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From Hunter to Hero:

Hunting narratives in *Odyssey* 19 and *Iliad* 9

Master Thesis Classics and Ancient Civilizations

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January 2017

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Introduction:

Hunting is one of the longest recorded human activities. Introduced for the first time in pre-historic societies, it is still practiced almost everywhere in the world. Its function, however, has changed dramatically from that time until now, at least for the western part of the world. What was at first a means to provide sustenance and protection has evolved into a kind of sports, an activity which, dangerous though may be, is not anymore dictated by the urgent need for food.

This revolutionary change in the function of hunting is traced already in ancient times. As far as Greece is concerned, evidence shows that even in Mycenaean societies hunting for food was scarce, since meat consumption was already supported by cattle and domesticated animals[1]. However, in the centuries that followed, hunting continued to be important for social and cultural reasons; although it was not anymore practiced out of necessity, it was still considered a noble activity, it was part of certain rituals and it was one of the most common mythological themes[2].

This diversity regarding the functions of hunting in ancient Greece is interestingly reflected in Homeric epic poetry, which develops the theme of hunting in multiple ways and in different contexts. However, there are two passages, one in the *Odyssey* and one in the *Iliad*, in which hunting has an exceptional role; in both poems, these are the only cases -apart from the similes- in which an animal is hunted but not eaten. The first passage, found in book 19 of the *Odyssey*, concerns Odysseus' youth boar hunt, which is described in detail and presented as the cause for the hero's scar that will betray his true identity to his nurse, Eurycleia. The second passage is part of Phoenix's speech to Achilles in book 9 of the *Iliad* and is about Meleager and the famous hunt of the Calydonian boar, sent as a punishment by Artemis for the impious behavior of Meleager's father. What is the role of hunting in these narratives? How can we explain the choice of the narrator to include a boar hunt in each context? And finally, what is the relation between these stories and the plot of each poem?

These were the questions that initiated the current research. To answer them, we should at first provide some background information regarding the function of hunting in ancient Greece. Thus, in the first chapter, we will offer some general facts derived from archaeological evidence and literary sources. In this introductory part of our research, we will try to clarify the distinction between the earlier aspects of "necessary" hunting and its later symbolic aspects. As far as the first category is concerned, we can distinguish between two types: hunting for food and hunting as a means of protection from threats. In the second category, two types are again included: hunting as a preparatory activity for war and hunting as part of *rites de passage*. A special subchapter will provide further information on the theme of the boar hunt. We should note here that this overview is not extensive, as it focuses on the economic, cultural and social aspects of hunting but excludes its artistic representations.

[1] Hamilakis (2000), 244.
[2] Barringer (2001), 2.

A small part of this aspect will be, however, covered in the next chapter, which is dedicated to the representation of hunting in Homeric epic poetry. In the first part, we have collected all the passages from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* related to hunting, from simple references to small hunting "episodes". In the second part, we will turn our attention to the hunting similes, found mostly in the *Iliad*; general information that have been collected, as well as the examination of selected passages, will help us examine their function in the narration. Our main focus will be the interpretation of the hunt, especially the boar hunt, as a *tertium comparationis* for a hero's death.

Moving on, we will start the main part of our research with Odysseus' boar hunt in *Odyssey* 19. Although this passage is certainly posterior to the Iliadic one, we have decided to start with it, because the text in this case is less puzzling and the hunt is described in more detail. First, we will place the story in its context and present its content. After that, we will try to understand its place in the narration, discussing mainly the following: the verbal links between Odysseus' boar hunt and the Iliadic battle scenes, the theme of initiation which is dominant in the narration and the narrative technique used in the passage. The conclusions that will be reached will prove that this hunting narrative is much more than an artfully constructed story about Odysseus' youth adventures; it is the key point that connects his heroic past with his future at the crucial moment of his recognition by his nurse.

The next hunting episode is part of Meleager's story, narrated by Phoenix to Achilles in book 9 of the *Iliad*. Although the object of the hunt is the same with Odysseus' case, namely a boar, there are multiple differences between the two narratives and the way hunting is described in each of them. This second narrative is much more complicated and, in some sense obscure. Hunting is only one of the themes developed and the sequence of the events that Phoenix narrates is not linear. Thus, although our examination will again begin with an overview of the context and the content of the story, our methodology, in this case, will be different; at first, it is necessary to answer some of the questions that Phoenix's narration leaves unanswered, in order to reconstruct the hunting scene. To achieve this, we will gather some information provided by other versions of the myth. Having completed that, we will analyze the narrative technique, focusing on the prominent figure of Meleager's wife, Cleopatra, and her central position in the story. In the last part of the chapter, the boar hunt will come to the front; after examining whether this is again an initiatory hunt or not, we will try to detect its link with the rest of the poem; in the end, some interesting remarks will be made, regarding the relation between the boar that gets killed on the one hand and Patroclus on the other.

Having completed that, we will be able to present our conclusions regarding the function of hunting in these two narratives; to give a glimpse of them, we could reveal that neither the choice of the boar as the hunted animal, nor the places where the two stories are found is coincidental. On the contrary, in each case the hunt plays a special role in the narration, commenting on the heroes' current situation and providing insight to major events that will, later on, take place.

Chapter 1:

The background of hunting in ancient Greece

1.1 Hunting for food

Hunting was first performed millions of years before the time of Homer or his Bronze Age heroes. Undoubtedly, it primarily functioned as a means to get food. However, it was not the first practice through which our distant ancestors gained access to meat. Recent anthropological and archaeological research has shown that hunting was actually the last stage of the development of human subsistence[3]. Between the first stage of food-gathering, in which hominins and proto-humans were vegetarians, and the last stage of hunting, there was an intermediate stage of scavenging[4]. This means that proto-humans collected meat from already dead, half-eaten animals that carnivores had already killed[5].Thus, meat first found its way in the human diet as "an extension of gathering behaviour"[6] and became its integral part only when humans had evolved enough to hunt and kill animals themselves. In any case, we can be certain that hunting of big game was already practiced by Neanderthals[7].

The consequences of the transition from vegetarianism to not only the consumption of meat, but, most importantly, the killing of animals, caused various changes to humans as they evolved through time. Except for the physical changes, such as the development of the brain and the changes in body structure[8], scientists and scholars have also examined the psychological effect that killing for food may have caused. Burkert, for example, in his detailed treatise on the origin and function of sacrifice, describes hunting as "one of the most decisive ecological changes between men and the other primates"[9]. According to him, the violence that humans of the Paleolithic era had to employ in order to forsake "the role of the hunted for that of the hunter"[10], affected their psychology to such an extent, that they not only became accustomed to killing animals, but also other human beings[11].

1.2 Hunting as a means of protection from threats

However, wild animals were not only killed for food. Another reason behind hunting activities was the need of humans to protect themselves from dangerous animals. This idea of animals posing a big threat to early humans was quite widespread in ancient Greece; it is

[3] Robinson (2014), 177.
[4] Robinson (2014), 177-178.
[5] Robinson (2014), 183.
[6] Robinson (2014), 182.
[7] Robinson (2014), 186.
[8] Robinson (2014), 184-186.
[9] Burkert (1983), 17.
[10] Burkert (1983), 18.
[11] Burkert (1983), 17-22.

mentioned by Protagoras in the platonic dialogue of the same name[12] and it is also reflected in various myths of great antiquity[13]. Hesiod, for example, mentions the lion that Hercules hunted and killed, referring to it as a *πῆμα ἀνθρώποισιν*[14], a calamity for men. Except for this lion, myths also include boars that were causing troubles to humans, as the Erymanthian boar[15] , hunted also by Hercules, and the Calydonian boar[16]. Theseus, too, hunted and killed a sow[17]. Herodotus - somewhere between myth and history- refers to a boar in Asia Minor, which caused severe damages and which hunters and hounds were assigned to kill[18].

Except for these cases in which individual animals harmed people and were killed for this reason, there is also evidence that hunting in antiquity functioned as a means to control the population of a species[19]. Strabo[20] and Athenaeus[21] present hunting with hounds as the solution given for different problems caused by the constant proliferation of rabbits and hares. Interestingly, similar solutions are offered nowadays to reduce the numbers of a species which shows a worrying increase of its population[22].

1.3 Hunting as practice for war

These two aspects mentioned above give a sufficient answer to the question why humans started practicing hunting. However, the fact that hunting was also an integral part of later, farming societies, which had easy access to meat by eating herded animals and had developed techniques to protect themselves from wild animals, needs further explanation. Although even in classical Greece game was commonly eaten after a hunt[23], hunting for societies that possessed cattle was no longer a necessity, but a choice.

According to archaeological evidence, hunting was more than a food providing technique already around 3.000 BC in Mesopotamia and other regions: it was connected to leadership and authority[24]. In Mycenaean Greece, hunting must have also functioned in a similar way: although hunting scenes are one of the most common subjects in iconographical

[12] Pl.*Prt*.322b.
[13] Except for the textual evidence mentioned here, there is also a wide variety of iconographical evidence of these heroic hunts. For a collection of early vase paintings depicting mythological boar hunts, see http://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/xdb/ASP/browse.asp?tableName=qryData&newwindow=&BrowseSession=1&companyPage=Contacts&newwindowsearchclosefrombrowse=
[14] Hes.*Th*.326-332. See also Apollod.*Bibl*.2.5.1.
[15] Apollod.*Bibl*.2.5.4.
[16] The hunting of the Calydonian boar will be extensively discussed in chapter 4.
[17]Apollod.*Epit*.1.This is the Crommyonian sow, to which Strabo 8.6.22 refers as the mother of the Calydonian boar.
[18] Hdt.1.36.
[19] Lane Fox (2013), 73,75.
[20] Strab.3.2.6.
[21] Ath.9.400d.
[22] Lane Fox (2013), 75.
[23] Lane Fox (2013), 73.
[24] Hamilakis (2003), 244.

representations[25], there are not that many bones of wild animals found around the Mycenaean palaces to prove that hunting was a common practice[26]. According to Hamilakis, this inconsistency manifests that the role of hunting had changed essentially from the Middle Neolithic to the Bronze Age and hunting was eventually considered an "important arena of social power"[27]. To put it more simply, hunting had become an activity through which men could show their prowess, acquire reputation and gain social status. In other words, someone who wanted to become a leader ought first to prove his competence in the hunting fields. As Burkert claims, courage, which was always one of the main qualities of the ideal man and, consequently, of the ideal leader, was one of the prerequisites and results of hunting[28].

Having these observations in mind, it is not surprising that Xenophon in the beginning of his *Cynegeticus* offers a list of heroes who were also hunters[29]. Heroes should be trained as hunters[30] in order to become heroes. And since they were unquestionable role models, men should be also trained in hunting in order to follow in their footsteps[31]. Even in classical Greece, hunting is proposed as an educative activity. Xenophon for example, being consistent with what he says in the *Cynegeticus*, presents hunting as an integral part of the education that Cyrus, the ideal leader according to him, had received[32]. Except for him, Plato also includes hunting land animals to the standard education a city should offer to its citizens[33]. In another passage, Xenophon justifies his ideas on hunting by enumerating the benefits coming from it[34]; they are all connected with the qualities that a good warrior should have and, thus, hunting is a good way for young men to practice warfare before taking part in battles. In addition to this, Plato describes war as a type of hunting[35] and Aristotle hunting as a type of war[36]. This connection of hunting with war is evident not only in literature but seems to have been a shared idea throughout Greek antiquity; it is found also in vase paintings[37], especially in archaic and classical Attic vases[38]. The greatest example, however, are Spartans and Cretans who were actually using hunting for war-training[39].

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[25] Hamilakis (2003), 243.
[26] Hamilakis (2003), 244.
[27] Hamilakis (2003), 243.
[28] Burkert (1983), 19.
[29] Xen.*Cyn*.1.2. Achilles and Odysseus are also included in this list.
[30] See for example Pin.*Nem*.3.78-90, where young Achilles hunts wild animals under the guidance of Cheiron.
[31] Xen.*Cyn*.1.17-18.
[32] See Xen.*Cyr*.1.4.9-16, where Cyrus hunts as a young boy. See also Xen.*Cyr*.2.1.29, where Cyrus sends his soldiers to hunt before the battle.
[33] Pl.*Leg*.823b.
[34] Xen.*Cyn*.12.
[35] Pl.*Leg*.823b.
[36] Arist.*Pol*.1256b.
[37] Barringer (2001), 7.
[38] Barringer (2001), 21, 27, mentions some cases of vase paintings in which boar hunting is conducted with military weapons and some others in which a hunt is depicted on the one side of the vase and a battle on the other. She interprets images like these as an attempt of the Athenian aristocracy to declare superiority in a period when it had to face a decrease in its political power, 6.
[39] See Barringer (2001), 10 and Anderson (1985), 26-27.

