

## LIKE FATHER LIKE SON TELEMACHUS' ΚΕΡΔΕΑ

In his discussion of Homeric symposia Athenaeus remarks that "Homer ... like the good artist that he is, portrays Telemachus as in all things resembling his father"<sup>1</sup>). When reading the *Odyssey* we do indeed have a distinct feeling that the father and son share similarities, not only in form and shape, as Mentor, Helen, and Menelaus testify, but in character as well<sup>2</sup>). But how does Homer enable the audience to compare the two figures? They differ in age and place, situation and circumstances. One is a boy just coming of age, the other a middle-aged man. While the youth enjoys security in the privacy of his home with his mother to protect him, the traveling hero is usually in danger, at the mercy of strange people or gods who wish to prevent his homecoming. We meet Telemachus first; his father does not appear in person until the fifth book of the epic. How, then, does the poet manage to create similitude without bringing the two figures together until Book Sixteen? Two techniques make it possible to portray the son in his father's image, yet different.

### *Mirror image episodes*

First, mirror image episodes show similar backgrounds of the two acting characters, and make the audience associate them when the matching episode is sung<sup>3</sup>). By depicting their actions and

---

1) Athen. Deipn. 5.182: "Ὅμηρος ὡς περ ἀγαθὸς ζωγράφος πάντα ὁμοίον τῷ πατρὶ τὸν Τηλέμαχον παρίστησι.

2) As is evident from this paper, I consider the subject of characterization in the Homeric epics a valid literary pursuit, viewing the epics as literary text in spite of their oral composition. For a variety of views, and the validity of this approach, see for example, J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1983) 50–80; see also O. Taplin, *Agamemnon's Role in the Iliad*, in: *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*, ed. C. B. R. Pelling (Oxford 1990) 60–82.

3) These scenes can be seen as doublets or versions of a basic type-scene which serve as tools in oral composition, or parallel scenes used to enhance the difference presented in each episode, cf. W. Arend, *Die typischen Szenen bei Homer* (Berlin 1933) 21–24 and passim; B. Fenik, *Studies in the Odyssey* (Wiesbaden 1974) 102–104; W. G. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic* (Baltimore 1984) esp. 33–38, but it seems erroneous to strip these

reactions as both similar and different, the poet accounts for the external similarity of the two characters, and for their differences, which may be the result of their nature of maturity. A good example of this technique is provided by Athenaeus, who after stating that Homer portrayed Telemachus in his father's image, says: "He has, at any rate, represented them both as being recognized by their tears, the one in the court of Alcinous, the other at the court of Menelaos"<sup>4</sup>). Athenaeus seems to be confusing plot events with characterization here; but still, the episodes are similar, and a further look at the actions and reactions of the characters can help show how Homer draws attention to their similarity.

The two episodes contain several similar conditions and circumstances that should be immediately apparent to the listener. Thus, when Telemachus and Peisistratos arrive at the gates of Menelaos' palace, Eteoneus asks Menelaos whether he should allow them to enter. Menelaos rebukes Eteoneus for not letting them through the gates and not offering them a proper *ξεινή*. A scolding scene also occurs in the Phaeacian episode, where the old counselor Echeneos rebukes Alcinous for not showing the newly arrived *ξεῖνος*, Odysseus, the proper welcome and letting him sit among the ashes. An additional echo is found in the portrayal of the palace and the effect of its splendor on the beholder. Peisistratos and Telemachus wonder at the gleam of sun or moon as they walk through the palace (4.45). Telemachus wonders at the flashing of bronze throughout the echoing halls and the flashing of gold (4.71–75), electrum, silver, and ivory. Similarly, Odysseus, when approaching Alcinous' palace, is appalled by the wealth and stops before entering because "there was a gleam as of sun or moon over the high-roofed house of great hearted Alcinous" (7.84 f., cf. 4.43–46). Bronze, gold, and silver cover the walls, doors, and door post. Although the outlines of each episode are similar, with an

---

'tools' of poetic intent or lack of planning on the part of the bard. Such an approach declines to award to the composer poetic creativity and judicious selection and attributes the poetic achievements of both epics to some self-guiding process of composition. The oral bard could not revise his poem as his writing counterpart can, but the years he served as an apprentice with his master gave him ample time to learn techniques of revising and composing in his memory. This kind of revision is different from that available through writing, but it does not mean that what he finally put in his variable recitals lacks intent and creativity. The results in the field of characterization are so striking that one comes to doubt whether any schematic process of composition can produce such intricate features.

4) *Ibidem*: πεποίηκεν γοῦν ἀμφοτέρους τὸν μὲν τῷ Ἄλκινῳ, τὸν δὲ τῷ Μενελάῳ διὰ δακρῶν γνωριζομένους.

initial mishandling of the ξείνος and ostentatious wealth, the guests themselves are very different. Whereas the youth spontaneously utters his amazement about the wealth and thinks he is seeing the palace of Zeus, Odysseus marvels “in his heart”, keeping his thoughts to himself (7.134; 83).

A similar technique is used in the depiction of the crying scenes in the courts of Menelaos and Alcinous. Menelaos has not yet asked the identity of the two young men. Although he notes that one of the youths resembles the still missing comrade Odysseus, he raises the subject of Agamemnon's murder carefully and expresses his deep sorrow about it, just in case he is facing Orestes and Pylades<sup>5</sup>). Receiving no response confirming his guest's identity, he proceeds to delineate his adventures, aiming for another hero. This other person is of course Odysseus, who is the only one who has not returned. Indeed, when he mentions Odysseus, the youth in front of him bursts into tears, and recognition and acknowledgment follow.

In Book Eight, on Odysseus' second day at the Phaeacian court and his first banquet, Demodocus sings about the quarrel that occurred between Odysseus and Achilles, to Agamemnon's great rejoicing. Listening to the song, Odysseus starts crying and groaning. His sorrow is obvious, and yet, unlike the sequence of events in the Spartan court, none of the Phaeacians notices it, or if they do, they do not seem curious about the cause of their guest's apparent grief. We are told that Alcinous “alone marked him and noticed, for he sat by him, and heard him groan heavily” (94 f.). Yet not only groaning is involved, for the guest had covered his head with his big cloak (83–85). Remarkably, Alcinous declines to ask the reason for his guest's sorrow, but suggests that the banqueters move on to competitive games. Once the games are over, Demodocus chooses a more joyful theme for his next song, telling the adventures of Ares and Aphrodite. Odysseus asks him instead to sing about the wooden horse that Odysseus had led to the citadel of Troy (492–95). Odysseus “melts in tears” during this long song. Still none of the Phaeacians except Alcinous notices Odysseus' revived grief<sup>6</sup>). At the end of the song Alcinous finally

5) Cf. F. Ahl, *Homer, Vergil, and Complex Narrative Structures in Latin Epic: An Essay*, ICS 24 (1989) 8–11.

