

THE UNEQUAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN GLAUCUS AND DIOMEDES IN LIGHT OF THE HOMERIC GIFT-ECONOMY

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THE EXCHANGE OF GIFTS is the climax of a long episode, the meeting of two foes on the field of battle, who discover that they were ξείνοι πατρώιοι by virtue of a ξείνος-bond established by their grandfathers. Diomedes proposes an exchange of military gear (τεύχεα) as a witness to onlookers of their ξείνια-relationship. Leaping from their chariots, they grasp hands and pledge their trust;

ἐνθ' αὖτε Γλαύκῳ Κρονίδης φρένας ἐξέλετο Ζεὺς,
δς πρὸς Τυδείδην Διομήδεα τεύχε' ἄμειβε
χρύσεα χαλκείων, ἐκατόμβοι' ἐννεαβοίων. Il. 6.234-236

This ending has always struck critics as odd; many have thought it intentionally humorous.¹ Conventionally, epic heroes are crafty and cunning, no more so than when they are protecting their wealth and their honor. Glaucus especially, as a direct descendant of Sisyphus, would be expected to have his wits about him in any transaction involving these.² Therefore, the idea that the Lycian chief would so miscalculate his giving is inherently incongruous. But, if that is all the point, that Zeus deluded Glaucus into outgiving outrageously when he should have given only equal value, then the poet is charged with putting a clumsy and inappropriate ending to one of the great moments of the *Iliad*. Since antiquity, scholars have puzzled over these three lines in an effort to supply a credible motivation for Glaucus' act. In his recent article, Calder (34) proposes a sociological explanation: Glaucus outgave Diomedes on purpose, and by so doing he displayed his superiority over the other.

Calder's explanation stems from the recognition that the epics describe an exchange system whose purpose was not the maximization of material profit but the establishment and maintenance of personal relations. In such "gift economies," the highest premium is placed on generosity and display; superiority in gift-giving equates to superiority in social prestige. "Power,

¹For a summary of ancient and modern explanations, see W. M. Calder III, "Gold for Bronze: *Iliad* 6.232-36," in *Studies Presented to Sterling Dow* (Durham, N.C. 1984, *GRBS Monograph* 10) 31-35 (hereafter cited as Calder).

²Glaucus bore the name of his paternal great-grandfather, Glaucus, son of Sisyphus.

authority and status are achieved by giving rather than receiving.”³ However, this exchange of gifts is not an example of competitive display on Glaucus’ part.

As members of a gift society, the poet and his listeners knew the complicated rules and social purposes of gift-giving, including, of course, the strategy of competitive giving. There are two prominent examples of this in the *Iliad*, the lavish donation offered by Agamemnon to Achilles (9.121) and the equally costly outlays by Achilles in the funeral and games for Patroclus (23.29, 166, 237). These are linked together. Agamemnon’s δῶρα were meant not merely to compensate for outrage, but also, by their extraordinary abundance, to elevate his own prestige and to put Achilles under severe obligation. The offer, if accepted, would have made Agamemnon the “winner” in τιμή and would have given him power over Achilles.⁴ Achilles’ counterstroke, long delayed, was to out-display his rival with a splendid funeral and feast in honor of Patroclus, followed by an openhanded distribution of treasure as prizes in the games. The unparalleled holocaust of sheep, cattle, dogs, horses, and captured Trojans makes this a true potlatch, in which all the valuables were destroyed or given away.⁵ If the exchange between Glaucus and Diomedes had been a similar example of the “potlatch principle,” the poet would not have presented it as an incident of divinely inspired stupidity.⁶

³C. A. Gregory, *Gifts and Commodities* (New York and London 1982) 55. These ideas, based on the pioneering work of Malinowski, Mauss, and Polanyi, were first systematically applied to Homeric society by M. I. Finley in *The World of Odysseus* (revised edition New York 1978 [original edition 1954]). For an analysis of the Homeric exchange economy, see W. Donlan, “Reciprocities in Homer,” *CW* 75 (1981–82) 137–175.

⁴The appropriate recompense would have been the return of Briseis and “something else” besides. See below, 5–6.

⁵The commonest examples of competitive giving in Homer are marriage gifts (see below) and feast-giving (to win followers and a reputation for liberality). See Donlan (above, n. 3) 163–164. B. Qviller, “The Dynamics of the Homeric Society,” *SO* 56 (1981) 109–155, at 125, calls gift-giving “the economic corollary to martial contests and fighting.” See S. C. Humphreys, *Anthropology and the Greeks* (London 1978) 151. On the archaeological (burial) evidence for “competitive destruction of wealth as a means of ranking households,” see I. Morris, “Gift and Commodity in Archaic Greece,” *Man* 21 (1986) 7–13.

⁶Calder’s explanation is that the story was a Mycenaean inheritance, and that “the Geometric poet no longer understood the custom” (34). This is contradicted by the textual evidence (as well as some archaeological evidence) of competitive giving. It is, indeed, quite likely that Bronze Age chiefs practiced competitive giving among themselves, since it is a nearly universal custom. If so, there is no reason to think that such practices, typically associated with pre-market societies, would have disappeared in the much more basic economy and society of the Dark Age. All indications are that gift-giving as a means of social integration and social control played a more prominent role in the Iron Age than earlier.

