Achilles and Paternal *kleos*

In this paper, I argue that Kleopatra and Patroklos center the Homeric auditor, and later the reader, on the importance of paternal κλέος within the poem. Achilles' actions in book 22-4 are rooted not merely in anger, but also in his role as surrogate for his father, recovering ancestral armor and avenging wrongs against members of the οἶκος.

Ancient Greece was, of course, intensely patriarchal. On one level, Homer's frequent use of patronymics and πατήρ merely meet expectation. But there is more to this picture. Though patriarchal, the *Iliad's* 48 references to πάτρα and πατρίς also point to the ancestral homeland as that at which any hope of νόστος must aim. So too, the items marked as πατρῷος. These are far fewer in number and most point to the warrior as current bearer of a family's kingly and martial tradition. Agamemnon bears a πατρώιον σκῆπτρον (2.46, 186). Diomedes displays πατρῷιον μένος (5.125). Diomedes and Glaukos are bound to each other as ξεῖνοι πατρώιοι (6.215, 231). Achilles carries a πατρώιον ἔγχος (19.387). The remaining two examples evoke the aforementioned bond between νόστος and ancestral land: Iphition's death as loss of πατρώιον τέμενος (20.391) and Lykaon's ill-fortuned return to πατρώιον δῶμα (21.44).

The most concise synthesis of these ideas appears in Hektor's response to Andromache, where he rejects the safety of home to fight in the front ranks, "striving for my both my father's great glory and for my own (ἀρνύμενος πατρός τε μέγα κλέος ἠδ᾽ ἐμὸν αὐτοῦ, 6.446)." More important, however, is the degree to which this theme is mirrored in two probable innovations of the *Iliad*: Kleopatra's replacement of Atlanta within the Meleagar myth of book 9 (Gantz, 329-30) and broad expansion of Patroklos' role within the narrative (Burgess 46). Existing scholarship on the father-son relationship tends to address the nurturing roll of the parent (see

Pratt 25 n. 2 for bibliography). But barring tragedy, children also owe a debt of reciprocity to their aging parents (Pratt 33), and this includes not merely physical upkeep, but also maintenance of ancestral κλέος. Just as Hektor is concerned with his father's glory, so Sarpedon's *parainesis* to Glaukon starts with their inherited τέμενος and other honors in Lycia (12.310-4). Nestor's sons fight in his name because he is too old to do so. Likewise, Achilles bears his father's armor and commands the Myrmidons (22.196-7).

Attention to this aspect of the poem helps clarify Achilles' motives for return to battle. Without rejecting his emotional bond to Patroklos as φίλτατος ἑταῖρος (17.411, 655), we must also recognize the familial duties incumbent upon the hero. As with Phoenix, Peleus had received Patroklos into his οἶκος after homicide (23.82-92), essentially offering protection and readmission to society in exchange for Patroklos' service. Because of Achilles' choices, his father's protectee now lies dead. Achilles briefly failed his father's final instruction "to always be best and be pre-eminent beyond others" (αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων, 11.784). Moreover, his father's divine armor – another likely Homeric invention (Heath 389) – is now in the possession of Hektor. In the honor-bound world of the *Iliad*, these problems have a ready solution, but its embrace means the hero's knowing acceptance of imminent death.

In book 9, Phoenix answered Achilles' proposal of return to Phthia with a myth that initially emphasizes Meleager's attachment to Kleopatra as a distraction from duty (9.555-7) but concludes with the hero fighting at her supplication (9.590-9). Similarly, after Achilles' withdrawal over τιμή andκλέος, the death of Patroklos eventually compels Achilles to renounce his anger at Agamemnon and return, though without loss of the promised gifts, unlike Meleager. Phoenix' re-orientation of paternal κλέος anticipates these events of books 16-19 and the close bond of familial and personal honor that drives them.

Book 24 provides the capstone to this motif. Ring composition underscores the paternal role, inviting comparison of Chryses/Priam and Agamemnon/Achilles. Unlike Agamemnon, Achilles proves capable of finding common humanity with his suppliant, a fitting end to the quasi-divine frenzy of an *aristeia*. The moment clearly relies upon the parallels between Peleus and Priam. More important, however, it also requires that the hero recognize his own similitude to Hektor. Each made a poor strategic decision due to overconfidence in divine favor. Each faced a choice between αἰδώς or personal/paternal κλέος as a result. And neither – indeed, no good Homeric warrior – willingly chooses infamy.

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