The Etiquette of Games in *Iliad* 23

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> Serious sport has nothing to do with fair play. It is bound up with hatred, boastfulness, disregard of all rules, and sadistic pleasure in witnessing violence: in other words, it is war minus the shooting.
>
> George Orwell

THE GAME-NARRATIVE in Book 23 of the *Iliad* has been discussed from various perspectives but not as a unit that supports the design of the epic through its detailed structure. Although the proper awarding of prizes clearly echoes the main theme of the poem, the book has been attacked by traditional analysts as an uneven patchwork, albeit composed of spirited remnants.[1] Even those who incorporate this section of the narrative into the *Iliad* usually advance quickly through it in their eagerness to reach the high ground of Book 24.[2] Several who focus directly on Book 23 employ it in defense of a more major point about Homeric composition: it has recently been mined for material supporting theories of consistent characterization,[3] for earlier narrative stories,[4] or for rules of conduct

[1] The unity of the game-narrative has long been questioned by *e.g.* D. B. Munro, *Homer, Iliad, Books XIII–XXIV*[4] (Oxford 1897) II 398f; W. Leaf, *The Iliad*[2] (London 1902) II 468f; G. S. Kirk, *The Songs of Homer* (Cambridge 1962) 222f; P. Chantraine and H. Gouble, *Homère, L'Iliade, Chant XXIII* (Paris 1964) 15ff; and M. M. Willcock, *The Iliad of Homer* (Houndsmills 1984) *ad Il.* 23.798–883.

[2] E. T. Owen, *The Story of the Iliad* (London 1947), makes the most striking move by grouping Book 23 with 24, thus making it the only book not to receive its own separate discussion.

[3] L. V. Hinkley, "Patroclus' Funeral Games and Homer's Character Portrayal," *CJ* 81 (1986) 209–21; R. Nicolai, "La *Metis* di Antiloco," *RivFil* 115 (1987) 107–13.

[4] M. M. Willcock, "Antilochus in the *Iliad*," in *Mélanges Edouard Delebecque* (Marseilles 1983) 479–85.

within an early society.[5] Even such staunchly Unitarian critics as Myres and Whitman do not probe the game-narrative's particular subtleties of design.[6]

In the broad structure of the *Iliad* the gathering of the army for Patroclus' funeral games stands as a structural parallel to its mustering prior to the Catalogue of Ships in Book 2. In both cases an extended picture of the army and its leaders is presented: in Book 2 the poet stresses the Greeks' military power, which is so clearly demonstrated in the following battle books that Zeus' support is required if the Trojans are to reach the ships; in Book 23 the army is gathered by Achilles for a show of unity now that he has avenged his comrade's death and will rejoin the troops.

In addition, major themes from the earlier books are echoed in the game-narrative. Given the peaceful, festival atmosphere in which the competition is conducted, McLeod rightly comments that "Book 23 ... is a counterweight to the bulk of the poem."[7] Specifically the games replay in more peaceful terms the conflict in Book 1: a series of competitions are held to establish a ranking of abilities, just as the reward system was supposed to do in Book 1, and disputes over the awarding of prizes recall Achilles' protests against Agamemnon's leadership. Achilles by his new posture does reintegrate himself into the Greek army: he sponsors the games, manages the efforts of others to compete for honor, and offers special recognition to Nestor and Agamemnon. Donlan has characterized the new position of Achilles: "the Funeral Games of Book 23 show the group sharing in complete harmony ... the contest scenes represent the final balancing ... Achilles becomes the embodiment of collegial cooperation." He then locates the authority in this scene in the internal agreement of the community to accept leadership:

> the principle of collective authority is a primary cultural given which operates reflexively to insure communal harmony ...

[5] For other descriptions of games in Homer see esp. *Il.* 11.698–702; 22.162ff; 23.630–42, 679f; *Od.* 24.85–92; more generally see W. H. Willis, "Athletic Contests in Epic," *TAPA* 72 (1941) 392–417; M. Gargarin, *Early Greek Law* (Berkeley 1986) Chs. 1 and 2.