Nevertheless, Calder has rightly identified the social role of gift-giving as the key to this "perennial puzzle in Homer." In following his lead, I shall try to show that Glaucus did overgive intentionally, but that the poetic point of the episode's "nearly burlesque ending" (Leaf) is that Diomedes, not he, was the superior in status.

I

Since incidents of gift-giving abound in the epics, we are well informed about the sociology of the gift in Homeric society. Gift-giving encompasses a broad array of gift-situations and relationships: traders' dues, ransom, peace compacts, rewards for services, tribute to chiefs, donations from chiefs, recompense for insult, marriage transactions, and guest friendship. Of these, only the last two formally prescribe an exchange of gifts; the rest are one-way transactions.⁷ Within this diversity, all gift transactions share basic features. Gifts are given either as compensation for specific acts, positive or negative, or in expectation of some future service or favor. The gifts themselves are always things of high value, sometimes animals, but much more frequently treasure goods (καμήλια). There is always a social element present in the transaction, though the degree of sociability varies according to the type of relationship. There is one other common feature. Ceremonies of giving, especially at the elite level, convey important information about rank and prestige.

As it happens, in the majority of gift-giving situations the distinctions of rank among the participants are previously known and recognized. Status and rank are defined by the relationship and are so stated by the transactions themselves. In traders' dues and ransom, for example, the recipient of the gift is the obvious superior, whereas in rewards for services rendered the gift-giver is manifestly the social superior.⁸ This is also the case in gifts to and from chiefs. The upward spiral of goods, personal services, special awards, and perquisites given to a leader by his people is a manifestation

⁷This does not mean that in gift-giving (as opposed to gift-exchanging) there is no expectation of reciprocity; some sort of return, sometime, is always expected. Merely that in some marriage transactions and in ξενίη an equivalent (treasure) return is demanded. Certain forms of compensatory giving, such as "blood price," fines (θωή), and μυχάγρια are highly particularized and have quasi-legal status. Traders' dues and ransom, though technically δῶρον-transactions, have minimal social purpose; like payment of χρέα, they are "doing business." Giving to beggars and other wandering unfortunates is part of obligatory ξείνια. See Donlan (above, n. 3).

⁸Of course, the receiver of a reward gets τιμή; but the greater honor goes to the giver, whose ability to reward demonstrates his social potency, his wealth, and his generosity. The gift sustains and strengthens the relationship, leaving the way open for further services and rewards.

of his superiority over them. Conversely, the obligatory downward flow of largesse from the chief also expresses his superiority over the gift-receivers.⁹

On the other hand, in marriage transactions, compensation for insult, and in guest-host relationships the status differential is often not clearly defined beforehand. In these cases the gift transaction itself serves to make explicit or to establish the relative social standing of the participants.

This is very clear in respect to the marital transactions of the Homeric elite, among whom marriages, both within and outside the *demos*, were political alliances, carrying with them long term obligations of reciprocal service. According to Homer, marriage arrangements among the *ἀγαθοί* were highly flexible, exhibiting several residential and gift-giving schemes. This variety in marriage patterns has been seen as a problem. Snodgrass used the coexistence of presumably opposing categories of giving ("bridewealth" vs. "dowry") to argue that Homeric society is a conflation of different historical stages. On the contrary, optionality in post-nuptial residence and gift arrangements is quite consistent with the fluid power relations within the epics. The giving and exchanging of marriage gifts served to calibrate relative prestige and authority among the loosely ranked top families.¹⁰ The bidding of bridegifts (*ἔδνα*) by suitors is a pure example of establishing primacy by competitive giving. The suitor who promises the most *δῶρα* wins the bride and the social connection he and his family want. By out-giving his rivals, he establishes his superiority over them, and so elevates his worth to the bride's family. The principle is exactly the same when a man recruits a desirable son-in-law into his *oikos*, without the requirement of wooing gifts (*ἀνάεδνον*) and, often, with promises of gifts to the groom. Acceptance of the offer is a clear statement by the groom that he recognizes the authority of the bride's father over him. The new husband is in the place of a son; his loyalty and services belong to his wife's father and brothers; his children belong to his wife's family.¹¹

⁹The continuous flow of mutual exchanges forms a system of reciprocities. This system is the economics of the highly personal leader-people relationship. A reputation for generosity was an essential element of the political control of a βασιλεύς. See Donlan (above, n. 3) 159-163, 169.

¹⁰This is an endless argument. For an exposition of the entire problem, see I. Morris, "The Use and Abuse of Homer," *CA* 5 (1986) 81-129; on marriage and status, see 106-113.

¹¹See Morris (above, n. 10) 107; Donlan (above, n. 3) 145-147. Hence, Agamemnon's offer of his choice of daughters *ἀνάεδνον* was not attractive to Achilles, as he makes clear (9.388-400). It is the wealthy, powerful houses, like Priam's and Nestor's that attract sons-in-laws (*Il.* 6.242; *Od.* 3.386). These are often men who for one reason or another had left their home communities (e.g., *Il.* 6.192, 14.121, *Od.* 7.311). A good example of the service-groom is Othryoneus of Cabeus, who had no *ἔδνα* to marry Cassandra, and promised instead service in the war (*Il.* 13.363). Idomeneus makes an insulting joke about this to his corpse (13.374). There is debate whether the *ἔδνα* at *Od.* 1.277-278

Status ambiguity is a potential problem in insult situations, where the participants would be men of equivalent rank. Such encounters are particularly sensitive because they touch the tenderest nerve of personal honor. In the interests of social harmony the breach must be healed, and the proper honor and dignity of both men must be preserved. The gift transaction is a definitive public statement of their relative status.

