

# The Embassy and the Duals of *Iliad* 9.182–98

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CONFUSION about the use of the dual in Homer is at least as old as Zenodotus. He was the first to suggest that Homer sometimes used it interchangeably with the plural. From Aristarchus on, Homerists have resisted this view and sought logical explanations for the supposed anomalies.<sup>1</sup> They have been successful for the most part, though difficult and stubborn instances remain (cf. *Iliad* 1.567, 3.279, 5.487). But even were one to grant a few isolated anomalies, there is nothing quite comparable, either in abruptness or extent of usage, to *Iliad* 9.182–98.

Debrunner, who studied the flexibility of the Homeric use of the dual, finally declared this instance simply a case of syntactical error, “Sprachfehler des Dichters.”<sup>2</sup> Variant readings at 9.185, 196, 197, 198 indicate the attempts even in antiquity to remove at least some of the offending forms. But neither this approach nor Debrunner’s is satisfactory, and we are left with a dilemma concisely described by Leaf as follows<sup>3</sup>:

The consistent use of the dual in speaking of the envoys in 182–98 naturally puzzled the ancient critics. Two explanations were offered—one, that the dual was identical in sense with the plural, a theory which is well known to have been held by Zenodotos; the other, that of Aristarchos, that Phoinix was not one of the envoys, but was sent beforehand to prepare for their coming afterwards (ἐπειτα 169). The former is naturally untenable (see on A 567, E 487); the latter, even if we admit that the departure of Phoinix could be passed over

<sup>1</sup> For the anomalous use of the dual in Homer see Pierre Chantraine, *Grammaire Homérique* II, *Syntaxe* (Paris 1953) 25ff; D. B. Monro, *A Grammar of the Homeric Dialect* (Oxford 1882) 122; Jacob Wackernagel, *Vorlesungen über Syntax* I (Basel 1920) 77ff; A. Debrunner, “Zum erweiterten Gebrauch des Duals,” *Glotta* 15 (1927) 14–25; further literature in E. Schwyzer and A. Debrunner, *Griechische Grammatik* II (Munich 1950) 46.

<sup>2</sup> Debrunner (preceding note) *Glotta* 15 (1927) 17.

<sup>3</sup> Walter Leaf, *The Iliad* (London 1900) I.384 (*ad Il.* 9.168).

in silence, is refuted by the surprise with which Achilles receives the envoys (193). The only acceptable alternative is to regard the whole speech of Phoenix (432-622) as an episode taken from some different but doubtless similar context, and adapted to the original story, in which Aias and Odysseus were the only envoys, by some probably slight alteration of the text here [168], in 223 and 622. Here as elsewhere we have good reason to be grateful for the conservatism which has preserved us the original dual.

For D. L. Page, as for other Analysts, the dual here is "exhibit number one" in the case against unitary authorship.<sup>4</sup> Unitarians, however, have insisted on the inseparability of Phoenix from the *Iliad*<sup>5</sup> and have followed up Aristarchus' line of solution: Phoenix is not really a member of the embassy and does not stand on the same footing as his two colleagues. Schadewaldt, Reinhardt and Van der Valk have been the most eloquent exponents of this view.<sup>6</sup> For Wilamowitz, who (rather surprisingly) granted the artistic necessity of Phoenix, the duals were sheer puzzlement: ". . . Und die rätselhaften Duale 182 vermag ich nicht aufzuklären. Denn der Versuch, den Phoenix auszuschneiden, bricht den Edelstein aus der Krone dieser jungen Dichtung ersten Ranges."<sup>7</sup> Other scholars, accepting neither the Aristarchan nor the Analytic approach, have left the duals as the problematical remnants of an earlier tale which Homer had in the

<sup>4</sup> Denys L. Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Sather Lect. 31, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1959) 297ff. See also Theodor Bergk, *Griechische Literaturgeschichte I* (Berlin 1872) 596 with n.129; E. Bethe, *Homer: Dichtung und Saga I, Ilias* (Leipzig and Berlin 1914) pp.76-77 with n.7; Willy Theiler, "Die Dichter der Ilias," in *Festschrift Edouard Tièche* (Bern 1947) 127ff; Peter von der Mühl, *Kritisches Hypomnema zur Ilias* (*SchweizBeitrAlt* 4, Basel 1952) 168-69. Further literature in Page and in E. Drerup, *Das Homerproblem in der Gegenwart* (Würzburg 1921) 350 n.4.

