A MARGINAL HERO

A MARGINAL HERO: THE REPRESENTATIONS OF DIOMEDES IN THE GREEK WORLD

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Abstract

The epic hero Diomedes is, in my opinion, considered a marginal hero, as he is relegated to a backbench in ancient Greek thought and ideology. I examine why this is the case, considering his role and impact in Homer's *Iliad*. Greek society valued its epic heroes beyond the words of the poets, yet some heroes received much more attention that others as central characters in tragedy and iconography, consequently regarded as favourites by mass audiences. I believe that examining a marginal hero like Diomedes is important in order to understand why Greek culture generally disregarded some warriors in favour of others, especially in the case of Diomedes, who displays heroic virtues more evidently than several other heroes who have received more attention. Overall Greek attitudes toward him offer an intriguing perspective on the epic heroes and the ways in which the Greeks idealized them. An examination of Greek literary, visual, and religious spheres of influence effectively aid in determining the reasons behind this phenomenon. In summary, this work attempts to understand Greek attitudes towards a hero who has received very little scholarly attention. The concept of the epic hero requires analysis of even the most neglected characters; one cannot understand Odysseus, Achilles, or Hector without examining Diomedes, who has a notable role in the very same tradition as the aforementioned heroes.

Acknowledgements

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Declaration of Academic Achievement

I myself, with suggestions and criticism from Dr. Daniel McLean and Dr. Kathryn Mattison, did all the research and found all the images herein. A committee consisting of Drs. Kathryn Mattison, Paul Murgatroyd, and Evan Haley oversaw this thesis and suggested improvements over my arguments, as well as several key resources to use in order to complement my views.

Introduction

Epic heroes had a conspicuous place in the minds of the people who heard of their heroic exploits through poetry; Greek mythology was a gateway to another time and place, with its own characters, stories, and explanation of the origins of the world. The deeds of Achilles, Odysseus, Hector and others were not just stories for the mere entertainment of the populace. Rather, epic poems were a kind of historical record, telling universal truths about humanity with idealized notions of the past and lessons for the present and the future. The heroes featured were models of behaviour, whether good or bad, and became objects of worship. Such an impact cannot be understated, which is why I examine the Greek hero Diomedes. His neglect in Greek culture provides valuable insight into which figures the Greeks preferred and why.

Greek society valued its epic heroes beyond the words of the poets themselves, yet some heroes received much more attention that others as central characters in tragedy and iconography, consequently regarded as favourites by mass audiences. Diomedes has always been a marginal hero, relegated to a backbench in ancient Greek thought and ideology. I examine why this is the case, considering the prominence of this character in the Iliad. There have been various scholarly works, such as Gregory Nagy's Best of the Achaeans and Seth Schein's The Mortal Hero, which regard the role of the epic hero in a societal context, none of which has given full attention to Diomedes alone. Instead, most works focus on the broader concept of the epic hero and/or his ideals. This approach inevitably ignores some figures who would otherwise make excellent case studies of Greek attitudes towards epic. I believe that examining a marginal hero like Diomedes is

important in order to understand why Greek culture generally disregarded some warriors in favour of others, especially in the case of Diomedes, who displays heroic virtues more evidently than several other heroes who have received more attention. Coincidentally, the ancient bias affects contemporary bias against Diomedes, who is viewed as dull and uninteresting at times. Nevertheless, overall Greek attitudes toward him offer an intriguing perspective on the epic heroes and the ways in which the Greeks idealized them.

The three areas which I chose to examine are the literary arts, visual arts, and Greek religion. In so doing I concentrate on the major forms of expression of the Greeks. For each chapter, I provide a somewhat broad but crucial overview of the values and ideologies relevant to the topic at hand. Especially important are the cultural and social developments which led to the prominence of each medium addressed in this thesis. With the exception of the third chapter, I limit my discussions to the Archaic and Classical Periods, thereby providing a focused investigation of representations of Diomedes during the evolution of fundamental Greek cultural developments.

Chapter one, which examines the role of the epic hero in literature and, consequently, his representation in Greek society, delves into the dichotomy between the audience and the poet and how this relationship pertains to Diomedes in a narrative context. The poet's words indubitably affected Greek attitudes towards Diomedes; the poet thus created this relationship through his craft. I establish a framework in which to analyze how distinct the character of Diomedes is within the poetic sphere, and hence how the ancient Greeks regarded him. The origins of epic poetry, which are still widely

disputed, are nevertheless relevant to the question of Greek attitudes towards epic heroes. As I examine in Chapter one, epic poetry underwent an evolutionary process from a spoken to a written art, influencing the value system of listeners and readers alike, whether they were commoners or elite individuals. I include a lengthy discussion of Greek values because of the didactic nature of the epic heroes; these heroes shaped cultural conceptions of glory and duty, so their value as educational models was quite evident. I investigate the value system inherent in several notable works by Greek poets, such as Theognis and Hesiod, limiting my discussion to the earliest extant examples of Greek self-reflection in poetry.

An examination of the Iliad comprises the bulk of my analysis in the first chapter; this epic poem provides the best extant means for the study of Diomedes and his role as an epic hero, and also allows for close comparisons with other heroes, mainly Odysseus, who is famously paired with Diomedes at several points in the narrative of the Iliad. I also include some discussion of fragmentary evidence relevant to Diomedes' status as a Homeric hero. Analyses of the partnership of the two heroes have been made in the past, like Dué and Ebbott's Iliad 10 and the Poetics of Ambush, but merely as a minor addendum to a greater work; my thesis, on the other hand, inspects the partnership more closely within the parameters of Greek heroic values. This partnership is so notable within the epic tradition because of the interplay of youth and age, mētis and biē, between the two heroes. The famous aristeia of Diomedes is another essential component in this discussion because of its explicit value in determining Diomedes' prominence in the Iliad and how he compares to the other epic heroes in terms of prowess. This chapter is

ultimately an attempt to understand and evaluate how Diomedes fits the role of the epic hero and how he was possibly perceived by Greek society.

The second chapter examines a vibrant visual art record in great detail. I describe and compare several extant pieces from the Archaic and Classical Periods which feature Diomedes. I focus only on Greek pottery because it exists in copious amounts and offers more insight into the concept of the epic hero than other media such as statuary. This chapter, in a similar fashion as the first, traces the cultural developments which had an impact on the visual arts over time, starting from the Geometric Period in visual art until the takeover of the pottery industry by the city-states in Magna Graecia near the end of the Classical Period. These developments, as well as elite views about the visual arts, are constantly in the background of heroic representations and therefore provide a useful outline for my analysis of Diomedes' visual art record.

When describing the iconography of Diomedes, I begin with the earliest depictions in the visual art record, and then follow the evidence diachronically through the following themes: the suicide of Ajax, the aristeia of Diomedes, the funeral games of Patroclus, miscellaneous battle scenes, the battle over the body of Patroclus, the Doloneia, and the theft of the Palladion. This method enables me to trace the evolution of the portrayals of Diomedes and the various episodes in which he takes part. The overarching significance of some specific portrayals is made clear in light of literary evidence and general trends in the visual arts, while other examples can only be speculated about due to the lack of literary evidence or extant comparanda. The visual art record ultimately

provides an interesting and informative chronology which demonstrates potential biases, trends, problems, and praises of Diomedes.

Chapter three is a discussion of Greek religion and hero cult within the polis. Religious beliefs are evident in various media, and the connection must be made between these beliefs and how they represented the worship of Greek heroes. I supply an overview of Greek religious ideology concerning the soul (psychē) and the symbolic relevance of religious customs to the city-state. I make some deductions about the early origins of ancestor worship by the Mycenaeans based on archaeological findings, without which hero cults would not have formed. Ancestor worship was essentially a precursor to hero cult, and had great influence on the eventual organization of hero cults. In an attempt to discover the most popular religious values of the period, I also analyze the overtones of several literary works; I spotlight the works of authors such as Pindar, Hesiod, Homer, and Herodotus in order to extract the significance of Greek religious ideology and apply it to the influence of Diomedes as a cult hero.

I illustrate where the hero cult of Diomedes had the most influence and how its traditions were diffused throughout the Mediterranean, despite a lack of archaeological or literary evidence on this particular cult and its forms of worship. Much of the information for this cult comes from areas outside of the Greek mainland, especially around the Adriatic Sea and the Eastern coasts of Italy. Because of the scarcity of literary evidence from the Archaic and Classical Periods, I rely on several later works, including Virgil's Aeneid and Strabo's Geography, to expand my arguments about the religious impact which Diomedes had in the ancient world. The homecoming (nostos) of Diomedes is

particularly important to the spread and subsequent following of the cult of Diomedes. With so many different traditions about this hero, it is especially important to trace where the cult followings of Diomedes formed and why, if at all, they had relevance in these specific regions. The marginal status of this cult is discussed in light of the cults of Herakles and Theseus, which were much more popular throughout the Greek world by comparison.

In summary, this work attempts to understand Greek attitudes towards a hero who has received very little scholarly attention. The concept of the epic hero requires analysis of even the most neglected characters; one cannot understand Odysseus, Achilles, or Hector without examining Diomedes, who has a notable role in the very same tradition as the aforementioned heroes. The epic tradition and its heroes are all pieces of a puzzle; one cannot get the whole picture without every piece.

Chapter One: Literature and the Hero

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, I will provide a diachronic analysis of the influence and tradition of Homeric values outside of epic, since Archaic Greek society clearly idealized several epic ideals, as is seen in several art forms. The main focus is what the Greeks had to say about Diomedes in the Archaic and Classical periods; this section will attempt to explain the link between the existing literature and its application in Greek culture, taking into consideration the moral values and practices of each period discussed. Diomedes and several other epic heroes reflected an established heroic tradition and became relevant not only in epic poetry but in everyday life.[1] The fact, however, that Diomedes, arguably one of the greatest heroes in epic, receives so little attention in surviving art and literature compared to other heroes is indeed a curious phenomenon.

Second, this chapter will analyze the dynamic relationship between the narrative and the audience, and how this can impact the audience's perception of a figure such as Diomedes. Epic poetry, as both fictive and historic in the Greek mindset, was used to teach young men how to behave and what to strive for.[2] In this way poetry was exemplary for the Greeks on a social and cultural level, and the Greek heroes had an important

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[1] Cedric Hubbell Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1965), 166.

[2] Mark W. Edwards, *Homer: Poet of the Iliad* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 31. As an "implied audience," the Greeks had to know about their own ancestors and the allegedly historic events behind such figures through epic poetry. In this way, a fiction becomes historic in the sense that it expresses fundamental *attitudes* and *values* that have always had an impact on the audience, despite whether the heroes featured in these stories existed or not.

didactic function in society.[3] This chapter is therefore focused on cultural history rather than literary history. The ideal role and function of the Homeric hero outside the narrative sphere will be analyzed to determine how Diomedes fits into the appropriate role of a Homeric hero from the audience's perspective. A Homeric hero would not have existed unless the poet, the link between audience and hero, shared the same world view as the audience and felt the need to compose his narrative with certain figures in mind. As such, this chapter will also determine what exactly distinguishes Diomedes from other heroes in the same tradition.

Methodology

A variety of concepts will be used pertaining to the analysis of Diomedes' reception in Archaic and Classical Greek society. This framework will aid in describing Homeric society and its various ethical categories. For the purpose of convenience, the use of the word "Homer" or "Homeric" will constantly refer to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. This chapter will in no way deal with the Homeric Question, which is a topic beyond the scope of this thesis.[4]

[3] Theognis, for example, uses his *Maxims* to educate the public and to attempt to "re-establish order" for the dire situation in which the nobility suffers at the hands of the inferior masses. I discuss his poetry in more detail below.

[4] According to Gregory Nagy (*Homeric Questions* [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996], 1), the Homeric Question continues to polarize scholarship on the subject. There is no way of formulating such a question which encompasses issues of authorship, date of composition, or even the completeness of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, among several other potential problems. Rather, as this work will elucidate, the role of a *collective* memory which preserved epic poetry is a lot more relevant than a discussion of Homer's authorship. Whitman (1965: 1-5) also mentions several problems with the Homeric Question, as well as approaches which have failed to settle the issue over time.

The word "tradition" in this context refers to the handing down of poetry over a long period of time, including oral and written formats. It is not uniform, but can be shaped and influenced by external factors. In addition, the terms "traditional material" or "traditional language" also refer to the same process of handing down poetry; this theoretically includes formulaic phrases and several themes relevant to epic poetry.

A key component of this chapter is resonance. Graziosi and Haubold provide a definition of resonance as a central idea in epic that establishes a connection for the audience between the text and its context.[5] This connection enables the audience to know that the performer has something meaningful to say about the world and its alleged history. The performer also must challenge his audience to situate a story within the past, among the wider context of the *cosmos*.[6] In doing so, the bard attaches historical significance to his poetry. Traditional phrases, such as "swift-footed Achilles," also evoke a larger context of story-telling which ultimately connect a moment to an even larger tradition through resonance.[7] A performance is only successful if some resonance is established between the poetry and the intended audience; the popularity of the Homeric epics is fundamentally attributed to this idea.

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[5] Barbara Graziosi and Johannes Haubold, *The Resonance of Epic* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co. Ltd., 2005), 27.

[6] Graziosi and Haubold 2005: 40. Genealogies linked the past with the present, especially among elite citizens, who would trace their own family history to a heroic ancestor.

[7] Graziosi and Haubold 2005: 51-53. Such connections are crucial to the story but are only ever slightly changed or manipulated during a performance, hence why they are traditional. Milman Parry, through his seminal works on Homeric formulae (*The Making of Homeric Verse* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971] 9), asserts that the use of such formulae is simple in principle. Bards kept and used these formulae from a larger stock of traditional sentences in a variety of ways to express ideas predicated on the needs of metrical length.

Timē, or "honour," is another definition relevant to this analysis, as is *kleos*, or "glory." Both terms are central to any discussion of a Homeric hero, especially *kleos*; a hero's identity is meaningless without it, so its application suggests a reciprocal relationship between the poet and the heroes of whom he sings.[8] In this way the bard is a mediator between the heroes and the audience, and a transmitter of *kleos*.[9] The bard is a necessary element for the success of epic's resonance with the audience. *Timē* and *kleos* are inseparable from a Homeric hero and signify his prestigious status.

Aretē, which translates to "heroic excellence," is a vital moral term included in any discussion about the Homeric hero. It is one of the most powerful commendations an *agathos*, a "good man," can be given in the Homeric world, encompassing a range of values related to military prowess and warfare.[10] A Homeric hero's status depends on this ideal even more so than *kleos*; it is essentially a condition for obtaining *kleos*. Only a few men could achieve such a status, and these were thus deemed more prestigious members of a community than others. Such members of a community, whom Morris calls "leading heroes," expected obedience from the subjects on whose behalf they fought.[11] In this way

[8] James M. Redfield, *Nature and Culture in the Iliad*: *The Tragedy of Hector* (London: Duke University Press, 1994), 32. Nagy (*The Best of the Achaeans* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999] 16) states that *kleos* comes to mean "glory" from "that which is heard" because the Muses confer such an honour on the poet. By inspiring him with the words, the Muses recite the poetry to the poet, an instrument who then recites to the audience. *Timē* on the other hand has connotations of heroic cult worship (151).

[9] Redfield 1994: 32.

[10] Arthur W.H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Values* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 31. An *agathos* is also meant to be admired by the people, and must have the skills and qualities expected of a chieftain.

[11] Ian Morris, "The Use and Abuse of Homer," in *Oxford Readings in Homer's Iliad*, ed. Douglas L. Cairns, 1-91 (Oxford University Press, 2002), 85. The only evidence of the common people in the *Iliad*, however, is in Book II with Thersites' outburst against Agamemnon. Morris (87) claims this episode demonstrates an idealized heroic world because the soldiers rejoice when Thersites is put in his proper place. The concept of shame-culture, discussed below in relation to the term *aischros*, is a component of *aretē* and the reciprocity between a leader and his people. For Homeric class distinction between the elite

the heroes had a reciprocal relationship with the common people in which they received and led according to how well they fought. In return the common people, who were essential in bestowing the high status associated with *aretē* on a leader, received protection and improved chances of survival.

This chapter will also delve into the dichotomy between competitive and cooperative excellences. Competitive excellence, that for which a Homeric hero strives, is a standard of *aretē*. Through competition, Homeric society designates which men will have the higher social standing and which will have a lower status, signifying a strictly aristocratic scale of values.[12] Yet to even be eligible for such a status, one had to rely on the *demou phatis*, or the "voice of the people," to legitimize leadership.[13] The nobly born were assumed to be divine, and consequently deserved the right to lead based on their wealth, skill, and intelligence.[14] A hero's *aristeia*, or prowess, is the ultimate embodiment of competitive excellence. Those who have physical and social prominence thus have a claim to *aretē* based on their competitive qualities, including their ability to do battle, wage war, and defend their homes. The figures that are able to excel in this respect are called the *aristoi*, a class wherein Homeric heroes are included. Cooperative excellence, on the other hand, encompasses various attitudes and behaviours which are not deemed as

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and the commoner, cf. Thalmann *contra* Rosen. The former (*The Swineherd and the Bow* [Ithaca: Cornel University Press, 1998], 270) claims this distinction is based on biology and action, where the elite are differentiated on the basis of their physical features and their success in warfare and social competition. Rosen (*Making Mockery: The Poetics of Ancient Satire* [Oxford: University Press, 2007], 116), on the other hand, views Thersites not as a commoner who oversteps his boundaries, but an *antagonist* who reciprocates abuse.

[12] Adkins 1960: 34.

[13] Adkins 1960: 48. The *demou phatis* ensures the highest standards of behaviour in a culture where *results* are much more important than intentions. If the people approve of one's leadership, it is acceptable in society.

[14] Lena Hatzichronoglou, "Theognis and Aretē," in *Human Virtue and Human Excellence*, eds. A.W.H. Adkins, Joan Kalk Lawrence, and Craig K. Ihara, 17-44 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1991), 21.

important as those of competitive excellence. They are often seen as weak or disadvantageous, and are driven by necessity.[15] Aiding or sparing a suppliant or working in conjunction with other heroes to achieve a similar goal is considered inferior to the competitive standards normally set by a Homeric hero.

The term *aischros*, denoting a shameful act or individual, is something to be avoided by a Homeric hero at all costs. It decries failure and challenges one's claim to *aretē*, whether in times of war or peace, regardless of one's intent.[16] It is the lowest form of denigration that exists for a Homeric hero. When used, given the context of shame culture and the opinion of others, this term is strongly antithetical to *aretē* and the status of an individual like a Homeric hero.[17] A hero is expected to behave in a certain fashion, and doing otherwise brands him as an illegitimate leader.

Redfield's idea of epic distance is another term relevant to this discussion. Epic distance describes the experience of an audience, and serves to remind it that the world which is being related by the poet is not its own, since men speak to the gods, corpses do not decay, and other similar supernatural events occur.[18] The bard tells a truth about an unreal world, and turns history into art.[19] The following discussion of the Homeric hero and the reception of Diomedes must be received with this idea in the background. The

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[15] Robert J. Rabel, *Plot and Point of View in the Iliad* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 88-89. But Rabel emphasizes that these cooperative values ensure the survival of heroes in dire situations, so they should not be downplayed as much as Adkins does. For example, when the Trojans are failing to gain ground in *Iliad* VI, they begin to cooperate and in turn shift the momentum of battle in *Iliad* VIII.

[16] Adkins: 1960, 33.

[17] For "shame culture," see Bernard Williams, *Shame and Necessity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 103. Due to the mechanisms of shame, characters feel a compulsion to act a certain way because of an internal *ethos* of necessity and the social expectations of other people. Agency is centered on the individual, but shaped by outside forces.

[18] Redfield 1994: 36.

[19] Redfield1994: 38.

distance between the subject matter and the audience is precisely what makes a Homeric hero such an important figure.[20] He is a figure which reflects a time in Greek history when men were much closer to the gods and earned eternal fame by doing the glorious deeds related in epic poetry. In other words, poetry *is* his *kleos*. The glorious deeds of men (*klea andrōn*) related in epic poetry distinguish the best men who ever lived and enable the audience to relate to a universal theme of life: one's quest to be remembered.

The Homeric Hero

A general survey of the Homeric hero and his appeal is required before moving on to the discussion about Diomedes. As already stated, the term "Homeric" refers to a traditional body of poetry, and its use in this context implies that the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are being discussed. So, a Homeric hero is a character that is found in the epics mentioned above. This hero exemplifies a social class, that of the *aristoi*, and has *aretē* because of his prowess in various societal functions such as warfare. The social value system of winning glory, demonstrated by both *timē* and *kleos*, is foremost to such a figure.[21] He is also a figure who must overcome the limits of mortality by obtaining *kleos*. Honour is a public acknowledgement of his superiority, and recompenses a hero for his mortality by overcoming his greatest enemy, death itself.[22] Because of his *aretē* and his

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[20] Redfield (1994: 41) asserts that the collective experience of poetry creates a world separate from objective fact, a relevant ideal in a world continuously being "demystified" by external forces like Sophism.

[21] Seth L. Schein, *The Mortal Hero: An Introduction to Homer's Iliad* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.), 70.

[22] Edwards 1987: 150-151. "Overcoming death" is used figuratively, not literally. A hero is rather immortalized in poetry, his eternal *kleos*. According to Vernant, a bloody death is beautiful when it strikes a youth in battle, thus raising him above the human condition and distinguishing him as a brave man (Jean-

connections to divinity, the Homeric hero deserves reverence and respect, and is born with an inherent right to lead.[23] His ability to communicate with the divine further entrenches the hero's entitlement to lead. Given these descriptions, a Homeric hero must also be wealthy and accepted as a leader in his own community. Cowardice and failure to pursue the interests of self and community were the only signs of weakness in a Homeric hero, as men were expected to exceed the standards set by society because of their qualities, and failure to do so was frowned upon by the community.[24] The ideal place to obtain such prestige is the battlefield, and one's ancestors establish the right to be distinguished because of the family's name and history. Despite this distinction, a Homeric hero still has to fight and succeed at doing so to claim his prestigious title.

Diomedes stands out in light of the aforementioned criteria for a Homeric hero. His heroism shines in several respects, most prominently during his *aristeia* of Books V and VI of the *Iliad*. Perhaps Schein describes his role best: "The *aristeia* of Diomedes shows a conventional type of hero successfully and in a straightforward, morally uncomplicated way being who he is, which, according to the norms and values of the *Iliad*, is the same as who he should be."[25] His motivation for fighting stems from both a socially-driven and a self-driven expectation, and he fulfils his role throughout the poem. As this chapter will elaborate below, Diomedes often shows himself to be one of the most

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Pierre Vernant, "Panta Kala from Homer to Simonides," in *Mortals and Immortals*, ed. Froma Zeitlin, 84-92 [Princeton University Press, 1991], 87).

[23] Hatzichronoglou 1991: 21.

[24] M.I. Finley, *The World of Odysseus* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1956), 28. If a hero did not live up to these expectations, he was considered weak and thus unfit to rule.

[25] Schein 1984: 34.

capable heroes of epic. His role in the *Iliad* encapsulates the qualities of a Homeric hero and the hero's characteristic pursuit of honour on the battlefield.

Social Context

Before examining the *Iliad* and Diomedes' role within it, one must determine what an Archaic and Classical Greek audience would have found relevant in the epic tradition and why some epics have survived so long after their initial composition. The aforementioned idea of resonance will be intrinsic to this discussion, as will be the role of epic distance and the extensive work of Arthur Adkins on Greek values. Certain values and ethics are recognizable from the time in which Homer supposedly composes and the time in which these performances are received in the Archaic and Classical periods, whether they are written or orally performed. Adkins asserts that Homeric values persevere into several periods and traditions, and their high level of consistency reaches beyond the inventive ability of an oral tradition.[26] The audiences of the aforementioned time periods would have accepted these values as pertinent to their respective societies, changed as they were from the time of the poetry's inception.

Epic poetry is the most appropriate way to discuss the *cosmos* and its development which strikes an audience as a historical truth.[27] The material resounds with the audience, especially the elite, who would have likely invested the most time in and attention to

[26] Arthur W.H. Adkins, *Moral Values and Political Behaviour in Ancient Greece*: *From Homer to the End of the Fifth Century* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1972), 10.

[27] Graziosi and Haubold 2005: 60. Homeric epic was performed in religious festivals as well, further entrenching its relevance in the context of the city-state and its religious values.

poetry because of its content.[28] Homer's works were great art and functioned as an ideological weapon to offer the vision that the Heroic Age was a time when people depended on a few great men for survival.[29] Yet this view is antithetical to Classical Greek political values, especially democratic ones, where tensions between upper and lower classes were very prominent. Ober claims that the standing of Athenian aristocrats was based on wealth, education, birth and behaviour, yet they had to "act the part," meaning they had to conform to a social code.[30] This is definitely like the expectations of the Homeric hero as depicted in the *Iliad*, and not at all part of the mindset of the commoner. As will be explored in more detail below, however, the divide between the mass and the elite in the way in which they received Homeric epic was mediated in that each class would have its own way of interpreting epic poetry.