The cases of Euryalus and Odysseus in *Odyssey* 8.133, and of Antilochus and Menelaus in *Iliad* 23.566, show the socially correct form. Insult provokes angry indignation, leading to an apology and offer of a δῶρον; the offer is accepted graciously by the victim, who adds a conciliating speech of his own. Although the situation bristles with tension, the parties move towards amity via a series of delicate manoeuvres designed for maximum face-saving on both sides. In the incident at Scheria the gift itself complements the apology in a perfectly fitting way. Euryalus' gift of a fancy sword and sheath symbolically calls back the insult that Odysseus looked like a merchant and not an athlete, and confers on the still anonymous stranger his proper status as a warrior.¹²

Status is a central consideration in the cheating incident of *Iliad* 23. Accused by Menelaus of "shaming my arete," Antilochus readily apologizes to the older and higher-ranking man, and offers him the prize mare and "some other better thing from my house." Though he is the aggrieved party, Menelaus ends up giving his prize to Antilochus, "in order that these men here may know that my spirit is never arrogant and unbending" (570-611). So Menelaus appears magnanimous and generous, as befits his superior status; the gift-receiving Antilochus is even more firmly indebted to the Atreidai.¹³

The insult situation between Agamemnon and Achilles is a negative image of these properly managed situations; the negotiations, which take up large portions of Books 9 and 19, are a caricature of the normal routine. Agamemnon's offer of δῶρα is belated and unaccompanied by a public apology. Odysseus' diplomatic suppression of Agamemnon's claim to superior rank (9.160-161) in his otherwise *verbatim* repetition of the gift offer (262-299) shows how crucial the question of their relative status was in the incident. Achilles' refusal, though inevitable under the circumstances, is

(referring to Penelope and the suitors) means "bridegifts" or "dowry"; see Morris 109. In support of the former interpretation, we might note the fact that the same lines are repeated (2.196-197) by the suitor Eurymachus, who later brought Penelope a gold chain as a wooing gift (18.295).

¹²Od. 8.401. It is significant that this is the only military item among all the Phaeacian gifts of clothing, gold, tripods, and cauldrons (8.392, 403, 430; 13.13).

¹³In Od. 22.54, each of the suitors promises τιμή worth twenty cattle, in bronze and gold, to Odysseus. Here, of course, the apology and gifts could not be accepted. For another potential insult/gift situation, see Od. 2.132; Morris (above, n. 10) 109.

also a breach of the convention. Their public reconciliation (19.56–275) likewise bristles with competitive tension. Agamemnon responds to Achilles' renunciation of his *χόλος* with an apology that is not quite an apology, and restates his offer of the gifts. Achilles offhandedly dismisses the gifts and manoeuvres to prevent a public display. When, at Odysseus' insistence, the gifts are produced for all to see, Achilles' response is short and ungracious; he does not acknowledge the gifts.

In presenting a perverse variation of the insult situation, the poet meant, and the audience understood, that both men were using gift-giving as a weapon in their ongoing *agon* over honor and status. The poetic message is that Achilles emerged the ultimate winner, because he took the gifts of Agamemnon on his own terms (unlike Meleager in Phoenix's story) and then outdazzled his rival with a brilliant display of generosity. Nor should we fail to note Achilles' final stroke. In the last contest of the games, Achilles awards first prize for spear-throwing to Agamemnon without a competition (23.884). It is a gracious compliment, and a fitting climax to their painful progress towards a semblance of amity. Yet the audience will also have noticed that the *ἄεθλον* was thereby transformed into a free *δῶρον*. Agamemnon departs from the narrative under obligation to Achilles.¹⁴

It is clear from the preceding discussion that every occasion of gift-giving in Homeric society was also a public declaration of the relative status of the participants. When political superiors give, their gifts are recognized as instruments of control; the obligations they create are the obligations of service. And when a man of lesser renown gives to one of higher renown, the obligation created is the favor and goodwill of the superior. Competitive giving can occur only when relative status is uncertain or in contention. In these cases, as we have seen, the gift itself is a statement about the status relationship between giver and receiver, and establishes, at least temporarily, a superior-subordinate condition.

II

We come, at length, to *ξενίη*, where the puzzle of Glaucus and Diomedes resides. "Guest friendship," as Finley says (above, note 3, 99), "was a very serious institution." It was also quite different from other personal relationships, both in its formal structure and in the symbolic role of the gifts that accompanied it. Guest friendship extended rights and duties proper to kinship and close comradeship beyond the *demos* to foreigners. The bonds of *φιλότις* were inherited by succeeding generations. The obligations, however, though sacred, operated only intermittently; repayment of the favors became due only on a return visit, which might be years later. The favors

¹⁴One presumes that the cauldron was the first prize, though the spear is mentioned first (884). I think it is meaningful that the *spear* goes to Meriones (893).

themselves were considerable and valuable. The guest-ξείνος received protection, food and lodging, certain "diplomatic" services, and parting gifts of treasure (κειμήλια).¹⁵

