Notice

Below is the second chapter of my dissertation on “The Association of Herakles and Dionysos in Archaic Greece,” concerning the portrayal of Herakles and Dionysos and their association in the epic poetry of Homer. However, this is the first chapter I have written, and so it represents an early stage of my work. I plan after this to turn to other archaic epic poetry, particularly that of Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns. Then I mean to consider lyric poetry and, very importantly for my topic, Attic pottery, where Herakles and Dionysos are exceedingly popular subjects for depiction and are frequently paired with one another.

Besides being interested in hearing your thoughts on the Homeric matters immediately under consideration, I would be interested in discussing some of the theoretical matters implicated, which I mean to discuss in my introductory chapter. These include, among other things, the relation of gods to one another in a pantheon, and of gods to mortals. Relatedly, I am especially interested in what I have called “exemplarity” below, of how gods and other mythological figures may provide a paradigm of action to human devotees, and, for that matter, other mythological figures. My particular work is on ancient Greece, but insights from other times and places would be very helpful!
(2) The Association of Herakles and Dionysos in Archaic Greece: Homeric Epic

In order to examine the association of Herakles and Dionysos, it will be important to consider first the epic poetry of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, since these are our earliest extant literary sources of information on the two gods, and were important across the Greek world throughout the archaic period and beyond.\(^1\) Our goal will be to come to an understanding of the portrayal in this literature of the individual characters and narrative functions of both gods, and to see in what ways they may already be associated with one another.

2.1) Dionysos in the *Iliad*

Both Herakles and Dionysos are mentioned only a few times by Homer, and neither has a speaking role in either the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*.\(^2\) To begin with the simpler case of Dionysos in the *Iliad*, there are but two Iliadic episodes in which Dionysos is mentioned, in both cases named in the speech of another character. The first of these is Diomedes’ tale of Lykourgos in book 6.\(^3\) Diomedes tells the story as part of a speech to his Lykian foeman Glaukos: he says that he will only fight Glaukos if the latter is mortal, for those who fight against the immortal gods come to a bad end, as did Lykourgos.\(^4\) By Diomedes’ account, Lykourgos routed the nurses of Dionysos (who is described as mad/raging, or *mainomenos*) from the mountain Nysa and drove the frightened god himself into the sea, where he fled to Thetis. Zeus, however, blinded Lykourgos in apparent retribution. The reasons for neither Lykourgos’ actions against Dionysos nor the madness of the god himself are specified. Later tradition, perhaps best known to us through poetry but by no means confined to it, makes Lykourgos one of the most formidable of the *theomachoi* who struggle against Dionysos as he spreads his rites through the world, but without further indication of such a tradition underlying Homer’s account, it would likely be anachronistic to understand the Lykourgos episode in light of Dionysian theomachy.\(^5\) Keeping in mind especially Diomedes’ own actions in book 5 of the *Iliad*, what we might call theomachy here must refer simply to the physical confrontations of mortals with gods on the battlefield: Dionysos takes his place among Aphrodite, Ares, and many other gods as the victims of mortal aggression, and so theomachy

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1 For the authority of Homer see Burkert (1985), 120-121, 125; but also the caution of Griffith (1990), 196-197 that it cannot be assumed Homer always provides the most authoritative or even earliest version of events when one attested later seems quite different: he may reshape traditional stories for his own purposes.
2 An important exception of sorts concerns Odysseus’ encounter in Hades with Herakles’ shade or *eidōlon* (*εἴδωλον*), which is explicitly distinguished from Herakles himself (*αὑτός*): see Hom. *Od*. 11.601-627. This case will be considered in section 2.2 below, as will (in a later chapter) the *Homeric Hymns.*
3 Hom. *Il*. 6.128-141. Commenting on the Lykourgos episode, Shipp supports Marzullo’s argument that the Dionysos episodes in Homer are all relatively late additions: see Shipp (1972), 257. If so, then this could affect the interpretation of what it means for Dionysos to be *mainomenos*, making the meaning of this word in the *Odyssey* (see below) potentially applicable to the *Iliad* at an earlier date than would be the case otherwise.
4 Given that Diomedes has, over the course of book 5, accomplished what is to my mind the most memorable theomachy in all Greek literature, his claim of being unwilling to fight the gods must be somewhat qualified.
5 Classical instances of Lykourgos in Tragedy will be noted below. Much later in Antiquity, Nonnos provides the most extended reading of Lykourgos as a Dionysian *theomachos*. See Nonn. *D*. 20.149-21.168. For what I would consider to be an anachronistic reading of the Iliadic episode itself in terms of later Dionysian theomachy, see for instance Daraki (1994), 34. For the events of the Boiotian Agrionia in relation to the story of Lykourgos as attested in Plutarch, see Burkert (1985), 165.
does not yet have any distinctively Dionysian implications, at least beyond whatever significance there might be in Diomedes’ choice of making Dionysos his ready example of the divine victim of a mortal theomachos. Curiously though, in book 5 Homer seems to make the mortal Herakles a paradigmatic theomachos. Dione reminds Aphrodite, who has been wounded by Diomedes, that Hera and even Hades himself suffered the pain of Herakles’ arrows. If Dionysos and Herakles are both somehow exemplary figures in relation to the topic of theomachy then it may well tell us something about them and their association. One possibility to be considered is that, if theomachy involves a straining of the boundaries that distinguish gods from mortals, and if Herakles and Dionysos both seem to be exemplary figures in relation to the topic of theomachy, then it may follow that negotiating the distinction between gods and mortals is especially important to them. We will return to this topic in more detail in section 2.2 below, once we have seen a little more of Homer’s Dionysos and Herakles.

Besides a kind of theomachy, a few other things familiar from later Dionysian traditions appear in the Lykourgos episode, including the nurses of the infant god, their sacred staves (reminiscent to us of what will later be called thyrsoi), and perhaps the Thracian setting of their misadventure. More pertinent to the subject of the god’s relation to Herakles may be his description as mainomenos (μαινομένοι Διωνύσοι), which he is called even before he has been frightened (otherwise out of his wits) by the violence of Lykourgos: it seems to be a characterization of him, here unexplained and so of unclear import, especially as regards how general a characterization it might be. It is possible that Homer simply assumes of his hearers a certain prior knowledge of the causes of Dionysos’ madness, and so of its implications. Herakles too will have to contend with madness, though seemingly not in Homer’s account of him, and later poetry, such as that of Euripides, will clearly make both his madness and the madness of Dionysos into violent inflictions sent by a wrathful Hera.

On the other hand, a better strategy for understanding what it might mean for the Dionysos who encounters Lykourgos in Homer to be called mainomenos may be to consider not what it means for Dionysos to be mainomenos in light of later sources but rather what it means for anyone to be mainomenos within a narrower Homeric, and especially Iliadic, context. Who else rages (μαίνεται) and is mad (μαινόμενος) in the Iliad? Moreover, we should keep in mind that these words may share a common root with a certain noun of rage, mēnis (μῆνις): this is of course the programmatic first word of

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6 For Diomedes’ confrontation with Aphrodite see Hom. Il. 5.330-352; with Apollo, see Hom. Il. 5.431-444; with Ares, see Hom. Il. 5.814-867.
7 Hom. Il. 5.392-404. Herakles is not named directly but is called both the κρατερὸς πάις Ἀμφιτρύωνος and the υἱὸς Διὸς αἰγιόχοι and is thus clearly identified. See section 2.2 below for further discussion of this episode.
8 For the (much later) first appearances of thyrsoi in art and literature see Carpenter (1986), 63-64; for the potential Thracian setting of the Lykourgos episode see Carpenter (1997), 36-37.
9 The role of Hera in inflicting Herakles and Dionysos with madness is seen quite clearly in Euripides’ Herakles and (in less detail) Kyklops respectively; see E. HF 822-1015, 1127-1129; Cyc. 1-4. For a brief discussion of the mythological enmity and ritual association of Hera and Dionysos see Burkert (1985t), 165, 223. For the possibility of Herakles as a raging theomachos in the Iliad, see section 2.2.
the *Iliad*, in which Homer asks the muse to sing the rage of Achilles. Whatever their etymological relationship, it is for our purposes more significant that they are conceptually related (besides similar sounding) in the *Iliad*. Thus to be *mainomenos* is to be in the emotional state at the heart of the *Iliad*. It therefore comes as no surprise to see that one who rages in the *Iliad* is most often a warrior in the fury of battle. Diomedes, the one who calls Dionysos *mainomenos*, is himself regularly described as raging, particularly during his *aristeia*. Hektor too rages, especially while the Trojans are ascendant on the battlefield. As would be expected, Achilles rages most of all, though most often he is said to have *mēnis* or to rage with the more closely related verb *menio* (μηνιω) rather than *mainomai* (μαινομαι). Of these three, only Achilles, or more precisely his heart, is like Dionysos called raging/mad via a form of the participle *mainomenos*. However, the participle may also be used to describe the god who rages most often in the *Iliad*: since we have seen that the great warriors Diomedes, Achilles, and Hektor are most distinguished by their martial raging, it likely comes as no surprise to see that Ares is the god who rages most regularly and is also called *mainomenos*.

The other attestations of Iliadic raging also mostly involve the battlefield somehow: one who is *mainomenos* almost always seeks to bring about death and destruction in the *Iliad*. When Hera complains that Hektor rages in his supremacy, Athena reminds her that it is Zeus who rages against the Danaans. When the two goddesses try to intervene against Hektor, Zeus sends Iris to stop them from leaving Olympos, asking them what madness rages in them. More complicated is the case of Andromache, whom a servant tells Hektor rushed with their child to the wall of Troy “like a raging/maddened woman” (μαινομένῃ ἐϊκυῖα) to observe the battle when she learnt that the Trojans were beset by an Argive onslaught (made possible by Diomedes’ *aristeia*). She is described similarly much later, rushing again to the wall “like a madwoman” (μαινάδι ἴση) when she hears Hekabe begin to wail upon seeing the death of Hektor.

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10 See Hom. II. 1.1. According to Muellner, Buck (1949), 1134 first proposed the etymology which would link *mēnis* directly with *mainomai*. This etymology has been more recently and thoroughly defended by Considine (1985) 145-151, but it remains speculative. For this discussion see Muellner (1996), 187-189: he does not accept the etymology of Buck and Considine, preferring instead what strikes me as another speculative etymology relying on the concept of “tabu deformation.”

11 Hom. II. 5.185 (μαίνεται), 6.101 (μαίνεται), 8.111 (μαίνεται, of the spear of Diomedes), 16.75 (μαίνεται, again of the spear of Diomedes).

12 Hom. II. 8.355 (μαίνεται), 9.328 (μαίνεται), 15.605 (μαίνετο, 16.245 (μαίνονθ’, of Hector’s hands), 21.5 (μαίνετο).

13 Hom. II. 24.114 (μαινομένην, of Achilles’ heart), 24.135 (μαινομένην, again of Achilles’ heart); 1.1 (Μῆνιν), 1.422 (μῆνιν), 1.428 (μῆνιν), 1.488 (μῆνιν), 2.769 (μῆνιν), 9.517 (μῆνιν), 12.10 (μῆνιν), 18.257 (μῆνιν), 19.35 (μῆνιν), 19.75 (μῆνιν).


15 Hom. II. 5.717 (μαινόμεθαι), 5.831 (μαινόμενον), 15.128 (μαινόμενε), 15.606 (μαινηται, where Hektor is like Ares or a fire raging thus).

16 Thus we find that mortals are most usually the intended targets of one who is *mainomenos* or has *mēnis*. The clear exception is the *mēnis* of Zeus, which twice would have threatened the gods had Athena not held Ares back from the battlefield: see Hom. II. 5.34 (where Athena is simply tricking Ares with the threat of Zeus’ *mēnis*), 15.122.

17 Hom. II. 8.352-361 (μαίνεται, of both both Zeus and Hektor). Zeus is said quite regularly to have *mēnis* see Hom. II. 5.34, 13.624, 15.122. The only other god so characterized is Apollo: see Hom. II. 1.75, 5.444, 16.711.

18 Hom. II. 8.413 (τι σφῶϊν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μαίνεται ήτορ).


20 Hom. II. 22.460-461.
rendered simply as “maenad,” bringing to ours minds the women in Dionysos’ retinue, and so commentators have considered the potential Dionysian implications of these descriptions of Andromache. Keeping in mind that Andromache is called mainomenos in book 6 of the Iliad, following the description of Dionysos himself as mainomenos in that same book, G. Privitera has argued, in the words of R. Seaford, that “the author of the Lycurgus narrative of Iliad 6.130-40 continued to be influenced by the Dionysiac narrative in his descriptions, a little later, of Andromache leaving home, and that the result influenced the parallel action of Andromache in book 22,” with the result that Andromache is likened to a maenad.\(^{21}\) However, against this line of reasoning we might object that there does not seem to be anything uniquely Dionysian about being mainomenos elsewhere in the Iliad, in light of how we have seen this word used there more generally. It evokes the raging fury of battle. But can even Andromache, who is neither a warrior nor a god of battle, be mainomenos in any such sense? That she is called mainomenos in those moments when she takes the greatest personal interest in the fighting and seeks to be as close to the battlefield as possible suggests that such a thing could be the case. Indeed, in book 6 she even goes so far as to inappropriately offer Hektor military advice.\(^{22}\) Thus whatever else it might mean to be a “madwoman,” in the Iliad it (perhaps inevitably) evokes a personal interest in battle and warfare, as it does more generally in the case of being mainomenos. Given that Dionysos’ maenads will later be associated with these same things, we see that they may be situated within a larger tradition attested in Homer.\(^{23}\) However, what cannot be said with any certainty on the basis of the Andromache episodes is that “madwomen” are inevitably close to Dionysos in the Iliad in any way beyond their shared experience of madness. Notwithstanding this, once they are so associated elsewhere then Homer’s Andromache too may readily appear to his hearers or readers with a “maenadic” aspect in the later sense of the term, and so provide a model for later Tragedy.\(^{24}\)

If we follow this interpretation, then the problem remains all the more insistently of what to make of Dionysos’ characterization as mainomenos: if everyone else in the Iliad who is somehow mad with battle-fury is mainomenos, then is Dionysos necessarily mainomenos in the same sense, or is he the sole exception to the Iliadic rule, mad for some other reason? Since Homer simply does not tell us, any answers given must be somewhat speculative. If Dionysos too is raging like a Homeric warrior, then it is hard not to imagine his encounter with Lykourgos in something like Nonnos’ terms, where the god does battle against the impious king.\(^{25}\) Alternatively, we have already mentioned the wrath of Hera as a

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\(^{22}\) Hom. Il. 6.431-439, 6.492-493.
\(^{23}\) For militant maenads see especially E. Ba. 748-768.
\(^{24}\) For this role of Andromache see Schlesier (1993), 101-103; Seaford (1993), 115-119.
\(^{25}\) Nonn. D. 20.149-21.168. Considering other accounts of the Lykourgos story somewhat closer in date to Homer, as West reconstructs Aischylos’ Edonoi we have no such warlike god: see West (1990), 27-32. The version of events related in this play is different than in Homer, lacking the chasing of Dionysos into the sea, and featuring instead a Lykourgos driven mad by Dionysos and so slaughtering his own son: Nonnos is closer to Homer in this respect than is Aischylos. According to West, it seems that a similar account appears on Attic vases, and in Sophokles’ Antigone, 955-965.
possible cause for his madness, and again, even if this story does not underlie Homer’s account, those familiar with it may well hear Homer’s words with its explanatory power in mind. Another possibility, suggested by the scholia and many more recent scholars, is that Dionysos is mainomenos because he is drunk, or because of his relation more generally to the madness induced by drinking. This possibility is attractive because of Dionysos’ familiar role as the god of wine, and because raging and being mainomenos in the Odyssey and other later sources are most usually associated with the effects of wine. However, against this interpretation is the apparent absence, at least otherwise, of any of these things in the Iliad, a problem to which we will return momentarily: Iliadic wine never evokes any mention of Dionysos, and moreover, if drunken madness was a matter of being mainomenos in the Iliad, then it could have appeared explicitly in this capacity on numerous occasions, as when Achilles rages against Agamemnon and calls him “drunk” (οἰνοβαρές). For these reasons, I think our best hypothesis is that Dionysos is called mainomenos for martial reasons which must somewhat elude us if they do not simply point to his making war against Lykourgos: this explanation is in accord with the use of the word mainomenos throughout the Iliad. What further implications this might have, including those concerning Dionysos’ association with Herakles, will be seen in section 2.2, once we have seen more of Dionysos and Herakles. Again though, it should be emphasized that complementary explanations of Dionysos’ madness in the Lykourgos episode are possible to Homer’s hearers once Dionysos is associated with such things as wine and maenads.

