

Achilles in the Underworld: *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aethiopis*

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I

THE ACTION of Arctinus' *Aethiopis* followed immediately upon the *Iliad* in the cycle of epics narrating the war at Troy. Its central events were the combat between Achilles and the Amazon queen Penthesilea, Achilles' murder of Thersites and subsequent purification, and Achilles' victory over the Ethiopian Memnon, leading to his own death at the hands of Apollo and Paris. In his outline of the *Aethiopis*, Proclus summarizes its penultimate episode as follows: "Thetis, arriving with the Muses and her sisters, mourns her son; and after this, snatching (ἀναρπάσασα) her son from his pyre, Thetis carries him away to the White Island (Λευκὴ νῆσος)." Thetis removes, or 'translates', Achilles to a distant land—an equivalent to Elysium or the Isles of the Blessed—where he will enjoy eternally an existence similar to that of the gods.¹ Unlike the *Aethiopis*, the *Iliad* presents no alternative to Hades' realm, not even for its hero: Achilles, who has learned his fate from his mother (9.410–16), foresees his arrival there (23.243–48); and in numerous references elsewhere to Achilles' death, the *Iliad* never arouses any alternative expectation.²

¹ For Proclus' summary see T. W. Allen, ed., *Homeri Opera* V (Oxford 1946) 105f, esp. 106.12–15. On the identity of the Λευκὴ νῆσος with Elysium and the Isles of the Blessed see E. Rohde, *Psyche* II (Tübingen 1907) 369–72, and D. Roloff, *Gottähnlichkeit, Vergöttlichung, und Erhöhung zu seligem Leben* (Berlin 1970) 93–95. Roloff (94–96) summarizes the physical characteristics typical of these lands of the blessed, who may dwell there, and the nature of their existence. For surveys of the historical development of this concept in antiquity see A. O. Lovejoy and G. Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore 1935) 290–314, and Rohde II 365–78. From as early as perhaps the sixth century the Λευκὴ νῆσος was identified with an island near the mouth of the Danube: for a summary of the testimonia see C. Fleischer in Roscher, *Lex.* I.1 (Leipzig 1884–86) 61f s.v. "Achilles." Leuke, however, undoubtedly existed in Greek myth before its identification with the island in the Black Sea: Rohde I 86f, and E. Diehl, *RE* 22.1 (1953) 1 s.v. "Pontarches."

² In fact Achilles' mortality is fundamental to the *Iliad*, which vicariously anticipates his death in the mourning scene of Book 18: cf. J. T. Kakridis, *Homeric Researches* (= *SkrLund* 45 [1949]) 65–95; see also my "Aristos Achaion: Heroic Death and Dramatic Structure in the *Iliad*," *QUCC* n.s. 17 (1984) 61–80. I cannot agree with G.

The *Odyssey*, as we shall see, embraces elements of both eschatological views. Do these apparent contradictions represent independent development and poetic aim, or is a more complex relationship at issue?

Certainly Achilles' fate in the *Iliad* conforms to its view of death generally: such forms of immortality as the apotheosis of mortals, worship as a cult hero, or translation to a White Island or Elysian Plain are passed over in virtual silence.³ The heroes of the *Iliad* look ahead only to Hades' dismal realm. This eschatology is integral both to the ethics and to the plot of the poem. Achilles' sense that life is finite and irreplaceable is explicit in his willingness to see disaster inflicted upon the Achaeans in order to vindicate his honor (1.352–56; cf. 414–20) and in the fierceness of his refusal of Agamemnon's gifts (9.401–20); it is fundamental to his sympathy for Priam at the close (24.534–51). Again, this somber view gives point to Sarpedon's praise of warfare and heroism in his famous speech on the life of an ἀριστεύς (12.310–28). Such sentiments would have a quite different effect if the *Iliad* reserved for Sarpedon and Achilles a special, privileged fate.

The *Odyssey*, for its part, locates the vast majority of the dead in the underworld but also includes alternatives omitted in the *Iliad*. Thus, while the *Iliad* states in a famous verse that the φνσίζοος αἶα already holds Castor and Polydeuces in Lacedaemon (3.243f), the *Odyssey* notes that the same earth holds them ζωοί, and specifies that they live one day but are dead the next (11.300–04)—a fate paralleled in the *Cypria*, where, according to Proclus' summary, Zeus grants Castor and Polydeuces alternating days of life and death.⁴ Similarly at *Il.* 18.117f Achilles mentions Heracles as an example of

Nagy's view (*The Best of the Achaeans* [Baltimore 1979] 165–210) that Achilles' immortality in cult is acknowledged by the *Iliad* and is essential to the poem's view of its hero.