[6] J. L. Myres, "The Last Book of the *Iliad*," *JHS* 52 (1932) 264–96; C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1958) 214f, 262ff.

[7] C. W. Macleod, *Homer, Iliad, Book, XXIV* (Cambridge 1982) 29–32.

> When the structural elements of Leadership Authority[8] are in proper balance the system of command and leadership permits an apparently effortless interchange of authority-roles, limiting friction between "juniors" and "seniors" or between those whose place and importance in the society are based on potentially conflicting claims (position or standing) concerning the initiation of decisions which affect the whole group.[9]

In all these efforts at building the game-narrative into the structures of the *Iliad,* the "communal harmony" that the game-narrative presents seems to stem from the behavior of Achilles as the game-giver—and, of course, this is true. Yet it still remains that there has been no successful effort to show that the individual events in the games are constructed to make an expressive whole appropriate to the ending of the epic. This paper will argue that the sense of emerging "collegial cooperation" of the Greeks in Book 23 is based on the army's enactment of a pre-existing social code relating to the proper conduct of games. The agent for the enforcement of this code is Achilles, but the guidelines for the individual contests and the settlement of disputes are not just the good ideas of Achilles or his initiative as the leader of the event. Rather Homer presents him as the enforcer of a social code, an etiquette of games, which is understood as proper procedure by both the poet and his audience.

Similar social codes provide structure to much of the Homeric narrative and often allow insight into the poet's presentation of individual scenes. The elements in the typical scene of guest-friendship have been identified and their proper order determined;[10] such a scene can be presented as a longer narrative, a

[8] Defined by W. Donlan, "The Structure of Authority of the *Iliad,*" *Arethusa* 12 (1979) 52, as: "The subject's (the person willing a mode of activity) ability, recognized, claimed or assumed, to make decsions, issue orders, or suggest specific courses of action with the expectation that the decisions/orders/suggestions will be persuasive or compelling to others."

[9] Donlan (*supra* n.8) 63f.

[10] Good discussions of evidence for the existence in the minds of poet and audience of such a standardized community custom are: W. Arend, *Die typischen Scenen bei Homer* (Berlin 1933) 28–78; H. L. Levy, "The Odyssean Suitors and the Host-Guest Relationship," *TAPA* 94 (1963) 145–53; D. M. Gunn, "Narrative Inconsistency and the Oral Dictated Text in the Homeric Epic," *AJP* 91 (1970) 192–203; M. W. Edwards, "Type Scenes and Homeric Hospitality," *TAPA* 105 (1975) 51–72; and most recently, J. M. Foley, *Traditional Oral Epic: The Odyssey, Beowulf, and the Serbo-Croatian Return Song* (Berkeley 1990) 247–77; M. W. Edwards, "Homer and Oral Tradition:

scene in which certain elements are extended or stressed to suit the surrounding narrative or even inverted for effect. Similarly the giving of gifts, ransoming practices, the preparation and serving of banquets, conduct in the Achaean assembly, and rules for arranging two-man combat—all are understood by the Homeric audience without being explained.[11] Narratives built on the foundation of such social customs have as cultural presuppositions rules that the community has developed for the effective conduct of human activities. For example, a proper host should not ask a guest's name until he has guaranteed him lodging and offered a meal; this practice is incorporated into reception scenes throughout the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[12] An etiquette of games, founded in the kinds of situations that could actually arise, is sufficiently complex for the poet to present a series of peaceful competitons in order to portray appropriate behavior by the winners and losers, by the organizer of the athletic contests, and by the spectators.

The basic form of the type scene at the root of each game includes the elements of a definition of the prizes in order, announcement of the contest, the self-presentation of the competitors, the preparation for the contest, [the definition of the terms of the contest], the description of the competiton, [the reaction of the spectators], the awarding of prizes, [the settlement of claims of unfairness], and [special awards]. The items enclosed in brackets do not occur in all of the first seven

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The Type-Scene," *Oral Tradition* 7 (1992) 303–08; and S. Reece, *The Stranger's Welcome: Oral Theory and the Aesthetics of the Homeric Hospitality Scene* (Ann Arbor 1993).