1.4 Hunting as a rite de passage

However, aside from being an important part of young warriors' education, hunting was also necessary for a young man to become a citizen in both Crete and Sparta, as evidence shows[40]. Based on these two cases, it could be argued that hunting, at least in some societies, was for boys a form of introduction into the world of adult men.

As far as Crete is concerned, Strabo, quoting Ephorus[41], refers to a strange custom: young boys could be abducted by their potential lovers and live with them in the countryside for a period of two months. There, they would be initiated to sex. Hunting wild animals was also an activity that the boy would do for the first time under the guidance of his lover[42]. Interestingly, these abductions were managed by official laws of the state. After this two-month period, the boy could return to the civilized environment and could finally participate in the feasts of adult men. He would also receive symbolic gifts from his abductor: an ox, a cup and weapons[43].

Similar rites existed in Sparta, too. The *κρυπτεία*[44] institution was also part of the training of young Spartans and was conducted in the countryside; but in this case, as Anderson points out, hunting[45] did not concern animals, but Helots. Hunting, however, was similarly a prerequisite for a Spartan to participate in a formal feast[46]. In addition to this, one of Xenophon's references to king Agesilaus[47] could be regarded as an indication of a relation between hunting youths and pederasty in Sparta.

Based on the similarities between these rites and the Athenian institution of ephebia[48], as well as attic myths and rituals, Vidal-Naquet suggested that ephebia was also a very old, connected-to-hunting ritual, which functioned as a *rite de passage* for young Athenians[49]. Two facts make this claim plausible: Aristotle's testimony[50] that boys who had not completed successfully this procedure were not considered citizens yet and the fact that epheboi, who were of young age, did not live inside the city but in the countryside. However, as Barringer[51] justly says, we do not have any textual evidence for the existence of the ephebia before the fourth century BC.

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[40] Anderson (1985), 26-27.
[41] Strab.10.483-484. Barringer (2001), 13-14, notes that Ephorus lived in the 4th century BC but the information he provided must refer to customs of great antiquity.
[42] Anderson (1985), 26, claims that this custom should not be confused with the hunting education that young Cretans had; the latter was common for everyone, whereas only few of them were abducted by adult lovers.
[43] Barringer (2001), 13
[44] See Pl.*Leg*.633a-b and Plut.*Lyc*.28.
[45] Anderson (1985), 160.
[46] Barringer (2001), 13, refers to Libanius, who writes in one of his orations that young Spartans could not take a seat in a banquet dedicated to Artemis, if they had not hunted yet. See also Lane Fox (2013), 80, for a similar tradition in Macedonia.
[47] Xen.*Hell*.5.3.20
[48] For a brief overview on the ephebia institution see Barringer (2001), 46-50.
[49] Vidal-Naquet (1986), 106-122.
[50] Arist.*Ath.Pol*.42.
[51] Barringer (2001), 47.

To sum up, even if the case of Athens is not persuasive enough, there is enough evidence to connect hunting with initiation. Burkert[52], for example, describes hunting in early human societies as a way of gender confirmation; hunting was an activity performed outside the boundaries of family-space and, thus, signified the transition from the realm of women to the world of men. Hamilakis[53] confirms this observation by pointing out the role of gender in hunting in farming societies.

1.5 The boar hunt

Hunting is a favorite theme in the Indo-European tradition and the boar is one of most frequently hunted animals. As West mentions, boar hunts can be found in Irish and Welsh sagas[54]. In the Mycenaean era, boars were also hunted and killed; helmets made of boar tusks found in many archaeological sites not only prove that Mycenaeans enjoyed killing boars; they reveal a connection of boar hunting to power[55]. Moreover, as shown already, many heroes, including Hercules, Theseus, Meleager and Peleus, were said to have hunted boars[56]. In the Homeric narration, too, boar is one of the most common wild animals.

Hull mentions three ways of boar hunting in ancient Greece: chasing the boar in the open field, using hounds that will lead it to nets or hunting it with footsnares[57]. Heroic hunts were, of course, carried out without nets or snares, simply because heroes were strong enough to kill these fierce animals on their own.

According to Xenophon, the boar is one of the most challenging animals[58]; hunting it is not only a difficult but a dangerous task as well. Boars can be very aggressive. They have sharp tusks and their big size and weight can easily kill someone. This is why Xenophon advises the aspiring hunter never to hunt a boar alone[59] and he also gives first-aid instruction in the case of a boar's attack[60]. The ferocity of the boar must have been commonly accepted[61] and thus, boar-hunting must have been considered a manifestation of great power.

To sum up, once encountered with a boar, the hunter had only one choice: to kill the animal. Otherwise, there was a great chance of him becoming the prey. To use Hull's words "victory was essential, for there was no safety except through conquest"[62]. Having this

[52] Burkert (1983), 18.
[53] Hamilakis (2003), 241-243.
[54] West (2007), 430.
[55] Hamilakis (2003), 243. For the description of such a helmet see *Il*.10.261-271.
[56] Barringer (2001), 15, refers also to 50 attic vases dated from 600 to 425 BC which depict nonmythological boar hunts.
[57] Hull (1964), 104. Boar hunters are sometimes depicted mounted. See Barringer (2001), 16.
[58] Xen.*Cyn*.10.17-18.
[59] Xen.*Cyn*.10.3.
[60] Xen.*Cyn*.10.13-16.
[61] Barringer (2001), 16, mentions the case of a vase painting where boars are used as shields by hoplites.
[62] Hull (1964), 105.

observation in mind will help us understand the function of the two Homeric boar-hunting stories, which will be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 2:

Hunting in Homer

2.1 Hunting in Homeric epic poetry – an overview

A lot more could be said about the performance, perception and representation of hunting in ancient Greece, but this lies beyond the scope of this current research. To bring the subject back to what will be later on discussed, we will now turn our attention to Homeric epic poetry and we will try to examine which of the previously mentioned functions of hunting are found in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Having completed that, we will discuss the hunting similes found in the two poems. The information and comments that will be provided in this chapter will help us understand the context in which the hunting stories of Odysseus and Meleager are found.

Surprisingly, although meat is the standard food for epic heroes[63], there are only two cases[64], both found in the *Odyssey*, in which hunting is practiced as a means to provide food: in book 9[65], where Odysseus and his crew hunt wild goats on the island of the Cyclops and in book 10[66], when Odysseus alone hunts and kills a wild stag. In both passages, hunting is presented as a necessity, since Odysseus and his comrades find themselves in strange places, where they have to look for their food themselves. This is why after a short reference to the hunting procedure, the narrator describes the feast, in which these animals are cooked and eaten[67]. What needs to be noted here is that, although hunting out of need for food does not seem to be something a hero would do[68], there is a heroic sense in the second case, since, as Schnapp-Gourbeillon states[69], the stag is described as a big beast, a *μέγα θηρίον*[70], and Odysseus manages to kill it without any help. Thus, hunting for food may not be a noble deed, but that does not mean that the endeavor *per se* is easy.

Although, as shown in the previous cases, hunting can be performed to provide subsistence, its general representation in the *Odyssey* is much more complicated. Hunting can be also an entertaining activity, a kind of sports, to put it simply. This aspect, except for Odysseus' narrative which will be discussed later, is clearly found in one of the similes,

[63] In Homeric epic poetry, meat is supplied by domesticated animals, see Sherratt (2004), 181-217, and Bakker (2013), 36-52.
[64] Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 141-146, includes in her overview of les *chasses homériques* a fishing scene in *Od*.4.367-369 and the killing of Helios' cattle by Odysseus' comrades in *Od*.12.320-373. However, I do not agree with this approach, since fishing could be hardly described as hunting and the cattle of the Sun consists of domesticated and not wild animals.
[65] *Od*.9.151-160.
[66] *Od*.10.156-173.
[67] Sherratt (2004), 184, referring to the Homeric feast, describes these two as the only passages in Homer where hunted game is eaten. Bakker (2013), 53-73 also mentions them.
[68] Interestingly, the consumption of game is never found in the *Iliad*, as Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 146, observes.
[69] Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 144.
[70] *Od.*10.171.

examined here separately from the rest. In book 6[71], when Nausicaa appears for the first time in the narration, she is compared to Artemis, who hunts boars or deer in the mountains for fun. Hunting here is not a necessity, but a choice, an activity which brings joy, as the use of the participle *τερπομένη* suggests.

If we continue with the *Odyssey*, another interesting, although implicit, reference to hunting is found in the *Νέκυια*, in the lines where Hercules is described in the underworld; Hercules wears a golden shield-belt on which two different subjects are depicted, namely hunting and war:

ἄρκτοι τ᾽ ἀγρότεροί τε σύες χαροποί τε λέοντες,
ὑσμῖναί τε μάχαι τε φόνοι τ᾽ ἀνδροκτασίαι τε. (*Od.*11.610-611)

[…] bears and wild boars, and lions with flashing eyes, and conflicts, and battles, and murders, and slayings of men[72].

Both the activities depicted on the belt are far from random, since, on the one hand, they constitute the source of *κλέος* for the hero and, on the other hand, verify the already mentioned deep connection of hunting to war.

Two more passages which reveal -and implicitly or explicitly comment on- this relation of hunting with war are found in the *Iliad*[73]. One of them occurs when the minor hero Scamandrius is introduced; Scamandrius is a Trojan warrior, who is characterized by the Homeric narrator as a skillful hunter, an *ἐσθλός θηρητὴρ*[74] and *αἴμων θήρης*[75]. His hunting skills are indisputable, since Artemis herself is presented to be his instructor. However preeminent in hunting Scamandrius may be though, his hunting experience is useless in the battlefield[76]; right after his introduction, the hero gets killed by Menelaus. The other passage is found in book 21[77]; in this second case, Artemis and Hera are having an intense quarrel and Hera reproaches Artemis for being suitable only for hunting and not for war; Artemis' field of action is thus disparaged and Hera presents herself as the expert in fighting, a much more noble activity[78]. If we read these passages together, a very interesting observation arises: hunting cannot substitute war and thus, good hunting skills are not enough to make someone a good warrior[79].

Although hunting in Homer's epic poetry is an activity rather constricted in the already mentioned "realistic" hunting scenes found in the *Odyssey*, the scattered references to hunters or Artemis and the stories narrated by Odysseus and Phoenix, a subject to be discussed in detail in the following chapters, there is a great number of similes, mostly in the

[71] *Od.*6.101-104.
[72] All the translations of the passages from the *Odyssey* come from Murray (1919).
[73] *Il.*5.49-54.
[74] *Il.*5.51.
[75] *Il.*5.49.
[76] See Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 146-147.
[77] *Il.*21.470-488.
[78] Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 147, regards this passage as a proof of the decline of hunting.
[79] Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1987), 146-147.

Iliad, which are connected to hunting. An overview and a brief examination of these similes would be very useful, since, far from describing real (or at least realistic) hunts, similes reveal a complex relation between humans and beasts. Thus, they provide interesting insights to the heroic system of values and correspond symbolically to the narration.

2.2 Hunting similes

Hunting similes, just like similes in general, are found more frequently in the *Iliad* than in the *Odyssey*[80]. According to Lee, there are 197 "long or Full"[81] similes in the *Iliad*; the corresponding number in the *Odyssey* is 45[82], less than one fourth of the Iliadic similes[83]. Among these, we find nineteen[84] similes connected to hunting in the *Iliad* and three[85] in the *Odyssey*. Various animals are being hunted: deer and fawns, wild goats, hares, leopards and, of course, boars[86]. In fact, especially as far as the *Iliad* is concerned[87], animals are one of the