³ There are two exceptions: the sacrifices offered to Erechtheus by the κοῦροι Ἀθηναίων (2.547–51) suggest a status in death similar to that of the heroes of cult worship; cf. B. G. Dietrich, *Death, Fate, and the Gods* (London 1965) 28–58, esp. 42 n.2; and Ganymedes' presence on Olympus (20.231–35; cf. 5.265f) implies that he was granted immortality following his rape by Zeus (so *Hymn.Hom.Ven.* 202–17; cf. Theognis 1345–48 W.). Perhaps comparable is Apollo's abortive rape of Marpessa (*Il.* 9.557–64). This evidence suggests that while the *Iliad* is conscious of such phenomena as hero cults, apotheosis, and translation, it has chosen not to include them within its eschatology in any significant form.

⁴ Allen (*supra* n.1) 102.13–17; cf. Pind. *Nem.* 10.55–90. *Cypria* fr.6 (Allen 120) apparently precedes Zeus' dispensation. The *Odyssey* also knows of the transformation of Ino into the goddess Leucothea (5.333–35; cf. Pind. *Ol.* 2.28–30), and Tithonus is mentioned as Eos' lover at 5.1 (cf. n.19 *infra*).

the inevitability of death, while the *Odyssey* (11.601–03) carefully emphasizes his apotheosis (a point on which Hesiod is in agreement: fr.25.25–33 M.-W.). These two examples are interesting for the contrast they present; more significant is Proteus' prophecy to Menelaus. At *Od.* 4.561–69 the old man tells Menelaus that he will not die in horse-nourishing Argos but will be sent to the Ἡλύσιον πεδῖον because he is the son-in-law of Zeus.⁵ In the *Aethiopsis* Memnon's mother Eos intercedes with Zeus to win for her son a similar immortality after he has fallen in battle. This translation of the hero to a distant land of immortality, present in both the *Odyssey* and the *Aethiopsis*, appears also in Hesiod's narrative of the generations of man, where some of the fourth race who fought around Troy and Thebes die, while Zeus sends others to the μακάρων νῆσοι near deep-eddying Oceanus (*Op.* 156–73).⁶ So much indicates that within the epic tradition the eschatology of the *Iliad* may be eccentric in comparison to that of the *Odyssey* and *Aethiopsis*.⁷

These differing views of the afterlife can also, of course, be regarded as presenting not so much an opposition as a range of possibilities in which the *Iliad* and the *Aethiopsis* represent the two extremes, with the *Odyssey* somewhere between them. The *Iliad* knows only of Hades. In the *Aethiopsis*, however, two of the three protagonists are translated. Although the *Odyssey*, like the *Aethiopsis*, allows for alternatives to the underworld, they are nevertheless marginal to its plot: while Menelaus can look ahead to Elysium, Odysseus rejects a similar immortality when it is offered by Calypso. This array of possibilities should be viewed within the context of the Troy cycle as a whole. Proclus' summaries of the *Ilias Parva*, the *Iliou Persis*, and the *Nostoi*

⁵ Calypso's offer of immortality to Odysseus (5.135f) provides something of a parallel. On the similarity between Elysium and Calypso's island see W. S. Anderson, "Calypso and Elysium," in C. H. Taylor, ed., *Essays on the Odyssey* (Bloomington 1965) 79–80.

⁶ On the relation of this passage to the issue of translation see Rohde (*supra* n.1) I 104–06; Nagy (*supra* n.2) 167–72; Dietrich (*supra* n.3) 345–47. F. Solmsen, "Achilles on the Islands of the Blest," *AJP* 103 (1982) 23, has recently reaffirmed the view that *Op.* 166 is a rhapsodic interpolation; Hesiod would thus have admitted all the generation of Heroes to the Isles. M. L. West, ed., *Hesiod, Works and Days* (Oxford 1978) *ad loc.*, is more convincing. H. Schwabl, *RE* Suppl. 15 (1978) 790f s.v. "Weltalter," accepts line 166 without argument, but assumes the translation of all the heroes; this remains a possible interpretation. Again, the assumption that not all the heroes were translated does not preclude Achilles' translation, as Solmsen (24) supposes.

⁷ J. Griffin, "The Epic Cycle and the Uniqueness of Homer," *JHS* 97 (1977) 39–48, discusses the tendency of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* to avoid the fabulous or magical, in contrast to the epics of the cycle. His treatment of the issue of immortality (42) tends, however, to reduce the differences between the two, when in fact the *Odyssey* is in this regard closer to the cyclic epics.

mention no translations, apotheoses, or the like. These poems may have resembled the *Iliad* in their view of the afterlife, but to rely upon an argument from silence here is risky, since in such brief outlines the omission of these elements may only reflect their relative unimportance to the individual plots. It seems improbable, for example, that in a summary of the *Odyssey* on a similar scale, the fates of such characters as Ino-Leucothea, Castor and Polydeuces, or Menelaus would have been mentioned. For its part, the *Aethiopis* is paralleled elsewhere in the cycle by the *Telegony*, in which Telemachus, Penelope, and perhaps also Odysseus are made immortal.⁸ Finally, in its use of these elements the *Odyssey* resembles the *Cypria*, where Castor and Polydeuces perhaps occupied rôles of roughly equivalent importance to that of Menelaus in the *Odyssey*. All this suggests that within the cycle as a whole it should not be surprising if two poems appear to differ in their presentation and exploitation of eschatological options. For the present discussion, however, the crucial issue is simply whether a poem does or does not know of alternatives to Hades. It is clear that the *Odyssey*, the *Aethiopis*, the *Cypria*, and the *Telegony* do. It remains uncertain whether the *Ilias Parva*, *Iliou Persis*, or *Nostoi* are aware of such alternatives; if so, these can have played no important rôle in their plots. Of the *Iliad* there is little doubt.