Works conceived later than Homer, such as Hesiod's *Works and Days* and the Theognidean *corpus*, incorporate ideals which were very significant in Homer's works.[31] For example, *Works and Days* sheds light on a former aristocrat, Perses, as he succumbs

[28] The elite would trace their own ancestry and prestige through poetry, and would invest their time and resources to ensure such performances continued, whether in a private or public/religious setting. Morris (2002: 84) claims that Homeric poetry was "elitist" in that it did not depict the *polis* as a homogeneous community, but rather included stand-out individuals who were indeed members of the elite. According to Josiah Ober (in *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens*, [Princeton: University Press, 1989], 55-56), by the early sixth century there was a clear distinction between the masses and the elite in Athens, as well as elsewhere in Greece. Such a divide stemmed from a socio-political distinction which grew exponentially after the Dark Ages c. 900 BC. The ruling elite were marked by descent and claimed to have "noble fathers."

[29] Morris 2002: 84.

[30] Ober 1989: 249-250.

[31] The dating of the *Works and Days* to a time after Homer is based on the material within the poem itself. It reflects a time where the economy is changing and a new sense of identity emerges, therefore it is safe to date the work to sometime between c. 730-650 BC, while Homer's work reflects Bronze Age society in some respects and a multitude of later values. Even so, both epics possibly influenced one another through performance. According to Nagy's theory of a multitext tradition, the middle of the sixth century was a standardizing period for writing texts, which started with the reform of Homeric performance and may have included Hesiod's poetry as well (*Poetry as Performance* [Cambridge: University Press, 1996], 110).

to new economic problems.[32] A newfound idea of divine justice is omnipresent in this poem. Hesiod depends on the *basileis* for justice, which is governed by Zeus, and reproaches these men when this duty is not carried out; this justice demands that men earn a living with honest, hard work rather than through deceitful means, such as trickery and bribery.[33] As such, there is a movement away from the Homeric *ethos* of *aretē* in this literature. *Aretē*, along with *timē* and *kleos*, were formerly means for success based on the ability to wage war and defend one's household, but in *Works and Days* the justice of Zeus takes over and there is less dependence on fighting and more so on divine will.[34] New values, such as hard labour and living a simple life, arise as the most important ideals over old notions of aristocratic competition. The upper and lower classes now begin to distinguish themselves through literature and these separate conceptions of *aretē*.

Hesiod's work also includes the idea of "good strife." In Homer this is evident in several episodes, especially the Funeral Games of Patroclus in *Iliad* XXIII, where competitors strive for rewards based on their skills in different types of contests. Hesiod, however, comments on the idea of good strife as a unifying force where farmers can come together and improve through competition, which is directly tied to *aretē*.[35] It is a force for social cohesion, and just as in Homer, the outcome of such a competition is significant because the winners are obviously considered the best. Each competitor improves and

[32] According to Adkins (1972: 25), the poem is meant to be consolatory for those who used to lead a life of *aretē*, mainly the aristocratic class, or the *aristoi*.

[33] Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 32. *Works and Days* 236-269 in particular relates the punishments of Zeus for evildoers and Hesiod's warnings for rulers.

[34] Adkins 1972: 30. Adkins also refers to this as the decline of the *agathos*.

[35] Adkins 1972: 33. Hesiod discusses the benefits of "good strife," or the firstborn daughter of Night, as opposed to Discord in *Works and Days* ll. 11-24.

strives to become better through such competition, and this in turn improves the community. It thus appears that certain Homeric values persist within the poetry of Hesiod, and the only thing that has changed is the context in which these competitions appear. Once again, there is social change and the diminution of the elite is spotlighted.

Theognis' poetry reflects an outlook of the aristocratic class which is similar to Hesiod's. The uncertainties of the *aristoi* are the focus, and the rise of a new order in which even the unworthy can become successful regardless of merit or noble birth.[36] This shift in the poetic tradition clearly points to a radical shift in Greek society where the upper classes are now losing their prominence.[37] Hatzichronoglou states that although Theognis' views on *aretē* are conflicted, his poetry still provides an important understanding of Greek ethics at this time.[38] Theognis communicates a sense of bitterness towards the inferior lower classes, and nobility is no longer deemed a necessary attribute for leadership, renown, or wealth.[39] Theognis' outlook is a reflection of the confusion of values experienced at the time of his writing during the 6th and 7th centuries BC; he reveres money, but laments the dire situation of the aristocracy and claims *aretē* enjoys

[36] Adkins 1972: 38. These are the *kakoi* (Adkins' term).

[37] Ober (1989: 205) comments on the tendency to keep the upper classes from gaining too much political control in the disparate society of the *polis*. Resentment was common, and social control of elite aspirations was ideal.

[38] Hatzichronoglou 1991: 18. As the only Archaic poet whose work is fully preserved, Theognis is instrumental in showcasing the traditions that persist in the Archaic world and how former values are becoming confused. Hatzichronoglou claims his work underwent a process of assimilation with Classical traditions to become a syllogue rather than the work of a single poet. She calls his poetry the "paradigmatic homeland" of the Archaic Greeks.

[39] *Maxims* ll. 186-202 communicate Theognis' resentment well. Wealth, formerly available only to the aristocrats, is now widespread among "mean men," and leads to the nobility being mixed with the basest people. Then ll. 315-319 in particular discuss how bad men are rich, and noble men are poor yet remain excellent. Their excellence is a trait which cannot be lost, as riches can be.

little honour in a society now ruled by the naturally inferior.[40] Both Hesiod and Theognis therefore contain the remnants of a Homeric system of values where the aristocracy enjoyed a predominant role, but its values since then have changed fundamentally. Given the context of these poems, the upper classes no longer have as much power as they used to, and ultimately must adhere to a drastic shift in the value system. The values indeed remain, but are reduced to a status of much less distinction and have become more universalized to accommodate the lower classes.

The same values are consistently portrayed even later during the Classical Period. Greek society was experiencing major changes during the 5th century, especially during the aftermath of the Persian invasions and the rising popularity of democracy. Dover maintains that there was a "generation gap" at this time, in which advice and beliefs that were passed down are considered irrelevant by their recipients; these beliefs were formerly useful because society was socially stagnant.[41] It was a commonplace aristocratic sentiment that moral progress had halted, and the use of the word *archaios* was contemptuous as a result.[42] The old ways were still favoured by them; the praise afforded by *aretē* and *agathos* propagated the activities of those who made the most contribution to the prosperity and the stability of the *polis*, whether in peacetime or in

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[40] Hatzichronoglou 1991: 25-27. These "inferior" men are the *nouveaux riches*, who made money mostly from gained wealth, such as trade, rather than through their land or merit. Later they were often targeted by Aristophanes' comedies, particularly well known figures like Cleon.

[41] Kenneth J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974), 106. He explains that this is a generational conflict.

[42] Dover 1974: 107. Dover lists Thucydides, Hesiod, and Aristophanes as examples of authors who thought this way. In particular, the Old Oligarch (in *Constitution of the Athenians* 2.19) comments on Athenian suspicions of the "virtuous" and how they consider such men harmful despite being a part of the *demos*. At 1.10-11 he also reproaches Athenians for allowing slaves such freedom as wearing fine clothing and making money in the navy.

war.[43] The upper classes continued to demonstrate old aristocratic sentiments also evident in Homer through their own reputations. The hope of attaining praise was a great incentive to virtue, whereas fear of reproach continued to be a major deterrent for wrongdoing.[44] Similar to the Homeric notions of *aretē*, the upper classes consistently regard their own reputation and the opinion of the community as foremost, despite challenges spurred on by lower class suspicions and ideals.

Public displays of honour, just like Homeric *timē*, were also important elements in aristocratic life. This was especially the case in a democratic *polis* where elite influence was only exercised *via* these displays and general involvement in government.[45] The competitive virtue of *philotimia*, or the "love of honour," was seen as the best way to gain prestige.[46] As a result, the aristocrats competed with one another in political settings and public life in order to attain the aforementioned rewards of *timē* and *kleos*, known as different concepts in the Classical period. Here again the influence of Homeric ideology is clear: there are still competitive standards in Greek society which were reflected and celebrated in Homer's poetry. These standards were justification for aristocratic or oligarchic rule, and were celebrated by these classes as a form of *aretē*.[47] Given democratic tendencies, however, the aristocrats would never be able to assert enough

[43] Adkins 1972: 64.
[44] Dover 1974: 228.
[45] Ober (1989: 14) claims the elite were discouraged from excessive public displays by the egalitarian ideology of the Athenian masses. Instead they were responsible for giving large material contributions to the state.
[46] Dover 1974: 230. To Demosthenes, this ideal extended to a communal level. An excellent example is *Against Meidias* ll. 16-20, in which Demosthenes scolds Meidias for interfering with his efforts as *choregos*, a prestigious title for any member of the elite to hold. Meidias' transgressions affected not only Demosthenes, but the community of Athens as well.
[47] Mario Mion, "Tolerance and *Aretē* in Fifth Century Athens," in *Human Virtue and Human Excellence*, eds. A.W.H. Adkins, Joan Kalk Lawrence, and Craig K. Ihara, 45-72 (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1991), 64.

influence to rule. But it is evident that the Homeric value system still existed in the Classical Period, yet had gradually evolved over a long span of time, encompassing various other ideals while nonetheless including the lower classes and their own newfound ideals of *aretē* and "good strife."

The popularity of epic was therefore a distinctive asset to the city-state. Not only did the upper classes receive poetry as a self-reflective element of their own lives, but the lower classes could also enjoy the thematic importance of the stories portrayed by the bard. Epic was a force of social cohesion. It consisted of a shared past and was an indispensable cultural resource to provide entertainment and ethical thought.[48] There was something for everyone to enjoy, regardless of age and status. The results-oriented culture of the Greeks required aspiring tales of heroism to be told in a competitive manner.[49] The notion of *aretē*, whether it required a competition between elite individuals or the hard work of a farmer providing for his family while being dutiful to the gods, was a universal aspect of everyday life which encompassed both upper and lower classes. Its meaning, although changed from its original Homeric framework, nevertheless resonated with the audience. There is a definite universality in Homer that attributes the miseries and exaltations of heroes to reality and the daily struggle for self-validation.[50] The epic tradition survived for such a long time because of its popularity in these respects. Despite

[48] Ruth Scodel, "The Story-Teller and His Audience," in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*, ed. Robert Fowler, 45-55 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 45.
[49] Adkins 1972: 60. In a results-culture, only winning was considered tolerable, and second place was of no comfort.
[50] Michael Clarke, "Manhood and Heroism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Homer*, ed. Robert Fowler, pgs. 74-90 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 90.

the challenges put forth by several opponents, including philosophers and historians, epic remained relevant and inspired its various audiences throughout the Greek world.

The *Aristeia* of Diomedes

As perhaps the most successful composition of extant epic poetry, the *Iliad* must be examined in order to distinguish Diomedes as a central heroic figure. Given the loss of most of the Epic Cycle, the *Iliad* is a key element in this pursuit. There are several episodes which distinguish Diomedes as a pivotal figure of epic, and so this section will examine his role within these episodes and determine the reasons why Diomedes is, or rather should be, a cultural icon. This is strictly for the purposes of placing Diomedes in a hierarchy of heroes. I will explore the relevance of this hero as opposed to others, and why Diomedes reflects an ideal hero and a paradigmatic figure to the Greeks. Diomedes is portrayed in several Books of the *Iliad*, and this study will focus on the most noteworthy instances in regards to Diomedes' prowess, and consequently the most famous episodes in the *Iliad* which feature Diomedes in a key role.

Diomedes' first major display of heroism is the *aristeia* of Book V. The hero appears in the largest number of battles in the entire epic, most of which are in the first half of the *Iliad*.[51] He is a figure of great interest to the poet since he is included so often. His *aristeia* is also the longest in the *Iliad*, encompassing all of Book V and some of VI.[52]

[51] Carolyn Higbie, *Heroes' Names, Homeric Identities* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 92.

[52] This *aristeia* is found in *Iliad* V.1-453, and then continues in V.793-909. The *aristeia* then ends in VI.119-236. Whitman (1965: 167) notes that Achilles' *aristeia*, by comparison, is scattered over Books XIX to XXII. The two *aristeiai* are meant to balance each other, one at the beginning and the other at the end.

Owen claims his inclusion in such a fashion is an act of retribution for the treaty which was broken by the Trojans in Book IV.[53] He thus has quite an instrumental role in the *Iliad*.

Iliad V is the purest display of *aretē* in the whole epic. It involves Diomedes' exploits not only against Trojan opponents, but against the gods themselves. This *aristeia* in particular demonstrates a characteristic ideal of a Homeric hero: one should strive to become the best warrior and attain the most honour. Achilles' *aristeia* by comparison, despite having much more impact on the battlefield, is motivated only by revenge. His fury towards Hector for the death of Patroclus spurs him on; honour is certainly not Achilles' goal when he returns to battle. Since the beginning of the narrative, Achilles has removed himself from the war and refuses to return. Diomedes takes his place as the most prominent Achaean hero from the onset of battle; he is a "surrogate Achilles," effectively replacing him for the time being.[54] Accordingly, Diomedes epitomizes the concept of competitive excellence, which is a vehicle for personal glory through strength.[55] He sets the standard by which subsequent episodes will follow.

This episode clearly sets Diomedes apart from other heroes. There are several characters who could have replaced Achilles, but the fact that Diomedes is chosen for the part reveals his prominence. He is compared to a star when Athena intervenes on his behalf, as the text indicates: "Δαῖέ οἱ ἐκ κόρυθός τε καὶ ἀσπίδος ἀκάματον πῦρ ἀστέρ'

[53] E.T. Owen, *The Story of the Iliad: As Told in the Iliad* (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, & Co. Ltd., 1947), 45.
[54] Rabel 1997: 90.
[55] Rabel 1997: 89. Also related to this idea is a hero's ability to speak, since a Homeric hero had to excel in both word and deed. Higbie (1995: 98) says there are several instances in the *Iliad* which portray Diomedes as a great speaker, particularly IX.32, IX.697, and XIV.110.

ὀπωρινῷ ἐναλίγκιον, ὅς τε μάλιστα λαμπρὸν παμφαίνῃσι λελουμένος ὠκεανοῖο."[56] According to Whitman, only three heroes receive such a description: Diomedes, Hector, and Achilles.[57] A clear link between the three heroes is established in this way. Kirk identifies this star as Sirius, whose brightness is the emphasis of the simile.[58] Only the best heroes of the *Iliad* are given the motif of brilliance in this fashion, so all three warriors are marked out as arguably the greatest heroes of the epic because of the simile shared between them.

Athena also imbues Diomedes with *menos*, or might. This definitive strength was meant to distinguish epic heroes from contemporary men, so that a Homeric hero stood out as an example to young men.[59] *Menos* is a sign of heroism, and it is intrinsic to the concept of the Homeric hero. Upon being injured, Diomedes prays to Athena and she responds with the following: "Θαρσῶν νῦν Διόμηδες ἐπὶ Τρώεσσι μάχεσθαι: ἐν γάρ τοι στήθεσσι μένος πατρώϊον ἧκα ἄτρομον, οἷον ἔχεσκε σακέσπαλος ἱππότα Τυδεύς."[60] In the association with *menos*, Diomedes is once again distinguished as a great hero. *Menos* can be either an aspiration to divine glory or a descent to reckless and self-destructive fury, two distinct possibilities for any hero.[61] The fact that Diomedes uses such *menos* in a beneficial manner suggests that he is also self-controlled, an important trait for Greek

[56] Homer, *Iliad* V.4-6. “On his helmet and shield she kindled fire bright as Orion’s dog, the dominant star when freed from Ocean to cast its radiant beams." English translation by Herbert Jordan (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008). All subsequent translations of the text of the *Iliad* will be from this translation unless otherwise specified.

[57] Whitman 1965: 143. All three warriors are given this simile in their greatest moments in battle.

[58] G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary Volume II Books 5-8* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), 53.

[59] Clarke 2004: 80.

[60] *Iliad* V.124-126. "Diomedes, do not hesitate to fight! I gave your arms and legs your father’s strength [*menos*], unstoppable, just like that of horseman Tydeus." The mention of Tydeus adds to Diomedes’ heroic identity, as Tydeus was also a favourite of Athena and a great warrior, a reputation which a son was supposed to carry on and surpass.

[61] Clarke 2004: 81.

men. Diomedes' father, Tydeus, loses Athena's favour by committing an atrocity in battle.[62] Diomedes on the other hand uses this strength to attain glory. This address is a clear comparison with Tydeus, but Diomedes is given a much more favourable reception by Athena, as well as a word of warning; Diomedes' actions could have had the same abhorrent result as his father's. The actions of a hero ultimately determine his praise in a medium where fiction and ethics complement each other.[63] The audience had a basic familiarity with epic material, and it would have known of the exploits of Tydeus. In the *Iliad*, Diomedes has surpassed the reputation of his famous father and thus has received a greater status as a hero while serving as an ethical *exemplum* to the audience and his own fellow warriors.

Diomedes' *aretē* is further bolstered during his *aristeia* before the encounter with Aeneas. The hero refuses to flee despite the great odds before him. Diomedes answers his squire, Sthenelus, when the possibility of flight is presented: "Μή τι φόβον δ᾽ ἀγόρευ᾽, ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ σὲ πεισέμεν οἴω. οὐ γάρ μοι γενναῖον ἀλυσκάζοντι μάχεσθαι οὐδὲ καταπτώσσειν: ἔτι μοι μένος ἔμπεδόν ἐστιν: ὀκνείω δ᾽ ἵππων ἐπιβαινέμεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὔτως ἀντίον εἶμ᾽ αὐτῶν."[64] There is an idealized feature to his reaction here. Diomedes does not want to fail in his pursuits; he does not want to be considered *aischros* by his peers. Whitman characterizes his mindset as follows: "His is the heroic pattern without thought, victory without implicit defeat."[65] His depiction here characterizes the most

[62] In Statius' *Thebaid* VIII.753-766, Tydeus severs Melanippus' head and eats his brain, an act at which Athena herself shudders. Tydeus is denied immortality as a result.
[63] Redfield 1994: 62.
[64] *Iliad* V.252-256. "No talk of retreat. I will not do that. It is not my way to run from any fight, or shrink back. My courage is as firm as ever. I decline to ride but, just as I am, I will stand."
[65] Whitman 1965: 167.

powerful ideals of the Homeric hero, and his *aretē* ultimately depends on his success in the battlefield. His very status as a hero and a leader is at stake since flight is not an option in a results-driven culture.[66] The duty and willingness to fight demonstrated by Diomedes are paradigmatic of the Homeric hero.

The greatest testament to heroic prowess in the *Iliad* is exhibited when Diomedes fights the gods Aphrodite and Ares. Although this particular episode could be seen as impious or extreme, in this case the hero is allowed by Athena to clash with the divine. During an *aristeia*, the limits of mortal men are barely recognized; in their respective *aristeiai*, Diomedes refuses to fight Apollo, Patroclus is opposed by Apollo, and Achilles fights the river Scamander.[67] Diomedes' fights against Aphrodite and Ares are no exception. After wounding Aeneas, Diomedes sees Aphrodite desperately rescuing her son, and he proceeds to injure her hand with his spear.[68] Ares, on the other hand, is stabbed by Diomedes' spear when Athena takes the reins of Diomedes' chariot and drives it into battle in place of Sthenelus.[69] Although Athena's role in the battle is the reason why Diomedes is successful, he is still designated as the one responsible for these events. Divinity is manifest in these episodes, yet it serves to highlight exceptional human achievement rather than divine intervention.[70] The hero is still responsible for his actions,

[66] I must note that Diomedes' retreat in *Iliad* XI.396-400 is *not* a flight. He is injured and cannot continue fighting until he is treated. The same happens to Odysseus a few lines later.

[67] Schein 1984: 35. These fights are found in *Iliad* V.440-444, XVI.707-711, and XXI.233-356 respectively.

[68] *Iliad* V.318-340. Diomedes could see the gods when Athena lifted the veil from his eyes in line 127.

[69] *Iliad* V.846-863.

[70] Schein 1984: 57.

despite the role of a god during his deeds.[71] There is therefore an inherent religious meaning in this episode. To contrast the two different planes of existence, Homer plays down the responsibility of the gods and emphasizes that of the mortals.[72] The focus is on humanity and its helplessness in the face of the divine, since Diomedes' actions have no further consequence other than removing Aphrodite and Ares from battle for a short time.

The wounding of the gods during Diomedes' *aristeia* contrasts the fragility of humanity with the might of the gods, since Diomedes' actions are ultimately fruitless in the grand scheme of the *Iliad*. Owen claims the wounding is comedic, since whenever the gods intervene in the epic there is an element of light-heartedness.[73] Yet there are severe consequences that follow the influence of a god: Apollo sends down a plague in Book I, for example, and causes Patroclus' death in Book XVI, while Athena plays an instrumental role in Hector's death in Book XXII. Episodes involving the gods on this scale are not at all comedic. Rather, they point to another important religious theme; a Homeric hero must challenge the very limits of mortality for recognition and renown. Challenging the gods is thus the best way to achieve the most prestigious status possible. Greek religious views, however, required its members to keep their distance from the gods, which is what allowed the gods to have such authority as ethereal beings.[74] The fact that a Homeric hero can come so close to the gods and interact with them on a violent

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[71] Dione assures Aphrodite that Diomedes will eventually be punished in V.410-415. This shows that a Homeric hero must suffer greatly for recognition. Achilles, for example, must have a short life in order to have *kleos*.

[72] Schein 1984: 60. Kirk (1990: 97) relates the idea of spilling "divine blood," or *ichor*, to the fact that the gods eat immortal food (ambrosia), so their blood must also be immortal. Humans and gods are supposed to be contrasted in all aspects of their lives, including warfare.

[73] Owen 1947: 52-53.

[74] Redfield 1994: 246. Mythology often shows how getting too close to gods can lead to tragedy.

level indicates the transcendental position of the Homeric hero. *Iliad* V displays the paradoxical nature of Diomedes' *aristeia*: not only is Diomedes a powerful warrior against other mortals, but he also represents the limits to which a mortal man can aspire in the shadow of the divine.

The *aristeia* of Diomedes continues well into Book VI. The Book begins with the rout of the Trojans and the role which several other Greek heroes play in the victory, spelling out Troy's possible doom. The competitive prowess of Diomedes is once again displayed and is clearly evident in the words which Helenus says to Hector. After advising Hector to return to Troy, he describes Diomedes as follows: "Ὂν δὴ ἐγὼ κάρτιστον Ἀχαιῶν φημι γενέσθαι. οὐδ᾽ Ἀχιλῆά ποθ᾽ ὧδέ γ᾽ ἐδείδιμεν ὄρχαμον ἀνδρῶν, ὅν πέρ φασι θεᾶς ἐξέμμεναι: ἀλλ᾽ ὅδε λίην μαίνεται, οὐδέ τίς οἱ δύναται μένος ἰσοφαρίζειν."[75] Once again there is a parallel with Achilles in the description of Diomedes. This description in the poem exceeds anything else found in the *Iliad*, because Achilles is always supposed to be considered the most formidable of the Greeks.[76] Helenus is possibly stating his own view in the desperate situation of the war, but his words have nevertheless characterized Diomedes as one of the greatest fighters on the Greek side, and a potential substitute for Achilles himself. His *aretē* is commended even further.

[75] *Iliad* VI.98-101. "I must say he is the mightiest Greek. We did not fear even Achilles as much, whose mother is a goddess. Diomedes is frenzied, and no one can rival his fury."

[76] Kirk 1990: 168. Nagy (1999: 26) comments on the difficulties of the application of the phrase "the best of the Achaeans," since Ajax, Diomedes, and Agamemnon also receive the same epithet. He concludes that Achilles must nevertheless stand out as the best warrior, since the *Iliad* is his *kleos*.

Yet the most interesting part of the battle is the meeting between Diomedes and Glaucus, wherein the famous armour-exchange is found.[77] Glaucus and Diomedes come together intending to fight one another, each boasting of his own descent in lengthy accounts, and after they realize that they inherited a guest-friendship *via* their grandfathers, they exchange armour as a sign of good faith, bronze armour for Glaucus and a gold set for Diomedes. Taunts are effectively a way to effeminize one's opponent, and are meant to reduce the other warrior to the same level as a subdued animal or a woman.[78] In this episode, however, the respective taunts bring to light the *xenia* shared by the two warriors. The normal conduct of a battle is ultimately ironic in this context.

Diomedes essentially wins the "duel" because he receives much more valuable armour; Glaucus on the other hand is arguably tricked into giving away his armour. The poet even clarifies this point, saying that Zeus suspended Glaucus' senses (ἔνθ᾽ αὖτε Γλαύκῳ Κρονίδης φρένας ἐξέλετο Ζεύς,.)[79] But it must be noted that in this instance, *xenia* trumps the harsh realities of war, pointing to an important religious theme once again. The armour-exchange is also proof that Diomedes has surpassed the reputation of his own father because he does not succumb to the madness which *menos* can entail. This episode is a sign of Diomedes' return to a normal state of conduct, just as when Achilles returns the body of Hector to Priam in *Iliad* XXIV, once again comparing the two heroes and linking them as potentially the most prominent Greek warriors.

