

## ARCHILOCHUS THE ‘ANTI-HERO’? HEROISM, FLIGHT AND VALUES IN HOMER AND THE NEW ARCHILOCHUS FRAGMENT (P.OXY LXIX 4708)

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**Abstract:** This article investigates how flight in battle is presented in the newly discovered Archilochus fragment (P.Oxy LXIX 4708) and compares it to the Homeric treatment of the issue. It argues that the traditional dichotomy between scholars who see Archilochus as ‘subverting’ epic values and those who see him as continuous with them is too simplistic, and that the new poem provides clear evidence of a more nuanced approach to epic material. The fragment’s approach reflects many of the subtleties found in Homeric attitudes to flight, and in this respect we see Archilochus using the cultural authority of epic to add weight to his argument. Nevertheless, the choice of the Telephus myth, which tells the story of a mistaken conflict, is an ironic one, and the narrative foregrounds the ways in which the Achaeans at Mysia fall short of heroic norms and perhaps casts aspersions on the contemporary scenario to which the mythological conflict appears to be compared. Hence the poem contains competing strands of consolation, celebration of an *aristeia* and mockery in a way which demonstrates Archilochus’ varied and subtle relationship to epic.

**Keywords:** Archilochus, Homer, heroism, epic, elegiac

One of the central areas of interest for scholars working on Archilochus has been his relationship to Homeric poetry. In addition to the linguistic connections between Archilochus’ poetry and Homeric epic, Archilochus makes use of similar themes and draws on a similar set of values to the traditional heroic material we know of from the Homeric poems.<sup>1</sup> Yet the obvious differences in the way this material is handled has led to one of the longest-standing debates in the study of Archilochus’ poetry: should we read him as a poet who fundamentally criticizes or undermines the values of epic or should we instead focus on the continuities between Homer and Archilochus?<sup>2</sup>

The publication of a major new fragment in 2005 paves the way for renewed interest in Archilochus as a poet.<sup>3</sup> Due to the need to establish a more-or-less secure version of the text, scholarship to date has tended to focus on the textual and linguistic aspects of the fragment, rather than on how it contributes to our broader picture of Archilochus’ *oeuvre*.<sup>4</sup> Yet the new poem is

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<sup>1</sup> For discussions of Archilochus’ use of Homeric language and motifs, see Tarditi (1956); Scherer (1964); Page (1964); Fowler (1987) 13–33; and most recently Létoublon (2008). For the contribution made to this topic by the discovery of the Cologne Epode, see Campbell (1976).

<sup>2</sup> For Archilochus as anti-epic or anti-heroic, *cf.* for example Fraenkel (1951) chapter 4; Snell (1953) chapter 3; Dover (1964) 196–98; Treu (1968); Tarditi (1968) 7; Burnett (1983) 38–42; Morris (1996) 35; Barker and Christensen (2006); for criticisms of this position and attempts to find continuity with Homer, *cf.* Page (1964); Russo (1974); Rankin (1977) 40–46; Toohey (1988); Fowler (1987) 3–13; Corrêa (1998) 132; Rougier-Blanc (2008) 25–26.

<sup>3</sup> First published by Obbink (2005). For alternative readings and revised versions of the text, see also D’Alessio (2006); Henry (2006); Luppe (2006); Magnelli (2006); Nicolosi (2006); Obbink (2006); Tammaro (2006); West (2006). For a detailed study of the various readings suggested, see Nicolosi (2007).

<sup>4</sup> Exceptions are Barker and Christensen (2006); Nobili (2009); Aloni and Iannucci (2007) 205–37.

of critical importance to the question of Archilochus' relationship to Homer, since unlike Archilochus' other surviving work it deals explicitly with mythological subject matter and draws on the tales of the Trojan War. Thus the new poem represents Archilochus' own take on epic material, and demonstrates how he can deploy an epic-style situation for his own purposes.<sup>5</sup> This article will explore what light the new fragment sheds on Archilochus' relationship with epic, and will examine it in depth before comparing it with similar scenes in Homer. Using the new poem, I shall argue that the traditional dichotomy of reading Archilochus either as subverting Homeric values or as straightforwardly continuous with them is too simplistic; in fact Archilochus' relationship with epic is considerably more nuanced than either of these positions allows. Moreover, reading Archilochus as a systematic subverter of epic is to misread not only Archilochus but the epic poems themselves, for the Homeric poems present a fluid and subtle attitude to heroism and warfare which closely parallels what we find in Archilochus. Thus in this article I shall explore not only Archilochus' position as regards 'anti-heroic' behaviour such as fleeing in battle, but also the degree to which the *Iliad* automatically criticizes such behaviour. As we shall see, the new poem illuminates Archilochus' relationship with epic in both directions, enhancing our reading both of Archilochus and of Homer. Thus the poem's importance in understanding the epic tradition itself should not be overlooked.

### I. Archilochus and Homer

Claiming a relationship between two such early texts is a fraught process, and so I shall lay some methodological groundwork before turning to the poems themselves. Scholars have differed on whether it is possible to argue that Archilochus 'knew' Homer in the sense of having access to a fixed version of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* or whether he simply drew on a shared pool of oral traditions and heroic myth.<sup>6</sup> Given the extreme paucity of evidence for the early circulation and transmission of Homer, this argument is impossible to resolve, for any position adopted relies on one's own assumptions about the date of the *Iliad* and the point in the poem's history when it was committed to writing. For the purposes of this article, I am not committed to insisting that Archilochus had access to a fixed version of the *Iliad* or that he had heard the poem in the form that it has come down to us. Rather, the only starting premise I find it necessary to rely on is the idea that Archilochus knew Homeric-style epic about the Trojan War,<sup>7</sup> and that therefore he was familiar with both the language and tropes of epic and the traditional stories it drew upon.<sup>8</sup> Both of these ideas are conclusively proved by the new fragment.