This view of the *Iliad* as odd-man-out is supported by evidence suggesting that the conception of a more fortunate existence after death was widespread before Homer. Belief in a realm of Hades was complemented by an alternative land of the blessed, usually an island located at the edges of the earth, where kings and other favored individuals enjoyed a happy eternity. Although it remains unclear just how this eschatology fits into the religious thought of pre-classical Greece, the idea of such an afterlife is generally agreed to go back at least to Minoan-Mycenaean times. The currency of this notion in poetry and myth is an issue separate from that of when Greeks actually began to believe in the possibility of personal immortality. Such a concept may be late as an element of popular religious belief, but this does not affect the present question of the relationship between epics.⁹

⁸ Allen (*supra* n.1) 109.23–27. That Odysseus is not mentioned at the end of the summary along with Penelope and Telemachus renders ἡ δ' αὐτοῦς ἀθανάτους ποιεῖ somewhat vague.

⁹ Still fundamental to discussion of this problem are M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* I² (Munich 1955) 324–28, and *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion*² (Lund 1950) 619–33. See also L. R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*

Since the *Odyssey* agrees with the concept of the afterlife found in the Cycle, it is surprising that it rejects the tradition of the *Cypria* in one important case: the fate of Achilles. For while the *Aethiopis* grants Achilles a blessed immortality on the *Λευκὴ νῆσος*, the *Odyssey* places him exactly where the *Iliad* leads us to expect him, in the underworld.

Before we attempt to explain this exception, a comment is in order on the position of the *Aethiopis* in relation to the Homeric tradition. Neoanalyst critics have dominated recent discussion of the relation between the *Iliad* and the *Aethiopis*, arguing against the traditional view that the epics of the Cycle—*Aethiopis* included—are post-Homeric and derivative.¹⁰ On the assumption that our *Iliad* is the later poem, they have maintained that the poet of the *Iliad* transformed material represented by the *Aethiopis* and its predecessors. While this approach has yielded important insights into how common narrative patterns are fitted to specific stories, it has tended to overlook the fundamental distinction between a specific *text* and the oral narrative tradition upon which that text is based. The demonstration that one story (*e.g.* that of the *Iliad*) is dependent upon another (*e.g.* that of the *Aethiopis*) cannot serve as proof that our *text* of the *Iliad* is subsequent to and based upon a specific text of the *Aethiopis*. Again,

(Oxford 1921) 2–18; B. G. Dietrich, *The Origins of Greek Religion* (Berlin/New York 1974) 41, 160–66, 310–14; E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley/Los Angeles 1979) 67–76. This view of the eccentricity of the *Iliad* within the epic tradition is supported by the arguments of W. Kullmann, “Gods and Men in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*,” *HSCP* 89 (1985) 1–23, esp. 14–17. C. Sourvinou-Inwood, “A Trauma in Flux,” in R. Hägg, ed., *The Greek Renaissance of the Eighth Century B.C.* (= *Skr. Utgivna av Svenska Inst. i Athen*, 4^o, XXX [Stockholm 1983]) 33–49, overstates the case for the post-Homeric appearance of this conception of the afterlife. Her argument does not deal adequately with the evidence for Minoan and Mycenaean influence, requires that all contrary evidence in the Homeric poems be removed as later insertions, and does not take into account the potential differences between a culture’s poetic fictions and its religious practices. On the specific problem of Achilles’ translation to Leuke cf. Dietrich (*supra* n.3) 346 n.1: “it is uncertain whether the myth which tells of his sojourn in Hades . . . is older than that which mentions his translation to Leuke . . .” On the antiquity of this particular tradition see also Fleischer (*supra* n.1) 53f, and Diehl (*supra* n.1) 3f, 10f.

¹⁰ The chief discussions are E. Pestalozzi, *Die Achilleis als Quelle der Ilias* (Zürich 1945); W. Schadewaldt, “Einblick in der Erfindung der Ilias. Ilias und Aithiopis,” *Von Homers Welt und Werk* (Stuttgart 1951) 155–202; J. T. Kakridis (*supra* n.2) 70f, 81–95; G. Schoeck, *Ilias und Aithiopis* (Zürich 1961). A. Dihle, *Homer-Probleme* (Opladen 1970) 9–44, attacks specific conclusions of Schadewaldt but not the method of Neoanalysis itself. More recently W. Kullmann, “Zur Methode der Neoanalyse in der Homerforschung,” *WS* n.s. 15 (1981) 6–13, 29–34, and “Oral Poetry Theory and Neoanalysis in Homeric Research,” *GRBS* 25 (1984) 307–23, has provided excellent summaries of earlier work on the problem. G. Nagy (*supra* n.2) 165–210, takes up certain aspects of the issue from the perspective of oral theory.