[80] For a comparison of the quantity of similes in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey* see Lee (1964), 3-5.
[81] Lee (1964), 3. With the term "long or Full", Lee refers to the similes which contain both a *protasis* and an *apodosis*. Those which lack a *protasis* are defined as "simple or Internal".
[82] Lee (1964), 3.
[83] The numbers cited here are indicative of the difference in the number of similes between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. As Lee (1964), 3-4, himself notes, there can be different classifications, such as the one of Friedländer that he quotes, if different criteria are used.
[84] For this classification, I follow Lonsdale (1990), 74, who states that even the cases in which the existence of hunters is only suggested by metonymy, can be considered as hunting similes, on the grounds of the presence of hounds. This means that similes in which an animal is attacked by another animal are not included in this category. Lonsdale, 71, mentions eighteen hunting similes: 3.23ff, 8.33ff, 10.360ff, 11.292ff, 11.324ff, 11.414ff, 11.474ff, 12.146ff, 13.198ff, 13.471ff, 15.271ff, 15.579ff, 17.133ff, 17.281ff, 17.725ff, 18.318ff, 21.577ff, 22.189. Lee (1964), 71, lists some of these cases under the subject "hunters", including also 11.549ff and 12.41ff. In my opinion, the former passage is not a hunting simile, since, although it includes *κύνες τε καὶ ἀνέρες ἀγροιῶται,* it refers to the repulsion of a lion attacking oxen and, thus, belongs to another type of similes, whose subject is the "marauding lion" (see Lonsdale, 49-70). Moreover, the adjective *ἀγροιώτης* does not necessarily denote the hunter but can also refer to herdsmen (e.g. *βουκόλοι ἀγροιῶται* in *Od*.11.293). However, I believe that the latter simile, the one in 12.41ff, should be indeed regarded as a hunting simile, as it explicitly refers to a boar or lion showing resistance against hunters and hounds, who prepare an attack. Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 47, also considers this case a hunting simile.
[85] The first of these similes, found in 4.791ff and discussed by Moulton (1977), 124, and Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 61-62, although exceptional, seems to be following the Iliadic pattern. The other two are significantly different: one of them (also discussed by Moulton, 120), in 6.101ff, has been already discussed in p.12 and the other one, in 11.412ff, presents the men of Agamemnon being killed by Aegisthus like *σύες ἀργιόδοντες,* boars with white tusks (11.413).
[86] I do not agree with Lonsdale (1990), 22, 71, who, although realizes that the boar never kills its opponent, regards it as an alternative for the lion, and consequently, suggests that both boars and lions are objects of hunts in Homer. On the contrary, I think that Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 47, is right saying that lions are never hunted in Homer, at least not in the way that boars or deer are hunted; As far as the two hunting similes where boar and lion are mentioned alternatively (11.292ff and12.41ff), Schnapp-Gourbeillon, 47, notes that it is the boar which is principally described as the object of the hunt and lion can be regarded as a threat which has been accidentally encountered by the hunters.
[87] It should be noted here that animals in the *Odyssey* are presented in a totally different way from the *Iliad*. A major difference is, as Lonsdale (1990), 17, states, that the animal similes of the *Odyssey* are not that cruel and violent (except for the ones found in the battle of the suitors).

most common subjects of similes[88]. Moreover, as Lonsdale points out, there is a close relation between the way animals and humans are presented in the similes: animals have human attributes and vice versa[89]. This important link derives from nature itself, since all the physical functions of the human body are shared with animals[90]. Having this observation in mind, it is not bizarre that the majority of the Iliadic hunting similes are concentrated in books, such as 11, 13, 15 and 17, where fighting and, thus, dying is dominant[91]; the attack to an animal during hunting, its potential resistance and its way of dying fit well in the fighting scenes, due to the common nature of animals and humans. To use Lonsdale words, the link with an animal is "crucial for exploring the mortality of the hero"[92].

To bring the topic closer to the hunting similes, we should first describe the participants in these images and offer some examples, in order to comment on their function. We will focus on the similes of the *Iliad* -making special references to the *Odyssey* when needed- since their number is bigger and their use generally more consistent. Except for the animal-target of the hunt, which has been already mentioned, almost every hunting simile (except for the one in 11.474ff) includes the participation of hounds. Strikingly, hounds seem to be indispensable to hunting similes, whereas hunters may not be mentioned at all[93] or may be only metonymically mentioned[94]. When the hunter is mentioned, he is most of the times called *θηρητήρ*[95], but can be also described as *ἐπακτήρ* [96], *ἐλαφηβόλος*[97], or just *ἀνήρ*[98]. There are some cases of individual hunters, but most frequently men are hunting in groups. A big number of these similes contain also an intruder: a lion, which, as in another type of similes, described as the "marauding lion" by Lonsdale[99], impedes the activity of hunting by attacking the animal-target of the hunt and terrifying the hunters and the hounds. Similes like these can be quite complicated, for example:

[…] ἀμφὶ δ᾽ ἄρ᾽ αὐτὸν
Τρῶες ἔπονθ᾽ ὡς εἴ τε δαφοινοὶ θῶες ὄρεσφιν
ἀμφ᾽ ἔλαφον κεραὸν βεβλημένον, ὅν τ᾽ ἔβαλ᾽ ἀνὴρ
ἰῷ ἀπὸ νευρῆς· τὸν μέν τ᾽ ἤλυξε πόδεσσι
φεύγων, ὄφρ᾽ αἷμα λιαρὸν καὶ γούνατ᾽ ὀρώρῃ·
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ τόν γε δαμάσσεται ὠκὺς ὀϊστός,
ὠμοφάγοι μιν θῶες ἐν οὔρεσι δαρδάπτουσιν
ἐν νέμεϊ σκιερῷ· ἐπί τε λῖν ἤγαγε δαίμων

[88] Lonsdale (1990), 10.
[89] Lonsdale (1990), 3.
[90] Lonsdale (1990), 7.
[91] It should be, however, noted that, as Lee (1964), 5, mentions, the majority of the Iliadic similes in general are found in fighting books.
[92] Lonsdale (1990), 7.
[93] See 3.23ff, 8.337ff, 10.360ff, 11.324ff, 13.198ff, 22.189ff.
[94] The epithet *αἰζηός* refers to the hunter and is very frequently used, mostly in plural, without a noun.
[95] E.g. 15.579ff.
[96] Simile 17.133ff.
[97] Simile 18.318ff.
[98] Similes 12.146ff and 13.471ff.
[99] Lonsdale (1990), 2. However, as stated already, the approach on lion similes used in this paper is the one of Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 38-48.

σίντην˙ θῶες μέν τε διέτρεσαν, αὐτὰρ ὃ δάπτει (*Il.*11.473-481)

[…] and round about the Trojans beset him, like tawny jackals in the mountains about a horned stag that has been wounded, that a man has struck with an arrow from the string; from him the stag has escaped and flees swiftly so long as the blood flows warm and his knees are quick, but when at length the swift arrow overpowers him, then ravening jackals rend him among the mountains in a shadowy grove; but a god brings against them a murderous lion, and the jackals scatter in flight, and he rends the prey[100].

In this passage, the relations between prey and predator are mixed up: Odysseus is compared to a deer wounded by a hunter, which has managed to escape only to be attacked by jackals. The jackals, however, are in turn repelled by the final winner of the prey, a lion. In the narrative, the jackals correspond to the Trojans, who have surrounded wounded Odysseus, and Menelaus is the lion that manages to push them away. Except for the triple level of comparison which makes this case extraordinary, the simile becomes even more complicated if we examine it in its context, since it is the last one in a sequence of four other hunting similes. The first one[101] compares Hector to a hunter, a *θηρητήρ,* who exhorts his hounds, namely the Trojans, to attack an animal. The role of the hunter is then adopted by Odysseus and Diomedes[102], who, although compared to wild boars, attack their hunter's hounds. Almost a hundred lines later[103], the Trojans are again the ones who hunt: they are compared to hunters and hounds and their victim, Odysseus, is a boar getting ready to repel their attack. This role-switching between the Trojans and the Achaeans represents, of course, the ambiguous outcome of the battle described in book 11. However, what is more important here is that hunted boars are used by the narrator to refer to heroes under attack, but can be also related to attacking heroes. This confirms our previous observation that the boar is far more than an easy prey.

If we now return to the simile cited above, there is another fact which seems peculiar: the final stage described in the simile, i.e the fact that the lion eats the deer, does not correspond to the narrative, since Menelaus, the lion, is the one who protects Odysseus, the boar. For this reason, the presence of a lion in this simile needs further attention, since it seems to be irrelevant to the content of the passage where it is found. A further examination of the link between lions and boars in the similes will help us understand cases like this.

According to Lonsdale, a boar and a lion maybe described with the same epithets and phrases[104]. However, although heroes, especially Hector, Aeneas and Sarpedon[105], are systematically compared to lions[106], only once is a hero compared to a boar[107]. Except for the

[100] All the translations of the passages from the *Iliad* come from Murray (1924).
[101] *Il.*11.292ff.
[102] *Il.*11.324ff.
[103] *Il.*11.414ff.
[104] Lonsdale (1990), 71, mentions the epithet *ὀλοόφρων,* as well as the phrases *ἀλκί πεποιθώς and [οὐ] ταρβεῖ οὐδὲ φοβεῖται* which are used in both lion and boar similes.
[105] Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 40.
[106] Strikingly, in *Od.*4.791ff, Penelope is also compared to a lion which is encircled by men. Moulton (1977), 123-4, notes the strange function of the simile and explains it by associating in with an earlier

common ferocity of the two animals, the way they are presented in the similes is extremely different: lions on the one hand may be chased with weapons, but only as a means of protection. Similarly to their function in the "marauding lion" similes, lions are systematically presented as a menace to society; as Schnapp-Gourbeillon[108] states, humans never take the initiative to hunt a lion out of fun, as they do with other wild animals; it is the lion that, as a ravager, invades the cultivated human realm. When this happens, men have to defend themselves by repelling it with weapons and hounds[109]. On the other hand, boar is the animal which is always attacked first[110]; in addition to this, hunters have to leave their place of action to go into the wild[111] and hunt boars, thus, in this case, man is the intruder. Moreover, lions in the similes may not always be successful[112], but they are never killed, in contrast to boars. These observations prove the superiority of lion over boar, a notion found in one of the most famous Iliadic similes. In that simile, which does not belong in the group of hunting similes, Patroclus, right before his death, is compared to a boar which gets killed by a lion, namely Hector.

ὡς δ᾽ ὅτε σῦν ἀκάμαντα λέων ἐβιήσατο χάρμῃ,
ὥ τ᾽ ὄρεος κορυφῇσι μέγα φρονέοντε μάχεσθον
πίδακος ἀμφ᾽ ὀλίγης: ἐθέλουσι δὲ πιέμεν ἄμφω·
πολλὰ δέ τ᾽ ἀσθμαίνοντα λέων ἐδάμασσε βίηφιν·
ὣς πολέας πεφνόντα Μενοιτίου ἄλκιμον υἱὸν
Ἕκτωρ Πριαμίδης σχεδὸν ἔγχεϊ θυμὸν ἀπηύρα (*Il.*16.823-828)

And as a lion overwhelms an untiring boar in fight, when the two fight with high hearts on the peaks of a mountain for a scant spring from which both are minded to drink: hard pants the boar, yet the lion overcomes him by his might; so from the valiant son of Menoetius, after he had slain many, did Hector, Priam's son, take life away, striking him from close at hand with his spear.

Undoubtedly, this case shows clearly that lions, although similar in many ways to the boars, are considerably more powerful than them. This observation may help us understand the complex simile discussed above: Menelaus is compared to a lion, regardless to the hunting context, due to his prowess and strength; that is the common link between the hero

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one, in 4.335ff, where Odysseus himself is compared to a lion. Schnapp-Gourbeilllon (1981), 61, also discusses this passage, providing arguments against the idea that this is a heroic hunt against a lion. She argues that this is a unique case and though the prey, namely Penelope, is noble, the hunters are not performing a heroic hunt, since they should be imagined using traps and tricks to capture the wild beast. In my opinion, we could also understand this simile as a variation of the marauding lion type; people, not necessary hunters, are trying to seize a lion.

[107] That is Idomeneus in *Il.*4.253.

[108] Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 47-49.

[109] As stated in chapter 1, this is a form of hunting attested also outside Homer's epic.

[110] An exception mentioned also by Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 49, is the Calydonian boar, a divine punishment, see chapter 4.

[111] Almost every boar hunt found in Iliadic similes takes a place outside the borders of human civilization e.g. 17.281ff.

[112] There are cases in which the lion has to retreat because of the large number of men, see Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 42-43.

and the beast. Heroes never hunt lions, because successful heroes are lions. However, boars, although mighty and dangerous, are the target of the heroic hunt[113], an animal savage but not noble, whose death is a proof of its killer's manliness. This, of course, does not mean that boar hunting is not a noble activity; on the contrary, as it will be discussed in the chapters to follow, boars seem to have a special place in the Homeric animal system.

[113] Schnapp-Gourbeillon (1981), 48-50.

Chapter 3:

Odysseus' boar hunt

3.1 Odysseus' boar hunt: context and content

After this introductory part, we may now focus on the first hunting story that will be examined: Odysseus' boar hunt. The story is found in book 19 of the *Odyssey*, at the crucial point of Odysseus' recognition by his nurse, Eurycleia. Before the analysis of this hunting narrative, however, let us provide some useful information regarding its context and its content.