In the new poem, Archilochus uses formulae familiar to us from Homer: for example his use of the phrase πολυφλοῖςβοι[ο θαλάσσης (10) or ἐϋκνήμι[ιδες Ἀχαιοί (12).<sup>9</sup> He also demonstrates the ability to work within the traditional system of composition, generating formulae based on (if

<sup>5</sup> Barker and Christensen (2006) seek to address this question but reach a very different conclusion. They argue for a subversive interpretation of the fragment, reading it as 'a narrative that glories in flight' (16), but, as I argue below, Archilochus' attitude to flight is considerably more complex than straightforwardly advocating it, and we should not overlook the many ways in which the *Iliad* also makes allowance for flight. Nobili (2009) rightly observes that the relationship between the new poem and epic is more complex than simply a wholesale rejection (270–71), but she draws on the *Odyssey* for a Homeric defence of flight; cf. also Seidensticker (1978). However, as various Homeric scholars have demonstrated, the attitude to flight in the *Iliad* is not straightforwardly negative, and we should apply these insights to Archilochus' use of epic material.

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the possible positions, see Garner (2005) 389–91.

<sup>7</sup> By 'Homeric-style' I mean simply heroic hexameter epic, of the type known to us from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Thus when I use the adjective 'Homeric' later in this article, I mean it in this sense, and not only to refer to the Homeric poems we have today.

<sup>8</sup> Of course, for readers who posit an early date for the fixing of the *Iliad* and therefore that Archilochus could have known a version of the poem which was more or less the same as the one we have, my argument will be all the more secure, as they will be comfortable reading the parallels between Archilochus and Homer as direct intertexts.

<sup>9</sup> Studies of Archilochus' corpus before the publication of the new fragment have often remarked on the

not identical to) Homeric formulae: for example, in line 8 he qualifies the Achaean flight with the phrase *αἰχμηταί περ ἔοντε[ς]*, drawing on the Homeric use of *περ ἔόν* (in various cases and numbers) as a qualifier.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, his use of the formula *πολὸν στρατ[όν]* (6) appears to be related to the common Homeric *στρατὸν εὐρύν*, though it fills a different metrical block.<sup>11</sup> It is impossible to know whether this represents Archilochus himself innovating within the traditional formulaic system or whether he is simply drawing on a wider pool of hexameter formulae than those transmitted via the Homeric poems. What we can be sure of, however, is that Archilochus was familiar with the diction and style of heroic poetry, and that he could work comfortably within the system. Thus, whether or not we are happy to say that this language evokes Homer specifically, we can confidently say that it evokes heroic epic more generally, and hence that using such language is designed to trigger the conventions and values associated with such poetry in the minds of the audience.

The new poem also demonstrates that Archilochus knew not only Homeric language but also Homeric myth. The story told in the new fragment is, of course, not one familiar to us from the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, but the myth of Telephus, previously known through the epic cycle, as well as in later treatments such as Euripides’ *Telephus*, parodied by Aristophanes.<sup>12</sup> West, in his analysis of the poem, interprets Archilochus’ use of the Telephus myth as indicating his lack of familiarity with the stories known to the *Iliad*-poet and instead attesting to a different tradition.<sup>13</sup> Yet the Telephus myth is clearly subordinate to the sack of Troy myth, for it assumes as a starting premise that the audience know why the Achaeans were on their way to Troy and what they eventually went on to do when they arrived there: it would make no sense for Archilochus to tell the Telephus myth in a context where it did not fit with a wider awareness of the Trojan stories.<sup>14</sup> West would no doubt accept this, for his scepticism relates to whether Archilochus knew the stories of the *Iliad* specifically rather than Trojan myth in general. However, the *Iliad*-poet too presumably drew his stories from a wider pool, and we cannot know which were developed or shaped by the poet himself and which were episodes rooted in the broader tradition. The inscription on the Pithekoussai vase known as ‘Nestor’s cup’ (*SEG* 14.604) demonstrates that aspects of what we know as the *Iliad*-story were known across Greece at a surprisingly early date.<sup>15</sup> We do not have to assume that the painter of Nestor’s cup had heard the *Iliad*, only that

similarities between his language and that of Homer (see n.1). Yet, as many of these scholars have pointed out, we must take care in distinguishing between language which is unequivocally Homeric and that which simply reflects the Ionic dialect of Paros: see Scherer (1964) 97. Hexameter epic-style formulae such as the ones discussed above, therefore, represent a firm basis upon which to claim that Archilochus intends to evoke epic and is not just composing poetry in his local idiom.

<sup>10</sup> Most commonly used in Homer to qualify adjectives and occurs in many cases and genders: *cf.*, for example, *ἀγαθός περ ἔόν*: *Il.* 1.131, 275, 15.185, 19.155; *χρυσεῖη περ εὐσῶα*: *Il.* 18.549; *πολέες περ ἔοντες*: *Il.* 5.94, 9.552; *μέγαν περ ἔοντα*: *Il.* 4.534, 5.625; *φίλην περ εὐσῶαν*: *Il.* 1.587; *κραναῖς περ εὐσῶης*: *Il.* 3.201; *ἰφθίμωι περ ἔοντι*: *Il.* 12.410, 20.356. Close parallels to Archilochus’ usage where it qualifies a noun are *νόθον περ ἔοντα*: *Il.* 8.284; *δουρικτητῆν περ εὐσῶαν*: *Il.* 9.343; *γέρων περ ἔων πολεμιστής*: *Il.* 10.549; *νέκυν περ ἔοντα*: *Il.* 24.35.

<sup>11</sup> *στρατὸν εὐρύν*: *Il.* 1.229, 384, 478, 484, 2.439, 4.209, 436, 19.196, 24.199. *πολὸν στρατὸν* is not a formula found elsewhere in Greek poetry before the fifth century.

<sup>12</sup> See *Cypria fr.* 1 Bernabé; Apollod. *Epit.* 3.17. The story of Telephus’ routing of the Achaeans is also told in the Hesiodic catalogue of women (*fr.* 165 M–W). For the sources for the Telephus myth, see Gantz (1993) 428–31, 578–80; for its relevance to the poem, see Aloni and Iannucci (2007) 210–12.

<sup>13</sup> West (2006) 16–17.

<sup>14</sup> Artistic evidence shows that stories about the Trojan War were well established by the seventh century: see Burgess (2001) 33–44.