[77] *Iliad* VI.119-236.

[78] Schein 1984: 77. Redfield (1972: 128-129) affirms that taunts are a way for a hero to prove himself in combat at the expense of his opponent. He must be defined in relation to past and present acts.

[79] *Iliad* VI.234.

At this point the *aristeia* of Diomedes comes to an end and focus is shifted to Hector's encounters with his family. This exchange, however, encapsulates the heroic mentality perfectly. Diomedes continues to demonstrate an individualistic and competitive heroic code, but the setting shifts to Hector's household after Diomedes completes his *aristeia*.[80] The deed is done, and the hero's status has been strongly affirmed. *Timē* is proof that a hero deserves to be recognized, and Diomedes' new armour is a symbol of that prestigious status as a hero. The episode is the crown on his extended *aristeia*, displaying magnanimity and the finest heroic relations.[81] This scene is ideal for a Homeric hero; not only does Diomedes surpass his own father, but he also attains a great amount of *timē* and shows religious valour in the midst of a brutal war. Book VI is the culmination of the *Iliad's* purest display of heroic *aretē* and a unique feature of the heroic *ethos* which no other hero demonstrates.

The *Doloneia*

Book X is widely considered to be a much later insertion in the Homeric *corpus*.[82] Thematically it is of relatively little importance, and its events are never mentioned again

[80] Rabel 1997: 95. The fact that the focus of the poem is shifted from Diomedes to Hector is suggestive of why he stops fighting.

[81] Kirk 1990: 191.

[82] Bryan Hainsworth, *The Iliad: A Commentary Volume III* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 151. He states that the scholia to Book X report two stories about Rhesus: one attributed to Pindar, in which Rhesus fights so well against the Greeks that Hera sends Odysseus and Diomedes to kill him secretly at night, and the other, known by later authors such as Virgil and Servius, in which Rhesus is given an oracle that claims he will be invincible after he and his horses drink from the Scamander. He is killed by Odysseus and Diomedes in both versions. It is unclear which version (if any) the poet of Book X was familiar with, but what is clear is that he had *some* knowledge of Rhesus' role in Troy, which was then adapted into this Book. Hainsworth (153) asserts, however, that any allegation about *Iliad* X being a foreign body of poetry is untrustworthy and impossible to trace in historical records in spite of its unpopularity among ancient scholiasts.

in subsequent Books. Even ancient commentators have their doubts about this episode's authenticity. Yet, as the illuminating work of Dué and Ebbott shows, the theme of ambush is an integral part of the epic tradition.[83] There is a great degree of traditional significance in the inclusion of the night raid by Diomedes and Odysseus, and *Iliad* X is likely a traditional episode as a result. There are several other examples of ambush in the epic tradition, including the sack of Troy itself, the ambush of Troilus by Achilles, and the attack on the suitors in the *Odyssey*.[84] *Iliad* X is another example of such a tradition at work. A closer examination of the material is necessary before its reception is elaborated.

Book X begins in the Greek camp, where the men are asleep after a tough battle. Agamemnon has a plan, and wakes the other leaders in order to organize a night raid. The Greeks were routed in Book IX, and the subsequent plan to surprise the Trojans and their allies at night is meant to bolster the Greek war effort. There is a clear contrast between ambush, or *lokhos*, and open battle; throughout the *Iliad* there is an obvious focus on the latter. But, as the words of Nestor show, ambush is no less acceptable a strategy in warfare. He says, "Ταῦτά κε πάντα πύθοιτο, καὶ ἂψ εἰς ἡμέας ἔλθοι ἀσκηθής: μέγα κέν οἱ ὑπουράνιον κλέος εἴη πάντας ἐπ᾽ ἀνθρώπους, καί οἱ δόσις ἔσσεται ἐσθλή: ὅσσοι γὰρ νήεσσιν ἐπικρατέουσιν ἄριστοι...αἰεὶ δ᾽ ἐν δαίτῃσι καὶ εἰλαπίνῃσι παρέσται."[85] Ambush is

[83] Casey Dué and Mary Ebbott, *Iliad 10 and the Poetics of Ambush* (Cambridge: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2010), 25. They further assert that the language of *Iliad* X is idiosyncratic to the rest of the poem. In other words, the language and the style is similar to the rest of the *Iliad*, which establishes the authenticity of this Book (27).

[84] Dué and Ebbott 2010: 33. These are not at all "un-heroic" or "un-Homeric" when compared. If more epic poems still existed, the theme of ambush would have certainly been included.

[85] *Iliad* X.211-217. "Such daring things he might do and return here, unscathed. Then his fame would spread wherever mortal men live, and he would receive rich gifts. Think how many rulers are camped with our ships...He would be honoured at every feast." Hainsworth (1993: 174) says the feast, the δόσις, is a vital part of *kleos*.

yet another manner in which to attain *timē*, and in these lines it is deemed as a fitting course to great rewards and praise.

Diomedes is the first man to volunteer for the expedition. He also proposes that someone else goes with him, and chooses Odysseus out of all the other heroes in contention for a spot. His prowess in speech is once again apparent with the proposal of his plan; he volunteers for the difficult task and convinces the other heroes that two volunteers would have double the wits of a single individual.[86] Ambush is linked to *mētis* as opposed to *biē*, and cunning is an asset which implies an endurance of prolonged hardship rather than the use of excessive force.[87] This essentially sets apart some heroes from others, as not all heroes were considered cunning. The best heroes were supposed to excel in both *mētis* and *biē*, and a night raid is an ideal setting for such a distinction. This is essentially why Diomedes chooses Odysseus, who is a famous proponent of *mētis*, as a partner. In *Iliad* XIII, Idomeneus praises Meriones and claims the best warriors do in fact excel in both types of warfare, ambush and *polemos*, or open battle.[88] Accordingly, Diomedes and Odysseus are depicted by the poet as the two best candidates for such an endeavour. Given Diomedes' role in Books V and VI, and the subsequent function he serves in Book X, he is indeed hailed as the best Greek warrior after Achilles.[89]

[86] *Iliad* X.218-226. Diomedes' speech here displays both his braveness and his intelligence, two assets for a Homeric hero.

[87] Dué and Ebbott 2010: 34.

[88] *Iliad* XIII.269-287. Dué and Ebbott (2010: 46-47) claim this passage determines where *aretē* is revealed most of all.

[89] It must be noted that Achilles is also an ambusher. Dué and Ebbott (2010: 43-44) cite the death of Troilus and the capture of Lykaon in the *Cypria* as examples of Achilles' prowess in ambush. In *Iliad* IX.323-327 Achilles speaks about "sleepless nights" he spent at Troy, most likely performing night raids.

The attack by Diomedes and Odysseus against the Trojan Dolon, an event known as the *Doloneia*, is famous for several reasons. It is believed that Dolon was inserted as a character to a traditional episode, but the mention of his family places him in a traditional context.[90] Regardless of a pre-existing tradition about this character, he is placed in the narrative as a crucial source of information for the two Greek heroes. Dolon tells them of Rhesus and the other allies who have come to Troy, placing the most attention on Rhesus' magnificent horses.[91] Here once again there is mention of the great rewards that come from ambush. After Dolon is killed by Diomedes, the narrative continues and the slaughter of the Thracians occurs. Diomedes receives *menos* from Athena (τῷ δ᾽ ἔμπνευσε μένος γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη), and proceeds to slaughter his enemies while Odysseus is relegated to the role of dragging bodies aside so the horses can be taken away.[92] Diomedes kills thirteen men, including Rhesus himself, while Odysseus is given a much more passive role. The horses are even given to Diomedes rather than Odysseus. As Homer writes, "Οἳ δ᾽ ὅτε Τυδεΐδεω κλισίην εὔτυκτον ἵκοντο, ἵππους μὲν κατέδησαν ἐϋτμήτοισιν ἱμᾶσι φάτνῃ ἐφ᾽ ἱππείῃ, ὅθι περ Διομήδεος ἵπποι ἕστασαν ὠκύποδες μελιηδέα πυρὸν ἔδοντες."[93] *Iliad* X is thus another display of Diomedes' *aretē*; in this episode he stands out undeniably from other heroes like Ajax or even Odysseus, since Diomedes gets the rewards for the expedition.

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[90] Dué and Ebbott 2010: 109. There are unfortunately no scholia which provide information on Dolon (107).

[91] *Iliad* X.427-445.

[92] *Iliad* X.482-502.

[93] *Iliad* X.566-569. "When the two men reached Diomedes' camp they took tight-plaited reins and tied the team at a manger where Diomedes' horses softly munched honeyed grain, their quick feet still."

There are also religious overtones in this episode; the spoils of Dolon are to be offered to Athena.[94] Throughout *Iliad* X, Diomedes' prowess in battle and his devotion to the gods are highlighted as essential attributes for a Homeric hero. Diomedes' competitive form of heroism is prevalent in this Book as well as the previous ones. His status as an *aristos* is not weakened with the night raid, but rather reinforced. *Iliad* X is the last prominent setting for the hero, since the Trojans become the dominant side and pave the way for Achilles' eventual return in the next half of the *Iliad*.

Iliad XIV & XXIII

Diomedes' role is downplayed in the next half of the epic. He continues to be the pivotal Greek hero in the first half of the epic and presents the audience with a precedent for Achilles and other Greek heroes, but his efforts are ultimately fruitless in the grand scheme of the *Iliad*; it is after all the *kleos* of Achilles. Yet each of the episodes which feature Diomedes continue to suggest how eminent he is. He is designated as the precursor to Achilles, and demonstrates to the audience what should be expected of a hero. In *Iliad* XIV, for example, after all the Greek commanders are wounded in the previous battle, Diomedes makes another important advisory speech to help win the next battle. After commenting on the prominence of his lineage, he states that the commanders should revisit the field in order to inspire the troops to continue to fight, advice which

[94] *Iliad* X.571. Although it is likely that Odysseus is Athena's champion in this episode, the prior Books suggest it is Diomedes who is her favourite at this point in the *Iliad*. He is the one who selects Odysseus as a companion, and, more importantly, he gets the *timē* associated with the night raid. Athena even addresses Diomedes at X.509-511, although *both* heroes prayed to her earlier in X.277-295.

Agamemnon and the other leaders accept.[95] Despite being the youngest commander among the Greeks, Diomedes displays his *mētis* in his words, winning over even the wily Odysseus.

The funeral games for Patroclus in Book XXIII also highlight the prowess of Diomedes within the *Iliad*. He participates in the chariot race, the most prestigious competition in the funeral games, and defeats Menelaus, Eumelus, Antilochus, and Meriones, consequently receiving illustrious rewards from Achilles, another form of *timē*.[96] According to Nagy, this athletic contest relates to the idea of agonistic competition and hero worship.[97] In this way Diomedes asserts his status as the foremost Greek hero after Achilles; the chariot race essentially becomes an arena for displaying heroic virtues in a non-lethal manner and elevates Diomedes to a greater heroic stratum.

The final event in which Diomedes participates during the funeral games is the spear fight with Telamonian Ajax, one of the greatest heroes on the Greek side. This episode once again shows Diomedes' prowess in battle and athletic competitions. The two warriors, chosen because they are the two best warriors after Achilles, charge at one another and join combat three times.[98] Diomedes eventually wins the battle, as the text of the *Iliad* describes: "Καὶ τότε δή ῥ᾽ Αἴαντι περιδείσαντες Ἀχαιοὶ παυσαμένους ἐκέλευσαν ἀέθλια ἶσ᾽ ἀνελέσθαι. αὐτὰρ Τυδεΐδῃ δῶκεν μέγα φάσγανον ἥρως σὺν κολεῷ τε φέρων

[95] *Iliad* XIV.109-134. Cf. the section on the Doloneia above for the relevance of *mētis* in a Homeric hero.
[96] The chariot race can be found in *Iliad* XXIII.287-538. This competition was the most formal occasion for validating the status of the elite (Nassos Papalexandrou, *The Visual Poetics of Power: Warriors, Youths, and Tripods in Early Greece* [Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005], 28-29). Chapter 2 of this thesis discusses the chariot race in more detail, including the value of tripods.
[97] Nagy 1999: 117.
[98] This episode is found in *Iliad* XXIII.798-825.

καὶ ἐΰτμήτῳ τελαμῶνι."[99] Despite the efforts of the Greeks to give both warriors equal prizes, Ajax confirms Diomedes as the winner by giving him the prize for the fight; Diomedes drew first blood and nearly killed Ajax, which was a feat even Hector could not accomplish in Book VII during his own duel with Ajax. As a result, this episode acknowledges Diomedes as a greater warrior than both Ajax and Hector. The spear fight in this Book ultimately designates Diomedes as the greatest hero after Achilles and further asserts Diomedes' status as a paradigmatic Homeric hero.

Diomedes in Lost Epics

This next section analyzes fragmented evidence pertaining to Diomedes' role and influence in lost epics. Despite their condition, these fragments nevertheless offer some important clues about what kind of impact Diomedes had on early Greek epic other than what an audience would have received from the *Iliad*. In the traditions that explain events before the Trojan War started, Diomedes took part in the victorious expedition of the Epigoni against Thebes in revenge for his father, who lost his life there.[100] He therefore avenged his father and achieved what he could not. Before this, while still in Argos, he secretly saved his grandfather Oeneus from the six sons of Agrius, who initially wrested the kingdom away from Oeneus.[101] Afterwards he became the ruler of Argos in Oeneus' stead. Diomedes was one of Helen's suitors before Menelaus won her hand, making him

[99] *Iliad* XXIII.822-825. "The watching Greeks feared for Ajax's life. They bade the men stop and take equal prizes, but Ajax gave Diomedes the long sword, whose scabbard hung from a finely tooled strap."

[100] Apollodorus, *Library* III.7.2, translated by Sir James George Frazer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921).

[101] *Library* I.8.6.

one of the many heroes who had to swear the Oath of Tyndareus to keep Helen safe from any harm in the future, and subsequently join the expedition against Troy.[102] Depictions of Diomedes are evidently quite suitable to his heroic status even before the Trojan War; all the aforementioned examples designate him as a noteworthy epic figure.

Diomedes also has a prominent role in the Epic Cycle apart from the *Iliad*. For instance, the *Cypria* sees the hero killing Palamedes with Odysseus,[103] and during the funeral games held by Achilles for Antilochus in the *Aethiopis*, Diomedes wins the sprint.[104] These examples thus demonstrate Diomedes' close partnership with Odysseus and prowess in athletic competition, just as the *Iliad* portrays, providing some correlation between these different epics in terms of his characterization. His partnership with Odysseus is evident in the *Little Iliad* as well, where the two heroes set out to retrieve the Palladion.[105] One version of the *Little Iliad* depicts Coroebus, a Phrygian ally of the Trojans who came to Troy with the intention of marrying Cassandra, killed by Diomedes during the sack of Troy, whereas most versions depict Neoptolemus as his killer.[106] Diomedes here continues to have a prominent role in slaying major heroic figures. In the *Returns*, or the *Nostoi*, Diomedes is one of the few Greek commanders to return home

[102] *Library* III.10.8.

[103] "Cypria" fragment 27. *Greek Epic Fragments: From the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC*, translated by M.L. West (Loeb Classical Library, 2003), 105. All subsequent fragments are taken from this work. According to Virgil's *Aeneid*, Palamedes was charged with false crimes by Odysseus, who then set out to kill him as a traitor (*Aeneid* II.82-99, translated by Robert Fitzgerald [New York: Vintage, 1990]).

[104] "Aethiopis" argument 4. *Greek Epic Fragments*, 113.

[105] "Little Iliad" argument 4. *Greek Epic Fragments*, 123. I discuss the relevance and mythological tradition of the Palladion in more detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

[106] "Little Iliad" argument 24. *Greek Epic Fragments*, 137.

safely after the gods set storms on the other Greeks.[107] Since the other Greeks suffered during their respective *nostoi* because they committed an atrocity of some kind, Diomedes' safe *nostos* implies that he had the favour of the gods during his journey.

Conclusion

The heroic displays by Diomedes ultimately resound with the audience in numerous ways. He is the purest representation of a Homeric hero who fulfills his duty and excels over other warriors. Book V is a key demonstration of an *aristeia* and the heights to which a mortal man can aspire, an amazing display of heroic obligations and societal expectations, and the precedent for all the heroes in the *Iliad*. Book VI is a culmination of this *aristeia*, and entrenches Diomedes' status as the successor to his famous father while also establishing relevant parallels with Achilles and Hector. His values stand out and he demonstrates a humane aspect to the war by exchanging armour with Glaucus and restoring his *menos* to a normal state. Book X further exalts Diomedes with a display of *mētis* as well as *biē*. He is distinguished as one of the few heroes who can undertake a night raid, which is a specialized and potentially rewarding type of mission reserved only for the best heroes, and he is both given and attains significant honours as a result. His accomplishments in the war exceed those of much more celebrated warriors in the Greek camp, such as Ajax and even Odysseus, as far as his role within the *Iliad* is concerned. Books XIV and XXIII further assert his status as a great speaker and a competitive figure who excels in battle over other great warriors. He is

[107] "Returns" argument 1. *Greek Epic Fragments*, 155. Some later traditions, however, which I describe in Chapter 3, have varying depictions of a harsh *nostos* for Diomedes.

constantly characterized as a central epic hero in these episodes, and his triumph over the gods and his close association with Athena also represent important religious themes of the *Iliad*.

Not only is Diomedes a pivotal figure of epic, he is also the most valuable hero of the Greek side during Achilles' absence. Any Archaic or Classical Greek audience would have found his portrayal--the embodiment of *aretē*--pertinent to its own values. Fragmented traditions about this hero also cast him in a positive light, expressing how paradigmatic he is as a Homeric hero. His presence in pivotal epics, such as the expedition of the Epigoni, the *Cypria*, *Aethiopis*, *Little Iliad*, and the *Nostoi*, all entrench his status as a decorated Greek hero and emphasize relevant themes about Homeric heroism. Even though the Homeric conception of *aretē* changes over time, the audience still found value in the Homeric hero, an inspirational figure who tries to define himself within the *cosmos*.

Chapter 2: The Visuality of Diomedes

Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the role of Diomedes in the *Iliad*, illustrating the impact of the epic hero through literature. I will now direct my attention towards the visual arts, taking into consideration numerous portrayals of the hero in vase-painting. Only examples from the Archaic and the Classical periods are of interest to this study, as examination of later examples from the Hellenistic or Roman periods are beyond the scope of this work. Interestingly, artists normally did not depict Diomedes as the text of the *Iliad* itself describes him.[108] Instead artists either invented their own narratives based around the events which they showed to their audience, or captured traditional episodes which are no longer preserved. This is partly attributed to several intrinsic attitudes directly tied to the importance of the epic heroes in society, and the progression of Greek art and its copious sources of influence, which I will discuss below. Furthermore, Diomedes is frequently paired with another hero, most notably Odysseus, and does not always receive a depiction in recognition of his own prowess; there is an inherent focus on cooperation instead of individualism whenever he is depicted. This is problematic because, as Rabel notes, "Cooperative heroism is an expression of weakness and disadvantage...heroes attribute great value to cooperation only when their survival is threatened."[109] The *aristeia* of Diomedes is exceptional, however. The visual arts for the

[108] Due to the lack of extant material from the Epic Cycle, the *Iliad* will receive much more attention than any other literary portrayals of Diomedes. Fragmentary evidence will nevertheless have significance to this work.

[109] Rabel 1997: 60.

most part diminished the influence which Diomedes had in the *Iliad*, portraying him as a lesser hero and ignoring the great feats which he performs throughout epic.

Accordingly, artists did not portray Diomedes as a hero who had a significant impact on the Trojan War, whether these portrayals were conscious or subconscious. Depictions more often treated him as a complementary figure to Odysseus and several others of allegedly higher standing. Artists, particularly vase painters, often exploited such divisions as they saw fit.[110] The fact that an artist would choose to portray Diomedes in the shadow of other figures is relevant to the question of the role which he played in Greek literature, as the previous chapter has already explored. I have observed that his role in the *Iliad* is quite emblematic of the epic hero, and he stands out as the standard for other heroes to follow. A cursory glance at Greek art, however, provides a contrasting image. The purpose of this chapter is to extract the meaning of these depictions in extant examples of Greek art so as to determine Diomedes' characterization in various material contexts. First I will provide an overview of Greek art from the beginning of the Archaic period; various motifs and ideals either progress or become dropped from one period to the next, so it is extremely relevant to the present study to decipher their meaning.

Geometric Period

The Geometric Period in Greek art lasted from c. 900-700 BC, after the fall of Mycenaean culture c. 1200 BC and the subsequent Dark Ages which lasted from 1100-900 BC. Before this period, figures were generally unframed and seemed to float in empty space, and they depicted actions that were not a part of everyday life, such as death

[110] Susan Woodford, *The Trojan War in Ancient Art* (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., 1993), 96.

scenes with lions.[111] The Geometric Period changed this relatively free style with a plethora of new techniques and conventions. It introduced a multiplicity of figures, a clear differentiation between men and women, a distinction between living and dead figures (the dead were depicted in a horizontal position, normally on a bier), a new focus on characterization, and imposed limits on style.[112] Typical Geometric decorations included meandering patterns and swastikas. Human figures were placed into two categories, where individual figures were shown performing distinctive acts, and animals were at times featured. Ultimately, the element of specific action was incredibly hard to represent, although necessary for a narrative function.[113] Funeral scenes and battles were very common, and often conveyed some sort of simple, unspecified narrative to a viewer. Most importantly the principle of *symmetria*, translated as "commensurability," which was a vital component even in Dark Age vase painting, was a monumental achievement of such imagery.[114] Even so, the subjects of this art form were very limited in scope. It was very matter-of-fact, as there was no inherent desire to depict mythological episodes or divinities, with little or no influence from other cultures, including that of the Mycenaeans.[115]

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[111] Anthony Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists: Text and Picture in Early Greek Art* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 14.

[112] Snodgrass 1998: 15.

[113] Snodgrass 1998: 15. Although Geometric art was more sophisticated than previous art forms, there were still several limits.

[114] Jeffrey M. Hurwit, "Art, Poetry, and the Polis in the Age of Homer," in *From Pasture to Polis: Art in the Age of Homer*, ed. Susan Langdon, 14-42 (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1993), 29. Hurwit defines *symmetria* as, "The studied relation of part to part and interaction of part to whole."

[115] John Carter, "The Beginning of Narrative Art in the Greek Geometric Period," in *The Annual of the British School at Athens* Vol. 67, pgs. 25-58 (British School at Athens, 1972), 37.

This type of art was not directly inspired by the various subjects of epic poetry, including the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, which must have been in circulation orally around this time. Snodgrass maintains that these two poems are dated much too late to be any influence on early art scenes though; in fact, most scholars tend to date their *completed* versions to the 7th century based on potential examples of Homeric episodes in art.[116] Indeed Homeric scenes are late and infrequent in the visual art record, while scenes from currently lost poems of the Epic Cycle were much more popular than Homeric ones ever were before the 5th century.[117] But regarding Geometric art, there appears to be no correlation between epic and the content depicted in extant Geometric examples. Rather, there is a strict emphasis on generalized scenes from everyday life, and artists seemingly had no interest in portraying epic in art.[118]

Battle scenes saw the most advances in terms of narrative. By 730 BC, artists depicted figures with much more action and even basic emotions, yet none could be named because of the conformity of the Geometric style in terms of figural shape.[119] The first potentially identifiable episode from the Trojan War saga, however, is the rescue of Achilles' body by Ajax, found on the neck of an Ionian transport jar from 700 BC, wherein a large man is carrying a corpse over his shoulder, with two spears framing the

[116] Snodgrass 1998: 13. Just like Gregory Nagy, Snodgrass believes the epic poems underwent an evolutionary process. Nagy (1996: 42), however, dates the final versions of these to the 2nd century BC. He asserts that the 7th century was still a time in which there were no written Homeric texts, and potential texts arose sometime during the middle of the 6th century.

[117] Jonathan S. Burgess, *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 35.

[118] Hurwit 1993: 33.

[119] Snodgrass 1998: 22.

scene.[120] Yet this does not necessarily mean that the scene is actually reflecting an epic tradition. The scene could rather be a general rescue scene, depicting a comrade removing the corpse of a fellow warrior from battle, which in turn eventually inspires artists to portray Ajax's rescue of Achilles in a similar fashion. If this was the case, then there is still no desire on the part of artists to portray specific episodes from epic. The most likely explanation of these heroic type scenes is that they were used for self-promotion by the aristocracy, and the everyday elements of life were thus being elevated to a heroic stratum.[121]

Hurwit suggests that a strong collective identity was developing around the idea of the *polis*, and that as a result poetry and art became strong expressions of a newfound ideal of community.[122] Consequently, the elite sought to illustrate their high status by asserting themselves through art. The visual motifs of the *aichmētēs* and the *dourikleitos*, the "warrior" and the "spear-bearer" respectively, asserted a statement of high status for the aristocracy, since the characteristic quality of the ideal fighter was the use of a spear.[123] Geometric art was a means by which the elite perpetuated their world views, and they advertised these views to others through heroic connotations. The spear-holding motif in Geometric art was therefore an essential part of the warrior status.[124] As a result,

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[120] Snodgrass 1998: 36-37. It must be stressed that this episode is not necessarily Homeric, but evocative of the lost works of the Epic Cycle, since the rescue of Achilles' body is attested in the *Aethiopis* (38).