6) N. Austin, *Archery at the Dark of the Moon* (Berkeley 1975) 184–185, translates ἐνόησεν “recognized” (8.533), saying that Alcinous recognized Odysseus but did not divulge his name. If this is true, we should grant the same meaning to Alcinous' first notice of Odysseus, in 8.94, where the same formula is used, and

asks Odysseus why he is crying, and the question leads to Odysseus' self-disclosure.

In the two crying episodes, information provided by the host elicits tears on the part of the guest, which in turn leads to a recognition scene. And yet Odysseus' first crying effects no recognition, which the audience must have expected after the events in the Telemacheian scene. A series of less pronounced differences then follows serving the text in its process of characterization. Let us examine the differences and try to account for their purpose.

The youth's reaction is immediate and uncontrollable. The tears fall to the ground straight from his eyelids. He then holds his purple cloak *before* his eyes, apparently to stop the embarrassing flow:

Ὦς φάτο, τῷ δ' ἄρα πατὴρ ὕψ' ἴμερον ὄρσε γόοιο,  
δάκρυ δ' ἀπὸ βλεφάρων χαμάδις βάλε πατὴρ ἀκούσας,  
χλαῖναν πορφυρέην ἄντ' ὀφθαλμοῖν ἀνασχῶν  
ἀμφοτέρωσιν χερσὶ. (4.113–16)

His father's crying is couched in a different way. During the first song we are told:

αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς  
πορφύρεον μέγα φᾶρος ἔλῶν χερσὶ στιβαρῆσι  
κάκ κεφαλῆς εἴρουσε, κάλυψε δὲ καλὰ πρόσωπα· 85  
αἶδετο γὰρ Φαίηκας ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυα λείβων.  
ἦ τοι ὅτε λήξειεν αἰείδων θεῖος ἀοιδός,  
δάκρυ' ὄμορξάμενος κεφαλῆς ἄπο φᾶρος ἔλεσκε  
καὶ δέπας ἀμφικύπελλον ἔλῶν σπείσασκε θεοῖσιν·  
αὐτὰρ ὅτ' ἄψ ἄρχοιτο καὶ ὀτρύνειαν αἰεΐδειν 90  
Φαίηκων οἱ ἄριστοι, ἐπεὶ τέροντ' ἐπέεσσιν,  
ἄψ Ὀδυσσεὺς κατὰ κρᾶτα καλυψάμενος γοάσκειν. (8.83–92)

Odysseus pulls his *big cloak* over his head, covering his face. The muse's claim that he did this so that the Phaeacians would not see his tears spurred a theory proposed already by Eustathius, who is

assume that Alcinoos knows Odysseus' identity from the time of the first song, even though no explicit recognition scene took place. Yet, Austin, 195–196, does not seem to think that Odysseus was recognized by his host prior to his explicit self-identification. Cf. also Kurt von Fritz, *Nóos* and *Noeîn* in the Homeric Poems, CP 38 (1943) esp. 84–85. As noted by von Fritz "...the concrete object is only the incident through which a character suddenly realizes the full meaning of a situation. This situation is the real object of the mental act designated by the verb νοεῖν". Alcinoos notes Odysseus' grief, but there is no indication in the text that he realizes Odysseus' identity.

ardently followed by modern scholars, that it was not good manners for a guest to express sorrow at his host's banquet<sup>7</sup>). Such a conclusion seems valid, and yet, since the question is one of propriety, one might ask whether it was proper for a guest to sit at a banquet groaning heavily with a cloak covering his head. Probably not. By noting explicitly the purpose of Odysseus' covering his head, Homer brings to mind the rules of etiquette and propriety. Yet by bringing up the subject of etiquette, he also tells us that Odysseus is trespassing its bounds. One's tears might be much less noticeable than one's covered head and groans, especially if he happens to be the guest in whose honor the banquet is held.

The most remarkable feature of the first crying scene is Odysseus' restraint. The poet first mentions Odysseus' pulling on the cloak and then his tears, unlike the outburst of the gushing tears in Telemachus' episode, where the tears first hit the ground and only then did the youth manage to pull *up* his cloak. Furthermore, despite his apparent deep sorrow, Odysseus calms down during the breaks in the song and resumes his crying when Demodocus resumes the song. This remarkable conduct not only marks our hero as having emotional control, but for the inner audience it clearly connects the song and the tears.

The second crying episode is even more instructive:

Ταῦτ' ἄρ' αἰοιδὸς ἄειδε περικλυτός· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεὺς  
 τήκετο, δάκρυ δ' ἔδευεν ὑπὸ βλεφάροισι παρειάς.  
 ὡς δὲ γυνὴ κλαίῃσι φίλον πόσιν ἀμφιπεσοῦσα,  
 ὅς τε ἔῃς πρόσθεν πόλιος λαῶν τε πέσησιν,  
 ἄσπεϊ καὶ τεκέεσσιν ἀμύνων νηλεὲς ἦμαρ· 525  
 ἦ μὲν τὸν θνήσκοντα καὶ ἀσπαίροντα ἰδοῦσα  
 ἀμφ' αὐτῷ χυμένη λίγα κωκύει· οἱ δὲ τ' ὄπισθε  
 κόπτοντες δούρεσσι μετάφρενον ἠδὲ καὶ ὤμους  
 εἴρερον εἰσανάγουσι, πόνον τ' ἐχέμεν καὶ διζῦν·  
 τῆς δ' ἔλεινοτάτῃ ἀχρεῖ φθινύθουσι παρειαί·  
 ὡς Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔλεινὸν ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δάκρυον εἶβεν. (8.521–531)

The portrayal is powerful because of the pitiful picture of the woman and the unusual comparison of the conqueror to his victim. But there is more to it. N. Austin has already pointed out that the Phaeacian episode surpasses others in its art of insinuation<sup>8</sup>).

7) E.g., J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, vol. 1 (Oxford 1988) ad 8.86.

8) Austin 191–200.