[11] For gift-giving see the recent, extensive discussions by R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual* (Oxford 1994) 13–25; W. Donlan, "Reciprocities in Homer," *CW* 75 (1982) 137–75, and "The Unequal Exchange between Glaucus and Diomedes in Light of the Homeric Economy," *Phoenix* 43 (1989) 1–15; for ransoming practices see *Il.* 11.101–12, 21.34–48; for banquet scenes see Arend (*supra* n.10) 68ff; W. C. Scott, "A Repeated Episode at *Odyssey* 1.125–438," *TAPA* 102 (1971) 541–51; for conduct in the assembly see R. Sealy, "Probouleusis and the Sovereign Assembly," *CSCA* 2 (1969) 259–65; J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980) 9–12; for arranging two-man combat see *Il.* 3.38–120, 245–339; 7.54–205.

[12] *Il.* 18.369–19.3; *Od.* 1.103–324; 3.4–485; 4.1–624; 5.55–148; 6.388–8.586; 10.133–11.12; 15.555–16.155; 17.204–23.348; Reese (*supra* n.10) 207–29.

events,[13] a type of modification well-paralleled in analyses of battle scenes or arming scenes.[14] Even the least elaborated of the events, weight throwing, illustrates the basic type scene (826–49):[15]

Definition prizes in order (826–29): the block of iron is described as an object previously used for throwing by a king and worthy of being war spoil; here it is the only prize since this type of contest has only one winner.[16]

Announcement of the contest (830–35): as the nature of the competition is clear from the presentation of the iron weight and its previous usage by Eetion, Achilles need only announce the contest briefly.[17] He does explain the worth of the prize for the winner.

Self-presentation of the competitors (836ff)

Preparation for the contest (839a)

[*Definition of the terms of the contest*]: omitted because obvious

Description of the competition (839b–47a)

Reaction of spectators (840+847b): the double reaction of the spectators singles out the victorious throw of Polypoites, replacing other determinations of the winner and making claims impossible.

[13] The eighth event, spear throwing, is a contest canceled by Achilles' special award to Agamemnon; thus most typical features of the type scene do not have a chance to be presented.

[14] See the discussion at M. W. Edwards, *Homer: Poet of the Iliad* (Baltimore 1987) 71–77 with bibliographical note.

[15] See the listing of the elements of the basic type scene in Book 23 and lines that are repeated as structural markers at K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer: Narrative Structure in the* Iliad (Princeton 1993) 224f.

[16] It is not stated why there can be only one winner in this contest. Perhaps this event shows the power of the game-giver to set the terms of each competition. D. G. Kyle has privately suggested alternative explanations of this anomalous prize: on a campaign a lump of iron could not be easily subdivided or portioned out for individual prizes, or the singularity of this prize could point to a later stage of games with single prizes (*e.g.* the Olympic games).

[17] This is the only contest of the first seven without a proper naming of the nature of the competition. Such an announcement, an element of the type scene, is not rigidly set within the sequence of topics. In the first four events as well as the archery contest the narrator names the competition; at 800–803 and 831–35 Achilles does.

Awarding of prizes (848f): Polypoites takes his prize; there is no need for an official presentation because there is only one winner for the single prize, and his victory has been ratified by the response of the spectators.

[*Settlement of claims of unfairness*]: unnecessary because of spectator response

[*Special awards*]: none given in this event.

There are a few modifications, such as items omitted (printed above in brackets) and adjustments in the listing and awarding of prizes for a contest in which there is only one winner, but the basic type scene is clear.

There are in addition significant expansions in this scene, such as the reference to Eëtion[18] and the double response of the spectators, both illustrating the types of extension that individualize each of the games. Throughout this narrative the poet introduces references, awakening wider resonances, to bring each scene into close contact with the rest of the poem and the narrative tradition; these elements draw principally on recognizable characters. The reference to the story of Achilles' fair treatment of Andromache's family when he captured Eëtion's city is an appropriate reinforcement of his current rôle as game-giver. A recent study carefully matches Ajax's words and actions in Book 23 with his qualities in other scenes; the same has been done for Antilochus.[19] Therefore it is no surprise that adaptations made to each basic game scene create episodes that emphasize familiar characteristics of well-known heroes: Nestor is predictably long-winded (306–48, 626–50), Odysseus relies on cleverness and the sponsorship of Athena rather than strength (725–32, 768–83), and Menelaus has a close relationship with Antilochus in a sufficient number of other passages in the poem to prepare for the easy resolution of their dispute here.[20]

