to violate her chastity. These images culminate in Penelope's final appearance before the suitors, in which she again stands, flanked by attendants, before the pillar upholding the roof, while bearing the bow and arrows that her husband will presently use to kill the suitors (21.64-6).

The epiphanic imagery surrounding Odysseus is still more direct. He kills the suitors during a festival to the archer god, Apollo. He strings the bow like a man "skilled in lyre and song," and when he plucks the string "it sings beautifully beneath his hand, like a swallow" (21.404-11). Bow and lyre unite the punitive and beneficent aspects of Apollo in a single image that likewise unites heroic exploits with the poetry celebrating those exploits. Odysseus is further assimilated to Apollo as he uses the bow to punish the suitors for attempting to violate the chastity of a character aligned with Artemis, the god's sister. After killing Antinoos, Odysseus reveals his identity, rebukes the suitors and proceeds to punish them, thereby completing a *theoxeny* theme that yet again aligns him with divinity.<sup>113</sup> Nevertheless, once his arrows are exhausted, he rearms to complete the

slaughter with the spear, thus realigning himself with the persona of a heroic warrior. This is what Eurukleia ‘sees’ when she later enters the *megaron* and finds him spattered with gore “like a lion” (22.402: ὡς τε λέοντα), the quintessential image of an Iliadic hero in combat. When, however, Eurukleia announces Odysseus’ return to Penelope, she denies that this is possible and insists instead that “one of the immortals” has killed the suitors (23.63). Eurukleia volunteers to prove to Penelope that the stranger is indeed Odysseus by showing her the hunting scar he received as a youth, another token that would identify Odysseus as a heroic warrior. Penelope, of course, will have nothing of it: she insists on the return of the Odysseus that is her husband, not an Apollo manqué, and certainly not a heroic warrior, an identity that has left her bereft and bereaved for twenty full years. And so, she tricks Odysseus into revealing not simply the knowledge, but the feelings associated with the bed they once shared, and those evoked by the thought that the bed, and with it Penelope herself, could be ‘mobile,’ just as Helen and just as Odysseus had been.<sup>114</sup> Their night of love-making afterwards is thus a *hieros gamos* in the truest sense:<sup>115</sup> as in the *Hymn to Demeter* and in her cult at Eleusis, a scene of epiphany involving joyous reunion among family members supplies a dramatic climax to the *Odyssey* that also heralds the return of prosperity to the wider community.



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<sup>1</sup> The most detailed study of the relationship between the *h.Cer.* and the Homeric epics is by Sowa (1984). See also Nagler (1974) ch. 5; Clarke (1989) 69-72; Foley (1994) esp. pp.91-4; M. Lord (1994); Muellner (1996) 23-5; A. Lord (2000) 186-7; Nickel (2003); for myths of return generally, see Frame (1978). For a history of interpretation of the Demeter-myth see Calame (2009) 8-39 with 60-6. On the early history of the cult, see e.g. Mylonas (1961); Darque (1981); Graf (1985) 273-82; Binder (1998); Cosmopoulos (2003); Bowden (2007); Palinkas (2008).

On epiphany in Homeric poetry, in addition to Sowa, see Turkeltaub (2003); see also Pucci (1986) and (1998) 69-80; García (2002); Bierl (2004); Nagy (forthcoming); and below, n.13; for epiphany generally, see the dedicated volume of *ICS* 29 (2004). For

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my purposes Turkeltaub's most important finding is negative: epiphany does not have anything remotely resembling the thematic regularity of a type-scene. Although some basic patterns can be discerned and should be allowed for, the detailed structural, verbal and thematic parallels we are considering cannot be dismissed as formal conventions of the theme.

<sup>2</sup> The referential model that I adopt here is substantially informed by Nagy's theory, (1996) esp. xiv-xviii, (1999), and (2004) esp. 26-39; cf. Cook (1995) 1-5, (2004) 48-51; Doherty (2009) 6-8, that the epics underwent a monumentalizing process in the course of the eighth century and then gradually 'crystallized' over the space of two centuries until achieving much their present form in Peisistratean Athens. I see the traditions preserved in the *h.Cer.* as undergoing a parallel process, in which case narrative engagement could begin once it had become sufficiently stabilized to make this possible. Similar stabilization of narrative is implied by the so-called 'Faktenkanon' Neoanalytic scholars use to explain the *Il.*'s allusion to narrative traditions preserved in the *Aithiopsis*, whose text is assumed to be later than the *Il.*'s. On the other hand, a substantial number of scholars now date the ms. tradition of Homer within the range of the generally accepted dates for the *h.Cer.* (see Cook [2004] n.52; to which now add Bierl [2004]).

I follow A. Lord, (2000) 186, in assuming a genetic explanation of the relationship between the narrative traditions preserved in the *Od.* and the *h.Cer.*: "The essential pattern of the *Iliad* is the same as that of the *Odyssey*; they are both the story of an absence that causes havoc to the beloved of the absentee and of his return to set matters right . . . . The rape of Persephone in all its forms as a fertility myth underlies all epic tales of this sort, and until the historical is completely triumphant over the mythic,

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all such tales are likely to be drawn into the pattern of the myth.” I depart from Lord only in where we locate the influence in diachronic terms: whereas for Lord the relationship is early and the influence of fertility myth on epic remains invisible, I see the affinity between the *Od.* and the *h.Cer.* as especially close because the influence is both early and late, so that the *Od.* is engaging with cognate narrative traditions. I see this as occurring because of the rise to prominence of the Eleusinian Mysteries in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century; from the 6<sup>th</sup> century, the Hymnic tradition was presumably performed at the quadrennial games held at Eleusis, while the *Od.* was performed nearby at the Panathenaia.