Interestingly, the other instance in which Dionysos is named in the Iliad explicitly pairs him with Herakles, while happening to bring to our minds the reason for Hera’s resentment of both. When Hera seduces Zeus in book 14, Zeus tells her that he lusts for her as he has never lusted before, and detailing those whom he desired in the past he says that his present desire is surpassed by that once felt for “neither Semele nor Alkmene in Thebes: the latter bore stout-hearted Herakles as her child, and Semele bore Dionysos, a joy to mortals” (οὐδ᾽ ὅτε περ Σεμέλης οὐδ᾽ Ἀλκμήνης ἐνὶ Θήβῃ, / ἢ ρ’ Ἡρακλῆα κρατερόφρονα γείνατο παῖδα· / ἢ δὲ Διώνυσον Σεμέλη τέκε χάρμα βροτοῖσιν). Here Herakles and Dionysos are paired due to a kind of biographical coincidence: they are both sons of Zeus born to mortal mothers in Thebes. Neither Zeus in this speech nor more generally Homer say anything else explicitly about this point, but we will see the theme of the shared Theban birthplace and mortal

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26 Schol. in II. 6.132 (ed. Heyne); Kerényi (1976t), 131. It should be noted that these possibilities are not mutually-exclusive: Nonnos’ Dionysos, for instance, may be both drunken and full of battle-fury.

27 Hom. Od. 9.350-354 (μαίνεαι, of the kyklops, who is about to taste wine), 18.406 (μαίνεσθε, of the suitors, whom Telemachos says have drunk too much), 21.298 (μαίνομενως, of the centaur Eurytion, whom the suitor Antinoos says drank too much, likening him to the disguised Odysseus). The exception is Hom. Od. 11.537 (μαίνεσθαι), where Odysseus speaks of Ares’ rage during war: he is speaking of Neoptolemos to Achilles’ shade of his time at Troy, and so it is perhaps to be expected that the Iliadic implications of the word would return for the occasion.

28 Hom. II. 1.225.

29 However, if there is good reason to think that the Lykourgos episode is indeed a later addition, not preceding the Odyssey in its date of composition, then it would be important to consider it more fully in light of the meaning of the word mainomenos in the Odyssey.

30 All translations are my own, unless otherwise indicated.
Maternity of Herakles and Dionysos return in later sources, including Hesiod and Pindar. However, we may be able to say a little more by considering the place of Herakles and Dionysos in Zeus’ fuller catalogue of women and their offspring: of the latter he names first Peirithoos, son of Ixion’s (here unnamed) wife, then Perseus, son of Danaë, and then Minos and Rhadamanthys, sons of Europa. Herakles and Dionysos follow, and then come Demeter and Leto, whose offspring Zeus does not mention. Hera herself comes at the end of the catalogue. Thus there seems to be an implicit ordering to the catalogue. Zeus begins with Ixion’s wife: she is the wife and mother of heroes and the once-beloved of Zeus, but otherwise seemingly so unimportant as to be left nameless. After her come other mortal women, ones important enough to have at least names if not stories of their own. Zeus does not tell these stories here, but Homer may know them: in the case of Alkmene and the difficult birth of Herakles he will have more to say in the Iliad, as will be considered in section 2.2 below. Alkmene’s example shows that Homer is likely making allusive references to the stories of these women, which are otherwise attested only in later sources. Thus it is not clear from this passage whether Homer assumes his hearers’ familiarity with, most significantly for our purposes, a significantly fuller story of Dionysos’ birth to Semele in Thebes, one which might include (as in the story of Alkmene) the wrath of Hera, or Dionysos’ highly unusual birth itself and Semele’s related death and eventual apotheosis. Again, it is other sources who will say more about such things, and as will be considered in later chapters, these details too may serve to associate Dionysos with Herakles. It should be noted though that, with the earlier reference to the “maddened” Dionysos and now the reference to his birth to Semele in Thebes, we have seen that both Iliadic mentions of Dionysos might bring to mind the jealous wrath of Hera, something which is explicit in the case of Herakles; we will return to the subject of Hera’s wrath when Herakles is considered in section 2.2. In any case, with these difficulties in mind we may see hints of a progression in Zeus’ catalogue of women, since Zeus proceeds from the nameless wife of Ixion, through the likely well-known examples of Danaë and Europa, and ends with Alkmene and Semele, who has the distinction already in Hesiod if not in Homer of becoming an immortal goddess. This would serve as an effective transition to Zeus’ remaining examples: Demeter, Leto, and of course Hera are all important goddesses, and in Zeus’ catalogue their names may stand alone, without need of reference to their fathers, husbands, or children.

With their children in our minds though, we see again that Zeus’ catalogue has surely been ordered. The first sons of Zeus to be named, Peirithoos and Perseus, are great heroes of the past, but in this capacity are now dead mortals. The pair of Minos and Rhadamanthys who follow are unusually

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31 e.g. Hes. Th. 940-944; Pi. P. 1-5.
35 Hom. Il. 19.86-133.
36 Hes. Th. 940-942.
distinguished among dead mortals, for they are agreed in later tradition to be judges among the dead, and in the *Odyssey* we even see Minos himself in this capacity in Odysseus’ account of the Underworld.\(^{37}\) Herakles follows. The difficulties of his case will be considered in section 2.2 below: what is important to note now is that by most accounts he is a mortal who becomes a god, though it is not altogether clear that he is already so in the *Iliad*. Considering this together with his theomachy, it may surely be said securely that at the very least he is already in the *Iliad* a mortal who strains the limits of mortality, even if he does not go so far as to become an immortal god himself. After Herakles comes Dionysos, whom Diomedes has told us already is a god, albeit seemingly a rather minor one in the *Iliad*. Finally, the children of Zeus with Demeter, Leto, and Hera are all gods.\(^{38}\) Thus there is a progression from dead mortals to immortal gods, one which may pass through the intermediate step of mortals who become gods. Herakles and Dionysos stand at this boundary, beginning clearly with Hesiod, since Herakles and Dionysos’ mother Semele both become immortal deities.\(^{39}\) What Hesiod says will be considered in the next chapter: what may be said here is that the hints of such a structure in Zeus’ catalogue suggest that Homer may assume his hearers’ familiarity with the pertinent stories of, for instance, the apotheosis of Semele, but it is difficult to say more than this without being excessively speculative. However, if Homer does not in fact know such stories, then it appears that his hearers in later days, beginning already in the later archaic period when we know that such stories did circulate, may well have understood him in light of what they knew. It is difficult to do otherwise.

Additionally, Homer’s Zeus calls Dionysos a “joy to mortals” (χάρμα βροτοῖσιν), without specifying what precisely this means. At first glance it seems like a stock-description, readily intelligible to us in light of Dionysos’ well-attested role as the god of wine and its delights. Indeed, this is one explanation of the phrase provided by scholia on the passage, which call Dionysos the inventor of wine (εὑρετὴς οἴνου), and it makes sense in light of Hesiod’s association of Dionysos with joy and wine, which will be discussed in chapter 3.\(^{40}\) However, such a reading must contend with the fact, noted briefly above in the discussion of the word *mainomenos*, that Homer does not explicitly associate Dionysos with wine in the *Iliad*: this description of Dionysos as a “joy to mortals”, offering at best a hint of the god’s familiar role, is as close as Homer gets to making wine something Dionysian. Indeed, it is striking that the wine which flows so much in the *Iliad* (and likewise the *Odyssey*) is never associated with the god of wine: we must set this peculiar fact against any temptation to associate Homer’s


\(^{38}\) Homer knows that Leto’s children are Apollo and Artemis: see Hom *Il*. 1.9-15, 21.468-504. The child of Zeus and Demeter presents more of a problem, since Homer is silent on the matter beyond the apparent implication of this passage that there must exist a child of Zeus and Demeter. Other sources, beginning with Hesiod, specify that their child is Persephone: see Hes. *Th*. 912-914. As for Hera, her children present their own problems which need not be considered here in full. It may be said that, in the *Iliad*, Hephaistos is their son: see Hom *Il*. 1.568-572, 14.338-339. The problematic lines 603-604 of book 11 of Homer’s *Odyssey* also name Hebe as the daughter of Zeus and Hera, and the wife of the now-immortal Herakles. See the discussion in section 2.2 below.


Dionysos with wine on the basis of Dionysos’ ubiquitous association with wine in later sources, since there is so much opportunity in Homer for at least something to be said clearly about Dionysos’ relation to wine. This problem was noticed by scholars long ago, and some attempted to explain it through the hypothesis that Dionysos was a rather late introduction to the Greek pantheon, thus largely alien to Homer and so Homeric wine. Setting aside the problem posed to such explanations by the later decipherment of Linear B and the apparent presence of Dionysos in thoroughly pre-Homeric Linear B inscriptions (which do not clearly make wine something special to Dionysos), such explanations must still account for what Dionysos *is* doing in Homer, keeping in mind that Dionysos admittedly plays a rather minor role there.

Therefore, if we do not assume that the Iliadic Dionysos is a joy to mortals simply because he is elsewhere the god of wine, why else might he be a joy to mortals? In order to try to answer this question it is necessary first to consider the nature of “joy”, or rather *charma* (χάρμα), in Homer.

The basic sense of the word *charma* is “source of joy,” etymologically related to the verb of joy *χαίρω*, and it appears seven times in the *Iliad*, always in the direct speech of a character, and moreover in a specific construction with the dative where someone is (or was, or may become) a *charma* to another. We have already seen the example of Zeus calling Dionysos a *charma* to mortals. Before this instance there are three others, all involving the disgrace of being a *charma* to one’s enemies in battle. In the first, an angry Hektor berates Paris for his cowardly failure to face Menelaus in a duel in book 3, calling him a *charma* to his enemies (δυσμενέσιν ... χάρμα) but a dejection to himself. In the second, Helenos urges Hektor and Aineas to rally their forces, lest they flee and become a joy to their enemies (δηΐοισι ... χάρμα). In the third, Nestor urges the Achaian sentries to continue keeping a good watch, lest in falling asleep they be made a joy to their enemies (χάρμα ... δυσμενέεσσι). What is the immediate effect of these speeches? In the first, Paris concedes that Hektor was right to mock him and agrees to face Menelaus in a duel to decide the outcome of the war: Hektor rejoices to hear his great speech (ἐχάρη μέγα μῦθον ἀκούσας), and so the brothers are promptly reconciled as, etymologically

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41 One may contrast later epics in which the connection is made. See for instance Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1.215.
42 See for instance the survey of early scholarship in Isler-Kerényi (2007), 244-252.
43 For the presence of the name of Dionysos in Linear B inscriptions see Hiller (2011), 184-185, who notes that Dionysos appears to be one of only four gods in extant Linear B to be found both in Crete (at Khania and Knossos) and on the mainland (at Pylos): Zeus, Poseidon, and Hermes are the others. See also Burkert (1985), 45, 162; Kerényi (1976), 68-69, who argues that one of the tablets provides evidence for Dionysos as a Mycenaean god of wine; Ventris & Chadwick (1973), 127, 411, where only a possible association with wine is noted; Bennett & Olivier (1973, vol. 1), 267-269, where the Pylos tablets are transcribed as Xa 102 and Xa 1419; Gérard-Rousseau (1968), 74-76, who cautions that all we can be sure of is that Dionysos’ name is attested at Pylos, and that the tablets do not permit the conjecture that Dionysos was already a god of wine for the Mycenaeans. On the basis of the hypothesis that Dionysos was an archaic arrival in Greece, scholars were initially hesitant to suppose that the Dionysos named unexpectedly in Linear B was a god, but at present this is most usually accepted.
44 For the etymology of χάρμα and its relation to the verb χαίρω, see Chantraine (1980, vol. 4), 1240.
46 Hom. *Il.* 6.82.
speaking, Paris’ speech has apparently become a *charma* not to his enemies but to Hektor. In the second, Hektor heeds Helenos’ advice and rallies his forces, who, far from becoming a joy to their enemies, promptly regain the upper-hand in the fighting. In the third, the sentries do not fail in their task, and the night raid which is launched with Nestor’s further encouragement brings no joy to the enemies of the Achaians. Thus in all three cases, being called a *charma* to one’s enemies, whether in actuality or potential, urges on the one so goaded to successfully counter the charge. Otherwise, we can say of those who risk being a *charma* to their enemies that they are mortal warriors, whether individual (Paris), a multitude (the Trojans and their allies), or a small number (the Achaian sentries). We can also say that these warriors are so urged not to be a *charma* to their foes in situations of great danger, whether of Paris in the face of Menelaus, the Trojans in the face of an Achaian advance, or the sentries of the Achaian camp in the face of the Trojans’ new-found ascendancy in the field.

Before analyzing how Dionysos may be a *charma* in this Homeric context, we will consider the remaining three Iliadic attestations of the word which follow his, and which are all somewhat more complicated. In the first, as the Achaians are being routed following the death of Patroklos, Aias asks his comrades how they might escape back to their own lines, so that they might be a joy to their dear companions (χάρμα φίλοις ἑτάροισι). Zeus pities the weeping Aias, and the Achaians in advance are able to return successfully to their camp with the body of Patroklos. However, any joy that they might be in their safe return is overshadowed by mourning for Patroklos, and so their dear companions are described instead as grieving (φίλοι ... ἑταῖροι / μυρόμενοι). We see *charma* applied here in a way that is somewhat different than in the first three instances: it still refers to warriors in a situation of great peril, but this time, instead of managing through some sort of martial success not to become a joy to their enemies, the successful Achaians fail to become a *charma* to their own companions back in camp. Thus the basic structure of *charma*, while maintained, has in certain respects been inverted.

In the next instance, Nestor advises his son Antilochos on how to win a chariot race held as part of the funeral-games for Patroklos: he urges him not to wreck his car in taking the turn too tightly, lest he become a *charma* to the others (χάρμα ... τοῖς ἄλλοισιν) but a disgrace to himself. Here the usual agonistic context has been modified from the field of battle to that of athletics, and so Antilochos’ opponents, who are otherwise his companions, are simply “others” rather than true enemies. Likewise, the aspect of danger remains in a lessened form, as seen in the wounding suffered by Eumelos when his...
chariot is wrecked. Here Antilochos is successful in that he does not wreck his chariot and become thereby a *charma* to his opponents. Indeed, in the quarrelling over prizes which follows the race he seems briefly to become a new Achilles, willing to make his comrades suffer anything to pay for his wounded pride: here the transformed agonistic setting of averted *charma* threatens a reversion to its military form.