while the *Aethiopsis* may have become fixed in writing or in memory later than the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, there is no indication that the tradition it represents is itself any later within the epic tradition as a whole. Thus, even if we are perhaps correct to speak of the *Aethiopsis* as a text later than the *Iliad*, there is no reason to doubt that it preserves a narrative tradition of comparable antiquity.¹¹ These epics in their written forms represent stable narrative traditions, preserved orally over many generations, that came into contact with one another through the agency of the poets performing them. My discussion of the relationship between these three poems assumes, then, the possibility of their mutual familiarity at least as narrative traditions.¹² Hereafter references to the "*Iliad*," the "*Odyssey*," etc., will take for granted not only the fixed text that has come down to us, but also the tradition each represents.

¹¹ A. Severyns, *Le Cycle épique dans l'école d'Aristarque* (Liège 1928) 313, maintains that the *Aethiopsis* dates from the eighth century but is post-Homeric; A. Lesky, *History of Greek Literature* (New York 1966) 82, locates the poem in the late seventh century, when he believes the other epics of the cycle were taking shape; G. L. Huxley, *Greek Epic Poetry* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1969) 144, argues that Arctinus was active in the late eighth century. In Kullmann's view ("Methode" [*supra* n.10] 29–34) the *Aethiopsis* existed as an oral narrative before the *Iliad* was written, but was given literary form thereafter. Pestalozzi (*supra* n.10) 5–7, 33f, *et passim*; Schadewaldt (*supra* n.10) 155–72; and Schoeck (*supra* n.10) 7–10, argue, on the basis of points where the *Iliad* appears to depend upon the *Aethiopsis* in terms of plot or of motif, that the former poem is based directly upon the *Aethiopsis*' predecessor, a 'Memnonis.' In my view, Dihle's counter-arguments (11–44), do not so much establish the priority of the *Iliad* over the *Aethiopsis*, as the unreliability and ambiguity of attempts to establish the interrelationships among epic narratives without taking into account the long oral tradition that certainly preceded the written texts. Dihle himself (43) observes that "Niemandem wird es einfallen zu bestreiten, dass der Kyklos eine Fülle von Personen und Ereignissen behandelte, die lange vor der Konzeption eines grossen Epos vom Groll des Achilleus Gegenstand epischer Dichtung gewesen war, Kyklos und Ilias also aus einem gemeinsamen Reservoir schöpfen." For this reason I am also unconvinced by E. C. Kopff, "The Structure of the Amazonia (*Aethiopsis*)," in Hägg (*supra* n.9) 57–62: despite his acknowledgement that the direction of influence between the two poems is difficult to establish, his attempt to reconstruct from the *Iliad* an *Aethiopsis* that is then held to be the source or model for our *Iliad* is inherently unreliable. Although the rôle played by narrative traditions in the formation of early Greek epic is well known to both Analysts and especially to Neoanalysts (*cf.* Kullmann, "Methode" 6–13), the implications of this 'prehistory' of the epic texts for attempts to establish historical lines of filiation have been underestimated. J. Notopoulos, "Studies in Early Greek Oral Poetry," *HSCP* 68 (1964) 31–45, presents compelling arguments for the conventional quality of the themes of epic poetry and the inapplicability of the concept of literary imitation to repetitions of these themes; *cf.* esp. 34f for the *Iliad* and *Aethiopsis*. See also the brief but illuminating discussion by J. B. Hainsworth, *Homer* (= *G&R: New Surveys in the Classics* 3 [Oxford 1969]) 29f.

¹² W. Kullmann, *Die Quellen der Ilias* (= *Hermes Einzelschr.* 14 [Wiesbaden 1960]) 212–14, supplies abundant evidence of the extent to which the *Iliad* in particular presupposes events narrated elsewhere in the Troy cycle.

II

While the *Odyssey* departs from the varied eschatology of the *Aethiopsis* in regard to the fate of Achilles in particular, it is the version of the *Aethiopsis* that predominates in subsequent poetry. Alcaeus' phrase Ἀχιλλεύς ὁ τὰς Σκυθίκας μέδεις (354 Voigt = Z31 L.-P.) refers to the location of the Λευκὴ νῆσος in the Black Sea.¹³ The scholium to *Argonautica* 4.814f (following Apollonius' mention at 811 of Achilles' destiny to reach the Ἥλύσιον πεδῖον) comments that Ibycus and Simonides both place Achilles in Elysium. Pindar twice alludes to Achilles' translation in passages corresponding to the version of the *Aethiopsis*. At *Ol.* 2.68–80 he describes how Thetis brings Achilles to the μακάρων νᾶσος after persuading Zeus with her prayers. In a reference to the *Aethiopsis*' Λευκὴ νῆσος at *Nem.* 4.48–50, Achilles is said to inhabit ἐν δ' Εὐξείνῳ πελάγει φαεινὰν . . . νᾶσον.¹⁴ In an Attic drinking song the tyrannicide Harmodius is said to be on the Isles of the Blessed along with Achilles and Diomedes (*PMG* 894). Euripides also twice mentions the Λευκὴ ἀκτὴ as Achilles' dwelling place (*Andr.* 1259–62, *IT* 427–38). The tradition of Achilles' translation, supported as well in a general way by Hesiod's account of the Fourth Generation, is clearly well established among Archaic and Classical poets.¹⁵