<sup>5</sup> For example, J. A. Scott, "Phoenix in the Iliad," *AJP* 33 (1912) 68-77; W. W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, transl. G. Highet I<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1954) 25ff; D. E. Eichholz, "The Propitiation of Achilles," *AJP* 74 (1953) 137ff.

<sup>6</sup> W. Schadewaldt, *Iliasstudien* (*AbhLeipzig* 43.6, 1938) 137-38; Karl Reinhardt, *Die Ilias und ihr Dichter*, ed. U. Hölscher (Göttingen 1961) 233ff; M. van der Valk, *Researches on the Text and Scholia of the Iliad II* (Leiden 1964) 258-59, with n.773 on p.258. This line of approach has also been advocated by Carl Rothe, *Die Ilias als Dichtung* (Paderborn 1910) 229-31; Scott (*supra* n.5) 75; H. E. Sieckmann, "Bemerkungen zum neunten Buche der Ilias," *BPW* (1919) 424-32, esp. 425; P. Mazon, *Introduction à l'Illiade* (Paris 1948) 176-77; F. Focke, "Zum I der Ilias," *Hermes* 82 (1954) 258ff.

<sup>7</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, *Die Ilias und Homer* (Berlin 1916) 64-65.

back of his mind.<sup>8</sup> Such compromises have not convinced many; and, as Schadewaldt said, the duals still belong among “wohl den schwersten Anstößen in der ganzen Ilias.”<sup>9</sup>

The lines present a problem of a different order from minor and easily granted slips like the resurrection in Book 13 of Pylaemenes who had been killed off in Book 5.<sup>10</sup> Here five men are named (9.169–70), perform various actions described in plural verbs for over ten lines (9.171–81), and then suddenly and repeatedly appear in the dual. There are eight, perhaps nine,<sup>11</sup> dual forms in seventeen lines. The objections to Aristarchus’ solution and its modern versions are already clear in Leaf’s comment and have often been repeated, most recently by Von der Mühl and Lesky.<sup>12</sup> The second type of solution, the influence of an earlier tale or earlier version where the embassy consisted of only two men, asks us to believe that a past tradition could make Homer fly in the face of grammar, the most primary requirement of even the simplest poet.

Fifty years ago Franz Boll called attention to the close parallel between the embassy-scene of Book 9 and that of 1.327ff.<sup>13</sup> Boll’s essay is not easily accessible and has not generally received the attention it deserves.<sup>14</sup> Though I risk putting myself in a minority (Wackernagel is the only scholar I have found who approves Boll’s view without reservations),<sup>15</sup> I venture to suggest that this approach is perhaps correct and, in any case, bears further study.

The repetitions which link the two scenes are striking and unmistakable:

<sup>8</sup> So Jaeger (*supra* n.5) 423–24 n.37; Cedric H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1958) 344 n.25; G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge 1962) 218.

<sup>9</sup> Schadewaldt (*supra* n.6) 137; A. Lesky, *AnzAlt* 8 (1955) 154, speaks of “den elenden Dualen.” See also A. Heubeck’s review of Page (*supra* n.4), *Gnomon* 33 (1961) 119: “. . . die berühmten Duale des I, für die das entscheidende Wort, wie sie zu verstehen und zu verteidigen seien, noch nicht gesprochen ist.”

<sup>10</sup> For this sort of minor contradiction see, for example, C. M. Bowra, *Tradition and Design in the Iliad* (Oxford 1930) 97ff, and J. A. Scott, *The Unity of Homer* (Sather Lect. 1, Berkeley 1921) 137ff.

<sup>11</sup> The ninth would be *φιλάτω* (for *φίλατοι*) in 9.198, which has strong manuscript support and is read by Leaf, Mazon, Bolling etc. In any case the dual here is an ancient *varia lectio*.

<sup>12</sup> Von der Mühl (*supra* n.14) 168–70; Lesky, *AnzAlt* 8 (1955) 153–54.

<sup>13</sup> Franz Boll, “Zur homerischen Presbeia,” *ZöstG* 68 (1917/18) 1–6; “Noch einmal zur homerischen Presbeia,” *ibid.* 69 (1919/20) 414–16.

<sup>14</sup> Boll’s view is mentioned by Debrunner (*supra* n.1), Drerup (*supra* n.4), Jaeger (*supra* n.5), and Schadewaldt (*supra* n.6) *loc.cit.*, but not examined carefully.