Further, the response of the spectators occurs as a significant element in the chariot race, the single combat, and the weight throw; but in each case it has a different function. Its shortest appearance is in the weight throw where it appers twice: *gelasan d' epi pantes Achaioi* (840) and *toi de boesan*

[18] The mention of an item taken from King Eëtion recalls an earlier Achilles, who treated the family of Andromache with honor; references to this story at *Il.* 1.366–69; 6.395–98, 414–28; 8.185–90; 9.186ff; 16.152ff; 22.468–72, 479ff.

[19] Hinkley (*supra* n.3); Willcock (*supra* n.4); Nicolai (*supra* n.3).

[20] 5.561–89; 15.565–71; 17.673–99; see Willcock (*supra* n.4).

(847). Yet these two brief reactions are sufficient to support Polypoites' claim of victory and to avert any charge of unfairness (as in the horse race and the foot race).[21] Beyond its narrative function within the short scene this element has no wider relevance to the book, as is true of many of the modifications in type scenes.

Individualizing extensions of both these kinds—traditional references and expansions of the standard elements—quite often concern the enforcement of rules in maintaining peace and averting violence; Homer is not much interested in athletic techniques *per se.* In other words, these extensions contribute to making the second half of Book 23 a report of regulated games rather than war. A list of such passages in each contest shows how consistently they relate to the rules and regulations of games:

Chariot Race: Ruling out an unfair competitor (274–86); acceptable coaching to plan tactics (304–48); assignment of starting positions (352–57);[22] the use of special umpires (359ff); the rôle of gods/unforeseen accidents (382–400); conduct of spectators and wagers with provision for an umpire (448–87); the rôle of mediator between quarrelling spectators (488–98); recognition of special talent (532–39); the substitution of prizes (539–65); the situation of the questionable winner[23] and modes of settling claims among competitors (566–611); honorary awards (616–52).

Boxing: The propriety of boasting (667–76); help for a defeated adversary (694f)

Wrestling: Proposing special tie-breaking rules (721–24); declarations of ties (733–37)

Foot race: Awards for a good loser (784–92)[24]

[21] On the rôle of the spectators in the games see J. M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad: The Tragedy of Hector* (Chicago 1975) 209.

[22] Similarly in the archery contest lots determine the sequence of competitors (861f).

[23] On the situations of the poor winner and the good loser see M. W. Dickie, "Fair and Foul Play in the Funeral Games in the *Iliad*," *JSportHist* 11 (1984) 8–17; Antilochus is both and is rewarded at 784–92 for showing that victory at any cost is not the only goal of competition; see also W. J. O'Neal, "Fair Play in Homeric Greece," *CB* 56 (1979) 11–14.

[24] Also in this section Homer may be illustrating the propriety of a competitor planning his aggressive moves. Odysseus decides to put in a final effort and distracts Ajax sufficiently to cause him to slip. A. Köhnken, "Der Endspurt des Odysseus: Wettkampfdarstellung bei Homer und Vergil," *Hermes* 109 (1981) 129–48, shows how the two separate actions can be seen as simultaneous results of Odysseus' *metis.*

Single armed combat: The ability of spectators to call off a contest (822f)

Weight throwing: The ability of a game-giver to define terms (824–35; see *supra* n.16); the rôle of the spectators in affirming a victory (840, 847)

Archery: The award of prizes by competitors (870–83)

Javelin throwing: Special awards by an umpire (889–94).[25]