The motif of the removal of a mortal to Elysium or some other land of immortality is also relatively common. In a striking parallel to the scene of Achilles' funeral in the *Aethiopsis*, Bacchylides recounts

¹³ E. M. Voigt, *Sappho et Alcaeus* (Amsterdam 1971) *ad loc.*, argues that this fragment refers to some other Achilles than the hero of the *Iliad*, a view that is supported neither by the earlier portion of the passage from Eustathius in which the fragment occurs, nor by two similarly-worded dedicatory inscriptions from Leuke, Ἀχιλλεῖ [Λευκ]ῆς μεδέοντι (*IosPE* I² 326, IV B.C.), Ἀχιλλεῖ νῆσον [μεδέοντι] (672, III/II B.C.). Cf. Rohde (*supra* n.1) II 371; Diehl (*supra* n.1) 2f; D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford 1955) 283.

¹⁴ See Σ *ad Nem.* 4.49. Solmsen (*supra* n.6) 19–21 argues that Thetis' persuasion of Zeus and Achilles' translation in *Ol.* 2 are Pindar's invention, but based upon Thetis' supplication of Zeus in *Iliad* 1. This seems an improbable explanation. If anything, Pindar modeled this scene on the *Aethiopsis*, of which Solmsen makes no mention.

¹⁵ See also Quint. Smyrn. 3.770–87; the 'Thessalian Hymn' at Philostr. *Heroicis* 208.53.10 (cf. 211.54.1–213.55.3); Pl. *Symp.* 179D–180B; Apollod. *Epit.* 5.5; Paus. 3.19.11–13; Arr. *Peripl.M.Eux.* 21, 23; and Σ Tzetzae *ad Lycophr.* 174. The only post-Homeric reference I have encountered to Achilles in the underworld is the description at Paus. 10.30.3 of Polygnotus' *Nekyia*, painted in the Cnidian Lesche at Delphi, in which Achilles appears in the company of Patroclus and Antilochus. Polygnotus, however, also included Memnon, whose translation is not otherwise disputed (Paus. 10.31.5–7). Aside from any plan to follow the *Odyssey*, then, Polygnotus may simply have been guided by a desire to include in his painting as many as possible of the heroes at Troy.

how Zeus quenched the pyre of Croesus and how Apollo carried him off to the Hyperboreans (*Ep.* 3.48–62).¹⁶ Similarly Heracles, according to one version of his myth, is borne up to Olympus from his burning pyre on Oeta.¹⁷ In a similar tradition known from a fourth-century vase-painting, Alcmene, too, was rescued by Zeus from a burning pyre.¹⁸ The scene from the *Cypria* in which Artemis rescues Iphigenia from the sacrificial altar, takes her to the Tauri, and makes her immortal is perhaps related to these other episodes (Allen V 104.15–20). Complementing the skolion noted above (*PMG* 894), Pindar mentions that Athena granted immortality to Diomedes (*Nem.* 10.7), and the scholium *ad loc.* evokes the famous *Διομήδεια νήσος ιερά* in the Adriatic. At the end of Euripides' *Bacchae* Dionysus prophesies that Cadmus and Harmonia will be removed by Ares to the *μακάρων* . . . *αἶαν* by Ares (1338f; *cf.* Pind. *Ol.* 2.78). Zeus' rape of Ganymedes, moreover, is known to the *Iliad* (20.231–35) and is paralleled by Eos' seizure of another Trojan prince, Tithonus (*Od.* 5.1; *cf.* *Hymn.Hom.Ven.* 218–38), as well as of Cleitus (*Od.* 15.250f).¹⁹

This motif of seizure by a divine force (though without any ensuing gift of immortality) is very much in evidence in the Homeric poems. Both Helen and Penelope wish that they could be carried off by *θvéλλαι*, while the absent Odysseus is similarly imagined to have been seized by the Harpies.²⁰ The numerous scenes of battlefield

¹⁶ See the discussion of the similarity of the land of the Hyperboreans to Elysium, *etc.*, at Roloff (*supra* n.1) 125, and Jebb's statement that the Hyperboreans serve here as an equivalent to Elysium (R. C. Jebb, ed., *Bacchylides, The Poems and Fragments* [Cambridge 1905] *ad* 59). *Cf.* the similar story of Perseus' visit to the banquet of the Hyperboreans at Pind. *Pyth.* 10.27–52—though Perseus does not remain among them.