<sup>3</sup> For φαίνεσθαι, see, e.g., *Il.* 1.198 and for ἐναργής, see, e.g., *Od.* 3.420 (for the active verb used in an epiphany see below on *Od.* 18.343). The compound ἐπιφαίνεσθαι and related terms denoting divine appearances are post-Homeric. Disguised appearance naturally belongs to *theoxeny*, which includes epiphany; on which see below.

<sup>4</sup> For a thoughtful survey and appraisal of recent scholarship on the *h.Cer.*, see Richardson (forthcoming). To avoid the awkwardness of repeating ‘the narrative traditions preserved in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*,’ I will henceforth refer to the ‘*Hymn*’ or ‘*Hymn to Demeter*’ in this sense.

<sup>5</sup> *Telemachy* refers to *Od.* Books 1-4, *Phaiakis* to Books 5-8, *Revenge* to Books 13-24, and *Mnesterophonia* to Book 22. As in my previous work, for hermeneutic convenience I adopt the shared conventions of previous scholarship and refer to the written text that has come down to us as the *Odyssey* and to the authorial personality as ‘Homer.’

<sup>6</sup> Sowa (1984) 271-2, understands the relationship in transcendental terms: “[p]erhaps the message of the various themes of Epiphany is that there does exist a plane of existence,

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beyond our ordinary experience yet surrounding us, in which we may at times participate.”

<sup>7</sup> On *E. Supp.* as a re-elaboration of Eleusinian mythology in terms of polis-ideology see Goff (1995). Calame (1998) argues that *S.* in the *OC* synthesizes the hero-cult of Oidipous with myths of autochthony and the Eleusinian Mysteries. On mutual interactions between tragedy and epic, see Nagy (2006) esp. § 34.

<sup>8</sup> I find the remarks of Calame, (2008) 69-71, 80-3; (2009) 63-4, on the contractual and pragmatic aspects of performing the *h.Cer.*, especially salient in this context; on which, see also Garcia (2002); Richardson (forthcoming) § 2.2.

<sup>9</sup> Homer’s silence on fertility cult can thus be explained in eristic terms, just as his silence on hero cult can be explained, in part, with his insistence that epic provides the only legitimate immortality to its heroes. On the ways in which epic can be seen as appropriating and adapting the functions of hero cult see Nagy (1999) esp. 112-7; Dué (2006) 39-46.

<sup>10</sup> Cook (1995) esp. 32-45; Clay (1997) 3-7.

<sup>11</sup> Mondi (1980), 204, sees the passage as reflecting traditions of divine kingship. On the social realities underlying the ideal, see, e.g., van Wees (1992) esp. 78-89, 138-52.

<sup>12</sup> Nagy (forthcoming) argues that these epiphanies feature Odysseus as a cult hero who likewise bestows *olbia* on his community; see also Nagy (2006) §§ 97-102. Drawing on Lord’s analysis, above n.2, I believe that we are dealing with cognate traditions and that Nagy’s findings support my own (for an intriguing parallel synthesis of heroic and mystery cult, again see Calame [1998]). Thus, whereas there is a significant overlap between hero and fertility myth, my focus is on the wider pattern of narrative parallels

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between the *Od.* and the *H.Cer.* that, following Lord, I believe also point to the ultimate origins of the similarity.

<sup>13</sup> On *theoxony*, see Kearns (1982); Flückiger-Guggenheim (1984), esp. 25-7, 81-100; Murnaghan (1987) 11-4; Reece (1993) 181-7; Olson (1995) 218-9; Louden (1999) 22-3, 95-7; de Jong (2001) ad *Od.*13.335-8; Bierl (2004) 50-1; Bravo (2004) 74-5; Rutherford (2009) 180-1; see also Bruit (1989) and Jameson (1994).

<sup>14</sup> Kearns (1982) 7. I note in this context Nagy's observation, (1990) 268-73, that cult heroes are like gods when they dispense justice; see also Nagy's argument, (1985) 74-6, that Odysseus is presented as an avenging cult hero in Theognis.

<sup>15</sup> Turkeltaub (2003) 4.

<sup>16</sup> Louden, (1999) 22, argues that Athene implicitly tests Telemakhos and the suitors.

<sup>17</sup> Foley (1994) ad *h.Cer.* 145-68; see also Parker (1991) 9.

<sup>18</sup> Thus Kearns, (1982) 6, speaks of "Metaneira's failure of a test, through her lack of trust in a stranger."

<sup>19</sup> For Poseidon's punishment of the Phaiakes, however, see below.

<sup>20</sup> von Kamptz (1982) p.145 § 53a1 and p.255 § 7b1, interprets the name to mean "etwa 'Ersinner, Berater,'" relating it to the root "\*men- 'denken.'" This is supported by context, as Mentos does advise Telemakhos—though Mentor's advisory role is less pronounced—but it ignores the echo of 1.89 and the subsequent behavior of Telemakhos demonstrating that she has succeeded in doing what she set out to do. My position coheres more closely with that of Nagy (1974) 266-9, who argues that Athene's *menos* consists of "power, faculty"; see also Muellner (1996) 47 n.43, who glosses with "mental energy"; Faulkner (2008) ad *h.Ven.* 188-90; Brilllet-Dubois (forthcoming).

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<sup>21</sup> Note that whereas divinely inspired *menos* can be imagined as lasting for a relatively brief period of time (cf., e.g., *Il.* 5.124-6), the effect in Telemachos' case is meant to endure.