Let the boxing match serve as a model for such a competition. Questions that might arise in a real contest are: is it proper for a contestant to boast and, if he does, what risks does he accept? Is the victor permitted to aid the loser? In narrative form this small vignette gives an answer to these two questions by assigning both actions to the contestant who claims to be the best and defeats his opponent. In terms of the honor code, boasting on the battlefield (*e.g.* Achilles to Aeneas at 20.178–98) and off (*e.g.* verbal battle between Idomeneus and Ajax, son of Oileus, at 23.448–98) is acceptable but must be evaluated on the probability of receiving a proper response from witnesses.[26] Idomeneus is rebuked for his claim to see the horses across the plain clearly (23.474–81); final solutions call for risking a valuable object or else settling the matter by force. If a boaster receives only laughter from witnesses, his boast has been ill-timed and his only way of redeeming his honor is to defeat his opponent.[27] In the boxing contest Epeius' boast is taken seriously by the onlookers, who "all became hushed in silence" (676). His opponent then rises and is soberly prepared for the match. When Epeius makes good on his boast by striking a blow so decisive that his opponent cannot remain standing—a moment em-

[25] O. Taplin, "Agamemnon's Role in the *Iliad*, in C. Pelling, ed., *Characterisation and Individuality in Greek Literature* (Oxford 1990) 77f, sees Achilles' gesture as Homer fading Agamemnon out of the *Iliad*. This, however, seems too dismissive for a scene with clear references to the quarrel scene in Book 1—even the introduction of Talthybius to transport the prize; see MacLeod (*supra* n.7) 28–32; Stanley (*supra* n.15) 230. Yet the award to Agamemnon seems more a means of superceding the quarrel than its final resolution and thus an appropriate conclusion to the re-establishment of harmony between Achilles and the Greek community, the major theme of Book 23.

[26] See W. Parks, *Verbal Dueling in Heroic Narrative: The Homeric and Old English Tradition* (Princeton 1990) 38: "The rival warriors require external observers to provide a public mnemonic record of their boasts, so that when they fulfill these boasts militarily, their fame will be corroborated."

[27] For an example of such a challenge compare the boasting and humiliation of Irus before the suitors at *Od.* 18.1–121.

phasized by the presence of a simile stressing the motion of the falling Euryalus (692f)—there is no further response. The comrades of Euryalus accept his defeat when they take the second prize. This kind of boast seems sanctioned, indeed even honorific, and is a part of the honor to be gained within the framework of the games.

In addition, once Euryalus has fallen, Epeius lifts him, and turns him over to his own men. There is no problem in aiding the defeated partner once the contest is completed. This action is paralleled in a wartime setting; for example, it is reasonable to send a captured enemy away for ransom. In this way a warrior is removed from the battlefield but he need not die; at the same time the coffers of the victorious warrior are increased. All the dictates of the heroic code are met in terms of increasing honor and possessions, while weakening the enemy and lessening his honor.

Throughout the game-narrative the presentation of each contest puts greater emphasis on the problems of conduct for contestants, spectators, or umpires than the skillful moves of the athletes.[28] The narrative first develops the problem—Antilochus forcing Menelaus to check his horses, the accidents of Eumelus in the chariot race (388–97) and of Ajax, son of Oileus, in the foot race (773–96), or a single combat in which the stakes become too high (822f). Then a method of handling the problem is offered in order to contain the potential disturbance within the limits of accepted norms: the oath insisted upon by Menelaus; the awarding of a prize to Eumelus in a questionable situation; the soothing speech of Antilochus, the good loser, for which he is awarded a special prize; and the suspension of combat between Ajax and Odysseus with the awarding of prizes by the umpire. In each example the solution described in the narrative is based on maintaining the spirit of competition rather than war, at the same time allowing one person to be declared better in a skill than another or to declare a draw. The aim is the preservation of the community; in cases of severe strain custom provided an acceptable means of adjudicating or settling claims of unfairness—and the burden of determining a proper settlement is shared by the game-giver, the spectators, and even

[28] H. A. Harris, *Greek Athletes and Athletics* (Bloomington 1996) 52; an exception is the careful description of the wrestling match where the tactics seem to be derived from the characters of the contestants (725–37).

the individual competitors.[29] Thus games are a peaceful way of channeling violence away from internal conflict and saving it for the society's proper enemies.[30]

