“I will not give up my status”[1]

The value of the mare in *Iliad* 23

Ancient Greek black-figure painting made by Sophilos, 580 – 570 BCE.
It depicts the Greek heroes watching the chariot race at the funeral games of Patroclus.
Inscription: ΠΑΤΡΟΚΛΥΣ ΑΤΛΑ ΣΟΦΙΛΟΣ ΜΕΓΡΑΨΕΝ. ‘Games for Patroklos, Sophilos painted me’.

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ResMA Thesis *Classics and Ancient Civilizations*
Academic Year 2016/2017

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August 2017

[1] The title of this thesis is an adaptation of *Il.* 23. 553: τὴν δ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐ δώσω· *But I will not give her* [the mare] *up.*

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Introduction

In book 23 of the *Iliad* Achilles honors his fallen friend Patroclus by organizing funeral games. These games consist of eight events of which one is a chariot race. Of the 640 verses devoted to all the events the chariot race covers more than half of them– an indication that this race might be of great significance.[2] The allocation of the prizes during the award ceremony of the race causes a commotion among the contestants, not in the last place because the course of the race itself remarkable. Eumelus, who has the fastest horses, finishes last. The best charioteer, Diomedes, wins the race and the inexperienced Antilochus, surprisingly, finishes in second place – yet in a questionable manner. The eminent Menelaus finishes third followed by Meriones. Due to the interference of gods and the reckless behavior of Antilochus the outcome of the race was not as expected. The reputation of these heroes as charioteers do not correspond with the places they finished in, which makes the awarding of the prizes even more chaotic. Although Antilochus finished second Achilles, as the distributor of the prizes, proposes to grant Eumelus with the second prize nonetheless. He wants to honor Eumelus' renowned reputation as a charioteer which in turn provoked the anger of Antilochus. Achilles respects Antilochus' request to not deprive him of the prize that was appointed to the place he finished in, a pregnant mare. Now Menelaus, Antilochus' superior, objects because Antilochus had overtaken Menelaus by a dangerous maneuver which forced Menelaus to slow down his horses in order not to crash. Although Antilochus was furious about being robbed of his mare a moment ago, he now easily gives up the horse to Menelaus. Even more noteworthy is that Menelaus in turn gives back the mare as soon as Antilochus has given him the reins of the horse in his hands. In the end, this exchange of the mare has not made a difference in the allocation of the mare at all.

This chaotic award ceremony and the commotion around the prizes is puzzling. Why are both Antilochus and Menelaus initially extremely eager to obtain the mare and subsequently equally eager to give her up so suddenly once they have obtained her? That heroes are not interested in het "material" value but rather in her symbolical value is obvious. But how does symbolical value work and how is this value determined? It seems that some dimensions of the situation elude the modern reader, in particular the significance of "giving", "receiving", "distributing", "giving up" and "giving back"—

[2] *Il.* 23. 262 – 652. Cf. RICHARDSON (1993) 164.

mechanisms that are perceived, conceptualized and evaluated differently by a Homeric audience than by a 21st-century reader. It is these mechanisms that constitute the value of the mare—the prize at the center of the conflict, that is subsequently so easily given up. Read along these lines, the significance of the award ceremony in *Iliad* 23 may go beyond a plain report of an allocation of prizes at an athletic context: it may be part of a larger poetic structure constituted by concepts of "giving", "receiving", "value" and "social value" that reflects the way social relationships are formed, legitimized and negotiated throughout the *Iliad*.

In this thesis I will subject this structure to analysis and unravel the social mechanisms that constitute the value of the mare in *Iliad* 23. In order to answer the main question of how the Homeric heroes constitute the value of the mare in *Iliad* 23, socio-economic and cultural aspects of the Homeric life need to be elucidated in advance. In the first chapter I discuss the capacity of objects to carry detailed information with them. An important aspect of how material objects are valued by Homeric heroes is this capacity to keep the memory of a hero alive. Since the heroes are concerned with their status and reputation in both the present and after their death, the entanglement of their identity with an object makes the memory of him everlasting. The sum of encounters between object and the heroes that successively obtained, owned and gave away the object is what was introduced by the anthropologist KOPYTOFF (1986) as the cultural biography of objects – a notion applied to Homeric epic by, amongst others, CRIELAARD (2003/ 2008) has applied this theory to Homeric epic in order to gain a better understanding of the role of material goods in structuring the social life of Homeric heroes. I will argue that, although the mare in *Iliad* 23 has no such biography, the heroes are fully aware of its ability to preserve their reputation. In the exchange of the horse, we not only see Antilochus and Menelaus preoccupied with their place in its cultural biography; as the audience, we are witnessing the very process of the *creation* of this biography and of a competition between two heroes, eager to be on top of the biography.

The conflict over the mare closely resembles the main conflict of the *Iliad* between Achilles and Agamemnon. Since the course of their conflict cover the majority of the *Iliad,* the material to analyze the underlying motivations of the conflict is significantly more than the conflict in *Iliad* 23. The unmistakable lexical and thematical parallels between both conflicts evoke the macro-level conflict while reading the micro-

level conflict between Antilochus and Menelaus. Reading book 23 along the lines of the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon and recognizing the similarities between the conflicts provides us a more articulate understanding of *Iliad* 23 and, in particular, of the conflict over the mare. Both conflicts center around status and shifting social relationships. These status conflicts are fought by means of the exchange of gifts. The vague boundaries and conditions of the exchange are prone to alteration that in turn is used by the heroes to frame the exchange in the most benefitable way for their own reputation. By using the socio-economic theories of MALINOWSKI (2014[1922]), MAUSS (1990 [1925]), POLANYI (2001[1944]) and SAHLINS (1972), arguing that economy is embedded in the culture of a society, we can examine the underlying motivations of giving and receiving objects and what it means to give or take. VON REDEN (2003 [1995]) and VAN WEES (1992) both show that the modi of reciprocity and redistribution in the Homeric social order can be framed in order to produce relationships (cooperative exchange) but it can also create a hierarchy between the receiver and the giver (competitive exchange). The competitive aspect of gift-giving is analyzed by BATAILLE (1988) and WOLF (1999) in their studies about the *potlatch* – a ritual destruction of wealth and a practice that, as I will argue, operates on motivations very similar to those underlying Agamemnon's extravagant act of gift-giving towards Achilles.

In the final chapter I will apply the conclusions of the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the protection of status to the conflict between Antilochus and Agamemnon in order to determine the value of the mare. The indisputable similarities between *Iliad* 1 and *Iliad* 23 in general and the conflict over the mare in particular subsequently emphasize the contrast with the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon. As KITCHELL (1989), DONLAN (1993) and BIERL (forthcoming) have argued, book 23 reflects upon the main conflict of the *Iliad* and is therefore of significant importance for the understanding of the *Iliad* in its totality. Moreover, this book illustrates that conflicts over status can be solved easily when all parties know their place in the hierarchy and when there is an appropriate arbiter who controls the intensity of the rivalry. Yet, the penultimate book illustrates that competitions over status never stop in the life of a Homeric hero and that these conflicts are always fought by means of the exchange of objects. In order to protect one's own status the heroes will always attempt to frame the exchange whereby the value of the object shifts constantly due to the situation in which it is given.

With this thesis I pursue to elucidate the conflict between Antilochus and

Menelaus. This can only be attained when we consider the conflict as a part of a larger system in which status and the ability to resolve such conflicts play a significant role. Moreover, it must be seen as one conflict in a series of similar conflicts, including the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon and as one of the many passages in which is reflected upon the conflict of Achilles and Agamemnon. Besides explaining how the value of the mare is constituted I will also argue that book 23 of the *Iliad* is indispensable if we want to thoroughly understand and value poetics of the *Iliad*. Analysis along these lines will elucidate the ways in which *Iliad* 23 offers, in a sense, a demonstration of how heroes can frame an exchange in order to manipulate the symbolical value of an object in order to defend and increase their status, yet without letting the status rivalry escalate to destructive proportions.

Chapter 1
The biography of the mare

1.1 THE BIOGRAPHY OF OBJECTS

The notion that objects have a social life may strike the modern reader as odd. In our industrialized world material objects are produced on large scale and are mostly obtained by means of impersonal market transactions. This type of mass-produced objects are known as *commodities*: common objects with use value which can be exchanged in a discrete transaction for something of equal value.[3] One feature of this modus of transaction is the absence of obligations to the exchange partner after the exchange has taken place. The value of the transacted commodities is neither increased by the relation between the exchange partners nor by any information about the producer of the object. Sometimes, however, the producer of the object, its (previous) owner(s) and the circumstances under which the object is exchanged are so significant for the value of the object that they can be called the object's 'life events'.[4] Just like the life events of a person create his/her biography and form and redefine his/her identity, the unique combination of events concerning the object form the "life" of the object. The term "object biography" was introduced by the anthropologist KOPYTOFF.[5] He argues that the information about previous owners of an object, its whereabouts and the ages in which it was used become entangled with the object. Since this information is neatly interwoven with the artifact, merely displaying it or making mention of the object immediately evokes its biography.[6] In contrast to commodities, the biography of these objects makes them unique and increases its symbolical value. As the biography develops the meaning and value of the object change as well.[7]

I use the metaphor 'biography' to describe the information about the object's background in order to illustrate the social function of the information that is entangled

[3] KOPYTOFF (1986) 68. Cf. CRIELAARD (2003) 52.
[4] KOPYTOFF (1986) 66 – 67. Cf. CRIELAARD (2008) 199.
[5] KOPYTOFF (1986).
[6] CRIELAARD (2003) 56; (2008) 201; 206. CRIELAARD demonstrates this with the example of the narrator's digression on the biography of Odysseus' bow when Penelope sees it (*Od*. 21. 11 – 41). A contemporary example is heirlooms that can immediately evoke the relation with the previous owner(s).
[7] GOSDEN & MARSHALL (1999) 170.

with the object. "Object *history*" as an alternative term would imply the disregard of the social aspects of such objects.[8] They can be personalized as a result of singularization through the detailed and unparalleled combination of the information they possess. The more distinct these objects become as a result of the biography the more significant their role is in social contexts, as is illustrated by the scepter of Agamemnon which I will discuss below.[9]

In contrast to post-industrial European and Northern American societies, where there is a predominant use of commodities, objects with a biography play a significant role in social relationships in some other contemporary societies. One of these societies is situated in the Trobriand Islands and was made famous by the research of MALINOWSKI.[10] He examined their ceremonial exchange systems which are known as *kula*.[11] Each participant in this system is connected to two partners to whom he gives one shell in return for another. These objects are never possessed by one person for a long time in order to prohibit participants from breaking partnerships.[12] According to MALINOWSKI the articles are not desired for the purpose of actual use so that their value must be sought in another aspect.[13] The exchange itself makes the objects valuable – the shell represents the commitment to a lifelong bond with the exchange-partner. The receiver of the shell has to repay with a gift over a longer period of time in order to preserve the relationship.[14] The age of a shell indicates how many owners it has known.

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[8] GOSDEN & MARSHALL (1999) 169.

[9] Although it is a contemporary Western conception that things and people are inherently different, KOPYTOFF argues that people and objects can be two extremes of the continuum. He uses the clarifying example of slavery to demonstrate that people can also be treated as objects. On the very moment that a person had become the property of someone else he, the slave, was robbed of his former social identity: his origin, social connections and his achievements during his life did not matter anymore. From this moment on the slave had become an object and could be seen as a commodity with exchange value. Their identity was redefined along with his status with reference to the group the slave now belonged to. In this setting and in this process an individual lost his identity and was made a commodity. See KOPYTOFF (1986) 64.

[10] I will confine myself to a brief summary of the kula practice in this thesis. This exchange system is highly complex and my description will not do justice to the background and the manifold purposes of participating in the kula. For a better and more detailed understanding see among others MALINOWKI (1922[2014]) and WEINER (1992).

[11] MALINOWSKI (2014[1922]). Kula is also known as "kula exchange" or "kula ring". The latter refers to the circle in which the objects of exchange circulate.

[12] MALINOWSKI (2014[1922]) 90 – 91.

[13] MALINOWSKI (2014[1922]) 96. The Trobriand Islanders cannot be interested in the use value of the shells given the fact that the majority of these shell-bracelets are too small to wear.

[14] MALINOWSKI (2014[1922]) 103.

This makes the age one of the features of a high ranked shell.[15] The older shells are most desired since they bear many stories of their illustrious former owners. Possessing such valuable objects means that the authority of the shell is transmitted to the new owner whereby he attains a higher rank and can (re)establish his political power.[16] It is not the use value that makes these objects desirable but "they are merely possessed for the sake of possession itself, and the ownership of them with the ensuing renown is the main source of their value."[17]

In addition to the work of MALINOWSKI, WEINER emphasizes the importance of the objects' ability to entangle stories about previous owners and events with them. In this way, the shells turn into "inalienable possessions": the memory of the owner is tied to the object, even if it is given away – the paradox of keeping-while-giving.[18] The giver becomes a part of the life of the shell. Moreover, his eminence grows and spreads over the islands as a result of the constant circulation of the object.[19] By giving the shells away the memory of the owner and his reputation fuse with the object which grants the former owner a certain kind of immortality.[20] A long biography of authoritative former owners constitutes the article's value. Therefore, being a part of the biography means to share in the objects prestige in the present and grands the new owner the opportunity of eternal remembrance.

1.2 THE BIOGRAPHY OF HOMERIC OBJECTS

As scholars like BEIDELMAN, WEINER and CRIELAARD have observed, a similar behavior towards objects can be found in the Homeric social order.[21] The majority of the objects

[15] WEINER (1992) 134. Besides age, weight, length and circumference determine the rank of the bracelets and necklaces. These high ranked shells even get a name as to stress their uniqueness and importance.
[16] WEINER (1992) 133.
[17] MALINOWSKI (2014[1922]) 97; WEINER (1992) 148. Cf. HYLLAND ERIKSEN (2001) 181.
[18] WEINER (1992) 33; 145; 147; WEINER (1994) 395..
[19] The essence of this exchange system was beautifully formulated by one of the village men who was interviewed by WEINER. About his more distant partners he said the following: "They never see my face, but they know my name." WEINER (1992) 140.
[20] This is CRIELAARD's (2008: 206) explanation of WEINER's paradox, although it is not how she uses the paradox in her work. According to WEINER the *possession* of a high-ranked shell determines the rank of the player seeing that some participants try to restrain their high ranked shells from circulation. I do, however, think that CRIELAARD's perspective on the paradox of keeping-while-giving is relevant for this thesis. Cf. VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 27 and MAUSS (1990 [1925]) 16, who argued that in gifts people and objects fuse and that keeping a gift consequently means keeping a part of the giver of the gift.
[21] BEIDELMAN(1989) 231 – 232; WEINER (1992) 132; CRIELAARD (2003) 51 – 53; CRIELAARD (2008) 198 - 199.

that are described in Homeric epic are not commodities. They are closely connected with their owners and have the potential to carry a lengthy life story with them.[22] The sum of the biographies of the previous owners and the circumstances in which the object was exchanged forms the life of the Homeric artifact, just like it created the biography of the kula shells.[23]

As CRIELAARD notes, the narrative structure of the biography of objects in Homeric epic is similar to the biography of Homeric heroes.[24] CRIELAARD explains that the genealogies of important heroes can cover a number of generations just like the biography of an object can cover multiple generations of owners. A shared feature between the biography of heroes and objects might be their divine origin.[25] An exemplary genealogy with a divine origin and a long list of famous ancestors can be found in Aeneas' parentage.

Iliad 20. 215 – 240

Δάρδανον **αὖ** πρῶτον **τέκετο** νεφεληγερέτα Ζεύς,
κτίσσε δὲ Δαρδανίην, ἐπεὶ οὔ πω Ἴλιος ἱρὴ
ἐν πεδίῳ πεπόλιστο, πόλις μερόπων ἀνθρώπων,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔθ᾽ ὑπωρείας ᾤκεον πολυπίδακος Ἴδης.
Δάρδανος **αὖ τέκεθ᾽** υἱὸν Ἐριχθόνιον βασιλῆα,
ὃς δὴ ἀφνειότατος γένετο θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων·
[…]
Τρῶα δ᾽ Ἐριχθόνιος **τέκετο** Τρώεσσιν ἄνακτα·
Τρωὸς δ᾽ **αὖ** τρεῖς παῖδες ἀμύμονες **ἐξεγένοντο,**
Ἶλός τ᾽ Ἀσσάρακός τε καὶ ἀντίθεος Γανυμήδης,
ὃς δὴ κάλλιστος γένετο θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων·
τὸν καὶ ἀνηρείψαντο θεοὶ Διὶ οἰνοχοεύειν
κάλλεος εἵνεκα οἷο, ἵν᾽ ἀθανάτοισι μετείη.
Ἶλος δ᾽ **αὖ τέκεθ᾽** υἱὸν ἀμύμονα Λαομέδοντα·

At first Zeus the cloud-gatherer begat Dardanus, and he founded Dardania, for sacred Troy was not yet built in the plain as a city for articulate men but they still lived on the slopes of the many-fountained Ida. Dardanus in turn begot a son, king Erichthonius, who became the wealthiest of mortal men. […] Erichthonius begot Tros, the king of the Trojans, and of Tros in turn there were born three noble sons, Ilus, Assaracus, and godlike Ganymedes, who was the most beautiful of mortal men. The gods snatched him up and carried him off to be the cupbearer of Zeus because of his beauty cupbearer that he might be

[22] CRIELAARD (2003) 53. Generally, when the biography of an object is narrated in Homeric epic it concerns artefacts like weaponry, metal vessels and even horses. However, there are only a few objects of which the biography is actually narrated in the epics (CRIELAARD (2008) 201).
[23] CRIELAARD (2003) 54; WEINER (1992) 134.
[24] CRIELAARD (2008) 200.
[25] CRIELAARD (2003) 53 – 54; CRIELAARD (2008) 200.