<sup>15</sup> Scholars have debated what level of familiarity with the *Iliad* the inscription presupposes: at one end of the scale we find those who read the inscription as referring specifically to the Iliadic description of Nestor’s cup (11.632–37) and therefore take it to represent a *terminus ante quem* for the *Iliad*: *cf.* Rüter and Matthiessen (1969); Kirk (1985) 4; Powell (1989), who calls the inscription ‘Europe’s first literary allusion’ (340). Yet it is impossible to prove definitively that the painter was referring to the Iliadic scene rather than simply to a myth where Nestor has a famous cup: for more sceptical views, see West (1994); Faraone (1996). Dihle (1969) goes as far as to suggest that the ‘Nestor’ in the inscription is not the heroic figure but

he knew of a story where Nestor owned a cup of particular beauty or importance. From our perspective, the Nestor's cup interlude in the *Iliad* appears to be a fixed part of the poem, associated with the poem's central plot of the wrath of Achilles, yet one could equally well argue that the *Iliad*-poet took care to incorporate the description of Nestor's cup precisely because it was a well-established item in the existing tradition. The Pithekoussai cup therefore demonstrates the difficulties of assessing which aspects of the *Iliad* are specifically 'Iliadic' (in other words, could only have been known by someone familiar with the *Iliad* in a fixed version) and which may have evolved from other mythological traditions. We should apply a similar caution to other episodes and motifs in the *Iliad*, such as the withdrawals of the Achaean heroes during Hector's *aristeia* (discussed below). Thus it is dangerous to make assumptions about which elements of the *Iliad* are dependent on a fixed version and therefore could not have been known in the absence of one.<sup>16</sup>

When I examine passages in Homer which I see as parallels to Archilochus, therefore, my argument does not rest on the idea that Archilochus specifically alludes to the passage as told by Homer or that the audience is required to recall that particular Homeric scene in order to make sense of Archilochus. Rather, the purpose of examining these parallels is that they provide good examples of heroic morality as expressed in epic poetry. Whether or not Archilochus had come across these specific incidents, he was demonstrably familiar with the epic tradition and its values more broadly, and he had therefore come across incidents like these and moral debates like these, since phases of retreat are likely to be inherent in a saga which deals with a ten-year war. Moreover, it is unwise to assume that the stories of Achaean retreats can only have been known via a fixed *Iliad* and that they did not derive from a wider tradition of tales set at Troy (or indeed from other epic traditions such as the battles at Thebes). Whatever one's position on the dating of Homer and the transmission of the *Iliad*, it is still appropriate to use Homeric poetry to cast light on Archilochus' poetry, and we can use Homer as a guide to the epic values with which Archilochus engages.

## II. Flight and heroism in the new Archilochus

The new poem tells the story of the Achaeans' abortive attack on Mysia and their humiliating defeat by the hero Telephus. The surviving section appears to begin with a generalizing *gnômê* on the merits of flight (badly damaged) before continuing to tell the story of Telephus:<sup>17</sup>

] . . . . [

εἰ δὲ] . [ . . . . ] . [ . ] . . θεοῦ κρατερῆ[ς ὑπ' ἀνάγκη  
 οὐ χρὴ ἀν]αλ[κείη]ν και κακότητα λέγει[ν,  
 π]ήμ[α]τ' εὔ[ε]θεθ[α] δ[η]α φυγεῖν· φεύγειν δέ τις ὄρη·  
 καὶ ποτ[ε] μ]οῦνος ἐὼν Τήλεφος Ἄρκα[κίδης] (5)  
 Ἀργείων ἐφόβησε πολλὸν στρατ[όν], οἳ δὲ φέβοντο  
 ἄλκιμ[οι], ἧ̄ τόσα δὴ μοῖρα θεῶν ἐφόβει,

simply a contemporary Pithekoussan, though most scholars have taken Nestor to be the legendary hero, given the lack of evidence for mythological names being used by historical-period Greeks.

<sup>16</sup> West (2006) 16 questions whether Archilochus could have known the *Iliad* and yet still have chosen to use the Telephus story, as he argues that 'If the *Iliad* had been established in Archilochus' time as the supreme

epic, he could easily have drawn from it to demonstrate his point that even the best fighters are sometimes forced to flee'. Yet, as I argue below, we can read the choice of Telephus more productively if we see it as a positive choice, for the Telephus story has a poetic angle which the Iliadic routs of heroes lack: the theme of a battle fought by mistake.

αἰχμηταὶ περ ἐόντε[ς.] ἐϋρρείτης δὲ Κ[αῖκος  
 π]ιπτόγων νεκύων στείνοτο καὶ [πεδῖον  
 Μύσιον, οἱ δ’ ἐπὶ θῖγα πολυφλοίσβοι[ο θαλάσσης (10)  
 χέρσ’] ὕπ’ ἀμειλίχτου φωτὸς ἐναϊρό[μενοι  
 προ]τροπάδην ἀπέκλινον ἐϋκνήμ[ιδες Ἀχαιοί·  
 ἀ]σπασιοὶ δ’ ἐκ νέας ὠ[κ]υπόρ[ο]υς [ἐέβαν  
 παῖδες τ’ ἀθανάτων καὶ ἀδελφεοί, [οὓς Ἀγαμέμνων  
 Ἴλιον εἰς ἱερὴν ἦγε μαχηομένο[υς· (15)  
 οἱ] δὲ τότε βλαφθέντες ὁδοῦ παρὰ θ[ῖν’ ἀφίκοντο·  
 Τε]ύθραντος δ’ ἐρατὴν πρὸς πόλιν [ἐ]ξ[έπεσον·  
 ἔ]νθα [μ]έγρος πνεύοντες ὁμῶς αὐτο[ῖ] τε καὶ ἵπποι  
 ἀφρ[αδί]ηι μεγάλῳ θυμὸν ἀκηχέ[δατο·  
 φ]άντο γὰρ ὑψίπυλον Τρώων πόλιν εἰς[αναβαίνειν (20)  
 αἶ]ψα· μ[ά]την δ’ ἐπάτεον Μυσιδα πυροφόρο[ν·  
 Ἡρακλ]έης δ’ ἦγτης[ε] βοῶν ταλ[α]κάρδιον [υἰόν, ἦ  
 οὔ]ρον ἀμ[ε]ίλιχ[τον] δηΐῳ ἐν [πολ]έμ[ωι  
 Τ]ήλεφρον ὃς Δαγγοῖσι κακὴν [τ]ό[τε φύζαν ἐνόρκα  
 ἦ]ρειδε [πρό]μαχος, πατρὶ χαριζόμε[ενος (25)  
 . . . ] . . . . . [ . ] . . . . [ .  
 . . . ] . [ . ] . . . [ . . . . . ] . . [ .  
 . . . ] . . . . [ . . . . . ] . θα . [ .