The final instance of Iliadic *charma* concerns the lamentation for Hektor. When Cassandra sees Priam returning to Troy with Hektor’s corpse, she raises a cry to the Trojans to come and see him since he was a “great joy to the city and the whole people” (*μέγα χάρμα πόλει τ’ ἦν παντὶ τε δῆμῳ*). Here what is most notably different is that the *charma* is set in the past in contrast to the sorrow of the present: we have mostly seen *charma* operate in potential until now. While there is a truce at this moment in the *Iliad*, the overall agonistic context remains: Hektor was a warrior who was a *charma* to the Trojans because he defended their city against its enemies, and now that he is dead so too will the city surely fall. It is also exceptional that Hektor is called a *charma* to the entire people: until now, when we have seen a warrior called a *charma* it has always been in relation to other warriors. Otherwise, this passage shows us *charma* operating as it usually has in prior instances.

On the basis of these six non-Dionysian instances of *charma* in the *Iliad*, what might we be able to say about Dionysos as a *charma* to mortals there? Dionysos as a *charma* is clearly different, perhaps most so in that he is not a mortal warrior but a god. In all other cases we have seen mortal warriors somehow be a *charma* to a subsection of mortals, usually to other mortal warriors like themselves. Furthermore, we have seen this *charma* operate in a zero-sum way: a source of joy to one mortal is necessarily a source of pain to another. However, Dionysos is apparently a joy to all mortals, with perhaps the notable exception of Lykourgos: he seems uniquely able to overcome the zero-sum divisiveness of Iliadic *charma*. Yet this may only be true among mortals. If Dionysos is a source of joy to mortals, then keeping in mind the zero-sum workings of Iliadic *charma*, we could expect him (among other possibilities) to somehow be a source of pain among immortals. Indeed he is, and we already know that the specific immortal to whom he is a source of pain is Hera. Zeus himself is reminding Hera of this in book 14 when he calls Dionysos a *charma*, as he lists the other goddesses and mortal women he has loved and praises the children born of their unions. As has already been seen, he mentions Dionysos together with Herakles, and Hera’s hatred and persecution of Herakles is mentioned throughout the *Iliad*. We thus have every reason to expect that it would be characteristic of the Iliadic Hera to similarly hate and persecute Dionysos. On the basis of largely later poetry and pottery, Carpenter has suggested

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58 It may be straining the argument to say that Dionysos is even a *charma* to Lykourgos because, as his (temporarily) defeated enemy, his defeat is briefly a source of joy to Lykourgos.
59 It may also be that the respect in which Dionysos is a *charma* to mortals is simply inapplicable to immortals: we will return to this possibility in section 2.5.
that the reason Dionysos is called mad at the start of the Lykourgos passage, examined above, is that he has been previously inflicted with madness sent by a jealous Hera.\(^{60}\) We now have further reason to suspect that the story of Hera’s maddening of Dionysos could already lie in the background of this episode in the *Iliad*, adding further meaning to his characterization there as *mainomenos*. Additionally, if the Iliadic Dionysos has such a background outside the *Iliad*, it is also possible that the unwitting (?) humour of Zeus’ speech to Hera is enhanced by his description of Dionysos as a *charma* to mortals: if this is otherwise a formulaic description of the god, intended to bring our attention to his benefactions (whatever they may be), here the unusual context of the formula’s utterance modifies its meaning so that it brings our attention, like Hera’s, to those others who have taken somewhat less delight in Dionysos. It is also possible that the use of this description of Dionysos, whatever traditional background it might have concerning him, has some further applicability to Herakles, since the two are so closely aligned in Zeus’ speech, and with Herakles’ theomachy in mind it seems clear that Herakles is not always a source of joy to all the gods, to say the least. We will return to this possibility when the Iliadic Herakles is examined in greater detail in section 2.2.\(^{61}\)

A further complication should be noted as regards the nature of Iliadic *charma*. For reasons which seem psychologically straightforward, the companions of Achilles rejoice when he sets aside his *mēnis* against them (οἱ δ’ ἐχάρησαν ἕυκνήμιδες Αχαῖοι / μῆνιν ἀπειπόντος μεγαθύμου Πηλείωνος).\(^{62}\) It appears that Achilles becomes a *charma* to the Achaians by setting aside his *mēnis*, becoming *mainomenos* instead against the Trojans. Thus *mēnis* and *charma* are emotionally related in their object: someone like Achilles can be both *mainomenos* and a *charma*, but not to the same person(s) at the same time. If Dionysos is a *charma* to mortals, then how can he be *mainomenos* when Lykourgos fights him? Again, Lykourgos seems exceptional as the mortal object of Dionysos’ *mēnis*, if Dionysos is otherwise a *charma* to mortals as a whole. Alternatively, Dionysos is just as exceptional in being *mainomenos* as he is as a *charma* to mortals as a whole, being in this case *mainomenos* against no one but rather in some other sense.\(^{63}\) Since even the somewhat different form of being *mainomenos* in the *Odyssey*, a state of reckless and drunken wrath, is nonetheless like its Iliadic counterpart in that it has a mortal object, it is difficult to understand what else such an unaggressive madness could be in Homeric terms. I think it is more likely that Lykourgos represents a special case, whether we choose to call it an “inconsistency” or simply an “exception,” and that Dionysos is indeed wroth with him.

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\(^{60}\) Carpenter (1997), 36.

\(^{61}\) Against such a possibility, Dionysos has not been characterized in such a way as to make Herakles’ description “stout-hearted” applicable to him, despite their close alignment in this passage. Thus any evidence for Herakles being a *charma* to mortals must be independent of his association with a god who is (uniquely in Homer) called a *charma* to mortals.

\(^{62}\) Hom. *Il.* 19.74-75

\(^{63}\) By such logic, the apparent contradiction could also be resolved by positing that Dionysos is called *mainomenos* because he is raging against someone who is not mortal, but there is nothing to indicate such a possibility, particularly in the case of a divine object since, as we have seen, the gods are almost never said to have *mēnis* against one another.
Since we have seen that the Iliadic Dionysos has a background outside the *Iliad*, it remains possible that part of the reason for calling him *mainomenos* and a *charm* to mortals lies in this background, otherwise unmanifest in the text. Such a background could include Dionysos in his role as the god of wine, as it clearly did to later Greeks in the case of *charm*, or it could allude to something else altogether. We have tried to cast some light on this background by considering internal textual aspects of the *Iliad*, in this case the workings of Iliadic *mēnis* and *charm*. From here we may be able to proceed to a larger Homeric Dionysos by considering the *Odyssey*, where once again Dionysos does not appear as a character but is mentioned twice.\(^6\) However, before moving beyond the *Iliad* it will be necessary to more fully consider Herakles’ place there, including any other aspects of his association with Dionysos.

2.2) Herakles in the *Iliad*

Like Dionysos, Herakles does not appear as a speaking character in the *Iliad*, but he is mentioned by other characters, in addition to the Homeric narrator, quite a bit more than is Dionysos. In examining how he is portrayed, our goal will be to see what we can say about the specifically Iliadic character of Herakles. From the outset though, it must be said that we will see Herakles routinely mentioned in such a way that makes it clear that familiarity with him is already expected of Homer’s audience, as it is, for that matter, of many other Iliadic characters.\(^6\) Moreover, Herakles himself seems to be such an important mythological reference point that it may be misleading to attach much importance to his Iliadic character simply because it marks the first literary attestation of any character of Herakles: the Iliadic Herakles seems necessarily to overleap the boundaries of his text into a larger Herakles mythology with which a certain familiarity is presupposed. For this reason, one of our goals here will be to see what we can learn about that larger mythology of Herakles at the time of the *Iliad*’s composition, in addition to seeing how Homer situates his own Herakles within the larger tradition.

The first mention of Herakles is made during the “Catalogue of Ships” in book 2. There we are introduced not to Herakles but to his son Tlepolemos (Τληπόλεμος ... Ἡρακλεΐδης), the commander of the Rhodians, whose mother Astyocheia bore him to the “Herakleian might” (βίῃ Ἡρακληείῃ) after he took her away from Ephyra, having destroyed many towns.\(^6\) We are also told that this Tlepolemos first came to Rhodes because he had to flee his home after killing Herakles’ elderly maternal uncle Likymnios for unspecified reasons, earning him the wrath of the “sons and grandsons of the Herakleian might.”

\(^6\) There is unfortunately little more to say about *charm* in the *Odyssey*. It appears once in Odysseus’ greeting to Nausikaa, where he wishes her a good marriage, noting that when a husband and wife live together in harmony, they are a joy to their friends (χάριματα ... εὐμενέτῃσι) but a great pain to their enemies. (See Hom. *Od*. 6.185.) The transfer of *charm* from the Iliadic battlefield to the domestic realm is in keeping with the greater importance of domestic themes in the *Odyssey*. Otherwise, *charm* continues to operate in a clearly agonistic and zero-sum way among mortals. The only other appearance of *charm* in the *Odyssey* is completely different, where it appears in the words of the narrator and no longer in the usual construction with a dative, describing Eurykleia’s recognition of Odysseus: *charm*, here meaning joy itself and not more precisely a source of joy, fills her heart simultaneously with pain. (See Hom. *Od*. 19.471.)

\(^6\) For the allusive nature of Homer’s Herakles, see for instance Baurain (1992), 73; Wathelet (1998), 64.

Even from this short description of Tlepolemos we learn a number of things about Herakles. First, we can say that Herakles belongs to a generation which flourished before the Trojan War, though, as will be seen below, this chronology will be complicated by other mentions of Herakles’ exploits. We will also hear more about Herakles’ military campaigns in the western Peloponnese, particularly at Pylos. This passage also indicates the importance of Herakles as the progenitor of legendary heroes, in this respect somewhat like his father Zeus. Tlepolemos is after all, according to the somewhat later attestation of Pindar, an important Rhodian founding hero who receives a significant cult there as such. However, it should be noted that Tlepolemos is one of only two named “son(s) of Herakles” (Ἡρακλεΐδης) in Homer: it is only from later sources, to which we will return in due course, that we see attested a greater significance to the sons of Herakles. Also noteworthy is the fact that Herakles does not appear exactly by name, but rather adjectivally as the “Herakleian might,” a distinctively epic way of characterizing him. It may draw attention to his body and its physical strength, but also, since it can be reconstructed linguistically as Mycenaean, it may hint at the antiquity of Herakles, and most immediately to his presence in earlier epic poetry.

Tlepolemos returns in book 5 to fight Sarpedon (the commander of the Lykians and cousin of Glaukos, whom we met already in his encounter with Diomedes discussed in section 2.1), and there he boasts of his paternity and tells us a little more about Herakles. Tlepolemos mocks Sarpedon’s claim of being a son of Zeus, saying that Zeus’ sons were clearly better in the days of his own father, the “Herakleian might, brave-spirited, lion-hearted” (βίην Ἡρακληείην ... θρασυμέμνονα θυμολέοντα), who sacked Troy in the days of Laomedon with a far smaller army. Sarpedon replies that Laomedon was indeed foolish not to give Herakles the mares he had come for: in the duel which follows Tlepolemos is slain, though not without wounding Sarpedon. Their exchange gives us a little characterization of Herakles and further fills out his Homeric biography. As in the case of his sacking of towns mentioned in book 2, the concision with which Tlepolemos and Sarpedon refer to Herakles presupposes a certain familiarity with him, one which may be shared by Homer’s hearers: the story was likely already traditional at the time of the Iliad’s composition, and indeed, W. Burkert argues that it was treated in

67 Hom. II. 2.661-667.
68 Pi. O. 20-33, 77-80. Pindar also comments further on the murder of Likymnios.
69 The other “son of lord Herakles” (Ἡρακλεΐδαο ἄνακτος) mentioned is Thessalos at Hom. II. 2.679, also in the Catalogue of Ships: Thessalos’ two sons Pheidippus and Antiphos lead the troops from Kos and other nearby islands.
70 For the potentially Mycenaean form of the term βίη Ἡρακληείη, see Rujigh (2011), 283-284; Rujigh (1995), 82-83; Fowler (2000), 261; Burkert (1979), 78; Burkert (1972), 81. Burkert argues that the formula reflects its usage in earlier oral epic poetry. Rujigh also argues that the general “might of NN” formula (used for instance of the βίη of Teukros at Hom. II. 23.859 and with other heroes and other terms of “might” such as μένος and ἴς elsewhere) reflects usages of Mycenaean royal courts. It is unclear whether the name of Herakles is attested in Linear B: a name which can be reconstructed as that of Herakles exists, but the reconstruction is not certain.
71 Hom. II. 5.633-642.
72 Hom. II. 5.648-662.
73 It is presumably not especially significant to the association of Herakles and Dionysos that the two leading Lykians of the Iliad each have speeches made to them in books 5 and 6 which mention Herakles and Dionysos respectively.
other epic poetry including a lost work attributed to Kreophylos to which Homer alludes. To the larger significance of Herakles’ sack of Troy we will return shortly.

Herakles makes another appearance shortly before the death of Tlepolemos, which has been mentioned already in section 2.1: it occurs when Dione is reminding the wounded Aphrodite of past occasions when gods were wounded by mortals. Her first examples are the impious giants Ephialtes and Otos, the sons of Aloeus (παῖδες Ἀλωῆος), who bound Ares in chains for more than a year. Then Dione tells of how the “strong son of Amphitryon” (κρατερὸς πάῖς Ἀμφιτρύωνος), who is not otherwise named, once struck Hera in her right breast with a three-barbed arrow, causing her terrible pain. She describes how “the same man, the son of aegis-bearing Zeus” (ὁυτὸς ἀνήρ, υἱὸς Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο) made even Hades feel the pain of his arrows when fighting “among the dead in Pylos” (ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσι), and she dwells on how the stricken Hades made his way to Olympos to be healed and comforted there, not unlike Aphrodite.

What can be said about Herakles on the basis of this? Perhaps most obviously, it must be said that we can only recognize that Dione’s tale concerns Herakles at all because of the peculiar description of his paternity: she calls him both the son of Amphitryon and the son of Zeus. Amphitryon is not mentioned anywhere else in the Iliad, but his relationship to Herakles is clarified through his mention in the Odyssey: when Odysseus sees Amphitryon’s wife Alkmene, he notes that she bore Herakles to Zeus, and this is the usual version of events in later sources, including Hesiod. Again, this allusive way of making reference to Herakles’ biography indicates the extent to which he is already an established character in the minds of Homer’s hearers, one who can be invoked through the mention of such details as his unusual paternity.