<sup>22</sup> Richardson (1974) ad *h.Cer.* 231-55; Alderink (1982) 9-10; Clay (1989) 243-4; Parker (1991) 9-11; Foley (1994) 90, 113-4 and ad *h.Cer.* 231-55; Felson-Rubin and Deal (1994); Konstan (1996); Nagy (1999) esp. 149, 181-2; Pache (2004) 74-8.

<sup>23</sup> Sowa (1984) 244, 251; see above, nn.17-8.

<sup>24</sup> On the pattern, see esp. M. Lord (1994); see also Sowa (1983). Telemakhos, however, will return *for* revenge, a pattern lacking from the *h.Cer.*, but which features prominently in Homeric epic. On the hero's revenge in epic versions of Withdrawal and Return, see in particular Rose (1967).

<sup>25</sup> On Athene's transformation, see S. West (1988) ad *Od.* 1.320; Turkeltaub, (2003) 288-9 with further bibl. at n.637, treats it as ambiguous. For the motif of amazement in epiphany scenes, cf. Turkeltaub (2003) 23, 31-2, 57-60; Faulkner (2008) ad *h.Ven.* 83-90, 83, 84. Note that Demeter rushes "like a bird of prey" (*h.Cer.* 43: ὥς τ' οἰωνός) in her search.

<sup>26</sup> Athene pours χάρις over Telemakhos as he enters the assembly in Book 2, a theme echoed by his subsequent entrance into the *agorē* in Book 17 (2.11-3~17.62-4). She twice performs the same service for Odysseus on Skherie (6.235~8.19). On the force of χάρις in these scenes and *h.Cer.* 215 see MacLachlan (1993) 31-4.

<sup>27</sup> Athene consequently does not instruct Telemakhos to search for his father, only for news of him. The *h.Cer.* describes Demeter as "searching over land and sea, but no one could tell her the truth" (43-5: ἐπὶ τραφερῆν τε καὶ ὑγρῆν / μαιομένη· τῆ δ' οὐ τις



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ἐτήτυμα μῦθήσασθαι / ἤθελεν). The actual object of her search is left implicit, and as it happens news of Persephone's abductor and whereabouts is all she can hope to obtain.

<sup>28</sup> As a consequence, the *Telemachy* exhibits features of the journey sequence that are found in the *h.Cer.* but not in the Odysseus-narratives, for example, the two helper motif (on which, see Sowa [1984] esp. 223-5): Telemakhos is escorted by Athene on his journey to meet the aged and wise Nestor, from whom he learns the initial reason for his father's delayed return. Nestor then encourages him to journey to Sparta, where he remains for an extended period in the court of Menelaos. This corresponds to Demeter's journey in the *h.Cer.*, where she is escorted by a virgin goddess, Hekate, to meet the all-seeing Helios, where she learns the reason for Persephone's disappearance. Demeter then journeys unescorted to Eleusis, where she remains for an extended period in the court of Keleos. Note that Telemakhos' journey is better motivated than Demeter's.

<sup>29</sup> The identity of the bird is unclear: *LSJ* and Thompson, (1895) 180, identify it as a lammergeyer, or 'bearded vulture,' and though the birds are impressive for their size there is no obvious motive for comparing Athene to a carrion bird, even if it does not have a taste for rotting flesh. It would also be appropriate to their location by the sea-shore to have her transform into an aquatic bird of some sort, and on this basis I have rendered with 'sea-eagle,' though in all probability we are simply to imagine a suitably exotic, large and carnivorous bird (cp. Leaf [1900] ad *Il.* 7.59). It may be relevant that *Ael. NA* 12.4 says the *phēnē* is sacred to Athene, unless this is an inference based on the *Od.* passage. It would, however, help explain why Nestor is able to identify Athene based on her transformation. Another aquatic predator, the heron, is also associated with Athene; on which see Thompson, *ibid.* 58-9; Dué and Ebbott (2010) ad *Il.* 10.274. I

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remain persuaded, however, by Muellner's (1990) differentiation among various birds in Homeric similes and would suggest only that we are here dealing, at least in part, with 'poetic' as opposed to natural species.

<sup>30</sup> Nagy (forthcoming) notes that these comparisons regularly occur in ritual contexts such as bathing and weddings. His larger finding is that **"for a mortal to appear like an immortal to other mortals is to become a divinity in a ritual moment of epiphany—as marked by the similes that make mortals equal to divinities in that ritual moment"** (163, his emphasis).

<sup>31</sup> On bathing see, in addition to Nagy (forthcoming), Lord (2000) 176: "The bath [of Odysseus in *Od.* 23] belongs in the tale of return—it surely has ritual significance." See also Dué and Ebbott (2010) ad *Il.* 10.576. On the importance of ritual bathing in prenuptial ceremonies for bride and groom, where it is often rhetorically paired with the torches used in the wedding procession, see *E. Med.* 1024-7 with the remarks of Mastrorarde (2002) ad 1026. This is of some relevance for Odysseus' baths on Skherie and during the recognition scene with Penelope. I also note in this context that a clay bathtub was discovered at Pylos in room 43, which was located on the ground floor, separate from the private apartments upstairs. Additionally, rather than open onto the stairwell leading to the apartments, or to the so-called 'Queen's Megaron' (room 46), the room containing the tub was located near a distyle stoa opening onto the central courtyard (court 3), onto which the porch of the main *megaron* also opened. The room originally opened onto the gate facing NE (41) and was thus situated along a central artery of the palace. This arrangement can plausibly be explained by assuming that the bathtub was used in conjunction with rituals performed in the courtyard.