By making the equation between the crying woman and Odysseus, Homer tells us more about the cause of the tears, which is not accounted for directly in either the first or second episodes of Odysseus' crying. This lack of explanation causes modern readers and scholars to find reasons of their own, which make sense considering the warlike nature and travel experience of our hero. Thus, modern scholarship tries to account for Odysseus' tears by suggesting that he experienced diverse emotions. The tears are said to be caused by nostalgia, a contrast between his former achievements and his present ignoble state, sorrow for his lost comrades, simple grief, or grief that paves the way for him to cross from the world of fantasy to reality, or the memory of past toils<sup>9</sup>). And yet, Odysseus is hardly a person who would break down for any of these reasons. His capability for emotional restraint at all times is a major characteristic, which enables him to use his wiles and resourcefulness to their maximum. This is a man who does not shed a tear while watching his wife cry over the memory of her absent husband (19.209–12). This is a man who endures the misery of his old and weak father, who mourns for his lost son, and instead of hugging and kissing him, which he feels like doing, addresses him with “insulting words”, calling him a slave, and lies to him (24.240–79). This is not a man who will cry at the memory of his past *successes*. Both songs, whether of his quarrel with Achilles or leading the wooden horse into Troy, have a complimentary note to them. Agamemnon rejoiced at the first one, we are told explicitly. The stratagem of the horse, thought up by our hero himself, was successful in capturing the city. If we disregard the possibility of Odysseus' succumbing to nostalgia proper, we should also note that there was nothing in the song that could sadden our hero's heart. Furthermore, if Odysseus was indeed concerned about not exhibiting grief in the company of banqueters, his request for a song about the wooden horse is puzzling. Wouldn't he expect that, hearing about his own deeds again would elicit from him a reaction similar to the one caused by the story of his quarrel with Achilles? One can only conclude that he cried because he wanted to<sup>10</sup>). The famous but puzzling simile that compares him to a woman who was crying because of his schemes for her city, tells us in fact that

9) E.g., Stanford ad loc.; Ch. P. Segal, *The Phaeacians and the Symbolism of Odysseus' Return*, *Arion* 1,4 (1962) 27–29; Fenik 43–44; Austin 197; Thalmann 165.

10) For a discussion of the validity of assuming hidden motives on the part of the character, especially in the Phaeacian episode, see Griffin 62–64.

he was crying because of his own scheme, one that concerns him alone. There is no question that the connection the poet makes between the “πτολίπορθος himself” and his victim is meant to be significant<sup>11</sup>). His crying is carefully planned and orchestrated, as was his scheme of the wooden horse. The only possible purpose for his crying under these particular circumstances is to draw attention to himself, and by doing so, precipitate his self-disclosure as the renowned hero of the song. We learn this from the careful scheme the poet uses in construing the two mirrorlike episodes of crying.

On the basis of the Telemacheian crying scene the audience expects an immediate self-disclosure and recognition, but the poet avoids this by giving further details about his main character and thus, again, marking the difference between the father and son. When unfolding Odysseus' capability for emotional restraint, scheming, and affectation, the poet tells his audience that Telemachus lacks all these qualities. Since the audience reads Odysseus' crying in terms of Telemachus' crying, the comparison only emphasizes Telemachus' lack of emotional control and his sincerity and straightforwardness, all of which were already evident in the Ithacan counsel when Telemachus at the end of his words dashes the staff down upon the ground and bursts into tears. He hurts to the point of losing self-balance, something that would never happen to his father.

### *Word and theme*

Telemachus' standard epithet in the epic is πεπνυμένος, usually translated as “sensible” or “prudent”, and yet the modern reader is usually puzzled as to the exact relevance of this sensibility or judiciousness. This epithet is used only in lines introducing a speech by Telemachus, which has led scholars to believe that it refers to Telemachus' capability of “speaking well”, meaning speaking with diplomacy and propriety in a given situation<sup>12</sup>). It seems, however, that whereas πεπνυμένος might indicate mental vigor in speaking, it does not necessarily point to diplomacy or propriety. In the *Iliad*, for example, the epithet is used of the heralds Talthybius and Idaeus, whose task is to transmit information word for word regardless of their own views and thoughts.

11) Hainsworth ad 8.523–30.

12) Austin 74–79.

This is in fact what both of them do. Iris, on the other hand, who, for example, not only transmits Zeus' message to Poseidon but tries to convince Poseidon to comply with Zeus' request, is never referred to by this epithet (15.158–167, 174–182, 200–217)<sup>13</sup>). Yet the epithet is also used for Antenor, Meriones, Antilochus, and Polydamas, heroes who do not hesitate to express their views boldly and forthrightly, without prior calculation, and without concern about pleasing the other party<sup>14</sup>). Similarly in the *Odyssey*, characters awarded the attribute, speak their mind. Thus when grief and weeping overtake the supping company in Sparta upon hearing Menelaos' reference to Odysseus, and Peisistratos wishes to stop the crying, he says straightforwardly to Menelaos that he finds no joy in weeping during supper. He cushions his request by pointing out that he also lost a brother in the war, but nonetheless he clearly wants the meal to resume. Menelaos complies with the youngster's request, calling him πεπνυμένος and his request πεπνυμένα (4.204–215). Likewise the πεπνυμένος Laertes does not hide his displeasure from Odysseus at not sharing the secret of his son's homecoming, and not having the opportunity to fight the suitors (24.375–382). It is a feature of a close friend for whom one weeps profusely, to have the capacity of πεπνυμένα to speak one's mind ingenuously and without guile or disguise (8.585 f.). And indeed, one is struck by the straightforwardness, sincerity, and spontaneity rather than diplomacy and propriety in Telemachus' speeches. He does not mind telling a stranger that his mother has not convinced him that Odysseus is his father (1.214–16). He is less than tactful with his mother when reproaching her for stopping Phemius' song, telling her to leave the *megaron* and go and busy herself with her own tasks. Not only is Telemachus described as πεπνυμένος before his forthright words to his mother, but the text makes a point of telling us that Penelope is seized with wonder at the μῦθος πεπνυμένος of her son (1.346–61 cf. 21.354 f.). It seems therefore, that beyond the meaning of judiciousness, the epithet points to the straightforwardness of the words spoken. In fact, Telemachus is self-conscious because he is unable to speak with propriety, especially when he has nothing concrete to say, and he

13) In the *Odyssey*, the herald Medon likewise sticks, in his information, to what he has clearly heard or seen, and is referred to as πεπνυμένα εἰδώς (4.696, 711; 24.442).

14) Cf. Il. 3.203; 7.347 (cf. H. M. Roisman, *Kerdion* in the *Iliad* – Profit and Trickiness, *TAPhA* 120 [1990] 33–34); 13.254, 266; 18.249; 23.570, 586.

asks Mentor to help him find words when addressing Nestor (3.21–4):

Τὴν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ἦῤδα·  
 “Μέντορ, πῶς τ' ἄρ' ἴω, πῶς τ' ἄρ' προσπτύξομαι αὐτόν;  
 οὐδέ τί πω μῦθοισι πεπείρημαι πυκνιοῖσιν·  
 αἰδῶς δ' αὖ νέον ἄνδρα γεραίτερον ἐξερέσθαι.”