As it has been already mentioned, Odysseus' boar hunting is part of a larger episode, namely the hero's recognition by Eurycleia. Up to that point of the plot, only Telemachus knows Odysseus' true identity. The two men have already agreed that they will make an unexpected attack on the suitors and they have arranged what each of them has to do: Odysseus will go to the palace disguised as a beggar, so that neither the suitors, nor the women of the palace can recognize him and Telemachus will make sure that there is no weapon available for the suitors at the moment of the attack[114]. When Odysseus arrives at the palace, he gets mistreated by the suitors and especially by their leader Antinous, who curses and beats him. Penelope, having heard that the stranger is an old friend of Odysseus, gets furious at the way he is abused and asks for a meeting with the beggar, so that she can ask him in person what he knows about her husband[115]. The meeting takes place in the beginning of book 19. Penelope, unable to recognize her husband, asks him his name and his origin. Odysseus says that his name is Aethon and he comes from Crete. He, then, refers to his last meeting with Odysseus, when the hero was on his way to Troy. In addition to this, he informs Penelope that, according to what he has heard, Odysseus is near Ithaca and will arrive at the island in short time[116]. Although Penelope believes the first part of the story, the fact that Odysseus was once a guest of the beggar, she is not persuaded that her husband will come back[117]. However, as a token of gratitude, she decides to host the man in the palace. She asks her maids to wash the feet of the stranger and prepare a bed for him to spend the night[118]. Odysseus kindly rejects the first proposal[119] and asks for an old lady to wash his feet[120]. Penelope then summons Eurycleia, who brings water and approaches the

[114] Odysseus and Telemachus; recognition: *Od*.16.185-245, plan of action: *Od*.16.259-336.
[115] Odysseus at the palace; Odysseus and Antinous *Od*.17.370-464, Odysseus and Penelope: *Od*.17.508-511.
[116] Odysseus' main points: *Od*.19.164-184, 19.185-202, 19.268-307.
[117] Penelope's reaction: *Od*.19.253-260, 19.312-314.
[118] *Od*.19.318-320.
[119] *Od*.19.344-345.
[120] Although scholars have interpreted Odysseus' request to be washed by an old woman in many ways (see de Jong (2001), 93-94 and Rutherford (1992), 177-178), the text does not suggest that Odysseus anticipated the recognition. On the contrary, it is something that occurs to him suddenly (αὐτίκα, *Od*.19.390), only after Eurycleia has responded to her mistress' request and for this reason he tries to conceal himself in the dark (*ποτὶ δὲ σκότον ἑτράπετ' αἶψα*, *Od*.19.389). See also de Jong (2001), 94.

guest, commenting on his resemblance with her master[121]. Odysseus replies that this view is held by many people[122]. It is only at this moment that Odysseus realizes the danger of being recognized by his nurse because of the old scar he has on his leg.

However, although Eurycleia recognizes the scar, and, thus, Odysseus, immediately[123], there are some 70 verses[124] until we finally see her reaction. These verses, "the most famous digression in all literature"[125], come to explain how Odysseus got the scar which revealed his identity. The story goes as follows:

When Odysseus was a mere baby, Eurycleia brought him to his maternal grandfather, Autolycus[126], who gave him the name "Odysseus" and declared that, when his grandson would reach puberty[127], he and his sons would welcome the boy to their palace in Parnassus and grant him many presents. Indeed, when that time came, Autolycus, his wife and their sons received Odysseus happily into their court. After sacrificing to the gods, they feasted and went to sleep. The next day, as soon as the sun had risen, Odysseus went with his uncle and their hounds to a steep mountain, an *αἰπὺ ὄρος*[128], to hunt. At some point, a big wild boar[129] appears, coming out of its lair; the boar stands in front of the men, looking extremely ferocious. Young Odysseus is the first who attacks the boar with his spear. The outcome of the attack is successful, since he kills the beast; yet he gets wounded by the boar's tusks. This wound is then healed by Autolycus and his sons, who, after that, offer Odysseus their promised gifts and send him back to Ithaca. When he arrives home, Odysseus narrates his achievement to his parents and explains how he got the scar on his leg.

Having discussed the context and the content of Odysseus' hunting story, we will now try to interpret it, focusing on the relation of the text with some of the general functions of hunting, as mentioned in chapter one. This interpretation will then helps us understand the narrator's choice to place this boar hunting episode at this specific place in the poem.

3.2 The "Iliadic" aspect of Odysseus' boar hunt

As was shown in chapter one, hunting was from a very early time connected to war and, thus, associated with manliness and social status. This connection is evident in the large variety of hunting similes found in Homer's epic poetry, discussed in the previous chapter.

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[121] *Od*.19.379-382.
[122] *Od*.19.383-385.
[123] *Od*.19.392-393.
[124] *Od.*19.393-466.
[125] de Jong (2001), 95.
[126] The negative connotations of this name, "the wolf himself", are evident, see Rutherford (1992), 184. Autolycus was a famous figure in archaic literature, connected to a series of deceitful deeds. One of them is cited in *Il.*10.261-271, where Odysseus wears a helmet with boar tusks which was once stolen from Amyntor by his grandfather. Helmets like these were actually found in Mycenaean archaeological sites. Hamilakis (2003), 243, based on these findings and the Iliadic passage suggests that this kind of helmets were a symbol of power in the Mycenaean era.
[127] This is indicated by the participle *ἡβήσας* in line 410.
[128] *Od*.19.431.
[129] *Od*.19.439.

Another strong proof of the relation between hunting and fighting is to be found in the vocabulary and the phraseology used to describe Odysseus' youth boar hunting.

To be more specific, there are several echoes of the Iliadic text in this passage that create a strong heroic resonance. Interestingly, these echoes are not scattered in the digression as a whole, but are, on the contrary, concentrated in the description of the hunt and the death of the boar. This smaller part of the narrative goes like this:

> […] ὁ δ᾽ ἄρα πρώτιστος Ὀδυσσεὺς
> ἔσσυτ᾽ ἀνασχόμενος δολιχὸν δόρυ χειρὶ παχείῃ,
> οὐτάμεναι μεμαώς· ὁ δέ μιν φθάμενος ἔλασεν σῦς
> γουνὸς ὕπερ, πολλὸν δὲ διήφυσε σαρκὸς ὀδόντι
> λικριφὶς ἀΐξας, οὐδ᾽ ὀστέον ἵκετο φωτός.
> τὸν δ᾽ Ὀδυσεὺς οὔτησε τυχὼν κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον,
> ἀντικρὺ δὲ διῆλθε φαεινοῦ δουρὸς ἀκωκή:
> κὰδ δ᾽ ἔπεσ᾽ ἐν κονίῃσι μακών, ἀπὸ δ᾽ ἔπτατο θυμός. (*Od*.19.447-454)

[…] Then first of all Odysseus rushed forward, raising his long spear in his stout hand, eager to stab him; but the boar was too quick for him and struck him above the knee, charging upon him sideways, and with his tusk tore a long gash in the flesh, but did not reach the bone of the man. But Odysseus with sure aim stabbed him in the right shoulder, and clear through went the point of the bright spear, and the boar fell in the dust with a cry, and his life flew from him.

First of all, the way in which the hunting action is introduced, namely the fact that Odysseus is the first of all men to take the initiative to throw his spear to the boar, resembles the way heroes' *ἀριστεῖαι* are introduced in the Iliadic narration. For example, in book 16 of the *Iliad*, Patroclus' *ἀριστεία* begins in a similar way, with the hero being the first to strike one of the enemies[130].

This Iliadic notion is also verified by the vocabulary used in the lines to follow. Odysseus attacks the boar *οὐτάμεναι μεμαώς,* a phrase used in book 21 of the Iliad, when Achilles attacks and in the end kills Lycaon[131]. Moreover, scholars have also pointed out the Iliadic echo in the metaphor of a liquid being poured out of a jar suggested by the verb *διαφύσσω*[132] in line 450 and in the phrase *λικριφὶς ἀΐξας*[133] in the following line. Thus, by the time we reach the point that the boar gets hit, the scenery is already constructed as a battle scene of the *Iliad*. Nonetheless, the fact that the boar gets wounded just like a warrior is still striking: the beast gets pierced at the right shoulder, just like Diomedes in book 5 of the *Iliad*[134] and the point of Odysseus' spear goes clear through the other side of the

[130] […] *πρῶτος δὲ Μενοιτίου ἄλκιμος υἱὸς/ αὐτίκ᾽ ἄρα στρεφθέντος Ἀρηϊλύκου βάλε μηρὸν, Il.*16.307-308.
[131] *Il.*21.65.
[132] de Jong (2001), 98, mentions two instances, *Il*.13.507 and *Il.*14.517.
[133] *Πουλυδάμας δ᾽ αὐτὸς μὲν ἀλεύατο κῆρα μέλαιναν,/λικριφὶς ἀΐξας,* […] *Il.*14.462-463. Rutherford (1992), 188, comments on this similarity.
[134] *Il*.5.98, mentioned by Rutherford (1992), 188.

penetrated spot, just like in the case of Agamemnon's wound by Coon in book 11[135] or Euphorbus' by Menelaus in book 17[136]. Finally, the verse which describes the boar's death is exactly the same with the one used regarding the death of Achilles' mortal horse, Pedasus[137].

We should, however, note that this link between Odysseus' boar hunt and certain passages from the *Iliad* does not suggest that there is a one-to-one relation between each instance and its Iliadic correspondence; on the contrary, these cases as a total underline the war-like aspect of Odysseus' hunt. In addition to this, if we take a look at the way the boar is introduced and described, Odysseus' accomplishment seems even more heroic; except for its big size, the animal has a bristling back and sheds fire from its eyes[138].

In this narrative, Odysseus succeeds in killing the boar, receives presents for his achievement[139] , makes his journey back to Ithaca and narrates to his parents, who are glad to receive him at home, what happened in Parnassus. This structure corresponds to Odysseus' future – in relation to this story- participation in the Trojan war: his eminence at the battlefield will secure his κλέος and, although his journey back to Ithaca will take an unexpected turn, he will return home with many gifts and narrate his achievements to his family. We can, thus, be certain that except for its general heroic tone, hunting in this case foreshadows young Odysseus' future military activities.

3.3 Odysseus' rite de passage

This interpretation of Odysseus' boar hunt as "as a preparation for life as a warrior"[140] is closely related to Odysseus' introduction into adult life in general. If we recall what has been already mentioned in chapter one, it is not difficult to detect *prima facie* the theme of initiation in this passage. However, a detailed interpretation of the boar hunt as Odysseus' *rite de passage* to adulthood is necessary to understand not only the content, but also the function of the narrative.

To proceed to this examination, we should at first provide some useful traits of rituals in general. Discussing the ritualization of sacrifice, Burkert provides a short but accurate definition of ritual as "a behavioral pattern that has lost its primary function –present in its

[135] *Il*.11.253, discussed also by Rutherford (1992), 188.
[136] *Il*.17.49.
[137] *Il.*16.469. Both de Jong (2001), 98, and Rutherford (1992), 188, point out this parallel, but none of them mentions that the same verse is found in *Od*.10.163, in the death of another animal, the stag that Odysseus kills. For a detailed examination of the latter passage see Scodel (1994), 530-534, who also discusses the battle vocabulary and the presentation of the stag as a warrior.
[138] *Od*.19.446.
[139] Rutherford (1992), 186, proposes that getting gifts is the main purpose of Odysseus' trip to his grandfather's court in Parnassus and hunting emerges only as a random activity. However, if we consider the strong connotations of initiation found in this narrative in connection to the general role of hunting as part of such rituals, discussed in chapter 1, this claim seems to be wrong.
[140] Rutherford (1992), 186.

unritualized model- but which persists in a new function, that of communication"[141]. Based on this definition, Burkert argues that although rituals may contain acts of violence, this action can be considered as "pretended aggression"[142], a statement rather than an actual deed[143]. This argument points out the meta-nature of rituals, since they are not related to real life directly, but are connected to it by symbolism. Based on this observation, we can consider *rites de passage* as rituals which denote the transition from one stage of life to another. According to van Gennep, the scholar who laid the groundwork for the study of *rites de passage*, there are three steps which need to be taken by any person who undergoes a *rite de passage*: the first part of the ritual is the separation from the original community (pre-liminal condition), the second and main part is the transition (liminal condition) and the third one is the reintegration into a new community (post-liminal condition)[144].

Having these in mind, Odysseus' boar hunt emerges as an undoubted case of ritual hunting. Young Odysseus does not hunt out of necessity; on the contrary, hunting in his case is described as a planned activity. There is not a marauding animal going into the cultivated area of men, but men are the ones who invade the realm of the animal. And, most importantly, the animal is not killed to be eaten[145]. To verify this, van Gennep's three-part division of any *rite de passage* can be also applied to Odysseus' case: the young boy is separated from his family and homeland, he is then engaged in undertaking a task, namely hunting the boar [146], and he finally goes back, scarred for life, to enter a new community. If we now turn our attention back to the text, the participle ἡβήσαϛ in line 410 leaves no doubt to the audience and the reader of the poem regarding the nature of the ritual which is going to be narrated in the following lines: it is an initiation, a *rite de passage* into the community of men.

