Paris/Alexander, Pandarus, Peisander, and Some Related Iliadic Doublets

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The Trojan hero Paris/Alexander, who according to tradition had stolen the Greeks' most beautiful woman and would eventually slay their greatest warrior, is portrayed in the *Iliad* as something of an antihero. When the opposing armies first advance, before any fighting occurs in the poem, Paris steps forward to challenge the enemy to a duel, holding a bow and wearing a leopard skin, but then is quickly made to withdraw shamefully into the crowd at the sight of Menelaus. Thus Hector, who takes the part of the leading Trojan in the *Iliad,* calls his brother *Dys-paris,* "Bad-Paris," and mocks him for excessive womanizing and lack of *alkê,* valor or defensive strength (*Il.* 3.39–57)—implying that he is not living up to his names, neither *Paris* nor *Alex-andros,* "Defender-of/against-Men." Here and elsewhere in the *Iliad,* Paris' character arguably suffers programmatic deflation, not only directly through his own actions and others' reactions to him, but also indirectly through his playing a comparatively minor role. In Paris' absence or relative inaction, the *Iliad* employs various alternate figures whose characters or deeds seem to have been partly inspired and shaped by that more infamous Trojan hero. The purpose of this paper is to discuss several such Iliadic doublets for Paris, especially those with names suggesting more than an accidental likeness.

The general idea that one Homeric figure might serve as a partial doublet for another by sharing a constellation of comparable characteristics or by performing a sequence of comparable deeds has already been promoted by other scholars. Bernard Fenik, for instance, drew attention to the nurses of Odysseus, Penelope, and Nausicaa, whose similar names signal their similar function: Eurycleia, Eurynome, and Eurymedousa. Likewise, two friends of Odysseus' house, whom Athena impersonates as she advises Telemachus, are called, hardly by chance, Mentor and Mentes. In summoning up figures to play analogous roles, the bard may readily resort to those with names that echo one another. Such composition by association is not restricted to the *Odyssey,* I shall argue, but can also be discovered in the *Iliad* among characters who seem at times to substitute symbolically for Paris. Playful treatment of his name is exemplified early in the poem not only by Hector's very first speech, summarized above, but also by the emblematic costume worn by the archer-hero at his initial appearance, the skin of a leopard or *par(dal)is.*

Paris-like figures in the *Iliad* present thematic variations on that hero's important interactions with Menelaus and Achilles; the former relationship will be the focus of this paper. The first and most obvious example is **Pa(nda)rus**, who enjoys partial "success" where Paris/Alexander had failed badly: while the Trojan prince dallies with Helen in bed, on the battlefield his ally wounds Menelaus with a bow in hopes of gratifying Paris (*Il.* 4.96). Much as Alexander once violated laws of hospitality, so Pandarus now breaks an armistice oath, re-enacting Trojan perfidy. The arrow pierces Menelaus' belt, and the bloody wound stains his shapely thighs, legs, and beautiful ankles, like ivory stained crimson by some woman (4.141–47). Later, identified by Aeneas as an archer inferior to no other Trojan (5.171–73), Pandarus boasts prematurely after shooting Diomedes in the shoulder (5.101–6, cf. 284–86), much as Paris will boast vainly after striking that same hero's foot with an arrow (cf. 11.378–84; 5.286=11.384).

The next closest parallel for such premature, Alexander-like optimism is exhibited by **Peis-ander**, who thrusts his spear against Menelaus' shield, joyfully expecting victory (13.607). Just as Peisander then strikes his opponent on the helmet's peak, so had Menelaus struck Alexander (13.614, cf. 3.362). While Menelaus' earlier attempt to avenge himself had been thwarted, here he is allowed to kill Peisander; standing over the body, he boasts, rather unexpectedly, about getting vengeance on the overweening Trojans for abusing his hospitality and stealing his wife (13.620–27). Thus even Menelaus sees Peisander as a kind of substitute for Paris/Alexander. Incidentally, another Peisander had been slain by the other Atreid, Agamemnon, with comparable justice: that man's father, Antimachus, had opposed returning Helen with the hope of being rewarded by Alexander (11.122–25).

Other Trojans who fight Menelaus provide a similar measure of poetic justice. His first victim, **Scam-andrius**, is distinguished as a gifted archer. But, with fitting paronomasia, this son of Strophius, "Turner," is hit in the back while retreating. Further victims include **Hyper-enor**, "Overweeningly Manly"; and Euphorbus, "Good Shepherd," whom other scholars have seen as a partial doublet for Paris (e.g., Richard Janko). Though Menelaus had failed to draw blood in the poem's first armed encounter, now he is permitted to wound another Priamid, **Helenus**, in another kind of duel, with both warriors releasing weapons simultaneously. This wounding is profoundly symbolic, not simply because the Greek spear is aptly driven through the Trojan hand into the bow that had shot an errant arrow, but also because Helenus' name recalls his brother's original offense, the abduction of Helen. Shortly thereafter, Menelaus is attacked by a certain **Harpalion**, identified as a guest friend of Paris; his death at the hands of Meriones ironically angers the Trojan prince, the paradigmatic offender of hospitality. Harpalion's name ("Snatcher"?) might seem related, at least through folk etymology, to *harpazô* ("to snatch, steal"), which was actually used for the first time in the poem by Paris to describe his stealing of Menelaus' wife (cf. 3.444).