If (one retreats?) under the powerful compulsion of a god, one should not call it weakness or cowardice; we were right when we hastened to flee our dreadful suffering: there is a proper time for flight. Even Telephus Arkasides once, alone as he was, put to flight the great army of the Argives, and those powerful men fled – so great was the fate of the gods that routed them – spearmen though they were. The Kaikos with its beautiful streams was crammed with the bodies as they fell and so was the Mysian plain, but the well-greaved Achaeans, slain at the hands of a pitiless man, turned away headlong towards the shore of the much-resounding sea. Gladly did they embark on their swift ships, the sons and brothers of immortals, whom Agamemnon was leading to holy Ilios to fight. But at that time they had lost their way and come to that shore; they fell upon the lovely city of Teuthras, and there, in their folly, snorting battle-might along with their horses, they were despondent in their hearts. For they thought they were quickly going up against the high-gated city of the Trojans; in vain did they tread upon wheat-bearing Mysia. And Heracles came to meet them, shouting to his brave-hearted son, Telephus, fierce and pitiless in battle, who aroused cowardly flight in the Danaans and strove in the front ranks and pleased his father.

In order to explore what attitude the poem shows towards epic values, we must first establish why the poet recounts the Telephus episode, and what role it plays in the poem. Scholars agree that the myth is used paradigmatically, to illustrate the point made in the first surviving lines, rather than being told for its own sake.<sup>18</sup> It is unclear how much more of Telephus’ story might have been told after the papyrus breaks off, but the section we do have demonstrates striking ring-composition. The essential structure of the mythological narrative runs as follows:

<sup>17</sup> The text printed here is that given by Obbink as published in *ZPE* (2006), where he makes various emendations to his original edition. All translations are my own.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. D’Alessio (2006) 21–22; Mayer (2006) 15–16; Obbink (2006) 8; West (2006) 15; Aloni and Iannucci (2007) 208–09; an exception, however, is

Bowie (2010) 151. The use of myth as paradigm to persuade and motivate the listener is a well-established rhetorical technique: for example Phoenix’s use of the Meleager myth at *Il.* 9.529–99 or Achilles’ use of the Niobe myth at *Il.* 24.602–20; see Willcock (1964); Austin (1966); Howie (1995).

- (A) Telephus alone demonstrated exceptional prowess (5–6)
- (B) Description of the battle-scene (6–12)
- (C) Explanation of the back-story: why are the Achaeans in Mysia? (13–17)
- (B) Description of the battle-scene (18–22)
- (A) Telephus alone demonstrated exceptional prowess (23–25)

In addition to the structural ring-composition, we also find the technique operating on a smaller scale: for example, the repetition of ἀμειλίκτος at 11 and 23, and the parallelism of μούνοσ (5) and πρόμαχος (25).<sup>19</sup> The use of ring-composition suggests that the Telephus story is drawing to a close at around the time the fragment gives out, and therefore that the point of the *exemplum* should be clear from the lines we have.<sup>20</sup> The opening lines of the fragment appear to give an answer: while the text is badly damaged, the phrase κακότητα λέγει[ν (3) is clear, as is the striking juxtaposition of φύγειν and φεύγειν (4). The myth is used to reflect on the accusation of cowardice and on what it means to flee in battle, and thus the story of the Achaeans fleeing before Telephus offers an analogue to whatever contemporary event Archilochus describes. The new fragment has therefore been taken by commentators to be a defence or justification of flight, while Barker and Christensen have gone as far as to see the poem as a celebration of flight and a rejection of the Iliadic distaste for retreat in battle.<sup>21</sup> When we examine the new poem in detail, however, the attitude to flight that emerges is hardly a defiant rejection of the epic status quo. Rather, the poem's attitude to flight is extremely ambivalent and flips between two competing forms of discourse.<sup>22</sup> Archilochus goes out of his way to defend the Achaeans from accusations of cowardice; this sense of special pleading serves to affirm rather than subvert the status quo, for his defence rests on the idea that these are special circumstances where the normal rules do not apply. Yet the function of the poem is not simply consolatory, and the defence of the Achaeans is left deliberately incomplete. For, as we shall see, Archilochus sets up the idea that there is no shame in flight only to subtly undermine it through the narrative techniques which he deploys.

The sense of special pleading enters the poem in its opening lines, for the poem as we have it opens with the phrase θεοῦ κρατερῆ[ς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης (2), before presumably using this idea to cast light on what one ought to call cowardice (κακότητα λέγει[ν, 3). Archilochus does not seem to be systematically rejecting the idea that fleeing is cowardly, but rather stressing the divine compulsion that governs this particular instance of flight. The details of his language reinforce this point, for while κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης is a common hexameter formula, found in Hesiod and the Epic Cycle, the dependence of ἀνάγκη on θεοῦ is a much rarer and more striking formulation, unparalleled elsewhere in Archaic poetry.<sup>23</sup> This dependence is unnecessary, for ἀνάγκη usually stands alone as an abstract force with power in its own right, able to operate

<sup>19</sup> [πρό]μαχος is suggested by D'Alessio (2006) 20 (he also offers ἡρειδε[ν τ' ἄ]μαχος as an alternative) based on a new reading of the last three letters, and this reading is accepted by Obbink (2006) 7. West (2006) suggests ἡρειδε[ν μο]ῦνοσ, in which case the ring-composition is still more striking.

<sup>20</sup> Moreover, there is no reason to assume that Archilochus directly alluded to later aspects of Telephus' story, for example his wounding or his guiding of the Achaeans to Troy. While the audience may well have known these stories, as Mayer (2006) 16 points out, there is a limit to how much consolation they provide, for even the most optimistic reading still projects victory far into the future (arguably into the subsequent generation, if we think of the myth that

Telephus' son Eurypylos was killed by Neoptolemus) and in another location.

<sup>21</sup> Barker and Christensen (2006) 15–16.