[121] Hurwit 1993: 36. This imagery was a type of rhetoric employed by the elite and spurred on by the rise of the *polis*.

[122] Hurwit 1993: 40.

[123] Papalexandrou 2005: 116-119.

[124] Papalexandrou 2005: 129. The spear represented political leadership as well, realizing an epic conception of the warrior hero, who had to both fight and speak exceptionally well (138). Hurwit (1993: 42) considers this an attempt by the elite to publish their own heroic pedigrees and merge them with the identity of the *polis* for political power and influence. As I have already discussed in the first chapter of this thesis,

the elite dominated most of the political and cultural ideologies of the *polis* through imagery. There was in actuality no such thing as "state art"--art which was in the service of the *polis*--and its absence enabled the elite to have great ideological control over the art forms of the city itself.[125]

Geometric art was therefore an elite-dominated, rhetorical statement of power and influence. The motifs depicted served as ideological weapons to assert status in a society beginning to differentiate itself psychologically and culturally. A newfound idea of community enabled social stratification to take place, an idea which the egalitarian Dark Ages suppressed. As a result, later art forms would continue to reflect these ideals, while new sources of influence from the East transformed Greek art and ultimately created a more sophisticated and well-developed art style during the latter half of the Archaic Period.

Archaic Period

Greek art continued to develop several new techniques and styles during the Orientalizing Period, which ran from c. 700-600 BC, and was characterized by influence from the Near-East, Phoenicia, and Syria. This was the most important time for the evolution of narrative techniques, wherein artists illustrated specific episodes from epic, new gestures and facial expressions, and most importantly, began to label individual

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Morris (2002: 84) argues that Homeric poetry was strictly elitist and represented an idealized time in which the ruling class stood apart from everyone else as the best men, while their leadership ensured the survival of the city and its members. The concept of the warrior hero is therefore intrinsic to the aristocracy of the *polis*.

[125] Hurwit 1993: 41. This explains why there is no evidence of status-charged memorials to the *polis*, but to individuals, via pottery such as the famous Dipylon krater.

figures by name.[126] By the end of the 7th century, during the Archaic Period (600-480 BC), there was a clear change in the status of vase-painting; Geometric pottery was no longer innovative or influential, and there was a possible change in the attitudes of artists because of Near-Eastern influence.[127] Overall, there was a less independent, more deferential attitude from vase-painters towards new places of interest.[128] Because of this trend, artists aspired to capture legendary episodes from a pre-existing oral tradition. Even architectural sculpture became a medium for complex narratives.[129] Benediktson suggests that this trend reflects a cultural transformation from an oral to a written culture where poetry began to lose its visuality, visual art its orality.[130]

The elite continued to dominate the medium of the visual arts well into the Archaic Period. But in contrast to the Geometric Period, there was a powerful tension between middling and elitist ideologies, whether these were reflected in poetry or the visual arts. Elitists claimed a special role in the *polis* based on outside sources, while the middling men rejected such claims based on what was decent.[131] As a result, the

[126] H.A. Shapiro, *Myth into Art: Poet and Painter in Classical Greece* (London: Routledge, 1994), 5-6.

[127] Snodgrass 1998: 74. There were developments in other media contemporaneous with this shift in Greek art, which could have been inspired by epic poetry or other sources.

[128] Snodgrass 1998: 74. He attributes the vase-painters' interest to Near-Eastern metalworkers, who used advanced incision techniques to give more detail to their work (75). In turn, the vase-painters drew on their craft as a source of inspiration for their own work.

[129] Shapiro 1994: 6.

[130] D. Thomas Benediktson, *Literature and the Visual Arts in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 5. The two media of literature and visual art became so different by the early 6th century that lyric poets assessed them in their works, either criticizing one and praising the other, or *vice versa*. I include some examples below (cf. Benediktson on Pindar and Plato).

[131] Ian Morris, "The Art of Citizenship," in *New Light on a Dark Age: Exploring the Culture of Geometric Greece*, ed. Susan Langdon, 9-43 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 16. The "middling ideal" was an ideological construct that defined itself against rich and poor members of society (12). It rejected overly luxurious displays in favour of a more modest lifestyle to collapse some of the distance between rich and poor. Archilochus and Hipponax are examples of these middling men, while Homer was elitist (cf. Morris 2001). Most elitists especially looked to the luxurious lifestyles of the Near East as examples of elite power and influence.

Orientalizing movement was a class phenomenon that shaped the social transformations of the early 7th century in Greece, with two sides morally opposed to one another.[132] Greek art continued to promote the world views of the elite despite the class tension which characterized this period. But by the end of the 6th century, with the ideals of collective citizenship and patriotism growing, whole city-states were making dedications in sanctuaries instead of individual citizens, while the view of the Near-East as hubristic prevailed over the former elitist view of the region as a source of power.[133] The elitist and the middling ideologies merged and obtained a more Pan-Hellenic status. This resulted in a process of self-definition for the Greeks; the idea of "the other" versus the idealized Greek was evident in several media.

Ideal models for emulation were necessary during this search for identity by the Greeks, and there was special consideration of what one should not be.[134] This is potentially why the Trojan War saga was of such great interest to the Greeks in all types of art. Indeed, the *Ilioupersis* was an early favourite topic of artists, with the earliest extant image dating back to the late 8th century.[135] Generic confrontations between warriors, rather than specific ones from a literary or an oral source, imparted a greater force of cohesion to each work as a whole.[136] This allowed an audience to view the battle

[132] Morris 1997: 42. This was not the case in Athens, however. An Athenian middling ideology disappeared around 700 BC, but on the other hand the aristocrats were not attracted to the elitist ideology which other city-states enjoyed (40). They were instead drawn to internal control of the serf class over any external influence. It was not until the 6th century that Athenian social rituals became much like those of the other central Greek *poleis*.

[133] Morris 1997: 43.

[134] Mark D. Fullerton, *Greek Art* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 54.

[135] Michael J. Anderson, *The Fall of Troy in Early Greek Poetry and Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 179. The image which Anderson mentions is that of a Trojan horse incised on a bronze pin.

[136] Anderson 1997: 191.

as a larger struggle, rather than an individualistic one between dueling warriors. During this crucial time of self-definition, the Greeks saw a common enemy in the Near East, the prime example of "the other" before the eventual Persian Wars.[137] Once again, as in the Geometric Period, preferential treatment was given to battle scenes. Although there is no conclusive evidence for inspiration by the Homeric poems before the 7th century, there is instead a period of remarkable inventiveness and originality.[138] Heroic subject matter further elevated the status of the elite, since they were the main audience of such pieces of art, but now it was applied to a broader Greek audience because episodes containing Greeks against barbarians eventually became Pan-Hellenic in status, and art began to reflect Greek attitudes towards themselves and others.

Classical Period

This period lasted from c. 480-323 BC and was a distinctive point for Greek art. The end of the Persian Wars marks the beginning of this period, and as a result more Greek self-definition occurred. The Eastern "barbarians" were contrasted with the Greeks in several ways, as is evident even in the sculptural reliefs of the buildings on the

[137] Jonathan M. Hall (*Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture* [University of Chicago Press, 2002], 179) discusses the fundamental role which the barbarians played in Greek self-definition during the Archaic Period. Hellenic self-definition was aggregative and entailed the evocation of similarities with peer groups which eventually transmitted themselves into a greater Hellenic genealogy, including the epic heroes. The barbarians were thus the antithesis to the Greeks. This is not the case with the Trojans in the Homeric epics until the fifth century, however (118). According to Edith Hall (*Inventing the Barbarian: Greek Self-Definition Through Tragedy*, 121-122), self-proclaimed Greek virtues such as *sophrosyne* and *andreia* became counterpoints to those of the barbarians, typically *amathia* (foolishness) and *adikia* (injustice).

[138] Snodgrass 1998: 100.

Athenian Acropolis.[139] The process of westward expansion, which was constant ever since the first Greek colonies in Sicily were founded, took vase-painting in new directions, as did shifting iconographic conventions.[140] The Southern Argolid, particularly Corinth, was the epicentre of vase-painting until the end of the 7th century, but the majority of the production of these pieces shifted to Attica, which became the predominant region in this respect.[141] Southern Italy also began to produce numerous pieces of art inspired by Attic artists.

The greater development of the visual arts naturally produced its share of critics. As fifth-century poets and prose writers looked for ways to explain poetic products, they turned to religious statues and tombstones, then to the visual arts.[142] There were varied attempts at defining and comparing both the literary and the visual arts, with the elite preferring the former. Several ancient authors found fault with the visual arts in that they were less effective in recording and preserving human action.[143] Consequently, visual imagery was more appealing and accessible to the lower classes, reflecting the aforementioned spirit of common citizenship and a Greek identity, while the elite

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[139] The Parthenon, for example, contains several sculptures symbolizing the triumph of Greeks against foreigners. The metopes surround the temple with a Centauromachy, Amazonomachy, Ilioupersis, and a Gigantomachy, publicly stating conflicts between polar opposites (Fullerton 2000: 54).

[140] Anderson 1997: 181.

[141] K. Friis Johansen, *The Iliad in Early Greek Art* (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1967), 43.

[142] Benediktson 2000: 39.

[143] Benediktson 2000: 39. Pindar, who wrote in the first half of the 5th century, writes in *Nemean* V.1-7 that art is limited by spatial medium, while poetry is temporal. He claims that song can travel, while statues simply sit on a base, which implies they cannot proclaim renown in the way poetry can. Comparisons of the two arts led to favouritism towards literature, and this was the case until the end of the 5th century (Benediktson 2000: 41). Plato provides severely harsh criticisms of all art forms. *Republic* X.598 examines the relationship between an artist and the truth he attempts to convey. He concludes that an artist's representation is far removed from any truth, and art is therefore deceptive.

preferred literature and rejected the more universal appeal of the visual arts. As I will elaborate below, the visual arts subsumed Diomedes into this *ethos* over time.

The Peloponnesian War, however, dealt a major blow to the pottery industry in Attica, while Southern Italy continued to produce these pieces and thrive in the industry.[144] Nonetheless, given the popularity of Athenian tragedies throughout the Greek world, this period became a high point for originality and fidelity to literary sources.[145] Most Greek values remained consistent ever since the Archaic Period, and 5th century Athens was a testament to this.[146] Just as in the Archaic Period, heroic scenes were becoming quite frequent. This increase in frequency over time was, as Snodgrass comments, "A part of a larger phenomenon in Greek art; artists have a considerable range of devices with which to designate a legendary subject."[147] Heroic legend and divine myth were therefore the preferred subjects in several media, including temple sculptures and pottery.

The early 5th century certainly witnessed profound changes in iconography, especially that of the gods, with a revolution in naturalism.[148] Paradigms were eventually created through mythological *exempla*, and these became essential tools for Greek

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[144] Shapiro 1994: 7. The Peloponnesian War lasted from c. 430-404 BC.

[145] Shapiro 1995: 7.

[146] Fullerton 2000: 68. Battles, *symposia*, athletic competitions, and several other topics clearly illustrated Greek values. These images were only enhanced stylistically over time, and the content remained the same. I only mention Athens because the most material culture survives from there.

[147] Snodgrass 1998: 139.

[148] Jeremy Tanner, "Nature, Culture, and the Body in Classical Greek Religious Art," *World Archaeology 33, No. 2: Archaeology and Aesthetics* (2001): 257. Statues were especially affected. Formerly, in the Archaic Period, statues were limited to *kouroi*, which were rigid and unrealistic in portraying the human body. But in the Classical Period, the statues engaged with the viewers and shared their own space, representing the human body through a much more realistic yet idealized depiction. The *kouroi* used to embody strictly aristocratic virtues of grace, vigour, and splendour of appearance (264). Naturalism changed this ideal with universalized imagery. Greek cultural and behavioural systems allowed for distinctive expressive effects which communicated cultural attributes (270).

cultural education.[149] Heroic imagery was therefore increasingly expressive in character, and represented strictly Greek norms, whereas the elite alone had formerly monopolized it and attached it to their own world views. Legendary subject-matter represented Greek culture and its superiority to other cultures; its patriotic tendencies excluded "the other" while promoting Pan-Hellenism. The Classical Period was the realization of a common Greek character through its artistic language and encompassed a political statement of cultural supremacy.

Diomedes in Context

I will now chronologically examine the material evidence for depictions of Diomedes topically, concentrating only on pottery because it survives in much higher quantities than other media. The examples which I provide are all the definite representations of Diomedes in the visual art record. The very few sculptural representations which survive do not represent significant Greek ideals about Diomedes, but rather reflect general Greek attitudes towards the idealized youth. Statuary ultimately cannot embody a full narrative. This discussion compares narrative and visual art associated with this hero to distinguish what artists wanted to tell their audience about Diomedes and why they depicted him in such a manner. Given the gradual growth and development of the Homeric poems, it is extremely likely that Diomedes had a long-standing status as a part of the Trojan War saga as a whole rather than just in the *Iliad*.[150] Imagery dependent on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* only became popular by the middle of

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[149] Ann Steiner, *Reading Greek Vases* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 129-130.
[150] Burgess 2001: 85.

the 6th century, while imagery from the rest of the Epic Cycle had remained popular since the end of the 8th century. Accordingly, there is a wide range for depictions featuring Diomedes.

Diomedes and the Suicide of Ajax

This topic received some attention from Athenian artists, with depictions ranging from sympathetic to solemn. Most artists tend to show the climactic moment when the hero's body was discovered, with some exceptions like Exekias' portrayal.[151] During the early Archaic period, the suicide of Ajax appears quite frequently in Corinthian, Laconian, and island art, but gradually diminishes over time during the end of the Archaic period.[152] Nevertheless, this theme continued to have influence not only in the visual arts but in literature, particularly with Sophocles' *Ajax*.

Figure 1, a Corinthian krater dated to 600 BC, shows a scene in which Odysseus and Diomedes discover the body of Ajax after he has committed suicide. Both warriors are understandably in shock after this discovery; Odysseus looks on while Diomedes holds his own neck.[153] Against expectations, Odysseus is much less involved in the piece than Diomedes. Culpability for this event lies with Odysseus as the winner of the arms of Achilles, but Diomedes receives much more detail and his dismay engages the viewer. It

[151] Woodford 1993: 100. I discuss Exekias' portrayal in more detail below.

[152] Karl Schefold, *Gods and Heroes in Late Archaic Greek Art* (Cambridge University Press, 1992): 279-280. A possible reason for the lower amount of portrayals is that Athenians preferred not to depict the humiliating defeat of one of their heroes.

[153] Schefold (1966: 92) identifies the warrior on the left as Diomedes, while Brown (*The Art of Suicide* [London: Reaktion Books, 2004], 29) says the warrior is Odysseus, whose gesture suggests he is in dismay over the incident. Odysseus is more likely on the right of this scene, however. The letters -ΣΕΥΣ appear around the shield of the warrior on the right, and the name is supposed to have started from the head, as Ajax's inscription demonstrates.

is also grimly ironic that Ajax appears to bow at the feet of Odysseus, finally acknowledging him as the winner of Achilles' arms in his death. This is done in part to hide Odysseus from his act, and allows the viewer to distance Odysseus from the blame, placing focus on the pathos for Ajax. Diomedes is used as a distraction, while also providing some symmetry to the scene by flanking Ajax's corpse.

In comparison, Figure 2, a Corinthian cup from 580 BC, portrays several Greek warriors after the discovery of Ajax's body. The figures herein are much more engaged; there appears to be an argument between the two sides, one in support of Ajax, the other in support of Odysseus. Nestor and Phoenix centre the narrative as the two oldest members of the party, while all the youngest members flanking them are nude. Ajax's position is different from conventional depictions in which he normally faces towards the right of the vase before and after his suicide.[154] The artist created this depiction in this way to enable Nestor to speak on behalf of Ajax and his attempt to receive the arms of Achilles, while Phoenix speaks in opposition before him. Diomedes is once again paired with Odysseus, but in a very passive role, merely supporting Odysseus' victory of the arms by compositional position. Ajax, however, is once again bowing at Odysseus' feet, a subtle touch to the scene which in no way singles Odysseus out as a villain. Evidently, Diomedes is a passive figure who is often portrayed to support Odysseus in some way. Diomedes and Odysseus have a famous partnership in Greek literature, and the artist represents the two heroes accordingly in the visual art record. His inclusion in Ajax's

[154] Schefold 1992: 279. Shapiro (1994: 151) mentions that this piece monumentalizes Ajax because of his large size in comparison to the other figures, which makes up for the triviality of his death based on the reactions of some of the figures.

suicide, whether in literature or visual art, is phased out by the middle of the 6th century.[155] Sophocles' *Ajax*, produced towards the late 5th century, definitively ends the association with Diomedes in this episode.

The Aristeia of Diomedes

The most common depictions of Diomedes are in the context of his *aristeia* in Book V of the *Iliad*. The *aristeia*, however, may not necessarily be that depicted in the *Iliad*, and it is possible that it was part of another epic altogether, before the *Iliad* was completed or made popular.[156] The association with Athena and her patronship prevails in nearly all extant examples, and becomes a dominant motif for Diomedes. The repetition of such a motif was a personal choice of vase painters and directed viewers to a thematic unity in a visual program.[157] This being the case, viewers had to think of Diomedes as the champion, or favourite, of Athena during the Trojan War. Figure 3, a Corinthian column krater dated to 580 BC, clearly demonstrates this motif at work. The hero and the goddess are looking at one another face to face, and their proximity to each other suggests a close relationship between champion and patron. It is possible that the rider on the chariot is Tydeus, the father of Diomedes, or he could be the figure at the front of the horses,

[155] The famous example by Exekias, Boulogne 558, dated to 530 BC, prefers a more solemn and brooding portrayal of this incident by depicting Ajax alone.

[156] Burgess (2001: 84) suggests that the *aristeia* could have taken place at any time during the Trojan War. Images pertaining to this episode may or may not have been inspired by the *Iliad*, since several incongruities are evident when comparing text and imagery.

[157] Steiner 2007: 39.

suggesting the former relationship he himself had with Athena.[158] Nonetheless, Athena's patronship in this image strongly suggests the rider is either Diomedes or his father.

Figure 4, a Corinthian votive tablet from 560 BC, continues the motif of Athena's championing of Diomedes. In this example, however, the goddess is standing high above the hero on his chariot, while Diomedes fights Aeneas over the body of Pandarus. Teucer and possibly Ajax stand by the horses in a standard battle position, with archer crouching and warrior shielding him. This is likely the moment from *Iliad* V where Diomedes fights Aeneas, given Pandarus' position in the episode. In the *Iliad*, Athena is not present during this fight, so the artist has chosen to include her rather than Sthenelus, Diomedes' charioteer.[159] The goddess' position is especially significant; in Figure 3 she is at eye level with Diomedes, but here she is higher than all the other figures and stands out the most. The artist's intention was to capture the interplay of the divine and human spheres, and he therefore highlights the relationship between gods and men.[160] As a result, Athena herself becomes the focal point of the narrative and overshadows the hero whom she supports. Diomedes receives a depiction which does not recognize his own prowess to its fullest, yet still adequately represents him as Athena's champion.

Figure 5, an Attic column krater dated to c. 540 BC, treats the *aristeia* quite differently, and was made when Attic pottery began to dominate the industry. The artist has chosen to depict only the fight between Diomedes and Aeneas, leaving out their

[158] Schefold 1992: 200.
[159] Athena withdraws from battle in *Iliad* V.134, and reappears by Diomedes' side in V.780. The fight between Diomedes, Aeneas, and Pandarus is found in V.274-318. Ajax and Teucer are not featured, however.
[160] Schefold 1966: 88-89.

respective charioteers, while also placing Athena and Aphrodite behind each warrior. The focus is placed on the two warriors rather than the divinities supporting them. Consequently, this type of monomachy, which contains the two goddesses framing the narrative, becomes conventional by the middle of the 6th century.[161] The scene also deviates from the fight in *Iliad* V, suggesting that either the artist was not familiar with that version or that he decided to depict the fight in a unique manner. Consistent repetition of this subject with the same syntax would have accordingly established a Type or a genre of vases.[162] The *aristeia* of Diomedes is therefore receiving much more favourable treatment compared to earlier versions, and the material again represents the close relationship between gods and men, as in the former example in Figure 4. The artist preferred to portray this motif instead of including the combatants only.

Figure 6, an Attic red-figure cup dated c. 520-510 BC, depicts yet another scene from the *aristeia*. This particular red-figure vase treats the subject matter with more fidelity to the literary sources; even though the inscriptions are absent, the episode is decipherable based on the content. Diomedes, on the far left, is chasing Aphrodite after she has rescued her son, Aeneas, while Apollo comes in from the right side to help, with some unspecified old men as onlookers behind him. Johansen notes that Apollo's outstretched hand is a warning to Diomedes for his aggressive behaviour.[163] The narrative in this example is not framed by two female goddesses, as in Figure 5, and instead contains the overwhelming odds which Diomedes must face, manifest in Aphrodite and

[161] Johansen 1967: 201. Athena's depiction without her armour was normal for early Attic art (202). Numerous works of art from this time period contain two gods framing a battle scene.

[162] Steiner 2001: 47.

[163] Johansen 1967: 206. This part of the *aristeia* can be found in *Iliad* V.319-453.

Apollo. The two gods are centered in the narrative, surrounded by mortals, with the plight of Aeneas as the centre of interest.

The Kleophrades Painter gives similar regard for the Homeric version of the episode in Figure 7, an Attic cup dated to 510 BC. Athena stands behind the spear-bearing Diomedes, who is stabbing Aeneas, held by the fleeing Aphrodite. This composition follows the conventional framework set out in Figure 5, but portrays much more emotion and action. Figure 8, an Attic calyx krater from 510 BC, is nearly identical but portrays the two goddesses framing the monomachy as in Figure 5. Both examples capture the Homeric episode quite well; the former mixes the goddesses into the episode while the latter has them on opposite ends of the scene, with Aphrodite more involved than Athena by rescuing her son. The stone with which Diomedes strikes Aeneas is never included in these portrayals.[164]

Artists definitely began to reproduce some Iliadic episodes in much more detail by the end of the 6th century.[165] The exemplary *aristeia* of Diomedes develops gradually in art, with more elaborate detail devoted to the wounding of Aeneas and the glory conferred on Diomedes over time. The introduction of red- and black-figure vase-painting certainly helped in this respect, enabling artists to capture such heroic feats in vibrant detail. The earlier examples of the *aristeia* emphasize the important relationship between Athena and Diomedes, god and man respectively, favouring a statement of divine intervention over textual fidelity. The later examples, on the other hand, continue to depict this relationship

[164] No extant works of art about this episode contain the stone found in *Iliad* V.302-308. The artists possibly considered it too farfetched to portray, so they ignored it in favour of the more realistic spear wound.

[165] Johansen 1967: 225.

by framing the heroes with their respective goddesses but also showcase the prowess of Diomedes with much more attention to the consequences of his *aristeia*. The prominence of Attic pottery and the subsequent shift in the iconography of certain characters vividly stand out compared to the Corinthian examples.

The Funeral Games of Patroclus

Depictions of this episode are very scarce, but some interesting examples survive. A fragment painted by Sophilos during the 6th century illustrates the excitement associated with such a sporting event.[166] Otherwise, the funeral games are quite rare because of the narrative character of the *Iliad*; the funeral games are ultimately incompatible with the motifs of the overall poem.[167]

Figure 9 is the only extant scene of a chariot race featuring Diomedes, and is part of the famous François Vase, a volute krater dated to 570 BC. It is an example of a very typical chariot race, and no part of it conforms to the account in the *Iliad* save for one of the participants.[168] The racers from first to last are Odysseus, Automedon, Diomedes, Damasippos and Hippothoon, the last two being generic, horse-related names. There are several rewards for the race interspersed throughout the image, the most notable being the tripods. Tripods were the most prestigious rewards in competitions during the funeral games, which articulated the memory of the deceased and stimulated *kleos* for the

[166] Woodford 1993: 83. This fragment contains very little information about the chariot race and its potential participants. Only the leading horses survive, and a crowd of excited spectators.

[167] Schefold 1992: 261. Johansen (1967: 88) stresses that the theme does not occur in younger Attic art.

[168] Johansen 1967: 88. The chariot race is found in *Iliad* XXIII.287-538. Johansen also mentions that the competitors are driving four-horse rather than two-horse chariots, reflecting a 6th century custom rather than the accounts found in epic. Another suitable--albeit simple--explanation is that two-horse chariots were just easier to draw, and the artist did not intend to capture the episode *verbatim*.

competitors.[169] The narrative in the *Iliad* has different competitors, however: Menelaus, Diomedes, Eumelus, Antilochus, and Meriones. This image is therefore not faithful to the *Iliad*, but could be a version of another chariot race.