Except for this general outline of Odysseus' hunting story which complies with the rules of *rites de passage*, there are multiple elements in the text which are also connected to the theme of initiation. The first sign is Autolycus' name giving to Odysseus[147]. Although this event certainly belongs to a much earlier stage in Odysseus' life, receiving a name is also an event with symbolic connotations[148]. In this case, Autolycus gives his grandson not only his name, but also some traits of his own personality which will determine the hero's destiny[149]. Moreover, the promise that Autolycus gives during this first meeting with his grandson

[141] Burkert, (1983), 23.
[142] Burkert, (1983), 24.
[143] For the function of rituals as a form of language see also Burkert (1983), 29-34.
[144] van Gennep (1965), 21.
[145] Remember the two other passages where Odysseus hunts to provide sustenance, where a feast is also mentioned, see p.11.
[146] Felson Rubin & Merritt Sale (1983), 142-143 are right to observe that, although its duration may vary, the transitional stage of an actual initiation included many more activities besides hunting. However, the brevity of Odysseus' liminal condition should not be considered a proof against the initiatory function of the hunt. On the contrary, we should keep in mind that this is a fictional ritual with a certain function in the narrative.
[147] Felson Rubin & Merritt Sale (1983), 147.
[148] For name giving and name change as motifs of initiation and *rites de passage*, see Bremmer (1978), 15-16, 7-9.
[149] Felson Rubin & Merritt Sale (1983), 147-148.

foreshadows the important role that he and his sons will play in Odysseus' future transition from childhood to adulthood.

Interestingly, Odysseus' liminal period, the period between his life as a child and his life as an adult, is spent at his maternal grandfather's court, together with his maternal uncles. This fact is also of great significance, since maternal kin is closely related to boys' initiation. Thanks to Levi-Strauss, some interesting conclusions regarding the link between boys and the male members of their mother's family were reached. First of all, Levi Strauss was the first who studied this relation as part of a bigger web of relations, those between father and son, husband and wife and sister and brother[150]. By examining the way these relations are structured in different primitive societies, he discovered that "the relation between maternal uncle and nephew is to the relation between brother and sister as the relation between father and son is to that between husband and wife"[151]. Thus, he proved that the close relation between nephew and maternal uncle, i.e. the avunculate, is not constricted only in matriarchic communities, but can be also found in patriarchic societies[152]. None the less, the avunculate may have a negative or a positive aspect[153]: in societies where the relationship between husband and wife is positive, the one between sister and brother is negative and so is the one between maternal uncle and nephew. On the contrary, in societies where the relationship between husband and wife is negative, the one between brother and sister is positive and so is the one between maternal uncle and nephew[154]. In the latter case, the uncle is caring towards his nephew and plays an important role in his upbringing[155].

Based on such observations and Indo-European evidence[156], Bremmer tried to examine how this relation was structured in ancient Greece. Using multiple examples not only from mythological but also from historical sources[157], Bremmer pointed out that maternal uncles were responsible for their nephews' education and thus functioned as a role-model for these boys[158]. The validity of this claim becomes undoubted if we examine it together with the absence of references regarding the relation between boys and their paternal uncles[159]. In addition to this, Bremmer also provided many examples in which maternal grandfathers were held responsible for the upbringing of their grandsons – as opposed to paternal grandfathers who are, again, absent[160].

[150] Levi-Strauss (1965), 41-43.
[151] Levi-Strauss (1965), 42.
[152] Levi-Strauss (1965), 39.
[153] Levi-Strauss (1965), 40-41.
[154] See Levi-Strauss (1965), 45, for a schematic representation of these relations.
[155] See Levi-Strauss (1965), 41.
[156] Bremmer (1983), 176.
[157] Among the examples mentioned by Bremmer (1983), 186, I consider the one in Xen.*Cyr*.1.4.7 the most relevant to Odysseus' case, since it refers to young Cyrus, who, during his stay at his maternal grandfather's court in Media, goes hunting with his maternal uncle, Cyaxares.
[158] Bremmer (1983), 178-184.
[159] Bremmer (1983), 179, mentions Hercules and Iolaus as the only instance of a paternal uncle and nephew relation in Greek myth.
[160] Bremmer (1983), 174-177.

If we now go back to Odysseus' boar hunt, we realize that this is exactly Autolycus' and his sons' role in the narrative: Autolycus is the one who suggests Odysseus' trip to Parnassus and has, thus, the main responsibility for the success of his *rite de passage*. His sons play an important role, too, as the companions and protectors of the young boy during the hunt. This is why both Autolycus and his sons as a group first heal Odysseus' wound and then grant him presents for his courageous achievement[161].

Except for the gifts[162] that Odysseus receives, there is also another sign which verifies the completion of his initiation: the scar on his leg. Scars, wounds and other forms of mutilation are generally considered as signs of initiation, as Felson Rubin and Merritt Sale justly point out[163]. Except for their function as communicative signs, declaring the success of a dangerous endeavor, wounds caused during hunting functioned also on another level. Through the wound, the hunter was considered to have gained some of the power of the dead animal to accompany him for life[164]. Just like in the case of his name, when together with it Odysseus obtained part of his character, so in the case of his wound, the hero is supposed to embody the strength of the animal he killed.

What is special in Odysseus' case is also the place of his scar, namely his leg. Bremmer offers some very useful insights into this subject: first of all, he points out that the mark on the leg is closely related to initiation in Indo-European tradition[165]. Strikingly, as Bremmer states, the origin of such rituals is related to hunting and especially to the practice of laming the game before killing it, found in various societies[166]. As proven by many myths, wounds on the leg are also connected to death[167]. In Odysseus' case the scar is actually created during a hunt and the fact that the hero recovers from a wound on the leg as severe as this[168] proves his courageous character and foreshadows his future achievements.

From this point of view, the choice of the narrator to introduce the theme of the scar becomes more clear; Odysseus obtained his scar when he was a young boy hunting in the countryside of Parnassus with his uncles, right before his transition into the community of adult men and, although this hunt was a one-time activity, his scar was meant to remain on his body for the rest of his life. Even though at the point of the digression he is disguised as a beggar, having nothing to relate him to his heroic nature whatsoever, his scar is not only unchanged, but serves as the clue that reveals his true identity, first to his nurse Eurycleia and then to his faithful servants, Eumaeus and Philoetius[169].

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[161] *Od*.19.455-462.
[162] Cf. the presents given to Cretan boys by their lovers at the end of their initiation, p.8.
[163] Felson Rubin & Merritt Sale (1983), 145.
[164] Felson Rubin & Merritt Sale (1983), 145, discussing this function, refer to Hercules who literally carried the lion he had killed by wearing its skin.
[165] Bremmer (1978), 11.
[166] Bremmer (1978), 12-13.
[167] Bremmer (1978), 11-12, mentions the cases of Adonis, Cheiron and Achilles, all of whom died wounded on their legs.
[168] *Od*.19.450-451.
[169] *Od.*21.207-225.

3.4 The narrative technique and the place of the digression

Although the topics mentioned so far have provided an explanation for the existence of a hunting narrative in the story of Odysseus initiation, there are still some questions which need to be answered: why do we find this digression at that specific point of the poem? Why does the narrator defer Odysseus' recognition for more than 70 lines? To put it briefly, why does the audience have to listen to all these details on how Odysseus got his scar? A narratological examination of the story within its context will help us answer these questions.

To begin with, we should at first consider some traits of the narrative. In her study on Homeric digressions, Gaisser defines them as "tales and episodes that interrupt the flow of the action to tell of events unconnected with the main story or to give background information"[170]. According to her, there are three narrative techniques exploited in digressions: the ring composition, the *Ritournellkomposition* and the composition by repeated theme[171]. The digression on Odysseus' scar is an example of complex ring composition[172]. This means that there are two concentric circles in the narrative[173]: the external circle is the one which contains the story of the scar[174] and the internal is the one which contains the story of the hunt[175] . Another trait of this narrative that makes it complex is the fact that it refers to two different levels of time: the first level regards Odysseus' naming scene, when the hero was a baby, and the second level the boar hunt, when he was in puberty. This observation reveals that although both scenes are much anterior to the present situation, namely Odysseus' bathing and recognition by Eurycleia, there is a great time-gap between them[176].

We can now agree that besides its length, it is also its complicated structure that makes this digression extraordinary. Whitman, who refers to this narrative as a "flashback", points out that its complexity is not due to lack of narrative skill[177]. On the contrary, he says, the poet manipulates time in such a way that present and past become inseparable, in order to describe the feelings of the characters in terms of action[178]. This is why the story is told in the third person by the narrator and is not presented as a recollection by Odysseus or Eurycleia; the narrator invades at a point where a mental activity of Eurycleia takes place, namely the recognition, but the information he wants to provide regarding the scar could not be possibly known to her[179].

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[170] Gaisser (1969), 2.
[171] Gaisser (1969), 3-6.
[172] For a classification of all the digressions found in the Homeric poems see Gaisser (1969), 37-40.
[173] Gaisser (1969), 20-21, mentions also another circle inside the hunting story, which she divides in three subsections.
[174] *Od*.19.392-393- *Od*.19.467-468.
[175] *Od*.19.393-394.- *Od*.19.395-396.
[176] Gaisser (1969), 2.
[177] Whitman (1958), 119.
[178] Whitman (1958), 118-119.
[179] Whitman (1958), 119.

Another question then emerges: why do we have to know all these details about the hunt and the way Odysseus got his scar at the first place? Narratees (at least modern readers) would be completely satisfied if they had simply learned that it was a scar that Odysseus had from his childhood which Eurycleia recognized. Auerbach's study on this subject was considered for many years to have offered a satisfactory solution. To put it briefly, the main reason that Auerbach offers for the length and complexity of the digression is the tendency of the epic narrator to leave nothing unexplained[180]. According to him, "the Homeric poems conceal nothing, they contain no teaching and no secret second meaning"[181]. This is why the hunting episode is so thoroughly narrated. In contrast to what the modern reader may think, the narrator does not aim to increase tension and create suspense by incorporating the digression between the moment of the recognition and Eurycleia's reaction. On the contrary, although there is not a specific aim behind his choice, the narrator manages to relax the tension by turning the narratees' attention to a whole new story[182]. As far as the perspective from which the story is told, Auerbach expresses an opinion similar to Whitman's by stating that, since Eurycleia, who was absent during the hunting, is the starting point of the digression, the narrative does not have a perspectivistic function[183].

Even if we agree with Auerbach that the digression is developed in conformity with the rules that govern Homeric narration in general, the choice of a boar hunt as a cause for the scar remains unanswered. If we look back to the material gathered so far, half of the answer is already given: hunting was an activity suitable for heroes, connected to their fighting skills. In addition to this, as shown in the Iliadic similes, the boar is a suitable animal to hunt, since it makes the endeavor dangerous and demanding. For Odysseus' case of boar hunt we can also be sure that it functions as a *rite de passage*. However, we still have to look a bit further to what follows in the plot to fully understand the poet's choice to narrate the boar hunt in full detail at that crucial point.

Odysseus' visit to the palace was part of his and Telemachus' plan to kill the suitors. After the bathing scene and the recognition by Eurycleia, Penelope, who during that episode had conveniently turned her eyes elsewhere[184], addresses Odysseus again and narrates to him a strange dream she had: an eagle came to the palace and killed a group of geese and then, speaking with a human voice, told her that he was her husband who had just killed the suitors. Hearing that, Odysseus responds that this could be the only possible interpretation of the dream[185]. Later on, in book 20, the content of the dream is validated also by Theoclymenus, who prophesizes Odysseus' return and the destruction of the suitors[186]. In the beginning of book 22, the long-prepared $\mu\nu\eta\sigma\tau\eta\rho\sigma\phi\sigma\nu\acute{\iota}\alpha$ finally begins: Odysseus takes

[180] Auerbach (1953), 6-7.
[181] Auerbach (1953), 13. See also Bakker (2009), 127-136, who discusses Homeric *enargeia* as well as the relation among the narrator, Odysseus- the hero and Odysseus-the story-teller.
[182] Auerbach (1953), 4-5.
[183] Auerbach (1953), 7. de Jong (1985), 517-518, on the contrary, argues in favor of a perspectivistic idea, claiming that Eurycleia could indeed know what happened during the boar hunt, since Odysseus narrated his experiences upon his return to Ithaca. From that point of view, we follow Eurycleias' thoughts during the digression.
[184] *Od*.19.476-479.
[185] *Od*.19.535-558.
[186] *Od*.20.380ff.

off his rags[187], grabs his bow and kills Antinous with an arrow. The strike is presented as follows:

τὸν δ᾽ Ὀδυσεὺς κατὰ λαιμὸν ἐπισχόμενος βάλεν ἰῷ,
ἀντικρὺ δ᾽ ἁπαλοῖο δι᾽ αὐχένος ἤλυθ᾽ ἀκωκή (*Od*.22.15-16)

But Odysseus took aim, and struck him with an arrow in the throat, and clean out through the tender neck passed the point.

If we go back to how the boar in book 19 is killed[188], the similarity between the two strikes is noticeable:

τὸν δ᾽ Ὀδυσεὺς οὔτησε τυχὼν κατὰ δεξιὸν ὦμον,
ἀντικρὺ δὲ διῆλθε φαεινοῦ δουρὸς ἀκωκή· (*Od*.19.452-453)

But Odysseus with sure aim stabbed him in the right shoulder, and clear through went the point of the bright spear.