The relationship was also a formal exchange partnership. This feature, unique to ξενίη, was highly functional in Dark Age Greece, where treasure items were scarce. For next to raiding, guest friendship was the chief means of circulating highly prized prestige objects beyond the local area. We should also note that the obligation to return gifts of at least equal value was a self-selecting mechanism, insuring that only men of approximately equal wealth became exchange partners. Networks of ξείνοι were thus indispensable to the ambitions of the pre-state βασιλεῖς, as indeed they continued to be to aristocrats in the archaic and classical πόλεις, even though such personal alliances often conflicted with state interests.¹⁶

It is important at this point to distinguish between simple hospitality (ξείνισμα) to a stranger, and the formal bond of guest friendship. Custom, reinforced by divine sanction, demanded that any stranger (ξείνος) who appeared at the door be given protection and sustenance. The giving of obligatory or altruistic hospitality does not automatically establish a continuing ξείνος-relationship. For that to occur, it is necessary that both men agree to a relationship, declare it formally, and symbolically cement it by an exchange of gifts on the spot.¹⁷ One scarcely needs to add that a commitment to a transgenerational political alliance *cum* exchange partnership was not entered into casually, but only after the most careful weighing, by both parties, of the potential advantages and disadvantages. In one sense, ξενίη is perfectly symmetrical. Both parties expect the benefits to balance; otherwise they would not have entered into the contract. Nevertheless, there is a structural imbalance in guest-friendship which is peculiar to it. Within the cycle of visit and return visit, the guest-ξείνος is the clear beneficiary. For, while it is true that ξενίη is ultimately balanced, the intermittent nature of the relationship gives the guest-ξείνος an important material advantage by providing him with a temporary fund of treasure goods. These, displayed and given away, are the necessary coinage of prestige and power among the elite.¹⁸

¹⁵Finley (above, n. 3) 66, 99–103; E. Benveniste, *Indo-European Language and Society*, Eng. tr. by E. Palmer (London and Coral Gables 1973) 83, 293–294; Donlan (above, n. 3) 148–151. For delay of return visit, see *Od.* 1.209; 19.221; 24.115, 309.

¹⁶G. Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge 1987).

¹⁷Herman (above, n. 16) 41–69. There is no such thing as non-reciprocal ξείνισμα, of course. Ideally, every man is a potential guest or host, according to circumstance. That sacred general obligation is surely the origin of formal ξενίη. However, a declared ξείνος-relationship is of a different order entirely.

¹⁸W. Donlan, "Scale, Value, and Function in the Homeric Economy," *AJAH* 6 (1981) 101–117.

Just how important this surplus was to the βασιλεῖς is shown by their preoccupation with amassing delayed gift-debts. The theme is woven into the plot of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus emerges into the real world of Ithaca via the magical Phaeacians, who put all to rights economically for Odysseus by giving him more guest-gifts than all the Trojan plunder he had lost at sea (*Od.* 13.135). This is the fantasy motif of the guest who receives and never has to repay. The same motif occurs in the lie of Odysseus/Eperitus, who tells Laertes how five years before he had given "Odysseus" an extremely generous array of δῶρα ξεινήϊα (*Od.* 24.273). "Stranger," replies Laertes, "you bestowed these gifts in vain, in your countless giving; for if you had found him alive in the land of Ithaca, then he would have sent you off having reciprocated well with gifts and good hospitality; for that is *themis* for the initiator" (24.283-286; cf. 1.316-318). Here we see both the fantasy of unrequited getting and its reverse, the dread of the host-ξείνος of giving with no hope of a return.¹⁹ A more everyday example is the suggestion of Menelaus that he and Telemachus make a tour of the surrounding regions. "Nor will anyone send us away as we are, but will give one thing at least, either a good bronze tripod, or a cauldron, or two mules, or a gold cup" (*Od.* 15.82-85).²⁰

This is not meant to imply that all the benefit is to the receiver. A reputation for being a generous host increases one's τιμή.²¹ The host "owns" the debt. His generous hospitality and abundant gifts impose a heavy obligation on the guest-ξείνος, insuring that when the ξεινοδόκος is in other men's lands he will get as good as he gave. But, as Herman points out, there is no way for ξείνοι to enforce the obligation.²² That is the severe limit of a relationship that purports to turn strangers into friends. The obligations of φιλία mimic those of ἑταῖροι and kin without the social constraints that attend these within relationships. So, while the giver is under great pres-

¹⁹Next to the collective guest-gifts of the Phaeacian βασιλεῖς, the ξεινήϊα of Eperitus are the most generous in the epics, almost as numerous as the ransom gifts for Hector's body (lines 276-277 = *Il.* 24.230-231). This adds to the fantasy effect. Most κερμήλια transactions consist of one to three items, reflecting the reality of treasure (metal) scarcity in the Dark Age. See Donlan (above, n. 18) 102-103.

²⁰Eagerness to collect ξεινήϊα is a character trait of Odysseus. He tells Alcinous that he would stay a year longer in Scheria if it meant getting more gifts (*Od.* 11.355). Though this gets him into trouble (9.224, 10.34), Odysseus has few peers in the art of gift-acquiring (19.282-286; cf. 19.239, 272; 14.285, 321; 15.159; 24.283). A suitor mockingly says that no one is κακοξείνωτερος than Telemachus, because he keeps a beggar-guest (Odysseus) who eats much but gives back nothing in return (20.376). Stanford (at *Od.* 15.54) is moved to remark that "the etiquette of Homeric hospitality was coming very near to being exploited as a 'racket'."