<sup>15</sup> Wackernagel (*supra* n.1) 78–79.

- 1.322: ἔρχεσθον κλισίην Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος  
 9.166: ἔλθωσ' ἐς κλισίην Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος
- 1.327: τῷ δ' ἀέκοντε βάτην παρὰ θῖν' ἀλὸς ἀτρυγέτοιο  
 9.182: τῷ δὲ βάτην παρὰ θίνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης
- 1.328=9.185: Μυρμιδόνων δ' ἐπὶ τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἰκέσθην
- 1.329: τὸν δ' εὖρον παρὰ τε κλισίῃ καὶ νηϊ μελαίνῃ  
 9.186: τὸν δ' εὖρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ
- 1.334: χαίρετε, κήρυκες, Διὸς ἄγγελοι ἧδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν  
 9.197: χαίρετον· ἧ φίλοι ἄνδρες ἰκάνετον· ἧ τι μάλα χρεῶ

But these parallels only make the “error” more plausible. They do not in themselves explain it away. It is, however, perhaps possible to go beyond Boll and find a *grammatically* satisfactory explanation for the duals. My suggestion is that they refer to the heralds, at least as far as line 196. The two heralds are first mentioned in line 170: *κηρύκων δ' Ὀδῖος τε καὶ Εὐρυβάτης ἄμ' ἐπέσθων*. The phrase *ἄμ' ἐπέσθων* in 170 could in itself be dual (this form of the third-person imperative is indistinguishable from the plural); and if so it would prepare for the later duals at 182ff. The parallel with 1.327ff would have influenced Homer to think of the heralds as the main actors here. In addition, the action preceding the duals is the ritual of a formal libation (174–78) led by the heralds (*ἀντίκα κήρυκες μὲν ὕδωρ ἐπὶ χεῖρας ἔχευαν*, 174). The office of the heralds naturally associates them with such ritual actions (compare the function of the heralds in 3.268ff and of Talthybios, one of the heralds in 1.327ff, in 19.250ff). Hence their important rôle in 174ff keeps them before our eyes for the necessarily ceremonious and solemn preliminaries to entreating a formidable, sensitive hero. To be sure, the shift from plural to dual at 182 is still awkward, as is the prayer to Poseidon in the next line,<sup>16</sup> and the address of Achilles in 197–98. But the difficulties of the first and third points may have an effect of their own, as we shall see; and, as for the prayer, it is perhaps not impossible to think of the heralds, who have been entrusted with

<sup>16</sup> It is unclear why the prayer at 183 is addressed to Poseidon. Leaf (*supra* n.3) I.385 (*ad loc.*) suggests it is because “Poseidon is both chief patron of the Achaian cause, and lord of the element by which they are walking.” Yet in 8.200–11 Poseidon refuses to help the Greeks against Zeus’ command. Note too 9.362, where Achilles names Poseidon in connection with his threat of departing, a motif which perhaps serves to balance the prayer of 183 and reflect on the fruitlessness of the embassy.

the formal ceremonies of 174ff, now praying for the success of the entire group. In any case, if *ἑπέσθων* in 170 is dual, some of the abruptness is eased; and the heralds have the advantage of being the only pair designated as such (note *ἄμα*, 170). They also recur later in Book 9 unambiguously in the dual (see *infra*).

If this approach is correct, we must now ask about its effect and meaning. Why would a consummate poet (as we believe Homer to be) encumber his narrative with a difficulty of this nature? Homer has, I suggest, risked the strained, even if not ungrammatical, effect of using the heralds as subject in order to point up as vividly as possible the connection with Book 1. He thus recalls the original dishonor done Achilles at its most intense moment, namely the point when Agamemnon's heralds translate the verbal insult into reality by demanding and leading off Achilles' prize, the tangible mark of his *τιμή*. This echo comes at the very moment when Agamemnon is eager to make amends by means of another delegation, a delegation of a very different sort. To look at the situation from a different point of view, the ironic similarity of the two situations generates the repetition of the formulas, even at the expense of a certain strain.

