NOTES AND DISCUSSIONS

GOLD ARMOR FOR BRONZE AND HOMER'S USE OF COMPENSATORY TIMH

The exchange of armor that concludes the Glaucus-Diomedes episode in *Iliad* 6 has long been a source of embarrassment for commentators. It has widely been felt that the comic overtones of the unequal exchange do not sit well with the noble tone of the preceding passage.[1] The nub of the difficulty is to be found in line 234, where the comic overtones are most conspicuous: ἔνθ' αὖτε Γλαύκῳ Κρονίδης φρένας ἐξέλετο Ζεύς. Some ancient commentators sought a way out of the difficulty by suggesting that φρένας ἐξέλετο means "elevated his mind" rather than "stole away his wits."[2] However, Homeric usage of the phrase elsewhere rules out this possibility.[3] Besides the problem of tone, there is another, more fundamental difficulty in this passage. Why did Homer, after going to considerable lengths to equate the heroes as guest-friends, seek to have one get the better of the other? Why did he not rather leave the scene with the two heroes on an equal footing, as they appear to be at line 233: "They grasped one another's hands and exchanged oaths of friendship"? Why, in short, did he choose to make so great a disparity between the gifts? This paper will attempt to answer these questions by demonstrating that the exchange of armor exemplifies a common type of scene in the *Iliad,* whereby Homer accords a favored hero what one might call "compensatory τιμή." The problem of the comic tone of line 234 is inextricably bound up with this question of compensatory τιμή. First, however, let us look briefly at some recent discussions of the passage.[4]

Two studies, by J. D. Craig and P. Walcot, focus on the question of Glaucus' motives.[5] Craig sees the exchange as Glaucus' tacit acknowledgment of Diomedes' superiority and a thinly veiled device for buying him off.[6] Thus Glaucus

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1. Cf., e.g., W. Leaf, *The "Iliad,"* vol. 1 (London, 1900; repr. Amsterdam, 1971), p. 275, who sees "this almost burlesque ending to one of the most delightful episodes in Homer" as "an outbreak of conscious and deliberate humour."

2. So, for instance, Porphyry: see M. van der Valk, ed., *Eustathii . . . Commentarii ad Homeri "Iliadem" Pertinentes,* vol. 2 (Leiden, 1976), p. 297; cf. also the useful survey of M. Maftei, *Antike Diskussionen über die Episode von Glaukos und Diomedes im VI. Buch der "Ilias"* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976).

3. At *Il.* 17. 470 and 19. 137 the phrase = "stole away his wits."

4. For an excellent review of the history of scholarship on this passage, see W. M. Calder III, "Gold for Bronze: *Iliad* 6. 232–36," in *Studies Presented to Sterling Dow on His Eightieth Birthday* (Durham, N.C., 1984), pp. 31–35.

→ Craig, "ΧΡΥΣΕΑ ΧΑΛΚΕΙΩΝ," *CR* 17 (1967): 243 → Walcot, "ΧΡΥΣΕΑ ΧΑΛΚΕΙΩΝ: A Further Comment," *CR* 19 (1969): 12–13.

6. "ΧΡΥΣΕΑ," p. 244.

is to be seen here as pragmatic, at best, and perhaps even cowardly. This characterization of Glaucus, however, is inconsistent with the picture that Homer presents of him elsewhere. Glaucus is, after all, the cousin and close companion of Sarpedon, and it is to him that Sarpedon utters his famous speech (12. 310–28), in which he points out that heroes must strive for immortality by fighting bravely. Elsewhere in the *Iliad* Glaucus is always depicted as a courageous Trojan hero. Walcot offers a modified version of Craig's interpretation, attributing Odyssean shrewdness to Glaucus, who (he argues) receives not only the bronze armor but also "a gift infinitely more precious, his own life."[7] This view of Glaucus as a shrewd bargainer, however, is directly contradicted by Homer's no-nonsense explanation for the exchange: Zeus stole away Glaucus' wits (234). Moreover, both Walcot and Craig ignore what is surely the main point of the whole scene. Glaucus is saved not by his generous gift of gold armor but by the revelation that Diomedes and he are guest-friends. Gift or no gift, Diomedes cannot kill Glaucus without incurring the wrath of Zeus ξένιος.

In his monograph on Diomedes, Ø. Andersen has surprisingly little to say about our passage; in essence, he agrees with Craig.[8] Calder, on the other hand, offers a new approach, basing his interpretation on the practice of gift-giving in primitive societies that anthropologists call "potlatch."[9] According to this principle a leader asserts his position by outstripping others in the generosity of his gift-giving. Inferiors acknowledge their subordinate position when they accept gifts that they cannot match. If we see this practice as lying behind the exchange between Diomedes and Glaucus, we have Diomedes acknowledging Glaucus' superiority when he accepts gold in exchange for bronze. What then of Homer's comment that Zeus stole away Glaucus' wits? Calder suggests that the exchange in the *Iliad,* with its potlatch ramifications, is "a Mycenaean raisin preserved in Geometric dough."[10] Living in a society that did not share the values inherent in the system of potlatch, Homer misunderstood the point of the exchange and thought that Diomedes had come off best. The chief difficulty with this ingenious interpretation, it seems to me, is that everything we know about Glaucus and Diomedes leads us to expect Diomedes, not Glaucus, to be in the dominant position. It is hard to imagine that this story could have been originally conceived to show Glaucus getting the better of Diomedes.