²¹E.g., *Od.* 3.346-355, 4.612-619 (cf. 15.113), 11.338-341, 14.402, 18.223. The house of Odysseus is known for its good hospitality; e.g., *Od.* 1.176; 19.315, 379, etc.

²²Herman (above, n. 16) 30-31. See *Od.* 19.313-316. ξεινοδόκοι might also be perfidious; e.g., *Il.* 6.178, 11.138 (cf. 3.205), *Od.* 21.25.

sure to be generous—perception of stinginess in ξεινία would jeopardize a return—the debt is a deferred benefit, cancelled if the partner dies or chooses to be unjust.²³

This brings us to the question of relative status. Differences or ambiguities in status between ξεινοὶ have nothing to do with rivalry or competition, since foreign ξεινοὶ do not oppose one another for τιμή within the same *demos*. However, the higher the status of a ξείνος in his community, the more valuable he is as a guest friend. Therefore, superior-subordinate in ξεινία is a function of one partner perceiving the relationship as of greater utility, or as the source of greater prestige, to himself than to the other. In his study of ξενίη, Herman found that formal status or official position within one's own community was of relatively little importance in forming a ξείνος-relationship.

What mattered most was the possession of a quality which the other needed, and that is why, in fact, a bond of ritualized friendship did not necessarily involve exact social equals.²⁴

Herman suggests that outgiving is an expression of this inequality of need. The promise of large gifts may signal that the giver "is willing to recognise the power of the recipient over him. The gift thus becomes a mark of submission . . ." ²⁵ There is, in fact, some evidence of submissive/subordinate giving by Homeric ξεινοὶ. When news reached Cyprus that the Achaeans were sailing to Troy, Cinyras sent Agamemnon an elaborate θώραξ as a ξεινήϊον (*Il.* 11.19). The unsolicited gift was plainly intended to flatter Agamemnon and win his favor (cf. χαριζόμενος βασιλῆϊ, 23), with the purpose, we may suspect, of excusing Cinyras from the expedition. Maro, the priest of Apollo in Ismarus, gave Odysseus ἀγλαὰ δῶρα, gold, silver, and wine (*Od.* 9.196 ff.). The form of giving is ξεινήϊα, but the purpose was clearly to buy protection (199) for Maro and his family during Odysseus' raid against the Cicones (9.39).

Let us summarize the "rules" of giving in Homeric ξενίη. Giving is never meant to overawe or to display superiority. ξενίη partakes of the φιλία of kinship and comradeship; hence, giving can only be a mark of respect and affection. Within the continuing relationship, the status of ξείνος-receiver

²³ Good hospitality and fitting guest-gifts, then, are strong reminders of the other partner's moral responsibility. "For a ξείνος remembers all his days a ξεινοδόκος who shows φιλότης" (*Od.* 15.54-55). Cf. *Od.* 1.309-318; 4.591-592, 613-614; 8.430-432; 15.78, 113.

²⁴ Herman (above, n. 16) 37. A good example is Agamemnon's ξενίη with the Ithacan Melaneus, whose house Agamemnon used as a base to recruit the paramount *basileus* Odysseus (*Od.* 24.115). See Finley (above, n. 3) 103.

²⁵ Herman (above, n. 16) 89. The nomenclature, of course, is strictly equal. Regardless of their relative status, partners are simply ξεινοὶ or φίλοι ξεινοὶ.

is the more advantageous status. These rules are, of course, known and understood by everyone. We would expect, therefore, a more or less uniform reaction to stories about asymmetrical giving between ξείνοι. My opinion, based on what has been said, is that the listeners' imaginations would supply a narrow spectrum of appropriate motives for being more generous. The outgiver wants or needs the *φιλία* of the other; the relationship is of greater prestige to him; he holds the other in higher esteem or respect; the other is acknowledged the better man, or the more valuable friend.

III

Let us test these deductions. There are four incidents of direct gift-exchange in Homer. Three accompany the initiation or reinitiation of a ξείνος-relationship, the fourth is the temporary pact of *φιλότης* made by Hector and Ajax, ending their duel.

In only one of these situations is there an exchange of equal value, the initiation of ξείνια between Odysseus and Iphitus (*Od.* 21.11). Odysseus and Iphitus of Oechalia met by chance in Messenia. Iphitus gave Odysseus the bow of his famous archer father Eurytus (thus honoring Odysseus as the bowman); Odysseus reciprocated with a sword and spear. Odysseus was a stripling (*παιδνός*, 21), just beginning his public career (16–21). Their chance meeting was in a neutral place, the house of a mutual ξείνος, Ortilochus. Homer calls the ritual exchange the "beginning of a loving guest-friendship" (*ἀρχὴν ξεινοσύνης προσκηδέος*, 35). The *hapax* *προσκηδής* emphasizes the kinlike quality of the bond. The conditions of their meeting show that the relationship was intended to be one of disinterested equality. The exchange of armor of equivalent material and significant value is the poetic expression of their equality of status.

In the other three examples of direct exchange, all from the *Iliad*, Hector, Bellerophon, and Glaucus give more than Ajax, Oeneus, and Diomedes. The situation of Ajax and Hector (7.283) is a very clear demonstration of how status differences are expressed by means of unequal exchange. As the loser in the duel, Hector is situationally the subordinate. He initiates (cf. 286) the compact of *φιλότης*, and gives a silver-studded sword, with sheath and *τελαμών*; Ajax counters with a *ζωστήρα* φοίνικι φαεινόν (305).