One can, of course, argue the reverse, namely that the duals of 9.182 are an error resulting from an improper use of a formula. Heralds, after all, are usually in pairs. But against this view stand (1) the extraordinarily close parallel of both language and situation with 1.327ff, which suggests that more than error or accident is involved, and (2) the continuation of the duals for seventeen consecutive lines. So long a nod is unlikely. I believe with Boll, then, that the repetition from Book 1 is conscious and artful.<sup>17</sup> The formulaic poetry of the *Iliad* operates consistently by exploiting just this sort of parallelism.<sup>18</sup>

One of the greatest of Homer's problems in the composition of his

<sup>17</sup> Boll (*supra* n.13) 2.

<sup>18</sup> For the significance and possible artistry involved in such repetitions see G. M. Calhoun, "Homeric Repetitions," *UCPCP* 12 (1933) 1–25, esp. 5ff, 12ff; Bowra (*supra* n.10) 92ff and more recently his chapter "Style" in A. J. B. Wace and F. H. Stubbings, *A Companion to Homer* (London 1962) 34–36. The importance of repetition and subtle variation has come to be appreciated more and more as an essential part of Homer's art. See, for example, G. F. Else, "Homer and the Homeric Problem," *Lectures in Memory of Louise Taft Semple—Univ. of Cincinnati Classical Studies I* (Princeton 1967) 348ff; M. W. Edwards, "Some Features of Homeric Craftsmanship," *TAPA* 97 (1966) 177; Douglas Young, "Never Blotted a Line? Formula and Premeditation in Homer and Hesiod," *Arion* 6 (1967) 311ff. For repeated and parallel themes see A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (*HarvStCompLit* 24, Cambridge [Mass.] 1960) chap. 9, esp. 188ff.

poem is to motivate the refusal of Achilles in Book 9.<sup>19</sup> Achilles' own reasons are stated clearly enough in his reply to Odysseus. They appear again in the gulf between himself and the simple Ajax, who cannot see any but quantitative differences between the matter of Briseis and Agamemnon's offer of seven girls besides (9.636ff). But the motive power behind Achilles' wrath lies seven full books and some four thousand lines behind us. We need to have brought home to us once more how deep an offense Achilles has suffered. By recalling at the outset of the embassy (182ff) that initial insult, Homer predisposes the entire embassy-scene (which is, after all, our first view of Achilles in action since Book 1) in Achilles' favor and makes his hero's refusal of Agamemnon's offer more plausible.

Line 182 recalls not only 1.327. It is also the second occurrence in the poem of the full formula, *παρὰ θῆνα πολυφλοίσβοιο θαλάσσης*, which occurs first in 1.34 and again, at an intense moment, in 23.59, the appearance of Patroclus' ghost to Achilles. In 1.34 Chryses, treated harshly by Agamemnon, walks by the sea just before his fatefully efficacious prayer to Apollo. The recurrent formula reinforces the obvious parallel of situation with Achilles. It helps, therefore, to pull together the accumulated effects of Agamemnon's proud and selfish behavior (note too that 1.326b=1.25b). The parallels create the sense of a deeply-rooted characteristic of Agamemnon which has manifested itself on numerous other occasions. And it is now the tenth year of the war.

There is another important echo of Book 1 in Agamemnon's speech, with its closing two lines about his being *βασιλεύτερος* and *προγενέστερος* (9.160–61). The lines revive the still unresolved issues of the quarrel at its inception (compare Nestor's speech, 1.277–81). And, though Odysseus tactfully omits the two lines when he reports the king's offer, Achilles takes up the *βασιλεύτερος*-theme with an ironic echo (9.392) of the Atreid's word.<sup>20</sup>

The parallels with 1.327ff serve not only to recreate the freshness of Achilles' resentment. They also provide a measure of the distance traversed by the hero since his initial encounter with Agamemnon's heavy authority in Book 1. His later replies, and especially 9.316–43, 401–16, 607–10, will indicate far more fully the different plane upon

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Whitman (*supra* n.8) 189ff; Eichholz (*supra* n.5) 143ff; S. E. Bassett, *The Poetry of Homer* (Sather Lect. 15, Berkeley 1938) 198ff.

<sup>20</sup> See Whitman (*supra* n.8) 192–93; also Focke (*supra* n.6) 262.

which he has shifted the quarrel.<sup>21</sup> But the opening passage too, by its divergences from the scene at 1.327ff, prepares us for these differences.