Recognizing that it is Herakles who is under discussion here, it may be noted that Dione does not provide an obviously flattering portrayal of him: he is implicitly likened to the impious giants who fought the gods. Dione’s subsequent remarks make this all the more clear: she does not approve of the “wicked man, violence-working, who did not take care in doing unseemly deeds, who gave pain with his archery to the gods who hold Olympos” (σχέτλιος, ὀβριμοεργός, ὃς οὐκ ὄθετ’ αἴσυλα ρέζων, / ὃς τόξοιν ἐκῆδε θεοῦς, οἱ "Ολυμποῦ ἔχουσι"). Yet in the context of the Trojan War, Dione’s remarks are perhaps of a somewhat partisan nature, intended first and foremost to comfort her injured daughter,

74 Davidson (1980), 201-202 (who summarizes Burkert’s argument in English); Burkert (1972), 80-85.
75 Hom. Il. 5.385-391.
76 Hom. Il. 5.392-394.
77 Hom. Il. 5.395-402.
78 Hom. Od. 11.266-268; Hes. Sc. 27-56.
79 In the Odyssey, Odysseus sees Aloeus’ wife Iphimedeia in the underworld and tells the story of how her two giant sons Ephialtes and Otos had plotted to storm Olympos before they were slain by Apollo. See Hom. Od. 11.305-320. It is interesting that her sons are simply called the sons of Aloeus in the Iliad, but in the Odyssey Iphimedeia is the wife of Aloeus who bears her sons to Poseidon. Speaking somewhat intertextually, Herakles and the “sons” of Aloeus look all the more alike because they are both described variously as the sons of a mortal (Amphitryon or Aloeus) and of a great Olympian god (Zeus or Poseidon).
80 Hom. Il. 5.403-404.
who certainly has her own partisan role in the conflict. That we should perhaps not take her speech at face-value may be indicated by what Dione says next, that Athena surely impelled “him” (τοῦτον) to fight against Aphrodite, and that Diomedes surely does not realize that the one who fights the gods must necessarily come to a bad end: she concludes by dwelling on the doom that may come to Diomedes. Her comments concerning Herakles and Diomedes blend together in a way that likens them very closely to one another, to the point that the description of one nearly describes the other. Athena did, for instance, support Herakles as she did Diomedes: indeed, in the next Iliadic mention of Herakles, Athena asks whether Zeus remembers how many times she saved “his son, worn down by the labours of Eurystheus” (ὑἱὸν, / τειρόμενον ... ὑπ’ Εὐρυσθῆος ἀέθλων). Thus while Dione may condemn the actions of Diomedes by likening him to Herakles, to other hearers her words may have the effect of serving to magnify Diomedes’ glory by likening him to a most illustrious predecessor. He is in fact one of several Homeric heroes who will be likened in various ways to Herakles: others, as will be discussed, include above all Achilles in the Iliad and Odysseus in the Odyssey. Again, while Homer’s text may tell us enough about Herakles for this process to proceed on the basis of information provided internally, the process is furthered greatly by a more general familiarity with the mythology of Herakles shared by Homer and his hearers.

As we consider our picture of Herakles’ character emerging from the Iliad, it remains though that his legacy there is somewhat ambivalent among the Homeric gods. To the special cases of Hera and Hades we will return below. By comparing Herakles to the giants Otos and Ephialtes and saying that he shot the gods of Olympos, it is perhaps as though we (insofar as we, ancient or modern, are mindful of other stories of Otos and Ephialtes in which the brothers strive to capture Olympos) have been invited to imagine Herakles impiously storming Olympos, showering the gods with his arrows. This image seems all the more incongruous to us in light of what we know about Herakles’ role in the Gigantomachy. Already commonplace in 6th century vase-painting (and even attested in some of the earliest monumental sculpture) is the image of Herakles fighting with his bow on behalf of the gods against the giants: as will be considered in another chapter, it is this deed which is often said elsewhere to have earnt him his place among the gods, as is indicated explicitly first by Pindar. Against this incongruous image I think we must set what we know on the basis of the analogy of Diomedes to Herakles. As we have seen from his comments to Glaukos discussed in section 2.1, Diomedes is aware of the dangers inherent in theomachy, and he only fights the gods with the encouragement (one might even call it “permission”) of Athena. Moreover, he is not waging an indiscriminate war against the gods but is rather fighting against specific gods (and mortals) among the Trojans. By the analogy of Diomedes to Herakles, this

81 Hom. II. 5.405-415.
82 Hom. II. 8.362-363.
83 Carpenter (1986), 55-60; Pl. N. 1.67-72.
84 Hom. II. 5.124-132, 5.826-834.
gives us some reason to think that Herakles’ actions against Hera and Hades may have proceeded with similar encouragement and in a similarly limited context, and knowing Athena’s role in helping Herakles, we have some cause to think she could have been involved. This must remain speculative: again, Homer only alludes to such events.

It should also be noted again that we see Herakles invoked by Dione as a kind of exemplary theomachos, and that given Diomedes’ own use of Dionysos as an exemplary victim of another theomachos, there may be a significance to the involvement of both Herakles and Dionysos in acts of theomachy. Importantly, we have seen that Diomedes himself is routinely described as mainomenos: his enemies say that he rages, and both Diomedes and Achilles speak of Diomedes’ spear as raging. It is only when he is in this state that Diomedes fights gods in battle: there appears to be something mainomenos about one who fights the gods, in which case it may be an apt description of Herakles, to whom Diomedes in his aristeia is likened. Yet we have also seen in section 2.1 that the word mainomenos describes Dionysos in the very moment when he is fought by Lykourgos, and that Dione’s first example of a god impiously fought, Ares, is also the god most regularly called mainomenos in the Iliad. Moreover, we have seen that Hera, the goddess wounded by Herakles, is once described this way as well. Thus we may be seeing another way in which theomachy blurs the distinction between mortals and gods, with both combatants being characterized by a certain emotional state of raging-madness. If so, and if this state is of particular significance to Herakles and Dionysos, then we may already be seeing in the Iliad an indication of the role of both figures in negotiating the boundaries between mortals and immortals, a role which will appear much more clearly (and in somewhat different ways) in later sources, to be discussed here in later chapters. For the form of the role’s appearance in Homer, it seems that in a martial work like the Iliad we may have good reason to expect the distinction between gods and mortals to be negotiated at least in part through direct combat. Thus we may have further indication of what it means to call Dionysos mainomenos in a specifically Iliadic context: the context of other works will allow for additional meanings to the term, and this will certainly be true when Herakles is called mainomenos as well.

Herakles makes his next appearance, though again not by name, in book 8. This passage was mentioned just above: Athena is complaining to Hera that Zeus is letting Hektor rout the Achaians, failing to show her proper gratitude for frequently saving his son when the latter was worn down

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85 Hom. Il. 5.185 (μαίνεται, said by Pandaros), 6.101 (μαίνεται, said by Helenos), 8.111 (μαίνεται, said by Diomedes of his spear), 16.75 (μαίνεται, said by Achilles of Diomedes’ spear).

86 Also, if Dionysos as a charma to mortals may in some capacity be a source of pain to those who are not mortals (including Hera), and since Herakles is closely associated with Dionysos in the passage that calls Dionysos a charma to mortals, it is interesting that Herakles the theomachos is a source of pain to (some) immortal gods. If this is not simply coincidental, then we might expect, on the basis of the zero-sum workings of Iliadic charma, that Herakles as a source of pain to the deities Hera and Hades is somehow acting as a charma to mortals. Thus as we proceed it will be necessary to look for independent evidence in Homer of Herakles somehow benefiting mortals by confronting these gods, in addition to other entities who are not mortals.
labouring for Eurystheus.\textsuperscript{87} It is by the characterizing mention of his labouring for Eurystheus that we recognize Zeus’ son as being Herakles, and again his labours for the king appear already to be traditional. This image is further elaborated by Athena, who describes Herakles as crying out to the heavens in his distress, prompting Zeus to send her to help him: thus we see Herakles enjoying the patronage of Zeus and Athena, as we would expect on the basis of other sources.\textsuperscript{88} Lastly, Athena mentions Herakles’ great labour of fetching the “dog of hateful Hades” (κύνα στυγεροῦ Ἀΐδαο), and suggests that had she known then of Zeus’ ingratitude to her, Herakles would never have escaped the underworld.\textsuperscript{89} Thus we see again an indication that Herakles may have an antagonistic aspect to his relationship to Hades, wounding him at one time and at another going to the underworld to take his dog. We will return to the topics of Hades and his dog (who receives no name in the \textit{Iliad}) below. What needs further comment here, since it is perhaps more unusual to us, in light of the generalized traditional image of Herakles, is the regret with which Athena describes her helping of Herakles during his labours, even the implication that she was reluctant to help him in the first place. Are we to picture such an Athena as she is depicted helping Herakles on, for instance, the metopes of the temple of Zeus at Olympia?\textsuperscript{90} I think another explanation may be in order, if we are not to simply dismiss this account. There are two important contextual aspects of Athena’s speech to note. The first is that she is speaking at a time of utmost disharmony among the gods in the \textit{Iliad}, and her words may serve to indicate how dire their situation has become, since we see her at odds with Herakles and even Zeus himself. I suspect even more to the point though is the fact that the characteristically cunning Athena is trying to rouse Hera to join her in helping the Achaians, against the will of Zeus. We already know that Herakles once shot Hera in the breast, and there will be further indications in the \textit{Iliad}, as elsewhere, that Hera struggled unrelentingly against him. Athena is reminding Hera of Zeus’ support for Herakles, while distancing herself from Zeus and Herakles by providing an alternative interpretation of what may already have been her traditional role as Herakles’ great divine patron. Hera’s response is to immediately do what Athena wished: Athena’s strategy, if such it is, is successful. If we are justified in reading the passage in this way, then it does not in fact force us to reconsider our usual understanding of Herakles’ relationship to Athena in the \textit{Iliad}.

We may get further background pertinent to Herakles’ wounding of Hades in the next mention of Herakles, in book 11. Here Nestor recalls the glorious deeds of his youth: he mentions that the people of Pylos were in difficulty because the “Herakleian might afflicted” (ἐκάκωσε βίη Ἡρακληείη) them years before, killing the best of the Pylians and even all eleven of Nestor’s brothers.\textsuperscript{91} This passage also

\textsuperscript{87} Hom. \textit{Il}. 8.357-363.
\textsuperscript{88} Hom. \textit{Il}. 8.364-365. Among these other sources is the \textit{Odyssey}; see for instance Hom. \textit{Od}. 11.626. Athena’s patronage of Herakles is also important in light of her patronage of Achilles and Odysseus, who (as will be discussed below) both are portrayed by Homer as having Herakles as their illustrious model.
\textsuperscript{89} Hom. \textit{Il}. 8.366-369.
\textsuperscript{90} For these metopes as a kind of \textit{locus classicus} of Herakles see for instance Stafford (2012), 24-29.
\textsuperscript{91} Hom. \textit{Il}. 11.689-693.
gives us further indication of precisely when Herakles lived: we see that he was active, apparently slaying Pylians in battle, when the elderly Nestor was still too young to fight beside his brothers. This fits somewhat awkwardly with Herakles’ fathering of Tlepolemos, but it still places him in a general way in the generation or two preceding the Trojan War. A thoroughgoing and precise chronological consistency cannot be expected for the deeds of Herakles: this seems to be true already by the time of the Iliad’s composition. As for Pylos, we have seen that it was the site of Hades’ wounding by Herakles “among the dead,” so this event was perhaps part of the same campaign described by Nestor, though he says nothing of it here, and we can say little on the basis of the Iliad about what provoked Herakles against the Pylians or against Hades himself at Pylos. Again, it seems likely that there existed already stories accessible to the audiences of Nestor and Homer which could have made these events less mysterious to them.92

As for the animosity of Hera towards Herakles, we see more of it recounted in book 14, where Herakles is directly named for the first time in our text. As Hera plots the seduction of Zeus, Hypnos expresses his reluctance to help her again: he remembers an earlier time when “that overbearing son of Zeus” (κεῖνος ὑπέρθυμος Διὸς υἱὸς) returned from sacking Troy, and how with Hypnos’ help Hera sent him off-course in a great storm to Kos, which provoked the wrath of Zeus, who would have flung Hypnos from Olympos had he not fled to powerful Nyx for safety.93 Already we recognize that the son of Zeus in question is surely Herakles, since he is said to have sacked Troy in the past: Tlepolemos and Sarpedon’s discussion of that event has been described above. Hera’s response to Hypnos dispels any doubts we might have about this, since she tells Hypnos that Zeus surely will not become as upset now over the Trojans as he was then over “his own son Herakles” (Ἡρακλῆος ... παῖδος ἑοῖο).94 As was seen earlier when Athena lamented Zeus’ ingratitude to her, we see indicated again Zeus’ fondness for his son Herakles. Indeed, Zeus himself reminds Hera of the same incident in book 15, showing again his care for Herakles. He asks her if she remembers how terribly he punished her because of his grief for “divine Herakles” (Ἡρακλῆος θείοιο), driven off-course to Kos, whom Zeus personally restored thence to Argos.95 Of course, the reason for Hera’s hatred of Herakles is implied clearly in a passage between the two just mentioned, discussed above in section 2.1: this is the part of book 14 where Zeus recounts the great lusts of his past, including that felt for Herakles’ mother Alkmene (together with Dionysos’ mother

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92 Thus it also remains difficult to say how Herakles’ bloody campaign against the Pylians, notwithstanding the confrontation with Hades, might make Herakles a charma to mortals. It is speculative even to suppose only that the dead among whom Herakles and Hades fight are the slaughtered Pylians. With such difficulties in mind, it is interesting that the scholia on Hom. II. 5.397 (ed. Erbse) reveal that ancient commentators sought to emend this passage. Thus Aristarchos makes “at Pylos” (ἐν Πύλῳ) into “in anger” (ἐν χόλῳ) or “at night” (ἑσπέρῳ), allowing Herakles’ confrontation with Hades among the dead to take place elsewhere. The D scholia on Hom. II. 5.397 (ed. Heyne), referring to Aristarchos again, suggest “at the gate” (ἐν πύλῃ) instead, specifically the gate of Hades, making this event part of the fetching of Hades’ dog.

93 Hom. II. 14.249-262.
94 Hom. II. 14.264-266.
95 Hom. II. 15.18-30. The implications of the word θείοιο will receive further comment below.
Semele). Again, the mythological themes involved, in this case the persecution of Herakles by Hera since he is the son of Zeus by a mortal woman, seem already to be traditional. The same may be true of Herakles’ misadventure at Kos, particularly if it can be related to something such as the strange events of the archaic epic Meropis: again, it seems that Homer only touches on the larger mythology of Herakles available to him and to his audience, a mythology which may now be largely inaccessible to us.

The next passage to mention Herakles, later in book 15, contributes little to our understanding of him. We are told that among the Greeks slain by Hektor is a certain Periphetes the Mykenaian, the son of Kopreus, the base herald who brought messages from Eurystheus to the “Herakleian might” (βίῃ Ἡρακληείῃ). For our purposes, this serves merely as still further attestation in Homer of Herakles’ labouring for Eurystheus, though the low character attributed to the king’s herald may suggest a certain ignobility as regards Eurystheus himself: more on Eurystheus will follow shortly.

In contrast, the mention of Herakles in book 18 is of considerable significance to our understanding of his Homeric character and larger role in the Iliadic narrative. Here Thetis warns Achilles that he will die if he returns to the fighting at Troy. Achilles replies that he must fight, accepting whatever the gods bring to pass, even if that means dying, “for not even the might of Herakles escaped his doom, although he was most dear to the Kronian lord Zeus, but Fate subdued him and the painful wrath of Hera” (οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ βίη Ἡρακλῆος φύγε κῆρα, / ὅς περ φίλτατος ἔσκε Διὶ Κρονίωνι ἀνακτι: / ἀλλὰ ἐ Ἑμῖρα δάμασσε καὶ ἀργαλέος χόλος Ἡρης). Here we see again the great fondness of Zeus for Herakles, besides Hera’s corresponding hatred of him. But perhaps more importantly for our purposes, we see explicitly the use of Herakles as a paradigmatic hero within the text. Achilles himself takes Herakles as his model, justifying his current actions through this glorious example: since even Herakles had to die, Achilles must also die, but by implication Achilles too will accomplish great and famous deeds as did Herakles.