The Homeric *ζωστήρ* is a rather shadowy piece of military equipment. It appears to have been a broad belt worn around the waist as protection for belly and groin, made either of bronze, of bronze plates sewn over leather, or simply of leather. Here there seems no doubt that a leather belt is meant.²⁶ Ajax's answering gift is unmistakably of lesser worth than

²⁶See, in general, H. Brandenburg, *Archaeologia Homerica*, Band 1, Kap. E, Teil 1 (Göttingen 1977) 119–143. H. Lorimer, *Homer and the Monuments* (London 1950) 246–247, thinks leather is meant; so Leaf (at 6.219) and Ameis-Hentze (at 7.305). This

Hector's. The audience will have understood this unequal exchange as a sign of his superiority and of Hector's submissive status. The symbolic content is heightened by the fact that the unglamorous ζωστήρ is a purely defensive item, while the sword is the instrument of attack at close range.²⁷

The initiation of ξεινία between Oeneus and Bellerophon is related by Diomedes (6.215). Oeneus, he says, had once hosted (ξείνισ') Bellerophon for twenty days;

οἱ δὲ καὶ ἀλλήλοισι πόρον ξεινήϊα καλά·
Οἶνεὺς μὲν ζωστήρα δίδου φοῖνικι φαεινόν,
Βελλεροφόντης δὲ χρύσειον δέπας ἀμφικύπελλον. 6.218–220

The modern presumption has been that the exchange was equal; but the giving of gold for leather in the same story as the giving of gold for bronze ought to give us pause. It is significant that the same "formula" (it occurs only these two times) is used for Oeneus' gift and for Ajax's lesser gift (7.305). Only in these two places is a ζωστήρ a gift item. Otherwise, military gear as gift objects consists of swords, breastplates, spears, or bows.²⁸

The δέπας (= ἄλεισον) is a common object, small and not of very great value. A δέπας ἀμφικύπελλον is the loser's prize in the boxing match, where first prize is a mule (*Il.* 23.654). Still, a gold cup is an eminently fitting guest-gift. A "very fine" ἄλεισον χρύσειον is a special personal gift from Alcinous to Odysseus (*Od.* 8.430). Menelaus offers Telemachus three horses and a δίφρος, plus a καλὸν ἄλεισον.²⁹ We recall that a χρύσειον ἄλεισον is included among the potential guest-gifts one might collect on a "tour" (*Od.* 15.85). One of the items of ransom for Hector's corpse was a δέπας περικαλλές, a gift from the Thracians, called a "great possession" (μέγα κτήρας).³⁰

On balance, the evidence warrants the conclusion that Bellerophon's gift of a gold cup outmatched Oeneus' leather belt. Ancient critics thought so.³¹ Just as important as the objective value of the gift, however, is its symbolic meaning. The δέπας is the instrument of drinking and libation, hence of conviviality, hospitality, and of cementing trust and loyalty. "I will give you," Menelaus promises Telemachus, "a καλὸν ἄλεισον, that you may make libations to the immortal gods remindful of me all your days"

seems certain from *Od.* 23.201, ἱμάντα βοῶς φοῖνικι φαεινόν (of Odysseus' bed).

²⁷In all other mentions of ζωστήρ (except 6.220), the belt is pierced by a weapon, resulting in a serious wound (*Il.* 4.132) or death (*Il.* 5.539, 17.519, 20.414).

²⁸Once, a boar's tusk helmet is given as a ξεινήϊον, a valuable heirloom with a long pedigree (*Il.* 10.266).

²⁹*Od.* 4.591 (= δέπας ἀμφικύπελλον, 15.102, 120). The cup is midway in value between Menelaus' main gift, a splendid silver and gold *krater*, and a woman's *peplos*.

³⁰*Il.* 24.234; this is the καλὸν ἄλεισον which Priam offers to Hermes as a gift for guiding him safely to Achilles (429).

³¹Porphyrion 1.96.11–20 (Schrader); Eustathius 638.44–45 (van der Valk).

(*Od.* 4.591–592).³² The message conveyed by Bellerophon's counter-gift is that he warmly welcomed the pact of φιλότης and was eager to see it flourish. Symbolically the imperishable cup promised that when Oeneus should visit Bellerophon in Lycia his reception would be even more friendly, his gifts more splendid.

If we have correctly decoded the message of the gift in this scene, Bellerophon, by outgiving Oeneus, admits a subordinate status in the relationship. Why Bellerophon should have been so eager for a ξείνος-relationship with Oeneus—or, more exactly, why the poem has Diomedes signify this to Glaucus—constitutes a parallel problem to the Diomedes-Glaucus exchange.

We turn, finally, to the exchange of ξεινήϊα between Diomedes and Glaucus. The total circumstance is highly unusual; for it is not a normal guest-host situation, but is also a meeting of enemies on the field of battle. Inevitably, therefore, the encounter—whether an invention of our poet or a story he inherited—contains overt elements of a battlefield truce. In either situation, the poetic message conveyed by the unequal exchange is clear: Glaucus affirms, before the two armies, that he is the subordinate.