In 1.320ff Agamemnon sends forth the heralds to the “tent of Peleus’ son, Achilles” (1.322); and he ends his brief speech with a threat of force. In 9.165ff, when Nestor suggests that a select group, including the two heralds, should “go to the tent of Peleus’ son, Achilles” (the line, “[go . . .] κλισίην Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος,” occurs only in these two places, 1.322 and 9.166) his speech ends not with threats to Achilles, but with preparations for a prayer to Zeus: “Bring water for our hands and give orders for holy silence, that we may pray to Zeus, son of Cronos, if he [possibly Achilles?] may take pity” (9.171–72).

The heralds of Book 1 find Achilles sitting by the ships. There is no mention of his being engaged in any activity or taking any joy in life; and Achilles “rejoiced not when he saw them” (1.329–30):

τὸν δ’ εὔρον παρά τε κλισίῃ καὶ νηϊ̄ μελαίνῃ  
ἤμενον· οὐδ’ ἄρα τῷ γε ἰδὼν γήθησεν Ἀχιλλεύς.

In 9.186–9, however, the heralds find Achilles enjoying his elaborately made lyre: τὸν δ’ εὔρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ (9.186; cf. also 189, τῇ ὄ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν).

In Book 1 the first words come slowly and after painful hesitation:

The two of them stood there (*στήτην*), frightened and with awe and respect for the king, nor did they address him or ask him anything; but he knew in his heart and he spoke: “Hail, heralds, messengers of Zeus and of men (1.331–34) . . .”

But in Book 9 Achilles responds immediately and vigorously:

And they stood before him (*στὰν δὲ πρόσθ’ αὐτοῖο*, 9.193; cf. 1.332); and in amazement he sprang up, still holding his lyre, leaving the place where he sat. And so also Patroclus, when he saw the men, rose up. Welcoming the two of them swift-footed Achilles spoke: “Hail; friends indeed have you come; great need there was (upon you), you who are the dearest of the Achaeans to me, angry though I am (193–98).”

<sup>21</sup> For the change in the terms of the quarrel see Whitman (*supra* n.8) 187ff.

These differences stress the changes both in Achilles and in the situation which have occurred since Book 1; and they also show us an Achilles who is more in command of the situation, yet simultaneously more reasonable and more open to the warmth of human ties (*φίλοι, φίλτατοι*, 9.197–98).

The duals in lines 197–98 are clearly the most troublesome in the entire passage. Even though the duals in 182ff and 192 can easily be referred to the heralds as the symbols of the official, one might say plenipotentiary, character of the embassy, lines 197–98 obviously stress the personal relation. One can, of course, simply maintain that this strained effect is the price Homer was willing to pay for the parallel with 1.327ff. But Homer could have conveyed that parallel without the special difficulty of these two lines. If we follow the line of interpretation already suggested, it may be possible after all to keep the duals of 197–98 and still make sense of the passage.

The greeting *χαίρετε* or *χαίρετον*, though common enough in the singular, occurs in the plural or dual only in the two passages under consideration, 1.334 and 9.197 (it also occurs once in the *Odyssey*, in the dual: 15.151). In Book 1, however, the greeting is entirely formal: the heralds are saluted solely in their official capacity as *κήρυκες, Διὸς ἄγγελοι ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν*. Achilles here is in no mood for a more personal touch. He recognizes that the heralds are just doing their duty (1.335ff); they are simply instruments of Agamemnon and hence are not “responsible” (*ἐπαίτιοι*, 1.335). Achilles, consequently, calls them to witness, again with a high degree of formality (1.339–40), and sends them forth without wasting another word. In Book 9 he is in a more delicate position. On the one hand he is receiving an official legation from Agamemnon, accompanied by the mark of that officiality, the heralds.<sup>22</sup> The scholion on 9.170 is to the point: *καὶ κήρυκες συμπαραγίνονται, ἵνα δηλωθῆ ὅτι δημοσία ἢ πρεσβεία ἐστί*. On the other hand this embassy contains not merely the inconsequential heralds, but respected fellow-warriors and the aged Phoenix, who is almost a foster-parent. Achilles, then, is caught between his response to the embassy *qua* official legation and his response to the embassy *qua* old and dear friends. The duals of 197–98, I suggest, are Homer’s way of handling this tension at the decisive point where Achilles has actually to address the envoys.

<sup>22</sup> See Focke (*supra* n.6) 257–58. Bassett, too (*supra* n.19) 200, points out that Ajax and Odysseus come not just as friends but “in the official capacity of envoys from Agamemnon.”

