A Typical Ending: Closure in the *Aristeiai* of Diomedes and Achilles

Existing scholarship on the encounter between Glaukos and Diomedes in *Iliad* 6 focuses largely on its psychology, use of mythology, and gift-exchange (see Scodel 2011: 315 for brief bibliography). In this paper I argue that the placement of the encounter within Diomedes' *aristeia* is itself a key indicator of its function within the *Iliad*. The dissolution of battle-fury through re-engagement with human bonds of reciprocity prefigures the denouement of Achilles' *aristeia* in books 23-24.

Lang (1995: 154-8) has already noted that the two heroes share many of the bonds of characterization, action, and divine patronage. Her work, however, does not consider these parallels within the context of the *aristeia* as typical-scene. Full consideration of this element is beyond the scope of the present paper, which is limited to the question of closure. As analyzed by Krischer (1971: 59-75), one would expect either the injury/death of the hero or an end to his *aristeia* once the body of the vanquished was removed from the battlefield. Despite the defeat and disappearance of first Aeneas (5.311-8) and then Ares (5.853-70), Diomedes' *aristeia* continues into book 6 and the hero's encounter with Glaucus. Agamemnon is wounded. Patroclus dies. Of the major *aristeia* episodes, only Diomedes, like Achilles, lives through his final encounter, thus bringing into focus the question of how one returns from the heighted, semi-divine state of battle fury to the community of normal warriors. The encounter with Glaucus is, I argue, critical in this regard. In recognizing the demands of ancestral reciprocity, Diomedes focus moves from killing and battle back into the world of mortal bonds and gift-exchange, a shift that is sealed in the exchange of armor.

Insofar as Achilles' wrath, battle-fury, and *aristeia* are the greatest in the *Iliad*, it is only fitting that, in his case, the resolution be greatly extended; nevertheless, the key element of closure remains the same. By *Iliad* 21, his fury, as previously with Diomedes, has risen to such a pitch that he battles deities, first Xanthus then Apollo. In Achilles' case, however, the encounter with Hector cannot serve an immediate path to resolution in the manner of Glaucus. Hector must die, for both Patroclus' and the performative tradition's sakes. But after his death, the poem returns intensely to bonds of mortal reciprocity. Patroclus' ghost begs for burial in a common urn, an appeal deeply rooted in his status as a protected suppliant in Peleus' house (23.82-90). While honoring Patroclus' death and foreshadowing Achilles' own, the games that follow also draw Achilles back into the mortal sphere of reciprocating prowess through gifts, though as host and not yet participant. But when a quarrel over prizes erupts following the chariot race, he acts swiftly to arbitrate and honor all parties with gifts (23.481 ff, esp. 555-65). In addition to mirroring earlier interventions both divine and human (Richardson: 223), the scene draws Achilles into mortal actions and stands in marked contrast to Agamemnon's disastrous mishandling of *gerata* in *Iliad* 1. Priam's visitation in book 24 then brings the poem full circle (Richardson: 5), framing its ending just as its beginning, with a father supplicating to ransom his child. Achilles' response is partly due to divine command (24.77-119). But his willingness to yield and accept Priam's ransom can also be read as a capstone to the pattern or re-engagement with mortal bonds already foreshadowed by Diomedes and developed through the games.

Such reading allows us to extend Kirk's efforts to push back against the extremes of the old analyst and unitarian debates (1983: 19 ff.) and provides more specificity to Benardete's observations about Diomedes as pattern for ways of killing and dying in the *Iliad* (2000: 50). More important, it suggests that the closure of the poem evokes questions about a warrior's

ability to return and reintegrate into society after an *aristeia* worthy of Homeric *kleos*, a line of thought that leads naturally to the next epics in the Cycle.

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