Λαομέδων δ᾽ **ἄρα** Τιθωνὸν **τέκετο** Πρίαμόν τε
Λάμπόν τε Κλυτίον θ᾽ Ἱκετάονά τ᾽ ὄζον Ἄρηος·
Ἀσσάρακος δὲ Κάπυν, ὃ δ᾽ **ἄρ᾽** Ἀγχίσην **τέκε** παῖδα·
αὐτὰρ ἔμ᾽ Ἀγχίσης, Πρίαμος δ᾽ **ἔτεχ᾽** Ἕκτορα δῖον.

among the immortals. Ilus in turn begot a son, the noble Laomedon. Laomedon in turn begot Tithonus and Priam, Lampus, Clytius and Hicetaon, a servant of Ares. And Assaracus begot Capys, who in turn begot Anchises. But Anchises begot me and Priam begot the noble Hector.

Aeneas' lineage is described as a sequence of begetting sons with the repetitive use of the verbs "to conceive" or "to beget a child" (τίκτω and ἐκγίγνομαι). Each time these verbs are used they connect two sets of persons – the parent and the child. The particles αὐτάρ and ἄρα and the adverb αὖ(τε) appear in combination with the verbs, highlighting the natural sequence or transition in the enumeration.[26] The narrative structure of the biography of Agamemnon's scepter is remarkably similar to the genealogy of Aeneas.

Iliad 2. 100 – 109[27]

ἀνὰ δὲ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων
ἔστη σκῆπτρον ἔχων, τὸ μὲν Ἥφαιστος κάμε τεύχων.
Ἥφαιστος μὲν **δῶκε** Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἄνακτι,
αὐτὰρ ἄρα Ζεὺς **δῶκε** διακτόρῳ ἀργεϊφόντῃ·
Ἑρμείας δὲ ἄναξ **δῶκεν** Πέλοπι πληξίππῳ,
αὐτὰρ ὁ **αὖτε** Πέλοψ **δῶκ**᾽ Ἀτρέϊ, ποιμένι λαῶν·
Ἀτρεὺς δὲ θνήσκων **ἔλιπεν** πολύαρνι Θυέστῃ,
αὐτὰρ ὁ **αὖτε** Θυέστ᾽ Ἀγαμέμνονι **λεῖπε** φορῆναι,
πολλῆσιν νήσοισι καὶ Ἀργεϊ παντὶ ἀνάσσειν.

Then lord Agamemnon rose, bearing the scepter Hephaestus himself had forged with toil. Hephaestus gave it to king Zeus, son of Cronos, and Zeus in turn gave it to the messenger, the slayer of Argus. Lord Hermes gave it to the horse-driving Pelops, and Pelops in turn gave it to Atreus, shepherd of the people. At his death Atreus left it to Thyestes, rich in flocks, and Thyestes in turn left it to Agamemnon to bear, to be the lord of many isles and of all of Argos.

Just as the lineage of Aeneas starts with a god, Agamemnon is the sixth owner of the scepter that the god Hephaestus had made for Zeus. The narrator mentions the scepter's

[26] DENNISTON (1959) 33; 55.
[27] All Greek texts of the *Iliad* are taken from Oxford Classical Text by MONRO, D.B. & T.W. ALLEN (ed.) (1920). The translations are my own.

previous owners in a sequence of exchanges that mirrors the sequential begetting of children in Aeneas' lineage. The verbs δίδωμι (*to give*) and λείπω (*to leave to someone*) recur in each verse and connect the giver to the receiver of the object as two sets of persons. Both narratives are structured like a catalogue through the repetition of the same verb that connects the giver/parent to the receiver/child. Moreover, just like the particles in the parentage illustrate its natural sequence, the use of the identical particles in the cultural biography of the scepter emphasize the natural transition of the object to someone else.

The biographies of persons do not merely enlist a number of names. They include details about each person's life, his important deeds and his death. This is what happens in the biography of an object as well: it is not the list of names that is emphasized but rather the additional information that is given about each person's life – the sum of short biographies of a hero's predecessors and the past owners of an object.[28] The appearance of Aeneas and the display of the scepter in the poem form the motivation for recalling its genealogy. By looking at Aeneas we simultaneously look at his parentage. Equally, by looking at or hearing about the scepter, we are reminded of its renowned biography. The divine origin and the (long list of) previous owners add to the importance of the object, just as a famous parentage increases the status of a hero.

The contemporary example of heirlooms demonstrates that we still attach significant value to objects that remind us of the persons who owned them once. Inherited objects are a good example of physical reminders of a person since they frequently invite people to recall stories about their previous owners. Because the biography of the past owner is entangled with the heirloom, the object becomes a palpable reminder of the past – the memory of a person lives on in the object. This is one of the reasons why the next of kin often find it difficult to throw away belongings of, for instance, a deceased relative. In the same way, losing a heirloom causes more misery than losing a commodity. Such goods cannot be replaced since its symbolical value has been lost along with the object.

Circulation of such an object means that the biography of the artifact becomes more layered, which in turn increases its value.[29] CRIELAARD shows that the object's

[28] CRIELAARD (2003) 54; CRIELAARD (2008) 200 – 201.
[29] CRIELAARD (2003) 56.

capability to incorporate the owner's identity and status is of significant importance to Homeric heroes.[30] To possess such an object means that the hero obtains the same eminence as the object whereby he can preserve or even enhance his status in the social order by presenting himself as the owner of that object. Yet, following the paradox op keeping-while-giving, giving the object away grants the hero the opportunity to live on in the object. By passing it on, the hero incorporates himself in the object's biography as a previous owner which might effectuate the preservation of his memory even after his death.

When a Homeric object is endowed with a lengthy and detailed biography its description often consists of recurring elements.[31] A clear example in which these standard ingredients are used for the composition of the biography is the silver krater of Patroclus.[32] The narrator tells us that Achilles offers this mixing bowl as one of the prizes for the funeral games.

Iliad 23. 740 – 749

Πηλεΐδης δ᾽ αἶψ᾽ ἄλλα τίθει ταχυτῆτος ἄεθλα,
ἀργύρεον κρητῆρα, τετυγμένον· ἓξ δ᾽ἄρα μέτρα
χάνδανεν, αὐτὰρ κάλλει ἐνίκα πᾶσαν ἐπ᾽ αἶαν
πολλόν, ἐπεὶ Σιδόνες πολυδαίδαλοι εὖ ἤσκησαν,
Φοίνικες δ᾽ ἄγον ἄνδρες ἐπ᾽ ἠεροειδέα πόντον,
στῆσαν δ᾽ ἐν λιμένεσσι, Θόαντι δὲ δῶρον ἔδωκαν·
υἱος δὲ Πριάμοιο Λυκάονος ὦνον ἔδωκε
Πατρόκλῳ ἥρωϊ Ἰησονίδης Εὔνηος.
καὶ τὸν Ἀχιλλεὺς θῆκεν ἀέθλιον οὖ ἑτάροιο,
ὅς τις ἐλαφρότατος ποσσὶ κραιπνοῖσι πέλοιτο·

Then the son of Peleus immediately set forth other prizes for swiftness of foot: a well-made silver mixing bowl; it held six measures, and in beauty it was the best in the whole world, since the Sidonians who work with great skill, had made it marvelously. Phoenician merchants brought it to the dark sea and placed it on the harbor and they gave it as a gift to Thoas. Euneus, the son of Jason, gave it as a price for Lycaon, the son of Priam to the hero Patroclus. And Achilles offered it as a prize in tribute to his friend, whoever should prove to be the most nimble in running.

The narrator starts the account of the biography by mentioning the physical and

[30] CRIELAARD (2003), CRIELAARD (2008).
[31] The standard elements are the object's material, measure, uniqueness, producers, origin, owners and the circumstances in which it was exchanged CRIELAARD (2008) 200. Cf. TSAGALIS (2012) 406 – 407.
[32] This example is used by CRIELAARD (2008: 200) to demonstrate the typical features of the composition of object biographies in Homeric epic.

material features of the object: the krater is made of silver (*material* – ἀργύρεον κρητῆρα), it holds six measures (*measure* – ἓξ δ'ἄρα μέτρα) and it is the most beautiful thing in the world (*exclusivity* – κάλλει ἐνίκα πᾶσαν ἐπ' αἶαν πολλόν). He continues by naming the producers of the artefact (Σιδόνες πολυδαίδαλοι εὖ ἤσκησαν) and concludes the biographical description by listing the object's previous owners and the transactions of the krater. First, the Phoenician merchants bring the mixing bowl to Lemnos and present it as a gift to king Thoas (Φοίνικες ἄνδρες δῶρον ἔδωκαν). Then, after Thoas' grandson Euneus had become the owner of the mixing bowl, he exchanges the object with Patroclus for the Trojan prince Lycaon, who was made a prisoner in turn (ἔδωκε Πατρόκλῳ ἥρωϊ Εὔνηος). During the funeral games, Achilles offers the mixing bowl as the first prize in the foot-race as a remembrance of Patroclus (Ἀχιλλεὺς θῆκεν ἀέθλιον). Odysseus wins the contest and thereby places himself in the illustrious list of owners of the silver mixing bowl.[33]

These above-mentioned features are the standard ingredients of an object's biography. They indicate that we are dealing with a biography.[34] Although the beauty of the material or craftsmanship is emphasized, the unique link of owners is what makes the object one of a kind. Adding the list of past owners to the object's biography indicates that this was considered a significant part of the object's value.[35] As the passage on Patroclus' mixing bowl demonstrates, the mention or display of the object forms a suitable starting point to digress on the aspects that makes the object unique and thereby valuable. Like the presence of a hero can form the trigger to narrate his biography, the presentation of an object can cause the recital of the object's past owners.[36] The object functions as a remembrance of someone or some event: when Achilles gives a prize from the chariot-race to Nestor, he explicitly states that the object must be considered as a μνῆμα.[37] The prize is a tangible reminder of Patroclus. It even

[33] *Il.* 23. 777 – 778.
[34] Since the *narrator* recalls the biography of the object it is implied that the internal audience consisting of Greek heroes was familiar with the life of the silver mixing bowl.
[35] Cf. WHITLEY (2016) 397.
[36] The biography of an object is regularly told by the narrator: in *Iliad* 23 there are only two out of five occasions where a character recalls a biography. In both of these cases it is Achilles who is referring to the biography of the weaponry he took from Asteropaeus who was defeated by him in *Iliad* 21. See also p. 15 – 17. Cf. CRIELAARD (2008) 201.
[37] Achilles offers a prize to Nestor although he cannot participate in the funeral games due to his age τῇ νῦν, καὶ σοὶ τοῦτο γέρον κειμήλιον ἔστω/ Πατρόκλοιο τάφου μνῆμ᾽ ἔμμεναι· οὐ γὰρ ἔτ᾽ αὐτὸν/ ὄψῃ ἐν

takes over Patroclus' identity to a certain extent: the object substitutes a person and adepts his biography as its own.[38] However, the object is not solely connected to one person. The sum of all individual owners and the characteristics of their lives forms the biography of the object. What connects these people to each other is the object by means of the exchange, as is made lexically visible by the verbs ἔδωκαν (v. 21. 545) and ἔδωκε (v. 21. 546) that grammatically connect the giver with the receiver. This incomparable sum of biographical information is what gives the object its symbolical valuable.[39]

But did the Greeks of the late Dark Age and early Archaic period really think along the lines of object biography? Or is this rather a literary phenomenon? It is important to bear in mind that we are unable to answer this question with certainty. Yet, the following observations suggest that it is plausible that the Greeks indeed were accustomed to think in terms of object biography.

The description of Patroclus' mixing bowl is a classic example of an object biography with a standard narrative structure. Yet, a significant number of Homeric artifacts only have short background story or have no biography at all. The characteristics of the narrative of a biography, however, indicate that we deal with the biography of an object and that the audience might have to bring back to mind the object's biography *themselves*. By giving some cues of the biography, the narrator invites the audience to complete the biography of the object. CRIELAARD rightly states that the life histories of objects are so neatly intertwined with the actions of the Homeric heroes

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Ἀργείοισι· *Take it now, my honorable lord, and let this treasure be granted to be a remembrance of the funeral of Patroclus for you, since you shall never see him again among the Argives.* (*Il.* 23. 618 – 620). Cf. GRETHLEIN (2014) 38.

[38] Cf. WHITLEY (2016) 397. The biography of objects must not be confused with ekphraseis, following the definition of ekphrasis as preferred by KOOPMAN (2014: 5) that ekphrasis is a verbal representation of a visual representation. The purpose of the object's biography differs from the purpose of an ekphrasis. In contrast to the biography, ekphrasis foremost deals with creating an *image* with words (KOOPMAN 2014: 3). For instance, the description of the cup of Patroclus evokes the *memory* of a person rather than the actual *image* in terms of the physical features of the cup or the persons involved in the transactions. Moreover, ekphrasis is the narration of images that are depicted *on* objects whereas in this case the stories about persons are entangled *with* the object (KOOPMAN 2016: 206). As KOOPMAN argues, ekphraseis are often narrated in a descriptive discourse in which the typical tense is the imperfect. This tense indicates a state or an ongoing event in order to make the image vivid. The tense that is frequently used for the description of the biography of an object is the aorist in order to designate a chain of completed events. Besides the difference in tense, the contrast with the diegetic discourse mode, as used for biographies, can also be found in the textual progression. Whereas the descriptive discourse mode progresses spatially the progress of the diegetic discourse mode is temporal which can be indicated by the adverbs (KOOPMAN 2014: 59-60; KOOPMAN 2016: 203). These are the main differences of biographies with ekphraseis (e.g. the shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18. 478 – 608)). For a more detailed examination of the definition and the common features of ekphrasis see KOOPMAN (2014) 2 – 16.

[39] CRIELAARD (2003) 56.

that the intended audience must have been familiar with the idea that objects carry social information with them and that they were of great importance to the characters.[40] That the phenomenon of thinking about the biography of an object is self-evident not only in pre-Classical Greece can be demonstrated by examples from contemporary societies. Relics like Saint Veronica's veil with Jesus' face and parts of Jesus' cross, jewelry of royals, the "Beat It" stage-worn jacket of Michael Jackson all immediately evoke the memory of the person(s) and events related to the object. Thinking in terms of object biography thus seems to be a phenomenon that transcends boundaries in time and culture. Subsequently, people naturally value these special objects because of their biography.

The timelessness of naturally recalling an object's past is mirrored in the composition of the *Iliad* as well. The *Iliad* was produced as oral poetry in a performance in which the singer (ἀοιδός) of the tales worked together with his audience. The actions of the Homeric characters were thus established by a collaboration of the poet and the audience and were shaped after social structures and norms of behavior of this "living social order".[41] Parts of the epic could easily be added, left out or revised depending on the needs and understandings of the audience. According to SHERRATT, some parts of the epic were more prone to such alteration than others "in order to dress it in more recognizably contemporary garb".[42] "Retrospectives", which she defines as "passages which emphasize the genealogy or pedigree of a particular character or object", were for example less susceptible to be transformed.[43] It is plausible that the descriptions of object biographies were less likely to be modified since it seems to be such a natural way of thinking about objects, as the examples in the previous paragraph have shown. If we follow the argument that Homeric epic was shaped after the ways of thinking of its audience and that the narratives of biography did not alter, it is reasonable to believe

[40] CRIELAARD (2008) 198.
[41] DONLAN (1993) 157 - 159. He characterizes the collaboration between singer and audience as a dialogue in which the singer could respond to the cultural, ethical and literary expectations of his audience. See pp. 157 – 159 for the discussion of the Homeric social order as a reflection of the society of the audience.
[42] SHERRATT (1990) 813. Speeches, similes and incidental description were more likely to be changed depending on the needs and expectations of the contemporary audience.
[43] SHERRATT (1990) 813. Although biographies seem to be less adaptable, I do, however, think that the singer of Homeric epic could decide on which biography he elaborated and for which he only gave some cues. By giving the indicators of the biography, the audience was naturally inclined to complete the biography. This reflects the strategies of the singer – not dwelling on some biographies, but evoking them nonetheless – as well as the ways of dealing with objects of the Homeric social order itself and as the reflection of the society of the audience.

that both the heroes in the *Iliad* and the audience of all times think in terms of object biography. These descriptions are dressed in a "timeless garb" and demand no significant changes since object biography seems to be a timeless phenomenon. Both the analogy with different cultures through different times and our comprehension of (the creation of) epic poetry seem to suggest that the Homeric audience thought in terms of object biography and that they valued objects because of it.