Then the straightforward Telemachus answered her:  
 “Mentor, how shall I go, and how shall I greet him?  
 I am as yet unversed in subtle/shrewd speech,  
 and moreover a young man feels shame in questioning the elder.”

Telemachus is in a situation that does not call for straightforward questioning of the elder Nestor. He is in need of “subtle speech”, “shrewd words”. The base *πυκνι-* usually refers to shrewdness and resourcefulness that is involved with trickery and deception, a straightforward approach was not a shrewd one<sup>15</sup>). Telemachus needs to make a tactful introduction before stating his inquiry. He needs to improvise and be resourceful because such conversations usually do not involve specifics and preclude a forthright approach. Telemachus foresees troubles in such a situation. Yet his clear and honest expression of his fears in front of the disguised Athena again qualifies him to be termed as *πεπνυμένος*.

That the epithet also indicates that forthrightness contains truth, we learn when Athena/Mentor instructs Telemachus to consult Nestor about the whereabouts of his father, saying that Nestor *ψεῦδος δ' οὐκ ἐρέει· μάλα γὰρ πεπνυμένος ἐστί* (3.20). Being *πεπνυμένος* is thus the opposite of telling lies. This is the gist of Telemachus' use of the epithet for Eurymachus and Antinoos when he tells Odysseus that the two men are sincere in their promise not to interfere for Irus' sake in his wrestling with Odysseus<sup>16</sup>).

---

15) E.g. Il. 2.54; 5.751; 10.302; 24.75; Od. 1.279. It is noteworthy that the only other person in the *Odyssey*, in addition to Athena and Odysseus, whose mental faculties are referred to by the base *πυκνι-*, is Eurycleia when Penelope introduces her to Odysseus (19.353). Is Penelope indeed not cognizant of her husband's presence, or does she rather try to tell her husband that here is a maid who is smart and capable of deception, who will keep the secret of his identity? On *πυκνιός* see also M. Lynn-George, *Epos, Word, Narrative and the Iliad* (Atlantic Highlands 1988) 231–233; R. P. Martin, *The Language of Heroes* (Ithaca and London 1989) 35–37.

16) 18.52–57, 65. Odysseus' reference to Amphinomos as *πεπνυμένος* in 18.125 is a compliment for Amphinomos' sincere well wishing without any sarcasm in 18.122 f.

Considering the resemblance, set up by the text, between the father and son, it is of extreme importance to note that this very common epithet is never attributed to Odysseus, and rightly so<sup>17</sup>). Odysseus, unlike all the characters for whom the epithet is used, never adopts the forthright approach; he is forever, as Athena states, *κερδαλέος* (13.291 f.). The constant use of an epithet for the son and the disinclination to use it for the father is yet another method of characterization that the text adopts. The listener wonders what qualifications for the epithet the son has that his father lacks.

*Κερδαλέος* is a person who exhibits *κέρδεα*. In the Homeric epic the base *κερδ-* has a double semantic sphere tying it both to skill/craft and profit/advantage. It indicates “resourcefulness exemplified by an immediate response to a situation at hand with one’s own interest uppermost in mind”<sup>18</sup>). Indeed, in the scene with Athena in Book Thirteen, Odysseus demonstrates this trait well. He wakes up on the seashore of Ithaca without recognizing the place, and is met by Athena disguised as a young shepherd (13.222). When she tells him that he has arrived on his own island, instead of revealing himself excitedly to the first person he encounters, and rushing home to see his dear ones, he keeps his identity secret. He introduces himself to Athena as one of the Cretans, known to be adventurous travelers, and thus unlikely to arouse suspicion. When Athena/shepherd mentions Troy with awe, and emphasizes its distance from Ithaca, he presents himself as a leader of a contingent in Troy, putting himself in the category of people who travel far. He also makes sure to present himself as a warrior, and one aware of his honor. He could not be forced, he tells the shepherd, to be a mere *θεράπων*, a squire, of Orsilochus’ father in Troy. He commanded his own contingent, he was a leader. Upon his return to Crete, in the process of settling this dispute, he killed Orsilochus, lying in ambush for him. He is, according to his story, a wealthy man who has brought many treasures with him to Ithaca, but also a dangerous one who has killed his opponent by

17) He is referred to as *πεπνυμένος* in two cases where his identity is not known, explicitly at least, to the speaker: by Alcinous in 8.388, and by Penelope in 19.350, 352.

18) Cf. H. M. Roisman, *Penelope’s Indignation*, *TAPhA* 117 (1987) esp. 66; *TAPhA* 120 (1990) 23–35. See also on the subject F. Bamberger, *κέρδος et sa famille (emplois homériques)*, *CLMA III* (1976) 1–32; I. de Jong, *Homeric κέρδος and ὄφελος*, *MH* 44 (1987) 79–81; A. Cozzo, *Kerdos. Semantica, ideologie e società nella Grecia antica* (Roma 1988).

ambushing him – an important piece of information in case the shepherd, or any of his friends, should think of depriving him of his possessions. He has a large family in Crete and allies in Elis and Pylos. That is, there are enough people to avenge him in the event that any misfortune should befall him. We thus see that every detail of the story Odysseus tells the shepherd serves to protect him during his stay in Ithaca and advance his interests. His main goal is to learn about his family and household without revealing himself, and yet he wishes to create the impression that he should be treated with respect. In sum, our hero invents on the spot a tale to his own advantage. As the poet says, he is revolving νόον πολυ-κερδέα (13.255). Hearing the story, Athena calls him κερδαλέος claiming that both he and she are best known for their κέρδεα (13.291–302).

Throughout the epic, Odysseus is engaged in a variety of situations that force him to choose between two alternatives, and he always chooses the one that is termed as κέρδιον<sup>19</sup>). His acts are also referred to by the base κερδ-, whether by himself or others<sup>20</sup>). Thus Helen refers to his avoidance of her while in Troy as his κερδοσύνη (4.251). After Odysseus asks Demodocus to sing about his leading the wooden horse to the citadel of Troy, and then cries ostentatiously and loudly during the song, Alcinous, who watched Odysseus during his first crying spell, asks him to answer his questions without using any more νοήματα κερδαλέα (8.548 f.). Alcinous, thus, has seen the trait κέρδεα in Odysseus' prior and current behavior. Eurycleia refers to Odysseus' command to her not to reveal his identity to Penelope as πολυκερδείησι νόοιο (23.77). And the poet himself marks Odysseus' sitting down and dropping his staff when attacked by Eumaeus' dogs as an act deriving from the hero's κερδοσύνη (14.31).