The duals which immediately precede (lines 192–93) are much simpler, for here Achilles' personal relationship with the individual ambassadors lies further in the background: "The two (heralds) advanced forward, and brilliant Odysseus led them; they stood before Achilles, and he rose up in wonder. . . ." Odysseus does not, of course lead *only* the two heralds here. At this moment the heralds stand for the entire embassy. Achilles' "wonder" may be due as much to the presence of an embassy *per se* as to the identity of the particular members. Herald and friends, the "official" and personal sides of the *dramatis personae*, are still inextricable. But line 197 begins to separate them. With ἦ φίλοι ἄνδρες ἰκάνετον, the formality of the situation (what one might call the formal fiction) is shattered: the envoys are no longer the insignificant underlings of Book 1, but Achilles' "dear friends," indeed the "dearest of the Achaeans." Yet the duals remind us still that Achilles is meeting his friends under strained circumstances. They come as the messengers of a man whom he nearly killed in anger. They have ties with both the Greek army and Achilles, while Achilles has abjured the former. Hence the content of his address is at variance with its form.

The strain—or, to be more severe, the contradiction or grammatical error—need not, then, result from the careless conflation (by Homer or some "Bearbeiter") of variant legends. The difficulty is inherent in the dramatic situation itself. And the parallel with Book 1 in respect to the duals generally and the greeting locally (1.334, 9.197) enhances this dramatic tension. (Paradoxically 1.334, where the dual would have been appropriate, uses the plural, and *vice versa* for 9.197, though one can, of course, take refuge in the convenient excuse of metrical necessity; but metrical necessity alone will not do for 9.197).

Using this interpretation as a tentative hypothesis, we may re-examine the action of this first phase of the embassy. The embassy approaches Achilles in terms of its "official" and formal function in the two heralds, who vividly evoke the scene of 1.327ff. The initial τὼ δὲ βάρην of 9.192 also points back to 1.327; but the rest of the line, ἤγειτο δὲ δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς, alerts us to the realization that Odysseus has replaced Phoenix as leader (see 9.168, "Let Phoenix dear to Zeus lead first of all"). This change too may be part of the complex drama unfolding before us and not merely a contradiction, for it is confirmed by Odysseus' manoeuvre in 223ff: he hastens to speak before Phoenix or Ajax.

Of the three speakers, Odysseus is the most closely identified with Agamemnon: he is the one to report *verbatim* Agamemnon's terms. He is also the least close of the three to Achilles (see 9.312–13). Achilles and Odysseus are, in fact, antithetical personalities, as Book 19 will bring out even more fully. Yet in his opening formal address at 197–98 Achilles must still respond to the embassy as a whole. He cannot single out individual members.<sup>23</sup> Nor, of course, does he know what each of them will say, though he might easily guess that Odysseus will be more committed to Agamemnon's aims and the success of the expedition than, say, Phoenix. The duals in 197–98, as the form appropriate to the two heralds, continue the tone of distance and formality; and the strong reminiscence of 1.327ff (present also in the first word of 9.197) strengthens that tone. The dual in 197–98, therefore, allows Achilles to retain his formal stance *vis à vis* the embassy as an official instrument of Agamemnon's policy. But φίλοι and φίλτατοι indicate the perplexing other side. The phrase μοι σκυζομένω περ in 198 also emphasizes the double nature of Achilles' relation to the embassy: they come to him as "dearest of the Achaeans" even though he is hurting the army as a whole by his angry, sulking withdrawal. The tension involved here is, in effect, the kernel of the tragic plot of the *Iliad*. The rather difficult phrase ἦ τι μάλα χρεώ in 197 (feebly emended in antiquity to ἡμέτερόνδε) is both a sympathetic recognition of the "great need" of his friends and a reference back to his threat in the earlier "embassy" of 1.327ff when he called to witness the heralds of that βασιλῆος ἀπηγέος (1.340–42)<sup>24</sup>:

. . . εἴ ποτε δὴ αὐτε  
χρειῶ ἐμεῖο γένηται ἀεικέα λαιγὸν ἀμῦναι  
τοῖς ἄλλοις. . . .

Like many such episodes in Homer, the meeting of Book 9 is structured in terms of formalities (see 171–77, 197–200, 205–22, 656–57, and the repetition 122–57=264–99). In view of the importance of these formalities,<sup>25</sup> the previously noted shift from Phoenix (9.168) to Odysseus (9.192 and 223ff)<sup>26</sup> may all be preparation for

<sup>23</sup> It would be, therefore, misguided oversubtlety to argue that the duals of 197–98 could apply only to the two closest friends, Ajax and Phoenix.