A clarifying example where the audience has to *fill in* the biography of an object can be found in the description of the breastplate of Asteropaeus. Achilles gives this corselet as a substitute prize to Eumelus in the award ceremony after the chariot race.

Iliad 23. 560 – 562

δώσω οἱ θώρηκα, τὸν Ἀστεροπαῖον ἀπηύρων,	*I will give him the bronze breastplate that I*
χάλκεον, ᾧ πέρι χεῦμα φαεινοῦ κασσιτέροιο	*stripped from Asteropaeus, around which an*
ἀμφιδεδίνηται· πολέος δέ οἱ ἄξιος ἔσται.	*overlay of shining tin circles. It will be of much*
	value to him.

Although Achilles alludes to the narrative of a biography by giving two aspects of its general structure, he does recall the biography of the breastplate. Yet, by saying "τὸν Ἀστεροπαῖον ἀπηύρων" (v. 560), Achilles evokes the biography of the corselet nonetheless: these words clearly remind us of the scene in which Achilles kills Asteropaeus. The omission of an extensively narrated biography might be on purpose. By withholding additional but unforgettable information about the fight between the heroes, these blanks are emphasized.[44] The audience must have certainly remembered the duel in *Iliad* 21 and the despoliation of Asteropaeus.[45] Achilles, the most important hero of the Greeks, took away Asteropaeus' weaponry which immediately increases the value of the corselet. Since the despoliation is such a memorable event, leaving this

[44] Although I do not fully agree with TSAGALIS (2012: 393) who argued that the emphasis on the material of the breastplate suggests that the value of the breastplate lies in the relation with Achilles' defeat of Asteropaeus, I do think that in this passage highlighting only two aspects of the biography put focus on what is not told by Achilles because the audience expects this information that is left out. The audience knows what happened during his battle with Asteropaeus and he mention of his name will consequently bring these details in remembrance.

[45] Both the internal and external audience. The external audience had learned about Asteropaeus, the fight with Achilles and the despoil only two books ago. I assume that the internal audience knew this as well, since it was one of Achilles' most remarkable fights: the last one before Hector and it was a fight against the god Scamander.

information untold is unexpected and is thereby even more accentuated.[46] This particular duel was even more unforgettable since Asteropaeus was Achilles' last major enemy in a series of battles before he defeated his greatest rival Hector.[47] Asteropaeus was not just some hero, as the following passages clearly show.

Iliad 21. 162 – 167

ὃ δ᾽ ἁμαρτῇ δούρασιν ἀμφὶς
ἥρως Ἀστεροπαῖος, ἐπεὶ περιδέξιος ἦεν.
καί ῥ᾽ ἑτέρῳ μὲν δουρὶ σάκος βάλεν, οὐδὲ διαπρὸ
ῥῆξε σάκος· χρυσὸς γὰρ ἐρύκακε, δῶρα θεοῖο·
τῷ δ᾽ ἑτέρῳ μιν πῆχυν ἐπιγράβδην βάλε χειρὸς
δεξιτερῆς, σύτο δ᾽ αἷμα κελαινεφές· […]

But the hero Asteropaeus hurled his own two spears at the same time, being skilled with either hand. His one spear struck the shield of Achilles but it did not break through, because the gold, the god's gift, held it back. The other spear struck his forearm, scraping the surface of his right arm, so the black blood gushed forth.

Iliad 21. 177 – 183

τὸ δὲ τέτρατον ἤθελε θυμῷ
ἄξαι ἐπιγνάμψας δόρυ μείλινον Αἰακίδαο,
ἀλλὰ πρὶν Ἀχιλεὺς σχεδὸν ἄορι θυμὸν ἀπηύρα.
γαστέρα γάρ μιν τύψε παρ᾽ ὀμφαλόν, ἐκ δ᾽ ἄρα πᾶσαι
χύντο χαμαὶ χολάδες· τὸν δὲ σκότος ὄσσε κάλυψεν
ἀσθμαίνοντ᾽· Ἀχιλεὺς δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ ἐνὶ στήθεσσιν ὀρούσας
τεύχεά τ᾽ ἐξενάριξε […]

The fourth time he [Asteropaeus] *wanted to break the ashen spear of Aeacus' son by bending it, but before he could do so, Achilles, being near to him, took away his life with his sword. He stroke him in his belly by the navel, and from it his guts poured out on the ground. And darkness covered his eyes as he lay gasping for breath. Achilles rushed forward to his chest and stripped him of his armor.*

[46] Achilles puts even more focus on his act of despoiling Asteropaeus since he has turned the standard narrative structure of a biography upside down: he starts with remembering that he took the breastplate of Asteropaeus [transaction] and concludes with its material features. Of course, this is the most important information about the breastplate according to Achilles himself. Starting with this biographical aspect underscores the narrative that never comes: Achilles' braveness during his fight with Asteropaeus and Scamander. Moreover, the only occasions in which Achilles narrates the biography of an object instead of the narrator in *Iliad* 23 are in the passages which involve the weaponry of Asteropaeus: *Il.* 23. 560 – 562; *Il.* 23. 807 – 808.

[47] RICHARDSON (1993) 66; 229 – 230 ad loc. 560 – 562. The whole figure of Asteropaeus stands out through the contrast with the Trojan Lycaon whom Achilles killed before just before he murdered Asteropaeus. Lycaon was "utterly helpless from the start" as RICHARDSON points out. In addition to his outstanding qualities, the contrast with Lycaon makes the character of Asteropaeus even more marked.

We learn that Asteropaeus is distinguished in battle because of his ambidexterity and that he is the only one who succeeds in making Achilles bleed.[48] This makes Asteropaeus an even more outstanding and memorable figure. Moreover, the presence of and reference to the breastplate must have triggered the audience to recall the lineage of Asteropaeus. His biography is told by the narrator a moment before the actual fight with Achiles starts. Achilles then asks him who he is and where he comes. Asteropaeus' answer runs as follows.[49]

Iliad 21. 153 – 160

Πηλεΐδη μεγάθυμε, τίη γενεὴν ἐρεείνεις;
εἶμ᾽ ἐκ Παιονίης ἐριβώλου, τηλόθ᾽ ἐούσης,
Παίονας ἄνδρας ἄγων δολιχεγχέας· ἦδε δέ μοι νῦν
ἠὼς ἑνδεκάτη, ὅτε Ἴλιον εἰλήλουθα.
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γενεὴ ἐξ Ἀξιοῦ εὐρὺ ῥέοντος,
Ἀξιοῦ, ὃς κάλλιστον ὕδωρ ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἵησιν,
ὃς τέκε Πηλεγόνα κλυτὸν ἔγχεϊ· τὸν δ᾽ ἐμέ φασι
γείνασθαι·

Great-hearted son of Peleus, why do you ask of my lineage? I come from fertile Paeonia, a far-off land, leading the Paeonians with their long spears. This is now the eleventh day for me since I arrived in Troy. But my descent is from the wide-flowing Axius. Axius who pours forth the loveliest water over the land, who begot Pelegon, famed for his spear. They say that he was my father.

What is striking is that Asteropaeus never reveals his own name to Achilles in answering his question of who he is.[50] As becomes clear from the frequency of a similar response of Homeric characters on this question of Achilles, the identity of a hero is mainly based on his parentage.[51] The characters are not interested in the hero's own name but foremost to whom they "belong".[52] The same behavior can be found in valuing an object: it is the

[48] He is the only hero in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* who could throw the spear with either hand. Moreover, by wounding Achilles as such that it draws blood from his wound, he reminds Achilles and the audience of Achilles' mortality. RICHARDSON (1993) 66. Cf. Schol. Hom. 21. 166 (A): ὑπὸ μόνου δὲ τούτου ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς τιτρώσκεται. *Because of only this one [spear] Achilles was wounded.*

[49] *Il.* 21. 150. τίς πόθεν εἰς ἀνδρῶν ὅ μευ ἔτλης ἀντίος ἐλθεῖν; *Who are you and where are you from, you who dares to come against me?*

[50] RICHARDSON (1993) 67 ad loc. 152 – 160. RICHARDSON remarks that it "would be unnecessary" for Asteropaeus to announce his own name.

[51] RICHARDSON (1993) 67 ad loc. 152 – 160. Among the parallels that RICHARDSON gives for listing one's parentage without making mention of his own name are the descent of Glaucus (Il. 6. 146 – 212) and the lineage of Hermes in disguise as Priam's guide (Il. 24. 397 – 400).

[52] Since all character reply to these questions with an equal answer, we can conclude that the heroes were aware that their individual name was not what the discussion partner wanted to hear. The parallels imply that the identity of the heroes was derived from their origin and that all Homeric characters agreed that

detailed information about the past of an object what makes it unique, interesting, valuable and renowned.[53]

As RICHARDSON points out, "the breastplate is a poignant reminder of Achilles' recent career of destruction" and not only of the battle against Asteropaeus.[54] Another remarkable aspect of this fight is that this is the only occasion where we see Achilles bleeding as a result of the flesh wound that was caused by Asteropaeus. Surely, the audience must have instantly thought of this when they were reminded of the battle.[55] This demonstrates how the mention of only two ingredients of the biography prompts the audience to reconstruct a significant part of the background story of which a character or the narrator can remain silent. Since all the information relating to the breastplate was given only two books before Achilles granted the breastplate to Eumelus, the audience would have certainly remembered all the distinguishing and memorable details and would have added them to the biography. It is thus by giving one cue that both the internal and external audience are encouraged to recall the full biography of the object.[56]

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one's lineage indicates who you are and that one's own achievements were of secondary importance to this question.

[53] What makes the breastplate an even more tangible reminder of Asteropaeus is the fact that the breastplate was physically attached to the hero most of the time. NOEL (2016) §4 discusses the bow of Philoctetes from Sophocles' tragedy *Philoctetes* as being physically related to the hero. The bow is his most valuable possession: he uses it as a tool for walking, he regards it as his interlocutor and he derives his identity from it. The frequent use of haptic vocabulary emphasizes that the object is constantly in Philoctetes' hands. Although the verbs of touch do not appear in relation with Asteropaeus and his breastplate, the corselet certainly is an extension of Asteropaeus' body just like the bow is the extension of Philoctetes. Asteropaeus must have worn the breastplate constantly since he was fighting in battle. Considering that Asteropaeus hardly took it off, the breastplate became a part of his body. Hence, the metaphor of Achilles taking a part of Asteropaeus' identity when he stripped off his breastplate becomes even more apt because of the constant physical connection between the owner and the object. For this reason, CRIELAARD's statement that "[…] they [the objects with a biography] bring the present owner almost into physical contact with the past" fits this example of Asteropaeus' breastplate even better than other examples of objects with a biography (CRIELAARD (2003) 56).

[54] RICHARDSON (1993) 229 – 230 ad loc. 560 – 562.

[55] NEAL (2006) 258 – 261; 260, note 87. Despite Achilles' minor injury, the blood gushes from the wound. Although Achilles is the only son of a god who bleeds from a wound, there has been paid little attention to this event despite the narrator's apparent weakness for giving vivid digressions on injuries and bleeding wounds that were caught in battle. NEAL has argued that the two verses that were devoted to Achilles' injury depict the occasional nature of this event and stress how Achilles completely ignored his wound, eager to continue his fight against Asteropaeus. As she states further, the context in which this incidental bleeding of Achilles, the son of a god and the most important hero of the *Iliad*, occurs is emphasizing his mortality: he fights against the son of a god as well as with Scamander, an actual god. The scene is thus also a reminder of the humanness of Achilles in a situation where he is far from acting like a mortal: he fights against non-humans.

[56] Judging from Eumelus' positive and thankful reaction on Achilles' remark that receiving the breastplate as a prize would mean much to Eumelus, the brief description has indeed evoked the life stories of both

As we have seen in these passages the narrator or a character can chose some elements of a typical object biography which naturally triggers the audience to recall the biography of the object and bring back its past owners and the transactions of the object. The capability of the object to evoke the memory of a previous owner is what makes the object valuable for the Homeric heroes.

1.3 CREATING THE BIOGRAPHY OF AN OBJECT

As we can see in an overview of the objects that are given as a prize in *Iliad* 23, only four prizes are endowed with a biography.[57] The majority of the objects in this book is merely specified by one or two particular features of the object.[58] The mare over which Antilochus and Menelaus fight is one of many in the list of objects that have no biography in the *Iliad*. Only some basic features of the horse, that was appointed as the second prize in the chariot-race, are mentioned by the narrator.

Iliad 23. 265 – 266

ἀτὰρ αὖ τῷ δευτέρῳ ἵππον ἔθηκεν ἑξέτε᾽ ἀδμήτην, βρέφος ἡμίονον κυέουσαν·	*To the runner up he offered a six-year old mare, broken-in and pregnant with a mule foal.*

Since there is no biography of the horse told at all, it is not plausible that the theory of object biography can be applied to this passage. The mentioned features of the horse do not give information about its previous owner(s), neither does it give any other indication that the horse has established any social relation between people. Just like the breastplate of Asteropaeus, this mare is 'a young object' since the only important life event to which she is connected is the funeral of Patroclus.[59] Since she has no biography

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heroes and the duel between Achilles and Asteropaeus with all its peculiar details. *Il.* 23. 562: πολέος δέ οἱ ἄξιος ἔσται. *It shall be of great worth to him*. *Il.* 23. 565: ὅ δὲ δέξατο χαίρων. *And he* [Eumelus] *delightfully received it.*

[57] See the appendix for an overview of the objects that have a biography in *Iliad* 23 and by whom this biography is narrated. Cf. CRIELAARD (2008) 201.

[58] E.g. a tripod with *ear-shaped handles* which holds *twenty-two measures* (*Il.* 23.264) and a female slave who is *skilled in fine handiwork* and *worth four oxen* (*Il.* 23.704 – 705). I do not consider it as a biography when only this type of feature is given. At least one former owner of the object has to be mentioned to make a biography since this information makes the object play a significant role in social relationships. Cf. CRIELAARD (2008) 200 – 201, note 12 who seems to apply the same requirements to a biography of objects in Homeric epic.

[59] Asteropaeus' corselet was only entangled with the biography of Asteropaeus before Achilles gained his

yet, standing at the beginning of her biography might increase this hero's reputation. If we read the passage on the quarrel between Antilochus and Menelaus and the sudden exchange of the horse along these lines, it becomes clear that both heroes try to *create* the horse's biography. As the passages on Patroclus' mixing bowl and Asteropaeus' breastplate have shown, the Greek heroes were fully aware of the ability of objects to revive the past and to preserve the owner's identity. As the owner of such an object, the hero became part of the object's biography. Yet, after having assured his position as the owner, giving the object to someone else would spread his glory and would secure his reputation as a former owner for eternity. In the argument between Antilochus and Menelaus we will see exactly this process of "writing" yourself into a biography. Both heroes are aware of the importance of claiming the ownership which places them in the biography of the mare. More importantly, they understand that giving her away leads to the preservation of their memory.

Antilochus objects fiercely as Achilles intents to grant Eumelus the second prize for the chariot race. Eumelus did not pray to the gods, as Antilochus informs us, which caused the anger of the goddess Athene who threw him off his chariot. Achilles' intention to honor Eumelus' ἀρετή as a charioteer nonetheless forces Antilochus to accept the third prize. From reading Antilochus' protest it becomes clear that he is not furious because the third prize is of less material value to him. In fact, he is not interested in the practical value of the horse at all.

Iliad 23. 551 - 554

τῶν οἱ ἔπειτ᾽ ἀνελὼν δόμεναι καὶ μεῖζον ἄεθλον,	*Take something hereafter from this store and*
ἠὲ καὶ αὐτίκα νῦν, ἵνα σ᾽ αἰνήσωσιν Ἀχαιοί.	*give him a better prize or even now*
τὴν δ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐ δώσω· περὶ δ᾽ αὐτῆς πειρηθήτω	*immediately, if you would have the Achaeans*
ἀνδρῶν ὅς κ᾽ ἐθέλῃσιν ἐμοὶ χείρεσσι μάχεσθαι.	*speak well of you. But I will not give up the*
	mare. Let the man who wants her fight me
	with his fists.