As already examined, artists did not reproduce Iliadic scenes until much later in the Archaic Period, while Figure 9 is dated to c. 570 BC. Diomedes' inclusion in both versions suggests he is one of the traditional competitors in this race, and since the *Iliad* distinguishes him as the winner in the most prestigious competition of the funeral games, he is likely the *traditional* winner. The most striking part of this image, however, is that Odysseus wins the race instead. One potential explanation of Odysseus' inclusion and preferential treatment in this image is that tripods were also symbols of verbal dominance and political leadership, and so Odysseus is the best candidate to receive one because of his prowess in both of these categories.[170] Epic heroes excelled in words and deeds, so this inherent characterization of Odysseus is appropriate. Nevertheless, the diminution of Diomedes' status implies that artists, or society as a whole, had favourites and so artists deviated from the traditional accounts of the narratives which they attempted to portray. This artist thus cast Diomedes in the shadow of Odysseus, a trend which continued up to the late Classical Period, especially with depictions of the theft of the Palladion.

Miscellaneous Battle Scenes

[169] Papalexandrou 2005: 28-29. The funeral games were the most public and formal occasion for the validation of status, so this was a very elite-oriented, heroic activity.

[170] Papalexandrou 2005: 35.

There is a plethora of battle scenes which cannot be identified within the *Iliad* or any other extant piece of literature. As such, their meaning and context are quite elusive. These depictions could possibly have been solely for artistic reasons, mainly as a way of glorifying particular figures.[171] This next category of illustrations provides evidence of Diomedes' role in episodes which are preserved only in the visual art record, not in any extant literature. Conversely, the artists who created these scenes may have decided to depict Diomedes in unique ways, inspired indirectly by Iliadic episodes and characters.

Figure 10 for example, an Attic neck-amphora dated to 540 BC, depicts Diomedes in a fight with Hector. The body of a Trojan archer, Skythes, lies prostrate on the ground beneath them.[172] This is therefore not a duel between the two heroes, but a standard battle scene. The two warriors are mirror images of one another, which suggests their strength is relatively even; the artist's choice of warrior in this example implies that he saw Diomedes as a formidable warrior and accordingly depicted him in a fight with the best of the Trojans. This example also deviates from the standard monomachy scenes, such as Figures 5 and 7, wherein two goddesses frame the battle scene. Whether or not this scene reflects a lost epic poem, the artist clearly chose to represent Diomedes in a gratifying manner.

Figure 11, a Chalcidian amphora from 540 BC, is an even more striking example of Diomedes' prowess in an unknown epic context. A hectic battle ensues between several

[171] Schefold 1992: 303.

[172] I call Skythes a Trojan because his head is facing away from Diomedes, suggesting the Greek hero killed him and is now attempting to despoil him. There is no mention of this character anywhere in extant poetry. Diomedes and Hector were potential duelists in *Iliad* VII.171-180, where the Greek heroes were shaking lots to determine which hero would face Hector. The Greeks hoped for Ajax, Diomedes, or Agamemnon, but Ajax's lot fell out in VII.183.

Greek and Trojan warriors; Diomedes, Odysseus, and Mnestheus on the Greek side; Charops, Glaucus, Hippolochus, and a dying figure whose name begins with "ME-" on the Trojan side. Diomedes strikes down Charops before him, while Hippolochus attempts to defend him.[173] Glaucus stands behind Diomedes, fighting Mnestheus, while Odysseus kills the unknown figure on the ground. The Greeks are definitely winning this battle, but the focus of the piece is entirely on Glaucus, who is surrounded by Greeks and looks out in despair directly towards the viewer in a rare frontal portrayal. The image hints at the close ties of *xenia* between Diomedes and Glaucus from *Iliad* VI, yet leaves little hope for Glaucus in this instance.[174] Interestingly, this artist depicts Odysseus and Diomedes in exactly the same way, with their heads down while striking their respective opponents, which in turn portrays the closeness between the two Greek heroes. Like Figure 10, this image portrays a standard battle scene with some exceptional figures. The pairing of Diomedes with Odysseus places the two heroes in equal standing, despite the impossibility of placing this episode in a known context. This image nevertheless reveals that artists recognize Diomedes' status as a great epic hero by the middle of the 6th century.

The Battle over the Body of Patroclus

[173] *Iliad* XI.426 refers to a figure named Charops, son of Hippasus, but it is Odysseus who kills him. The artist, however, was not concerned with depicting an Iliadic episode, for there are too many liberties to think of this image as such.

[174] The armour exchange is found in *Iliad* VI.119-236, and Figure 11 in no way reflects this episode. Instead, Glaucus' death is certain.

Attic artists sought to capture episodes with intense battle scenes, but they mostly neglected the death of Sarpedon, who was killed by Patroclus himself, and chose instead to portray the death of Patroclus and the subsequent fight for his body.[175] The theme does not appear until about 550 BC, with Exekias' portrayals at the forefront. The intensity of the warriors rescuing Patroclus stands out often, whether they are fighting for his body or removing it from the battlefield.[176] This category of imagery seemingly became popular near the end of the 6th century and did not rise again in popularity.

The *Iliad* provides the only surviving account of this rescue in epic, from which Diomedes is absent.[177] Figure 12 however, an Athenian calyx krater from 530 BC, includes Diomedes fighting alongside Ajax, who carries a Boeotian shield, and most likely Menelaus behind him. Patroclus' corpse centers the narrative on the ground beneath them. "HEKTΩP" is the only remaining name seen on the Trojan side, but his companions may be Glaucus and Aeneas, who accompany him in *Iliad* XVII. Schefold speculates that the artist included Diomedes here in admiration of his *aristeia* in Book V.[178] Indeed the artist views Diomedes as a formidable warrior, and his inclusion also juxtaposes with Aeneas, his main mortal enemy from Book V, and Glaucus, his guest-friend from Book VI. Once again Diomedes receives favourable treatment (in the form of his inclusion in an episode in which he did not originally participate) in Attic art from the

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[175] Schefold 1992: 250. The famous calyx krater by Euphronios, New York 1972.11.10, is an exception to this trend. The artist portrays a beautiful image of Sarpedon's death and the subsequent removal of his corpse by Sleep and Death.

[176] Woodford 1993: 77.

[177] This scene comprises all of Book XVII. The main combatants for the Greeks are Menelaus and Telamonian Ajax. The *Iliad* is the likeliest source of inspiration for this particular depiction based on the figures represented in art.

[178] Schefold 1992: 251.

late Archaic Period, whether or not it is attributed to inspiration from the *aristeia* in the *Iliad*.

Figure 13, a cup which Exekias also made c. 530 BC, has a full view of the combatants, who are not named. It is safe to assume they are the same characters as Figure 12 because of its similarities to that example in terms of the number of warriors and their formations. The Greeks are on the right side of the composition because of their military discipline and comradeship, contrasting with the Trojans on the left attempting to pull the body of Patroclus away.[179] Through "ellipsis," a viewer would know the repetitive language of a vase such as this one so well that he/she should realize what is missing specifically (in this case, the inscriptions) and still understand the content.[180] Similar to Figure 12, this example includes Diomedes in an episode in which he did not originally participate and viewers would be familiar with this fact. The similarity of this example to Figure 12 implies that the inclusion of Diomedes in portrayals of the rescue of Patroclus' body became quite common, to the extent that viewers sometimes did not even need inscriptions to identify the characters, and Attic art repetitively glorified Diomedes with depictions of this episode.

Figure 14, an Attic cup from 510 BC, is the only extant red-figure example of the rescue of Patroclus' body, signifying that this subject was likely decreasing in popularity. Again Patroclus' body, writhing in agony before death, centers the narrative while the four combatants over him are Ajax and Diomedes on the left, and Aeneas and Hippasos on the right. The artist stunningly leaves out Menelaus and Hector, the chief warriors in

[179] Schefold 1992: 252.
[180] Steiner 2001: 19. She defines ellipsis as a cohesive element revealed through repetition (18).

Iliad XVII who fought to rescue Patroclus' body. Paradoxically, the artist's intimate knowledge of the *Iliad* stands out because he chooses to leave out Menelaus and Glaucus, but adds Diomedes and Hippasos, both of whom were not originally a part of this episode.[181] Diomedes has altogether replaced Menelaus, an integral character in the narrative, while Hippasos' inclusion is much more difficult to interpret. He was the father of a Trojan named Apisaon of Paionia, and is rarely ever mentioned in the Epic Cycle.[182] The aforementioned examples by Exekias seemingly influenced later depictions with the insertion of Diomedes, most notably Figure 14, even though he is not an original character in depictions of this episode. Despite the declining popularity of this rescue scene, artists notably represented Diomedes as a mighty warrior and an important epic hero by the end of the Archaic Period.

Doloneia

Images of the Doloneia are scarce, but Dolon himself is represented since the early 6th century, as the Corinthian cup from 590 BC in Figure 15 demonstrates.[183] The reason why the artist included him is unclear, but the artist also incorporated several other figures known from epic. On the other side of this vase the artist portrayed a duel between Achilles and Hector, so Dolon is potentially a "filler" character. Johansen argues that the

[181] Schefold 1992: 254.
[182] Johansen 1967: 200.
[183] The encounter between the three heroes is found in *Iliad* X.349-459. Dolon sees the two Greeks chasing him through the trees and attempts to flee, but Diomedes throws a spear ahead to stop him. Odysseus then finds out valuable information from Dolon before Diomedes slays him.

figure corresponds with a standard Corinthian Dolon composition.[184] Artists therefore recognized Dolon as early as the beginning of the 6th century, whether taken from the *Iliad* or another epic which no longer exists.

Figure 16, an Attic oenochoe dated one hundred years after Figure 15, demonstrates the capture of Dolon in a more inspired composition. The figure on the left must be Diomedes, since the Homeric account states that he holds a sword and subsequently kills Dolon with it.[185] Odysseus is clearly on the other side of the composition, given his role in Book X, so this image definitely takes its inspiration from the *Iliad*. Diomedes and Odysseus are mirror images of one another, except for the sword which identifies each hero, and Dolon looks to the left in terror, knowing his death is imminent. As such, the artist glorifies Diomedes and maintains Odysseus' position as his equal, rather than a superior hero as other examples have shown. The artist's representation of Diomedes is characteristic of his determination to portray an Iliadic scene as accurately as possible to the source.

Figure 17, however, a Lucanian calyx krater dated to 390 BC, ignores the account in the *Iliad* altogether. As already examined, late in the Archaic period Attic artists tended to portray Iliadic episodes relatively close to the literary accounts, especially with the *aristeia* of Diomedes. Near the end of the Classical period, Attica was no longer at the forefront of the pottery industry and Southern Italy took over as the main producer of

[184] Johansen 1967: 74. Fragmentary bronze reliefs from the late fifth century in Dodone portray a group of three figures, one of which is naked on the ground and surrounded by the other two, who carry swords. Johansen claims this model for the death of Dolon derived from the North-East Peloponnese (75).

[185] *Iliad* X.454-456. The skins which all the heroes wear in Figure 14, including Dolon's wolf skin, also correspond with the Iliadic version found in X.177-337.

these pieces.[186] As such, the Lucanian artist created an original piece loosely inspired by the *Iliad*.[187] The artist chose to portray Odysseus himself as Dolon's killer, implying that the honour which subsequently comes with this task goes to Odysseus, while Diomedes receives a more passive role as a distraction to the Trojan spy. His movements match those of Dolon step for step in a pantomime with sinister overtones.[188] There is clear favouritism for Odysseus shown by the artist, and this consequently magnifies Odysseus' status at the expense of Diomedes. This depiction thus portrays the latter as a mere supporting character to Odysseus, as in the aforementioned examples from the early Archaic period. The favouritism shown towards Odysseus extends into several portrayals of the Theft of the Palladion.

The Theft of the Palladion

Several different versions of this episode are attested by many authors. Most accounts state that both Diomedes and Odysseus enter Troy and take away the Palladion.[189] In some versions Helen helps Odysseus, who is dressed as a beggar to bypass the Trojan guards.[190] Odysseus then attempts to steal the Palladion from Diomedes and kill him in order to gain glory alone, but Diomedes catches him in the act and drives

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[186] Fullerton (2000: 130) notes how Attic styles were not universal throughout the Greek-speaking world, especially in Magna Graecia, where a plurality of eclectic styles emerged after Attica lost its prominence in the pottery industry. This was the result of what Fullerton deems an "inferior culture" taking on the works of an artistically superior one.

[187] Contrary to Figure 17, this episode illustrates Diomedes as the best Greek warrior after Achilles because of his prowess in both battle and ambush (Dué and Ebbott 2010: 37).

[188] Woodford 1993: 75.

[189] Virgil, *Aeneid* II.162-167, Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XIII.348-357.

[190] Apollodorus, *Library, epitome* 5.13. Theano, the wife of Antenor, has a role in helping the two Greek heroes rather than Helen in other versions (Suda, *Παλλάδιον*).

Odysseus back to camp ahead of him as a safeguard.[191] It was imperative to seize the Palladion in order that Troy could fall. This was a sacred image of Athena, allegedly sent down from Zeus to Dardanus, the founder of Troy, or to one of his descendants.[192] Its placement within the city of Troy was supposed to have brought protection to the city. According to Pausanias, Diomedes keeps the Palladion during his *nostos* until it is stolen by an Athenian named Demophon.[193] Servius, however, writes that Diomedes and Odysseus took a false Palladion, while Helen and Deiphobus fled with the real one.[194] Several cities, such as Athens and Argos, claimed to have the real Palladion within their walls.

This type of scene became quite popular by the middle of the Classical Period and provides an important visual example for examining the relationship between Diomedes and Odysseus.[195] Figure 18, a Panathenaic amphora dated to 420 BC, portrays Helen, Diomedes, and Odysseus during the theft of the Palladion within Troy's walls.[196] Diomedes, on the far left of the composition, looks back at Helen while Odysseus, on the

[191] Suda, *Diomedeian Compulsion*. Aristophanes makes an allusion to this episode in *Ecclesiazusae* 1029, in which the Young Man is taken to be Odysseus, while the Old Woman is Diomedes, taking Odysseus as a prisoner. The "necessity of Diomedes" which Plato mentions in *Republic* VI.493d also refers to the aforementioned episode.

[192] *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Second Edition, eds. N.G.L. Hammond & H.H. Scullard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), *s.v.* "Palladium."

[193] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* I.28.9. Eventually the Palladion makes its way to Italy when Aeneas takes it there (II.23.5).

[194] Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid of Virgil* 2.166.

[195] Odysseus's characterization shifts dramatically over time. W.B. Stanford (*The Ulysses Theme* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1954], 2) writes that he is a character capable of constant revival and re-interpretation. A characteristic which especially distinguishes him from other epic heroes is his intelligence, a neutral quality for a Homeric hero (7). As such, he deviates from the norm in the *Iliad* in several heroic features (66), but tragedy often presents him as a villain, except Sophocles' *Ajax*, which sheds him in a positive light (103). Odysseus does not receive any favourable portrayals again until Plutarch's writings c. 90 AD as a prototypical Stoic (158). His characterization, however, has since remained as that of a treacherous, contemptible intriguer (159).

[196] The first two letters of Helen's name survive as inscribed (ΕΛ-).

far right, stands with his gear at the ready. As in most literary accounts, Diomedes holds the Palladion, and indeed the Attic cup from 390 BC in Figure 19 depicts him doing so much more clearly. Artists often portrayed Diomedes either without a beard or with a short one in the Classical period to illustrate his youth, unlike all of the previous examples in this study. Odysseus, older by comparison, always has a beard but is otherwise equipped in the same way as Diomedes with a short spear, a sword, and limited clothing. This contrast between age and youth, experience and enthusiasm, exemplifies the dynamic relationship between the two heroes and distinctively deviates from earlier depictions of Diomedes.

Figure 20, an Apulian volute krater from 380 BC, also depicts Diomedes with a short beard. Many moments from the narrative are condensed; Diomedes already holds the Palladion in one hand and the bonds of an unnamed Trojan prisoner in the other. Nike stands behind him to represent his victory in the endeavour, while Odysseus, if even included in this piece, is missing because of the fragmented condition of the work.[197] The artist chose to portray Diomedes in this fashion to continue the tradition of the hero as the Palladion's bearer and emphasize his youth; he becomes a stock figure in this episode. Just as in Figures 18 and 19, this example associates the Palladion's capture solely with Diomedes, as the figure of Nike suggests, while Odysseus' subsequent role in attempting to take the Palladion for himself is never illustrated.[198] Thus artists did not portray Odysseus' villainous intentions, opting to magnify one hero rather than demonize another.

[197] He is likely the figure on the other side of the vase entering through the temple door, but the upper part of the body is missing.
[198] Cf. Suda, *Diomedeian Compulsion*.

The vibrant depiction of the theft of the Palladion is quite different in Figure 21, an Apulian oenochoe dated to 360 BC. There are two Palladia, one for each of the two heroes, and Athena on the left gives directions, signifying her collaboration in their cause.[199] Both heroes are favourites of the goddess, so this representation is not exceptional in this respect. The unnamed woman on the right could be Helen, Hekate, or the priestess Theano. Once again the relationship between the two heroes in terms of age is evident, but this example ignores the tradition of Odysseus' attempt at taking the Palladion from Diomedes as well. There is no hint of Odysseus' villainy, and instead both heroes receive the honour of taking the statue for the Greeks, thereby diminishing Diomedes' role as exemplified by Figures 18-20. This vase painter seemingly decided to characterize Odysseus and Diomedes equally, ignoring the most popular rendering of the narrative in favour of a more flattering portrayal of Odysseus.

Heroic Comparanda

More consideration must be given to figures who are not affiliated with Diomedes to the extent that Odysseus is. As I argue in Chapter one of this thesis, Achilles is considered the greatest hero in the *Iliad*, with Diomedes a close second. Given the popularity of this character, it is fitting to provide some visual comparisons with portrayals of Diomedes. Depictions of Achilles were far more popular than those of Diomedes simply based on the amount of examples available today. One of the most

[199] Some sources claim there were two Palladia, others say there was one real Palladion and a fake one. Most, however, mention only one. This is the more likely option given that the material evidence mostly depicts one Palladion. Several Hellenistic and Roman coins, intaglios, sarcophagi, and reliefs depict Diomedes with the Palladion.

common themes derives from *Iliad* XIX, where the hero receives his new arms from his mother Thetis.[200] From the first quarter of the 6th century until much later, various representations still survive and all examples have the same basic composition.[201] Figure 22, an Attic column-krater from c. 580-560 BC, is one of the most well-preserved vases depicting this popular theme. Achilles receives his arms from his mother opposite him, who is accompanied by several Nereids interspersed throughout the vase. Unnamed male figures, identified as young warriors and elderly men, stand behind Achilles and the Nereids in the standard compositional style of vases depicting this theme. The episode is inspired by the *Iliad* scene in Book XIX, but with a few alterations *via* the inclusion of more figures. The nucleus of the painting, the interaction between Achilles and Thetis, is depicted as far back as the 7th century, while the more crowded composition is strictly Attic.[202]

Audiences remained interested in the life of Achilles from a pre-Trojan War tradition. The training of Achilles by Chiron, as Schefold observes, was another favourite topic by Attic artists and helped preserve legendary traditions that were independent from the Homeric epics.[203] Figure 23, an Attic cup from 550 BC, is one of several notable examples where Chiron receives Achilles for training during childhood. The image shows Peleus holding Achilles and handing him over to the centaur, while Thetis and the Nereids mourn. Over time, during the late 6th and early 5th centuries, Achilles is depicted

[200] *Iliad* XIX.18-29.
[201] Johansen 1967: 92-93. Achilles is always on the left, and Thetis on the right.
[202] Johansen 1967: 106.
[203] Schefold 1992: 211.

as a youth rather than a child.[204] Artists thus continued to represent episodes featuring Achilles and Chiron; the mentor relationship demonstrated by this theme ultimately had overtones with Greek society and remained very popular.

Despite the thematic interest in several other episodes, artists depicted battle scenes quite frequently. As the ideal setting of a Homeric hero, the battlefield received a great amount of consideration; famous duels from the *Iliad*, such as that between Diomedes and Aeneas above, provided a visual hallmark for heroic displays. I argue above that the *aristeia* of Diomedes received very favourable treatment in light of his prowess in the *Iliad*. The next examples, however, give a solid basis to the claim that depictions of Diomedes' battles do not stand out when compared to other heroes.

Figure 24, a monomachy featured on an Attic hydria from c. 520-510 BC, displays a striking similarity with the monomachy of Diomedes on Figure 8. Figure 24 depicts the duel between Achilles and Hector from *Iliad* XXII. Achilles has Athena standing behind him and Hector has Artemis; similar to Figure 8, two goddesses frame the scene of the monomachy behind their respective champions, and the figure on the left is about to kill or wound the one on the right. Figure 25, an Attic cup from the same time period, is almost exactly the same as Figures 8 and 24, except that it features Ajax and Hector's duel from *Iliad* VII, with some obvious changes from the poetic text.[205] This type of composition was clearly a conventional form of portraying any monomachy, since

[204] Schefold 1992: 212.

[205] Ajax and Hector fight with full armour in *Iliad* VII.255-292, and no goddesses support either hero on the field; Apollo supports Hector at one point, however. Both heroes also come out of the affair unscathed.

Figures 8, 24, and 25 are remarkably similar.[206] In other words, all monomachies from the middle of the 6th century onwards contained two gods framing the scene and two heroes meeting in the middle, with a winner on the left and a loser on the right, regardless of which figures were depicted. Portrayals of the *aristeia* of Diomedes were part of a conventional style of monomachy, so they were ultimately unoriginal. Diomedes was still glorified to some extent in that he received recognition, yet this was done in the shadow of conventionality.

Artists were also inspired by the events in *Iliad* XXIV, especially the ransom of Hector's body. This episode is a motif that dates back to the Argivo-Corinthian bronze reliefs of the 7th and early 6th centuries.[207] In this way, interest was evident in the events after an *aristeia* rather than solely on those during one; Achilles drags the body of Hector on his chariot after he slays him in *Iliad* XXII, and proceeds to keep his body in his tent until the end of the poem. Figure 26, an Attic cup by Oltos from between 520-510 BC, shows an image of Achilles reclining over the lifeless body of Hector with Priam before him. Hermes stands behind Priam as his guide, and a serving girl is placing a wreath on Achilles' head, with some unknown and possibly generic figures framing the scene. Achilles has not yet noticed that Priam has entered. The scene is quite famous for several reasons: it is an emotional episode in the *Iliad* and restores Achilles to a normal state of conduct after his abhorrent behaviour towards Hector's corpse; in this case, Achilles'

[206] Johansen 1967: 208. Each portrayal only has very slight changes in order to meet the specific situation in which each is set.
[207] Johansen 1967: 127.

menos drives him to commit a terrible act, unlike that of Diomedes in Book VI.[208] Given that this scene is so frequent in the visual art record, its popularity is undeniable; Depictions of Diomedes, by comparison, never centre on events directly after his own famous *aristeia*.

The relationship between Achilles and Patroclus also received favourable reception by artists. The image on Figure 27 is one such example. This Attic cup by the Sosias Painter, made c. 500 BC, features Achilles bandaging Patroclus' wound after a battle. Notably, Achilles is beardless, designating Patroclus as the older of the two, and their closeness as friends is quite evident in the image. The contrast of the postures of the two warriors lends the composition a strong emotional counterpoint; Patroclus is complicated in his posture, since he braces himself for the painful ordeal he must suffer, while Achilles is static and concentrated on his task.[209] The inner thoughts of the two heroes are at the forefront of the depiction. Achilles cares for his friend, and any viewer with a knowledge of the *Iliad*, or the basic plot of the Epic Cycle, would have known that Patroclus would eventually die, making this a grim yet solemn image of the friendship between the two figures. As a character, Achilles is much more complex than Diomedes and can inspire captivating portrayals such as this one; Diomedes' characterization ultimately did not motivate artists to create such unique and emotional compositions.

Conclusion

[208] Cf. *Iliad* VI.120-245 and the armour exchange . As I argue in Chapter one of this thesis, this episode curbs Diomedes' *menos* and thus keeps him from doing something vile, as Achilles does to Hector.

[209] Schefold 1992: 225.

Portrayals of Diomedes changed frequently throughout Greek art. The earliest examples from the Archaic period use Diomedes as a supporting character to other figures. Figures 1, 2, and 17 demonstrate that Diomedes' inclusion actively aids Odysseus, either distracting the viewer in some way or standing passively in the background. Over time, however, Diomedes receives more noteworthy portrayals. Figures 4-8 reveal the gradual evolution of the *aristeia* from the beginning to the end of the Archaic period and how artists slowly developed a narrative composition to better capture Diomedes' prowess. This composition, however, was conventional for any depictions of a monomachy, and thus did not stand out in any respect. Furthermore, this evolution extended to scenes in which Diomedes has no traditional role, as Figures 12, 13, and 14 illustrate, all of which are also from the late Archaic period. The distinctive Figures 10 and 11, whether or not they reflect traditional episodes, also demonstrate Diomedes' popularity and pre-eminence near the end of the Archaic period. The early depiction of the chariot race in Figure 9, on the other hand, ignores the traditional portrayal from the *Iliad* and magnifies Odysseus as a hero by awarding him the victory which belongs to Diomedes. Figure 21 is a similar attempt at awarding Odysseus undeserved honour by portraying him with his own Palladion. Figures 16 and 18 regard Diomedes and Odysseus more as equals, while Figures 19 and 20 show great favour towards Diomedes alone regarding the Palladion's seizure.