I believe that we have a better chance of understanding this puzzling incident if we turn away from the supposed motives of the characters and focus our attention on Homer's practice in essentially similar situations. Let us first examine two incidents that are similar to one another and share important features with the scene between Glaucus and Diomedes. The first of these occurs at the beginning of Book 5, when Diomedes confronts the sons of Dares, Phegeus and Idaeus. Phegeus is killed, but since Dares is the priest of Hephaestus, that god intervenes to rescue Idaeus so that the aged priest will not be left utterly destitute (*Il.* 5. 9–24). Homer is careful to note, however, that

7. "ΧΡΥΣΕΑ," p. 13.
8. *Die Diomedesgestalt in der "Ilias,"* Symbolae Osloenses supp. 25 (Oslo, 1978), p. 106.
9. "Gold," pp. 33–34.
10. Ibid., p. 34.

Diomedes drives off the horses of Phegeus and Idaeus and gives them to his companions (5. 25–26). Later in the same book we find the passage in which Diomedes confronts Aeneas. Before the actual encounter, Diomedes tells Sthenelus that once he has defeated Aeneas, Sthenelus should make a dash for Aeneas' horses and drive them off to the Greek camp (5. 260–64). In the event, Diomedes seriously wounds Aeneas, but Aphrodite intervenes to rescue her son (5. 302–18). Sthenelus drives off Aeneas' horses as instructed (5. 319–26).

In both these incidents divine intervention prevents Diomedes from killing Trojan heroes. In both cases, however, Homer is careful to note that Diomedes wins the rescued hero's horses. It seems clear that the horses are intended as a form of compensation for Diomedes' being thwarted of the τιμή that would accrue from killing the hero. Aeneas, of course, is a far more significant hero than Idaeus. Accordingly, Diomedes' compensation for not being allowed to kill him should be correspondingly greater. Before Diomedes actually encounters Aeneas, Homer, in a short digression, has him point out to Sthenelus that Aeneas' horses are descended from those Zeus gave to Tros and are consequently "the best horses under the sun" (266–67). This digression seems clearly intended to make the horses sufficiently prestigious that gaining them is appropriate compensation for Diomedes when he is prevented from killing Aeneas.

Later in Book 5 there is a slightly different example. Sarpedon kills Tlepolemus but is himself seriously wounded (628–67). Odysseus spots the wounded hero and is about to go after him; but since it is not fated for him to kill Sarpedon, Athena diverts his attention to a group of Lycians, of whom he kills seven (668–78). Here again we have the same pattern. Divine intervention rescues Sarpedon from Odysseus, and Odysseus receives compensatory τιμή, this time in the form of victory over seven minor heroes.

The exchange of armor between Glaucus and Diomedes is best viewed in the light of these parallels. Diomedes, at the conclusion of his aristeia, confronts a significant Trojan hero, whom he would certainly defeat in combat. He is, however, debarred from fighting Glaucus by the divinely sanctioned bonds of guest-friendship. Clearly, he ought to receive some form of compensatory τιμή. Homer neatly achieves this compensation by linking the need for τιμή with the customary exchange of gifts between guest-friends. Diomedes may not kill his guest-friend. He may, however, come off better in the exchange of gifts. Since Glaucus is a significant hero on the Trojan side and killing him would bring Diomedes much τιμή, Diomedes' "victory" in the exchange should be striking. Hence the very unequal exchange and Homer's explicit comment on the relative value of the two gifts (ἑκατόμβοι' ἐννεαβοίων).

The exchange of gifts between Hector and Ajax in Book 7 is an important parallel. When the heralds stop the fight between these two, pointing out that light is failing, Hector suggests that they exchange gifts so that people might say of them: "they fought out of heart-consuming strife but they were reconciled and parted in friendship" (7. 301–2). The two heroes then exchange arms. Hector gives Ajax "a silver-studded sword with scabbard and well-cut baldric" and receives "a belt shining with purple" in return (303–5). It is unclear whether we are supposed to regard these gifts as approximately equal or to see Ajax as

coming out somewhat ahead. Homer does not comment on their relative value.[11] Why not? Glaucus and Diomedes do not fight; so Homer uses the exchange to make it quite clear who is the better fighter. Ajax and Hector, on the other hand, have already fought when they come to exchange gifts, and it has become obvious that Ajax is the superior fighter. Homer has therefore no need to rely on the exchange of gifts as the criterion for determining the victor. As the heroes return to their respective armies, Homer tactfully but unmistakably indicates again that Ajax was the victor (307–12): "The Trojans rejoiced when they saw Hector coming to them safe and unharmed, having escaped the might and invincible hands of Ajax. They brought him to the city scarcely believing that he was safe. For their part, the well-greaved Achaeans brought Ajax, as he rejoiced in his victory (κεχαρηότα νίκῃ), to Agamemnon."