<sup>22</sup> Scholars have disagreed on whether the poem justifies or criticizes flight: see Obbink (2006) for the former view; Mayer (2006) for the latter. Yet, as I argue below, Archilochus deliberately switches between both strategies, creating a sense of anxiety and indecision for the audience. See also Aloni and Iannucci (2007) 231–32 for the double viewpoint created by the poet.

<sup>23</sup> κρατερῆς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης: Hes. *Thg.* 517; *Cypria fr.* 9.3. The formula is also used by Theog. 1.387; Hdt 1.67.16 (the latter in a hexameter oracle, which suggests it is a conventional formula).

independently of the gods.<sup>24</sup> Archilochus is overloading his forms of supernatural causality, implying that the retreat is not due simply to ἀνάγκη, but still more strongly that it is due to necessity doubled up with divine will: if ἀνάγκη alone can be described as κρατερή, then ἀνάγκη θεοῦ should be even more irresistible. The intensity of this need for flight is then further emphasized by the juxtaposition of φυγεῖν and φεύγειν (4). Hence even before Archilochus introduces the paradigm, we sense his anxiety about flight: far from revelling in a counter-cultural message, the first lines of the fragment try to establish how extreme this particular set of circumstances are, in order to justify why this example of flight should not be viewed as κακότης.

From this defensive beginning, Archilochus then moves into the Telephus myth; yet while superficially this appears a straightforward *exemplum*, on analysis it is in fact handled oddly. The message we are led to expect (and the way most commentators have interpreted the point of the paradigm) is to justify the Achaean flight: ‘it is not cowardly to flee, since even the Achaeans, great men that they were, fled before Telephus’. Yet rather than focusing on the Achaeans, the focus of the paradigm is Telephus himself: καὶ ποτ[ε] μ]οῦνος ἐὼν Τήλεφος Ἀρκα[κίδη]ς / Ἀργείων ἐφόβησε πολὺν στρατ[όν] (5–6). This observation is more than simply a grammatical one, for the focus on Telephus has a significant effect on how a listener interprets the paradigm. Rather than dwelling on the men forced to flee and defending their actions, Archilochus instead focuses on the victor triumphant in battle and describes the mighty deeds he carried out. This is further underscored by the contrast between Telephus, described as μόνος (5), and the Achaeans, who are a πολὺν στρατόν (6), a comparison which further glorifies Telephus as it reminds us that acting alone he put an entire army to flight. The focus on Telephus’ prowess is in tension with the opening *gnômê* defending flight, partly because the audience might see the Achaeans’ behaviour, routed by a single man, as ignominious, but more importantly because Archilochus’ narrative strategy is designed to direct the audience’s emotional attention primarily towards Telephus himself instead of his victims. It leads us to dwell on Telephus’ courage and his impressive achievements, rather than on the defeated Achaeans and the divine compulsion that lies behind their defeat. This is a form of discourse hardly designed to justify or celebrate flight, but rather one reminiscent of a Homeric *aristeia*, where the purpose of focusing on the individual hero is to raise his status in the poem and encourage the audience to admire his brilliance.<sup>25</sup> Thus although Archilochus purportedly introduces the myth in order to support the moral ‘flight need not be cowardice’, he depicts it in a way which reminds the audience of the glory to be gained by putting others to flight rather than fleeing oneself: the paradigm serves to undercut the moral rather than reinforce it.

Archilochus then switches tack once more, reverting to his emphasis on special pleading and on justifying the retreat: the Achaeans are portrayed as impressive warriors despite their flight, called ἄλκιμοι (7) and αἰχμηταί (8). The τόσα clause (ἢ τόσα δὴ μοῖρα θεῶν ἐφόβει, 7) breaks into the middle of this description, as though indicating the poet’s desire to stress how little choice the Achaeans had in fleeing, while the dependence of μοῖρα on θεῶν represents a similar doubling up of causality as the earlier ἀνάγκη θεοῦ (2).<sup>26</sup> But then we are given another picture of Telephus’ impressive prowess, as Archilochus describes Telephus’ slaughter of the Achaeans in the river and on the plain of Mysia (8–10), and the panic-stricken flight of the survivors (10–12): images which perhaps evoke Achilles’ *aristeia* and his slaughter of the Trojans in the

<sup>24</sup> Cf. κρατερὴ δ’ ἐπικείσεται ἀνάγκη: *Il.* 6.458; φεύγοντας ἀνάγκη: *Il.* 11.150; ἀχλύμενοι περ ἀνάγκη / νηῶν ἡμίονοντο: *Il.* 12.178–79.

<sup>25</sup> On the Homeric *aristeia*, see Krischer (1971) 23–74.

<sup>26</sup> μοῖρα θεῶν is found elsewhere in Archaic liter-

ature: cf. *Od.* 3.269, 11.292; *HHAp.* 238; but μοῖρα, like ἀνάγκη, has power in its own right and is more commonly described as acting independently of the gods: for example *Il.* 5.83, 613, 629, 12.116, 13.602, 16.849, 17.478, 672, 18.119, 22.5.

river Xanthus.<sup>27</sup> From Telephus we move once more back to the Achaeans, as Archilochus explains how they came to be fighting in Mysia (13–21). Once more, their abilities are stressed, as we are told they are no ordinary mortals but the ‘sons and brothers of the gods’ (παῖδες τ’ ἄθανάτων καὶ ἀδελφοί, 14), a strategy which again serves to justify flight, for if demi-gods sometimes need to flee, how can mere mortals be condemned for it?<sup>28</sup> Yet even here the presentation is ambiguous. Archilochus tells us of the gladness with which the Achaeans boarded their ships (ἀ]πάσιοι δ’ ἐκ νέας ὠ[κ]υπόρ[ο]υς [ἐκέβαν, 13), yet in context it is unclear whether this gladness refers to the heroic enthusiasm with which they originally set out for Troy or the relief with which they now escape from Telephus. We are told they are ἀπάσιοι immediately after the description of their flight to the seashore, implying that they are glad to survive and escape. Yet as the poem continues, it becomes clear that we are listening to a flashback to the Achaeans’ earlier story, and thus perhaps ἀπάσιοι refers to the zeal with which they initially embarked on their quest for eternal *kleos*. The ambiguity of this line encapsulates Archilochus’ complex attitude to flight, for we find him alluding both to the Achaeans’ original thirst for glory and to their humiliating defeat (κακὴν ... φύζαν, 24) while this sense of confusion is enhanced by the sudden temporal shift. The poem as we have it ends with a return to the glory of Telephus: once again his exceptional status is emphasized ([πρό]μαχος, 25), and we are told of his divine support by his father Heracles (22) and how he impresses his father (πατρὶ χαριζόμενος, 25). Telephus is said to have brought ‘cowardly flight’ (κακὴν ... φύζαν, 24) to the Achaeans, a description which seems deliberately to recall and undermine the opening discussion as to whether flight counts as κακότης. Yet κακὴν too expresses the ambiguity of the poem’s attitude to flight, for we are perhaps encouraged to wonder whether this is Archilochus’ own judgement or focalized through Telephus or the despondent Achaeans.