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<sup>32</sup> Mylonas (1961) 249-50; Richardson (1974) pp.166-7 ad *h.Cer.* 47 (I add pp. here and below as there are two entries marked '47' and this one should read '47ff.');

Dillon (1997) 63-4; see also below, n.52.

<sup>33</sup> Bathing is not, however, featured in the *h.Cer.* except in the negative sense that Demeter goes nine days without a bath (50), and it is sometimes assumed that this also echoes cult practice (on which, see below, n.37).

<sup>34</sup> Cook (2009a).

<sup>35</sup> Sowa (1984) 250: "Odysseus' appearance to Nausikaa seems, conversely, less like a simple recognition than a divine Epiphany. We must include both the appearance of Odysseus to Nausikaa and Demeter's appearance to the daughters of Keleos in the pattern that I call 'God Welcomed by Maidens,' but which is sometimes called 'The Women at the Well.'" Reece (1993) 13, identifies the theme as a "universal tale that knows no geographical bounds." In making this claim, he seems to have been influenced by Alter's argument, (1981) 51-62, that three Old Testament accounts (*Gen.* 24:10-61, 29:1-20; *Exod.* 2:15b-21) in which a stranger's encounter with a girl at a well leads to marriage belong to a 'betrothal type-scene.' Arterbury (2010), however, reclassifies the theme as 'Hospitality' rather than 'Betrothal,' citing Odysseus' encounter with Nausikaa as a *comparandum*, and on this basis adds *John* 4:4-43 to the pattern. He also links the theme to *theoxeny*, 68, 81-2, though he does not use the term. On the other hand, Richardson's Greek parallels (1974) ad *h.Cer.* 98ff., involve scenes of ab- and se-duction. Even if such scenes were considerably more common than they seem to be, their diversity, and with it the uniqueness of the scenes in the *Od.* and *h.Cer.*, risk being masked by application of a common label.

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<sup>36</sup> Sowa (1984) 250; see also Arthur (1994) 225-7. Sowa also argues, *ibid.* 253, that the epiphany of Odysseus “is divided up: He is discovered first by Nausikaa, to whom he also shows the first set of miraculous tokens (6. 229-237); it is to her that he lies about his identity (6. 170-172). He appears again with miraculous tokens of beauty to the assembled Phaiakians, whose king, Alkinoos, thinks that Odysseus is a god. He is mistreated by one of the Phaiakians (Euryalos), and finally reveals his identity to the assembled Phaiakians (9. 19-28).” She later, *ibid.* 254, qualifies the claim about Odysseus’ lying: “[w]ithout actually telling a lie to Nausikaa, Odysseus conceals his identity by telling only part of his story, while appearing to tell all of it (6. 170-172), for who could guess that a man could suffer more adventure than to be shipwrecked for twenty days? (Here he exaggerates; he was actually shipwrecked for only three days!)” I would be inclined to call the extension of *κραιπνὰ τε θύελλαι* to the entire voyage the narrative equivalent of the principle of grammatical agreement with the nearer noun, one that in this case is much helped by its rhetorical convenience to the task that Odysseus faces. The more interesting issue is that the epiphany is “divided up,” since Demeter’s is as well and in almost precisely the same way.

<sup>37</sup> Richardson (1974) p.166 ad *h.Cer.* 47, speculates that “the mystae may have abstained from washing for a period, but this cannot have corresponded with the duration of the festival, as they bathed in the sea on the sixteenth Boedromion.” He goes on to note, *ibid.*, that “The Rheitoi, on the Sacred Way to Eleusis, were also used for purification (Hsch. s.v. *Ῥειτοί*; Deubner, o.c. 75 n. 11). . . . A ritual purification with the water of the river Ilissos formed part of the Lesser Mysteries (Polyaen. 5. 17. 1, Stat. *Theb.* 8. 763 ff., Deubner, o.c. 70).”

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<sup>38</sup> Foley (1994) 73.

<sup>39</sup> On Ogugie as a multiform of the ‘Islands of the Blessed,’ see Cook (1992).

<sup>40</sup> Mylonas (1961) 44-7; Richardson (1974) pp.18-9 and ad *h.Cer.* 99, 200 and 272 (elsewhere, pp.326-8, Richardson suggests that the Parthenion and Kallikhoron wells are identical); Cole (1994) 204-5.

<sup>41</sup> Turkeltaub, (2003) 81, notes that assigning the “journey and arrival” to the mortals, i.e. to the daughters of Keleos, in such encounters “is very rare.” This is of some significance since the sequence is also assigned to Nausikaa, while Athene arrives in Book 13 disguised as a mortal.

<sup>42</sup> Although I have been using ‘false’ and related terms to describe these stories, I place it here in quotes to signal that they are only ‘false’ in the sense that they do not agree with the primary narrative. They are, however, used to communicate important ‘truths’ about the characters who relate them and are perfectly authentic ‘myths’ in their own right.

<sup>43</sup> M. Lord, (1994) 186, thinks that the wish for a husband may be coincidental to the shared theme of maidens at the well, since marriage is “usually associated” with it. Even if the theme is as common as Lord implies (on which, see above, n.35), the parallels between the two scenes are much more extensive than that.

<sup>44</sup> For the term and discussion of its features, see Turkeltaub (2003) 22-3.

<sup>45</sup> Nagy (forthcoming) argues that the act of comparison is itself a ritualizing gesture that abets the assimilation.