Homer, then, has Diomedes get the better of the exchange in order to make it clear that he would have been victorious if they had fought and to compensate him for being robbed of his victory by the revelation that he and Glaucus are guest-friends. In handing over gold armor in exchange for bronze Glaucus is thus to be seen neither as a pragmatist nor as a coward. Nor for that matter is he a fool. Though Zeus temporarily robs him of his wits, we are no more to think of him as a fool than we are to think of Ajax as a coward when Zeus arouses fear in him (11. 544). Moreover, there may be a special reason for Zeus' intervention. If Diomedes had ignored the ties of guest-friendship and killed Glaucus, he would certainly have incurred the enmity of Zeus ξένιος. In fact, Diomedes is delighted by the revelation that Glaucus is a ξένος rather than an ἐχθρός. He throws down his spear, speaks friendly words to Glaucus, proposes an exchange of gifts, and leaps off his horse to shake his hand. Diomedes' joy is spontaneous and sincere, as indeed one would expect it to be. For great Homeric heroes appropriate behavior in such circumstances is not a merely formal matter of observing the rules of guest-friendship but rather an instinctive reaction, and the more instinctive the reaction, the more commendable it is. Zeus' intervention, which Andersen considers particularly significant,[12] may be intended to imply that Zeus was gratified by Diomedes' exemplary behavior. When the exchange is viewed in this light, the comic overtones are considerably diminished.

It might be objected that in contrast to the parallel passages adduced above, this episode does not suggest that Diomedes has suffered any loss or is at all frustrated by not fighting Glaucus. Indeed, Diomedes' delight in meeting a guest-friend might well be thought adequate compensation for any potential loss of τιμή resulting from the revelation that prohibits their fighting. But it is important to keep our attention focused on Homer rather than on Diomedes and on ancient, not modern, values. Homer first creates a confrontation between two major heroes, from which—the audience is bound to expect—Diomedes will emerge victorious with his τιμή significantly enhanced. He then frustrates that expectation when he has Glaucus unconsciously reveal that the two heroes are

11. Homer's audience, however, would not need the same guidance on these matters as modern scholars. One suspects that they would have been quick to evaluate the relative worth of the two gifts even without a cue from Homer.

12. *Diomedesgestalt*, p. 106.

linked by inherited bonds of guest-friendship. How should he have Diomedes react to this situation? Clearly, for Diomedes to show any sign of annoyance would be unthinkable, for this would imply disrespect for the ties of guest-friendship. Homer has Diomedes respond in the only way a hero of his caliber can—with unfeigned joy at meeting a ξένος. This in no way diminishes the need to compensate him for being deprived of a significant victory. Rather, Diomedes' admirable behavior increases his merit, particularly in the eyes of Zeus. It is altogether fitting, therefore, that his merit should be recognized in the exchange of gifts and that Zeus should intervene to bring this about.

It remains true, nevertheless, that Glaucus seems unfairly slighted by the incident. I doubt that this would have troubled Homer and his audience as much as it does the modern reader. Homer has no qualms about protecting the heroic standing of the major Greek warriors even at the cost of slighting—often unfairly, to our way of thinking—the ability of the Trojans in general and of Hector in particular. At times he will do this even to the detriment of the plot. For instance, the plot requires that only Achilles should be able to defeat Hector. Otherwise, what is all the fuss about when Achilles withdraws? Yet at different points Homer indicates that Ajax, Diomedes, and Agamemnon are all superior to Hector in battle.[13] On the other hand, in Book 11, when various major Greek heroes are wounded, including Agamemnon, Diomedes, Odysseus, and Machaon, Homer does not allow Hector to inflict any of these wounds. We find Homer's treatment of Hector and Glaucus problematic because we do not share the Greek-centered viewpoint of Homer and his audience. Modern readers can scarcely avoid seeing the Glaucus-Diomedes episode as a unique demonstration of the importance of guest-friendship, charming for the most part but marred by the shabby treatment meted out to Glaucus at the end. For Homer and his audience, it was, first and foremost, another victory for Diomedes.

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13. Hector is presented as inferior to Ajax at 7. 244–312, to Diomedes at 11. 349–60, and, apparently, to Agamemnon at 11. 186–213; see M. Willcock, *A Companion to the "Iliad"* (Chicago, 1976), p. 128.

ASCONIUS 14–15 CLARK AND THE DATE OF Q. MUCIUS SCAEVOLA'S COMMAND IN ASIA

As is well known, Q. Mucius Scaevola (cos. 95) alienated the *publicani* by his strict supervision of their activities in Asia when he was proconsul there at some point in the 90s. This offense was at least partially avenged by the prosecution and conviction of his legate and adviser, P. Rutilius Rufus, at a date generally assumed to be 92. The date of Scaevola's tenure of Asia is an old controversy, for we are nowhere told whether he proceeded to the province during (or immediately after) his consulship or his praetorship: if he went out as consul, the