Thus portrayals of Diomedes vary greatly in the visual art record; the earliest tend to be unique yet apathetic toward Diomedes, but by the end of the Archaic period they are for the most part gratifying examples of the hero and similar to the prestigious accounts in

the *Iliad*, a trend which also benefits portrayals of other heroes such as Achilles, as Figures 24-27 demonstrate. Portrayals of Achilles were always popular and gave considerable attention to several notable episodes, as Figures 22 and 23 show. Over time, clashing middling and elitist ideologies affected the concept of the Homeric hero paradigm and audiences preferred different figures, like Odysseus, over Diomedes. The depictions of the Classical period depart from textual fidelity, and vary greatly in their either flattering or dismissive renderings of Diomedes. Achilles and Odysseus, among other heroes, are considered much more complex and, consequently, more interesting figures than Diomedes simply based on narratives about these heroes. This ultimately had a negative influence on Greek attitudes towards Diomedes. There is clearly no consensus on depictions of this figure, but the late Archaic period was the definitive high point for distinguishing the illustrious son of Tydeus.

Chapter 3: The Hero in Cult Worship

Introduction

The second chapter of this thesis has examined the influence of Diomedes in the visual art record by analyzing vase-painting from the Archaic and Classical periods. I have observed that there are numerous discrepancies between the visual arts and the *extant* literature associated with this hero, and that portrayals of the hero or the episodes in which he partakes vary in either flattering or dismissive terms, with many depictions casting Diomedes in a passive role, yet others glorifying him to some visible extent. I now turn to a discussion about the cult worship and potential deification of Diomedes, with special consideration of literary works other than those discussed in the two previous chapters of this thesis. The literature and visual art of the Archaic and Classical periods had a profound influence on those of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, and as a result it is essential to examine what later authors mention about Diomedes. This chapter will be crucial for understanding the impact which Diomedes did have in the ancient world in terms of the cult worship of epic heroes, and how a hero like Diomedes moves from the sphere of literature to that of religion and its overall significance to the city-state in mind.

Most hero cults are widespread across the Mediterranean and are post-Homeric in their establishment, not aboriginal.[210] Diomedes' cults, which were situated predominantly in Cyprus, Metapontum, and other cities on the coast of the Adriatic, are no exception. This chapter examines why these hero cults had influence in specific places

[210] Lewis Richard Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Chicago: Ares Publishers Inc., 1921), 284. By post-Homeric, Farnell refers to the diffusion of Homeric poetry and a date around the 8th century BC. Tomb cult and hero cult are not the same developments, and the former existed before the 8th century BC.

and why they had little influence in mainland Greece, with Diomedes' homeland of Argos as the exception, while complementing general Greek religious views and practices during the Archaic and Classical periods. I will also discuss the issue of whether there is any Homeric influence in the worship of Diomedes as a cult hero, since the dominant material for the establishment of this hero cult is from a currently lost epic tradition about the *nostos*, or "homecoming," of Diomedes. I include a comparison between different poetic interpretations of immortality and how these can shape the views towards the epic hero in the *polis*.

The Soul (*Psychē*)

Attitudes towards the soul and its final resting place aided in shaping several religious institutions and practices. Homer portrays one very predominant image of the soul in his poetry, which depicts that the soul, known as *psychē*, exists twice in humans, once as a visible shape, the second time as an invisible image which gains its freedom after the death of its human body.[211] According to Bremmer, there is an inherent duality in the soul: the body soul and the free soul. The body soul gives life and consciousness to a body, and represents the inner self of a person during his/her waking life, whereas the free soul is active during unconsciousness and represents one's personality, with its location in the body a mystery.[212] Bremmer further suggests that Homer distinguished between these two concepts in his poetry, and the free soul was known as *psychē*, the

[211] Erwin Rohde, *Psychē: The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality Among the Greeks* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 6. The *psychē* is responsible for the twofold nature of people as experienced by having dreams, swoons, and ecstasy.

[212] Jan Bremmer, *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (Princeton University Press, 1983), 9.

body soul as *thumos, noos*, or *menos*, signifying that a dualistic belief in the soul existed at the time of the poetry's first conception.[213] The *psychē* is the more important part, however. Achilles, for example, mentions how he needs his *psychē* in order to survive, and later he claims that his prize for avenging Patroclus will be Hector's own *psychē*.[214] The *psychē* is also the part of the soul which goes to Hades when a person dies, while the *thumos* simply disappears.

This view of the dead was fundamentally unchanged from the earliest times to the Classical period. There were some eschatological changes over time, but these had a very limited impact on society, while a major change which did take place was the communal use of the dead in rituals.[215] Consequently, the general pattern of attitudes remained consistent while the *uses* of death changed; the ideal citizen displaced the hero while the heroic death for the city-state received more emphasis than that of the epic hero.[216] The popular belief of the soul as a dual entity was pervasive not only in literature but in practice. A proper funeral was a necessity in order for the free soul to make its ultimate transition to the realm of Hades, with the free soul moving on and the body, no longer needed as a vessel for the free soul, remaining behind.[217]

[213] Bremmer 1983: 13.
[214] *Iliad* IX.322, XXII.161 respectively.
[215] Ian Morris, "Attitudes Towards Death in Archaic Greece," in *Classical Antiquity* Vol. 9, No. 2, pgs. 296-320 (University of California Press, 1989), 297. Rather than honouring a single deceased individual, communities worshipped all those who passed away with these festivals.
[216] Morris 1989: 301-306.
[217] Bremmer 1983: 92. Inhumation and cremation designated social status, yet although they were different methods to dispose of a body, they represented the same belief that a body needed to receive proper rites of passage (94). Bremmer stresses that this was not a universal practice though (97). Different *poleis* had different methods of burial for all or some of their citizens.

But Homer's view posits a definite finality for the soul, and he does not portray a view of the soul's immortality or an afterlife. While the *Odyssey* contains an image of the underworld, its residents are mere shades and cannot hope to attain anything more than their present situation. They have a bleak and mournful existence in the soul's final dwelling place, Hades. The *Iliad* on the other hand makes no mention of the underworld, and instead focuses on deeds, which are made immortal through the *kleos* which people earn while living, and epic poetry propagates in turn. This concept, according to Nagy, implies that a hero must die before his immortality comes to fruition in this respect.[218] Yet there are traditions which indicate that the soul itself can attain immortality, and that there is some conception of an afterlife without death as a prerequisite.

The oldest extant portrayal of the cult of souls and the belief in immortality is found in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, in which Hesiod discusses the Five Ages of Men and its degeneration from the height of happiness to a life of misery and toil.[219] The people in the Golden and Silver Ages had a special destiny after their deaths, something which already suggests that there was a concept of an afterlife reserved especially for them as prestigious mortals.[220] A picture of immortality is also contained within the Heroic Age, which includes the epic heroes who fought at Thebes and Troy, along with several others. What distinguishes this age the most from the others, however, is the ability of some

[218] Nagy 1999: 175.
[219] Rohde 1966: 68.
[220] N.J. Richardson, "Early Greek Views about Life after Death," in *Greek Religion and Society*, eds. P.E. Easterling & J.V. Muir, pgs. 50-66 (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 55. Golden Age members became guardians of justice on earth (*Works and Days* 121-126), while those of the Silver Age received honours as blessed mortals (*Works and Days* 140-142).

heroes to depart from life without dying.[221] Some prominent figures gain immortality by virtue of their deeds or familial relationships, and there are several notable demigods who lived in this age. Most importantly, this age includes a reference to the Islands of the Blessed, a land far removed from the rest of the world at the ends of the Ocean, where heroes go to live in peace and glory under the rule of Cronos, whom Zeus released for the very purpose of overseeing the souls.[222] This is an image of an afterlife which is indeed not found anywhere in Homer's poetry, or elsewhere in Hesiod's work. The poet does not comment on what happens to the soul in his own time, the Iron Age, referred to as the worst of the Five Ages of Men. Hesiod suggests that there existed some form of ancestor worship in his time, yet over time this view changes and the more popular Homeric view of the *psychē* prevails.[223]

A state of immortality for mortals was an uncommon, and indeed paradoxical idea, and the lack of literary evidence about this idea suggests its unpopularity. Homer attests to the more popular view wherein the soul simply moves on to Hades, while most people believed that rest, which was brought on by death, was the greatest blessing one could have.[224] Apparently mortals ultimately could not achieve immortality after their passing, except through verbal renown. Pindar's poetry includes several different attitudes towards the soul, however, some of which suggest that an altered immortality of the soul exists, yet others that immortality exists only through words, which are themselves

[221] Rohde 1966: 70. Some of these figures include Heracles, Menelaus, Achilles, and Diomedes according to some traditions.

[222] *Works and Days* 166-176.

[223] Rohde 1966: 78. Rohde calls it the "Homeric view" without assuming Homer created this concept. Instead, Homer's poetry reflects a more popular view of the *psychē*.

[224] Rohde 1966: 412.

immortal.[225] In *Nemean* IV he addresses a generic soul beside the stream of Acheron,[226] implying that the dead can hear the living praise them, while in *Olympian* VIII he makes a link between the memory of the dead by the living and the proper rites of the dead.[227] Despite grandiose achievements, a man needs poetry in order for others to remember him, as he claims in *Olympian* X.[228] Evidently, in these examples there is no mention of a land of immortality in which souls live on in a state of great happiness. Instead, Pindar's immortality elevates mortals away from mere humanity and towards a semi-divine status through a poet's words.[229] To attain immortality, one had to strive in life, whether in battle or in athletic competitions, in order for his memory to live on. But in *Olympian* II, Pindar includes a rare reference to the Islands of the Blessed and some of its inhabitants.[230] Pindar is certainly not confused about his own religious views on the *psychē*, and is likely attempting to please his patrons by including different versions of an afterlife in different works. Not everyone necessarily believed in the same view.

Generally, poets depicted the *psychē* as living on in some way, but not as more than a mere shade in the underworld. References to the Islands of the Blessed are very scarce, and according to Hesiod an altered state of immortality is only limited to people from the Heroic Age, a grim and uncomforting prospect for the contemporary Iron Age dwellers, since there is nothing more to life after one passes away. Certainly there were only a few figures who could ever hope to reach the Islands of the Blessed. These figures

[225] The poet's self-glorification is evident in his craft. Without him, his patrons cannot attain immortality.
[226] Pindar, *Nemean* IV.85.
[227] Pindar, *Olympian* VIII.77.
[228] Pindar, *Olympian* X.91,
[229] Dean A. Miller, *The Epic Hero* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 5.
[230] Pindar, *Olympian* II.78-79. Pindar includes Peleus, Cadmus, and Achilles in this category.

were praiseworthy in this respect; they exceeded the limits of mortal life and earned the utmost recognition as a result. Their immortalization demonstrated how close the human sphere was to the divine. Now that there is a clear idea of the relevance and impact of the immortality of heroes in Greek religious ideology, I will turn to a discussion of its significance to hero cults and how they reflected and put into practice the aforementioned religious ideas of immortality.

Greek Religion and the *Polis*

Every aspect of everyday life in the *polis* was tied to religion in some way. Religious worship revolved around the people and the city itself; the gods were ever-present in the affairs of the state and its people. The religious activities of families and villages were directed towards the welfare of the city-state and were indeed open to all the citizens, while the state financed and regulated the performance of ritual activities.[231] Religious temples and sanctuaries throughout the Greek world were not only statements of religion, power, or wealth, but also symbols of nationalism. In essence, they were Pan-Hellenic structures. The citizens turned to the gods for several reasons, notably for fertility of crops, good health, economic prosperity, and safety in war and travels.[232] Greek religion was an essential element of daily life and thus had a very public and social function.

Yet it is important to determine what exactly constituted the divine for the Greeks and how the power and influence of the gods shaped the lives of the worshippers.

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[231] Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 160.
[232] Mikalson 2005: 162.

Henrichs lists the three properties which distinguish these beings from their mortal worshippers: immortality, anthropomorphism, and power.[233] Immortality is an obvious property for a god; this quality gives divinity its transcendence. Anthropomorphism has epiphanic connotations, and allows mortals to see and recognize their gods.[234] The fact that the gods can be human in form connects the two concepts of the mortal and immortal worlds, especially in a cultic context. The last, divine power, is a ubiquitous, unchallenged quality among the gods and the driving force behind polytheism, defining the relations between gods and mortals.[235] Pindar's own poetry reflects an awe-stricken relationship with the ultimate power of the gods and how they surpass the very rules which govern mankind.[236] The gap between the two worlds of the divine and the mortal is ultimately unbridgeable, so the need to communicate with the gods is inherent in religious practice and its associated rituals. An individual would win the favour of the gods by practicing a state's ancestral customs, which determined which deity to worship and when, which offerings to use, and to what purpose.[237] There is consequently a strict emphasis on proper ritualistic action and the timing for performing such rituals.

As a unique part of polytheistic religion, cults enabled their members to communicate with specific deities or heroes and receive special benefits in turn. The worshippers' perception of various gods and heroes depended wholly on the location of their cult, their place in the calendar, the nature of the sacrificial victim, and the mode of

[233] Albert Henrichs, "What is a Greek God?" in *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations*, eds. Jan N. Bremmer and Andrew Erskine, 19-39 (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 29.
[234] Henrichs 2010: 33.
[235] Henrichs 2010: 35-37.
[236] C.M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 62.
[237] Mikalson 2005: 182.

ritual.[238] Gods had specific identities and characteristics, yet depictions of them could vary between several cities, especially with respect to their names and an epithet denoting function or origin, such as Hermes Agoraios or Demeter Eleusinia.[239] Mythology gave these gods much more substance and character; in his *Histories*, Herodotus claims Homer and Hesiod created the pantheon and gave the gods their names, appearance, and epithets.[240] Although Herodotus' views on the subject misinterpret mythological traditions and the descriptions of the poets, he points to the perceived importance of literary traditions with respect to the worship of the gods. The rich cultural traditions of the Greeks gave the gods physical and mental attributes, and enabled the Greeks to worship them variably as cultural constructs.

There were vestiges of Pan-Hellenism in some forms of religious worship. The founding of sanctuaries in the 8th century provided a legacy for Greek veneration of deities; these sanctuaries fostered a cultural unity that shaped artistic, literary, and political traditions by providing a meeting place for Greeks from several different cities.[241] The diffusion of religious ideas occurred as a result, as these ideas influenced different *poleis* over time. Religion was therefore also a political and cultural asset to the city-state, providing a basis for unity and harmony among the Greeks who frequented Pan-Hellenic sanctuaries. Divergence from Pan-Hellenic representations was still possible, since no two cities or communities worshipped the same gods in the exact same

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[238] Jan N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1994), 13.
[239] Bremmer 1994: 13.
[240] Herodotus, *Histories* 2.53.2.
[241] Langdon 1993: 125-126.

way, yet there was a universality to religious ideals despite slight alterations in the worship of different deities.[242]

Especially after the Persian Wars of the early 5th century, religion became a social phenomenon on two levels: patriotic and popular.[243] The former dealt with "immortalizing imagery" and the civic ideal of the glorious death in battle by the citizen for the sake of the *polis*, the latter placed the dead as an accessible element to the ordinary citizen, stressing the use of libations and sacrifice as means to contact them in another world.[244] The citizens began to worship the heroic dead more often, such as the Athenian dead at Marathon, and paid respect to them *via* hero cults, which raised the status of dead men to that of the epic heroes. Patriotic religion thereby asserted that dead heroes would live on, glorified in immortal memory, in the same manner as epic heroes and the *kleos* which they receive from epic poetry.[245]

The Greeks altered religious practices in accordance with their changing world, and as a result the general polytheistic religion of the Greeks was full of ambiguities and contradictions.[246] There was no clear, universal religious view among the city-states, several of which differed in their views and attitudes towards the gods and their various cults. Dodds refers to the mess of conflicting answers and religious views at the end of the Archaic period as the "Inherited Conglomerate," which also led to a very wide gap

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[242] Robert Parker, *On Greek Religion* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011), 225-226.
[243] Herbert Hoffmann, "*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*: The Imagery of Heroic Immortality on Athenian Painted Vases," in *Art and Text in Ancient Greek Culture*, eds. Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne, pgs. 28-51 (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 47.
[244] Hoffmann 1994: 48.
[245] Hoffmann 1994: 50.
[246] Henrichs 2010: 37.

between the religious beliefs of intellectuals and the common people.[247] Accordingly, the questioning of religion by such intellectuals posed a dangerous threat to the state and its customs.[248] Traditional views conflicted and there was no general consensus on the nature of the gods and how to best worship them. A strong oral tradition and mysterious ritual origins fostered a conception of religion which was ultimately at odds with itself; the "Conglomerate" slowly gave way to rationalism over time.[249] Rationalism stressed reason over the knowledge of the divine, claiming that it was impossible to know or even understand the gods.[250] Yet there was no way to consolidate the various religious views of the Greeks, and the "Inherited Conglomerate" persevered as a reflection of the difficulties tied to polytheism and its many forms of worship.

Hero Cult and Significance

Hero cults became much more commonplace from the beginning of the 8th century onwards, and they were widespread throughout several Greek cities in the Mediterranean by the last quarter of the century. Farnell attributes this phenomenon to a simultaneous diffusion of written epic poetry, and he further suggests that some formerly nameless graves were given the names of specific heroes because of the popularity of

[247] E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), 180. The term "Inherited Conglomerate" was first coined by Gilbert Murray in 1946.

[248] J.V. Muir, "Religion and the New Education," in *Greek Religion and Society*, eds. P.E. Easterling & J.V. Muir, pgs. 191-218 (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 195.

[249] Mark L. McPherran, *The Religion of Socrates* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 98.

[250] Dodds 1951: 181. Plato himself saw the dangers inherent in this Conglomerate, and attempted to stabilize them with a counter-reformation which ultimately failed (207).

these epic heroes in poetry.[251] In the current archaeological record, there appears to be no evidence of hero cults in Mycenaean contexts before the 8th century, but there is a sudden increase of them afterwards.[252] Epic poetry could have had a profound influence on the rise of hero cult in this respect. Antonaccio stresses that the veneration of ancestors, something quite different from any kind of tomb cult, took place since the Iron Age and did not stop during the rise of the *polis* and the subsequent popularization of hero cult.[253] The veneration of ancestors was therefore a precursor to hero cult in that certain figures, most likely family members and prestigious individuals, were honoured in an organized manner or ritual.[254] The spread of epic poetry and hero cult thus go hand in hand as simultaneous developments stemming from much earlier traditions.

Yet the use of the word ἥρως in Homeric poetry did not have any religious implications, and was instead used depending on the context.[255] Bowra agrees that there are different uses of the word which depend on context, some uses designating a great warrior, others denoting a person who showed such prowess in life that he is honoured in death with a second, altogether better existence.[256] The use of the word itself in poetry implies that it was used before the prominence of hero cults in the Greek world. Price advocates the view that despite the lack of hero cults in Mycenaean society, there existed

[251] Farnell 1921: 284. The poetry he refers to is Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

[252] Theodora Hadzisteliou Price, "Hero-Cult and Homer," in *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte 22, No. 2*, pgs. 129-144 (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973), 131. Price says that the development of tomb cults likely began after the Dorian migrations in the 11th century BC, but hero cults themselves during the 8th century.

[253] Carla M. Antonaccio, "Contesting the Past: Hero Cult, Tomb Cult, and Epic in Early Greece," in *American Journal of Archaeology 93, Vol. 3*, pgs. 389-410 (Boston: Archaeological Institute of America, 1994), 389.

[254] Antonaccio 1994: 389. She acknowledges that Homeric poetry potentially inspired mainland Greeks, who had nothing in common with the Mycenaeans in terms of burial practices, to adopt hero cults (397).

[255] Bruno Currie, *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes* (Oxford University Press, 2005), 60-62.

[256] Bowra 1964: 48.

some sort of a hero belief unrelated to cult worship, and that Homer was aware of practices associated with this belief, as he writes in his poetry.[257] It is far more likely that the early Greeks used the word to distinguish certain elite members of their communities in a non-religious manner, but they did not exactly distinguish whether or not its use was religious.[258] Admittedly, it is still unclear if ἥρως had an overtly religious significance. Its use in Homeric poetry is not in a strictly religious sense, however.

One cannot determine the religious nature of epic hero worship based on Homeric poetry, then. The best way to understand such figures is to group them as a single class of figures, as dead mortals who exercised the powers of minor deities after their passing.[259] Heroes were revered and in turn gave benefits to their worshippers much like the Greek gods; several cults required yearly rituals or sacrifices in honour of the cult figure. The cult of Achilles in Thessaly, for example, required its followers to make a journey to Troy every year and sacrifice some victims as to a god, others to the dead.[260] Many of these cult heroes were anonymous and barely received cult worship from their followers, while others were quite popular and had tremendous influence in the lives of their worshippers.[261] Some poetic traditions do in fact link the power and influence of the epic heroes to contemporary figures. Pindar's poetry, for example, makes allusions to heroic

[257] Price 1973: 131. She points to the category of semi-divine beings in the *Iliad* as proof of Homer's acknowledgement of hero belief. Homer described a hero as *hemitheos* when he died, and its use in this context did not diverge with that in Hesiod's *Theogony* (133). These demigods therefore articulated a vague type of hero belief.

[258] Currie 2005: 68.

[259] Parker 2011: 107.

[260] Philostratus, *On Heroes* 53.8, translated by Jennifer K. Berenson McLean and Ellen Bradshaw Aitken (Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002).

[261] Parker 2011: 107. Inscriptions are the best way to identify such tombs, but many tombs do not give archaeologists that luxury. They were either the tombs of forgotten heroes or tombs which had always stood nameless and were later given heroic connotations.

traditions when honouring certain athletes, which I will discuss in more detail below. Some major athletic contests even claimed to have their origins in hero cults.[262] Both Homer and Pindar's poetic works stress that *kleos* compensates for a hero's death, yet they have different conceptions of the term. Homer portrays an exclusive conception of *kleos*, where *kleos* offers immortality through verbal renown and excludes immortality in cult or any other form, as opposed to Pindar's inclusive conception, which combines the immortality of renown and cult.[263] As I have already mentioned, Hesiod also portrays a belief in an immortality inherent in hero cult in his *Works and Days*, with the ideal of the Islands of the Blessed. Clearly Homer did not capture an essence of hero cult, a phenomenon to which Hesiod and Pindar allude, but it did exist prominently in some traditions.

Herakles provides the most interesting case study for hero worship because of his dualistic nature as a mortal hero and later as a god. He is the prototypical example of a semi-divine being who eventually attains fully-fledged immortality, without dying beforehand, by virtue of his magnificent deeds. There are, however, some versions of the story which contain his death in some way.[264] His apotheosis story singles him out quite distinctly from any other figure of god-hero status, and there is no comparable tradition.[265] He fails to conform to general heroic patterns and the popular Greek view of

[262] Currie 2005: 57. Some trials of heroes, which were followed with success, are paradigms for athletic victors in Pindaric poetry (59).

[263] Currie 2005: 71-72. Several odes imply an inclusive model when they refer to an exclusive one.

[264] Odysseus finds the shade of Herakles in *Odyssey* XI.601, and Herakles dies at the end of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*.

[265] Emma Stafford, "Herakles Between Gods and Heroes," in *The Gods of Ancient Greece: Identities and Transformations*, eds. Jan N. Bremmer and Andrew Erskine, 228-244 (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 239.

immortality through the words of a poet, especially with a lack of a tomb and the localization of a cult.[266] Herodotus writes that there are two ways to sacrifice to Herakles: as a dead hero and as an Olympian immortal, making Herakles unique as a cult figure.[267] There is no doubt that most Greeks knew Herakles' mythology, yet there is literature which tends to downplay his divinity. Euripides' *Herakles* treats the titular character foremost as a man, with no hint of his eventual apotheosis. Herakles is perpetually a figure between gods and heroes, since his mortal origins are always in view of his later deification.[268] Yet his function as a dead hero and as a god suggest the problematic character of hero cults and immortality.