¹⁷ Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.7.7; Diod. 4.38.4–39.1. This element is absent from Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. F. Welcker, *Der epische Cyclus I* (Bonn 1865) 218–20, argues that it was probably included in Creophylus' *Oechalias Halosis*. M. P. Nilsson, *The Mycenaean Origins of Greek Mythology* (Cambridge 1932) 205f, believes that the story is old but post-Homeric. A. Heubeck, ed., *Odyssea III* (Milan 1983) *ad* 11.601–27, considers Heracles' apotheosis to be later than the version of the myth in which he is consigned to the underworld.

¹⁸ A. S. Murray, "The Alcmene Vase formerly in Castle Howard," *JHS* 11 (1890) 225–30. Alcmene appears on an altar while Amphitryon and Antenor light a pyre heaped up in front of her; from above, Zeus sends a rainstorm. Murray (225f) argues that the depiction is based on Euripides' *Alcmene* and compares the pyre to that of Heracles on Oeta (227f).

¹⁹ Eos is said to take Tithonus to "the ends of the earth near the streams of Ocean" (*Hymn.Hom.Ven.* 227), where Elysium is usually located. (Her seduction of Orion assures no similar benefit at *Od.* 5.121–24.) Eur. *Hipp.* 454–56, mentions Eos' rape of Cephalus, and Hesiod notes Aphrodite's seizure of Phaethon (*Th.* 986–91). One might also compare, despite the absence of a mortal victim, Hades' rape of Persephone (*Hymn.Hom.Dem.* 2–21).

²⁰ Penelope: *Od.* 20.61–82, where she recounts the story of the daughters of Pandareus carried off by the winds or Harpies; Odysseus: *Od.* 1.241f, 14.371; Helen: *Il.*

rescue in the *Iliad*, containing the elements of divine intervention and the preservation of the hero from death, can be regarded as another form of this motif, applied *e.g.* to Aeneas (5.311–46, 20.288–339), Hector (20.438–54), and Paris (3.373–82). Another scene of some importance is the removal of Sarpedon's corpse to Lycia by Sleep and Death. The close correspondence between this episode and Eos' seizure of Memnon in the *Aethiopsis* has often been noted.²¹ It is clear, then, that Achilles' translation in the *Aethiopsis* represents a well-attested motif in Greek myth, and is paralleled in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* by numerous related motifs.

At this point we can draw the following conclusions:

- (1) The intervention of a god to transfer a hero from mortal danger to safety is a well-established motif in the *Iliad*, as is the notion of seizure by some supernatural force in both poems.
- (2) The removal of a mortal by a divinity either to a land of blessed immortality or to the company of the gods themselves is a common motif of Greek myth, and there is some evidence for its association with the funeral pyre.
- (3) The available evidence indicates that it is the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, not the *Aethiopsis*, that are eccentric in their presentation of Achilles' afterlife.

Let us compare in this light the account of Achilles' death and funeral in the *Odyssey* with those presented in the *Aethiopsis* and the *Iliad*. The *Odyssey* knows a number of episodes from the story of the *Aethiopsis*, including Memnon's victory over Antilochus (4.186–88), the battle for Achilles' corpse and Odysseus' heroism at that time (5.308–10), the quarrel between Ajax and Odysseus over Achilles' armor (11.553–55), and the death and funeral rites of Achilles (24.36–92). This last event is of central importance for our argument.²²

6.345–48. For a summary of this motif in Homer see Rohde (*supra* n.1) I 69–75; *cf.* G. Nagy, "Phaethon, Sappho's Phaon, and the White Rock of Leukas," *HSCP* 77 (1973) 157–59, 167–70.

²¹ See G. Lung, *Memnon. Archäologische Studien zur Aithiopsis* (Bonn 1912) 56f, 61–71; Pestalozzi (*supra* n.10) 10–15; Schoeck (*supra* n.10) 23–25. It is noteworthy that in his *Nekyia* Polygnotus (*supra* n.15) portrayed Memnon seated next to Sarpedon in an apparent posture of consolation. The *Lytra* is perhaps comparable as well, where it is contemplated that Hermes might seize and carry off Hector's body (*Il.* 24.71–73, 109–11).

²² Since the coherence of the second *Nekyia* and its integrity with the rest of the poem have been abundantly established, I do not hesitate to rely upon it. See the discussion of this issue in my *Achilles in the Odyssey. Ideologies of Heroism in the Homeric Epic* (= *BeitrKlasPhil* 171 [Königstein/Tr. 1985]) 9–11. The best defense of this passage remains in my view C. Moulton, "The End of the *Odyssey*," *GRBS* 15 (1974) 153–69; see also D. Wender, *The Last Scenes of the Odyssey* (= *Mnemosyne* Suppl. 52 [Leiden 1978]).