Achilles’ use of Herakles as a paradigmatic hero is only possible through a familiarity with the life and, in this case, death of Herakles from a larger mythological tradition.

The details of this tradition may raise certain difficulties of interpretation for us, since Achilles all but says that Herakles dies. Nothing further is indicated about the death of Herakles in the Iliad. In

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96 For the dating of the Meropis see Lloyd-Jones (1984), 145-150; for other earlier sources concerning Kos, see the discussion of Fowler (2000), 314-315. Having seen at Hom. II. 2.676-679 that a grandson of Herakles commands (among others) the troops from Kos, we may have further reason to think that Homer is making allusive reference to deeds of Herakles at Kos. Thinking again of Homeric charma, we may also note that Herakles as described here is presumably a source of joy to Zeus and in that very capacity a source simultaneously of pain to Hera, who is made to suffer terrible punishments owing to Zeus’ care for Herakles. On the other hand, Zeus’ concern for Herakles causes him to suffer grief for him, and so in this respect Herakles is a source of pain even to Zeus.

97 Hom. II. 15.636-643. For the potentially base name of Kopreus himself, derived from kopros (κόπρος, meaning “dung”), see Chantraine (1970, vol. 2), 563.

98 Hom. II. 18.117-119.

99 Such an interpretation of the passage is already indicated in the scholia Hom. II. 18.117c/d (ed. Erbse), which note that the example of Herakles provides a “paradigm” (παράδειγμα or παράδειγμα) for Achilles.

100 It should be noted though that both Philoktetes “knowing well his archery” (τόξων ἐῢ εἰδὼς) and his exile on Lemnos are mentioned; see Hom. II. 2.716-725. Later sources, to be considered in the discussion of Tragedy (especially of
light of the well-known tradition, attested already in the *Odyssey*, that Herakles was made an immortal god, the emphatic mention of his death has sometimes been read as an indication that the story of Herakles’ apotheosis was not yet current at the time of the *Iliad*’s composition, and appears only in the *Odyssey* as a later, though nonetheless archaic, addition. However, I will argue below that a careful reading of the *Odyssey* and of Hesiod (besides later sources) supports another possibility, namely that Herakles must die before he can become immortal. Thus it will be seen that there is no inevitable incompatibility between the death of Herakles and his immortality, at least on the basis of his presentation in archaic epic as considered on its own terms. However, it remains possible to suppose that Herakles was not considered a god at the time of the *Iliad*’s composition, on the basis that there is no explicit mention of his divinity there. His divinity could, after all, have appeared in several ways.

Setting aside the lack of any description of his cult, it is telling that Herakles is never portrayed among the gods in the *Iliad*, though this is true as well, as we have seen, of Dionysos, in addition to other important deities such as Demeter. God or not, what is clear is that most of the stories about Herakles reflected in Homer, as will be seen to be the case in most later literary sources as well, seem largely to concern his life as a mortal. Homer seemingly has no stories to tell about Herakles as a god.

With Herakles’ time as a mortal in mind, a word about the “doom” or rather *kēr* (κήρ) that overcomes his Iliadic might is in order. One of my arguments in this dissertation is that among the basic tasks of Herakles and Dionysos as gods in Greek religion there is the protection of mortals from a number of baneful entities associated with death and the world of the dead, which in later times unambiguously include *kēres*.

The evidence for this task is provided most fully by sources which post-date the *Iliad*, and I think it is clear from what little Homer has to say about Dionysos that there is no clear evidence for Dionysos protecting mortals from *kēres* in the *Iliad*, although the possibility that such a task could be related to his being called a *charma* to mortals will be considered once his appearances in other sources have been examined. Homer’s Herakles is not depicted protecting mortals from *kēres* either, but Achilles’ words do show us a mortal Herakles who succumbs to *kēr*. Might this provide any

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101 This incongruity is noted in the scholia Hom. *Il.* 18.117a/b (ed. Erbse), where it is remarked that either Homer “did not know that Herakles is immortal” (ὅτι οὐκ οἶδεν ἄθανατον τὸν Ἡρακλέα), or that he simply did not wish to discuss the matter, since the mention of Herakles among the gods on Olympos in the *Odyssey* suggests that he did know. Setting the program of much (comparatively recent) 20th century study, Erwin Rohde argues that the journey of Odysseus to Hades is a later addition to the *Odyssey*, largely un-Homeric in spirit, and that the encounter with Herakles is an addition to this added material, with the three verses concerning Herakles’ apotheosis marking a still further addition. He suggests that the encounter with Herakles was added because of the “analogy” he provides for Odysseus. See Rohde (1925), 32-39. As I will argue, the analogy goes far beyond the descent to Hades made by both Herakles and Odysseus.

102 Regarding Herakles, the literary sources in question are much later in date. They include the difficult Lykophron, *Alexandra*, 663 (where the word Κηραμύντου is thought to refer to Herakles) and the *Orphic Hymn to Herakles* (ed. Quandt) 12.16, where Herakles is said to “send away the baneful *kēres* with winged arrows” (πτηνοῖς τ’ ἰοβόλοις κήρας χαλεπὰς ἀπόπεμπε). Visual sources, particularly Attic vases, may present a similar picture already in the late archaic period: these will be considered in a later chapter.
antecedent for Herakles’ later activity of confronting *kēres*? Keeping in mind the use of the word *kēr* elsewhere in the *Iliad*, it seems likely that Achilles’ description of Herakles’ failure to escape *kēr* is better understood in terms of a larger pattern of Homeric diction concerning the demise of (most typically) a warrior.103 This is not to say that we should suppose the early archaic audience of Homeric poetry had in mind a Herakles who dies in battle, quite differently than in the accounts attested not long after of the fatal robe of Deianira.104 More likely, this language reflects Achilles’ martial perspective, his own (and Homer’s) way of interpreting the traditional character of Herakles: this would facilitate his paradigmatic understanding of the example of Herakles’ death. Thus Herakles’ fatal encounter with *kēr* is simply like that of many other heroes in the *Iliad*, though it is distinctive insofar as Achilles himself cites it as an exemplary instance of such an encounter. Again, it remains that later hearers and readers of Homer familiar with a Herakles who is a god who fights *kēres* and other such entities might find another significance to the story, involving a Herakles who already struggles against *kēres* as a mortal.

The next mention of Herakles tells us something more about the unusual circumstances of his birth, and about his service under Eurystheus. Agamemnon, accepting Achilles’ return to the fighting at Troy, blames their earlier quarrel on Zeus, Fate (*Μοίρα*, seen just above “subduing” Herakles), Fury (*Ερινύς*), and especially Ruin (*Ατη*), Zeus’ eldest daughter who blinds all.105 He then tells the story of how Ruin once blinded even Zeus himself, on the day when Alkmene was to bear the Herakleian might (*βίην Ἡρακλείην*) in Thebes. When Zeus boasted that a human child was about to be born of his own stock, one who would become a great ruler, Hera tricked him, blinded as he was to her treachery, to swear an oath upholding his claim. She then caused Eurystheus to be born prematurely in Argos, while holding back Alkmene’s delivery in Thebes.106 After being told by Hera of Eurystheus’ birth, Zeus was stricken by a great grief and in his rage he flung Ruin from Olympos, hence she now dwells among mortals.107 Yet because of her Zeus “always groaned whenever he saw his own dear son doing some shameful labour for Eurystheus” (*τὴν αἰεὶ στενάχεσχ’, ὅθ’ ἑὸν φίλον υἱὸν ὁρῷτο / ἔργον ἀεικὲς ἔχοντα ὑπ’ Εὐρυσθῆος ἀέθλων*).108 Several aspects of Herakles’ Homeric character and circumstances seen already are seen again in this passage: among these are the fondness of Zeus for his son Herakles and Hera’s hatred of him, both of which apparently predate his birth. We see again Herakles’ Theban birthplace and his mortal mother Alkmene there. Moreover, we see Herakles’ characteristic toiling for Eurystheus (who is here called an Argive): it is presumably called a “shameful work” (*ἔργον ἀεικὲς*) because it is the sort of toiling for another that was not, according to the initial plan of Zeus, supposed to be Herakles’ destiny. However, just as Agamemnon was deceived by Fate and Ruin, so too might we

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103 For a detailed discussion of *kēr* and other causes of Iliadic death, see Garland (1981), 45.
104 This story does not appear among extant sources until Hes. *Fr.* 25.17-25.
expect Zeus, deceived by Ruin, to have been also subject to Fate: thus Herakles’ diminished status among mortals, toiling for another king, is due to the same combination of Fate and the wrath of Hera that leads eventually to his demise as described by Achilles. Thus it frames his entire mortal existence, marking his birth and death. Apart from the mention of his toiling for Eurystheus, few details of Herakles’ labours are forthcoming in Agamemnon’s account, since they are not the subject of the story. Indeed, only one deed, the fetching of Hades’ dog from the underworld discussed above, is specified in the Iliad as being a labour performed for Eurystheus. It is not clear whether Herakles’ other specified struggles—seeking the mares of Laomedon and consequently sacking Troy when they were not granted, campaigning against Pylos and other cities in the western Peloponnese, there fighting Hades and on an unspecified occasion Hera—are here considered labours for Eurystheus. Although according to much later mythographers who distinguish between the labours proper (athla) and various other quests (parerga) of Herakles the deeds just mentioned are not properly labours of Herakles, for various reasons this systematizing distinction is likely altogether inapplicable to the Homeric material. What we can say about the deeds of Herakles to which Homer alludes is that they accord with the pattern attested later: some seem to involve the subduing of animals, while others are of a military nature; some are performed for Eurystheus (for reasons unspecified), while others, perhaps, are not. We will return to the topic of the general nature of Herakles’ labours when the Odyssey is discussed in section 2.3 below.

It should also be noted that Agamemnon’s tale is striking for its detail: most mentions of Herakles in the Iliad are rather more allusive, referring to things presumably well-known already, but this one is not. It is tempting to conclude that it must be a Homeric innovation, but there are other possible explanations: it is thus necessary to consider the tale in its larger context, as a speech of Agamemnon. Given Agamemnon’s rhetorical goal of deflecting blame from his own person, a long story not too similar to the circumstances of his quarrel with Achilles may simply be just what he needs. However, like many of Agamemnon’s other speeches it is somewhat disingenuous. Agamemnon’s speech relies on the comparison of himself to Zeus: both are kings among the powerful, and if even Zeus can err, so too may Agamemnon; but as Zeus remains the great ruler of the gods, so too does Agamemnon remain the great commander at Troy. Trapped by the logic of his story though, Agamemnon must say something about the consequences of Zeus’ mistake, in this case the familiar figure of Zeus’ own son enduring the labours of Eurystheus. The problem here for Agamemnon is that within the larger Iliadic context, where Achilles has likened himself to Herakles, any story explaining how it came to be that the great Herakles had to toil for a lesser king may reflect badly on Agamemnon by making Agamemnon himself reminiscent less of Zeus than of Eurystheus. The implication, as it is elsewhere in the Iliad, is that

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109 What follows Herakles’ mortal existence will be considered below in the discussion of the Odyssey.
110 Fowler (2000), 271; see also Stafford (2012), 24-30.
111 For Agamemnon as an ineffective orator, see for instance Martin (1989), 62-64, 69-74, and especially 113-119.
112 This point is also discussed in Davidson (1980), 200; Lowenstam (1993), 109-112. Lowenstam notes that Zeus indeed suffers now for Achilles just as he did once for Herakles.
Achilles is by far the greater man than Agamemnon. It is thus only by Homer’s telling the story more fully that it is able to accomplish its effects. Yet again, Herakles serves as the paradigmatic hero to whom the later heroes at Troy are compared, and here we even see the comparison extended to Herakles’ larger circle.

There remains one last mention of Herakles in the *Iliad*. Having agreed with Zeus’ plan for the gods to fight one another openly at Troy, Poseidon leads the way to the wall of “divine Herakles” (Ἡρακλῆος θείοιο): this was built together by the Trojans and Athena, so that it might save “him” (μιν), seemingly Herakles, as he fled the sea-monster from the shore to the plain. The frustrating concision of Homer’s reference to this incident shows us that he is again likely alluding to a well-known tale which he need not tell in full, though it would appear to refer to another event which took place when Herakles was at Troy. Later literary sources give a fuller account of Herakles battling the sea-monster to save a certain Hesione, daughter of Laomedon, the Trojan king whose mares Herakles is said by Homer’s Sarpedon to have sought. However, traces of the battle may survive in Athenian black-figure pottery, suggesting an older, albeit very poorly-attested, story.

This is also the second time that we have seen Herakles called “divine” (θείοιο). Might this word be of any significance as regards questions of Herakles’ mortality and divinity? It is a fairly common description in the *Iliad*, used especially, as here, in the genitive θείοιο, and like the “Herakleian might” it appears to have Mycenaean roots. In this construction it is used once for the sea (9.214), Dolon’s father Eumedes (10.315), the Lemnian king Thoas (14.230), and Briseis’ father Mynes (19.296). Oileus has the distinction of being called θείοιο twice, both in reference to the paternity of his son Medon. The word is used four times each to describe Odysseus and Achilles. Thus with the unusual exception of the sea in book 9, the word is used consistently to describe mortal heroes, especially the great Homeric heroes Odysseus and Achilles. It follows that Herakles, as the exemplary hero of the past to whom Achilles is compared in the *Iliad* (as Odysseus will be in the *Odyssey*), is also described as θείοιο. The word seems to mean “divine” in the sense of “godlike,” referring to heroes who, though like the gods in their surpassing greatness, are nonetheless mortal. It is unlikely that the word alludes in the *Iliad* to Herakles’ divinity: it points rather to his exemplary mortal career.

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113 For Achilles’ general superiority to Agamemnon, see for instance Nagy (1999), 26-32.  
115 See the discussion of sources in Fowler (2000), 311-313.  
116 BA 219, now in Taranto, attributed to Lydos shows Herakles fighting a serpentine monster of enormous size, while there is behind him a woman apparently trapped against a rock. Based on the later literary accounts, it has been suggested that the image could depict Herakles fighting to save Hesione. See Boardman (1974), 224, fig. 179. This is the only such image extant from the archaic period, and there are extant none from the classical period, at least suggested to be images of Hesione.  
It is this particular exemplarity, the way in which the “might of Herakles” provides a definitive model of human excellence to the later generation of heroes at Troy, that may be especially important to our understanding of a specifically Homeric character of Herakles in the *Iliad*. Lacking other contemporary sources, we unfortunately cannot say that the use of Herakles as an exemplar is a distinguishing feature of Homeric poetry. What we can say, since (as I will discuss) the figure of Herakles continues to be used as a foremost exemplar by later poets, prose-writers, and vase-painters, is that if Homer did not originate the practice, he nonetheless surely gave it an enduring form, one which would have been available wherever Homeric poetry was recited. It is also, as we will see, in no small part through his role as an exemplar that Herakles is brought together with Dionysos, even though the latter is a much more minor figure in the *Iliad* than is Herakles. Lastly, in the martial context of the *Iliad* it is as a warrior that Herakles is especially exemplary. We have reason to think that this aspect of Herakles has been emphasized by Homer, likely to the detriment of other traditional aspects of Herakles. However, we will see something more of the latter in the *Odyssey*, to which we turn next.