The base is also allotted to Penelope. Antinoos marks her κέρδεα as her most commendable feature (2.88, 118). And in Book Eighteen, when Penelope decides to show herself to the suitors, she justifies her decision by telling Eurynome that she wants to tell her son a word that will be κέρδιον to him (παιδι δέ κεν εἴποιμι ἔπος, τό κε κέρδιον εἶη, 166). She explains what she means by ἔπος κέρδιον, saying “that he should not always go among the insolent suitors, who speak well to him, but are plotting evil things for the

19) 9.227; 10.152; 18.92; 19.282; 24.238.

20) Cf. 6.148; 8.163, 547; 11.357; 13.254, 290, 297; 14.30; 14.508; 19.285; 23.139; 23.216; 14.166.

future" (18.167f.). Yet when finally she appears before the suitors and addresses Telemachus, she says nothing of the sort. She upbraids Telemachus for not demonstrating *κέρδεα*, which she says he used to wield as a child. She relates his inability to employ *κέρδεα* to his having allowed a beggar to be ill-treated in their house, referring to the suitors' forcing Odysseus to wrestle with Irus. Commentators regard Penelope's scolding of Telemachus and his reply, verses 214–43 of Book Eighteen, as an interpolation. Munro, for example, says that the dialogue "is intended to be secret, yet it is carried on in the presence of the suitors". More recently, critics have tended to explain the episode as exhibiting the unity of mind between Odysseus and Penelope and how Penelope's decision to appear before the suitors serves Athena's purposes. The change in her message is accounted for by her inexplicable urge to appear before the suitors. She had no particular message, but made one up when she talked to Eurynome and makes up a different one when she appears before the suitors<sup>21</sup>).

Yet it seems that excising this dialogue between the mother and son is likely to miss an important point. Nor do we need an intricate explanation of the discrepancy between Penelope's expressed purpose of showing herself to the suitors and her actual one. Penelope should speak with her son in private, but she could hardly have planned it this way. After all, she connects her future conversation with her son with her appearance before the suitors, because she assumes that her son is with the suitors. Her words to Eurynome include the gist of her message and do not need to be repeated word for word. Surely it would not be politic and well mannered to tell Telemachus, in front of the suitors, that they are scheming against him. The characters of the *Odyssey* always prefer the roundabout approach. Penelope needs to change the wording to meet the situation. What she could say in a straightforward manner to Eurynome, she cannot say in front of the suitors. When she appears, she adjusts her message to the latest example of the suitors' scheming, and her son's conforming with it: he allows the suitors to mistreat a guest in his own household. By complying with the suitors' maltreatment, Telemachus lets them plot against him, for he is responsible for proper hospitality in his own house. Penelope's upbraiding of Telemachus expresses what she intended to say but in different words. She still provides her son with an

---

21) Cf. C.S. Byre, Penelope and the Suitors before Odysseus: *Odyssey* 18.158–303, *AJP* 109 (1988) 159–173.

ἔπος κέρδιον “a crafty word to his own benefit”. On the level of the poet, or the text and the audience, we find Penelope’s scolding her son for not revealing what she reveals now, to be resourceful in the face of an upcoming situation.

The base κερδ- is also used to mark a common characteristic of Eumaeus, Athena, and Autolycus. That is, it is a trait of Odysseus’ family and his close accomplices. Unlike the *Iliad*, which criticizes the wielding of κέρδεα, since acts of resourcefulness in one’s own interest usually encroach upon the demands of the community, the *Odyssey* looks at κέρδεα as a valuable asset, to the point that when disapproval is involved, a pejorative adjective – κακά – is added (23.217)<sup>22</sup>). It is important, therefore, that Telemachus is described as not demonstrating κέρδεα because it marks him as lacking a characteristic that is vital to the royal family and its identification mark. We have already seen that what Telemachus lacks is emotional restraint and use of affectation, elements which amount to creative resourcefulness in meeting a demanding situation. But although Telemachus is said to lack the trait, we should not assume that he is unaware of its importance. His mother’s scolding him for not displaying κέρδεα would be enough to inform him that wielding κέρδεα is to be commended. The poet not only uses the subject of resourcefulness, but also the base κερδ- in the youth’s characterization.

In Book Sixteen, Odysseus, left alone with his son in Eumaeus’ hut reveals his identity to Telemachus. The recognition scene is rather short. No tokens of identity are provided, and there is nothing personal and secret that the two men can share because Telemachus was a baby when his father left for Troy. Telemachus accepts his father’s identity unquestioningly, emphasizing that Odysseus now resembles a god, even though just moments before he looked like a beggar. No one but a god could have undergone such a metamorphosis<sup>23</sup>). Yet right after Odysseus’ self-revelation and Telemachus’ acknowledgment, a more subtle recognition occurs. Telemachus ardently wishes to be recognized by his father as an adult, no longer a child. Telemachus has been striving for a while for such recognition from the characters surrounding him: his mother, Eurycleia, Eumaeus, and above all the suitors and servant women in the house. His aspiration is more pointed in his

22) See Roisman, TAPhA 117 (1987) 66; TAPhA 120 (1990) 26–32.

23) Odysseus, though, tries to find a common set of views and establish psychological sympathy between the youth and himself prior to his self-disclosure, see Austin 204–205.

encounter with his father because he has to achieve all at once what he has supposedly already attained through lengthy relations with other characters. How does the text suggest this information?

After telling Telemachus how he reached Ithaca with the help of the Phaeacians, in verses 235–39 Odysseus asks Telemachus: “Come, then, tell me the number of suitors, and tell me about them, so I can know how many there are, and which men are of them; and then, when I have pondered it in my faultless mind, I can decide whether we two alone will be able to face them without any help, or whether we must go looking for others.” Telemachus answers that in spite of Odysseus’ great fame the two of them could not fight successfully against 108 suitors, the numbers of whom he describes at some length<sup>24</sup>), concluding (256 f.): ἀλλὰ σύ γ’, εἰ δύνασαι τιν’ ἀμύντορα μερμηροῖξαι, / φράζεο, ὃ κέν τις νῶϊν ἀμύνοι πρόφρονι θυμῷ (“Now, you then, consider, if you can think of a helper, *one* who would aid *us two* with a ready heart, tell me of him”). The text emphasizes the number of suitors, and then when Telemachus tells his father that it is impossible for the two of them alone to tackle them all, it lets the youth suggest how many helpers they need. He says they need only *one*. By polarizing the singular number of the helper against the dual number of the father and son and putting the two words next to each other the text claims attention. More than providing information, for which he was asked, Telemachus aims to give advice. He makes much of the large number of suitors; his description goes on for 24 lines and insinuates repeatedly that the two of them will be unable to oppose the suitors. An anticlimax follows when he asks for only *one helper*. One man can be of very little help against 108. One gets the impression that the reason for this protracted answer is mainly Telemachus’ wish to express his views and comments. He should be consulted in matters of strategy and not asked only for raw information. His father seems to get the point and asks half jokingly whether Athena and Zeus will be sufficient, or whether he should think of someone else. With these words, Odysseus both answers Telemachus’ query, and seemingly involves the youth in the decision-making process. Telemachus’ reply is worthy of notice: “These two helpers whom you mention are good, although