This is quite apparent when we consider the episode in its broader aspect, the meeting between enemies. Diomedes is the unmistakable superior; he confronts Glaucus at the height of his martial glory. The episode is the final exploit of his extraordinary ἀριστεία. He begins, as Craig notes, with an invitation to Glaucus to fight and be killed.³³ Even after he recognizes their ξείνος-bond, Diomedes continues to dominate. His words, though "gentle" (214) are a clear vaunt of superiority (227–229):

πολλοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἐμοὶ Τρῶες κλειτοὶ τ' ἐπικούροι
κτείνειν ὃν κε θεός γε πόρῃ καὶ ποσσὶ κιχέω
πολλοὶ δ' αὖ σοὶ Ἀχαιοὶ ἐναιρέμεν ὃν κε δύνῃαι.³⁴

The entire episode, insofar as it is a temporary truce, has obvious parallels to the truce between Ajax and Hector in Book 7. The larger gift, therefore, is quite easily interpreted as a gift of submission. There can be no doubt that the listeners were supposed to have the idea that during the entire episode Glaucus "was conscious of his inferiority in the presence of the overbearing Diomedes."³⁵

³²See *Od.* 8.430, where again the purpose of the special gift-cup is to remind the receiver of the giver. Cf. *Od.* 3.40–64, 15.147–159, *Il.* 16.225.

³³J. D. Craig, "ΧΡΥΣΕΑ ΧΑΛΚΕΙΩΝ," *CR NS* 17 (1967) 243–245, at 243.

³⁴Eustathius says that in line 228 Diomedes ἐσέμνυνεν ἑαυτὸν . . . τὸν μέντοι Γλαῦκον οὐ πάνυ σεμνύνει τὸ "ὃν ἂν δύνῃαι" (638.37–38). The scholia on lines 227–229, however, say that Diomedes is not overbearing (Erbse 2.171.76–81). Cf. at 214 (169.33–34).

³⁵Craig (above, n. 33) 244. The idea of a cowed Glaucus is at least as old as Horace *Serm.* 1.7.17. It should be noted that the duel between Ajax and Hector is the next major martial episode, separated by the domestic scene of Hector and Andromache. All three episodes portend the eventual Achaean victory.

Yet, at line 215 the poet abruptly changes the psychosocial context. Glaucus goes from nameless ἐχθρός to ancestral φίλος; their gifts are the expression of a ξείνος-bond, forgotten and now happily reestablished. But this is the context in which Glaucus lost his wits and made a shameful exchange. It would be difficult to deny that the bard's intent was to show Diomedes the superior in the ξείνος-situation as well. The favored explanation of the early commentators, opposed to the notion of Glaucus as victim, was that the Lycian, inspired by his father's injunction, μηδὲ γένος πατέρων αἰσχυνέμεν (209), gave gold for bronze so that he would not appear to be less generous than his grandfather. This charitable explanation has the merit of bringing out the fact that Bellerophon's gift of gold was on Glaucus' mind when he exchanged gifts with Diomedes. The obvious corollary to this idea, however, is that Diomedes "set up" Glaucus. Most seriously, it does not explain why Homer would show Glaucus displaying noble generosity and in the same breath "find fault" with him for it.³⁶

Here is my explanation of lines 234-236. It is apparent from the beginning of their encounter that Diomedes was playing cat and mouse with Glaucus. His opening speech is ironic. Who are you? If you are a god, I will not fight you, but if you are a mortal, I will kill you (6.123-143). This from a man who had been given the ability to recognize gods (5.127) and who had just fought and wounded Aphrodite (5.336) and Ares (5.855) and defied the mighty Apollo (5.434). In his second speech (6.215-231) Diomedes orchestrates the rituals of ξενίη. He recognizes the ξείνος-relationship and chooses to reinitiate it. He assumes the controlling role of the ξεινοδόκος, thus taking the part of his grandfather Oeneus and putting Glaucus in the role of Bellerophon. Significantly, Diomedes' account of the original ξενίη focuses almost exclusively on the gift and the more valuable counter-gift. The listeners had abundant signals of Diomedes' total control of the situation and of his dominance over Glaucus. Attuned to the subtle etiquette of the gift and its poetic function, they were prepared to see Glaucus assume the position of the subordinate ξείνος, attempting by means of a more generous initiatory gift to bind them closer in φιλία.

It seems, then, that the point of lines 234-236 is not that Glaucus out-gave, for that was conventionally expected, but that he was so bewildered he gave at the humiliating ratio of 11 to 1. That is the real bite of the poet's joke, and is to be explained by Diomedes' cunning manipulation of his psychological advantage. Glaucus, prepared for a duel to the death, is

³⁶See Σ 234 (171.92-95, 1-2); Porph. 1.96.11-17, 96.33-97.6; Eust. 638.44-53. Diomedes is explicitly excused from the charge of craftiness: Σ 230 (171.88-89); Eust. 638.62-64. Line 234 is tortuously explained as ἀντὶ τοῦ ὑπερηύξησε τῇ φιλοτιμίᾳ, ὥς τὸ "γέρας ἔξελον" (Σ 6.234; Porph. 1.96.33; 1.97.16; Eust. 638.52). Alexander Pope accepted this as having "the nobler Air," even though it "dishonours" Diomedes for proposing the exchange. See Calder 31. Cf. C. M. Bowra, *Homer* (New York 1972) 68, "... but the laugh is to the credit of Glaucus, who is carried away by generosity."