2.3) Herakles in the *Odyssey*

It is as one of the great bowmen of the past that Homer regularly presents Herakles in the *Odyssey*. We have already seen aspects of this side of Herakles in the *Iliad*, where Dione describes a Herakles “who gave pain to the gods who hold Olympos with his archery” (ὅς τόξοισιν ἐκηδε θεούς, οἱ Ὁλυμποῦ ἔχουσι), even wounding Hera and Hades. It is not clear that Odysseus has such a story in mind when he speaks of the archery of Herakles. Goaded on by Euryalos to take part in the Phaiakian athletics, the disguised Odysseus offers a general challenge and boasts of his skill in archery, saying that he is by far the best archer among mortals, second only to Philoktetes among the Achaian ranks at Troy. He then qualifies his boast, saying that he would never vie with the men of old, such as Herakles and Eurytos of Oichalia, “who once strove even with the immortals in archery” (ἀνδράσι δὲ προτέροισιν ἐριζέμεν οὐκ ἔθελήσω, / οὔθ Ἡρακλῆι οὔτ’ Ἐυρύτῳ Ὁἰχαληῆι, / οἳ ρα καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἐρίζεσκον περὶ τόξων). In the case of Eurytos, Odysseus remarks that Apollo slew him for daring to challenge the god to an archery contest; in the case of Herakles, Odysseus makes no further comment. Besides the possibility that Odysseus is alluding to something like the story of Herakles’ excessive archery told by Dione in the *Iliad*, there are several other peculiarities to his boast. For instance, he brings Herakles and Eurytos together for reasons that are simply thematic: the story he tells about Eurytos’ death appears to have nothing to do with Herakles, and it may rather bring to our minds those stories of other mortals who foolishly challenge Apollo or another god to such contests. This

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124 The possibility of this allusion is suggested by the scholia on Hom. *Od.* 8.224 (ed. Dindorf).
125 Indeed, a comparable instance in Homer is Thamyris’ challenge to the Muses mentioned at *Il.* 2.594-600: it so happens that Thamyris is said to come from Eurytos’ city of Oichalia. See also Fowler (2000), 331.
may strike us as unusual in light of others versions of events attested later, in which (to give a general picture drawing on multiple sources) Herakles bests the Oichalian king Eurytos in an archery contest for the hand of his daughter Iole: Eurytos refuses to grant Herakles his prize, and so Herakles raises an army, sacks Oichalia and takes Iole.\textsuperscript{126} If Homer knows such a story, he does not tell it, though it is known that an epic \textit{Sack of Oichalia} existed already in the archaic period, and some archaic vase-paintings appear to depict stories about Herakles, Eurytos, and Iole, not otherwise extant in any form before Sophokles’ \textit{Trachiniae}.\textsuperscript{127} Perhaps the different version of events given by Homer’s Odysseus has something to do with the needs of his speech for a story about mortals challenging the very gods in archery. In any case, here Herakles and Eurytos are invoked as examples of the limits of mortal achievement, though in both cases they seem to push these limits too far to be appropriate examples to the lesser mortals of a later generation.

However, the truth of this may be more complicated than it first appears, for Homer has more to say about Herakles and Eurytos. Passing over book 11 for the moment, both figures return in book 21 in the narrator’s description of the bow of Odysseus. We learn that this bow is in fact the very bow that once belonged to Eurytos, given to Odysseus by Iphitos, Eurytos’ son and, we learn, Odysseus’ friend of long ago.\textsuperscript{128} We also learn that Herakles, “the stout-hearted son of Zeus, privy to great works” (Διὸς υἱὸν ... καρτερόθυμον, / ... Ἡρακλῆα, μεγάλων ἐπιίστορα ἔργων) murdered Iphitos in order to steal his fine mares, doing this when Iphitos was a guest in Herakles’ home.\textsuperscript{129} Homer’s language, that of the narrator, strongly condemns Herakles for this treacherous deed, calling him a “wicked man, who respected neither table nor the vengeance of the gods” (σχέτλιος, οὐδὲ θεῶν ὄπιν αἰδέσατ’ οὐδὲ τράπεζαν).

This Herakles is seemingly in no way a positive example: if anything, his murderous inhospitality brings to mind the Kyklopes and other villains of the \textit{Odyssey}. Thus we cannot say that Homer’s Herakles always functions as an exemplary hero of the past, unless we allow exemplarity to sometimes carry a negative sense.\textsuperscript{131} In any case, it is also important to see that Odysseus may not have been completely honest in saying that he would not vie with the great bowmen of old such as Herakles and Eurytos: Odysseus, we now realize, has among his prized possessions the very bow of Eurytos, and his final confrontation with the suitors shows that he is uniquely worthy of wielding the weapon of one

\textsuperscript{126} For a discussion of sources see Fowler (2000), 329-332.
\textsuperscript{127} See again Fowler (2000), 329-332; Burkert (1972), 80-85.
\textsuperscript{128} Hom. \textit{Od}. 21.11-41. In light of the traditions attested later, that of the archery contest of Herakles and Eurytos, and of Philoktetes’ inheritance of the bow of Herakles, Odysseus’ earlier claim to be second only to Philoktetes in archery is interesting: just as Eurytos was surpassed by Herakles in archery, so too is Odysseus (who now owns the bow of Eurytos) surpassed by Philoktetes (who now owns the bow of Herakles).
\textsuperscript{129} Hom. \textit{Od}. 21.24-30.
\textsuperscript{130} Hom. \textit{Od}. 21.28.
\textsuperscript{131} It is interesting, in light of the developing tendency over the archaic and classical periods to make Herakles into a thoroughly positive exemplar that there is such a strong tendency in later mythographers towards, in Fowler’s words, “exonerating Herakles of guilt in any of these events.” See Fowler (2000), 332-333.
of the greatest ever mortal archers. Therefore, notwithstanding Odysseus’ expressed reluctance to vie with the likes of Herakles and Eurytos, it seems that they remain to him as examples of some sort.

I think that it is with the grisly death of the suitors in mind, together with the examples set for Odysseus by Herakles and Eurytos, that we must understand Odysseus’ earlier encounter with Herakles in book 11. It is an encounter prefigured by Odysseus’ first seeing Amphitrion’s wife Alkmene, “who bore Herakles the brave-spirited and lion-hearted after having lain in the arms of great Zeus” (ἡ ῥ’ Ἡρακλῆα θρασυμέμνονα θυμολέοντα / γείνατ’ ἐν ἁγκοίνῃσι Διὸς μεγάλου μυγείσα).132 We have seen this basic description of Herakles the “brave-spirited and lion-hearted” before, in Telephemos’ boast to Sarpedon in the Iliad.133 What we should also note now is that, although the term “brave-spirited” describes only Herakles in Homer, the term “lion-hearted” describes one other man in the Iliad: it is how Aias, son of Telamon, describes Achilles, calling him “breaker-of-armies and lion-hearted” (ῥηξήνορα θυμολέοντα).134 The only other man in Homer to be called “lion-hearted” is Odysseus: in book 4 of the Odyssey, it is how Penelope twice describes him, lamenting her loss of a “good and lion-hearted husband” (πόσιν ἐσθλὸν ... θυμολέοντα).135 Thus a word used by Homer to describe Herakles generally is used also to characterize Achilles in the story of his wrath and Odysseus in the story of his homecoming: again, we see that two of Homer’s main heroes are likened to Herakles, the exemplary hero of an earlier generation who also fought at Troy and had a perilous journey thence to home.

Herakles receives further characterization in the following lines, in which Odysseus describes seeing Megare, “whom the son of Amphitrion wed, the force always unyielding” (τὴν ἔχεν Ἀμφιτρύωνος υἱὸς μένος αἰὲν ἀτειρής).136 We have regularly seen Herakles called “might” or βίη (βίη), but this is the only time that he is called “force” or μένος (μένος) in Homer.137 As for what it means to call him “unyielding” or ἀτειρῆς (ἀτειρής), the word is used elsewhere by Homer only in the Iliad, once by Paris to describe the heart of Hektor (in a simile likening Hektor’s heart to the axe of a shipwright), and thrice to describe bronze, specifically the bronze spear-tip of Diomedes when it smashes through the mouth of Pandaros, the bronze spear-tip of Hektor which cuts through six layers of Aias’ shield, and the resounding bronze armour of the fighting warriors at Troy.138 Thus there is a distinct severity if and indeed violence to the term ἀτειρῆς, though it is not clear whether it is a general characterization of Herakles or if it has more specific bearings to his relationship with Megare. This is unfortunately the only Homeric mention of her: we learn nothing else of what she means to Homer (or might mean to his hearers) beyond the fact that her father is a certain Kreion. Besides this Megare, the only other explicit indication in Homer of Herakles having dealings of any sort with specific mortal

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132 Hom. Od. 11.266-268.
133 Hom. Il. 5.638-639.
134 Hom. Il. 7.228.
135 Hom. Od. 4.724 & 814.
136 Hom. Od. 11.269-270.
137 For such descriptions see again Rujigh (1995), 82-83.
women—besides his mother Alkmene—is seen in Tlepolemos’ boast to be the son of Herakles and a certain Astyocheia, who seems to have been a war-captive. Thus it is not clear to me whether the assumed circumstances of Herakles’ wedding to Megare are similarly violent. On the other hand, it would likely be anachronistic to suppose that Homer and his early hearers have in mind though this violent characterization of Herakles something like what is likely an innovation of Euripides, Herakles’ killing of Megara. The passage is thus frustrating for clearly alluding to a larger mythology of Herakles known to Homer and his hearers but not altogether available to us, and so there is little we can say about the larger implications of it for the time being.

Having, as it were, set the stage for Herakles, we may now consider his appearance in book 11. The passage in question will be considered in detail and ought to be cited here in full.

Τὸν δὲ μέτ’ εἰσενόησα βίην Ἡρακληείην, εἴδουλον· αὐτὸς δὲ μετ’ θανάτοις θεοῖς
tέρπεται ἐν βαλίης καὶ ἔχει καλλίσφυρον Ἡβην,
[pαιδείς Δίος μεγάλοιο καὶ Ἡρῆς χρυσοπεδίλου.]
άμφι δὲ μιν κλαγγὶ ηκύων ἱν οἰκων ἢς,
pάντος’ ἀτυζομένων’ ὁ δ’ ἐρευνὴ Νυκτὶ εἰκώς,
γυμνὸν τόξον ἔχειν καὶ ἐπὶ νευρῆφιν οἰστόν,
δεῖνον παπταίνειν, αἰεὶ βαλέοντι εἰκώς.
σαρδαλέος δὲ ὀλοκληρώμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντα προσήυδα·

'The ghost of powerful Heracles—his ghost, I mean: the man himself delights in the great feasts of the deathless gods on high, wed to Hebe, famed for her lithe, alluring ankles, the daughter of mighty Zeus and Hera shod in gold. Around him cries of the dead rang out like cries of birds, scattering left and right in horror as on he came like Night,'
naked bow in his grip, an arrow grooved on the bowstring, glaring round him fiercely, forever poised to shoot.
A terror too, that sword-belt sweeping across his chest, a baldric of solid gold emblazoned with awesome work... bears and ramping boars and lions with wild, fiery eyes, and wars, routs and battles, massacres, butchered men.
May the craftsman who forged that masterpiece— whose skills could conjure up a belt like that— never forge another!
Heracles knew me at once, at first glance, and hailed me with a winging burst of pity:
“Royal son of Laertes, Odysseus famed for exploits, luckless man, you too? Braving out a fate as harsh as the fate I bore, alive in the light of day? Son of Zeus that I was, my torments never ended, forced to slave for a man not half the man I was: he saddled me with the worst heartbreaking labors. Why, he sent me down here once, to retrieve the hound that guards the dead—no harder task for me, he thought—but I dragged the great beast up from the underworld to earth and Hermes and gleaming-eyed Athena blazed the way!”
(trans. R. Fagles)

Thus Odysseus sees for himself the Herakleian might, or rather his image, or \(\textit{eidōlon} (\varepsilon \iota \delta ο \lambda ο ν)\), among the dead. The suddenness of the qualifying \(\textit{eidōlon}\) has led many commentators to read lines 602-604 as an interpolation dating likely to the 6\textsuperscript{th} century, an intrusion of Herakles the god into what is otherwise material from an earlier age when Herakles was regarded as simply a (necessarily dead) hero.\textsuperscript{143} As we have seen above, Herakles is not explicitly called an immortal anywhere else in Homer, and moreover, line 604 of these verses is recognizably the same as line 952 of Hesiod’s \textit{Theogony}: there are thus certainly grounds for suspicion.\textsuperscript{144} Without lines 602-604, Odysseus sees the dead Herakles among the dead; with the lines, Odysseus sees merely some kind of phantom, perhaps a remnant of Herakles’ mortality, while Herakles himself is among his fellow gods on Olympos.\textsuperscript{145} The fraught question of the originality of these lines need not detain us here, since it would seem that already by the 6\textsuperscript{th} century we can consider these lines sufficiently “Homeric” to tell us something about the contemporary Homeric Herakles as he stands in relation to the Herakles depicted, for instance, on Attic pottery. It remains that it is questionable whether the lines in question were always Homeric, and so they cannot be taken as evidence that Herakles was regarded as a god by Homer’s earliest hearers.\textsuperscript{146}

Maintaining lines 602-604, Odysseus says that Herakles himself is happily among the immortal gods, married now to Hebe, that is, Youth herself, the daughter of Zeus and Hera. We will return to the further implications of this delightful image below. Quite different is the sight of Herakles among the dead. Odysseus tells of the terrible sound made by the dead as they rush around this grim Herakles in

\textsuperscript{143} See for instance Rohde (1925), 39; Stafford (2012), 172-173. In contrast, for a defence of the lines in terms of a poetic technique of deliberate self-correction see Griffith (1990), 197.
\textsuperscript{144} Hes. \textit{Th}. 952.
\textsuperscript{145} For the idea that the shade is a remnant of the mortal part of Herakles see the scholia on Hom. \textit{Od}. 11.602 (ed. Dindorf).
\textsuperscript{146} For the dating of Homer see for instance Rujigh (1995), 21-25.
terror, like frightened birds. Their apparent fear seems due to the appearance of Herakles himself: he
looks like “black Night” (ἐρεμνῇ Νυκτὶ ἐοικώς; the capitalization of Night, both here and above, is
mine) and seems ready to strike with his bow at any moment. We have already seen Odysseus’
characterization of Herakles as an exemplary bowman; we now see that it remains true even of the dead
Herakles in Hades. Before we can dwell on the implications of this point, Odysseus describes Herakles’
great golden baldric, or aortēr (ἀορτήρ): it is decorated with “bears and wild boars and fierce lions,
combat and battle and slaughter and the slaying of men.” It thus recalls the labours of Herakles.
However, Homer himself has told us nothing about Herakles fighting bears and boars and lions, though
as detailed above, we have heard of his struggles with the dog of Hades—mentioned again by Herakles
himself—and a sea-monster at Troy, and we have seen him called “lion-hearted” and desiring the mares
of Iphitos and Laomedon. This passage is our best hint in Homer as to the considerable importance of
Herakles’ activity of subduing animals, something which is much better attested in other archaic (and
other) sources, both literary and visual. Thus again we see Homer making allusions to a larger
complex of Herakles mythology available to him and his hearers. The images on the baldric suggest two
sides to the deeds of Herakles, one involving animals and the other warfare. As we have seen above,
Homer’s presentation of Herakles has emphasized this second side of Herakles’ deeds. Again, in light of
the role of Herakles as an exemplary figure to the heroes of Homer, it seems probable that Homer is
emphasizing those aspects of Herakles’ complicated figure which are most pertinent to his heroes. Thus
in the Iliad, a tale of warriors at Troy, we hear much about Herakles as a warrior at Troy, and we see the
greatest of those warriors, Achilles, liken his mortal self to Herakles, as described in section 2.2 above.