24) “From Dulichion there are fifty two chosen men, and six serving men follow them; from Same come twenty four men; from Zacynthus there are twenty youths of the Achaeans. From Ithaca itself, there are twelve men all of them the noblest, and with them is Medon, the herald, and the divine minstrel, and two squires skilled in carving meat” (16.247–53).

they are situated high in the clouds; and also they rule over all men and immortal gods alike” (16.263–65). Telemachus’ answer is often taken as ironical, since it supposedly implies that the two of them need something more than divine patronage in their struggle<sup>25</sup>). I seriously doubt such an interpretation<sup>26</sup>). Telemachus is never sly and ironic, and in this scene in particular, he is preoccupied with gods. He wanted his father to involve him in the decision, and now he ponders the pros and cons of the situation: ‘Yes, those are good helpers. There is a drawback in having them as protectors because they are far away, yet this seems to be of no concern since despite their distance, they manage to rule over mortals and immortals.’

In the first part of the encounter between the father and son, Telemachus is called upon to respond to an unexpected situation: he finally meets his father, not on his journey, but at home. He reacts to the challenge in the best way he can, both by giving his father the required information, and acquiring the proper status with his father. Yet the muse does not award him any title with the important κέρδ-base. We seem to observe two curious implications. On the one hand, Telemachus is the only member of the royal family who is not mentioned by any character of the story as having κέρδεα; on the contrary Penelope scolds him for failing to demonstrate behavior that will attest to his having this trait. Yet he uses the base κέρδ- rather often, five times, only one less than his κερδαλέος father. Two features characterize his usage: he uses it in clusters, and at times inappropriately even if slightly.

Thus, during the first encounter between the father and son, Odysseus tells Telemachus to be secretive about his father’s return, and not even tell Laertes, Eumaeus, or Penelope. And in verses 304–7 he says:

ἀλλ’ οἷοι σύ τ’ ἐγώ τε γυναικῶν γνώομεν ἰθύν·  
καί κέ τεο δμῶων ἀνδρῶν ἔτι πειρηθεῖμεν,  
ἦ μὲν ὅπου τις νῶϊ τίει καὶ δεΐδιε θυμῶ,  
ἦ δ’ ὅτις οὐκ ἀλέγει, σὲ δ’ ἀτιμᾶ τοῖον ἐόντα.

These lines are the last part of a longer speech Odysseus gives in which he tells his son what is going to happen. One should note, that whereas Odysseus seems concerned about the respect both of them should receive from the slaves, he mentions only Telemachus

25) Cf. Munro, Stanford ad loc.

26) See also, A. Hoekstra, A Commentary on Homer’s Odyssey, vol. 2 (Oxford 1989) ad loc.

as being potentially mistreated. Also, Odysseus clearly wishes Telemachus to feel he is an active participant in the upcoming events, even though he tells him what to do and delineates the entire plan. Again *no advice* has been sought from Telemachus, nor is he asked for any comments. Still, Telemachus responds. He does not consent or promise to keep his father's secret, as might be expected, but again doubts his father's chosen course of action:

ᾠ πάτερ, ἦ τοι ἐμὸν θυμὸν καὶ ἔπειτά γ', οἶω,  
 γνώσεαι· οὐ μὲν γάρ τι χαλιφροσύναι γέ μ' ἔχουσιν· 310  
 ἀλλ' οὐ τοι τόδε κέρδος ἐγὼν ἔσσεσθαι οἶω  
 ἡμῖν ἀμφοτέροισι· σὲ δὲ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα.  
 δηθὰ γὰρ αὐτως εἴση ἐκάστου πειρητίζων,  
 ἔργα μετερχόμενος· τοὶ δ' ἐν μεγάροισιν ἐκηλοὶ  
 χρήματα δαρδάπτουσιν ὑπέρβιον οὐδ' ἐπι φειδώ. 315  
 ἀλλ' ἦ τοί σε γυναῖκας ἐγὼ δεδάσθαι ἄνωγα,  
 αἶ τέ σ' ἀτιμάζουσι καὶ αἶ νηλίτιδές εἰσιν·  
 ἀνδρῶν δ' οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ γε κατὰ σταθμοὺς ἐθέλοιμι  
 ἡμέας πειράζειν, ἀλλ' ὕστερα ταῦτα πένεσθαι,  
 εἰ ἔτεόν γε τι οἴσθα Διὸς τέρας αἰγιόχοιο. (16.309–20)

Several points are of interest. First, Telemachus emphasizes that he *thinks* well, he *is not slackminded*, that is, he is no longer a child (19.530)<sup>27</sup>). Once again we see his stubborn aspiration to be considered an adult by his father. Secondly, Telemachus' persistent preoccupation with the female servants reveals a loathing of the maids who consort with the suitors. Hoekstra's comment that he has daily experience with their conduct is well taken. Yet Penelope, who must also have experienced their daily infidelity, seems less disturbed by it. Here again, we note the reaction of an immature teenager who is more sensitive to sexual conduct than an adult would be, and thus undermines what he has just pretended to be<sup>28</sup>). The third point is, Telemachus' youthful urge to rush. Odysseus has said that the male servants will be tried "where/how" any of them behaves (16.306). The word *οπου* can mean either a place "where" or manner "how". In this case it makes no

27) J. Winkler, *Constraints of Desire* (New York 1990) 136, maintains that by pointing out that he is no longer a child, Telemachus avows discretion, since it is "a trait of children who have not yet learned to control their public personalities with constant vigilance by erecting a wall of discretion".