Agamemnon's account in the second *Nekyia* of the events following Achilles' death corresponds closely to Proclus' summary of the final scenes of the *Aethiopis*: the intense fighting over Achilles' corpse, the setting-out of his body, Thetis' arrival and mourning with her sisters and the Muses, Achilles' pyre, the heaping up of a tomb, and the games held in Achilles' honor. Agamemnon does not describe how Ajax and Odysseus carried Achilles from the fighting, or refer to their dispute over Achilles' arms, but these episodes are mentioned elsewhere in the *Odyssey*. If the *Odyssey* does not know the *Aethiopis* directly, the two poems at least rely on a common tradition. The only important difference between the two accounts concerns what intervenes between placing Achilles on the pyre and the erection of his tomb: in the *Aethiopis* Thetis transports Achilles to the *Λευκή νῆσος*, in the *Odyssey* the Achaeans collect his bones and place them together with those of Patroclus in a single vessel.²³

What the *Odyssey* omits at this point is as important as what it includes. For in the midst of a faithful summary of a segment of the *Aethiopis*, the *Odyssey* departs from that narrative tradition and introduces unmistakable Iliadic themes. First, one notes the presence of Patroclus, who is given priority in Achilles' affections over Antilochus, though the latter is *φίλτατος* to Achilles in the *Aethiopis*.²⁴ Second, Agamemnon's statement that Achilles' ashes were mixed with those of Patroclus in a golden vessel provided by Thetis (*Od.* 24.73–79) corresponds to Patroclus' request at *Il.* 23.82–92 that he and Achilles be buried together in the golden jar given to Achilles by

²³ Kullmann (*supra* n.12) 41 argues that the inclusion of both Achilles' translation and the erection of his tomb in the *Aethiopis* entails a contradiction. But as Dihle (*supra* n.10) 17f points out, there is no reason to think that the tomb is not a cenotaph, which is common enough in Homer (*cf.* Rohde [*supra* n.1] I 86 n.2). Dihle's own view of this passage, however, is equally questionable. If the *Odyssey* makes no reference here to Achilles' translation, this requires only that the *Odyssey* depart at this one point from the version of Achilles' death in the *Aethiopis*, not, as Dihle contends, that the Odyssean account be entirely unrelated to the *Aethiopis*. But the accounts in the two poems are mutually exclusive, since translation entails physical survival of the hero in the land of the Blessed, and thus presupposes at least the corpse that cremation would destroy (*cf.* Roloff [*supra* n.1] 99f).

²⁴ The apparent unimportance of Patroclus to the *Cypria* reinforces his identity with the *Iliad*. The single piece of evidence that he appeared in the *Cypria* at all is Proclus' note that he sold Lycaon on Lemnos; this is corroborated by the *Iliad* at 23.746f (see Kullmann [*supra* n.12] 194 n.2), though the sale is elsewhere attributed to Achilles (21.40f, 77–79; 24.751–53). Pindar's reference to Patroclus at the sack of Teuthrania seems by itself an inadequate indication of the contents of the *Cypria* (*contra*, Kullman 193f). For arguments that Patroclus appeared only in the *Iliad*, see R. von Scheliha, *Patroklos. Gedanken über Homers Dichtung und Gestaltung* (Basel 1943) 236–50. The *Odyssey*'s reference to Patroclus here would in any case certainly evoke the *Iliad*.

his mother.²⁵ Thus in a passage in which the *Odyssey* asserts the finality of Achilles' death, it contradicts the tradition represented by the *Aethiopis*, which it follows otherwise, and at the same time alludes to that of the *Iliad*, its apparent authority on this point.

III

The presentation of Achilles' death in the *Odyssey* can be explained in two ways. It may be that the *Odyssey* preserves in Books 11 and 24 a traditional version, that known to the *Iliad*, and is completely ignorant of the account in the *Aethiopis*, which must therefore be later and innovative. Or the *Odyssey* consciously follows the version of the *Iliad* and rejects that of the *Aethiopis*, though it is familiar with it. The latter seems the more probable hypothesis.

Let us reconsider some of the arguments from dating. The immortality that the *Aethiopis* grants Achilles does not appear to be the result of a later narrative reflecting later religious beliefs: all the evidence seems to indicate that the eschatology presented in the *Aethiopis* dates from Minoan and Mycenaean times (*supra* n.9). Moreover, such an afterlife is in fact known to the *Odyssey* (if not in association with Achilles), and mention of Erechtheus and Ganymedes in the *Iliad* itself (*supra* n.3) excludes the possibility that such eschatological features entered the epic tradition after the *Iliad* had reached its final form, but at a time when the *Aethiopis* had not yet become fixed.