Now it is Odysseus’ turn. Though he claimed to his Phaiakian hosts that he would not liken
himself to the great Bowman Herakles of old, now, having described the dead Herakles in Hades, there
still a great Bowman, Odysseus will make a clear comparison of himself to that very Herakles. However,
it is the unexpectedly talkative shade of Herakles who will do this work within Odysseus’ tale. These
are in fact Herakles’ only words in Homer, to the extent that we can identify Herakles with his
underworldly eidolon. This Herakles asks Odysseus if he (Odysseus) too is subject to the same sort of
“evil fate” (κακὸν μόρον) which once led him (Herakles) to go to Hades, and then he tells of how he

147 Hom. Od. 11.605-606.
148 Hom. Od. 11.606-608. Among other interpretations, I note especially the account of the scholia on Hom. Od. 11.605
(ed. Dindorf), which explain the noise by saying that when Herakles came to Hades for Kerberos, he made war upon the
dead and upon Herakles himself, hurting them and putting them to flight. Thus when Herakles’ shade returned to Hades,
the dead there thought that he had come back to hurt them again, and so they made war upon him (ἐμάχοντο πρὸς τὸ
eidolon αὐτοῦ). Here the dead are (reciprocally) aggressive.
149 Hom. Od. 11.609-612.
150 Hom. Il. 5.633-642 (lion-hearted), 5.648-662 (mares of Laomedon), 8.366-369 (dog of Hades), 20.144-148 (sea-
monster); Od. 11.266-268 (lion-hearted), 21.24-30 (mares of Iphitos).
151 For this topic see for instance Burkert (1979), 78-98; Burkert (1998), 11-26. We will return to Herakles’ confrontations
with animals in subsequent chapters.
152 Most of the other shades encountered by Odysseus have to taste the blood of his offering in order to be able to speak
coherently: see Hom. Od. 10.516-540, 11.23-50, 146-149, 225-234. Herakles’ shade seems to be an exception: for the
importance of the blood and the incongruity of this Herakles see for instance Rohde (1925), 36-39.
was forced to perform hard labours for a much lesser man (we recognize Eurystheus), the hardest labour (or aëthlos, ἄεθλος) being that of fetching the dog of Hades, which he accomplished, helped by Hermes and Athena.\textsuperscript{153} The precise circumstances of Odysseus’ journey are different, but the implication is clearly that he too is indeed subject to such a fate as was Herakles. Thus the implication of Odysseus’ tale is that none other than Herakles himself makes it clear that he, Herakles, may serve as a kind of example for Odysseus.\textsuperscript{154}

This depiction of Herakles shows other ways in which Herakles provides such an example. Like Achilles before him, for instance, Odysseus is helped by Athena, and we have seen Hermes come to Odysseus’ assistance as well.\textsuperscript{155} In the \textit{Iliad}, having already seen Agamemnon perhaps likened to Eurystheus, Odysseus’ service to Agamemnon at Troy may even recall Herakles, and the tale of Herakles’ fraught homecoming from Troy may also be of some pertinence. It is as an exemplary Bowman though that Herakles has been particularly characterized in the \textit{Odyssey}, and in this capacity too he serves as an example to Odysseus. The latter’s most distinguished feat of archery comes in the last books of the \textit{Odyssey}: the only one able to wield what we have seen was once the bow of Eurytos, he prevails in the archery contest for the hand of Penelope, and then slays the defeated suitors.\textsuperscript{156} Odysseus himself characterizes his victory in the contest as an aëthlos, using the same word we have already seen used by Herakles to describe his own labours.\textsuperscript{157} It indeed sounds like a deed worthy of Herakles, and though we have seen that Homer himself says nothing about the archery contest for the hand of Iole, it remains possible for hearers of Homer familiar with her story, as was possible by at least the 6\textsuperscript{th} century if not earlier, to think of Odysseus’ victory with Iole in mind.\textsuperscript{158} What follows is not on the same scale as the sack of Oichalia, but it remains a devastating slaughter of treacherous foes. At the sight of the Bowman Odysseus the suitors too are terrified, making a great clamour and rushing around “in all directions” (πάντοσ(ε)), just like the dead around Herakles.\textsuperscript{159} Both bowmen are a grim sight, glancing darkly around them, ready to strike, though the precise language which describes them is different.\textsuperscript{160}

\textsuperscript{153}Hom. \textit{Od}. 11.617-626.
\textsuperscript{154}Rohde, who argues that this passage is an addition, suggests that the whole reason for its addition is the provision of Odysseus with this analogy; see Rohde (1925), 29. As we see, the use of Herakles as an exemplary figure in Homer extends far beyond his appearance in this passage.
\textsuperscript{156}It should be noted that unlike Achilles, Odysseus is never called mainomenos in the \textit{Iliad}. In the \textit{Odyssey} the word’s implications are different, as mentioned above in section 2.1: thus it becomes all the more interesting that the disguised Odysseus, seeking to take part in the archery contest, is mocked by Antinoos for being like the mainomenos centaur Eurytion. See Hom. \textit{Od}. 21.297-310. Odysseus’ triumph over the suitors follows, one in which he is more like a mainomenos warrior of the \textit{Iliad} than a mainomenos drunk of the \textit{Odyssey}, and one in which he is something like Herakles.
\textsuperscript{157}Hom. \textit{Od}. 22.5.
\textsuperscript{158}For sources on Iole and the related sack of Oichalia see Fowler (2000), 329-333, who notes that Ioleia appears in extant literature first in Hesiod (Hes. \textit{Fr}. 26.31-33); Burkert (1972), 80-85.
\textsuperscript{159}Hom. \textit{Od}. 11.606, 22.21-24.
\textsuperscript{160}Hom. \textit{Od}. 11.608, 22.34.
Odysseus is not Herakles, but he has lived up to the example of Herakles, even performing his own aëthlos. So too will later heroes and their deeds be likened to Herakles and his labours.

A curious fact remains to be explored. If the suitors around Odysseus are somehow like the dead around Herakles, then the dead around Herakles are somehow like the suitors around Odysseus: this suggests the possibility that the dead fleeing and shrieking in terror around Herakles may, like the suitors, be somehow wicked, even dangerous beings, and that Herakles’ grim shade, like Odysseus, has important work to do in dealing with them. This is not the first indication Homer has given us that Herakles may have unusual dealings with the dead and their world: besides the fact of his own journey to Hades, we have seen him fighting the god Hades in somewhat mysterious circumstances “among the dead at Pylos” in the Iliad. In addition to subduing animals and waging war, dealing with the world of the dead may also be a particular concern to Herakles more broadly, but what precisely this might mean is not immediately clear on the basis of what Homer has to say about Herakles. As we have seen though, Homer has his own interests in the exemplary function of Herakles to his heroes. With this in mind, it is interesting that the two Homeric heroes who, I have argued, are most carefully likened to Herakles, Achilles and Odysseus, are the only two besides Herakles himself seen to confront the souls of the dead in Homer. Achilles must placate the ghost of his comrade Patroklos with proper funeral rites. Odysseus, who happens to meet quite a few dead souls, must placate the ghost of his comrade Elpenor with proper funeral rites. Homer’s dead cannot rest without a proper funeral, and so the great Homeric heroes Achilles and Odysseus see to it that the dead are properly dealt with. I suggest that in this respect too they may have Herakles to look to as an example. Taken altogether, we see further indication that dealing with the dead may be important to Homer’s Herakles.

2.4) Dionysos in the Odyssey

This brings us back to Dionysos, since to better understand the role of Herakles in dealing with the dead, it is worth considering what his half-brother Dionysos has to do with them in the Odyssey. As in the Iliad, Dionysos is mentioned only twice, and again his role seems minor in comparison to that of Herakles. Moreover, both mentions of him are even more succinct than in the Iliad. However, just as we saw that Dionysos’ brief appearances in the Iliad were rich in thematic resonances with the rest of the text, so too are his appearances in the Odyssey of more than passing significance. To begin with his

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161 Indeed, once they are slain and arrive in Hades the suitors too become a noisy throng of dead spirits. See Hom. Od. 24.1-14. It should also be noted that if these dead are indeed dangerous, it would appear to make them quite different from the dead as portrayed otherwise by Homer, who generally appear to be rather powerless spirits, as Odysseus’ mother Antikleia tells him. See Hom. Od. 11.216-222.

162 Hom. II. 5.395-397.

163 To the possibility that it somehow involves being a charma to mortals we will return below in section 2.5.

164 Hom. II. 23.62-107. Note that Patroklos’ ghost remarks that he has been overcome by ker, and that Achilles too will succumb to his Fate (Moira): these are the same words we have seen used to describe the doom that overtook even Herakles, as discussed in section 2.2.

165 Hom. Od. 11.51-83.

166 For the importance of proper funeral rites for Patroklos and Elpenor see Johnston (1999), 9-10; Rohde (1925t), 17-19.
second appearance, at the beginning of book 24 the spirits of the slain suitors arrive in Hades, where they encounter the spirits of the Achaian commanders at Troy.\textsuperscript{167} Among the latter are Achilles and Agamemnon, who greet each other. Achilles reminds Agamemnon of how powerful he (Agamemnon) was in life, and expresses his wish that Agamemnon had died an appropriately glorious death at Troy, instead of as he did: Achilles does not tell the tale, but by this point in the \textit{Odyssey} we have heard several times of how Agamemnon was slain treacherously by his wife Klytaimnestre and her lover Aigisthos upon his return from Troy.\textsuperscript{168} Agamemnon replies to Achilles by recalling how gloriously Achilles died, how well he was mourned, and how magnificent was his funeral and burial, in contrast to his (Agamemnon’s) own.\textsuperscript{169} The magnificence of Achilles’ funeral owes much to the involvement of the goddess Thetis, Achilles’ mother, and her retinue of mourning sea-nymphs, but the Muses are also directly involved by singing Achilles’ dirge.\textsuperscript{170} Among the other immortals, closely involved in a somewhat less direct way are Hephaistos and Dionysos: Agamemnon tells Achilles that after Hephaistos’ fire burnt his body, they gathered his bones in unmixed wine and oil (\textit{σοίνῳ ἐν ἀκρήτῳ καὶ ἀλέιφατι}), and then placed them together with the remains of Patroklos in a golden amphora (\textit{χρύσεον ἀμφιφορήα}).\textsuperscript{171} The latter was given to them by Thetis, who “said that it was the gift of Dionysos, and the work of famous Hephaistos” (\textit{Διωνύσοιο δὲ δῶρον / φάσκ’ ἔμεναι, ἔργον δὲ περικλυτοῦ Ἡφαίστοιο}).\textsuperscript{172} That Hephaistos has made a fine object of metal is in keeping with his usual activity in Homer: among many other things, he makes Achilles’ resplendent armour in the \textit{Iliad}, which like this amphora is presented by Thetis for her son’s sake.\textsuperscript{173} Thus golden works of Hephaistos encase Achilles’ body in life and contain his remains in death. The reasons for Dionysos’ involvement are less clear. We have seen him with Thetis once before, fleeing in terror to her from Lykourgos’ theomachic aggression.\textsuperscript{174} Thus even if we do not agree with the scholia, which suggest that Dionysos gave Thetis the golden amphora on that very occasion, it seems appropriate for him to give her a gift of thanks, and more generally to be on friendly terms with her.\textsuperscript{175} It should also be noted that we have already seen such a golden amphora in the \textit{Iliad}: there Patroklos’ ghost requests that his remains be placed together with those of Achilles in the golden amphora (\textit{χρύσεος ἀμφιφορεύς}) given to Achilles by Thetis.\textsuperscript{176} Achilles complies, seeing to it that Patroklos’ remains are placed in a golden phiale (\textit{ἐν χρυσέῃ φιάλῃ}),


\textsuperscript{168}Hom. \textit{Od}. 24.15-34; cf. Hom. \textit{Od}. 1.32-43, 11.405-434. It is precisely the threat of such a fatal homecoming that has menaced Odysseus throughout the \textit{Odyssey}, a threat which he has at last overcome, though at this point in the text his work is not yet finished. Thus Agamemnon rejoices in Odysseus’ victorious return, contrasting their wives and destinies. See Hom. \textit{Od}. 24.191-202.

\textsuperscript{169}Hom. \textit{Od}. 24.35-97.

\textsuperscript{170}Hom. \textit{Od}. 24.47-48, 60-64.

\textsuperscript{171}Hom. \textit{Od}. 24.71-77.

\textsuperscript{172}Hom. \textit{Od}. 24.73-75.


\textsuperscript{174}Hom. \textit{Il}. 6.135-137.

\textsuperscript{175}For this explanation see the scholia on Hom. \textit{Od}. 24.74 (ed. Dindorf).

\textsuperscript{176}Hom. \textit{Il}. 23.91-92.
and communicates their wish that his own remains be placed together with those of Patroklos in time.\(^{(177)}\)

Presumably, the golden amphora in the *Odyssey* is meant to be the same one mentioned in the *Iliad*, although nothing is said in the *Iliad* about the amphora being a gift of Dionysos or a work of Hephaistos. It is less clear whether the golden phiale is meant to be the same object, or if instead the placement of Patroklos’ remains there is temporary, until they can be placed together with those of Achilles in the golden amphora.

The gift of Dionysos mentioned at the end of the *Odyssey* may signify more than the tying up of such loose ends from the *Iliad*. We have seen in section 2.1 above Dionysos called *mainomenos* and a *charma* to mortals: both terms are intelligible as regards his relation to wine as exemplified in other sources, but it is far from clear that he has any relation to wine in the *Iliad*, and I have suggested other potential understandings of these descriptions on the basis of Iliadic diction. Now in this instance, of itself an amphora such as the one given by Dionysos might be suggestive of wine, wine simply being among the many things which might be stored in an amphora.\(^{(178)}\) However, we have seen that Achilles’ bones are treated in unmixed wine (and oil) before being placed in the golden amphora: this is the only time that we see wine explicitly mentioned in close proximity to Dionysos in Homer. Whatever this might suggest about Dionysos’ interest in wine, this particular wine is not mixed for drinking but is instead used for funerary purposes.\(^{(179)}\) Moreover, we should keep in mind that Agamemnon’s speech is a reminder to Achilles that though dead, he should be glad, for he lived and died well as one most dear to the gods (μάλα γὰρ φίλος ἦσθα θεοῖσιν).\(^{(180)}\)

We have seen already the importance to Homer’s dead of receiving proper funeral rites: Achilles has received these rites, rites in which Dionysos has had a part of some sort to play, and so Achilles’ spirit in Hades should be at peace.