Not only is the structure of these two units identical, but 22.16 is almost the same to 19.453, with the *ἀκωκή,* the point of the killing weapon, penetrating and getting out of the victim's skin in each case. If we also take into consideration that the theme of a weapon doing clear though a body is rare in the *Odyssey*, occurring only in these two passages and in the stag hunt in book 10[189], the connection between the boar hunt and the *μνηστηροφονία* becomes even stronger. From this point of view, Odysseus' successful hunting experience in mount Parnassus is presented as a guarantee for the success of the endeavor to follow the bathing scene, namely the killing of the suitors.

In other words, the boar hunt is a story which not only recalls the hero's prowess at the moment when his social status and *κλέος* are at crisis, but it also foreshadows Odysseus' future successes and the restitution of what during the bathing scene seems to be lost . The hero, who as a boy managed to kill a huge, fierce boar on his own, has acquired valuable experiences in the field of killing and, most importantly, has proved his heroic value. When nothing of his heroic past seems to be left, it is this experience which needs to be remembered, not only to enhance the confidence of the hero, but to ensure the audience that this mistreated, humiliated, dressed with rags beggar, can and will achieve his plan to destroy his enemies in the most violent- but at the same time heroic- way.

[187] Segal (1994), 81, refers to Odysseus' revelation and his stepping on a threshold at the moment of the attack as signs of completion of another *rite de passage*. Interestingly, among the full list of signs connected to *rites de passage*, he includes bathing scenes,72-76, although he considers the one with Eurycleia an incomplete ritual, since the nurse spills out the water and does not finish what she had started.

[188] *Od*.19.452-453.

[189] […] *τὸ δ᾽ ἀντικρὺ δόρυ χάλκεον ἐξεπέρησε*, *Od*.10.162.

Chapter 4:

Meleager's boar hunt

4.1 Meleager's boar hunt: context and content

The second case of a hunt narrated in Homer's epic is found in book 9 of the *Iliad*. This is the story of Meleager and the Calydonian boar, a famous myth, which had many variations and was a very popular theme in poetry and iconography[190]. To begin with, we will refer to the context of Meleager's story in the *Iliad* and we will present the content of the myth narrated by Phoenix, before we proceed to more complicated issues and examine the function of the boar hunt in this case.

In the end of *Iliad*'s book 8 the situation for the Achaeans is as bad as it can get; by the end of the day, the Trojans turn out to be more than victorious: it is the first night since the beginning of the war which they spend fearlessly outside the city walls[191]. Their success at this point is guaranteed by Zeus' support, who has commanded all the gods to abstain from the battlefield and he himself is helping the Trojans[192]. This is part of Zeus' plan, the promise he gave to Thetis to restore the heroic τιμή of Achilles. However, as he declares, the situation will soon change: Patroclus will get killed and Achilles will return to fight the Trojans and avenge his friend's death[193].

In the beginning of book 9, Agamemnon summons the leaders of the Achaeans and declares that there is no choice left for them but to go back to their homelands. His proposal is rejected[194]. On the contrary, the assembly decides to follow Nestor's advice and send an embassy to Achilles in order to beseech him to leave his wrath aside and return to the battlefield. In exchange, he will get back Briseis and many gifts from Agamemnon. Three leaders undertake the task to persuade him: Odysseus, Phoenix and Ajax[195]. When they reach Achilles' hut, they get a warm welcome by the hero, who receives them as his dearest friends among the Achaeans[196]. Odysseus is the first to speak: he describes the calamity that has struck the army and he enumerates the gifts that Agamemnon is bound to give. Achilles rejects all the gifts and announces to the embassy that he is planning to leave Troy in the morning[197].

Phoenix is the next to speak, his speech being the longest of the three. In the beginning, he refers to his own story and his relationship with Achilles[198]. He explains how, cursed by his father, Amyntor, he was offered asylum by king Peleus, who granted him a land to rule over. Phoenix was the one who took care of Achilles when he was a child and struggled to

[190] Barringer (2001), 4-5.
[191] *Il*.8.553-565.
[192] *Il*.8.5-27.
[193] *Il*.8.470-476.
[194] *Il*.9.26-28, 32-52.
[195] *Il*.9.96-172.
[196] *Il*.9.196-197.
[197] Odysseus' speech: *Il*.9.225-306; Achilles' response: 308-430.
[198] *Il*.9.434-495.

make him the hero he was. This is why, according to him, Achilles should yield to his request. Moreover, Phoenix continues, a man has to honor the *Λιταί*, the daughters of Zeus that represent prayers[199]. Although they are lame and crossed-eyed and, thus, they reach their recipient at a late point, one should never ignore them, least they get infuriated and punish the offender. Furthermore, in the current situation, it is necessary for Achilles to accept Agamemnon's apology, since it is accompanied with generous gifts.

At that point, Phoenix remembers an old story that is suitable for his friends to listen to[200]. This is the story of Meleager and the Calydonian boar and the version that Phoenix narrates goes like this[201]: Artemis was once enraged, because king Oeneus had given offerings to all the other gods except her. For this reason she sent to Calydon a *σῦν ἄγριον ἀργιόδοντα*[202], a wild boar with white tusks, which caused many troubles ravaging the land. Many men tried to kill the boar, only to be killed by the ferocious animal. The beast was at last hunted and killed by Oeneus' son, Meleager, who had many hunters and hounds by his side. However, the troubles for the Aetolians had not ended yet; Artemis brought war between the Aetolians and the Curetes for the head and the hide of the boar. As long as Meleager was fighting with the Aetolians, Calydon was protected. But as soon as Meleager, cursed by his mother for killing her brother, decided to abstain from the battle, the Curetes started to gain more and more ground. The Aetolian priests approached him with gifts, his family tried to persuade him to go back and defend them, so did his comrades; all in vain. Only at the last moment, when the Curetes had already set Calydon on fire, Meleager yielded to his wife's, Cleopatra, entreaties and saved his city from the enemy.

Phoenix finishes his long speech urging Achilles to avoid this situation and help the Achaeans now, to ensure his own profit. Otherwise, he will end up like Meleager, who reentered the war at such late a point that he did not get any of the gifts offered at first[203]. Achilles' response is again negative: Phoenix should not be on Agamemnon's side; on the contrary, he should spend the night with him and leave Troy the next day[204].

Having heard this, there is not much left for Ajax to say. Thus, the last speech is rather short, laying emphasis on Achilles' cruel behavior toward his comrades and friends. Although Achilles acknowledges that Ajax is right, he is still obdurate: he will fight again only when one of his own ships is on fire[205]. At that point, Odysseus and Ajax return to the camp of the Achaeans and announce the failure of the embassy. Phoenix, on the other hand, obeys Achilles and spends the night with the rest of the Myrmidons.

Some preliminary comments can be already made: just like Odysseus' boar hunt, Meleager's story is also a digression[206]. However, in this case hunting is a rather small part of the narration; additionally, there is an extremely complex web of relations, concentrated in

[199] *Il.*9.496-524.
[200] *Il.*9.524-528.
[201] *Il.*9.529-599.
[202] *Il.*9.539.
[203] *Il.*9.600-605.
[204] *Il.*9.607-619.
[205] Ajax's speech: *Il.*9.624-642; Achilles' response: 644-655.
[206] See p.25.

70 lines, which make the narrative much harder to understand. On top of that, multiple questions remain unanswered regarding the events related to the hunt: Why did Meleager kill his uncle? Why did he decide to abstain from the battle when he was angry with his mother? Why did Artemis send a second calamity to the Aetolians, after the ravaging boar? Was there a second offense or was she still mad because of Oeneus' neglect[207]?

4.2 Variations on Meleager's death and the role of Atalanta

Due to these problems, Meleager's story in *Iliad* 9 has been one of the most debated passages of the *Iliad*, in regard to the Homeric Question[208]. Both the Analysts[209] and the Unitarians[210] examined the relation between the tradition on the one hand and the Homeric text on the other, trying to detect the origin of the story and determine the extent to which Homer transformed an already existing story[211]. Nowadays and after Kakridis' very influential neo-analytical approach, we could say that scholars have reached an agreement that the story could not have been exclusively Homer's invention[212]; on the contrary, it was presumably based on an older tradition, perhaps an epic poem with Meleager as its main hero[213]. Homer incorporated this story in Phoenix's speech, changing it when necessary to strengthen its link with Achilles' current situation[214]. However, since a thorough analysis of arguments like these would demand an individual research, we will only focus on answering the questions stated above, since they affect the way we interpret the function of the boar hunt.

To cast some light on these rather dark aspects, we should at first consult the valuable information provided by other texts[215]. Following Hainsworth, who includes them among the "principal sources" for Meleager's myth[216], we will examine briefly how Bacchylides, Apollodorus and Pausanias present this story[217].

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[207] Questions related to the controversial inclusion of Althaea in the list of Meleager's suppliants after his retirement, as well as Achilles' alleged "memory loss" regarding the embassy scene have been intentionally excluded, since they do not seem to affect directly the reconstruction of the hunting story. For more on these, see Kakridis (1984), 14-17, and Page (1959), 305-311, respectively.
[208] Willcock (1964), 152.
[209] See for example Page (1959), 297-315, who considers the whole embassy scene as a latter addition to the Homeric text, and Phoenix's speech an even later addition to the embassy scene.
[210] See for example Whitman (1958), 181-220, who regards the embassy scene as an integral part of the evolution of Achilles' character in the poem.
[211] For a modern overview of this subject see Alden (2000), 233-241.
[212] West (2010), 4.
[213] Kakridis (1984), 23.
[214] For the adaptation of Meleager's story to Achilles' situation see Rosner (1976), 323-324, and Willcock (1964), 152-153.
[215] Barringer (1996), 52, provides a detailed list of Greek and Latin texts which refer to the myth of the Calydonian boar.
[216] Hainsworth (1993), 130.
[217] The goal behind our choice is to include one example of all three versions of Meleager's death.

To begin with, in Bacchylides' fifth ode, Hercules meets Melager in the underworld and the latter narrates his story to the former[218]. In this version, Artemis is again the one who brings the boar to the Aetolians, and Meleager, together with the best of the Greeks, kills the beast. After that, the goddess forces the Curetes and the Aetolians to fight over the hide of the boar. It is in the fever of this war that Meleager kills two of his maternal uncles[219] and, thus, causes the wrath of his mother. However, in Bacchylides' account, Meleager does not withdraw from the battle: he dies while fighting, when his mother burns a well-kept log, which was destined to end the hero's life when burnt. As far as this version is concerned, Kakridis has argued convincingly that it belongs to a folk tale, much older than the curse version[220]. Whether the curse version was a Homeric invention or not, is though a controversial subject[221]. In any case, Phoenix's choice to leave the log version out of his narration is completely understandable and justified: Meleager's story is presented as a parallel to Achilles' case, in which the theme of retirement is of outmost importance; yet Melager's retirement is incompatible with the log version, since the hero does not have the time to react at all and dies while fighting, as soon as the log turns into ash.

Apollodorus on the other hand, mentions both the log and the curse version of Meleager's death[222].What is interesting in his account and is missing in Homer and Bacchylides is the inclusion of Atalanta in the story. According to Apollodorus' version of the log, Meleager, although already married to Cleopatra, fell in love with the huntress Atalanta during the hunt of the Calydonian boar. Atalanta was the first to strike the boar and so Meleager decided to grant her its hide. Disapproving his decision, his uncles deprived Atalanta of the spoils and Meleager killed them. However, according to the version of the curse, the uncles were killed during a fight over the spoils, which resulted to the war between the Curetes and the Aetolians. Althaea cursed her son and he retired from the battle; he returned at a late point, saved the city and met his death. In this version, Atalanta is omitted[223]. Interestingly, her participation in the boar hunt seems to be incompatible with the theme of the general war between the Aetolians and the Curetes. Also Ovid, the other major source which includes Atalanta, presents her as the reason for the conflict between Meleager and his uncles but does not expand this conflict into a war[224].

Similarly to Apollodorus, Pausanias also presents both versions, that of the log and that of the curse. However, he additionally offers a third variation, found in the *Eoeae* and the *Minyad*, as he says[225]. In contrast to the other two, this version does not hold Althaea responsible for her son's death; Meleager was killed by Apollo, who supported the Curetes

[218] Bacchyl.5.94-154
[219] For a detailed examination of the number of the uncles found in the textual sources, see Alden (2000),234.
[220] Kakridis (1984), 5-9.
[221] Kakridis (1984), 9. Swain (1988), 275, argues in favor of this.
[222] Apollod.*Bibl*.1.8.1-3.
[223] In my opinion, Swain (1988), 323, misinterprets Apollodorus' text by expanding Atalanta's role to both the versions cited, when she is clearly mentioned only in the first one. Hence, he is wrong to claim that Atalanta has to be regarded as the cause of the war in the Homeric version, too.
[224] Ov.*Met*.8.273-523. See also Diod.Sic.4.34, where Atalanta is mentioned, too, but the theme of the war omitted.
[225] Paus.10.31.3-4.

during the war with the Aetolians[226]. However, Kakridis seems to be right to regard this as a later, post-homeric change in the myth, a projection of Patroclus' and Achilles' death on Meleager[227].