Antilochus even suggests that Eumelus could be awarded with a more valuable prize

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place in the breastplate's life story.

(μεῖζον ἄεθλον) as long as no one dares to touch "his" horse.[60] The mare has no biography yet. It is thus not plausible that Antilochus values the horse because of its biography. Antilochus' motivation to hold on to the second prize seems to lie in the events that happened during the race. At the very moment in which these rivalries happened they became a part of the biographies of the prizes that were appointed to the chariot-race. The prizes symbolize and recall how the heroes won their prizes. So, besides recalling the memory of Patroclus, the prize also brings back to mind how it was obtained. If Antilochus had accepted the third prize, the reasons why he received this prize would have given him less honor: although he finished second, the prize was granted to someone who did not pray to the gods and finished last due to his own fault.[61] From Antilochus' point of view the mare recalls Antilochus' efforts to win the race, his craftsmanship as a charioteer and that Antilochus deserves this prize according to place he finished in. An important aspect of the value of a prize is thus the manner in which it is won, not in the last place because these circumstances fuse with the obtained object.[62]

An important reason for Menelaus to lay claim on the mare is that Antilochus disgraced his ἀρετή during the race, in front of all the Greeks.[63] Especially the trickiness by which Antilochus finished before Menelaus makes agreeing with a lesser prize unacceptable for him. Once again, the background of obtaining a lower ranked prize makes it worthless for Menelaus in terms of *symbolical value*. Since his horses were actually the faster ones, it is he who deserves the mare. The importance of the biography of an object is clearly shown in the actual quarrel between Antilochus and Menelaus.

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[60] See *Il.* 23. 826 – 835. The lump of iron that was awarded in the discus-throwing event forms a significant contrast with Antilochus' constitution of value to the horse. Although the narrator is concerned with the biographical value of the lump, Achilles merely highlights its practical use. Achilles demonstrates here that it is possible to prefer an object's use value over the value because of its previous owners. However, since the narrator recalls part of the story about Eëtion and how Achilles carried it off as spoil of the conquer Thebe it implies that the biography of the lump is important anyway.

[61] Antilochus says in *Il*. 23. 546-547 that Eumelus, although he is a good charioteer, should have prayed to the gods. According to Antilochus Eumelus does not deserve the second prize because the fact that he finished last was due to his own lack of worshipping the gods that brought him down in the race. This explains why Antilochus is not satisfied with a third prize although the remembrance of Patroclus is entangled with the third prize as much as with the second prize. We can find a parallel with modern competitions in which the participants can win medals. If someone wins the bronze medal because the winner of the silver medal cheated, nobody would be happy with the third place. If the winner of the second place offered to switch medals the medal would have lost its meaning. It is the recognition of the legitimate ownership that restores the value of the prize.

[62] Winning the first prize due to the use of drugs or cheat makes the prize less valuable than by winning it on your own – provided that the audience knows the circumstances.

[63] For a more elaborate discussion of Menelaus' concern with his reputation see chapter 3.

Although Antilochus protests vehemently against giving the horse to Eumelus, he immediately gives the horse to Menelaus, yet emphasizing that he was the horse's first legitimate owner.

Iliad 23. 591 – 595

τῷ τοι ἐπιτλήτω κραδίη· ἵππον δέ τοι αὐτὸς δώσω, τὴν ἀρόμην. εἰ καί νύ κεν οἴκοθεν ἄλλο μεῖζον ἐπαιτήσειας, ἄφαρ κέ τοι αὐτίκα δοῦναι βουλοίμην ἢ σοί γε, διοτρεφὲς, ἤματα πάντα ἐκ θυμοῦ πεσέειν καὶ δαίμοσιν εἶναι ἀλιτρός.	*Be patient with me; I will of my own accord give up the mare that I have won. And if you claim anything further from my own possessions, I would rather give it to you, cherished by Zeus, at once, than fall from your good graces henceforth, and do wrong in the eyes of the gods.*

The sudden willingness of Antilochus to give up the mare can be explained by applying the theory of object biography to this passage. Antilochus chooses his words wisely and tries to be in control of the conditions of the exchange with Menelaus. Handing over the mare to Menelaus does not mean that he recognizes Menelaus as the legitimate winner of the prize, since he does never admit that he won because he cheated.[64] By giving the horse as a gift to Menelaus, Antilochus might increase his own status. However, he has to designate the horse as his property before it can be entangled with Antilochus' identity and preserves his memory.[65] The clear emphasis on giving the horse voluntarily (αὐτὸς, v. 591) and on his ownership of the horse (ἵππον (…) τὴν ἀρόμην, v. 591-592) demonstrates the importance of ensuring his place in the mare's biography as her first owner.

Yet, Menelaus seems to see through Antilochus' plans. Just like Antilochus, Menelaus sooths his anger quickly after hearing Antilochus' attempt to frame this event as a gift-giving in which Menelaus would play the role of receiver.

Iliad 23. 602 – 603 ; 609 – 611

Ἀντίλοχε, νῦν μέν τοι ἐγὼν ὑποείξομαι αὐτὸς	*Now, Antilochus, although I have been angry, I*

[64] RICHARDSON (1993) 233 ad loc. 587 – 589. See chapter 2 & 3 for the underlying motivations of giving and receiving an object in an exchange that represents a status conflict.
[65] Cf. BEIDELMAN (1989) 240; RICHARDSON (1993) 233 ad loc. 587 – 589.

χωόμενος	*can give way to you;*
[…]	*[…]*
τῶ τοι λισσομένῳ ἐπιπείσομαι, ἠδὲ καὶ ἵππον	*I therefore yield to your prayers, and will give*
δώσω ἐμήν περ ἐοῦσαν, ἵνα γνώωσι καὶ οἵδε	*up the mare to you, although it is mine, so the*
ὡς ἐμὸς οὔ ποτε θυμὸς ὑπερφίαλος καὶ ἀπηνής.	*people will recognize and know that I am neither harsh nor rigid.*

Menelaus seems to recognize that if he accepts the horse as a gift from Antilochus the possession of the mare still would not represent Menelaus' superiority in the race and Antilochus' unlawful claim on the prize. Menelaus now tries to win back the control over the conditions of the exchange by presenting himself as the giver of the horse and as a noble superior yielding to what he frames as Antilochus' prayers. Moreover, he copies Antilochus' rhetoric and explicitly states that the horse never belonged to anyone else than to him (δώσω ἐμήν περ ἐοῦσαν 610). The most effective way to secure his status and preserve his name and glory is by giving away the possession that is entangled with the hero's identity. Menelaus possesses the mare for an extremely short time but it seems that he has had her long enough in order to actualize the potential value of the horse. We should now consider Menelaus as one of the former owners of the horse whereby he has acquired a place in its biography. Only by giving the mare away the status of the hero can be secured and can his memory live on.

Both heroes try to create a biography for the horse in which they frame themselves as the initial owner and giver in order to earn κλέος as the "reward of valor after death".[66] The quarrel is an example of what CRIELAARD states as that the objects with a biography "are actively used in social strategies revolving around status competition and self-promotion. Those involved make conscious decisions whether to keep these prestige-giving artifacts or give them away."[67]

A part of the motivation to give the horse away is that the exchange is seen by all the Greeks.[68] The deliberate decision of Menelaus to give the horse to Antilochus is

[66] VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 18. On the glory that is entangled with an object she says: "In the complex constellation of heroic achievements gifts assume different meaning and therefore different kinds of value. In all cases they belong to the order of exchange in which immortal *kleos* is gained." (2003[1995]: 24).
[67] CRIELAARD (2008) 197.
[68] *Il.* 23. 576 – 578. Menelaus called upon them to act as referees in their conflict. Moreover, he had taken the scepter of Agamemnon which was considered as the signal that the bearer was about to make a public speech (*Il.* 23. 567 – 568). Cf. RICHARDSON (1993) 230 ad loc. 566 – 585.

motivated by his concern with his reputation. Since the status of a Homeric hero derives from the audience's perception of him, it is crucial for Menelaus to perform the exchange in front of all the Greeks. He explicitly says that donating the horse must show that he is "neither harsh nor rigid" (*Il.* 23. 611). Besides enhancing a hero's status, the visibility of the exchange is also important for the increase of the fame of an object. By recalling its biography in the company of many people, the chances on circulation of one's reputation and the chances on immortal fame increase. CRIELAARD rightly points out that "it is gift-giving in particular that has the power to preserve the memory of the donor and spread his or her fame, especially when the gift is used in company of others (…)".[69] By stressing that the horse belonged to him from the very beginning, Menelaus makes sure that his audience does not interpret this gift-giving as redeeming a debt – the circumstances in which the horse is given constitute a significant part of its biography and determine how people in the present as well as in the future think of Menelaus. Moreover, respect and honor could only be obtained through validation by others, as we will see in the next chapters.[70] This makes the audience an indispensable part of claiming respect through exchanging objects. The presence of the audience thus explains Menelaus' action of framing this event as a gift-giving ceremony.[71] Everything that has been said and everything that has happened during the exchange of the mare has become entangled with the horse as a part of its biography. The only way in which Menelaus could secure his status is by rewriting the biography of the mare and by attaching the best remembrance of himself to the horse.[72]

In the end, Antilochus walks away with the mare. In terms of ownership of the material object the exchange seems to have made no difference from the beginning of the quarrel. However, the detour of the mare was crucial for the symbolical value of the

[69] CRIELAARD (2003) 57. The public setting and the frequent use of the verb δώσω remind us of public exchange ceremonies in Homeric epic. The visibility of the exchange and the narration of the object's biography are of crucial importance for the production of the biography, according to CRIELAARD (2008) 202 – 203. See e.g. *Od.* 4. 613 – 619. Cf. BEIDELMAN (1989) 233 – 234.
[70] VAN WEES (1992) 69 – 71.
[71] BEIDELMAN (1989) 249; VAN WEES (1992) 71. VAN WEES uses the term 'deference' to describe Homeric honor that is 'acknowledged and conferred, or denied and withheld' by others. In this chapter the notion of 'giving' has been discussed as incorporated in the biography. In the following chapter, I will discuss 'giving' and 'receiving' and the accompanying quest for glory from a different perspective, namely not how the scene is being remembered but what it depicts at the moment of the act.
[72] The constant concern of the Homeric heroes with deference is visible through the whole *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. As we will see in chapter 2 & 3, the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles is foremost about protecting their reputation. Especially Hector's quest for glory becomes clear in *Il.* 6. 459 – 463 where he sooths Andromache and even in his final words before he is killed by Achilles (*Il.* 22. 304 – 305).

mare. By first validating his ownership and thereafter giving her as a gift, Menelaus has been able to create a biography for the mare in which he places himself as the very first owner.[73] In order to recognize and to understand one aspect of what in fact has happened during the exchange we need the notion of object biography. Although there is no biography for the mare as there is for Patroclus' cup, the concept of the object biography implicitly plays a leading role in the motivations of the acts and words of the Homeric heroes.

In this chapter I have argued that some objects contain a biography that consists of the sum of the biographies of their former owners. In the case of Homeric epic, an extensive biography might be given as in the case of the mixing bowl of Patroclus. Sometimes, however, only some features of the biography are mentioned. Since each element indicates the narration of a biography, the internal and external audience must have understood that only part of the object's biography was told and that the biography had to be completed by them. The elements of the biography that are not explicitly told are thus evoked nonetheless. In this way, the audience is encouraged to fill in the blanks. This reconstruction of the Homeric way of thinking about objects elucidates the quarrel of Antilochus and Menelaus. The theory of object biography explains that the value of the attached biography exceeds the utilitarian value of the prize. In the case of the mare it is especially the possibility to be at the beginning of her biography that constitutes her value. Receiving and passing on an object with (its capability of creating) a biography is a strategy to obtain eternal glory as well. The importance of being part of the biography of an object in order to secure your status and to be remembered has become clear from both the examples of objects with a biography as from the example of the mare where a biography is "in the making". Although the horse in *Iliad* 23 has no biography, both heroes fight to stand at the beginning of her biography in order to enhance their reputation in the present as well as in the future.

[73] VAN BERKEL (2010) 251. See chapter 2 for a more elaborate examination of the material and social perspectives of the exchange.

Chapter 2
Modes of exchange and the conflict of Achilles and Agamemnon

2.1 THE CONFLICT OF ACHILLES AND AGAMEMNON

The conflict between Antilochus and Menelaus in *Iliad* 23 clearly reminds us of the central theme of the *Iliad*: the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon. That the quarrel in *Iliad* 23 is modelled on this bigger conflict becomes clear from the echoes in vocabulary as well as in theme. The conflict between Antilochus and Menelaus can thus be read as a reflection on the leading conflict of the *Iliad*.[74] Since the parallels with the passages on the quarrel over Briseis are so strong, the conflict between Antilochus and Menelaus can only be understood if we first comprehend what lies at the root of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon.

First, the overarching thematical parallel between both conflicts is unmistakable. Since king Agamemnon is forced to give back his γέρας (*a prize of honor*), the girl Chryseis, he lays claim on Briseis, Achilles' prize of honor. Just like Antilochus and Menelaus feel disrespected by being deprived of what they consider their proper prize, Achilles' status is damaged by being deprived of Briseis. Eventually, Agamemnon gives back Briseis to Achilles, framing her transaction as an act of gift-giving. Although both the mare and Briseis are returned to their initial owners in the end, respectively Antilochus and Achilles, the detour that the objects make turn out to be crucial for the constitution of the value of these objects. The underlying motivation of this detour will be thoroughly analyzed in paragraph 3.

The reference in *Iliad* 23 to the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon becomes even more apparent when we take a closer look on the similarities in vocabulary. Especially the closeness of Antilochus' protest to *Iliad* 1 recalls the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon: τὴν δ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐ λύσω· (*Il.* 1. 29), τὴν δ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐ δώσω· (*Il.* 23. 553); καὶ δή μοι γέρας αὐτὸς ἀφαιρήσεσθαι ἀπειλεῖς (*Il.* 1. 161 – 162), […]

[74] Cf. RICHARDSON (1993) 220; 224; 228.

μέλλεις γὰρ ἀφαιρήσεσθαι ἄεθλον (*Il.* 23. 545).[75] Although these echoes are clear, the following example demonstrates that even if the passages cannot be compared one-to-one, the conflict in *Iliad* 1 is brought back to mind. Achilles' reaction on Agamemnon's intention to take Briseis as a substitute γέρας is not identical to Antilochus' response to Achilles when he wants to give the second prize for the chariot race to Eumelus.

Iliad 1. 298 – 303

χερσὶ μὲν οὔ τοι ἔγωγε μαχήσομαι εἵνεκα κούρης οὔτε σοὶ οὔτέ τῳ ἄλλῳ, ἐπεί μ᾽ ἀφέλεσθέ γε δόντες· τῶν δ᾽ ἄλλων ἅ μοί ἐστι θοῇ παρὰ νηῒ μελαίνῃ τῶν οὐκ ἄν τι φέροις ἀνελὼν ἀέκοντος ἐμεῖο· εἰ δ᾽ ἄγε μὴν πείρησαι, ἵνα γνώωσι καὶ οἵδε· αἶψά τοι αἷμα κελαινὸν ἐρωήσει περὶ δουρί.	*I will not fight with my fists for the girl neither with you nor with any other, since you are taking back what you gave. But of everything else that is mine by the swift black ships, you shall not take against my will. Come, try it, so that these men may know: your dark blood will flow along my spear.*

Iliad. 23. 543 – 544 ; 553 – 554

ὦ Ἀχιλεῦ, μάλα τοι κεχολώσομαι, αἴ κε τελέσσῃς τοῦτο ἔπος· […] τὴν δ᾽ ἐγὼ οὐ δώσω· περὶ δ᾽ αὐτῆς πειρηθήτω ἀνδρῶν ὅς κ᾽ ἐθέλῃσιν ἐμοὶ χείρεσσι μάχεσθαι.	*Achilles, I will be furious if you fulfill this announcement.* *[…]* *But I will not give up the mare. Let the man who wants her fight me with his fists.*

Whereas Achilles is *not* willing to physically fight for the prize that he was deprived of, Antilochus is ready to use his fists to defend the prize he has won. Although the reactions of both heroes are the very opposite of each other, the repetition of *fight with my fists* (χερσὶ […] μαχήσομαι and χείρεσσι μάχεσθαι) stresses the link between both episodes. The resemblance is particularly emphasized since this specific combination of forms of χείρ and μάχομαι is solely used in the above-mentioned episodes. The vocabulary of *Iliad* 23 thus evokes the main conflict of the *Iliad* without being a duplicate

[75] Cf. RICHARDSON (1993) 228 – 229. Moreover, all the Greeks agree on the decision to give the object away, except for respectively Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1 and Antilochus in *Iliad* 23 (*Il.* 1. 23 – 25; *Il.* 23. 539 – 542).

of it, as I will demonstrate in chapter 3.[76] Yet, the understanding of the fundamental mechanisms underlying the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon is necessary for an articulate comprehension of the quarrel between Antilochus and Menelaus as a reflection on this main conflict.