<sup>46</sup> On αἰδώς τε σέβας τε see Cairns (1993) esp. 137-46 and 156-9; on χλωρόν δέος see Stanford (1965) ad *Od.* 11.38-43; Irwin (1974) 62-8, who renders with ‘pale fear’; Dué and Ebbott (2010) ad *Il.* 10.376.

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<sup>47</sup> On the formula, see Dué and Ebbott (2010) ad *Il.* 10.313, who remark that in the *Il.* it “is used after a challenge by one man to a group . . . and . . . serves as a pause before another individual responds . . . .”

<sup>48</sup> See Richardson (1974) ad *h.Cer.* 231-55 on, e.g., the adoption-ritual of infants who are “made a part of the new household by contact with the hearth.” See also Mastronarde (2002) ad *E. Med.* 713. Richardson, *ibid.*, explains the similarity of the Demophoon story to domestic adoption rituals with “the character of the mystic initiation as a rite of adoption, with which the idea of purification is also associated.” This is especially interesting in terms of Odysseus’ reunion with Penelope. Note that at the close of the *H.Cer.*, Plutos is sent to the hearths of those whom the goddesses love, indicating that he takes up residence in their houses (cf. 486-9 with Richardson [1974] ad *h.Cer.* 488f.).

<sup>49</sup> Mylonas (1961) 236-7; Richardson (1974) ad *h.Cer.* 231-55; Burkert (1983) 280-1.

<sup>50</sup> This echoes the arrival scene at Sparta, in which Eteoneus asks Menelaos whether to receive the strangers and Menelaos admonishes his *therapōn* on the proper protocol for receiving guests (4.22-36).

<sup>51</sup> Richardson, (1974) ad *h.Cer.* 191, and S. West, (1988) ad *Od.* 1.130, note that *thronos* and *klismos* can be used interchangeably in epic.

<sup>52</sup> Mylonas (1961) 205-8; Richardson (1974) ad *h.Cer.* 192-211 and 231-55; Burkert (1983) 267-9, (1985) 286; Edmonds (2006).

<sup>53</sup> Compare Ankhises’ response to Aphrodite’s partial epiphany in the *h.Ven.*

<sup>54</sup> Homer may be indulging in some ironic word play when he calls Hermes the *ἔυσκόπῳ Ἄργειφόντῃ* (7.137), which he probably understood to mean ‘the keen-sighted swift appearer,’ in that the Phaiakes are not exactly keen-sighted at the moment, while

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Odysseus appears suddenly in their midst (for the latter term see the *ΣΙΙ*. 2.104; Merry-Riddell [1886] ad *Od.* 1.38; Stanford [1965] ad *Od.* 5.43). Note the further irony that Hermes is Odysseus' sometime grandfather by a tradition that was probably known to Homer (see Cook [1995] 9 nn.13 and 15).

<sup>55</sup> See above, n. 35, esp. Richardson.

<sup>56</sup> Turkeltaub (2003) 33, 36-7, 88-91.

<sup>57</sup> Cook (2009a).

<sup>58</sup> Before extracting an apology from Eurualos, however, Alkinoos asks for another performance by Demodokos, who sings the story of Ares and Aphrodite, with its explicitly sexual themes and public mockery of adulterers: this story was considered so risqué in antiquity that some even questioned its authenticity (for the song, see Burkert [2009]; Garvie [1994] ad *Od.* 8.266-369, with further bibl.). The rude jesting of the gods, who openly look at and taunt the naked lovers trapped *in flagrante delicto* can, however, be directly paralleled in Iambe's "jesting and jeering," to the *aischrologia* at the *gephurismos* and *pannychis* held during the Mysteries, and still more directly to Baubo's self-exposure in the 'Orphic' version of the myth (see Graf [1974] esp. 194-9; Richardson [1974] pp.77-86). One may also well compare the scene in which Odysseus had earlier appeared naked before Nausikaa, with its clear comical overtones.

<sup>59</sup> On the image, see below on Penelope's appearances in the *megaron*. Odysseus' promise to pray to Nausikaa "as to a god" (8.467) is relevant in this connection.

<sup>60</sup> As we have seen, springs and wells feature prominently in Persephone's worship; and caves are likewise associated with the goddess and her cult, in Athens and elsewhere, although this is not an explicit feature of the *h.Cer.* When Hades abducts Persephone, a

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cave implicitly results, but the *h.Cer.* naturally focuses on the dramatic image of the earth opening up and Hades emerging to seize her. For a cave as the site of her abduction, see, e.g., Deubner (1932) 40-5; Richardson (1974) pp.18-9 and ad *h.Cer.* 200; Parke (1977) 159 with 83-4.

<sup>61</sup> On shepherding as a developed symbol of anti- and ante-civilization, see Cook (1995) 102 with n.24, and 152-3. As Turkeltaub notes, (2003) 247, this is the only case in Archaic epic of a god changing gender when circumstances do not require it. Her willingness not only to avoid hints about her true character, but even to assume traits opposed to it, leaves Athene especially difficult to identify, as Odysseus ruefully notes.

<sup>62</sup> Kearns (1982) 2-4.

<sup>63</sup> Turkeltaub (2003) 243-4, 269-70.

<sup>64</sup> Epimenides fr. 5 (Kinkel); cf. Callimachus, *Hymn to Zeus* 8 with the testimonia gathered by Pfeiffer (1953) ad loc.

<sup>65</sup> Cf., e.g., Erbse (1972) 154-5; Clay (1997) 196-7; Cook (2009a) 128.