The role of these long-dead heroes in the living world requires elaboration. According to Parker, the cult heroes did not interfere in the lives of the living on behalf of a higher power, as the Christian saints do, but they instead heard and answered prayers in their own right.[269] In essence they were similar to minor deities, and their worshippers sought their help or blessings for specific reasons, whether they had personal or public motives. Heroes were bound to only one locality, and their power did not extend beyond borders.[270] Their tombs were even used as territorial markers at times as a way to legitimize land claims, a practice which declined after the Classical period.[271] Herodotus

[266] Stafford 2010: 229. Heroes had localized power which did not translate to other areas of Greece.
[267] Herodotus, *Histories* 2.44.5. The historian considers Herakles to be an ancient god, and considers his worshippers correct when they sacrifice to him in the two ways mentioned above.
[268] Stafford 2010: 244.
[269] Parker 2011: 104. Heroes received their status through their exceptionality and/or prowess, not piety and moral values. As a result, they were not always models for emulation.
[270] Mikalson 2005: 41.
[271] Susan E. Alcock, "Tomb Cult and the Post-Classical Polis," in *American Journal of Archaeology 95, Vol. 3*, pgs. 447-467 (Boston: Archaeological Institute of America, 1991), 455. In Hellenistic times, it was possible that tomb cults were no longer legitimate territorial markers in inter-*polis* arguments (456).

writes that the bones of Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, were a necessary item in order for the Spartans to defeat the Tegeans in battle and rightfully claim the Tegean land as their own.[272] As Herodotus shows, hero tombs had a powerful symbolic value for a group of people, but there were also ways in which hero cults could develop a common identity between different *poleis*. For example, they could stress group solidarity between settlers in a new colony from different parts of the Greek world without shared traditions.[273] Hero cults thus had various social and political functions which tied in to their religious purposes.

The heroization of contemporary men was a frequent custom as well. As early as the 6th century, certain city-states were heroizing real individuals, and it is possible that this was a practice which began even earlier in Greek history.[274] This is not surprising, since the Greeks believed that epic heroes lived at one point in the distant past, so heroizing contemporary men was the same as heroizing past men. By the 5th and 4th centuries, heroization is a routine practice.[275] Collective honours were granted to groups of citizens, especially the war dead, rather than to individual aristocratic founders, as in former times.[276] The city-state was becoming increasingly involved in this religious initiative, and the Athenians exemplified this especially when they heroized their dead by

[272] Herodotus, *Histories* 1.67.2.
[273] Parker 2011: 119.
[274] Farnell 1921: 283.
[275] Currie 2005: 103. The evidence for cults of the war dead is strongest in Athens, Sparta, Thasos, and Thebes (95).
[276] Christopher Jones, *New Heroes in Antiquity: From Achilles to Antinoos* (Harvard University Press, 2010), 27. During the 8th and 7th centuries, the founders of colonies, known as *oikistai*, often received cult honours in their names. In essence, they became heroes and were tied to the well-being and prosperity of their respective colonies.

"democratizing" heroic honours in the 5th century for the war dead, athletes, and in the religious treatment of the living.[277]

The practice of tomb cult manifested an implicit reliance on the "past in the present" especially in the post-Classical *polis*.[278] Tomb cults, which legitimized the rule or influence of certain families, became major religious institutions over time, to the extent that Hellenistic rulers became cult figures during their own lifetime. Notably, however, descent normally did not last beyond one's grandfathers, and only a few generations reused their tombs.[279] Later cult activity became more formalized, and remodelling or reconstruction took place in several old tombs.[280] There was a clear desire to structure a ritualized environment much more effectively, implying the influence which cults continued to have on their worshippers.

The Cult of Diomedes

The cult of Diomedes is significant because of the existence of several poetic traditions which discuss the deification of this hero.[281] Some have theorized that Diomedes was initially an aboriginal god worshipped in some areas around the Mediterranean whom Homer downgraded for use in his poetry, yet this theory fails to

[277] Currie 2005: 87.
[278] Alcock 1991: 447.
[279] Antonaccio 1994: 402.
[280] Alcock 1991: 453.
[281] Unfortunately, archaeological evidence on the subject is very scarce, so scholars rely much more on the literary evidence.

explain the history of the cult of Diomedes.[282] There was a definite distinction between epic heroes and contemporary men, where mythical heroes stood in opposition to present ones.[283] Poets describe them as men closer to the gods than present men, who lived in another age and performed the greatest deeds ever known. The immortal epic heroes represented a link to the distant past which no contemporary heroes could make, giving specific heroes a very different, more solemn role as minor deities in Greek religious ideology.

The archaeological evidence for the hero cult of Diomedes comes mostly from the coast of the Adriatic Sea. In Argos, however, his shield was carried out of the temple during a procession for Athena.[284] There are also vestiges of this cult in areas like Cyprus and some mainland Greek cities, given the inscriptions on votive offerings found in temples and tombs, but the popularity is most evident along the Eastern coast of Italy;[285] the most distinct votive offerings to the hero were actually found within the island of Padraguza on the Adriatic.[286] There was a very famous island named after the hero on the Adriatic. A passage in Aelian's *On Animals* explains the significance of this island and the mysterious birds which inhabit it:

> Καλεῖταί τις Διομήδεια νῆσος, καὶ ἐρωδιοὺς ἔχειπολλούς. οὗτοι, φασί, τοὺς βαρβάρους οὔτε ἀδικοῦσινοὔτε αὐτοῖς προσίασιν: ἐὰν δὲ Ἕλλην κατάρῃξένος, οἳ δὲ θείᾳ τινὶ δωρεᾷ προσίασι πτέρυγας ἁπλώσαντεςοἱονεὶ

[282] Farnell 1921: 291. There is no literary evidence for this theory. Instead, Farnell draws on the similarity in name between Diomedes and the Thracian Diomedes, whose horses Herakles captured as one of his Twelve Labours.

[283] Currie 2005: 45.

[284] Farnell 1921: 290.

[285] Farnell (1921: 290) explains that the cult reached so far East in the Mediterranean because of the Achaean migration during the 8th century. The same migration may have brought the cult of Diomedes to the Northern reaches of Italy as well.

[286] Parker 2011: 245.

> χεῖράς τινας ἐς δεξίωσίν τε καὶ περιπλοκάς.καὶ ἁπτομένων τῶν Ἑλλήνων οὐχ ὑποφεύγουσιν,ἀλλ᾽ ἀτρεμοῦσι καὶ ἀνέχονται, καὶ καθημένωνἐς τοὺς κόλπους καταπέτονται, ὥσπερ οὖν ἐπὶ ξένιακληθέντες. λέγονται οὖν οὗτοι Διομήδους ἑταῖροιεἶναι καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ τῶν ὅπλων τῶν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἴλιον μετεσχηκέναι,εἶτα τὴν προτέραν φύσιν ἐς τὸ τῶν ὀρνίθωνμεταβαλόντες εἶδος, ὅμως ἔτι καὶ νῦν διαφυλάττειντὸ εἶναι Ἕλληνές τε καὶ Φιλέλληνες.[287]

The passage alludes to an unusual tradition about the Shearwaters which stems from the *nostos* of Diomedes, during which he allegedly traveled throughout Italy. Strabo also reflects on the peculiarities of the island, including the history tied to Diomedes' excursions and the regions and peoples among which he had the most influence. He writes that Diomedes himself had sovereignty over the areas around the Adriatic, citing the islands of Diomedes as proof of this, as well as the various tribes of people who worshipped him even in contemporary times, including the Heneti and the Dauni.[288] He further claims that Diomedes founded the two cities of Canusium and Argyrippa, which used to be called Argos Hippium, and that the votive offerings in the Daunian temple of Athena at Luceria contained votive offerings specifically addressing the hero.[289] Strabo also refers to the gentle, pro-Greek nature of the birds of Diomedes. Given Aelian and

[287] Aelian, *On Animals* I.1, translated by A.F. Scholfield (Loeb Classical Press, 1958). "There is a certain island called Diomedea, and it is the home of many Shearwaters. These, it is said, neither harm the barbarians nor go near them. If however a stranger from Greece puts in to port, the birds by some divine dispensation approach, extending their wings as though they were hands, to welcome and embrace the strangers. And if the Greeks stroke them, they do not fly away, but stay still and allow themselves to be touched; and if the men sit down, the birds fly on to their lap as if they had been invited to a meal. They are said to be the companions of Diomedes and to have taken part with him in the war against Ilium; though their original form was afterwards changed into that of birds, they nevertheless still preserve their Greek nature and their love of Greece." Arnott (*Birds of the Ancient World from A-Z* [London: Routledge, 2007], 37-38) identifies this bird as the *Diomēdeios Ornis*, or bird of Diomedes, a name which stems from post-Trojan War traditions about the *nostos* of Diomedes, which I will discuss below. The island is today known as San Domenico, situated about 15km north of the "spur" of Italy.

[288] Strabo, *Geography* 5.1.9. The Heneti sacrificed a white horse to Diomedes in special groves where wild animals grew tame.

[289] Strabo, *Geography* 6.3.9. In Strabo's time, Argyrippa was named Arpi.

Strabo's evidence, Diomedes' influence in Italy is relatively well known in the Greek world, and this may have thereafter led to the establishment of his cult in the region.

Yet there are conflicting traditions about the deification of Diomedes. Strabo lists four different traditions about the hero's life in Italy. For one, he claims that Diomedes left the city of Urium, where he was making a canal to the sea, but when summoned he went home to Argos, where he died; the second tradition claims the opposite, that he stayed at Urium until the end of his life; the third tradition claims he disappeared on Diomedea, the uninhabited island where the Shearwaters who were formerly his companions live, which implies some kind of deification; the fourth tradition comes from the Heneti, who claim Diomedes stayed in their country and eventually had a mysterious apotheosis.[290] The first two traditions give no indication of divinity except later through a hero cult, and the other two declare strongly for Diomedes' immortality as more than a mere cult hero. Argos had a strong claim for the first tradition, considering the Argives held the shield of Diomedes, along with the famous Palladion, in the temple of Athena.[291] These traditions, as I have already mentioned, are more prominent in Italy than mainland Greece, but there is evidently no clear consensus on the matter.

Pindar alludes to a similar tradition about the hero's deification in *Nemean* X, where he writes the following: "Διομήδεα δ᾽ ἄμβροτον ξανθά ποτε Γλαυκῶπις ἔθηκε θεόν."[292] This particular ode glorifies Argos and all its heroes, including Diomedes, addressing the athlete Theaeus, who won a wrestling contest. Pindar sees Diomedes as a

[290] Strabo, *Geography* 6.3.9.

[291] Callimachus, Λοετρὰ Παλλάδος, line 35. See also Farnell 1921: 289-290.

[292] Pindar, *Nemean* X, line 7. "And once, the golden-haired, gleaming-eyed goddess made Diomedes an immortal god."

useful link when he makes the comparison to glorify the young athlete. In doing so, Pindar aimed to reflect heroic traditions and their relevance to the winner through the victory ode.[293] This line also hints at some kind of cult tradition for Diomedes in Argos, the hero's homeland. Since the ode was written especially for Argives, Pindar reflects a real and popular custom about their famous hero. The ode thus glorified both the heroes of the past and through them the athletes of the present as their descendants. But more importantly, the line above fits with the view that Diomedes became immortal in literature and mythology, not only through hero cult. A drinking song to Harmodius, one of the famous tyrannicides of Athens, even includes a reference to Diomedes as an inhabitant of the Islands of the Blessed, along with Achilles and, of course, Harmodius himself.[294] The tradition thus extended to popular culture in the Greek mainland.

In order to attain immortality, a scholiast for *Nemean* X says Diomedes married Hermione, the only daughter of Menelaus and Helen, and lives with the Dioscuri as an immortal god while also enjoying honours in Metapontum and Thurii.[295] In this way Diomedes would have obtained immortality through this relationship as a son-in-law to Menelaus, who was also immortal eventually by virtue of his marriage to Helen, a daughter of Zeus.[296] Athena's involvement is strangely absent from the latter tradition of Diomedes' deification. At Athena's behest, Diomedes would have received immortality instead of his own father Tydeus, who was supposed to receive it first in the *Thebaid*. Tydeus, however, commits an atrocious act and Athena denies him the honour and

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[293] Currie 2005: 58.
[294] *Skolion* 894. Taken from Nagy 1999: 197.
[295] J.B. Bury, *Pindar: Nemean Odes* (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1965), 199.
[296] This version of the myth is found in Euripides' *Helen*, 1676-1679.

awards it to his son.[297] These two traditions, although they stem from the same line in *Nemean* X, conflict once again, demonstrating the unreliability of myth.

The *nostos* of Diomedes places much more emphasis on the hero's travels to Italy than on his role in Argos and other regions of mainland Greece. Not much evidence about this journey survives, but according to Pausanias, Diomedes landed in Attica with his men on his return home.[298] The Argives, blinded by the darkness of the night, did not realize it was Attica when they landed. An Athenian named Demophon, thinking that hostile men had landed, attacked the men and stole the Palladion from them, which later made its way to Italy with Aeneas.[299] Indeed later traditions do not contain any reference to Diomedes and the Palladion, suggesting that it was either widely believed that the item was stolen or lost, or that they no longer knew about the connection between Diomedes and the Palladion. Diomedes' travels to Italy are more commonly attested in Roman sources, however.

Book XI of the *Aeneid* contains a lengthy reference to Diomedes' *nostos* and his detour to Italy. Venulus, one of Latinus' messengers, recalls the mission to Diomedes after they seek his help in the war against the Rutulians. He states that when he found Diomedes, he was laying the foundations of his new city, Argyrippa.[300] Ovid, on the other hand, writes that Venulus came to the home of exiled Diomedes in vain, but he was erecting walls with the favour of Iapygian Daunus, his new father-in-law, which would

[297] Statius, *Thebaid* VIII.753-766. Tydeus takes a bite out of Melanippus' brain after he kills him, thus losing any claim to immortality because of the heinousness of this action.
[298] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* I.28.9.
[299] Pausanias, *Description of Greece* II.23.5.
[300] Virgil, *Aeneid* XI.246-247.

make the city Luceria, not Argyrippa.[301] These are two of the cities which Strabo discusses above, pointing to some correlation between some of the ancient sources about where Diomedes went during his *nostos* and consequently where his hero cult had influence. Yet there are still some unresolved differences between the two traditions.

Diomedes eventually speaks and states that, as punishment for his involvement at Troy, he never reached his fatherland of Argos and that he never saw his beloved wife again.[302] Once again, some of the sources agree that Diomedes never reached Argos and settled somewhere else instead. The hero also states that birds pursue him and his soldiers, birds which used to be his companions and cry out everywhere they land, including the sea cliffs.[303] Here there is yet another reference to a tradition about the companions of Diomedes and their landing on what were later called the Islands of Diomedes, where his men mysteriously turned to Shearwaters. The Roman poet is clearly aware of the tradition which Strabo and Aelian discuss in their respective works. Diomedes ultimately refuses to join the war, and sends Venulus away.

A few statements stand out among the ancient sources. There is an emphasis on the Islands of Diomedes and sea travel in the region of the Adriatic. Since Diomedes never reached Argos, he sought a new home in a new world after a failed expedition to Greece. Greek colonization in what was known as Magna Graecia, the area around Sicily and the Southern coast of Italy, flourished in the 8th century around the same time as the rise of hero cults in the Mediterranean. This movement also enabled the diffusion of

[301] Ovid, *Metamorphoses* XIV.457.
[302] *Aeneid* XI.366-368. This was also a punishment for wounding Aphrodite in *Iliad* V.
[303] *Aeneid* XI.371-373.

Greek cultural achievements, including epic poetry, which in turn made its way up North along the Adriatic coastline. The names of certain tribes also stand out--the Heneti and the Dauni--as well as cities which honoured Diomedes in a special way--Argyrippa, Metapontum, and Luceria--all of which are around the Adriatic coastline. Since so much of the content in the post-Trojan War tradition about Diomedes focuses on his migrations West, it is only fitting that the mainland Greeks, save for Argos, tentatively ignored his cult.[304]

The cult of Achilles was quite popular in the opposite side of the Mediterranean. It had its epicentre on the island of Leuke, and several other locales near the Black Sea granted Achilles godlike status in the same fashion as the tribes of the Adriatic coastline.[305] As a result this specific cult is a fitting comparison to that of Diomedes. These two cults were essentially mirror-images of one another because of the prestigious status enjoyed by the two heroes and their scattered locations throughout the Mediterranean away from mainland Greece.[306] These two hero cults were, in Parker's words, "sailors' religions," since sailors would have comprised the main body of worshippers for each cult.[307] The cult of Diomedes, like that of Achilles, had an uninhabited island as a focal point which extended to the shores of the sea on the nearby mainland. Consequently, the two cults were very important to the sailors who frequented these islands. The cult of Achilles blessed sailors travelling in the Eastern Mediterranean,

[304] The cult of Odysseus bears witness to a similar phenomenon, where mythological mapping allowed this cult to have influence in areas where Odysseus allegedly travelled during his own *nostos* in the *Odyssey* (Farnell 1921: 326).

[305] Parker 2011: 244. Achilles was known as "Achilles who rules Scythia" in some cults.

[306] Parker 2011: 244.

[307] Parker 2011: 245. These islands were important to sailors because they marked out distinct religious areas, possibly used as land markers, when they travelled by sea.

and to gain a similar protection the sailors sought the blessing of Diomedes in the Western portion, since popular myth had already allotted him a *nostos* in that region.

Compared with other hero cults, those of Achilles and Diomedes were not very popular except in their main regions of influence, the Eastern and Western Mediterranean; they were thus marginal hero cults. A popular hero cult was that of Herakles, for example, which was widespread around the Greek world for several reasons. Given that Herakles was heroic and warlike in aspect, his cultic popularity stemmed from his prowess in battle and his unrivalled strength; he was worshipped as a warrior in several regions, especially Thebes and Sparta, and received titles such as Πρόμαχος.[308] His status as a cult figure certainly did not diminish over time. Given the role of citizens in defending their respective *poleis*, the martial benefits which Herakles could grant as a cult hero are apparent. Theseus, on the other hand, had strong support in various democratic *poleis* because he was seen as a champion of the poor and oppressed, and he even had a shrine in the Athenian *agora* where money and food were distributed to the poor during his namesake festival, the Theseia.[309] Sources about Diomedes' cult, in comparison, do not provide solid evidence for festival practices or shrines. This in turn vouches for the unpopular status of the cult of Diomedes on the Greek mainland.

Conclusion

[308] Farnell 1921: 146. Sacrificial inscriptions to Herakles were found as far East as Ionia (147). Other cult titles included Καλλίνικος (the "Triumphant"), Ἀνίκητος (the "Invincible"), and Σωτήρ (the "Saviour").

[309] Farnell 1921: 340.

I initially set out to demonstrate where and how the fame of Diomedes spread, keeping in mind which religious values the majority of the Greek city-states held. One can see the influence of epic when examining the dispersion and localization of the cult of Diomedes around the coast of the Adriatic and in some parts of mainland Greece. The *nostos* of this hero saw him go West towards the areas in the Adriatic coastline, and in response his cult followed along with the reverence of sailors and their fascination with the hero. This trend is especially evident in the amount of Roman literature which addresses some aspects of the post-Trojan War tradition about Diomedes. The hero cults had a very important religious function in society, as their localized power granted benefits to anyone in need of them. Diomedes was therefore treated as a minor deity in this specific region, with the more popular stories of his deification and the mysterious Islands of Diomedes at the forefront of his cult worship. This cult, however, was not widespread; cults like those of Herakles and Theseus had a much more prominent function in the Greek world due to the benefits which they granted their followers and the popular mythological traditions of these figures.

The popular view of the afterlife of the soul was that there was a finality to life and that mortals could not expect anything else after their passing, but some of the epic heroes exceeded these limits with the promise of an afterlife in the Islands of the Blessed, as some literary traditions and mythological episodes suggest. This is the case with Diomedes as well, since several mythological traditions contain references to his apotheosis and the immortality of the heroic soul. The greatest heroes were essentially rewarded with alternate, peaceful lives for their prowess in battle or otherwise. Although

not a major cult in the Greek world, the cult of Diomedes nevertheless reveals how the epic tradition, in combination with the interests of certain *poleis* and individuals, creates and spreads a religious phenomenon throughout several regions of the Mediterranean.

Conclusion

I have named Diomedes a marginal hero, relegated to the boundaries of social and cultural institutions in contrast to other figures, although the mythology associated with him was part of different cultural media widely available to the Greeks. At times Diomedes received a portrayal that represented him as a great hero or cult figure, but lack of interest in this hero is evident in most cases. The driving forces behind this phenomenon had nothing to do with the cultural developments of the times, but instead lay with the very people who initiated them; as with all art forms, people have favourites and tend to neglect even those who could have received more attention as paradigmatic figures. I set out to prove that the Greeks were generally indifferent towards Diomedes, and in the process demonstrated that he nevertheless had a very unique place in their minds. Paradoxically, the evidence which I have presented suggests his stature should be more recognized.

The Homeric hero's value system resonated with audiences for centuries after the oral composition of the poems. As a result, these universalized values were extremely relevant to the *polis* as moral lessons. According to the high standards emblematic of the epic hero, Diomedes stands out above several other characters. Even Achilles, the main hero of the *Iliad*, falls short of Diomedes in most respects when considering the values of the epic hero. Diomedes thoroughly fulfills the role of an *aristos*, or an "excellent man," in his ability to carry out what is expected of him in war, thus fulfilling societal obligations associated with the elite hero class. His *aretē*, "heroic excellence" shown by his deeds, gains him prestige and heroic status; without this he would not have a leading

role in battle and would lose the respect of his companions. The *kleos* he earns throughout the *Iliad* further demonstrates his capacity for self-motivated heroic excellence; not only does he defeat the Trojan hero Aeneas (among several others) in battle, he performs a night raid with Odysseus, thus granting him a special status as a hero of *mētis* and *biē*, cunning and force respectively. His *aristeia*, which I argue is the purest in epic, stood as a strong testament to his heroic prowess. It is the longest in the *Iliad*, places the hero on an equal footing with Achilles and Hector, and even sees him successfully challenge the gods Ares and Aphrodite, a feat no other mortal accomplishes in the poem. He is the only Greek commander able to replace Achilles and thus sets a standard for others to follow, clearly exemplifying the concept of competitive excellence. His deeds even surpass those of his father Tydeus, who was one of the heroes who took Thebes a generation before the Trojan War started. Diomedes also participates in one of the most unique episodes of the poem where he famously exchanges armour with Glaucus, thereby humanizing the war and curbing his *menos*. Other major examples of Diomedes' prowess are seen during the funeral games for Patroclus, through his victories in the chariot race and the spear fight, as well as his excellent speaking abilities throughout the epic.

Several lost epics also relate the deeds of Diomedes in a positive light, including his rescue of Oeneus, the expedition against Thebes, his well-known partnership with Odysseus in the *Cypria*, and winning the sprint in the *Aethiopis*. Based on his exploits in Greek literature, especially in the *Iliad*, and the heroic values which the Greeks idolized, Diomedes is a representation of the heights to which mortals can aspire with the support of the gods. His character is always driven by a heroic ambition to transcend the limits of

mortality for renown in the face of incredible odds. He is the mainstay Greek hero during Achilles' absence from battle in the *Iliad*, and thus is distinguished as a pivotal epic figure.

The visual arts, however, often portray him in a different light. Elite values and attitudes projected themselves onto the visual arts since the end of the Dark Ages in Greece. As a result, the warrior motif was instrumental in asserting and displaying status. Epic poetry had a profound influence on this evolving medium, lending sophistication and even credibility to various depictions. The elite class continued to dominate this field during and after the Archaic Period, and consequently saw a need to visually portray episodes from epic in order to assert this status during a period of Greek self-definition in the world. This led to a rise in battle scenes being depicted, an attempt at portraying Greeks against "the other." Greek culture was diametrically opposed to the Near East and its values, especially after the Persian Wars of the early 5th century.

Diomedes was a part of this movement with respect to pottery; because Diomedes had a long-standing status in the Trojan War saga, not just in the *Iliad*, there was a range of situations in which he could appear. He is merely used as a supporting character at times, as the earliest depictions of the suicide of Ajax demonstrate, in which artists partnered him with Odysseus but as a passive character. Portrayals of his *aristeia*, on the other hand, gradually improve his image over time and depict him as an excellent hero. There are also examples from unidentified battle scenes which do the same. As a result, the late Archaic Period becomes the high point for depictions of Diomedes. Notably, however, several key heroes from the Trojan War receive similar portrayals during the

same time period, making Diomedes a character who does not stand out by comparison. Interest was ultimately placed in these other heroes more so than in Diomedes. Furthermore, preference is given to Odysseus in the majority of examples in which they appear together. Representations of traditional episodes which feature Diomedes as a main character, such as the theft of the Palladion and the capture of Dolon, often ignore Diomedes' efforts and give Odysseus a more prominent role, especially those produced in Southern Italy after the Peloponnesian War in 404 BC.

Textual fidelity to the *Iliad* is quite evident near the end of the Archaic Period, although there could possibly have been textual influences other than the *Iliad* itself. On the other hand, an artist may well have ignored or slightly altered the narrative context of known episodes. The overall trend still remains clear: as a figure in the visual arts, Diomedes receives less noteworthy recognition than that found in the literary evidence. The majority of extant works contain various problems which are not compatible with the literature about the hero. Artists therefore chose to portray Diomedes with their own unique expressions, most of the time ignoring favourable portrayals. As a result, there is a gap between the literary and the visual art spheres in terms of characterization; the malleability of this hero suggests that textual fidelity was of no importance to artists, which in turn negatively influenced portrayals of this hero.