In analyzing the game-narrative, it is helpful to recall three distinctive characteristics of Homeric compositon. (1) The division of a book or a book-length narrative into structural sections is well precedented in the Homeric poems, which throughout are composed in a style marked by pervasive parataxis. (2) As an extension of this point, Homer typically builds a lengthy narrative by juxtaposing a series of events, all of which are told as if each were unknown to and unknowing of the others.[31] In fact, it has been well demonstrated that individual type scenes of battle throughout the *Iliad* are usually developed each to themselves and do not necessarily lead from one to another in any causal way.[32] (3) The structurally separate sections must be united through interpretation to present an enriched theme.[33] The effect of these three characteristics is that each event in the narration of the games can be told for itself without harming the unity of the poet's theme. The individual episodes need not reflect actual games in their order or in their

[29] See discussion of the settlement of disputes by L. Gernet, *Droit et société dans la Grèce ancienne* (Paris 1955) 9–18; E. Cantarella, *Norma et sanzione in Omero: Contributo alla protostoria del diritto greco* (Milan 1979), ch. 5, but note the reservations in the review of Cantarella's work by D. M. MacDowell, "Law in Homer," *CR* 31 (1981) 66f.

[30] For discussion of the words for conflict see M. N. Nagler, "Toward a Semantics of Ancient Conflict: *Eris* in the *Iliad*," *CW* 82 (1988) 81–90.

[31] The lack of formal or causal connection between the individual incidents in the combat of Diomedes at *Il.* 5.1–83 or the loosely connected encounters at *Il.* 11.310–598 provide good parallels; in both cases the poet is building larger structures important to the full narrative from incidents presented as independent of one another.

[32] Well illustrated by B. Fenik, *Typical Battle Scenes in the Iliad: Studies in the Narrative Techniques of Homeric Battle Description* (Wiesbaden 1968). In the game narrative the repeated line at 271, 456, 657, 706, 752, 801, and 830 can be seen as an ordering structural device: see W. G. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry* (Baltimore 1984) 1–38; Stanley (*supra* n.15) 8.

[33] For general discussions see Thalmann (*supra* n.32); D. Lohmann, "Homer als Erzähler in 23. Buch der *Iliad*," *Gymnasium* 99 (1992) 289–319; the most recent complete analysis of the sections within each narrative unit is Stanley (*supra* n.15).

subject matter,[34] and especially not in the overparticipation in sequential games by the same competitor. Each contest is a particularized expression of a single incident, all of which, when ordered into a series, make up the longer unit. More important than the presence or lack of connections between events is that each episode is told in a certain way.

The narrative elements characteristic of Book 23's presentation of the games—episodic structure, the lengths of descriptions, the non-causal sequencing of contests, and the use of overly-repeated characters, are typical of Homeric style and are subordinated to the poet's purpose. His plan is stated at the beginning of Book 23 (10f):

> αὐτὰρ ἐπεί κ' ὀλοοῖο τεταρπώμεσθα γόοιο,
> ἵππους λυσάμενοι δορπήσομεν ἐνθάδε πάντες.[35]

Book 23 should then lead to the opening lines of Book 24:

> Λῦτο δ' ἀγών, λαοὶ δὲ θοὰς ἐπὶ νῆας ἕκαστοι
> ἐσκίδναντ' ἰέναι. τοὶ μὲν δόρποιο μέδοντο
> ὕπνου τε γλυκεροῦ ταρπήμεναι.[36]

The natural need of the Greeks to lament the dead Patroclus is the background to Book 23, but it is the movement from mourning to normal life that the events must convey.

The image of the reconstituted community in the minds of the audience is conveyed through the concrete objects and the physical actions, which are used to form the paratactic series of games that compose the full narrative. The structural features peculiar to the game-narrative are not only characteristically Homeric but also are tailored to present effectively the theme of maintaining a community-wide standard:

(1) *Episodic structure of the games.* The relentless episodic structure characteristic of the game-narrative allows the poet to include a wide variety of items from the etiquette of games in order to show the ability of such traditional rules to deal with most problems arising in a civilized competition. No one event

[34] Other games are reported with some different events and in a different order: the order in the games for Amarynceus (23.629–40) is boxing, wrestling, running, spear throw, and chariot race; see also 23.620–23; *Od.* 8.120–30.