2.2 MODES OF EXCHANGE

On a superficial level, both conflicts center around being deprived of a prize. Yet, the fundamental reason of the conflicts lies beneath the surface. Since Agamemnon had to give up his γέρας, the allocation of the spoils was disturbed and he had to reaffirm his hierarchical position as a king. As Agamemnon himself says, it is inappropriate for a king to be left without a prize of honor.[77] In order to restore his own reputation as the king, Agamemnon chooses Achilles' γέρας as his substitute war prize which in turn damages the reputation of Achilles. This problem has its origin in the scenario in which a prize must pass on to someone else due to his higher reputation. The established order and allocation are disrupted by an unforeseen additional element in the distribution – Agamemnon's rank demands a γέρας, although the prizes of honor were already appointed. Moving with the prize of Achilles in turn jeopardizes the established order. We will see that the same problem exists in *Iliad* 23 when Eumelus is moved to the second place by Achilles, which caused Antilochus to be demoted in the ranking. Because of Achilles' public humiliation, he decides to withdraw from the war. Only when Agamemnon realizes that Achilles' participation is necessary for winning the Trojan war, he offers Achilles an abundance of gifts as recompense.

The distribution of the spoils of war by Agamemnon represents the hierarchy and the mutual social obligations between a leader and his subordinates through giving, whereas Agamemnon's attempts to resolve the conflict by giving spectacular gifts to Achilles portrays the social relation between two individuals. These mechanisms occur with different ways to claim and point out one's social status. In order to analyze the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon with respect to the claim on status by exchanging objects we need to further examine the above-mentioned ways of

[76] Although the theme of both conflicts is the concern to secure one's status as made tangible by the exchange of an object, the development and the result of the conflicts are significantly different.
[77] *Il.* 1. 116 – 120.

exchanging which are known as respectively "redistribution" and "reciprocity".[78]

Redistribution and reciprocity belong to the modi of the exchange of goods as an economic system. Ever since the study of MALINOWSKI in 1922, anthropologists have emphasized that economic systems are an integral part of society and culture and that we can only understand these systems if we acknowledge its connection with its social and cultural aspects. Since economy is not an isolated phenomenon, there is a range of economic systems that depend on the social systems in which it functions. [79] POLANYI, following MALINOWSKI in recognizing that economy is inherently connected with a society, provided a threefold division of modi of the circulation of goods: market exchange, reciprocity and redistribution.

Market economy is characterized by the exchange of commodities for something of equal value. This exchange is anonymous and impersonal – it does not create a personal relationship or constrains someone to certain obligations after the transaction. In contrast to the traditional "embedded" gift economy of reciprocity and redistribution, market economy is a "disembedded" modus. Reciprocity, however, is based on a mutual agreement by gift giving. When one receives a gift, he is obliged to give a counter-gift. The receiver must respond with a gift in return in order to maintain the relationship with the giver. The gift does not have to be returned immediately.[80] In fact, an immediate counter-gift, as happens in a market exchange, can be seen as the end of a relationship. The essence of this exchange must not be sought in the economic aspect but rather in the social and cultural relation that is preserved by the exchange of gifts or services.[81] In redistribution, the exchange is centered around a chief or state administration who receives the sum of the materials of the community first and distributes it later among

[78] Although I do not imply that the Homeric heroes had the notion of these different economic modi and thought of them as such, these models are necessary in order to identify the meaning and functions of the modi of exchange in *Iliad* and what, consequently, lies beneath the surface of the conflicts in *Iliad* 1 and 23.
[79] POLANYI (2001 [1944]) 57; HYLLAND ERIKSEN (2001) 176.
[80] HYLLAND ERIKSEN (2001) 181 – 182. VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 18.
[81] VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 18 draws the distinction in value between gifts and commodities as respectively being 'symbolic', 'qualitative' or 'subjective' and functional, quantitative and objective. In contrast to commodities, the value of a gift can only be recognized in a social context. SAHLINS (1972) 193 – 195, characterizes three types of reciprocity: 1) generalized reciprocity between friends or neighbors where the gift is not immediately returned; 2) balanced reciprocity with an immediate counter gift like market exchange and 3) negative reciprocity between enemies such as stealing and plundering. This additional typology gives a better indication of the existence of various cultural modi of reciprocity and redistribution. This approach of scaling types of reciprocity is preferred by VON REDEN (2003: 2-3) over the model of POLANYI which "failed to appreciate the different cultural forms of reciprocity and redistribution".

them. This phenomenon is also known as "pooling". It confirms and enhances the status and the legitimacy of the distributor as a ruler. He is the outstanding individual who determines the manner in which the goods are distributed.[82] The distinction between reciprocity and redistribution, according to HYLLAND ERIKSEN, is that the first modus is "a decentralized, egalitarian principle of distribution" whereas the latter can be described "as a hierarchical principle of distribution".[83] Following POLANYI and SAHLINS the principle of redistribution is based on a hierarchical political structure whereas reciprocity produces interpersonal relations.

Despite the analytical division of economic modes, POLANYI has argued that all principles can function alongside each other in one and the same society with their relative significances depending on the situation.[84] The modi of reciprocity and redistribution can be found in the Iliadic social order as well. In Homeric epic, as VON REDEN argues, "gifts […] are desired and given because they create and sustain social relations between people. In the language of heroes, they attach honor to warriors and create hierarchy and obligation in the warrior community."[85] Yet, many individual exchanges are ambiguous whereby the modi can easily fuse. The ambiguity of the exchanges makes them prone to multiple interpretations and consequently prone to manipulation.[86] Exchanges in the *Iliad* can for example either create a bond (cooperative exchange) or create a hierarchy (competitive exchange).[87] Thus, the transaction of goods validates the mutual status of both the receiver and the donor.[88] The quest for honor and the maintenance of one's reputation is the principal motivation of Homeric heroes and forms the axis of their life. [89] Since one way to stabilize and secure one's status by means of exchange, the "warfare" over status is often fought by framing the terms of the

[82] POLANYI (2001[1944]) 53.
[83] HYLLAND ERIKSEN (2001) 184. Whereas market economy is the common modus in modern societies, reciprocity exists more often in small egalitarian societies and redistribution in feudal societies.
[84] Cf. HYLLAND ERIKSEN (2001) 184.
[85] VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 18.
[86] VAN BERKEL (2010) 250. VAN BERKEL demonstrates that for example the exchange of a bicycle can be marked as 1) a sale or swap; 2) a contractual loan such as renting; 3) a friendly loan such as lending; 4) a gift. The type of exchange depends on the context of the exchange. Although the focus of VAN BERKEL's work is on classical Athens, the same modi of exchange can be applied to Homeric epic. Cf. HYLLAND ERIKSEN (2001) 185.
[87] Cf. BIERL (forthcoming) 8, who more generally states that the Homeric social order "depends on a balance between competitive and cooperative values".
[88] A similar role of exchange is explained by ROLLASON (2016). He shows that the gifting of Roman clothing was described in Late Antiquity in such a way as to examine the transmission of political power.
[89] VAN WEES (1992) 64; VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 18.

exchange. As I will argue in paragraph 3, it depends on the parameters of the transaction if it is profitable for the hero to either donate or to accept gifts. The underlying intention of the exchange constitutes the value of the offered gifts, as accurately explained by VAN BERKEL: "Underneath the overt economy of visible exchanges lies a moral economy in which people constantly revaluate each other, negotiate expectations and loyalties towards another, and redefine their relationships."[90] In the following paragraph, I will show that both Achilles and Agamemnon take advantage of this room to maneuver in framing an exchange. As the social situation changes the heroes frame the exchange as the modus that fits their purpose best.[91]

2.3 GIVING AS STATUS RIVALRY

As I have said earlier, the obsession of Homeric heroes with increasing their status can be structured as the exchange of goods. At the very beginning of the *Iliad,* Agamemnon divides the spoils of the latest plunder of the Greeks – the goods are exchanged by means of redistribution. Agamemnon distributes the booty among his subordinates in order to confirm his social rank as well as the hierarchical ranks of the other Greeks. A share of the booty is given by him according to each hero's individual status. A brief explanation of the process of this redistribution is given by Achilles.

Iliad 9. 330 – 333

τάων ἐκ πασέων κειμήλια πολλὰ καὶ ἐσθλὰ ἐξελόμην, καὶ πάντα φέρων Ἀγαμέμνονι δόσκον Ἀτρεΐδῃ· ὃ δ᾽ ὄπισθε μένων παρὰ νηυσὶ θοῇσι δεξάμενος διὰ παῦρα δασάσκετο, πολλὰ δ᾽ ἔχεσκεν.	*I took many fine treasures from many cities, and bringing everything with me I ever gave it to Agamemnon, son of Atreus. But he, staying behind at the swift ships, received it and ever distributed a small part but ever kept many things himself.*

As the king, Agamemnon has the privilege to be distribute the booty and to be the first to receive a γέρας as he wishes, even though he had not fought for the spoils himself.[92]

[90] VAN BERKEL (2010) 249. Cf. HYLLAND ERIKSEN (2001) 184.
[91] VAN BERKEL (2010) 251.
[92] BIERL (forthcoming) 3.

Achilles describes this pooling of spoils with the continuous use of verbs with the suffix -σκ- (δόσκον, v. 331, δασάσκετο and ἔχεσκεν, v. 333). This points out the iterative character of pooling the booty with Agamemnon as the distributor: the redistribution of spoils of war is not a one-off distribution but a structural pattern that denotes the status quo. According to VAN WEES, the rest of the booty was distributed as follows: "[Agamemnon] hands out *gera* of his own choosing to "the best men and the princes". His dispositions are regarded as expressing the collective will of all the men involved in the capture of the booty."[93] The spoils that are recollected are thus not the property of the heroes who plundered the villages, but of their king. Yet, the heroes have the right to receive a just share in the booty.[94] A share in these spoils is not a gift from Agamemnon's private property, but a hero's legitimate share in honor. However, the exact prize of honor is chosen by Agamemnon which gives the prize the foil of a gift. Already in this form of redistribution we see the vague boundaries between redistribution and reciprocity – whereas reciprocity obliges the recipient to give a gift in return, the receiving subordinates in redistribution must "pay back" with respecting the distributor in order for him to validate his position.[95] The allocation of the prizes of honor designates the social position of the king as well as the hero within the community.[96] Agamemnon's motivation for redistributing the spoils is thus to gain the respect of the Greek heroes in order to secure his own hierarchical position.

Although Agamemnon maintains his position and status by giving away goods, receiving a share of honor validates the position of a hero. To them obtaining such an object illustrates the secure or increase of their status. It is proper for Agamemnon to *give away* the objects whereas the heroes maintain or increase their reputation by *accepting* a γέρας. This is an example of a situation in which both parties agree on the parameters of the exchange and respect them. Besides, it becomes clear that giving as well as receiving can validate one's status, depending on the context of the exchange and the aimed at shift of status.

The agreement on the terms of the exchange change in disagreement when

[93] VAN WEES (1992) 302, transliteration in the original. In this way, the diversity in Achilles' claims that Briseis was given to him by Agamemnon (*Il.* 9. 367 – 368) and elsewhere that she was given by the Greeks (*Il.* 1. 162 and *Il.* 16. 56) has been clarified. Cf. VAN WEES (1992) 87; BEIDELMAN (1989) 236.
[94] VAN WEES (1992) 310.
[95] BEIDELMAN (1989) 236.
[96] VAN WEES (1992) 309; DONLAN (1993) 160.

Agamemnon has to return his γέρας Chryseis to her father. Agamemnon is now the only one left without a prize of honor which is improper for a king. As a result he wants a substitute γέρας in order to protect his status as a king and the accompanying privileges. It is not the actual loss of Chryseis that Agamemnon is concerned with, but what she symbolizes – the loss of honor and respect in front of all the Achaeans.[97]

Iliad 1. 116 – 120

ἀλλὰ καὶ ὥς ἐθέλω δόμεναι πάλιν, εἰ τό γ᾽ ἄμεινον·	*Yet, even so, I will to give her back, if that*
βούλομ᾽ ἐγὼ λαὸν σῶν ἔμμεναι ἢ ἀπολέσθαι·	*seems best; I would rather want the*
αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ γέρας αὐτίχ᾽ ἑτοιμάσατ᾽, ὄφρα μὴ οἶος	*people to be safe than perish. But get*
Ἀργείων ἀγέραστος ἔω, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ ἔοικε·	*ready a prize of honor for me at once, so*
λεύσσετε γὰρ τό γε πάντες, ὅ μοι γέρας ἔρχεται ἄλλη.	*that I am not the only one of the Argives without one, since that would be improper. For you all see that my prize of honor goes elsewhere.*

The ratio of distribution and, consequently, the hierarchy could only be restored if 1) the booty was recollected and distributed again or if 2) one of the princes gave his γέρας to Agamemnon voluntarily. The first alternative, however, seems to be no option. Once the booty has been distributed it must not be interfered with.[98]

Iliad 1. 122 – 126

Ἀτρεΐδη κύδιστε, φιλοκτεανώτατε πάντων,	*Noblest son of Atreus, most covetous of all,*
πῶς γάρ τοι δώσουσι γέρας μεγάθυμοι Ἀχαιοί;	*how can the brave Achaeans give you a*
οὐδέ τί που ἴδμεν ξυνήϊα κείμενα πολλά·	*prize of honor? We know nothing of a*
ἀλλὰ τὰ μὲν πολίων ἐξεπράθομεν, τὰ δέδασται,	*common wealth in store. But what we now*
λαοὺς δ᾽ οὐκ ἐπέοικε παλίλλογα ταῦτ᾽ ἐπαγείρειν.	*we took as booty from the cities has been distributed, and it is not proper to recollect again these goods from the people?*

Achilles' brief remark on the option to reassemble the spoils that were already

[97] KITCHELL (1989) 165.
[98] VAN WEES (1992) 309.

appointed to the heroes (τὰ δέδασται, v. 125) illustrates that Achilles considers this an outrageous and improper (οὐκ ἐπέοικε, v. 126) solution.[99] Yet, Achilles does not deny that leaving the king without a γέρας is improper (οὐδὲ ἔοικε, v. 119) as well. Agamemnon's only chance to restore his position in the hierarchy is to lay claim on one of the gifts of honor of the princes. That status is entangled with a γέρας and that it is thus important for a king to have such a share of honor is clearly shown by Agamemnon.

Iliad 1. 184 – 187

ἐγὼ δέ κ᾽ ἄγω Βρισηΐδα καλλιπάρηον
αὐτὸς ἰὼν κλισίηνδὲ, τὸ σὸν γέρας, ὄφρ᾽ ἐῢ εἰδῇς
ὅσσον φέρτερός εἰμι σέθεν, στυγέῃ δὲ καὶ ἄλλος
ἶσον ἐμοὶ φάσθαι καὶ ὁμοιωθήμεναι ἄντην.

But entering your hut, I will take the fair-cheeked Briseis, your prize of honor, so that you will understand how much mightier I am than you, and so that another will fear to claim to be my equal and claiming they're my peers, and comparing himself to me face to face.

By publicly laying claim on Briseis, Agamemnon demonstrates that he as the king has the right to choose his share of the booty. Moreover, the choice for Briseis as substitute γέρας is motivated by the desire to put Achilles in his place for declaring to be Agamemnon's equal.[100] Before Achilles' attack on him, Agamemnon considered the girls of Ajax, Odysseus and Achilles of equal value (*Il*. 1. 137 – 139). Briseis suddenly becomes more valuable to Agamemnon at the very moment Achilles undermines Agamemnon's rank. Taking Briseis as a substitute γέρας now exhibits the message that is explicitly stated by Agamemnon in vv. 185 – 187. So, the symbolical value of *Briseis* is constituted by the context.

So far, the claim on Briseis has restored the position of Agamemnon but has damaged Achilles' status.[101] As DONLAN notes, the deprivation of one's γέρας can be described as negative reciprocity: Agamemnon maximizes his reputation at the expense of Achilles.[102] Whereas Agamemnon frames his act as legitimate according to the privileges of a king, from Achilles' perspective it is an act of dishonoring him. Achilles is not willing to give

[99] VAN WEES (1992) 309.
[100] *Il.* 1. 163 – 168.
[101] *Il.* 1. 355 – 356.
[102] DONLAN (1993) 161.

up Briseis voluntarily to Agamemnon. He does not want to give up his status symbol for which he actually fought to someone who receives all the booty but never fights for it. Giving away Briseis does not increase Achilles' reputation. In fact, it would have decreased his reputation. This situation demonstrates that taking away one of the prizes puts the established order, in which status is the focus of concern, into danger. Now that the heroes end up in a situation in which they do not agree on the parameters of the exchange and the rivalry over status gets out of control, the heroes show that they use the ambiguity of exchanges to manipulate its terms in order to increase and maintain their status and decrease the reputation of the other.