taken unawares by the sudden and unexpected shift from enmity to *φιλία*. Diomedes' offer of an exchange on the spot forces him to make a crucial immediate calculation. Unprepared, affected by Diomedes' aura of invincibility, conditioned by Diomedes' statement that Bellerophon had given gold to Oeneus, anxious to please his new *ξείνος*, Glaucus reacts in confusion to Diomedes' gift of bronze (*φρένας ἐξέλετο Ζεύς*) and makes a face-losing exchange. I am suggesting, then, that the entire *ξείνος*-scene was tailored to create a poetic expectation that Glaucus would display submissive giving. The audience was fully cognizant that an intimidated Glaucus was being gulled by a superconfident Diomedes; and in the climactic exchange of *ξενήϊα* was expecting some such surprise "punch line" as they heard.³⁷

Two questions remain. First, why would the poet want to show the illustrious Glaucus as a submissive giver? In the *Iliad* there are numerous instances of supplication and ransom. All such examples of overt submissive behavior on the field of battle are by Trojans (or allies) to Achaeans.³⁸ The gifts that are offered are patently gifts of submission, statements by the givers that the receivers are superior in *arete* and *τιμή*. Such incidents are part of the general Iliadic plan of Hellenic superiority. We may now add to the list the poetically more subtle examples of battlefield submission by Hector to Ajax and Glaucus to Diomedes.

These are more subtle because they take place within the context of *φιλία*. Nevertheless, as we have repeatedly emphasized, the audience was given plenty of stylistic clues that *φιλία* was only a mask. The inherent contradiction (which in the case of Diomedes and Glaucus is almost surrealistic) of battlefield foes exchanging gifts of friendship was itself a sufficient signal that the episodes were symbolic occasions. That, plus the clear indications that the two Achaeans were more potent in valor, and, especially, the gifts themselves, will have told contemporary hearers that Hector and Glaucus were performing public acts of submission.

This brings us to the final question of poetic motivation. We have already remarked at length on the elaborate staging of the episode. Let us look at the format one more time. The encounter starts off, conventionally, as the preliminaries to battle, with vaunt and return vaunt. Typically, there would follow the duel to the death and the despoliation of arms by the victor. Naturally, Diomedes would be the odds-on favorite. As it turns out,

³⁷ According to M. Maftai, *Antike Diskussionen über die Episode von Glaukos und Diomedes im VI. Buch der Ilias* (Meisenheim am Glan 1976), behind the face-saving version preserved to us is another level of criticism which said that Diomedes was lying from the outset, and that his call to renew the *ξενίη* "war nur ein übler Trick, mit dem Diomedes den Glaukos aus schmutziger Gewinnsucht übertölpelte" (52; see 2, 13, 14-18). See above, nn. 34 and 36.

³⁸ See V. Pedrick, "Supplication in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*," *TAPA* 112 (1982) 125-140, at 127; J. Gould, "*Hiketieia*," *JHS* 93 (1973) 74-103, at 80, n. 38.

Diomedes is the victor and he symbolically despoils Glaucus. Homer intricately transposed Diomedes' expected duel with a major opponent (which would have been a conventionally fitting climax to his ἀριστεία) into a duel of another sort, a contest of wit and will. The listeners will have readily caught on to this strange new twist, and will have become instantly aware that the agon they were witnessing had been shifted to the level of μῆτις, "wily intelligence." Detienne and Vernant have shown that for Homeric men μῆτις is more than a quality of mind; it is

itself a power of cunning and deceit. It operates through disguise. In order to dupe its victim it assumes a form which masks, instead of revealing, its true being. In *metis* appearance and reality no longer correspond to one another but stand in contrast, producing an effect of illusion, *apate*, which beguiles the adversary into error and leaves him as bemused by his defeat as by the spells of a magician.³⁹

Diomedes in this scene reveals himself as a master of μῆτις.

The poet's "joke" itself stands as a complex and artfully elaborated (ποικίλος) example of the lesson it illustrates: that the Achaeans were superior to the Trojans and their allies in μῆτις as well as in βίη. Or, rather, we should say with Detienne and Vernant that cunning intelligence is the essential part of Hellenic κράτος—"in a sense, the absolute weapon" (13).

The supreme epic example of Achaean μῆτις (and of Trojan ἀπορία in its presence) is the Wooden Horse, a perfect combining of Hellenic cunning and might. The μῆτις behind the δόλος (*Od.* 8.494) of the wooden horse and the μῆτις of Diomedes' κέρδος display equally "the most prized cunning of all: the 'duplicity' of the trap which always presents itself as what it is not and which conceals its true lethal nature beneath a reassuring exterior."⁴⁰

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³⁹M. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*, Eng. tr. by J. Lloyd (Hassocks, Sussex 1978) 21. They take as their Homeric example of μῆτις another complex ruse, the trickery of Antilochus in *Iliad* 23 (11–26). The youthful Diomedes is an ideal balance of might and cunning intelligence (cf. *Il.* 9.53–54). Four times he gives the leaders precisely the right advice (7.399, 9.31, 9.696, 14.109). He initiates the spy-raid on the Trojan camp (*Il.* 10.220).

⁴⁰Detienne and Vernant (above, n. 39) 27. I should like to express my appreciation to the Director and staff of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, at University of California, Irvine for access to the facilities and files of the TLG data bank.