The cult worship of Diomedes follows a curious trend. The locales for this cult are the coasts of the Adriatic, away from the mainland with the exception of Argos, Diomedes' home town. These sites were influential because of their role within the epic tradition and, subsequently, the strong presence of Diomedes' hero cult. The popular

ideology regarding the soul maintains that there are two souls, the body soul and the free soul, the former being responsible for personality, the latter for conscience and dreams. The final resting place of the free soul is in Hades, and mortals cannot expect a higher plane of existence other than the bleak surroundings of the underworld, as represented by Homer in the *Odyssey*. Yet there are traditions which describe a higher state of being which mortals can attain after death. The Islands of the Blessed, as Pindar and Hesiod write, are a place for the greatest heroes who ever lived, including those who took part in the Trojan War. Traditions about these islands mention that Achilles and Diomedes live there in complete happiness, a reward for being such exceptional figures during their respective lifetimes. This view is seemingly less popular than the view expressed in Homeric poetry, yet has implications for hero cults. Such heroes who attained this status essentially became minor deities and granted special benefits to cult worshippers.

Greek religion was a vital asset to the city-state, and cults awarded its members the chance to communicate with higher beings. Despite the problematic nature of polytheistic worship and its conflicting views and practices, cult worship was extremely popular throughout the Greek world and eventually became more structured. The cult of Diomedes, like its namesake figure, was not popular on the mainland after the diffusion of epic poetry to other parts of the Mediterranean. Several epic traditions see the hero go west after the Trojan War during his homecoming (*nostos*). As a result, the cult followed the same path and was established in remote areas of Magna Graecia. Strabo, Aelian, Virgil, and other writers mention these traditions in some detail, and most sources agree on key components of Diomedes' *nostos*, especially on the Islands of Diomedes, which

suggests that the tradition was well known throughout antiquity. Even the cult of Achilles, who was the greatest hero of the Trojan War, had very limited cult locations, seeing the most activity in the Eastern Mediterranean.

It is fitting that the two great heroes Achilles and Diomedes experienced similar trends in cult worship; their popularity stemmed from the admiration of sailors, who spread their cultic worship to remote locations based on the mythical traditions of the two heroes, one having died at Troy in the East and the other going West. They are thus given the name of sailors' religions, since they were based on sea travel and saw the influence of sailors in their diffusion. Compared to mainstay hero cults, such as those of Herakles and Theseus, Diomedes' cult does not have a very distinguishing status in the ancient world. Nevertheless, despite its unpopularity among the majority of the Greek mainland, the cult of Diomedes demonstrates how cult practices spread throughout the regions of the Mediterranean and which influences drove this phenomenon.

After examining the three facets of Diomedes' influence in Greek culture (the literary, visual, and religious spheres), one can effectively determine that the hero is misrepresented. He is portrayed as an excellent hero who sets and ceaselessly follows a paradigm for the Homeric hero in literature, yet is later represented as a minor figure in the grand scheme of the epic tradition. Both the visual arts and the cult worship associated with Diomedes are underwhelming when compared to the literary depiction in the *Iliad*. There are, of course, lost representations of the hero in literature, yet the lack of visual representations of these suggests that either artists did not appreciate these lost works or had no interest in them. The cult worship of this hero was prominent away from Athens,

the epicentre of Greek culture, and never had influence there. It appears that the more time that passes by, including the cultural and social developments which occur along the way, the less the hero is appreciated. Diomedes becomes a relic of the epic tradition while other traditions grow and develop. The literary, artistic, and religious values of the Greeks suggest that Diomedes should receive much more acknowledgement in the ancient world, yet the evidence presents the opposite. Although the *Iliad* gives one very gratifying picture of this hero, other forms of expression show that the Greeks did not consider his *exemplum* noteworthy; clearly there is always an element of favouritism at play, but the circumstances behind this trend are as follows.

Diomedes' characterization is too ideal to garner any interest from artists and, seemingly, most of the Greek mainland. When one considers tragedy, for example, there is a stark focus on the humanizing flaws of heroes; tragedy exposes these flaws and demonstrates to the audience that heroes are indeed human, and have the potential for great suffering. Diomedes is for the most part incompatible with the interests of Greek theatre, despite some efforts to include him.[310] Audiences simply could not connect with such a character; a generation gap could have had a profound influence in this respect. Furthermore, when considering the partnership between Diomedes and Odysseus, the latter stands out much more; Odysseus' characterization offers the possibility for a variety of interesting portrayals, none of which Diomedes could hope to emulate despite being a paradigm for Homeric heroism, as I have argued. Yet this is precisely why his neglect is interesting. The fact that the Greeks could neglect a hero with the stature of Diomedes

[310] I have written in Chapter one that there is a lost tragedy called *Rhesus* in which he participates, and in Chapter 2 that Aristophanes makes a subtle reference to the "necessity of Diomedes" in *Ecclesiazusae*.

speaks volumes about their culture. The Greek epic hero was indeed a transcendental figure; the Greeks ultimately did not like this idea and made great efforts to bring heroes back down to a more human level over time.

Figures

Figure 1: Odysseus and Diomedes over the body of Ajax. Corinthian krater, c. 600 BC--Paris E635.

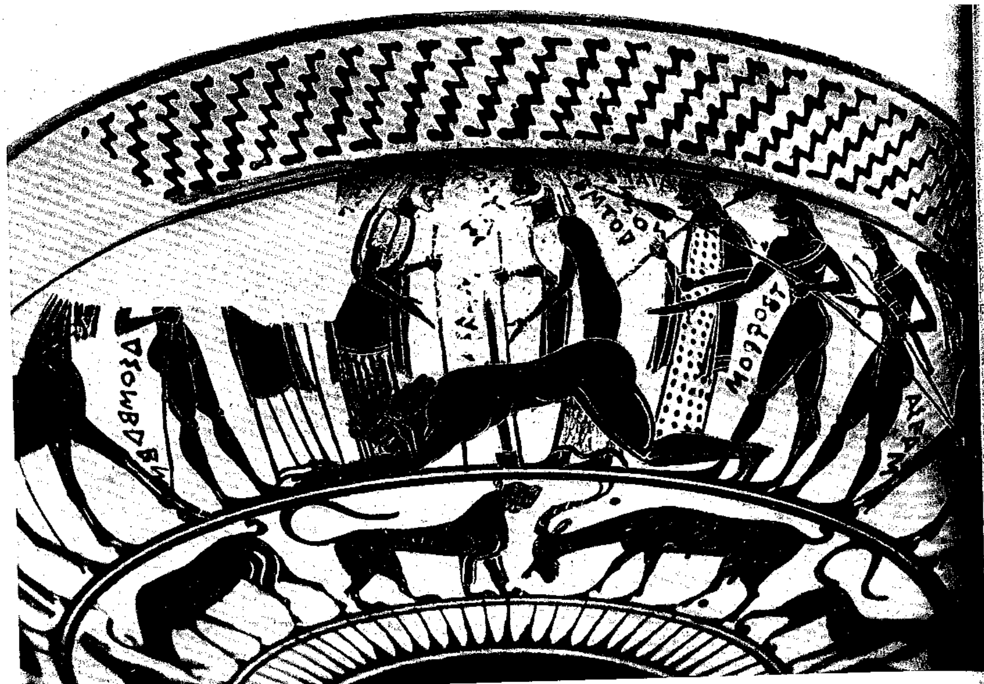

Figure 2: The Achaeans find the body of Ajax. Corinthian cup by Cavalcade Painter, c. 580 BC--Basel BS 1404.

Figure 3: The Chariot of Diomedes (or Tydeus?), with Athena standing by. Corinthian column krater, c. 580 BC--Basel BS 451.

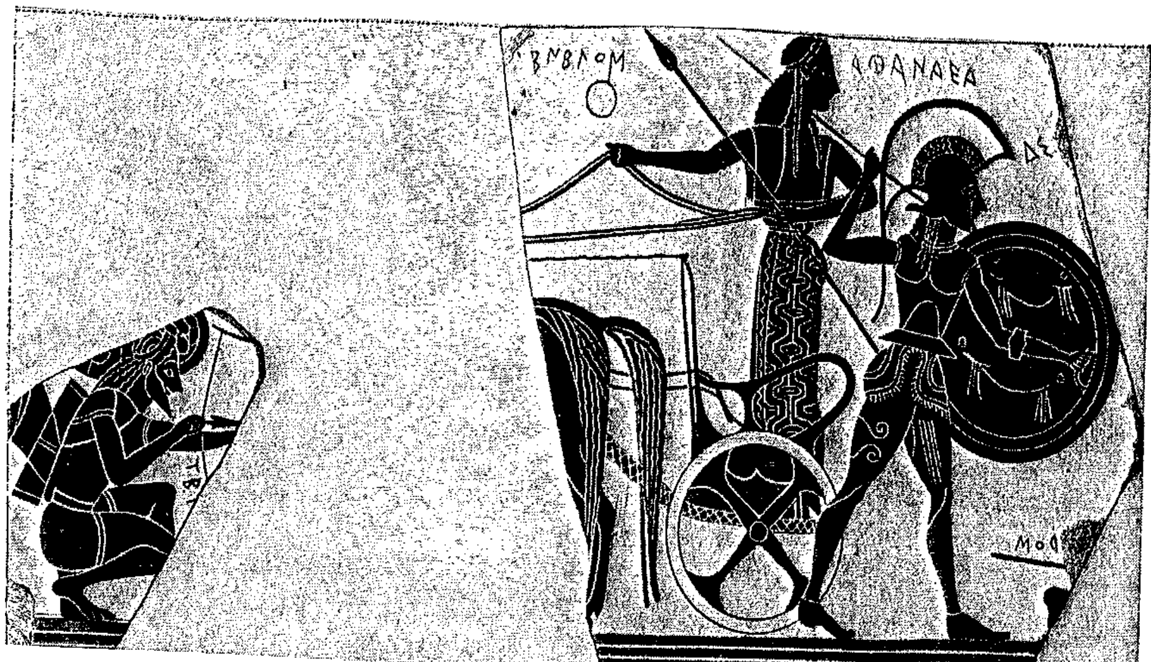

Figure 4: *Aristeia* of Diomedes. Corinthian votive tablet, c. 560 BC--Berlin F764.

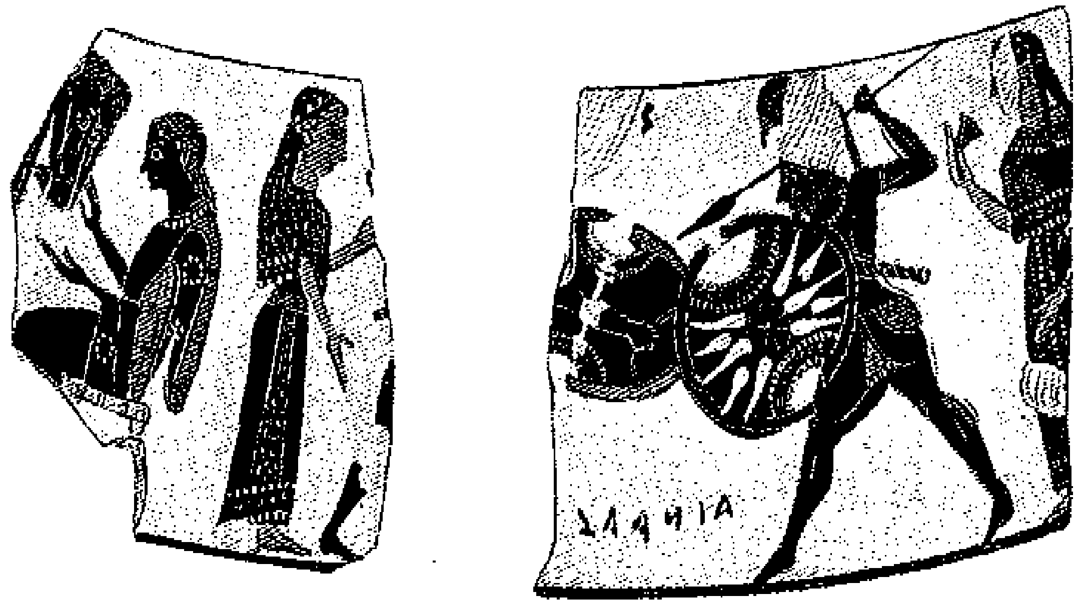

Figure 5: *Aristeia* of Diomedes. Attic column krater, c. 540 BC--Athens 646

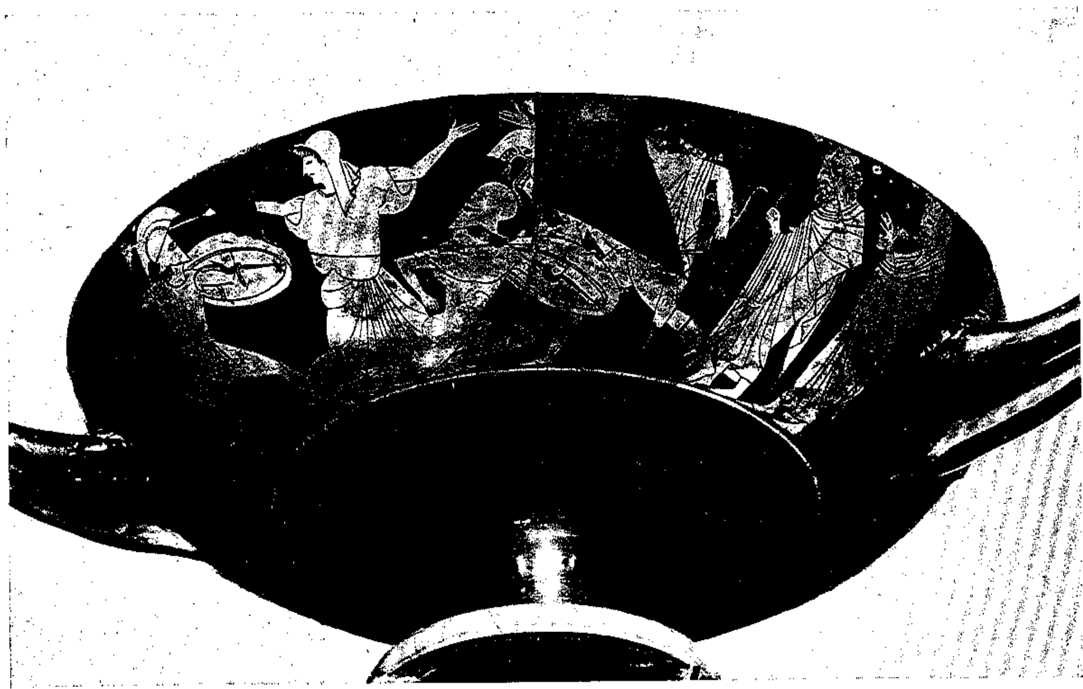

Figure 6: *Aristeia* of Diomedes. Attic red-figure cup by Oltos, c. 520-510 BC--Copenhagen 100.

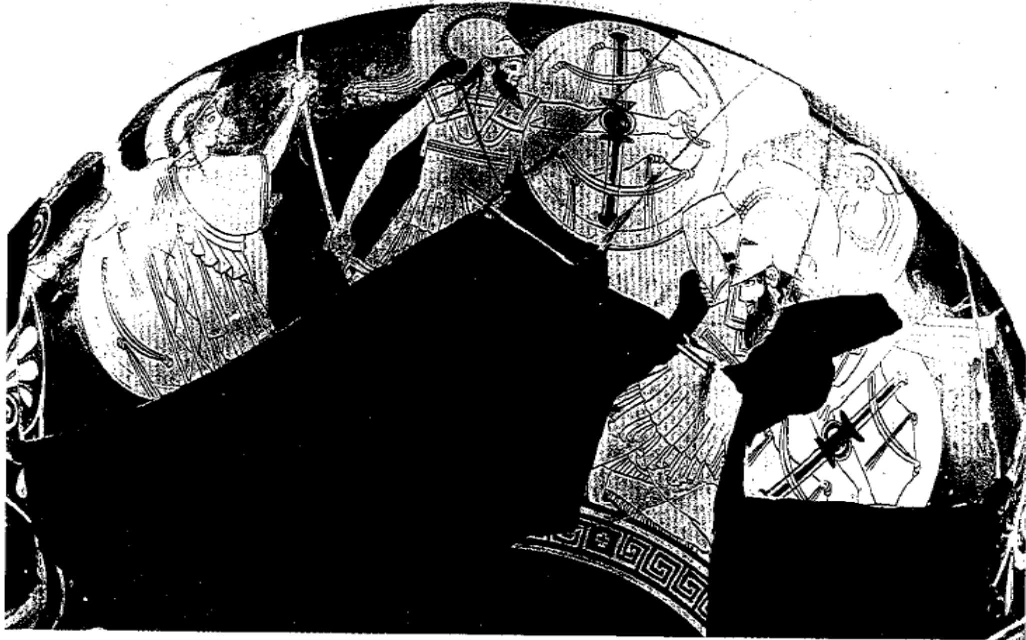

Figure 7: *Aristeia* of Diomedes. Attic cup by Kleophrades, c. 510 BC--British Museum E73.

Figure 8: *Aristeia* of Diomedes. Attic calyx krater by Tyszkiewicz Painter, c. 510 BC--Boston 97.368.

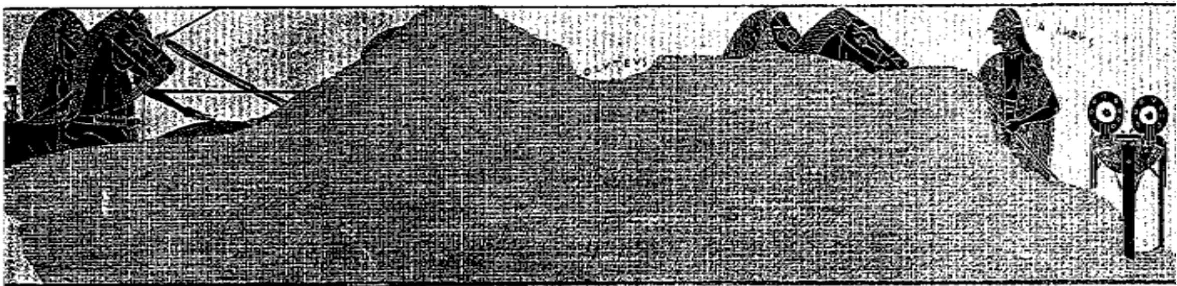

Figure 9: Chariot Race at the Funeral Games of Patroclus. Attic volute krater by Klitias, c. 570 BC--Florence 4209.

Figure 10: Diomedes fights Hector over Skythes. Neck-amphora, c. 540-530 BC--Angers MTC 1003.

Figure 11: Diomedes fights Charops, Glaucus behind him. Chalcidian amphora, c. 540-530 BC--Melbourne 1643/4.

Figure 12: Fight for the Body of Patroclus. Calyx krater by Exekias, c. 530 BC--Athens, Agora Museum.

Figure 13: Fight for the Body of Patroclus. Cup by Exekias, c. 530 BC--Munich 2044.

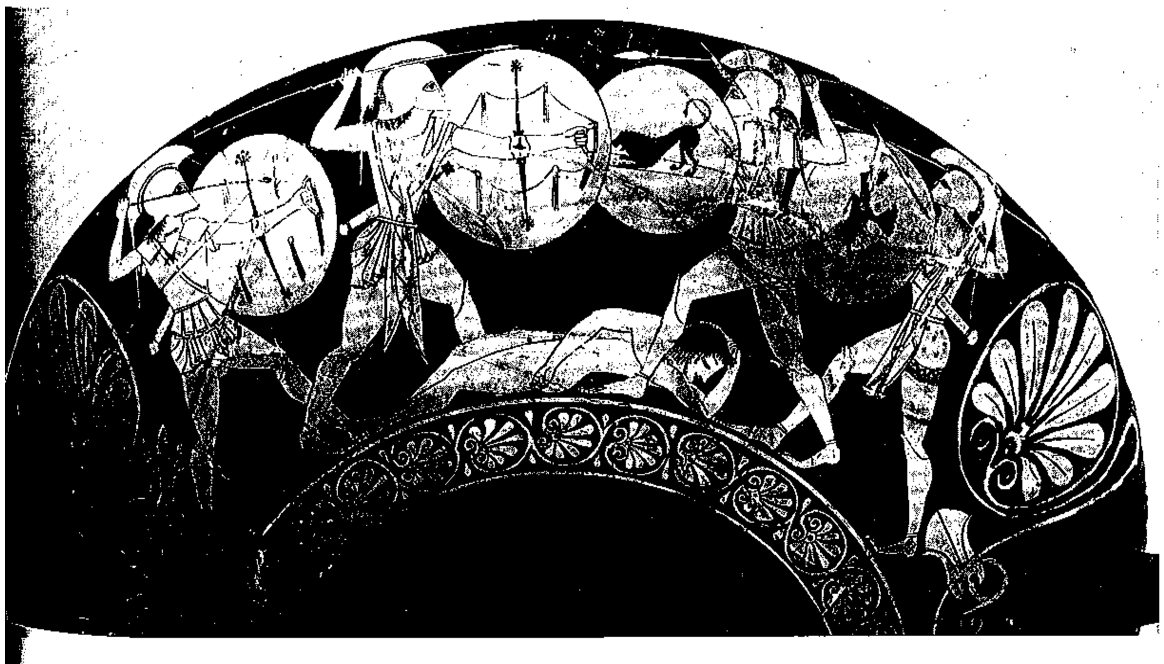

Figure 14: Fight for the Body of Patroclus. Cup by Oltos, c. 510 BC--Berlin F 2264.

Figure 15: Dolon among other Warriors. Corinthian cup, c. 590-570 BC--Brussels, Bibl. Royale.

Figure 16: The Capture of Dolon. Attic black-figure Oenochoe, c. 490 BC--Oxford 226.

Figure 17: The Capture of Dolon. Lucanian calyx krater, c. 390-380 BC--British Museum.

Figure 18: The Rape of the Palladion. Panathenaic amphora, c. 420 BC--Naples 81401.

Figure 19: The Rape of the Palladion. Attic cup, c. 400-390 BC--Oxford 1931.39.

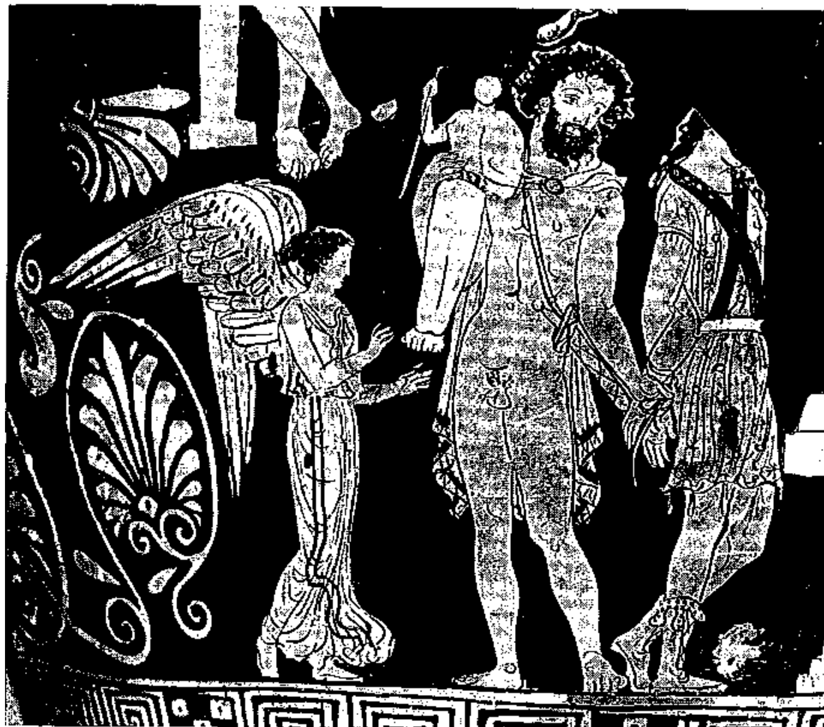

Figure 20: The Rape of the Palladion. Apulian volute krater, c. 380 BC--Taranto, Mus. Naz.

Figure 21: The Rape of the Palladion. Apulian Oenochoe, c. 360 BC--Paris K36.

Figure 22: The arms of Achilles. Attic column-krater, c. 580-560 BC--Berlin 3763.

Figure 23: Peleus hands Achilles to Chiron. Attic cup, c. 550 BC--Wurzburg 452.

Figure 24: Duel between Achilles and Hector. Attic hydria, c. 520-510 BC--Vatican H502.

Figure 25: Duel between Ajax and Hector. Attic cup, c. 520-510 BC--Louvre G115.

Figure 26: Priam ransoms Achilles for Hector's body. Attic cup, c. 520-510 BC--Munich 2618.

Figure 27: Achilles bandages Patroclus' wound. Attic cup, c. 500 BC--Berlin-Charlottenburg F 2278.

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