28) His deep animosity toward the maids is revealed even more fully in the final stage of their punishment, when he overrules Odysseus' order to kill them by sword and hangs them, taking an active part in the execution.

sense to ask, “where someone honors us two and where not”. The two verbs that are used, *τίειν* and *δείδειν*, clearly call for an adverb of manner: “How one honors and fears us.” Furthermore, Odysseus clearly puts the testing of the male and female servants within the framework of the household and not the faraway farms. Yet Telemachus seems to misunderstand his father, thinking he intends to go from farm to farm and test the men *before* their fight with the suitors. Prior testing of the slaves on their farms would have postponed the confrontation with the suitors, and Telemachus wants immediate action against them. In his youthful inclination to speed things up, he fails to listen carefully to what his father tells him. The last point, and the most important for our purpose, is Telemachus' concern for his possessions. This feature of Telemachus' character is well testified in his mother's recurrent remarks that her son wishes her to remarry because by not doing so she indirectly causes the loss of his possessions. The concern for his holdings might be an inborn reaction, but we should note that on his journey to visit his father's friends, he learned from both Nestor and Menelaos that taking proper care of one's possessions is a mark of an adult and a grown-up son. Thinking, as he does, that Odysseus means to test the servants first and then deal with the suitors, he brings up his concern about wasting the household's goods, by the continuous feasting of the suitors, as a reason to rid the halls of them first and postpone the trial of the servants. It is remarkable how this thought brings forward the word *κέρδος* in the sense of “profit”, with no additional connotation of trickiness, a meaning found nowhere else in the *Odyssey*. The enhanced meaning of “profit” is usually found in the comparative form *κέρδιον*, yet even there it does not indicate simply profit, but profit attained through some sort of “wile”, “cunning”, or “trickiness”. Here, Telemachus is using a word that he considers part of adult vocabulary and concern<sup>29</sup>). The audience, however, would note the misuse of the word and watch with amusement as the youngster strives for recognition.

In Book Twenty Ctesippus throws the hoof of an ox at Odysseus and misses. Telemachus is tremendously angry and says:

Κτήσιπ', ἥ μάλα τοι τόδε κέρδιον ἔπλετο θυμῷ·  
οὐκ ἔβαλες τὸν ξεῖνον· ἀλεύατο γὰρ βέλος αὐτός. (20.304–5)

29) For Telemachus' awareness of the need to use the “proper words”, see also P. Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos* (Ithaca 1987) 161–164, who shows how Telemachus cleverly substitutes *γαστήρ ... κακοεργός* as Odysseus' motivation for fighting Irus by *κραδίη και θυμός ἀγήνωρ* (18.53 f., 61).

Over the years scholars have had difficulty with this passage, yet the difficulty was never clearly identified. Munro, for example, found the passage ironical because, he says, it was not that Ctesippus missed his target, but that Odysseus saw the hoof coming and avoided it. However, nothing else in this moving address reveals sarcasm. There is also a tendency to suspect the word θυμῶ, because, Munro says, it also occurs at the end of verse 301, and in neither place does it have a perfectly smooth sense. The common idiom is not τόδε κέρδιον ἔπλετο θυμῶ, but φίλον ἔπλετο θυμῶ. And the common idiom with κέρδιον is τό γε κέρδιον δοάσσατο θυμῶ. We do see a contamination of the common phraseology here. The uneasiness of Munro and other scholars with the phrase is misplaced, however. The problem is not with θυμῶ but with Telemachus' further misuse of the κερδ- base. On the one hand, he uses a term that he might consider adult language, and here, he addresses one of the suitors in his capacity as the adult master of the household, as a host, who from now on will not allow his ξείνος to be abused. By striving to appear an adult he misuses the word κέρδιον for φίλον, an economical/modal term for an emotive one. Further on in the passage, Telemachus reassures Ctesippus that he is indeed an adult now. The insertion of this *lapsus linguae* on the part of the youth reveals, once again, a careful technique of characterization on the part of the muse. Telemachus divulges his secret hope in thinking that it would have served his own interests (κέρδιον) if Odysseus had been hurt. Then the chances would have been better that his father would have signaled him to bring out the hidden weapons, and the decisive struggle with the suitors would have taken place. After all, Odysseus has already told him that he must be mistreated by the suitors so they can be punished for it. Telemachus uses the base oddly once more in the same speech. In verse 316 he says that it would have been κέρδιον for him to die (καί κεν πολὺ κέρδιον εἶη / τεθνάμεν) rather than behold "these shameful things" (316 f.). The common comparative used for the expression "it would be better to die" is φέρτερον, which, for example, Leiodes uses in 21.154 in a similar context. The semantics of the comparative κέρδιον do not accord with death<sup>30</sup>).

30) Telemachus seems to have problems in using phrases. Thus in his only use of the base πεπνυμεν-, most commonly used of him, he combines it with the verb νοῆσαι (18.230) whereas it is usually used with the verbs εἰδέναι, ἀγορεύειν and εἶναι. Telemachus seems to be confused in this scene by the suitors as he tells his mother. His misuse of language is an attempt on the part of the poet to exemplify the youth's uneasiness.

It is noteworthy that the suitors respond to Telemachus' speech by using the comparative κέρδιον, even though we do not encounter any use of it on their part in any other event. Agelaus addresses both the suitors and Telemachus and Penelope. He calls the suitors to order and says to the son and mother:

ὄφρα μὲν ὑμῖν θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ἐώλπει  
 νοστήσειν Ὀδυσῆα πολύφρονα ὄνδε δόμονδε,  
 τόφρ' οὐ τις νέμεσις μενέμεν τ' ἦν ἰσχέμεναί τε 330  
 μνηστῆρας κατὰ δώματ', ἐπεὶ τόδε κέρδιον ἦεν,  
 εἰ νόστησ' Ὀδυσσεὺς καὶ ὑπότροπος ἴκετο δῶμα· (20.328–32)

By the insertion of the phrase ἐπεὶ τόδε κέρδιον ἦεν, a term Telemachus appears fond of, Agelaus seems to wish to lay common ground between them so that he can persuade him to tell his mother to wed one of them. In Agelaus' evaluation of the past conduct of Telemachus and Penelope, we would expect a phrase containing a modal qualitative pointing to the propriety of the conduct, rather than a comparative indicating the profit and trickiness of the behavior. Agelaus' intent is to flatter Telemachus and discuss the issue within terms preferred by the youth. A similar instance occurs in the words of the anonymous suitor in 20.381, who tries to persuade Telemachus to send Odysseus and Theoclymenus to the Sicilians, saying that this mode of action would have been κέρδιον by far.

All the same, although no character attributes κέρδεα as a characteristic of Telemachus, the poet himself awards the youth the trait of wielding κέρδεα, thus pointing out to his listeners that the youth possesses his father's main feature even if it is not yet pronounced enough to be evident to anyone else. After all, only Telemachus, of all the characters who surround Odysseus in the house, knows about Odysseus' return, and thus this feature of the youngster cannot be appreciated by others in the following particular event.