When Agamemnon eventually recognizes that the Greeks desperately need Achilles in the war, he is willing to reconcile with Achilles. He offers him an abundance of *gifts* which marks the shift from redistribution to the modus of reciprocity, Whereas Agamemnon established his position as the king with reference to his subordinates by means of redistribution he now wants to [re]establish a mutual relationship between two individuals with gift-giving. Agamemnon enumerates the lavish list of gifts as recompense for Achilles[103]: seven tripods (ἕπτα τρίποδας, v. 122), ten talents of gold (δέκα χρυσοῖο τάλαντα, v. 122), twenty cauldrons (λέβητας ἐείκοσι, v. 123), twelve horses (δώδεκα ἵππους, v. 123), seven women (ἑπτὰ γυναῖκας, v. 128), Briseis (κούρη Βρισῆος, v. 132). After the sack of Troy Agamemnon will give him gold and bronze (χρυσοῦ καὶ χαλκοῦ, v. 137) to take home and the twenty loveliest women after Helen (Τρωϊάδας δὲ γυναῖκας ἐείκοσιν […] αἵ κε μετ᾽ Ἀργείην Ἑλένην κάλλισται ἔωσιν, vv. 139 – 140). After they have returned to Argos he would offer him one of his own three daughters (Χρυσόθεμις καὶ Λαοδίκη καὶ Ἰφιάνασσα, vv. 145 – 146) without a bride-price (ἀνάεδνον, v. 146) and with a dowry (μείλια πολλὰ μάλα, v. 147 – 148), seven well-populated cities (ἑπτὰ εὖ ναιόμενα πτολίεθρα, v. 149). "All this", Agamemnon concludes his list, " I will do, if he soothes his anger. Let him give way and submit to me […] for I claim sovereignty and seniority over him."[104] Already in the very first verse of this list of gifts, Agamemnon importunately asks his audience to pay attention to his willingness to give up his property (*Il.* 9. 122: ὑμῖν δ᾽ ἐν πάντεσσι περικλυτὰ δῶρ᾽ ὀνομήνω. *Before you all, let me name the glorious gifts I will grant him*). The public exhibit of his generosity is

[103] *Il.* 9. 121 – 161.
[104] *Il.* 9. 158 – 161.

crucial since the reputation of a Homeric hero completely depends on the opinion of others of him.[105] Agamemnon not only shows how wealthy he is, he also demonstrates that he is ready to give up his wealth. The contrasting actions of Agamemnon of first desiring to *obtain* an object to increase and secure his status and now being eager to *give up* his goods generously illustrates that the focus of redistribution and reciprocity is not merely *obtaining* objects, but also the ability to *give away.* The parameters of the exchange determine if "giving"/"giving up" or "receiving"/"obtaining" an object causes the increase, decrease or maintenance of one's status. As the above-mentioned passages (*Il.* 1. 116 – 120 and *Il*. 1. 122 – 126) have shown and following passages will illustrate, the use of the verb δίδωμι is not restricted to one singular modus of exchange. The verb can be used as "to grant", "to give up", "to hand over" and "hand in" whereby δίδωμι can function in various modi of exchange and between all boundaries of these modi.

Although the amount of gifts seems to be proper as a recompense and cannot be disparaged as a such, the emphasis on Agamemnon's generosity and his concluding words (*Il*. 9. 160 – 161) demonstrate that the offer is not meant as a mere recompense at all. The underlying intention of *voluntarily* giving these goods to Achilles is to make Achilles acknowledge Agamemnon's superiority over him.[106] The envoys avoid recalling Agamemnon's explicitly mentioned purpose of the gifts to Achilles, but he seems to recognize Agamemnon's intentions nonetheless. The purpose of the gifts and thus their symbolical value makes Achilles reject the long list of gifts that was offered by Agamemnon.[107] The subordinating function of this gift-giving is even further emphasized because the majority of the offered goods was booty from Lesbos which was mainly acquired by Achilles' merit.[108] Agamemnon's action demonstrates that gift-giving can take on the form of rivalry. If one's words do not match his accompanying deeds, the material recompense is invaluable.[109] BEIDELMAN accurately states that "Agamemnon's speech nicely epitomizes the profound ambivalence of such reciprocation. The payment itself is handsome, but the terms with which it is conveyed continue guerilla warfare

[105] DONLAN (1993) 160; BEIDELMAN (1989) 233 – 234.
[106] *Il.* 9. 515 – 523; *Il.* 9. 632 – 636. Cf. BEIDELMAN (1989) 238.
[107] *Il*. 9. 264 – 306.
[108] BEIDELMAN (1989) 237. Besides, BEIDELMAN says, Agamemnon stresses the fact that *he* won prizes and consequently fame with the horses he offered to Achilles (*Il.* 9. 127 ὅσσά μοι ἠνείκαντο ἀέθλια μώωυχες ἵπποι). Also marrying Agamemnon's daughter would have certainly made Achilles an inferior as his son-in-law.
[109] BEIDELMAN (1989) 236.

between the two men by still asserting Agamemnon's superiority."[110]

Agamemnon's "warfare" in gift-giving resembles one of the most famous examples of the exchange of gifts in order to practice power which is known as *potlatch*.[111] Living in a hierarchical society, the chiefs of the Kwakiutl tribes must defend their status constantly. They secure and try to improve their rank by competing in gift-giving. By giving each other an abundance of impressive gifts, the receiver has to make a counter-gift that surpasses the value of the received gifts in order to obtain the highest hierarchical status.[112] Besides, the host destroys as much of his valuable properties as he can in order to demonstrate his wealth. The chiefs host a party and invite other chiefs, donating their presents to them and destroying their own goods. According to BATAILLE, this ostentatious aspect of the potlatch is crucial: "If he [the chief] destroyed the object in solitude, no sort of power would result from the act. But if he destroys the object in front of another person or gives it away, the one who gives has actually acquired, in the other's eyes, the power of giving or destroying."[113]

The resemblance with Agamemnon's "competition in generosity" and, more importantly, publicly showing that he can afford "give away" his property, is striking.[114] DONLAN explains that "it is by giving gifts especially that one man gains power over another; generous gifts publicly proclaim the giver's potency and, at the same time, put the receiver under obligation."[115] Agamemnon shows here that he is able and willing to donate this amount of property and thereby stages the mutual social affairs between him and Achilles. His foremost concern seems to be the visibility of his generous act as explicitly said in *Iliad* 9.122 (ὑμῖν δ᾽ ἐν πάντεσσι περικλυτὰ δῶρ᾽ ὀνομήνω). MAUSS's comment on the potlatch that "[…] it is not even a question of giving and returning gifts, but of destroying, as not to give the slightest hint of desiring your gift to be reciprocated"

[110] BEIDELMAN (1989) 237.
[111] The potlatch was practiced by the Kwakiutl, a tribe of native Americans on the north-western coast of North America, and neighboring tribes. Cf. VAN WEES (1992) 222. For a discussion of the potlatch see e.g. BATAILLE (1988) 63 – 80, MAUSS (1990[1925]) 47 ff., WOLF (1999) 69 – 131.
[112] JOHANSEN (1967) 7 – 8; BATAILLE (1988) 67 – 68; HYLLAND ERIKSEN (2001) 182.
[113] BATAILLE (1988) 69. Cf. WOLF (1999) 112 stating that "what came to be called 'potlatching' did involve feasting and gift giving, but its central feature lay not in lavish expenditures but in the display and affirmation of privileges and in transfers of valuables in the presence of witnessing guests."

[114] VAN WEES (1992) 222; VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 81.
[115] DONLAN (1993) 160. Cf. VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 82, stating that "gift-giving and hospitality were motivated by the desire to create and maintain a superior place in the social hierarchy."

can thus relate to the enormous gift-giving of Agamemnon as well.[116]

According to FINLEY, gift-giving in Homeric epic always demands an equally valuable gift in return. The complexity of giving and framing the parameters of the exchange is illustrated by this situation. Although Agamemnon designates his action as a recompense (ἄποινα), he uses this opportunity to take precedence again by framing his recompense as a lavish act of gift-giving. Yet, by staging his act as generously giving gifts, he is not after a counter-gift from Achilles at all, as would be the norm in a process gift-of giving where friendship is established and maintained.[117] Even if it would be an act of friendliness instead of rivalry, the obligation of returning Agamemnon's extraordinary gift with interest is almost impossible. Still, accepting the gifts puts Achilles under the obligation of Agamemnon. In either way, the act of recompensing has been deliberately turned into a statement of authority by Agamemnon.[118]

Moreover, Agamemnon lists Briseis in the middle of the enumeration of his presents, as if he wants to make her just one of his many gifts. Her biography – as an object – seems to be totally erased: Agamemnon never makes mention of how Achilles obtained her initially and how Agamemnon took her away from him. He disentangles Briseis and enumerates her in a catalogue in which the value of the individual objects is subservient to the effect of the sum of the lavish gifts. Whereas Briseis was the most desired and valuable possession in *Iliad* 1, Agamemnon now has turned her into an object that derives its value from the cumulation of all the enlisted objects.

In terms of material value, the recompense offered by Agamemnon is significantly more valuable than Briseis alone. It is however the symbolical value of the gifts that makes Achilles reject them. The recognition of Achilles' status was entangled with Briseis when she was given to him as a γέρας, his legitimate share of the booty,

[116] MAUSS (1990[1925]) 47. Although MAUSS uses the verb 'destroying' in a literal sense (the Kwakiutl literally destroyed their valuables in order to show their wealth), one can also be symbolically destroyed by receiving an exorbitant amount of gifts. In this case it concerns the status of Achilles that will be destroyed: by accepting the gifts of Agamemnon he subordinates himself to the king. This dueling with gifts to increase one's status can also be found in for example South Africa (BÄHRE 2006: 141 – 166). The financial mutuals that were founded for economic and social support ruined one of the participants because the gifts she received were too much and too expensive to be able to make a counter gift with interest. These kinds of gifts can be paralleled to the original meaning of what is now known as a 'white elephant', indicating that the cost of the maintenance of the object (or animal) would ruin the receiver. In modern days the white elephant often depicts a building-project that may be of ostensible value but forms an expensive burden such as Olympic stadia or the Sagrada Família in Barcelona.
[117] FINLEY (1977[1954]) 64. Cf. VAN WEES (1992) 222.
[118] DONLAN (1993) 165.

whereas Achilles would publicly subordinate himself to Agamemnon by accepting this spectacular amount of *gifts* from Agamemnon.[119] Achilles shows to be fully aware of Agamemnon's intentions for the exchange and he does not except his terms. Yet, Achilles *must* accept the gifts. When Achilles' beloved friend Patroclus died, Achilles wanted to take revenge on the Trojans. Before he could do so, his mother Thetis urged him to reconcile with Agamemnon.[120] In order to achieve this reconciliation, Achilles had to accept the gifts offered by Agamemnon. Once again, it is emphasized that Agamemnon must bring out the gifts "so that everyone can see them".[121] Although Achilles has to accept the gifts in order to reenter the battle, Achilles never *directly* accepts Agamemnon's donations. In fact, he leaves it up to Agamemnon whether to give the gifts or not.

Iliad 19. 146 – 150

Ἀτρεΐδη κύδιστε, ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγάμεμνον,	*Noblest son of Atreus, king of men,*
δῶρα μὲν αἴ κ᾽ ἐθέλησθα παρασχέμεν, ὡς ἐπιεικές,	*Agamemnon, whether you are willing to*
ἤ τ᾽ ἐχέμεν παρὰ σοί· νῦν δὲ μνησώμεθα χάρμης	*hand over the gifts, as is meet, or keep*
αἶψα μάλ᾽· οὐ γὰρ χρὴ κλοτοπεύειν ἐνθάδ᾽ ἐόντας	*them yourself, rests with you. Now let us*
οὐδὲ διατρίβειν· ἔτι γὰρ μέγα ἔργον ἄρεκτον·	*remember the battle hastily. Because it*
	is not befit to waste time here in talking
	nor to delay. For the great task is yet
	unaccomplished.

Achilles frames this scene as if he has the choice whether to accept the gifts or not. He makes it look like he is indifferent to the offered objects, as if *he* is the king who generously tells his subordinate that he can keep his presents if he wants to. Achilles seems to be more concerned with quickly settling the conflict with Agamemnon in order avenge Patroclus as soon as possible. In fact, Achilles does not accept the reconciliation that was symbolized by these gifts at all. He, as VON REDEN phrases it, "subverts the

[119] The value of Briseis has shifted for Achilles: she is now offered as a *gift* by Agamemnon which makes her almost invaluable for him due to her connection with Agamemnon's status as his superior. BEIDELMAN (1989) 238 further notes that the offer of lands and his daughter are certainly an act to demonstrate Achilles' subservience.

[120] VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 22: "Although he [Achilles] marks his independence of human social order by refusing Agamemnon's gifts he has to accept them in the end because only in this way can he win the rewards promised by the gods in the long term." The goddess Athene has promised him three times as many gifts for the loss of Briseis if he does not attack Agamemnon.

[121] *Il.* 19. 143 – 144; *Il.* 19. 172 – 174.

gesture of reconciliation. He refuses to share a meal with Agamemnon and he manipulates the meaning of the very gift which would have sealed the reconciliation."[122] So, although Achilles receives the presents offered by Agamemnon, his behavior during the exchange shows that Achilles has bend the situation to his own terms in order to reject these gifts *as the symbolical subordination* to Agamemnon.[123] By the halfhearted acceptation of Agamemnon's gifts he manipulates the terms of the exchange as set by Agamemnon. He has no other choice than to accept the gifts, yet he frames the acceptation as perfunctory in order to prevent his status from being damaged even more.

As I have demonstrated, the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles is foremost a conflict about status. The narrative of the status rivalry is structured as a competition in the exchange of objects in order to make their shifting mutual relationship tangible.[124] The way in which an exchange is framed has significant implications for the social relations that are established by the exchange. Briseis is not irreplaceable for her beauty or skill, as a 'material object'. What makes her valuable is the symbolism about the current status of both heroes that is entangled with her. This symbolical value makes her more desirable than "as many gifts as sand or dust".[125] Moreover, the heroes are well aware that they can only secure the audience's recognition of the changes in their mutual relationship by making the shifting relation tangible and visible – by the exchange of a physical object that represents this shift in status. Briseis forms the 'arena' in which the heroes fight to redefine their mutual status and to enhance their political and social power. Whereas Briseis was Achilles' *legitimate share* in the redistribution of the booty, Agamemnon has turned her into a *gift*. By accepting and recognizing her as a gift, Achilles would have ostensibly subordinated himself to Agamemnon. According to VAN BERKEL exchange is "a process that is typically presented as self-evident, but that does allow space for multiple interpretation of the same exchange, and may,

[122] VON REDEN (2003[1995]) 22. *Il.* 19. 198 – 214; *Il.* 19. 305 – 309. VAN WEES (1992) 45, explains that in the Homeric household princes invited townsmen "who do not, and are not expected to, reciprocate in kind. Instead their regular enjoyment of the prince's hospitality puts them under obligation to serve and support him." Although the Greeks are far away from home, Agamemnon stages this hierarchical feasting as the seal of their settlement in which he claims his superiority over Achilles once again.
[123] VON REDEN (2003) 81.
[124] DONLAN (1993) 160.
[125] *Il*. 9. 385.

consequently, yield conflicting understandings of the relationships based on such events."[126] In this conflict, it seems that both Achilles and Agamemnon are aware of this space for the interpretation of the exchange but do also understand that the opponent uses this room to maneuver in order to make a claim about their status. They do not have conflicting understandings of the situation but they rather take the opportunity to play with the terms of the exchange as to profit best from the exchange. Although the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon mostly shows that receiving gifts means acknowledging the superiority of the giver, it depends on the context if accepting or giving gifts secures one's status. The final book of the *Iliad,* for instance, clearly shows that by accepting the gifts of Priamus the superiority of Achilles is recognized by the Trojan king.[127] The value of Briseis is thus that she, as an object, has the capability to represent the (shifting) status of both Achilles and Agamemnon. Besides, she can make the maintenance, the increase and the damage of the reputation of the heroes concrete and tangible to the people who must acknowledge this reputation in order to obtain it.

[126] VAN BERKEL (2010) 251.