As to the dates of the individual texts, I have already maintained that in evaluating their relationship we must take into account their genesis within a tradition of oral narratives. While the *Odyssey* may not be directly familiar with the *Iliad* in the form we know, it is nevertheless aware of Patroclus and his importance to Achilles, as well as of the eschatology of the *Iliad*—one perhaps distinctive to that poem. Again, to say that the *Odyssey* knows the *Aethiopis* is merely to assert its familiarity with a narrative tradition crystallized in the particular text known to Proclus. (That this familiarity may have been mediated through a prior *Achilleis* or *Memnonis* is irrelevant to the present argument.) Finally, it seems improbable that the conception of Achilles' fate in the *Aethiopis* would so completely dominate subsequent

²⁵ Although the *Aethiopis* could have depicted the placing of Patroclus' ashes both in this urn and in Achilles' cenotaph, the mixing of their ashes as described in the *Odyssey* would be impossible since Achilles' corpse was rescued from the pyre before it could burn. The *Odyssey* must refer here to the version of Achilles' death assumed by the *Iliad*.

treatments of this theme if, in contradicting the *Iliad*, it also made a decisive departure from an established tradition consigning Achilles to Hades instead of to the *Λευκὴ νῆσος*.

There seems, then, to be little support for the view that the *Aethiopsis* or the *Λευκὴ νῆσος* motif is late and for that reason necessarily unknown to the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad*. Since the *Odyssey* mentions events from other narratives spanning the entire Troy cycle, it is not surprising that it is familiar with the *Aethiopsis* as well.²⁶ Of the latter there can be no doubt, in view of the *Odyssey*'s detailed presentation of Achilles' death and funeral. The evidence thus indicates that in its portrayal of Achilles' fate the *Odyssey* consciously chooses to follow the version known to the *Iliad* in preference to that of the *Aethiopsis*.

It remains to consider why the *Odyssey* would prefer the version of the *Iliad* on this point. In the *Aethiopsis* Achilles is made immortal and thus wins a glory in death corresponding to his preëminence in life. I have already alluded to the relationship between the *Iliad*'s vision of the afterlife and the tragic quality with which it endows its hero by contrasting Achilles' beauty and strength with his youthful death. If in choosing the one version over the other the *Odyssey* does so from no eschatological compulsion and with some degree of awareness of these rival traditions, the question becomes less one of influence or imitation than of how the *Odyssey* interprets the other poems, and of how it wishes them to be viewed in relation to itself.

The contrast between Achilles and Odysseus in this connection is clearly delineated in the *Odyssey*. Achilles' foreknowledge of his destiny is central to the heroism of which he is exemplary. But the underworld, which in the *Iliad* is simply man's common lot, to be cursed but not avoided, cannot cast the same fatalistic shadow over the *Odyssey*, where there are other possibilities.²⁷ As a result, Achilles' fate possesses an entirely different character in the *Odyssey* than it does in the *Iliad*: it is a misfortune, not a necessity. Yet within this very opposition between a dreary underworld and a blessed immortality, the *Odyssey* remains silent about the ultimate fate of Odysseus. This element of Odysseus' characterization is, in effect, displaced by the theme of the *νόστος*, the homecoming that is also an escape from premature death—and beyond this, a happy life following the propitiation of Poseidon, and death in old age in the midst of quiet

²⁶ In addition to the *Aethiopsis*, the *Odyssey* is also familiar with events from the *Cypria*, *Ilias Parva*, *Iliou Persis*, and the *Nostoi*.

²⁷ Cf. Nilsson's discussion (*supra* n.9: 324–26) of the strong contrast in Greek eschatological thought represented by these simultaneous but contradictory options.

and prosperity (11.119–37).²⁸ At the time of Teiresias' prophecy such a death seems fortunate, and the *Odyssey* is not concerned to give its hero a second chance after he rejects Calypso's offer of immortality.

The *Odyssey* could have placed Achilles in an Elysium or Leuke—or at least have excused him from Hades' realm—but it does not. By consigning Achilles to the underworld, the *Odyssey* denies him Leuke; by acknowledging the possibility of immortality while at the same time denying it to Achilles, the *Odyssey* relies upon the authority of the *Iliad* to contradict the *Aethiopis*, in effect setting the two versions of the hero's fate at odds, and exploiting both to its own advantage. By opposing to Hades the alternative of a blessed immortality, the *Odyssey* rejects the tradition of the *Aethiopis* and simultaneously undermines the Iliadic version of Achilles' fate. For the destiny common to all in the *Iliad* and integral there to Achilles' tragic character is measured in the *Odyssey* against immortality and Elysium, and thus serves as a mark of Achilles' mere mortality. Achilles' presence in Hades' gloomy realm enables the *Odyssey* to portray him as dissatisfied in death, wondering about his son, longing to return to Phthia (*Od.* 11.488–503). His discontent provides a pointedly unfavorable contrast to the destiny of Odysseus, who does not achieve immortality but surpasses in his own life Achilles' lot in the *Iliad*.²⁹

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²⁸ The *θάνατος* . . . *ἐξ ἁλός* of *Od.* 11.134 may, of course, refer to death at the hands of Telegonus as narrated in the *Telegony* (Allen [*supra* n.1] 109), though *ἀβληχρός* would seem to rule this out.

²⁹ I wish to thank Leslie L. Collins, Ruth Scodel, Susan Shelmerdine, and the anonymous referees for useful criticism of this paper at various stages.