<sup>66</sup> Heubeck (1989) ad *Od.* 9.39-61. Note in this context that Odysseus concludes by saying that “the gods themselves” (14.357) hid him from the crew and led him to Eumaios’ steading, just as Athene had earlier hid Odysseus in a mist and sent him to the swineherd.

<sup>67</sup> Cook (2009a) 129-30.

<sup>68</sup> He also deflects an initial request to identify himself to Eumaios as he had on Skherie, though he does supply his parentage (on which, see below).



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<sup>69</sup> Muellner (1976) 96-7; Cook (2009a) 129-30. As Turkeltaub notes, (2003) 22-7, such hints of identity are common features of the god's lying tale as well as the closely related element of disguise in epiphany narratives.

<sup>70</sup> It is also notable for its explicit echo of the Kikonian and Thrinakian episodes, the first and last of Odysseus' narrated adventures.

<sup>71</sup> He repeats his words to Melanthe when the latter abuses him during his interview with Penelope, again calling attention to his rags with the suggestion that this is why she despises him (19.70-80).

<sup>72</sup> My wording is meant to accommodate the possibility that Eumaios has simply dropped out of focus. Differently Russo (1992) ad *Od.* 17.415-44.

<sup>73</sup> Odysseus also suffers physical abuse from Melanthios earlier on the way to the palace, and Melanthios likewise fails to recognize the significance of his failure to dislodge the old man from the road when he kicks him on the hip (17.233-8). In that encounter, the temptation to retaliate with a display of strength that would expose his disguise is explicit.

<sup>74</sup> A further partial epiphany occurs in the subsequent boxing match with Iros, where the suitors recognize that the beggar is far stronger than he first appeared. Nevertheless, they still fail to recognize the further implications of this despite their suspicion in the present scene that the stranger could be a god in disguise.

<sup>75</sup> Murnaghan (1987) 13 n.20.

<sup>76</sup> When Odysseus presently reveals his identity and declares that he has returned to punish the suitors, Eurymachos attempts to negotiate the terms on which the suitors might propitiate him for the wrongs he had suffered (cp. the attempted propitiations of

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Keleos and Zeus in the *h.Cer.*, and of Eurualos and Antinoos in the *Od.*). Odysseus, however, declares that he will be satisfied by nothing less than the slaughter of all the suitors (22.61-4). Whereas gods often provide reassurances after their epiphany, Odysseus' unique, explicit refusal can be compared to Demeter's own failure to do so because she is still intent on revenge (on the motif of reassurance, see Turkeltaub [2003] 33-4).

<sup>77</sup> On the effect of such comparisons, again see Nagy (forthcoming).

<sup>78</sup> Cf. von Kamptz (1982) pp.132-3 § 47a,b2; p.231 § 67a4. Nagy (1985) 76-8, and Levaniouk (2000), accept a primary meaning of 'fiery' and argue that it is used in an extended sense, referring to the fierce and relentless hunger of a beggar and the resourcefulness to satisfy it. Note that Demophoon is also a 'man of light,' who is compared to a fire brand (*h.Cer.* 239); see Richardson (1974) ad *h.Cer.* 234.

<sup>79</sup> Note that 19.303-7=14.158-62. On light symbolism in Homer, see Whitman (1958) 121-3; Austin (1975) ch. 5, esp. 244-6; Clarke (1989) 73-5; Russo (1992) ad *Od.* 18.317-9, 343-5, 19.306, 306-7; Cook (1995) ch. 5, esp. 163-8; Bierl (2004); see also Bultmann (1948); Bremer (1976) esp. 109-65; Bravo (2004) 66-7, 73. Whitman notes that light is used to symbolize victory in the *Il.* and extends this to the *Od.* passages (he makes no distinction between natural and artificial, interior light). He is followed in this by Clarke and Russo; cf., however, Mastronarde (2002) ad *E. Med.* 482. Based on Athene's cult in the Erechtheum at Athens, I argued, *ibid.*, that the light illuminating the *megaron* in *Od.* 19 symbolizes divine protection and support, though these interpretations are not, of course, exclusive. I would now add that in relation to Demeter's cult, light also

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symbolizes epiphany as return/resurrection, of the hero and of life and prosperity generally (for Athene's lamp in Book 19, see below, with n.104).

<sup>80</sup> Hoekstra (1989) ad *Od.* 14.204; von Kamptz (1982) pp.241-2 § 69a2; p.274 §75b (Κάστωρ); pp.142-3 § 51a2; p.277 §75b (Υλακίδης).

<sup>81</sup> Note Odysseus' own repeated address to Penelope as ὦ γύναι, with diairesis after the first foot, or ὦ γύναι αἰδοίη, ending at the principle caesura before continuing with Λαερτιάδεω Ὀδυσῆος. Stanford (1965) ad *Od.* 19.107, calls the address as ὦ γύναι “a daring ambiguity : it could mean ‘Wife’ as well as ‘Lady’.” Interestingly, the extended formula is once used by Theoklumenos (17.152), a character sometimes identified as an Odysseus-substitute by Analytic scholars. The formula is otherwise used by Odysseus in addressing his wife.

<sup>82</sup> Whereas he had earlier replaced Nausikaa with the son of the Thesprotian king in his story to Eumaios, he here eliminates mention of Kalupso to Penelope, though he later tells her about both Kirke and Kalupso (23.321, 333-4).