[35] "When we are satisfied with shattering lament,
unyoking our horses we shall all feast here together."

[36] "The games broke up, and the people scattered—
each to his swift ship, and the rest thought of dinner
and the enjoyment of sweet sleep."

would present sufficient opportunity to include all possible problems without having the individual match disintegrate into a formless hodge-podge—and the interdependent maintenance of society by game-giver, participants, and spectators in a wide variety of situations is the key to this narrative.

(2) *The different length of episodes.*[37] The longest event in terms of lines is the chariot race with 396; the next longest is the foot race with only 58. The length of any of the events in relation to the others depends on the importance of the rules therein illustrated to the satisfactory presentation of the etiquette underlying the whole series of games. The longest contests are those with multiple competitors moving on a course, a situation that provides less opportunity for spectators to witness problematic encounters; thus the rules are more complex, the possibilities for infractions more intricate, and the negotiations required for settlement knottier. Weight throwing involves multiple contestants, but they compete one at a time and the whole field can be seen so easily that the spectators serve as adequate judges; no intervention by Achilles is required for the proper award of that prize. In a sense the same happens in the archery contest where the competitors 'judge' the victor when the spectators are filled with wonder at Meriones' feat.

(3) *The sequence of the episodes.* The chariot race stands first in the series. This privileged status is appropriate for the number of rules and procedures illustrated in this race. Rules concerning tactics, course layout, unfair competition, and settlement of claims are the most intricate and should take the most time; in addition, they are basic to all game structures and should be dealt with first. It is then easier to add shorter and less complex incidents that illustrate special tie-breaking rules, the use of the spectators as judges, or acknowledgement of special achievement.

[37] Throughout the Homeric poems the length or brevity of each individual description seems determined by the poet's desire to focus his audience's attention on the contribution of that event to the broader theme. The clearest example is the series of Odysseus' adventures in Books 9–12 of the *Odyssey*, within which the trip to the underworld in Book 11 (588 lines) is undoubtedly shorter in time than the twelve-month stay of Odysseus with Circe and the one-month stay with Aeolus, which occupy respectively 585 lines (10.133–574 + 12.1–142) and 75 lines (10.1–75). In a series of events the poet does not seek to illustrate length of time by length of narrative. As a corollary, the order of events is not intended to be historical; rather it supports the effective presentation of the theme—the education of Odysseus through a series of encounters.

(4) *Repeated characters.* The selection of the same characters for different games is made without regard to their stamina; rather the introduction of Odysseus as Ajax's competitor in the wrestling match adds a reference to their famous competition from the narrative tradition, increasing interest in the event. Similarly, Odysseus' inclusion in the foot race allows the appearance of Athena as his customary protector. The narrative needs of the individual contest are more important to the poet than maintaining a roster of well-rested athletes.[38]

The rationale for the full sequence of the games is based on categories of participants and special circumstances. The first three events are built around rules concerning direct contact between competitors and awards to the winners (chariot race, boxing, and wrestling). Then in the foot race, the single combat, and weight throwing the poet presents the proper rôles of those technically outside the contest—losers and spectators.[39] Third, the archery and javelin contests contain special situations —the settlement of victory by the competitors themselves and the effective cancellation of a contest by the game-giver to satisfy an extraordinary requirement. The structure is not so schematically clear in the text as the narrative makes its points through individual games as they occur; there is, however, at least a tendency toward ordering events by the categories suggested in an etiquette of games.

The game-narrative in *Iliad* 23 seems constructed from at least three different elements. First, the poet depends on traditional devices of story telling—above all, on the type scene of an athletic contest, which he repeats and manipulates to construct a series of games.[40] Second, he employs characters used before in the *Iliad* and in other early narrative tales, each of whom provides him with well-known traits that the poet uses to individualize each scene. Finally, Homer has a general theme that gives shape to each event and ultimately to the whole narrative of the games. This theme is the army's use of communally accepted rules and procedures in order to preserve the game format in the face of strong feelings, unfairness, defeated opponents, acci-

[38] This is a problem parallel to the many meals of Odysseus and Diomedes at *Il.* 9 and 10; see Aristarchus *ad* 9.222.