<sup>24</sup> The connection between the "need" of 9.197 and 1.340ff is noted by Boll (*supra* n.13) 3.

<sup>25</sup> On the formalities in general see Focke (*supra* n.6) 258.

<sup>26</sup> The change from Phoenix to Odysseus in 9.168, 192 and 223 is often cited as another piece of evidence for multiple authorship and "Umdichtung": see Bergk (*supra* n.4) 595 n.128; Von der Mühl (*supra* n.4) 168; Boll (*supra* n.13) 5.

Achilles' coldness of response to the "official" function of the embassy, for that function, underlined by the formalities and by the heralds, comes to be embodied in Odysseus (or at least more fully in Odysseus than in the other two heroes). In so far as this side of the embassy transmits Agamemnon's regal position, Achilles must react negatively, not out of irrational violence (Achilles is in fact remarkably calm, from his first appearance with the lyre at 9.186ff to the end of the book), but as part of his struggle and self-justification against Agamemnon's authoritarian power. The difficulties of 182-98, then, serve to portray the full complexity of Achilles' position and prepare for the later presentation of the gulf which separates him from the success-minded Odysseus, the crass Agamemnon, and the well-meaning but bluntly insensitive Ajax.

This interpretation of the duals gains support from the ending of the episode. The heralds, along with the duals, recur at the end of Odysseus' report to Agamemnon (9.688-92):

So [Achilles] said; and there are these men, who followed along with me, to say the same thing, Ajax and *the two heralds, intelligent both*. (*Αἴας καὶ κήρυκες δύο, πεπνυμένω ἄμφω* 689). But Phoenix spent the night there, for thus he [Achilles] ordered, that he might follow him in ships to his dear fatherland tomorrow, if he wishes; but by force he will not bring him.

It is often remarked that Odysseus repeats neither of Achilles' more encouraging replies to Ajax and Phoenix, but only the last three lines of Achilles' first speech (9.427-29). This fact has sometimes been taken as further evidence that Phoenix is a later addition and that the "original" form of the book (the "Ur-I" of the Analysts) contained only Ajax and Odysseus. But in fact Odysseus' report, combined with his reference to the "official" heralds in 689, performs an important function. It reminds us, for the last time in the book, of the distance between Achilles and Agamemnon and, indeed, between Achilles and the rest of the army.

This rather surprising report to Agamemnon is connected with the beginning of the embassy. Achilles' last pronouncement (9.652-54) is that he will remain by his ships until Hector comes to the tents and ships of the Myrmidons: *Μυρμιδόνων ἐπὶ τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἰκέσθαι*

(9.652). Line 652 repeats both 1.328 and 9.185<sup>27</sup>: that is, it points back to the cause of the wrath. Similarly 9.654 (*ἀμφὶ δέ τοι τῆ ἐμῆ κλισίῃ καὶ νηϊ μελαίνῃ*) points back to the heralds' arrival at Achilles' tent in Book 1 (329): *τὸν δ' εὔρον παρά τε κλισίῃ καὶ νηϊ μελαίνῃ*. It will be recalled that the first phrase of this line was used at 9.186: *τὸν δ' εὔρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ*. The libations follow (*σπέισαντες*, 657), bringing us back to 174ff (*αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ σπέισαν . . .*, 177). And here at the close "Odysseus led the way" (*ἦρχε δ' Ὀδυσσεύς*, 657), just as at the beginning of the embassy (*ἦγγεῖτο δὲ δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς*, 192). Immediately after this formal departure, Patroclus gives instructions for the preparation of Phoenix' bed; and those in Achilles' tent retire for the night (9.658–68). The repetitions and the whole arrangement of the scene form an artful use of the familiar "ring composition." Through these formulaic repetitions Homer juxtaposes once more the authority and the aims of Agamemnon (as embodied in his heralds and in his spokesman, Odysseus) against Achilles' very different relation with Phoenix. The scene at 658ff serves to gather around Achilles, under the shelter of his own tent, those who are really close to him, and to shut out those who are not. The mysterious privacy, indeed isolation, of Achilles, introduced in the famous scene which follows the heralds' departure in Book 1 (348ff), remains triumphant; and the division between individual and army, Achilles and Agamemnon, stands out more sharply and in broader perspective than before.