Based on this overview, we can make the following remarks: if we exclude the version which includes Apollo, there are two versions attested regarding Meleager's death, both of which hold Althea responsible for killing her son, either through the curse, or through the burning of the log connected to his life. If we now examine the Homeric version in connection with the other accounts using the curse theme, we can supplement some of the gaps in the story. As far as Meleager's retirement is concerned, the only explanation that the Iliadic text provides is that the hero was angry with his mother[228]:

ἀλλ᾽ ὅτε δὴ Μελέαγρον ἔδυ χόλος, ὅς τε καὶ ἄλλων
οἰδάνει ἐν στήθεσσι νόον πύκα περ φρονεόντων,
ἤτοι ὃ μητρὶ φίλῃ Ἀλθαίῃ χωόμενος κῆρ
κεῖτο παρὰ μνηστῇ ἀλόχῳ καλῇ Κλεοπάτρῃ (*Il*.9.553-556)

But when wrath entered into Meleager, wrath that makes the mind swell in the breasts also of others, even of the wise, he then, angry at heart with his dear mother Althaea, lay idle beside his wedded wife, the fair Cleopatra.

Later on, we read the content of the curse: Althaea wished for her son to be dead[229]. However, Meleager's retirement is only explained if we understand that the hero was supposed to die during the war, as we see in Apollodorus' and Pausanias' curse version of the myth. Hence, although the death of Meleager is only foreshadowed[230] and not explicitly stated in Phoenix's narrative, we may conclude that the hero decided to stay away from the battlefield to avoid dying on it. Again, Phoenix's choice is completely justified, since the goal of his parable is to persuade Achilles to reenter the battle; any information regarding Meleager's death has to be omitted.

Furthermore, this overview proves that Atalanta is not a standard participant in the hunting story. In some cases, she is presented as the cause of the conflict between Meleager and his uncle(s). If so, the conflict is described rather as a family issue and does not grow into a war. The versions, on the other hand, that expand this conflict into a Curetes-versus-Aetolians war, do not portray Atalanta as its cause. It was over the acquisition of the spoils that Meleager quarreled with his uncle(s) and killed him/them. Based on this observation, we suggest that the Homeric text, too, implies a fight over the spoils as the reason for Meleager to kill his uncle and not his love affair with Atalanta, as some scholars have

[226] See, however, Swain (1988), 275, who claims that a possible interference of Apollo as Meleager's executor does not contradict the Homeric account, since Erinys maybe the one who hears the curse but there is no information whether she executes it herself.
[227] Kakridis (1984), 5. See also Willcock (1964), 151-152, who defines this as an "epic rationalization".
[228] Willcock (1964), 153.
[229] *Il*.9.571.
[230] Griffin (1995), 136,139.

claimed[231]. In this case, Artemis' rage seems to be a lasting theme, with a single cause but multiple outcomes.

4.3 The narrative technique of the digression – Cleopatra and Patroclus

After answering these important questions, we may now examine the way Meleager's myth is told by Phoenix and its place in the narration. To begin with, this is how Phoenix, after finishing the allegory of the *Λιταὶ,* introduces this new subject:

οὕτω καὶ τῶν πρόσθεν ἐπευθόμεθα κλέα ἀνδρῶν
ἡρώων, ὅτε κέν τιν᾽ ἐπιζάφελος χόλος ἵκοι·
δωρητοί τε πέλοντο παράρρητοί τ᾽ ἐπέεσσι. (*Il*.9.524-526)

Likewise we have heard the glorious deeds of men of old who were warriors, when furious wrath came on one of them; won might they be by gifts, and turned aside by words.

Clearly, Phoenix is about to provide an example, a paradigm for Achilles to imitate, taken from the lives of old heroes, who functioned as the ultimate role-models, since their heroic value was non-negotiable. The existence of a paradigm at that point of the story is not something remarkable; the use of paradigms for didactic purposes was generally acceptable[232] and they are often found in Homeric poetry[233]. In fact, if we consider the tutor–student relationship between the narrator and the narratee of the paradigm, Phoenix's choice to use this rhetoric device seems totally reasonable. However, if we take a look at the end of the narrative, things become more complex:

ὣς ὃ μὲν Αἰτωλοῖσιν ἀπήμυνεν κακὸν ἦμαρ
εἴξας ᾧ θυμῷ· τῷ δ᾽ οὐκέτι δῶρα τέλεσσαν
πολλά τε καὶ χαρίεντα, κακὸν δ᾽ ἤμυνε καὶ αὖτως.
ἀλλὰ σὺ μή μοι ταῦτα νόει φρεσί, μὴ δέ σε δαίμων
ἐνταῦθα τρέψειε φίλος· κάκιον δέ κεν εἴη
νηυσὶν καιομένῃσιν ἀμυνέμεν· ἀλλ᾽ ἐπὶ δώρων
ἔρχεο: […] (*Il*.9.597-603)

Thus did he ward from the Aetolians the day of evil, yielding to his own heart; and to him then they paid not the gifts, many and pleasing; yet even so he warded evil from them. But you, dear boy, let me not see you thus minded in your thoughts, and do not let a god turn you into this path; it would be a harder task to save the ships when they are burning. But come, while yet the gifts may be had;

[231] See p.36.
[232] Jaeger (1946), 32.
[233] For a list of Iliadic paradigms see Austin (1966), 300-301.

By the end of the narrative, Meleager, introduced as a role-model in less than a hundred lines ago, has turned out to be an example to be avoided[234]. Phoenix is explicitly urging Achilles not to follow in Meleager's footsteps and return to the war now that he can get the presents the Achaeans are offering. What has been expected to be an "instructive example"[235] turns out to be the exact opposite and this is indeed peculiar. The key to understand this change is to be found in the role of Cleopatra in the story.

Although ring composition is a common technique exploited in the development of paradigms[236], its complexity in Melager's story is noticeable. Gaisser places this among a list of passages with complex ring composition[237], but acknowledges its extraordinary style; in fact, there are three rings in the story[238], each of which is composed of more rings itself. Interestingly, Cleopatra is located in the central ring, and the information regarding her parents and her original name is in the center of this ring. Why does Phoenix place these lines, which seem to be of minor importance, at the center of Meleager's story?

In addition to this, it is surprising that Phoenix even mentions Cleopatra's parentage whereas other, more important aspects of the story are omitted. Auerbach's theory, as explained in the previous chapter[239], could, indeed, be a possible explanation for this. However, it does not match with the rest of the narrative which is allusive and vague[240]. In addition to this, the fact that Phoenix provides two names for Meleager's wife is puzzling; clearly, Cleopatra is a less common name of the heroine, who was generally known as Alcyone[241].This, at first glance unnecessary, inclusion of the name "Cleopatra", whose resemblance to the name "Patroclus" was already noted in antiquity[242], is the first hint of the connection between the two figures[243].

However, their name is not the only thing that Patroclus and Cleopatra have in common: In Meleager's case, Cleopatra was the only one, after a sequence of unsuccessful ambassadors, who managed to persuade the hero to go back and fight against the Curetes[244]. In Achilles' case, too, it is thanks to Patroclus that Achilles will return to the

[234] Kakridis (1984), 4.
[235] Jaeger (1946), 32.
[236] Willcock (1964), 147.
[237] Gaisser (1969), 38.
[238] The war of the Curetes and the Aetolians, Meleager retires from the battle, Meleager is persuaded, see Gaisser (1969), 18-19.
[239] See p.26.
[240] This contrast has been noted by Austin (1966), 297, who mentions two types of techniques: the first is the one analyzed by Auerbach; the second one, which is especially used in Iliadic paradigms, is "casual, allusive and elliptical" (303-304). Kakridis (1984), 51, attributes this obscurity to the fact that Phoenix does not narrate the events of Meleager's story in chronological order, but in a way that fits his paradigmatic purposes. Kirk (1962), 164-169, also refers to this peculiar sequence of events and attributes it to the "abbreviated reference style" found in passages which summarize stories outside the Homeric tradition.
[241] *Il*.9.561-564.
[242] Eust.*Il*.775.64-66.
[243] This has been a much debated subject. For a modern overview, see Alden (2000), 240.
[244] Alden (2000), 248. For the role of the wife as a climax in the "love-scale" motif, see Kakridis (1984), 14-21.

battle. However, Patroclus' words will not be enough to persuade Achilles[245]. It is only after his death, announced by Zeus already in 8.476, that Achilles will decide to help the Achaeans, in order to avenge the death of his most beloved friend. Based on this observation and on what will be examined in the following section, Meleager's story does not seem to be functioning only as a paradigm for Achilles, the internal narattee; much more than this, it is foreshadowing the role Patroclus will play in the books to follow for the sake of the external narratee.

4.4 The function of the boar hunt in Phoenix's narrative

As already said, the boar hunt occupies a rather small part of Meleager's story. Indeed, if we remove the lines dedicated to the explanation of Artemis' anger and the rather general word *κακὸν,* hinting to a punishment, in line 533, the actions of the boar and its hunt are concentrated in the following nine lines:

ἡ δὲ χολωσαμένη δῖον γένος ἰοχέαιρα
ὦρσεν ἔπι χλούνην σῦν ἄγριον ἀργιόδοντα,
ὃς κακὰ πόλλ᾽ ἔρδεσκεν ἔθων Οἰνῆος ἀλωήν·
πολλὰ δ᾽ ὅ γε προθέλυμνα χαμαὶ βάλε δένδρεα μακρὰ
αὐτῆσιν ῥίζῃσι καὶ αὐτοῖς ἄνθεσι μήλων.
τὸν δ᾽ υἱὸς Οἰνῆος ἀπέκτεινεν Μελέαγρος
πολλέων ἐκ πολίων θηρήτορας ἄνδρας ἀγείρας
καὶ κύνας: οὐ μὲν γάρ κε δάμη παύροισι βροτοῖσι·
τόσσος ἔην, πολλοὺς δὲ πυρῆς ἐπέβησ᾽ ἀλεγεινῆς. (*Il*.9.538-546)

At that the Archer goddess, the child of Zeus, grew angry and sent against him a fierce wild boar, white of tusk, that worked much evil, wasting the orchard plot of Oeneus; many a tall tree did it uproot and cast on the ground, root and apple blossom and all. But the boar Meleager, son of Oeneus, slew, when he had gathered huntsmen and hounds from many cities; for not by few men could the boar have been slain, so huge was he; and many a man he set on the grievous pyre.

Reading these lines, we realize that the emphasis is put on the ferocity of the boar: it was a wild beast, which not only destroyed the land of Oeneus, but had also caused the death of many men. Killing it was definitely not an easy task, since it was finally achieved only when a great number of hunters and hounds were gathered at Meleager's request. Interestingly, no information is included regarding the way the boar got killed: no mention of the weapon with which Meleager struck it, no description of the procedure followed or the way the animal died. As for the participation of Meleager's uncle in the hunt, Phoenix is again silent;

[245] *Il*.16.21-45. Alden (2000), 249-251, is right to note that Achilles fails to realize the connection between Patroclus' and Cleopatra's requests, because Patroclus' plea is different from the one expressed by the embassy in book 9, since it does not aim directly to Achilles' return.

the uncle's first appearance happens only later in the narrative[246], when the theme of the curse is introduced.

Unquestionably, the heroic kill of an extremely wild animal, the participation of matrikin[247] and the inclusion to the endeavor of a group called Curetes[248] carry initiatory connotations for Meleager's hunt. In addition to this, as shown from Barringer's valuable collection of iconographic material, Meleager was depicted in several Attic vases as a young man, beardless and naked, save for the $\chi\lambda\alpha\mu\grave{\upsilon}\varsigma$, the typical outfit of the Athenian ephebes[249]. Could we, thus, conclude that Meleager's boar hunt is, just like Odysseus', initiatory?

Felson-Rubin and Merritt-Sale give a positive answer to this question[250]. They even take this speculation a step further: if the only assault to Artemis was Oeneus' neglect, then the goddess would be satisfied with the destruction caused by the boar. However, as line 547 explicitly shows, it is Artemis again who stirs up the war between the Aetolians and the Curetes. This second punishment implies a second sin[251]. Although not mentioned by Phoenix, this insult comes from Meleager and his erotic affair with Atalanta during the hunt, found in other sources. What Felson-Rubin and Merritt-Sale suggest is that it is Meleager's sexual connection with Atalanta, a relationship against the rules of *rites de passage*[252] and repugnant to Artemis, that caused the goddess' rage. Their conclusion is that in the story of Meleager everything goes wrong because the *rite de passage* is not successfully conducted, in contrast to Odysseus' boar hunt, which included no sex and was thus successful[253].