[39] For the importance of the presence and participation by spectators see Gernet (*supra* n.29) 16f; Redfield (*supra* n.21) 209.

[40] For descriptions of other games known to Homer see 11.698–702; 22. 162ff; 23.630–42, 677–80; *Od.* 24.85–92; more generally see Willis (*supra* n.5); Gagarin (*supra* n.5) Chs. 1–2.

dents, and the inevitable inequality between contestants. In other words, an etiquette of sports underlies the games, and Achilles' rôle, drawing upon this code, is to enforce proper behavior and to resolve conflicting purposes.[41] Adkins has described the importance of Achilles' maintenance of a heroic society's values in distributing the prizes among Eumelus, Menelaus, and Antilochus at the end of the chariot race:

> This is a hopeless tangle of values. Unless the allotment of prizes bears some relation to the result of the race, there is no point in running at all, since the prizes could be distributed before the race starts. Accordingly, some attention must be paid to the result; and yet clearly in this society some attention must be paid to the *arete* of the respective competitors as well. Such a situation can only lead to doubt, confusion, and argument. In a chariot race, this may be unimportant; but we have here in microcosm the tangle of values which prevailed in the Athenian law-courts and assembly, with such disastrous results.[42]

Homeric's society's cohesion is so fragile that continual reaffirmation of rank and privilege is required to keep violence tamed. Achilles' rôle is that of the umpire, or the protector of the community's conventions, as he enforces rules for contests and awards appropriate prizes to each competitor.[43] It is striking how intense and prickly both winners and losers can be in Book 23—and how easily violence could break out without the controlling power of an etiquette of games skillfully and continually applied by Achilles. In fact, the *Iliad* opens with Agamemnon's failure to enforce a community-serving value code

[41] Achilles has generally been regarded as the chief cause of the harmony that emerges among the Greeks: *e.g.* J. R. Dunkle, "Some Notes on the Funeral Games. *Iliad* 23," *Prometheus* 7 (1981) 18: "the most prominent theme of the funeral games is the triumph of order over disorder. When every hero receives his due, heroic life functions well. The order of the games has as its source Achilles, around whom, as Whitman says, 'order slowly spreads ... in a widening ring'." Dunkle, "Nestor, Odysseus, and the *Mêtis-Bie* Antithesis: The Funeral Games, *Iliad* 23," *CW* 81 (1987) 1–17, points to the eventual defeat of force by the skill of the pragmatic hero, which is signaled at the end of the *Iliad.*

[42] A. W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility* (Chicago 1960) 52.

[43] This is discussed in more general terms by Redfield (*supra* n.21) 209f with n.78; Donlan (*supra* n.9). Other studies recognizing elements of the unstated etiquette are Gernet (*supra* n.29), Cantarella (*supra* n.29), and D. G. Kyle, "Non-Competition in Homeric Sport. Spectatorship and Status," *Stadion* 10 (1984) 1–19.

in Book 1; the result is Adkins' "doubt, confusion, and argument." but the *Iliad* partly closes when Achilles, the contrasting adequate umpire, reestablishes the code for community conduct.[44]

It remains uncertain that all members of the audience had personally experienced the exact version of the etiquette practiced in Book 23, but they must have been acquainted with a series of such ordering mechanisms from experiences of actual games as well as the presentation of such events in other narrative tales.[45]

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January, 1998

[44] N. Richardson, *The Iliad: A Commentary Volume 6*, ed. G. S. Kirk (Cambridge 1993) 164f: "A function of the funeral games themselves ... must be to defuse the intensity of passion accumulated in the struggles which have preceded, leaving us at the end with a strong sense of restoration of the normal, in terms of both emotion and conduct, in preparation for the resolution of book 24."

[45] I want to thank my colleague J. B. Rutter for suggesting the idea of the etiquette of competition and providing guidance throughout the development of this article. M. W. Edwards, D. G. Kyle, and W. G. Thalmann have provided generous comments on the final manuscript.