<sup>83</sup> As we have seen, such hints commonly feature in the lying tale during divine epiphany scenes: the effect belongs to what Turkeltaub (2003) labels the ‘Ironic Treatment of the God.’ He notes, *ibid.* 26, that “[t]hough the **Ironic Treatment of the God** is often so pointed that it is difficult to believe that the mortal character remains ignorant, dramatic irony is an integral part of any epiphany scene with a **Disguise**, and its pervasiveness throughout these scenes suggests that unless the mortal explicitly recognizes the god in a particular scene, we should be very wary of making psychological deductions that run counter to the general tendency.” There is thus no reason to assume, as is sometimes done, a subtext in which Penelope recognizes and even colludes with Odysseus.

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<sup>84</sup> Cook (1999a) 115-6.

<sup>85</sup> On the displacement see also Austin (1975) 224-7. Note that expectation of a scene of recognition by the queen is further reinforced by the recognitions based on external appearance by Helen and Arete in structurally parallel scenes (4.137-46, 7.233-9).

<sup>86</sup> To be sure, the pairing of partial and full epiphany can be paralleled in the *h.Ven.* and is thus not unique to the *Od.* and *h.Cer.*

<sup>87</sup> Turkeltaub (2003) 31.

<sup>88</sup> In this context, cf. *h.Cer.* 239 with Richardson (1974) ad loc.; Foley (1994) ad 231-55; above, nn.32, 48-9.

<sup>89</sup> The connection to ἀλάομαι seems clear, since it echoes Odysseus' own status as an ἀλαόμενος and disguise as an ἀλήτης. My translation is designed to bring out the connection. For other interpretations, see Stanford (1965) ad *Od.* 24.304-5; Heubeck (1992) ad *Od.* 24.304-6; Breed (1999); below, n.92.

<sup>90</sup> The appearance of all three characters is linked by Murnaghan, (1987) 27 n.12, in terms of mourning as sympathetic death; on which see also Cole (1985) 10; Redfield (1994) 181-2; and for modern parallels see Bradbury (1965) esp. 107-11; Kearl (1989) 95-103. What makes this of special interest for my purposes is that in both the *h.Cer.* and the *Od.* the stories of parent and child closely mirror each other.

<sup>91</sup> For the sense, see Stanford (1965) ad *Od.* 24.283-4; Heubeck (1992) ad *Od.* 24.284.

<sup>92</sup> The usual interpretation is to see all of these names as assertions of wealth, and on this basis emendations of the text have been proposed. Stanford (1965) ad *Od.* 24.304-5, notes that Wackernagel, (1916) 249-51, suggests changing Ἀλύβαντος to Σαλύβαντος, or 'Silver Town,' and Πολυπημονίδαο to Πολυπαμμονίδαο, or 'Much Owning,' and

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linking Ἐπήριτος to the root ἄρι— yielding ‘The Chosen One.’ Apheidas is thus taken to mean ‘Unsparring’ in the sense of generous. Scholars have tended to accept Wackernagel’s interpretation without adopting his emendations. In addition to Stanford, cf. von Kamptz (1982) p.166 § 63a1 (Φεΐδας), pp.80-1 § 26a (Πολυ-πάμων), and pp.57 §16e and 82 § 27b (Ἐπ-ήριτος); Heubeck (1992) ad *Od.* 24.304-6. On Eperitos as ‘Man of Strife,’ Stanford notes that Eusebius links the name to ἔρις, and concedes that whereas the link to ἄρι— “is preferable philologically,” the link to ἔρις “fits the story better.” I would add that the reference to wealth also is less than transparent. Peradotto, (1990) 144, likewise notes that Wackernagel’s interpretation “better satisfies current state-of-the-art etymology and creates internal consistency among the four names, but in the process renders them arbitrary within the framework of the entire narrative.” In this context, see the comments of Nagy, (2004) 131-7, on the meaning of Akhilleus’ name and the role of folk-etymology in the shaping and interpretation of traditional poetry. See also Breed (1999), who reaches the same conclusions as I about the meaning of Eperitos and Polupemon, but interprets Apheidas to mean ‘Neglectful,’ i.e., of offering proper burial, and Alybas to mean ‘Revenant-Corpse-Town,’ referring to an unburied member of Odysseus’ crew.

<sup>93</sup> Heubeck (1992) ad *Od.* 24.361-83; de Jong (2001) ad *Od.* 24.365-8.

<sup>94</sup> These stories can also be seen as making a metapoetic statement on the nature of traditional story-telling, according to which the poet continuously readjusts, expands and contracts his narrative to the needs and desires of his audience using a common stock of inherited themes.

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<sup>95</sup> The scene with Telemakhos, which Kearns, (1982) 3, terms the “thematically most significant of the recognition scenes” in the *Od.*, forms the core of her study of *theoxeny* in the *Od.* See also Turkeltaub, (2003) 298-302, on the formal elements.

<sup>96</sup> For fleeces see above, n.52; for sitting on the ground during the Thesmophoria, see Deubner (1932) 56; Burkert (1985) 243. Note, however, that in the Thesmophoria the women sit on λύγαι (for which, cf. *Od.* 9.427), not ῥῶπες.

<sup>97</sup> On interpreting κυάνεαι (16.176) to mean ‘regain its color,’ see Irwin (1974) 90-1.

<sup>98</sup> Stanford (1965) ad *Od.* 16.187-8. For another, possible example of word play involving ἀληθείς at 205, cp. *Od.* 14.118-27, with remarks by Dougherty (2001) 63-5; Cook (2003) 186.