[127] *Il.* 24. 578 – 581. The abundancy of gifts given by Priamus (*Il.* 24. 228 – 237) is similar to the enormous list of presents offered by Agamemnon in *Iliad* 19. 122 – 161. Priamus gets the body of his son in return which characterizes this exchange as a balanced reciprocity. However, Priamus presents himself as a suppliant when he offers the gifts to Achilles (*Il.* 24. 485 – 506. Cf. *Il.* 24. 465 – 467). In contrast to the context in which Agamemnon offered Achilles gifts, the context of this gift-giving demands Achilles to accept the gifts since they now represent Achilles' superiority over the giver. Achilles proves to be very well aware of the various possibilities of the intentions of gift-giving and knows how to respond to them with respect to secure his own reputation.

Chapter 3
The value of the mare and the symbolism of *Iliad* 23

3.1 THE VALUE OF THE MARE

We have seen that Achilles and Agamemnon are capable of manipulating an exchange and do so in order to reevaluate each other and (re)define their social relationship. This framing of the situation has a close connection with the conflict between Antilochus and Menelaus, who take every opportunity to change the parameters of the exchange of the mare as well. The prizes in *Iliad* 23 are awarded according to the same principle as the distribution of the booty in *Iliad* 1: Achilles appoints the prizes for the funeral games and from that moment on there should have been no more interference with the allocation.[128] The award ceremony is a form of redistribution in which Achilles divides the prizes among the contestants according to their place in the competition. It does not become clear from the text if these prizes are spoils of war that belong to all the Greeks or that it is Achilles' own property. However, even if the prizes are part of Achilles' private store, from the moment he appoints the prizes to a place in the competition the prizes do not belong to Achilles anymore. They have become a legitimate prize rather than a gift from Achilles. In the redistribution of the spoils of war as well as in the award ceremony, the heroes *earn* the prize rather than that it was given them *as a gift*. In both situations respectively Agamemnon and Achilles distribute the goods, but as soon as they allocated it there must not be interfered with since it does not belong to the distributor anymore. Achilles' plan to disrupt the distribution by granting Eumelus with the second prize is thus the motivation for Antilochus to protest. By giving Eumelus something of his own store (οἴκοθεν ἄλλο, v 558), Achilles prevents a conflict over status that could have escalated like the one between himself and Agamemnon. As EUSTATHIUS commented, Achilles had experienced himself what it meant to be robbed of the prize you were entitled to own.[129]

Antilochus' cheating during the race in turn triggers the objection of Menelaus,

[128] See p. 34. Cf. BEIDELMAN (1989) 240.

[129] EUSTATHIUS (1827) 305. ὃς πεπειραμένος οἶδεν οἷόν ἐστιν ἡ τοῦ γέρως ἀφαίρεσις. *Who* [Achilles] *knows by experience what it means to be robbed of one's prize.* Cf. RICHARDSON (1993) 228; BIERL (forthcoming) 15.

who rejects Antilochus' legitimate ownership of the mare. As in Achilles' case, Menelaus' foremost concern is the damage that has been done to his reputation (ἐμὴν ἀρετήν, βλάψας, v. 571) which is made tangible by giving the prize to the person who deceived him, which he would otherwise have won. Since the parallels with *Iliad* 1 are so clear, the willingness of Antilochus to give in and to give up the mare forthwith emphasizes the contrast with the conflict between Achilles and Menelaus.[130]

Yet, Antilochus frames this exchange as reciprocity and does not admit that he cheated and subsequently not deserves the second prize. Antilochus' motivation to give the mare to Menelaus is exactly what Menelaus urged the audience not to think – that he wanted the mare because of his superiority in social status and power.[131] By emphasizing that he *voluntarily* gives up *his* mare (τὴν ἀρόμην, v. 592, "giving" means to Antilochus that he can put Menelaus under obligation as to "take credit in the exchange".[132] Antilochus' imitation of Agamemnon's behavior in the conflict with Achilles is remarkable: he gives up the mare *voluntarily* (v. 591) and is willing to add even more gifts. Yet, Antilochus is willing to adhere to the social order *before* the conflict has the chance to escalate. In contrast to Achilles, Antilochus recognizes Menelaus as his superior, whereas Achilles was not able to do so. Still, he molds the terms of the exchange to protect his own status as the legitimate owner of the mare and does not admit that he had deceived Menelaus.

Achilles' halfhearted acceptance of the gifts of Agamemnon is in turn mirrored by Menelaus' reaction on Antilochus' donation of the mare. He neither accepts nor rejects the mare. Although taking the reins of the horse in his hands implies Menelaus' acceptance of the gift, his following speech, however, indicates that he turns down the horse *as a gift from Antilochus*.[133]

Iliad 23. 609 – 611

τώ τοι λισσομένῳ ἐπιπείσομαι, ἠδὲ καὶ ἵππον	*I therefore yield to your prayers, and will give*
δώσω ἐμήν περ ἐοῦσαν, ἵνα γνώωσι καὶ οἵδε	*up the mare to you, although it is mine, so the*

[130] Cf. BIERL (forthcoming) 16.
[131] *Il.* 23. 575 – 578.
[132] BEIDELMAN (1989) 240.
[133] *Il.* 23. 596 – 597. ἵππον ἄγων μεγαθύμου Νέστορος υἱὸς/ ἐν χείρεσσι τίθει Μενελάου· *The son of Nestor brought the horse and gave it in Menelaus' hands.*

ὡς ἐμὸς οὔ ποτε θυμὸς ὑπερφίαλος καὶ ἀπηνής. *people will recognize and know that I am neither harsh nor rigid.*

Like Achilles, Menelaus is aware of his position in the exchange as Antilochus has framed it. But unlike Achilles Menelaus shows that he is capable of both de-escalating and simultaneously regaining the control over the terms of the exchange. He will not be deceived in "this game of shifting definitions of autonomy and generosity".[134] In only three verses Menelaus presents himself as a merciful superior who is as generous as to *give up* his own legitimately earned prize (δώσω ἐμήν περ ἐοῦσαν, v. 610). By stating this, Menelaus tries to manipulate the perception of the (internal and external) audience of their current mutual relationship in order to re-establish his own status – *he* won the prize and more importantly *he* is willing to give it up. Whereas it was initially important to *obtain* the mare for the increase of Menelaus' status, the ability to *give her up* actualizes the mare's symbolical value now. Menelaus has turned Antilochus' gift-giving into supplication and frames his own gesture of giving the horse as rewarding Antilochus for his loyalty to him. In this way, he emphasizes Antilochus' status as a subordinate of Menelaus.

Iliad 23. 606 – 610

οὐ γάρ κέν με τάχ' ἄλλος ἀνὴρ παρέπεισεν Ἀχαιῶν· ἀλλὰ σὺ γὰρ δὴ πολλὰ πάθες καὶ πολλὰ μόγησας σός τε πατὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀδελφεὸς εἵνεκ' ἐμεῖο· τώ τοι λισσομένῳ ἐπιπείσομαι, ἠδὲ καὶ ἵππον δώσω

Not soon should another man of the Achaeans have persuaded me, but you have suffered greatly and toiled greatly for me, you as well as your noble father and as your brother. I will therefore give in to your prayer and I will this horse to you.

Menelaus not only declares in front of all the Greeks that he is superior to Antilochus, but to Antilochus' brother and his father Nestor as well. Menelaus thereby turns the gift into a symbol of his superiority and the subordination of Antilochus and his family.[135] Moreover, his action is motivated (ὡς, v. 611) by a hero's ceaseless concern with the perception of others of him (ἐμὸς οὔ ποτε θυμὸς ὑπερφίαλος καὶ ἀπηνής, v. 611) in

[134] BEIDELMAN (1989) 241.
[135] BEIDELMAN (1989) 241 characterizes the gift as 'poisonous'.

order to protect his reputation. Menelaus presents himself as a generous and magnanimous superior. In this way Antilochus, as the receiver of the gift, is even more obligated to Menelaus.[136] As a subordinate of Menelaus, Antilochus has no choice but to accept the gift of Menelaus – his reputation does not decrease, since he was under obligation of Menelaus already.

A competition in charioteering has quickly turned into a competition over status by means of the exchange of an object. The shifting parameters in turn made the heroes quickly alter from desiring to obtain the horse to give her away and showing their capability of giving in in order to increase their reputation.[137] By skillfully circumventing the correspondence between action (the exchange) and the accompanying speech, the heroes create the symbolic value of the object that is transacted. They shape the context in order to 'insert' a part of themselves in the object as to make the mutual relationship and hierarchy tangible. The rhetoric that comes along with the transaction thus provides us with the context to elucidate the terms and intentions of the exchange which otherwise would have remained obscure.[138]

3.2 HOW TO SOLVE A STATUS CONFLICT?

Besides the importance of *Iliad* 23 for analyzing the social dimensions between heroes in a status conflict, *Iliad* 23 is poetically of significant importance for an articulate comprehension of the *Iliad* as well. Although the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon indisputably resembles the quarrel about the mare, the outcome of the latter conflict is the exact opposite. The conflict between Antilochus and Menelaus is the compressed version of the quarrel of Achilles and Agamemnon yet with a harmonious resolution.[139] Whereas one change in the appointed allocation in *Iliad* 1 caused a large-scale conflict, the issue is settled before a conflict could arise in *Iliad* 23. Achilles shows to the audience (both internal and external) that he now knows how to act in order to prevent an escalation of the situation by refraining to rob Antilochus of his prize. Although Nestor takes on the position of arbiter in book 1, Achilles and Agamemnon both are incapable of taking advise about acting properly in in the heat of a status

[136] DONLAN (1993) 162.
[137] KITCHELL (1989) 169.
[138] BEIDELMAN (1989) 241.
[139] DONLAN (1993) 161; RICHARDSON (1993) 165 – 166, 233 *ad loc.* 23.587 – 595; BIERL (forthcoming) 16.

conflict.[140] RICHARDSON rightly states that Achilles, as 'the model ἀγωνοθέτης (*judge of the contest*), proves to be competent in resolving tensions that arise during the games and that he can ensure the avoidance of large conflicts.[141] Although Antilochus and Menelaus clearly attempt to secure their social position and to enhance their reputation, they also give in and respect the other in order to prevent a potential violent conflict. Antilochus' speech to Menelaus is what RICHARDSON calls a 'masterpiece of honorable reconciliation', highlighting Menelaus' superiority in age and his own youth.[142] Menelaus in turn tries to put an end to their status warfare by recognizing and respecting Antilochus' past efforts on Menelaus' account.

The chariot-race in particular demonstrates the ideal process of ending status conflicts. From all the events of the funeral games, the chariot-race is the most competitive and yet the heroes act justly with respect to the social norms concerning status and hierarchy. The importance of the chariot-race in particular in this respect is accurately shown by DONLAN's remark that "like everything that happens in this book of reconciliation, the race episode symbolizes harmonious restoration of the correct social order: the headstrong young man chastized, the basileus' honor kept safe and magnified." The outcome of this conflict differs significantly from the one between Achilles and Agamemnon, since the latter were not able to de-escalate a conflict over status. The indisputable similarities between the conflicts makes the points of contrast even more significant.

The quick resolution of potential conflicts over status can be found throughout *Iliad* 23, although the narration of the other events is significantly shorter than the chariot-race.[143] In the series of remaining competitions Achilles presents himself as a just leader of the games who strategically appeases potential conflicts, just like he did in the discussion over granting Eumelus the second prize.[144] According to VAN WEES, "it seems that 'always to be the best and superior to others' is a goal accepted by everyone and pursued everywhere."[145] Especially *Iliad* 23, as the book about games between

[140] *Il.* 1. 275 – 279.
[141] RICHARDSON (1993) 165; BIERL (forthcoming) 5, 7.
[142] RICHARDSON (1993) 233 *ad loc.* 587 – 595.
[143] BIERL (forthcoming) 22 even calls the following events an appendix, implying that besides the significant difference in the amount of verses devoted to the chariot-race and the other competitions, the encompassing theme of the *Iliad* is best reflected on in the chariot-race and its award ceremony.
[144] BIERL (forthcoming) 7.
[145] VAN WEES (1992) 89. Cf. BIERL (forthcoming) 2; *Il.* 11.784).

heroes who always seek to protect and increase their status at all costs, is prone to conflicts. Also in these minor competitions the leading motifs of extreme competition in search for glory recur along with Achilles' performance as the soother of quarrels.[146] The excessive rivalry between the participants might easily turn into big fights that might be as destructive as the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon was.[147] However, all conflicts are quickly settled in anticipation of an intensification. The majority of the events illustrate that the heroes are now able to effectuate the ideal resolution of a conflict in order to avoid a destruction like the Greek army had already experienced.[148]

Remarkable in this respect is the 'competition' in sight of the spectators during the chariot-race. Idomeneus is the first to notice that Eumelus did not have the leading position anymore, but Ajax, the son of Oeleus, immediately "reproves him in a dishonoring manner" (αἰσχρῶς ἐνέντιπεν, v. 473).

Iliad 23. 476 – 479

οὔτε νεώτατός ἐσσι μετ᾽ Ἀργείοισι τοσοῦτον,	*You are neither so far the youngest among*
οὔτέ τοι ὀξύτατον κεφαλῆς ἐκδέρκεται ὄσσε·	*the Argives, nor do your eyes see the*
ἀλλ᾽ αἰεὶ μύθοις λαβρεύεαι· οὐδέ τί σε χρὴ	*sharpest from your head, but you always*
λαβραγόρην ἔμεναι· πάρα γὰρ καὶ ἀμείνονες ἄλλοι.	*brag. It is not fit for you to brag, for there*
	are other and better men present too.

As VAN WEES notes, the casual situation of watching a competition can easily turn into a challenge about status. Moreover, the scene illustrates how heroes can suddenly rival which might lead to "an escalation of hostilities". Watching who will finish first seems to be an unlikely situation where it involves status. However, as Ajax says, some heroes have a more keen perception than others. This makes the eyesight a competition and a challenge in status, which would have reminded the audience of the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon.[149] An escalation of the situation could have been close at hand

[146] BIERL (forthcoming) 23.
[147] BIERL (forthcoming) 5.
[148] DONLAN (1993) 163.
[149] KITCHELL (1989) 165; VAN WEES (1992) 90.

if Achilles had not come between them.[150]

Iliad 23. 490 – 494

αί νύ κε δὴ προτέρω ἔτ᾽ ἔρις γένετ᾽ ἀμφοτέροισιν,
εἰ μὴ Ἀχιλλεὺς αὐτὸς ἀνίστατο καὶ φάτο μῦθον·
μηκέτι νῦν χαλεποῖσιν ἀμείβεσθον ἐπέεσσιν,
Αἶαν Ἰδομενεῦ τε, κακοῖς, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ ἔοικε.
καὶ δ᾽ ἄλλῳ νεμεσᾶτον, ὅτις τοιαῦτά γε ῥέζοι.

And now a further strife would have come between both of them, if not Achilles himself arose and spoke these words: do not reply to one another with harsh words, Ajax and Idomeneus, nor with evil words, since this is not proper. You would feel resentment with someone else as well, who should act like this.

Achilles reprimands both heroes and declares that their competition is too aggressive and not properly fought (οὐδὲ ἔοικε, v. 493). By taking on the position of arbiter Achilles prevents more hostility. Achilles' intervention in the majority of the small (potential) conflicts throughout this book illustrates that the atmosphere in the social order has changed and that status conflicts can be solved and that the status of all heroes can be secured simultaneously.[151] However, a diplomatic judge 'to control and channel any destructive energy' seems to be indispensable to solve such conflicts.[152]

3.3 THE SYMBOLICAL VALUE OF *ILIAD* 23

The importance of the chariot-race is marked by the outstanding length of its description, yet, the affirmation and undermining of the social structures and the proper behavior in new social developments is present throughout *Iliad* 23. The importance of and the ease with which reconciliation is achieved as a clear contrast to the central conflict of the *Iliad* argue for the depiction of book 23 as *mise en abyme* – it depicts a foil of the escalated conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon.[153]

[150] Interestingly enough, Idomeneus proposes to make Agamemnon the arbiter of their bet although Achilles is the legitimate judge of the games. Cf. BIERL (forthcoming) 14.
[151] Most of the events involve what might be resulting in a conflict. An escalation of the wrestling-match between Odysseus and the great Ajax was prevented by Achilles (*Il.* 23. 733 - 737). Moreover, the tension in the foot-race (*Il.* 23. 781 – 784) and the armed combat (*Il.* 23. 822 -825) can be felt, but it is soothed before a conflict could arise.
[152] BIERL (forthcoming) 29.
[153] KITCHELL (1998) 162; BIERL (forthcoming) 4 – 5. For the discussion of Iliad 23 as reflecting on the entire Iliad see also HILMY (1992) 45 – 47; KITCHELL (1998); MARTIN (2000); ULF (2004).