The poem thus weaves together and alternates two conflicting strands of thought: first, the defensive emphasis on the Achaeans’ lack of choice and their courage despite their retreat; second, the focus on Telephus’ glory, enhanced by the images of his prowess on the battlefield. Commentators on the poem have overlooked the tension within these competing narratives, for logically the two are compatible: the braver and more impressive Telephus, the more reasonable that the Achaeans should retreat before him.<sup>29</sup> Yet by emphasizing Telephus’ glory and his impressive deeds, Archilochus reminds the audience of the desirability of overcoming the enemy, and the glory to be gained by such an *aristeia*. This traditionally heroic morality sits oddly with the idea that flight is unproblematic. The audience’s emotional attention is focused on the achievements of Telephus, not on the noble and brave retreat of the Achaeans; rather than emphasizing Telephus’ power to justify the Achaeans’ retreat, Archilochus tells of Achaean retreat in order to highlight Telephus’ glory. The tension between these two strands is enhanced by Archilochus’ poetic technique, for he repeatedly switches between them, creating an unsettled narrative which echoes the ambiguity in the poem’s broader morality.

<sup>27</sup> Again, it is valid to argue that Archilochus knows the story of the slaughter in the river without knowing of the specific Homeric version. Readers who are more comfortable with a fixed version of the *Iliad* might be interested by the parallelism between νεκῶν κτείνετο (9) and the river’s complaint at *Il.* 21.220 that he is κτεινόμενος νεκέεσσι.

<sup>28</sup> I agree with the interpretation of Bernsdorff (2006), who argues that the ἀδελφοί represent the Achaeans themselves, brothers of the gods in terms of their own familial relationships to immortals.

<sup>29</sup> An exception is the discussion in Aloni and Iannucci (2007) 231–36, who find the conflict between these two strands sufficiently problematic as to suggest that the fragment originally comprised of two separate poems on the Telephus myth: one celebratory, the other consolatory. I find such a radical solution unnecessary: as I argue here, there are positive reasons why the poet might have deliberately created such a conflict. Moreover, the competing strands run together throughout the poem and cannot be neatly separated into two halves.



### III. Flight and heroism in the *Iliad* and in Archilochus

Archilochus' strategy for portraying the Achaeans' defeat, then, is more complex and problematic than is at first apparent. We should not interpret the new poem as a celebration of flight or as a counter-cultural reassessment of the ethics of retreat.<sup>30</sup> In fact, the poem's essential conformity to heroic ethics becomes apparent if we compare Archilochus' stance to attitudes to flight found in the Homeric poems, where, as we shall see, flight is presented in a similarly nuanced manner. Archilochus, then, does not reject Homer when he defends flight, and it is wrong to regard this as ammunition for his 'anti-heroic' outlook. Rather, by reflecting and engaging with the complexities of flight in a heroic world, Archilochus appeals to the cultural authority of epic to add weight to his argument and to evoke the ambiguous discourse on flight which we find in the *Iliad*.

Flight is never unproblematic in the *Iliad*, and there are several examples of characters or the poet himself criticizing the desire to flee. Early in the poem, Agamemnon attempts to test the army's resolve by appearing to advocate a withdrawal from Troy (2.110–41); the subsequent chaos serves to condemn Agamemnon's poor leadership and casts the Achaeans in a negative light for their immediate desire to retreat (2.142–54). Agamemnon also advises flight in Book 9 (17–28), where he is roundly condemned by Diomedes (32–49), and the army's approval of Diomedes (50–51) once again acts as a criticism of Agamemnon's feebleness and poor judgement. A similar pattern occurs in Book 14 (74–102) where Agamemnon suggests flight and Odysseus objects. The association between flight and cowardice is used to drive the warriors on, as when Nestor appeals to the Achaeans to stand firm for the sake of their families and their sense of *aidôs* (15.661–66). Perhaps the most clear-cut reflection on the ethics of flight comes from Odysseus, who muses on the problem of retreat when he finds himself cut off in battle (11.404–10); he concludes that 'it is cowards who abandon the fighting' (οἶδα γὰρ ὅτι κακοὶ μὲν ἀποίχονται πολέμοιο, 108) and recalls the hero's obligation to stand his ground (109–10).

These cases demonstrate the problematic nature of flight within the world of the *Iliad*.<sup>31</sup> Yet as Homerists have argued, we find a more nuanced picture when we examine these examples in more detail; moreover, as we shall see, the attitude which emerges is surprisingly similar to Archilochus'.<sup>32</sup> For a start, one should be cautious about extrapolating general principles from specific situations. Odysseus' stirring condemnation of flight can only be taken as a clear-cut statement of heroic morality if the speech is taken out of context and examined alone, for shortly after this speech Odysseus does indeed retreat from the battle, led away by Menelaus (11.487–88). We are surely not meant to condemn Odysseus for this behaviour: he has shown his courage by his isolated stand and his reluctance to withdraw; moreover he is now wounded and cannot fight much longer (11.456–58). The other Achaeans see rescuing Odysseus as the correct thing to do and do not suggest that he would be wrong to leave the battlefield (11.465–71). However, Odysseus' tactical withdrawal seems in conflict with the 'kill or be killed' morality he espoused earlier, and we should therefore avoid treating this morality as representing an agreed ethical standard within the poem.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, Odysseus himself earlier in the poem shows much less reluctance to flee in battle, withdrawing before Hector despite Diomedes' criticisms (8.92–98).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup> For Archilochus scholars describing flight as 'anti-Iliadic' cf. Seidensticker (1978) 10–11; Barker and Christensen (2006) 17–26: both these articles argue that Archilochus' attitude to flight is closer to that of the *Odyssey* than the *Iliad*.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Barker and Christensen (2006) 24: 'Odysseus, hesitating between fight or flight, discerns the "correct" choice for the *Iliad* and acts accordingly'; Rinon (2008), who argues that flight in the *Iliad* is 'basically an index of cowardice and shame' (97).