This theory was strongly criticized by Most, but his objections were mostly focused on the fact that a love affair between Atalanta and Meleager seems to be a later addition to the myth, literarily attested for the first time in Euripides[254]. As far as the initiatory function of the boar hunt, he acknowledged that the story has some initiatory features, without further commenting on it[255]. However, to my point of view, West is justified to doubt whether this is a case of initiation[256] for the following reasons:

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[246] *Il*.9.567.
[247] See p.23.
[248] West (2010), 7-8, argues persuasively that the Curetes of the Iliadic text are not a separate nation or tribe; on the contrary, the word is used as a synonym for *κοῦροι*, i.e young men, and, thus, refers to an age group of Aetolians, who lived in the Pleuron, i.e. on the margins of the civilized world. See also Bremmer (1978), 23-30, who extensively examines the liminality of the Curetes.
[249] Barringer (1996), 64 and Barringer (2001), 32.
[250] Felson Rubin & Merritt Sale (1983), 153.
[251] Felson Rubin & Merritt Sale (1983), 152-153.
[252] Felson Rubin & Merritt Sale (1983), 142-144.
[253] Felson Rubin & Merritt Sale (1983), 159-160.
[254] Most (1983), 203-205. Barringer (1996), 53, is absolutely wrong stating that Atalanta is also mentioned in Bacchyl.5. She is though right to note that Atalanta is systematically included in vase paintings depicting the Calydonian boar hunt before her participation is mentioned in the first literary sources (55).
[255] Most (1983), 206. Barringer (1996), 58, also agrees that this is a case of an initiation. See also Bremmer (1983), 173-186.
[256] West (2010), 9-11, presents the alternative theory that the origin of the boar hunt in Meleager's myth is to be found in a ritual contest which involved the head of a boar.

First of all, Meleager's boar hunt is described as an absolute necessity for Oeneus' realm. In this case, it does not seem to be planned and definitely it does not function as a sport. The boar is not a random animal; it is the embodiment of a divine punishment. Secondly, in the Iliadic passage it is the boar that invades the cultivated area, destroying the fields in Oeneus' land and not the hero who travels outside the boarders of the city to find and kill a ferocious animal[257]. Most importantly, in Phoenix's story Meleager is certainly an adult, since he is already married. In any case, it would be at least safe to argue that Phoenix does not imply that Meleager kills the boar because of an initiatory ritual, a *rite de passage* into adulthood, to which no parallel of Achilles situation is to be found whatsoever.

Why is it then that the hunt scene is included in Phoenix's speech? As we have already seen, Phoenix is a selective narrator, excluding from his narration information that did not comply with his paradigmatic purposes, such as Meleager's death. In the case of the boar hunt, one could easily claim that it was already one of the major themes of Meleager's myth by the time of *Iliad*'s composition, so Phoenix could not simply ignore it[258]. However, what is clearly important for Phoenix is the motif of Meleager's retirement and late return, which is directly connected to the Curetes-Aetolians war and not to the boar hunt. In addition to this, if Phoenix's mere purpose was to underline Meleager's prowess by mentioning the killing of the boar, and thus present the image of a hero worthy of Achilles' attention, he would have given some details on how this achievement was conducted. However, as mentioned above, the information given is confined to the description of the boar and the battle that arose between the Curetes and the Aetolians for its head and hide. In my opinion, it is this last topic that makes the boar hunt an indispensable part of Phoenix's parable.

This is how Phoenix presents the starting point of the war:

ἣ δ᾽ ἀμφ᾽ αὐτῷ θῆκε πολὺν κέλαδον καὶ ἀϋτὴν
ἀμφὶ συὸς κεφαλῇ καὶ δέρματι λαχνήεντι,
Κουρήτων τε μεσηγὺ καὶ Αἰτωλῶν μεγαθύμων. (*Il*.9.547-549)

But about his carcass the goddess set much clamor and shouting concerning his head and shaggy hide, between the Curetes and the great-hearted Aetolians.

In other words, this is the picture that Phoenix describes: the dead boar is on the ground, between the Curetes and the Aetolians; each group tries to pull the boar on their side in order to take its head and hide and a great war arises for this reason. Interestingly, this is not the only place in the *Iliad* where this situation is found. On the contrary, fighting around a dead body in order to take it as spoil is a theme of major importance for the plot of the poem. In book 17, a similar situation is presented, this time with Patroclus' dead body laid

[257] See p.22.

[258] Barringer (1996), 54, says that the earliest certain depiction on vases of Melager's boar hunt is dated in the early sixth century. Stesichorus had also certainly connected Meleager with a boar hunt, see Garner (1994), 26-38. West (2010), 5,7, considers the boar hunt a "typical heroic theme". However, Kakridis (1984), 12, places it among Homer's innovations.

on the ground and surrounded by Trojans and Achaeans fighting over it[259]. This scene is described as follows[260]:

τοῖς δὲ πανημερίοις ἔριδος μέγα νεῖκος ὀρώρει
ἀργαλέης· καμάτῳ δὲ καὶ ἱδρῷ νωλεμὲς αἰεὶ
γούνατά τε κνῆμαί τε πόδες θ᾽ ὑπένερθεν ἑκάστου
χεῖρές τ᾽ ὀφθαλμοί τε παλάσσετο μαρναμένοιιν
ἀμφ᾽ ἀγαθὸν θεράποντα ποδώκεος Αἰακίδαο. (*Il*.17.384-388)

So then all day long raged the great strife of their cruel fray, and with the sweat of toil were the knees and legs and feet of each man beneath him ever ceaselessly spattered, and his arms and eyes, as the two armies fought about the noble attendant of the swift-footed grandson of Aeacus.

Again, it is *ἀμφὶ* a dead body, this time Patroclus', that two groups of men are fighting. Again, this is not a trivial conflict, it is a *μέγα νεῖκος*. The fact that the Trojans and the Achaeans are not only fighting around, but over the body of Patroclus is explicitly stated in the following passage:

ὣς οἵ γ᾽ ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα νέκυν ὀλίγῃ ἐνὶ χώρῃ
εἵλκεον ἀμφότεροι· μάλα δέ σφισιν ἔλπετο θυμὸς
Τρωσὶν μὲν ἐρύειν προτὶ Ἴλιον, αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοῖς
νῆας ἔπι γλαφυράς· περὶ δ᾽ αὐτοῦ μῶλος ὀρώρει
ἄγριος[…](*Il*.17.394-398)

so they on either side were trying to drag the corpse this way and that in a small space; and their hearts within them were full of hope, the Trojans that they might drag him to Ilios, but the Achaeans to the hollow ships; and around him wild battle arose […]

If we now recall what has been mentioned in chapter two regarding the hunting similes found in the *Iliad*, the link between Patroclus and the Calydonian boar becomes stronger. It is not only the fact that book 17 contains a relatively big number of hunting similes[261]; more

[259] Kakridis (1984), 3, points out the similarity between the hunters standing around the Calydonian boar on the one hand, and the Achaeans standing around dead Hector in *Il*.22.369ff. See also Rosner (1976), 323, who regards the boar as a parallel to Briseis, since she was the cause of the conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon. However, this conflict did not end to a war as in the case of the Aetolians and the Curetes. Additionally, Meleager's retirement was caused because of his mother's curse and not because he was deprived of his spoil.

[260] Cf.*Il*.16.563-566 where the same is happening around dead Sarpedon. See also *Il*.17.267-268 and 368-370, where the Achaeans are gathering around dead Patroclus.

[261] See p.14.

importantly, two of these similes refer to a boar hunt[262]. What is even more striking is that at the moment of his death, in book 16, Patroclus is compared to a boar[263] .

Of course, we do not suggest that the audience of the *Iliad* was expected to immediately recall the Calydonian boar hunt, narrated in book 9, when they listened to the narrator explaining how the Trojans and the Achaeans fought around Patroclus; what we would like to claim is that, although for Achilles Meleager's boar hunt was nothing more than an interesting detail of the paradigm narrated to him by Phoenix, for the external audience the boar hunt was part of a story with multiple hints to Patroclus, whose death was already announced. In any case, the connection between the hero and the animal is admirable, enhancing the validity of what has been said in chapters one and two: the boar is not only a fierce animal; it is rather a warrior, an opponent difficult to conquer, who not only fights, but also dies like a hero - just like Patroclus.

[262] *Il*.17.281ff, where Ajax keeping Trojans away from Patroclus is linked to a boar which repels hunters and hounds and *Il*.17.725ff, where both Ajaxes are compared to boars, which, although wounded, resist to hounds attacking them.

[263] *Il*.16.823-828, see p.16-17. See also a preceding simile, in *Il*.8.337ff., where Hector pushing away the Achaeans is compared to a hound which attacks and wounds a lion or a boar.

Conclusions:

Although hunting is a theme quite frequent in Homeric epic poetry, the hunting narratives found in *Odyssey* 19 and *Iliad* 9 are indeed extraordinary; it is not only the fact that these hunting scenes are more detailed than the other references to hunting; what is more striking is the fact that the hunt in these two narratives is much more than an activity from the past turned into an interesting story. On the contrary, for different reasons in each case, the violence expressed towards the object of the hunt, namely the boar, is strongly linked to the future events in Odysseus' and Achilles' lives.

In Odysseus' case, the successful boar hunt in mount Parnassus when the hero was still a young man functions as a guarantee for his heroic future. After he was initiated into killing during his stay at his grandfather's court, Odysseus gained the courage and prowess needed to stand out in the battlefield. Of course the hero had the chance to show these qualities multiple times during the Trojan war and during the wanderings away from his land. However, after his return to Ithaca, Odysseus has to prove his manliness for one last time: he has to kill the suitors that have been wasting his property for twenty years. This endeavor is dangerous and demanding. The suitors are many in number, whereas Odysseus has only his son and his two loyal servants on his side. Furthermore, when he enters his palace, Odysseus himself does not seem to be the hero he was any longer. Nothing on him resembles the mighty king of Ithaca; he is disguised as an old beggar and he looks weak and impotent. He gets humiliated, mocked and mistreated. It is at this point that the hunting narrative emerges. When Eurycleia starts washing her master's feet, she notices the scar that was once caused by the tusks of the fierce boar he had managed to kill when he was young. On this crucial point, the Homeric narrator "pauses" the recognition, develops the hunting story and in this way assures his narratees that Odysseus will be once more successful when confronted with the suitors. The valor acquired when he was young is everlasting -just like the scar on his thigh.

Meleager's boar hunt is more complicated for various reasons, which do not have to be repeated here. What is interesting in this case is the way the story is presented: the hunt belongs to a larger, extremely dense web of events that are part of Meleager's life but, at the same time, are relevant to the recipient of the story, Achilles. This is of course understandable since Phoenix narrates the story for this exact reason: he wants to persuade Achilles to start fighting again on the side of the Achaeans and, in order to achieve this, he presents Melager's story as a parallel to the hero's current situation. However, the killing of the Calydonian boar that Phoenix includes in his parable seems to be irrelevant to Achilles' case. If we consider that Phoenix omits other, more important details of the myth, the role of the hunt becomes even more peculiar and thus, requires further interpretation. To find the missing piece of this puzzle, we have to think about the hints to Patroclus' future role in the *Iliad*, hidden behind the figure of Cleopatra. We realize then that the function of Meleager's narrative as a whole is different from what has been expected: what Phoenix introduced as a paradigm turns out to be a foreshadowing of the events to follow in the narration. From that point of view, the emphasis put on the conflict that arose between the Curetes and the Aetolians over the dead body of the boar can be also interpreted as a

glimpse to the future: soon Patroclus will be the one lying dead on the ground and over his body a great battle between the Achaeans and the Trojans will take place. This interpretation is verified in the most striking way: at the moment of his death, Patroclus will be compared to a boar that submits itself to the force of a lion and dies.

After these observations, we can conclude that although these two narratives share a common subject, namely a boar hunt, there are many differences between them. In the passage from the *Odyssey*, the hunt is part of Odysseus' own experience and it is narrated by the Homeric narrator. It originally functioned as a *rite de passage* and is now narrated to foreshadow the successful outcome of the μνηστηφονία scene. In the passage from the *Iliad*, Meleager's hunt is part of a story within the story, a tale narrated to Achilles by Phoenix, another Iliadic character. However, although the hunt is not part of Achilles' own past, it will find an interesting parallel in his future. The paradigm of Meleager that Phoenix introduces acquires thus a prophetic function. From that perspective, we may suggest that in both passages, hunting is an indispensable part of the narration, which, through its general heroic connotations and its symbolic aspects, connects the present situation with events that will happen later in each poem.

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