Is Dionysos’ involvement in placating the dead Achilles largely incidental, having more to do with his relationship to Thetis, or is it indicative of a broader involvement with the dead? His other appearance in the *Odyssey* is even more enigmatic than the one just discussed, but it may be pertinent to answering this question. We have already seen Odysseus in book 11, mentioning that he saw Alkmene among the dead souls of famous women in Hades. Among these other women he sees Ariadne, Minos’ daughter: he says that Theseus tried to take her from Crete to Athens, but that Artemis killed her first on Dia, “on account of the testimony of Dionysos” (Διονύσου μαρτυρίῃσι).\(^{(181)}\) Here we likely see another allusion to a fuller story known by Homer and his hearers but not well known to us. We are more

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\(^{(177)}\) Hom. *Il.* 23.238-244, 23.252-254.

\(^{(178)}\) We will in a later chapter consider the case of a krater of the mid-6th century by Kleitias depicting a procession of gods attending the wedding of Thetis and Peleus. Dionysos, labelled, is featured prominently: he carries an amphora. Rumpf suggests that this is the very golden amphora given by Dionysos to Thetis, though Carpenter is not persuaded: see Carpenter (1986), 11; Rumpf (1953), 469-470.

\(^{(179)}\) As seen in the details of Patroklos’ funeral, wine is used throughout the cremation procedure, though never with any overt reference to Dionysos. See Hom. *Il.* 23.218-221, 23.250-251.

\(^{(180)}\) Hom. *Od.* 92.

familiar with a version of events attested later, in which Theseus abandons Ariadne in her sleep on Naxos, where she is saved by Dionysos.\textsuperscript{182} Moreover, there is extant from the archaic period already the account of Hesiod, who tells us that Dionysos married Ariadne and that Zeus made her immortal for Dionysos’ sake.\textsuperscript{183} Homer’s account seems utterly at odds with these.

It is possible that Homer simply records a different tradition about Ariadne than the one to which we are better accustomed: since Homer’s Theseus seems not in any way to deliberately abandon Ariadne (whether compelled by a deity to do so or otherwise), this must surely be true at least in part. However, there is something to be said about the attempts of modern scholars to reconcile the apparent divergence between these versions of events. L. Bonfante and E. Richardson have interpreted the very similar scenes on two 5\textsuperscript{th} century Etruscan mirrors to be depictions of the death of Ariadne: Athena (Menarva/Menrrea) and Dionysos (Fufluns) face Artemis (Artames/Artanas), who holds Esia in her arms together with her bow and arrows: this Esia is identified with the slain Ariadne, who is now being united with Dionysos before being made immortal.\textsuperscript{184} Richardson argues that Dionysos’ testimony in the \textit{Odyssey} is thus in effect that “the god points out to Artemis that Ariadne must die because she is destined for immortality with him, not for an earthly marriage with Theseus.”\textsuperscript{185} The argument is suggestive as applied to a theme attested in the iconography of Etruscan mirrors and may tell us something about the reception of the story of Ariadne among the Etruscans if Esia is indeed to be identified with Ariadne, but for our purposes we cannot use these mirrors alone as evidence concerning what Homer’s earlier Greek hearers might have made of the meaning of Dionysos’ testimony, especially since the presence of Ariadne among the dead in Homer’s Hades suggests that she has not been made immortal in the \textit{Odyssey}.\textsuperscript{186} However, we have already seen other indications in Homer’s text which suggest that such a possibility as the one advanced by Richardson is not so remote from Homer’s world as it might at first appear. Richardson, after all, mentions Semele as a similar case to Ariadne, citing much later sources which show that she had to die before she could be made immortal.\textsuperscript{187} We have seen in section 2.1 above indications that Homer’s Semele may already be on her way to becoming a goddess if she is not already considered immortal, and it appears from the testimony of Pindar that she was

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\item\textsuperscript{182}For early accounts of Ariadne see Fowler (2000), 469-472; Carpenter (1997), 64-65; Richardson (1979), 190-191. The scholia also note the peculiarity of Homer telling a story of Theseus and Ariadne in which Dionysos’ usual role has been seemingly reversed, which suggests that Homer’s account has been a source of potential confusion for quite a long time. See scholia on Hom. \textit{Od}. 11.325 (ed. Dindorf).
\item\textsuperscript{183}Hes. \textit{Th}. 947-949.
\item\textsuperscript{184}Bonfante (1993), 232-233; Richardson (1979), 192.
\item\textsuperscript{185}Bonfante (1993), 232; Richardson (1979), 193.
\item\textsuperscript{186}There will be much more to say about this when we come to the problem of Ariadne and Dionysos in Attic pottery: Sabetai argues compellingly that “Dionysiac hierogamy scenes invited comparisons between the divine figures and the human couple” and “could accompany an \textit{aōros}, a prematurely deceased, unmarried youth, to his or her grave.” See Sabetai (2011), 160. On the basis of these, it may be possible to link the story of Ariadne’s death to eschatological hopes, and again this would allow for Ariadne to be both slain and immortalized for Dionysos’ sake, and would further account for the particular role of Artemis in slaying Ariadne before her marriage.
\item\textsuperscript{187}Bonfante (1993), 232; Richardson (1979), 193. For the lateness of literary attestations of Semele’s rescue from Hades, see Carpenter (1997), 63-64: Paus. 2.27.5 and 2.31.2 provide the earliest mentions. However, already in Pindar there is the account that she died and yet became a goddess: see Pi. \textit{O}. 2.25-27.
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honoured with established cult as a goddess in his time.\textsuperscript{188} In more detail within the \textit{Odyssey}, not far from Ariadne in Hades we have seen Herakles, said to have died and become a god. On the basis of Herakles’ example, there is no inevitable contradiction between Ariadne dying because of Dionysos on the one hand (as in Homer) and being made immortal for his sake on the other (as in Hesiod).\textsuperscript{189} However, it remains that Homer says nothing about Ariadne being immortal: Odysseus sees her shade among the dead, but says nothing about she “herself” being on Olympos like Herakles “himself.” Even if Homer knows of Ariadne’s apotheosis, which could follow her death, he seems only interested in the latter, and the role of Dionysos (and Artemis) in it.

It may be significant that the other dead women detailed in proximity to Ariadne are both problematic figures.\textsuperscript{190} Before Odysseus describes Ariadne he discusses Iphimedeia, and her giant sons Otos and Ephialtes whom we have seen in section 2.2 above among the great \textit{theomachoi}: according to Odysseus now, these two sought to seize Olympos itself from the gods, but Apollo slew them before they were able.\textsuperscript{191} After Ariadne Odysseus comments on “baneful Eriphyle, who exchanged her dear husband for costly gold” (στυγερήν τ’ Ἐριφύλην, / ἣ χρυσὸν φίλου ἀνδρὸς ἐδέξατο τιμήεντα), which appears to be a highly compact allusion to the story of Eriphyle’s role in the death of Amphiarao, mentioned again in more detail in book 15.\textsuperscript{192} Thus in the case of Iphimedeia we see an instance of the gods punishing transgressive mortals: Apollo happens to be the god in question, though it is not Iphimedeia herself whom he punishes. In the case of Eriphyle, Odysseus says less, though when Amphiarao is mentioned in book 15 his gift of prophecy is emphasized: here the gods appear to reward mortal righteousness, and again Apollo is the god directly implicated.\textsuperscript{193} Eriphyle herself, however, is generally said in other sources to have been slain by her son Alkmaion, avenging the death of his father Amphiarao, and so Homer may be alluding to what is again a tale of retribution and lethal punishment. With the troubling example of Iphimedeia and the clearly bad example of Eriphyle in mind, I think there may be some reason to agree with those ancient (and more recent) commentators who see Homer’s Ariadne as another example of a mortal punished for wrongdoing, in this case a transgression against Dionysos himself, perhaps through her relationship with Theseus. However, the matter remains inconclusive.

It is Apollo’s sister Artemis who brings about Ariadne’s death, but Dionysos is apparently the cause, whether we suppose that he desires Ariadne to be be immortalized or simply punished. Thus

\textsuperscript{188} See for instance Pi. \textit{Fr.} 75.13-19.
\textsuperscript{189} Thus the sleep of Ariadne in later sources becomes an actual death, from which she is awakened to immortality by Dionysos; see Richardson (1979), 193-195, who suggests that the metaphor is also applicable to the Ariadne motif frequently found on Roman sarcophagi. (To the subject of Dionysos and Ariadne (and Herakles) in Hesiod we will return in chapter 3.)
\textsuperscript{190} By “detailed” I mean that they are not simply named but are discussed in at least a few words. Other women are named in closer proximity to Ariadne, but Odysseus says nothing about them.
\textsuperscript{191} Hom. \textit{Od.} 11.305-320.
\textsuperscript{193} Hom. \textit{Od.} 15.243-253.
Dionysos in the *Odyssey* is always mentioned in connection with death and the dead: we have seen the slaying of Ariadne in one instance and the funeral of Achilles on the other. There is no indication of Dionysos’ interest in wine in the first instance, while in the second there is the possibly of an indirect involvement with wine in its funerary use: the theme of death is more prominent as regards Dionysos in the *Odyssey*. Is this Dionysos much like the Dionysos of the *Iliad*? In the case of Lykourgos there we have seen a mortal punished by other gods for transgressing against Dionysos, as may also be the case of Ariadne. In the case of Semele we may have seen hints of themes of death and apotheosis, as may alternatively be the case of Ariadne. Again, we have seen no direct mention of wine in either instance, though we have seen the descriptions of Dionysos as *mainomenos* and a *charma* to mortals, terms which can be associated with wine elsewhere. Alternatively, Dionysos’ raging-madness may belong more to the battlefield, and the joy he brings to mortals may be of another sort than that of the vine. By considering the implications of his association with Herakles in Homer I think it may be possible to clarify some of these interpretive difficulties.

### 2.5) Herakles and Dionysos in Homer

Reviewing the association of Herakles and Dionysos in Homer, one important aspect seen in the above discussion is what I will refer to as the *paradigmatic* or *exemplary*. Herakles functions in no small part as one of the greatest figures of the past to whose example Homeric heroes may turn, and in various ways Achilles in the *Iliad* and Odysseus in the *Odyssey* are compared to Herakles. Moreover, we have seen that the Homeric Herakles is constructed largely through a rather selective process of allusive reference to a larger mythology so as to suit the needs of the text: thus for instance in the *Iliad* he is made into a great warrior in order to provide a model for the warriors at Troy, and his other sorts of deeds receive less emphasis, if any mention is made of them at all. As we will see in the following chapters when we consider other portrayals of Herakles, such a method of making Herakles into an exemplary figure by emphasizing a certain aspect of his complicated mythological character will be commonplace in later times: perhaps this is a matter of following a Homeric precedent, but it could also be the case that Herakles was already able to serve such paradigmatic functions at the time of Homer. Indeed, we will see Herakles providing diverse examples to even ordinary people in everyday situations, besides Homeric warriors in moments of godlike triumph.\(^\text{194}\)

While much less pronounced than in the case of Herakles, Dionysos too has his paradigmatic aspect in Homer. Just as Homer’s Herakles provides one of the great examples of a *theomachos*, Homer’s Dionysos provides one of the great examples of the divine victim of a *theomachos*. Again, we will see Dionysos maintain his role in later sources as a god who is resisted by *theomachoi*, to such an extent that theomachy itself will be able to take on uniquely Dionysian implications which were most

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\(^\text{194}\) Keeping in mind the general ability of the gods to serve as exemplary performers to their mortal devotees (see for instance Patton (2009), to whom we will return in later chapters), Herakles’ rare status as a god who was once a mortal will provide him with an unusual versatility as a god.
likely unknown to Homer. Moreover, in the general way in which, as a god with whom mortals—in this particular case mythic *theomachoi*—might very closely interact in a certain sort of situation, Dionysos will return in later sources, and this will provide one of the grounds for his association with Herakles.\(^{195}\)

Moreover, we have seen that the raging-madness of theomachy involves a blurring of the distinction between gods and mortals: this of itself is of particular significance to Herakles and Dionysos. Besides the case of theomachy, we have seen Homer explicitly pair Herakles and Dionysos through the parentage of both of them to Zeus and a mortal woman in Thebes. They share such a mixture of parents with many other Homeric figures. However, they are more unusual as regards the stories concerning the apotheosis of their mortal mothers and wives. I have argued that we may find hints of Semele’s apotheosis in the structure of Zeus’ catalogue of women in the *Iliad*, though this is necessarily somewhat speculative: even more speculative may be the argument that Ariadne’s apotheosis already underlies the story of her death in the *Odyssey*. If Homer and his hearers did not know such stories, it remains likely—quite demonstrably in the case of Semele and arguably so in the case of Ariadne—that later readers and hearers could find them in Homer’s text. Again, Herakles and Dionysos share a marked interest in negotiating the boundaries of the mortal and divine realms.\(^{196}\)

The most dramatic example of this interest is provided by Herakles himself as a mortal who becomes a god according to the *Odyssey*. It should be noted that if there is any truth to the claim that Dionysos’ testimony in book 11 of the *Odyssey* is that one must first die in order to become immortal, it is a truth embodied there by Herakles. For our purposes, it will be more important to see whether such a claim might be possible in the later archaic period rather than at the time of the *Odyssey*’s composition itself. Keeping in mind Herakles’ ability then to serve as an exemplar to even ordinary mortals, his transcendence of his own mortality may have far-reaching eschatological implications, ones in which, on something such as the understanding of Homer just described, Dionysos would necessarily be closely involved. We will be able to return to this possibility when later sources are considered.\(^{197}\)

Relatedly but more concretely, we have seen Herakles and Dionysos in Homer show a certain interest in dealing with death, the dead, and their world in ways that do not involve anything like making them immortal. Herakles violently confronts Hades among the dead and, possibly on the same occasion, journeys to Hades’ realm to fetch his dog. Moreover, the dead *eidōlon* of Herakles is locked in an apparently unending confrontation with the dead souls in Hades, and I have suggested that his similarity to Odysseus confronting the suitors may give us reason to think that these noisy dead are potentially dangerous entities, ones who are kept in check by him. Homer’s Dionysos, who is certainly involved in

\(^{195}\) I have in mind especially the many depictions in Attic pottery of Dionysos and Herakles reclining at a banquet, where I think Herakles may (among other things) be appearing in his capacity as a paradigmatic symposiast together with the god of the symposium. For a general discussion of these images, see for instance Wolf (1993), 22-29.

\(^{196}\) The boundary between humans and animals is also significant to them in other sources and will be discussed as appropriate in later chapters: Homer, however, seems to have little interest in it.

\(^{197}\) I have in mind such things as the depiction of Herakles as a kind of paradigmatic Eleusinian initiate.
the death of Ariadne and possibly Semele as well, may also show a concern in seeing to the dead in Hades, but in his case it is by assisting in the funeral rites of Achilles, whose dead soul is thus placated. Since Homer’s Dionysos appears unusually aloof from the vintage, it seems to me that part of the reason he is called a *charma* to mortals in the *Iliad* may be instead due to such concerns. Again, when we come to examine sources from the later archaic period, Dionysos’ role as a protector of the living from the dead will be more explicit. The gods do not need such protection, and in this way Dionysos serves as a *charma* to mortals in their particular capacity as mortals. Herakles will also be seen to share similar activities, and since he is so closely associated with Dionysos when the latter is called a *charma* to mortals, I think there is reason to suppose that the designation, unique to Dionysos, may also be applicable to Herakles in this particular capacity. Yet setting aside the later sources, I suggest that Homer already portrays a Herakles and Dionysos who—at times—show an interest in protecting mortals from threats to their lives coming from the world of the dead.
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