<sup>32</sup> On Homeric flight cf., for example, Redfield (1975) 118–19; Cairns (1993) 69–79; Rinon (2008) 97–101.

<sup>33</sup> Rinon (2008) 98 attempts to 'carefully demarcate the line separating flight from retreat' (98), the latter being a less shameful activity. Yet Rinon's own analysis (99–101) demonstrates the difficulty of making this distinction, for in the absence of certain clear signals, such as dropping a shield or turning your back, the difference between flight and retreat may be grounded

The example which best encapsulates the complexities of Homeric flight is the exchange between Diomedes and Nestor in Book 8, when Nestor persuades Diomedes to flee and counters his fear of being called a coward (8.137–56). Here Nestor wisely advises flight, arguing that Diomedes must not attempt to withstand the will of Zeus.<sup>35</sup> We should take Nestor's approval of flight seriously, for his role in the poem is frequently to act as the proponent of accepted morality.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, we know that Nestor's interpretation of Zeus' will is correct, for the poet has told us that Zeus sent a thunderbolt directly in front of Diomedes' chariot in order to force him to withdraw (8.133–36).<sup>37</sup> To persuade Diomedes of the need to retreat, Nestor stresses Zeus' power and reminds Diomedes of the futility of resisting the gods (140–44).<sup>38</sup> Diomedes, despite his reluctance to flee, immediately accepts that Nestor's advice is wise and that he is in the right (ναὶ δὴ ταῦτά γε πάντα γέρον κατὰ μοῖραν ἔειπε, 146). It is presumably to Diomedes' credit both that he recognizes the validity of Nestor's position and does not attempt to go against the will of Zeus, and also that he feels distress at the thought of flight and pays proper heed to his reputation.<sup>39</sup> Indeed, we see the same conflict of emotions in Diomedes' response to Hector's taunts as he contemplates turning to fight and is three times warned by Zeus' thunder: a warning he ultimately heeds (8.167–71). We see a similar blending of elements as in Odysseus' speech: on the one hand, a fear of the consequences of flight, and a belief that flight incurs shame and lays one open to accusations of cowardice; on the other, an awareness of the power of the gods and the futility of trying to go against their will.<sup>40</sup>

When we re-examine the Archilochus poem in the light of Homer, then, we see striking continuities in the values expressed. It is natural, the poet implies, to be concerned about what others will think of you if you withdraw in battle and to worry about incurring the charge of cowardice (κακότητα λέγει[ν, 3); indeed flight remains something problematic (κακὴν ... φύζαν, 24). Nevertheless, if the gods are really against you, divine will is a factor which can explain and justify flight (θεοῦ κρατερῆ[ς ὑπ' ἀνάγκης, 2; μοῖρα θεῶν, 7).<sup>41</sup> Just as Diomedes dwells on the glory that Hector will gain from his flight (*Il.* 8.148–50), and hence acknowledges the desirability of putting others to flight rather than fleeing yourself, so too Archilochus dwells on the glory that Telephus gains from his *aristeia*. Yet just as Nestor explains why Diomedes is not behaving like

as much in the eye of the beholder as it is in any objective criteria (unless made explicit by the poet). In any case, even flight can sometimes be justified: cf. Nestor's advice at 8.139–44 (discussed above), where he advises Diomedes to flee (φόβονδ' ἔχε μόνυχας ἵππους, 139) and does not attempt to mitigate it by presenting it as a more salubrious form of retreat.

<sup>34</sup> It is disputed whether Odysseus fails to hear Diomedes or simply ignores him: see Kirk (1990) p.306 on 97–98. Even if οὐδ' ἐκάκουσε (8.97) means that Odysseus did not hear, rather than wilfully incurring the charge of cowardice, we are still surely meant to contrast his quickness to retreat with Diomedes' courage in rescuing Nestor.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Whitman (1958) 177, who notes that Nestor's words here suggest flight need not always be the unheroic option; see also Cairns (1993) 75, who comments on this passage and others which suggest that 'some did not feel themselves absolutely constrained by such maxims as "it is disgraceful to retreat"'.  
<sup>36</sup> Cf. Primavesi (2000); Roisman (2005) 36–38; Scodel (2008) 142–43.

<sup>37</sup> Fenik (1968) 222 and Andersen (1978) 115 comment on the unusual nature of this action, which

serves to foreground divine will particularly clearly. However, while Zeus' sending of the thunderbolt may be extreme, it is one in a series of interventions by which the gods make their will clear to mortals: see Kelly (2007) 51, n.83. The fact that Zeus' will is made so transparent here adds further weight to Nestor's argument and thus helps to justify the decision to flee.

<sup>38</sup> See Kelly (2007) 51–52 on the persuasive power of Nestor's speech.

<sup>39</sup> See Cairns (1993) 72–74 for an analysis of the factors which motivate Diomedes.

<sup>40</sup> Indeed, Homeric heroes frequently use divine will to justify retreat or flight: cf. Menelaus at 17.97–101, Hector at 16.657–58, Diomedes at 5.817–23, Aeneas (of reluctance to fight Achilles) at 20.98–102. Even Agamemnon's deceptive speech at 2.110–41 uses as its pretext the idea that the gods are against the Achaeans, and the reason that the audience can condemn his speech as the wrong advice is that we know he is dissembling. For analysis of these speeches and their relationship to Homeric norms, see Janko (1992) 159; Gaskin (2001) 159–60; Scodel (2008) 64.