Mise en abyme was defined by DÄLLENBACH as 'any internal mirror that reflects the whole of the narrative in simple, repeated, or "specious" (or paradoxical) duplication'.[154] Whereas the social order falls apart in book 1 due to the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon, book 23 shows the reintegration of the Greek army. The discussion between Antilochus and Menelaus is easily resolved, just like all the other minor competitions have a harmonious ending. RICHARDSON notes that the function of *Iliad* 23 is to sooth the tension that was build up by the fight between Achilles and Agamemnon. It builds up to *Iliad* 24 by means of marking the restoration of the established order and the reintegration of the group.[155] Moreover, Achilles is acting increasingly anti-agonistic in book 23 and is remarkably generous in awarding gifts in contrast to his former stern demeanor and incapability to give up.[156] A large part of the accomplishment of the reconciliation is due to the very hero who was not able to recognize authority nor to give up in order to respect his superior at the beginning of the *Iliad*.[157]

Although Achilles proves to be anti-agonistic, he also wants to make sure that one's reputation is honored, regardless of the situation. One might wonder, for instance, why Eumelus was granted the second prize although he finished last. Following RICHARDSON, Achilles believes that prizes should be awarded for one's undeniable ἀρετή (*excellence*).[158] This attitude towards recognizing one's ἀρετή emphasizes that Achilles is the one to rehabilitate the social norms in this respect. He proves to be willing to disorder the pattern of distribution in order to honor one's true merits, of course thinking of his own loss in status by being deprived of Briseis. Yet, Agamemnon did exactly this to save his own reputation. Then, when Achilles was the "victim", he blamed him for doing so. Moreover, Achilles puts Antilochus in the same position as he was in.[159] Achilles, in the role of Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1, shows now that *he* indeed is able to ideally solve such status conflicts without giving in to the zero-sum-game model where one

[154] DÄLLENBACH (1989) 43, as quoted from BIERL (forthcoming) 5. Moreover, *Iliad* 23 indeed provides distinct divergences from the *Iliad*'s main story as DE JONG (1985) requires from a 'mirror story'. Cf. BIERL (forthcoming) 6.
[155] VAN WEES (1992) 94; RICHARDSON (1993) 164 – 165.
[156] BIERL (forthcoming) 23.
[157] RICHARDSON (1993) 165.
[158] RICHARDSON (1993) 224.
[159] VAN WEES (1992) 65. This situation illustrates that only by taking away one's honor the honor of someone else can be increased. It is for this reason that the conflicts and competitions about status are described as a zero-sum-game.

hero's reputation has to decrease.[160] Eumelus, Antilochus and Menelaus obtain a prize that they are more than happy with.

The culmination of the theme of reconciliation comes at the end of *Iliad* 23, where Achilles grants Agamemnon with a prize for spear-throwing without letting him compete at all.

Iliad 23. 890 – 891

Ἀτρεΐδη· ἴδμεν γὰρ ὅσον προβέβηκας ἁπάντων ἠδ᾽ ὅσσον δυνάμει τε καὶ ἥμασιν ἔπλευ ἄριστος·	*Son of Atreus, we know how far you excel all and how far you are the best in power as well as in throwing the spear.*

Achilles again shows that he knows how to play with the boundaries and the terms of exchanging goods. He redirects the situation – an award ceremony – to the exchange of gifts between two individuals – a form of reciprocity in which the receiver is under obligation. Achilles stretches and manipulates the parameters of *gift-giving* and turns a matter of redistribution cunningly into reciprocity in which he has the upper hand. On the one hand, Achilles shows that this gesture is "the final seal of their reconciliation" [161] - he voluntarily grants Agamemnon a prize, without letting him make an effort for it. This is the complete opposite behavior concerning the ability to give up his properties from what he has shown in the conflict over Briseis, whereby he acknowledges Agamemnon's superior position. Achilles restrains Agamemnon from participating in the javelin competition because he is supreme in power (ὅσσον δυνάμει ἔπλευ ἄριστος, v. 891). VAN WEES argues for a similar reading of the passage as symbolizing the reconciliation between the heroes. In order to reinforce this interpretation he notes that the ambiguity of the word δύναμις as meaning physical strength as well as authority suggests that Agamemnon's reputation as a javelin-thrower is protected and simultaneously his status as a king.[162] DONLAN, however, rightly notes the double meaning of Achilles' gesture. He shows that Achilles rewards Agamemnon for something he himself is superior in, which is a most generous and reconciling act.[163] Yet, we cannot

[160] DONLAN (1993) 163.
[161] RICHARDSON (1993) 165.
[162] VAN WEES (1992) 95.
[163] DONLAN (1993) 170.

deny the competitive aspect of Achilles' gesture when we take into consideration the ability to stretch the boundaries of an exchange and the various motivations for gift-giving. DONLAN is surely right in saying that "no member of an audience attuned to the use of gifts to calibrate status could have missed the point that a prize to be won was converted to a free gift."[164] This last picture we get of Achilles in *Iliad* 23 stands in firm contrast with the image of Agamemnon at the beginning of the *Iliad.* Whereas Agamemnon took away the *legitimate* and *rightfully earned share of honor* from Achilles, Achilles generously offers Agamemnon a 'free' gift.[165] "Agamemnon leaves", as DONLAN states, "the poem under obligation to Achilles". The very end of *Iliad* 23 corresponds with the very beginning of *Iliad* 1: although Achilles accused Agamemnon of being greedy and keeping all the booty for himself without even fighting for it, Achilles lets – or even makes – Agamemnon do exactly this in the javelin-competition.[166] Achilles shapes the terms of the exchange into a situation of gift-giving in which Agamemnon does not earn the gift for he has not competed for it.[167] Again and again it becomes clear that the heroes have the ability to play with the boundaries of exchange. Despite Achilles' underlying competitive motivations of his gesture, he is nonetheless able to achieve the reconciliation – Agamemnon takes the prize and does not protest against Achilles' action.[168]

To sum up, by giving the mare back and forth, Antilochus and Menelaus frame the exchange and are thereby able to situate themselves as the initial owner of the horse in order to protect their status. More importantly, they demonstrate their ability to give up the mare in order to respect the social structures, which stands in sharp contrast to the disability of Achilles and Agamemnon. Antilochus and Menelaus solve their conflict while respecting the social hierarchy and but defending their reputation nonetheless. The chariot-race with the conflict about the mare is the basis on which we can see large-scale structures in the other small-scale conflicts in book 23, but also in the *Iliad* as a

[164] DONLAN (1993) 170. For a similar point see BIERL (forthcoming) 27, who calls Achilles' action ironical and almost cynical, though diplomatic and conciliatory.
[165] DONLAN (1993) 170 notes this as well. Yet, he describes the object taken away by Agamemnon and given by Achilles a "gift". I think that the recognition of the difference in taking away an *legitimate share* and giving a *free gift* is crucial for the understanding of the significance of the emphasis on the contrasting images of both heroes
[166] RICHARDSON (1993) 270 *ad loc.* 23. 884 – 897; BIERL (forthcoming) 28.
[167] BIERL (forthcoming) 28.
[168] BIERL (forthcoming) 28.

total. *Iliad* 23 in general and the conflict about the mare in particular emphasize how heroes should behave in a conflict over status in order to prohibit an escalation. By restoring the norms and proper behavior in these conflicts, the authority of Agamemnon has been restored at the end of *Iliad* 23 as well. *Iliad* 23 shows us how the social (and hierarchical) structures are restored and how status conflicts are properly solved by means of the exchange of objects. "It reflects", as BIERL convincingly states, "upon the nature of the aristocratic-agonistic ideal of behavior, the protagonists' endeavor to excel and the danger of overdoing it".[169] *Iliad* 23 provides us an alternative behavior in situations where aristocratic values are jeopardized.

[169] BIERL (2018) 4.

Conclusion

One of the main themes of the *Iliad* is the question of how heroes should react when the established social order is jeopardized due to changes in the societal hierarchy. The Homeric heroes are especially competitive when their own status is involved and can be damaged. They are prepared to defend their reputation at all costs which can easily lead to a conflict with destructive consequences.

The conflict over the mare in *Iliad* 23 is a clear example of a status conflict that is made tangible by the exchange of goods. They exchange material objects in order to make their social status visible and to enhance their reputation. Antilochus and Menelaus consider being part of the cultural biography of an object as one way to secure your status. The memory of the (former) owner fuses with the object which makes the owner "immortal" – as long as the object exists and circulates, the owner will be remembered as well. Although the mare has no biography, Antilochus and Menelaus show that they are aware of the reputation-preserving capability of object and *create* a biography for the mare while they exchange her. Both heroes emphasize their position as the legitimate owner of the mare whereby they validate their place at the beginning of the biography. By subsequently giving her away, they try to secure their reputation for the present as well after their death – people will be reminded of him by seeing or hearing about the object with which he has become entangled.

The capability of the mare to preserve the memory of the hero is just one aspect of her symbolical value. By comparing the conflict over the mare in *Iliad* 23 with the conflict of Achilles and Agamemnon it has become clear that both status conflicts are structured as a competition in giving. Since glory and status are intangible, its obtainment or increase can only be made concrete by the exchange of material objects. All heroes are aware of the ambiguity of the modi and parameters of an exchange and prove that they are able to manipulate the terms of the exchange in order to increase or sustain their status. Because of this ambiguity, the context of the exchange determines if an object should be "given", "given up", "received" or "obtained" in order to increase one's reputation. As the social situation changes, the symbolical value of the object in the exchange changes as well – there is no *actual* value of the object.

It has become clear that the shifting value of the mare can be understood more

articulately when we approach the mare (along with the other prizes in book 23) as the battleground of contention where social relationships and status are negotiated and reflected. Moreover, the conflict between Antilochus and Menelaus has shown how large-scale social structures in the *Iliad* can be elucidated. *Iliad* 23 in total forms a foil that reflects upon and forms a contrast to the status rivalry between Achilles and Agamemnon that is fought and made visible by means of exchanging objects. The resulting conflict of the disruption of the established order in *Iliad* 1 causes the Greek social order to fall apart. *Iliad* 23 shows that such rivalries over reputation can be easily reconciled if there is a just and diplomatic arbiter close at hand who and if the heroes behave in correspondence with their place in the social hierarchy. In this respect, the award ceremony of the chariot race is the most important passage that reflects on the most prominent conflict of the *Iliad*: it is its condensed version, yet it demonstrates that the heroes are capable of giving up in order to protect the social hierarchy and the interest of the social order as a whole by de-escalating a conflict. It firmly contrasts with Achilles and Agamemnon in *Iliad* 1 who both categorically refuse to give up their spoil of war – it is embedded in an overarching social fabric in which status, the ability to solve conflicts harmoniously or the escalation of status conflicts are stake. Yet, Homeric heroes still do not do give up their status easily. Although *Iliad* 23 mainly shows how a potential conflict should be prevented and should be reconciled as soon and as status-preserving as possible, it simultaneously illustrates that heroes always attempt to frame an exchange in the most profitable way. The heroes are aware of the room to maneuver in an exchange in order to defend, maintain and increase their status – the center of a Homeric hero's life.

Based on the conflict between Antilochus and Menelaus, I have argued in this thesis that the principles underlying the constitution of symbolical value to an object can be discovered. Although the conflict over the mare seems to be arbitrary, the analysis of these principles shows that the conflict is part of a larger social, cultural and poetical entity. Although the scene in which the mare is exchanged seems strange at face value, the application of socio-economic theory and theory on the Homeric continual quest for status have shed a light on the motivations of the exchange of objects as a means to (re)define social relationships. The reason for constantly manipulating the terms of an

exchange in order to strengthen one's position is twofold. On the one hand, it is necessary to frame the exchange for the sake of protecting the hero's status at that very moment. By controlling the parameters of the situation the hero validates his social position in front of an audience who has to recognize this redefined status. On the other hand, the context of the exchange fuses with the transacted object as a part of its biography. Manipulating the transaction is thus not a mere concern of securing one's status for the present, but also for the future – the creation of the most benefitable conditions of an exchange in terms of reinforcing status simultaneously attaches the best image of the hero to the biography of the object, whereby his κλέος (the reputation after death) is secured as well. As demonstrated by the actions of Achilles, Agamemnon, Antilochus and Menelaus, the Homeric heroes are thus aware that they can control the symbolical value of the transacted object by framing the exchange. By doing so, they not only defend and enhance their status at the moment, but also guarantee the best memory of themselves in the future by "writing" themselves in the biography of the object – for Antilochus and Menelaus, the mare is the vehicle by which they negotiate over their current individual status and by which they make their memory last forever.

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Appendix: objects with a biography in *Iliad* 23

Iliad 23	Object	Event	Biography	Narrator/ Character	Greek and Translation
263	Woman skilled in fine handiwork	Chariot race	No		
264	Tripod with ear-shaped handles holding twenty-two measures		No		
265 - 266	Six-year old mare, broken-in and pregnant with mule foal		No		
267 – 268	Cauldron holding four measures, brand new		No		
269	Two talents of gold		No		
270	Two-handed cooking dish, brand new		No		
560 – 562	Asteropaeus' breastplate	Substitute prize for chariot race	Yes	Achilles	δώσω οἱ θώρηκα, τὸν Ἀστεροπαῖον ἀπηύρων χάλκεον, ᾧ πέρι χεῦμα φαεινοῦ κασσιτέροιο ἀμφιδεδίνηται· *I will give him the bronze breastplate that I stripped from Asteropaeus, around which an overlay of shining tin circles.*
654 – 656	Six-year old mule, broken-in and hardest to break	Boxing match	No		
	Two-handled drinking cup		No		
702 – 703	Great tripod to hold a cauldron over the flames, worth twelve oxen	Wrestling match	No		
704 – 705	Female slave, skilled in fine handiwork. Worth four oxen		No		
740 – 749	Silver mixing-bowl	Foot-race	Yes	Narrator	ἀργύρεον κρητῆρα τετυγμένον· ἓξ δ᾽ ἄρα μέτρα χάνδανεν, αὐτὰρ κάλλει ἐνίκα πᾶσαν ἐπ᾽ αἶαν πολλόν, ἐπεὶ Σιδόνες πολυδαίδαλοι εὖ ἤσκησαν,/ Φοίνικες δ᾽ ἄγον ἄνδρες ἐπ᾽ ἠεροειδέα πόντον, στῆσαν δ᾽ ἐν λιμένεσσι, Θόαντι δὲ δῶρον

					ἔδωκαν·/ υἱος δὲ Πριάμοιο Λυκάονος ὦνον ἔδωκε Πατρόκλῳ ἥρωϊ Ἰησονίδης Εὔνηος. καὶ τὸν Ἀχιλλεὺς θῆκεν ἄεθλον οὖ ἑτάροιο, *a well-made silver mixing bowl; it held six measures, and in beauty it was the best in the whole world, since the Sidonians who work with great skill, had made it marvelously. Phoenician merchants brought it to the dark sea and placed it on the harbor and they gave it as a gift to Thoas. Euneus, the son of Jason, gave it as a price for Lycaon, the son of Priam to the hero Patroclus. And Achilles offered it as a prize in tribute to his friend, whoever should prove to be the most nimble in running.*
750	Large well-fattened ox		No		
751	Half talent in gold (+extra half talent for Antilochus' kind words)		No		
799 – 800	The shield, helmet and long-shadowed spear	Armed combat	Yes	Narrator	θῆκ᾽ ἐς ἀγῶνα φέρων, κατὰ δ᾽ ἀσπίδα καὶ τρυφάλειαν/ τεύχεα Σαρπήδοντος, ἃ μιν Πάτροκλος ἀπηύρα. *Now Achilles brought out a shield and helmet, and a long-shadowed spear, Sarpedon's weaponry that Patroclus had captured.*
807 – 808	Sword of Asteropaeus		Yes	Achilles	τῷ μὲν ἐγὼ δώσω τόδε φάσγανον ἀργυρόηλον καλὸν Θρηΐκιον, τὸ μὲν Ἀστεροπαῖον ἀπηύρων· *I will give him this noble silver-studded Thracian sword which I took from Asteropaeus.*
826 – 829	Lump of pig-iron	Throwing competition	Yes	Narrator	αὐτὰρ Πηλεΐδης θῆκεν σόλον αὐτοχόωνον ὃν πρὶν μὲν ῥίπτασκε μέγα σθένος Ἠετίωνος· ἀλλ᾽ ἤτοι τὸν ἔπεφνε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς, τὸν δ᾽ ἄγετ᾽ ἐν νήεσσι σὺν ἄλλοισι κτεάτεσσι. *But Peleus' son offered a huge lump of pig-iron as prize that the powerful Eëtion used to throw. But swift-footed Achilles had killed him and carried it off in his ships with his other possessions.*
850	Ten double-headed axes of dark iron	Archery	No		
851	Ten single-headed axes of dark iron		No		
884	Long-shadowed spear	Throwing javelin	No		
885 – 886	Cauldron, new and embossed with flowers. Worth an ox		No		