In Book Twenty we learn that the suitors, following Amphinomos' advice, decide to stop their plotting against Telemachus for a while and plan to have a feast. They enter the hall for the meal; wine, bread, and roast meat are being prepared. And the text tells us:

Τηλέμαχος δ' Ὀδυσῆα καθίδρουε, κέρδεα νομῶν,  
 ἐντὸς ἔυσταθέος μεγάρου, παρὰ λάϊνον οὐδόν,  
 δίφρον ἀεικέλιον καταθεῖς ὀλίγην τε τράπεζαν·

πάρ δ' ἐτίθει σπλάγγων μοίρας, ἐν δ' οἶνον ἔχευεν  
 ἐν δέπαϊ χρυσέφ, καί μιν πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν· (20.257–61)

Scholars are usually puzzled by the phrase “distributing κέρδεα” in this case. They maintain that we know from Book Seventeen that Odysseus, when he first entered, placed himself in a strategic position on the threshold of the main door leading from the open court, ἀυλή to the hall, μέγαρον. What, then, are the κέρδεα, which traditionally are taken to indicate wile or shrewdness, that Telemachus is said to demonstrate in the situation? Indeed, the youth reveals here a remarkable resourcefulness in acting according to what he thinks is his advantage. We should view the entire passage in terms of Telemachus’ resourcefulness<sup>31</sup>). First, he does not let his father continue to sit *υπον* the threshold, which he is said to be doing in Book Seventeen, but instead situates him inside the μέγαρον and tells him to join the suitors. He waits on him, serving him meat, bread, and wine in a golden cup. Later on, when some more meat is being roasted and served, Telemachus orders that Odysseus is to be served a portion *equal* to that served to the suitors (281). Telemachus is intentionally and emphatically aggrandizing the beggar in his halls, awarding him treatment not only equal to that of the suitors but even better by serving him himself and not ordering Eumaeus to do it, as he commanded him to do in Book Seventeen.

Addressing his father, he says, “Sit down here among the men and drink wine; and the insults and blows of all the suitors I shall myself ward from you, for this house is not a public domain, but it belongs to Odysseus, and he acquired it for me. And as for you, suitors, hold back your mind from rebukes and blows, that no strife or quarrel may arise” (262–67). Telemachus’ words can have only one effect: to enrage the suitors, reminding them that he is in charge and depriving them of honor by allotting a strange, roaming beggar the same treatment as a nobleman. We should remember that Odysseus told his son that the time would come when he would nod to Telemachus on the instigation of Athena, and then Telemachus would have to hide the weapons hanging on the wall. This moment has passed. Odysseus has no more instructions for his son. Now all the options are open. Telemachus knows

31) N. Austin, *Telemachos Polymechanos*, Calif. Stud. in Class. Antiq. 2 (1969) 45–63, examines Telemachus’ pursuits in general terms of intelligence marked by ability to read into men’s actions and words while devising schemes of his own. This episode, however, is not included in the discussion.

that the moment will also come, as his father told him, when both of them, with the help of Athena and Zeus, will confront the suitors with the hidden weapons. When that time will be is not clear, but it has to do with the suitors' vilification of Odysseus. If anything, Telemachus tries to be helpful in making this moment come soon and fast<sup>32</sup>). He is chiding the suitors, trying to arouse their anger against Odysseus, which should bring about their mistreatment of him and finally the long-awaited struggle to banish them from the halls. He does this by inviting a strange beggar to take his place among the divine noble suitors, and by awarding the beggar hospitality and entertainment equal to that given the noble suitors. He often has slips of tongue that show his true thoughts. By warning against insults and blows he tells us what he expects will happen. And, in fact, the suitors react exactly the way Telemachus wants them to. They are so enraged because a beggar is invited to sit among them and be served an equal portion of roasted meat, that Ctesippus, for example, throws the hoof of an ox at the beggar. The battle that Telemachus is awaiting eagerly is unfortunately postponed.

By attempting to precipitate the struggle with the suitors, he not only responds to Penelope's rebuke of him for not wielding κέρδεα, but in a contextual view, in relation to his father and the secret they share together with the audience, Telemachus demonstrates resourcefulness by arousing the suitors' anger against Odysseus and thus hastening the confrontation. The text allows us a glimpse at the working of κέρδεα in Telemachus on more than one level. What might have seemed to Penelope, had she been present, a straightforward wielding of κέρδεα for the sake of maintaining the laws of ξεινίη, is a much more intricate and complicated weaving of schemes on the part of Telemachus, who is not at all concerned about the well-being of the beggar, who is *not* a ξείνος. Telemachus is planning to mistreat the suitors, who strictly speaking are his guests, his ξείνοι. His application of κέρδεα is completely lost on the surrounding characters, who are not privy to the secret of the father and son, yet his independent, wily resourcefulness in turning a given situation to his advantage, is being noted by

---

32) His youthful tendency to lack patience, wish to speed up events, and seek immediate solutions is revealed in other cases as well. See for example the recognition episode between Odysseus and Penelope, where he seeks an immediate acknowledgment of his father by his mother 23.97–103, or his attempt with the bow, when Odysseus has to signal to Telemachus to restrain him from stringing the bow (21.118–129).

the listeners, who were explicitly told to watch for it when the poet qualified the upcoming behavior as  $\kappa\epsilon\rho\theta\epsilon\alpha$ . Thus just before the decisive battle with the suitors, before we part with the two heroes, we are able to see that the son is indeed in his father's image, even if the situations he faces are less heroic and are supervised by his wily parent.

Telemachus' character portrayal depends, for a large part, on comparison with his father. The poet enforces this comparison with two techniques. He creates situations that demand similar reactions from the father and the son and lets his listeners draw their own conclusions from the characters' behavior. By an intricate use of the theme and words drawn from the base  $\kappa\epsilon\rho\theta$ -, he shows us how the youth aspires to be recognized as an adult equal to his father. Toward the end of the poem we learn that Telemachus does not lack his father's major feature: resourcefulness in responding to an unexpected situation while keeping one's own interests in mind. Modern scholarship, on the whole, attributes development to Telemachus' character, yet usually restricts it to the *Telemacheia*<sup>33</sup>). Yet, change and aspiration in the young character are evident in his encounter with his father, not so much in acquiring new features, as in revealing inborn characteristics. Telemachus grows from a youngster incapable of any affectation to a young man who is capable of independent, wily conduct.

Waterville, Maine

Hanna M. Roisman

---

33) E. J. Woodhouse, *The Composition of the Odyssey* (Oxford 1930) 212–214, sees the development of the figure of Telemachus as exceptional in the Greek literature, where character drawing, he maintains, is mainly static. Cf. Austin, *Calif. Stud. in Class. Antiq.* 58–59; J. A. Scott, *The Journey made by Telemachus and Its Influence on the Action of the Odyssey*, *CJ* 13 (1917) 420–428; C. M. H. Millar & J. W. S. Carmichael, *The Growth of Telemachus*, *G & R* n.s. 1 (1954) 58–64; H. C. Clarke, *Telemachus and the Telemacheia*, *AJP* 84 (1963) 129–145.