It is appropriate, then, that the most "official" of the three ambassadors should report only Achilles' response to the king's formal terms. Achilles' response to his *φίλοι* belongs only in the privacy of his own tent. It has no place and no meaning in the colder, more calculating, more public council-chamber of King Agamemnon. It is part of the irony and tragic foreshadowing that the embassy succeeds only in so far as Achilles is moved by *personal* ties. When Achilles is so moved again, in Book 16, it is to precipitate the tragedy.

Agamemnon, however, has no claim to these personal replies of Achilles nor to the success of this personal side of the mission. As far as Agamemnon himself is concerned, the embassy is a failure. And, from the point of Achilles' heroism, this is as it should be. The development of the tragic implications of Achilles' story requires absolutely that this failure of the embassy be completely clear, so that we may

<sup>27</sup> Boll (*supra* n.13) 2 notes the repetition 1.329=9.185=9.652, but without comment.

experience Achilles' loss of Patroclus as part of his own choice and his own tragic conflict between self and human ties.<sup>28</sup> Homer has used the means at his disposal to effect that end. What has been read as contradiction is in fact the subtle deployment of the characteristic devices of a highly stylized and formulaic poetry: the echo and variation of formulas which recall parallel situations and the significant omission of lines in *verbatim* repetitions. A poetic form which concentrates on the "outside" of things and men requires that the poet use such means to depict the complexity of the inner life and the relationships with which any significant and comprehensive literary work deals.

Agamemnon, then, gets back only the response directed to him through his spokesman, Odysseus. Odysseus' mention of the heralds at this point (689) provides a final confirmation of the two levels on which Achilles' meeting with the ambassadors has operated. It is also another reminder, at a crucial point, of that initially disastrous embassy of 1.327ff.

The duals of 197–98 *are* harsh, and there is no gainsaying it. But such harshness may have an effect of its own. So careful an exploitation of formalities, repetitions and tone in Homer may perhaps seem to some excessively subtle. But we have come to see aspects of Homer which the assumptions of many of our predecessors concealed from them. We are no longer subject to the Romantic view of the naïve, artless Homer of the "Volksgeist" and "Naturgenie" school, nor can we fully accept Arnold's picture of Homer's austere plainness and simplicity. Even the all-formulaic Homer of the "hard" Parryists has been giving way to an artist of considerable sophistication.<sup>29</sup>

The duals of 182–98, when understood in connection with the heralds and the "formal" side of the embassy, can give grammatical sense

<sup>28</sup> For the tragic conflict see Whitman (*supra* n.8) 187ff, 198–200. Wilamowitz (*supra* n.7) 65 granted a high tragedy to the character and contradictions within Achilles in Book 9: "Auch die Widersprüche in einem Menschen wie Achilleus zeigt er uns. . . . Nirgend ist Homer so sehr ἀρχηγὸς τραγωδίας wie im I."

<sup>29</sup> For example M. W. M. Pope, "The Parry-Lord Theory of Homeric Composition," *Acta Classica* 6 (1963) 1–21; J. B. Hainsworth, "Structure and Content in Epic Formulae," *CQ* n.s. 14 (1964) 155–64; A. Hoekstra, *Homeric Modifications of Formulaic Prototypes* (Amsterdam 1965) esp. 7–30; T. G. Rosenmeyer, "The Formula in Early Greek Poetry," *Arion* 4 (1965) 293–311; Adam Parry, "Have We Homer's *Iliad*?" *YCS* 20 (1966) 177–216, esp. 191–201; Edwards (*supra* n.18) esp. 177–79; Young (*supra* n.18) 279–324, *passim*. Among the older literature see esp. G. M. Calhoun, "The Art of the Formula in Homer," *CP* 30 (1935) 215–17.

and harmonize with other details of what I believe to be a unified design. That design includes the echo of 1.327ff in 9.182ff and 9.652ff, the shift from Phoenix's leadership to Odysseus' in 192 and 223, the recurrence of the heralds in the dual in 689, and Odysseus' limited report to Agamemnon in 677–92. The duals, then, have their place in the dramatic situation and developing tragedy, a tragedy defined by a three-way tension between social position and obligation, passionate attachment to *φίλοι*, and fierce individual pride.<sup>30</sup>

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