<sup>99</sup> Faulkner, (2008) ad *h.Ven.* 109-10, remarks that “[t]hese lines are extremely similar to *Od.* 16. 187-8 . . . where Odysseus assures Telemachus that he is not a god. If the poet was thinking of that passage, there is a certain irony in the echo; Odysseus is for once telling the truth with these words, whereas in the mouth of Aphrodite they are full of deceit. Whether, however, there is direct imitation here is uncertain; the lines could be a formulaic response to being likened to a god (cf. *Introd.*, p. 33).” In the Introduction, *ibid.* 33, he states somewhat more forcefully that “[o]ther similarities between the content of Aphrodite’s and Odysseus’ lies and Anchises’ and Penelope’s responses might support the case for imitation [in the *h.Ven.*], but this can equally be explained by stock material; again, the broad structure of these lines could have been a formulaic response to being likened to a god, upon which both these passages are based.” My own model, for which see above, n.2, could support the notion of *mutual* engagement between traditions, as I have argued in previous studies (Cook [1995], [2009b]; see also Brillet-Dubois

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[forthcoming]). In the present case, I think that the reception of the *Od.* is enriched by assuming direct engagement with this specific hymn-tradition, but again my case only depends on the verse in question being a traditional element of *theoxeny* scenes.

<sup>100</sup> Rood, (2006) 1, explains the simile in terms of “a consistent association among birds, gods, and vengeance in the poem.” On the identity of the birds in the simile, see above, n. 29.

<sup>101</sup> Thus Kearns, (1982) 4, citing Müller (1966) 109-10.

<sup>102</sup> Russo (1992) ad *Od.* 18.343-5.

<sup>103</sup> On σέλας used of divine light, cf. *h.Cer.* 189 with Richardson (1974) ad loc. For divine light generally, including light emanating from the head, see also Faulkner (2008) ad *h.Ven.* 83-90, 174; for light-symbolism in Homer see above, n.79; below, n.104.

<sup>104</sup> For a review of scholarship on the passage, see Cook, (1995) 163-70; Turkeltaub, (2003) 302-6 (though I distance myself from his claim that the scene is parodic); Bierl (2004) 51-5.

<sup>105</sup> Cook (1995) 168; Burkert (1997) 20-1.

<sup>106</sup> Thus Burkert (1985) 288. Although Eckert, (1963) 50-1, denies the possibility of explicit allusion and is unaware of the larger pattern of parallel structures, themes and motifs shared by the *Od.* and *h.Cer.*, he nevertheless observes (ibid. 54): “Pfeiffer has recently argued for a cultic significance in this scene. In terms of initiation, however, the scene recalls nothing so much as the reports of the final ceremonies inside the Telesterion at Eleusis which speak of the blaze of light that illuminates the hall when the initiates enter the final rites.” For discussion of Pfeiffer’s claims, see above, n.104.

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<sup>107</sup> Note that, conversely, the death of the suitors is directly associated with the extinction of the sun's light in the ecstatic prophecy of Theoklumenos (20.350-7)—where note that his sudden, unannounced appearance is something of an epiphany in its own right—and with that of the moon's light if the foregoing interpretation of *lukabas* is correct. An intuitive connection can perhaps be felt with the fact that Anti-noos dies without 'recognizing' (*noein*) that he is being punished by the returning Odysseus.

<sup>108</sup> See above, n.13; Austin (1975) 236-8.

<sup>109</sup> Cook (1995) 162-3. The iconography of heraldic flanking of goddesses, trees, and columns is common from the Bronze Age onwards. For archaic examples depicting Artemis as *potnia thērōn* see, e.g., the Boeotian pithamphora dating to ca. 680-70 BC in the Athenian National Museum (inventory no., A00220), and the François Vase dating to ca. 570 BC in the National Archaeological Museum of Florence (inventory no., Florence 4209). See also E., *IT* 42-58, in which Orestes appears in a dream to Iphigeneia as a pillar of the house.

<sup>110</sup> Cp. *Od.* 1.365-6, where the account of their reaction is delayed.

<sup>111</sup> The pairing can also represent Penelope's dilemma as well as the transition occasioned by marriage. As Bergren, (2008) 220, remarks, "[a] woman is moved from the οἶκος of her father and the status of an 'Artemis' to the οἶκος of her husband and the sexual life of an 'Aphrodite.'" At this moment Penelope is neither and both.

<sup>112</sup> The contrast between the bed and pillar echoes one that Bergren, (2008) 217, finds between the bed and Penelope's weaving.

<sup>113</sup> Note that when Odysseus strings the bow Zeus immediately thunders, "revealing signs" (413: σήματα φαίνων); and after shooting through the axe heads Odysseus



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announces that it is time to eat dinner “in the light” (429: ἐν φάει). When Eurukleia sees Odysseus standing among the dead suitors, her response is to ululate (22.408), which is also the response to a god’s epiphany in cult; see Rudhardt (1992) 178-80, who, however, uses the passage to illustrate the “profane” sense of the verb; García (2002) 21.

<sup>114</sup> On these scenes, cf. Cook (1995) 161-3, (2009a) 115.

<sup>115</sup> It may even support the idea that one was also celebrated in Demeter’s cult: in this context, see in addition to the marriage of Hades and Persephone, that of Demeter and Iasion preserved in *Od.* 5.125-8 and Hes., *Theog.* 969-74; cf. M. West (1966) ad *Theog.* 971; Graf (1974) 129-30, with n.16; Richardson (1974) ad *h.Cer.* 489; Burkert (1985) 108-9; Auffarth (1991) 570; on the *Od.* and *hieros gamos*, see Auffarth, *ibid.* 565-72. For a recent survey of *hieros gamos* in the ancient world, see Nissinen and Uro (2008), esp. the entries by Avagianou and Pongratz-Leisten.