<sup>41</sup> For divine will as a justification for refusal to fight, see Fenik (1968) 164.

a coward by yielding to divine will, so too Archilochus explains that flight need not count as cowardice if divine will is against you. Moreover, by drawing on heroic morality, Archilochus gains authority for the view he espouses. The striking difference between divine will in epic poetry and in real life is its knowability: in the *Iliad* the audience is kept aware of the gods’ true intentions, yet this is also made clear to the characters by mechanisms ranging from portents and omens to direct divine intervention. Adrian Kelly notes that statements in the poem about the ‘mind of Zeus’ (Διὸς νόος) are inevitably followed by a description of Zeus’ will in action, reinforcing the audience’s understanding of the gods’ will and power.<sup>42</sup> Yet in the real world, the will of the gods is something that can only be guessed at and is never securely known: thus when Archilochus claims that the contemporary warriors fled θεοῦ κρατερῆ[ς ὑπ’ ἀνάγκης (2), it begs the question as to how he can know that they fled due to divine will rather than simply cowardice or incompetence. By invoking a genre where the gods’ will is regularly revealed, Archilochus aims to make the reasons for defeat appear more clear-cut and to make his claim of divine hostility more convincing, and the retreat more acceptable.

Nevertheless, Archilochus’ depiction of Telephus’ rout of the Achaeans taps into another epic model – the motif of the hero triumphant in his *aristeia* – and this serves to undercut the audience’s identification with the defeated Achaeans. We see most clearly what Archilochus is doing if we look at alternative poetic strategies for depicting the process of retreat. Homer’s description of Ajax retreating under pressure from the Trojans (*Il.* 11.544–74), for example, is a revealing case-study, for it demonstrates how a poet might choose to present withdrawal in a situation where he wants the audience’s sympathy to remain with this character and where he aims to impress upon the audience the inevitability of the retreat. Ajax’s retreat comes in the broader context of Hector’s routing of the Achaeans: hence the poet potentially faces the problem of how to keep the focus on Ajax’s bravery rather than on the glory Hector gains from defeating him. In order to prevent this, the poet avoids pairing Hector and Ajax – indeed we are explicitly told that Hector avoids joining battle with Ajax (11.540–42). If Ajax had withdrawn before Hector, the audience’s attention might have been drawn to Hector’s prowess rather than remaining with Ajax; by keeping Hector out of the way, the poet has Ajax withdraw before an anonymous group of Trojan warriors, keeping the emotional focus entirely on the Achaean hero. As Ajax begins to withdraw, he is compared to a lion being driven away from his kill by herdsmen (11.548–55). The lion simile reminds us of Ajax’s ferocity and valour; moreover, the poet describes the scene in a way designed to highlight Ajax’s reluctance to flee, making the point of comparison the reluctance with which the hero and lion withdraw, rather than the fact of retreat itself (τετιηότι θυμῶι ... τετιημένον ἦτορ, 555–56).<sup>43</sup> The poet then immediately continues with another simile, comparing Ajax to a donkey (11.558–71). While the simile contains elements of humour, it also emphasizes Ajax’s superiority over the Trojans, who are implicitly insulted by being compared to small boys, so feeble (νηπίη, 561) that they cannot even master a donkey. The poet again stresses the reluctance of Ajax’s retreat: it is made clear that he does not flee in a disorderly panic, but gives ground slowly, with many about-turns (566–68), and even in retreat he is still influential in holding back the Trojans (569–71).<sup>44</sup>

Thus Homer uses a variety of narrative techniques to retain his audience’s focus on Ajax and to ensure that they remain impressed with his courage and strength. Despite Ajax’s retreat, he remains the emotional focus of the passage, and the Trojans, for all that they are the victors, appear inferior. The contrast between Archilochus’ poem and this passage highlights how problematic Archilochus’ portrayal of Telephus is if we accept that the poem’s role is simply consolatory. It also demonstrates that in the context of a defeat, boosting the status of one’s opponent is liable to

<sup>42</sup> Kelly (2007) 173.

<sup>43</sup> For the withdrawal of the hero as a conventional moment for similes, cf. Scott (1974) 41–42. For the use

of lions in similes, see Clarke (1995) 145–52.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Hainsworth (1993) on 558–62.

detract from one's glory rather than add to it; rather, the hero stands out as more impressive if no rival is present to steal his thunder.<sup>45</sup> In fact, Archilochus' portrayal of the Achaeans, despite his repeated reminders that they are brave men with fate against them, is much closer to Homer's portrayal of the panicked Trojans as they rush towards their city (*Il.* 21.606–07):

τόφρ' ἄλλοι Τρῶες πεφοβημένοι ἦλθον ὀμίλῳι  
ἀσπᾶσιοι προτὶ ἄστυ, πόλις δ' ἔμπλητο ἀλέντων.

Then the rest of the Trojans came rushing in in a crowd, panic-stricken and glad to reach the city, and the city was filled with them as they crowded together.

Like Archilochus' Achaeans, the Trojans are disorderly, frightened and indistinguishable from one another. Archilochus describes the Greeks as fleeing 'headlong' (προ]τροπάδην, 12), conveying a similar tone of hasty panic: an effect used by Homer in *Iliad* 16, when he anticipates the rout of the Trojans before Patroclus (303–05):

οὐ γάρ πώ τι Τρῶες ἀρηϊφίλων ὑπ' Ἀχαιῶν  
προτροπάδην φοβέοντο μελαινάων ἀπὸ νηῶν,  
ἀλλ' ἔτ' ἄρ' ἀνθίσταντο, νεῶν δ' ὑπόεικον ἀνάγκη.

For the Trojans had not yet fled headlong before the warlike Achaeans, away from the black ships; they still stood their ground, but withdrew from the ships by necessity.

Again, we need not commit to the idea that Archilochus is intentionally evoking either of these passages; it is sufficient to argue that this is a poetically effective way to portray a rout and perhaps one he was familiar with from depictions of battle-scenes. In the Homeric lines, the description of the panicked Trojans is part of the way in which Achilles' *aristeia* is portrayed as exceptional; so too in Archilochus the disorderly flight of the Achaeans is set against the image of Telephus magnificent in victory.

The new Archilochus poem should be seen, therefore, not as rejecting or questioning the values of heroic epic, but as engaging with a *longstanding* concern about the fraught issue of withdrawal in battle. The *Iliad* not only engages with this debate, but does so in strikingly similar terms. Archilochus draws on traditional heroic themes and questions, and he uses the story of Telephus not to re-evaluate the values of epic for his own time, but to gain the cultural authority of epic and to engage with an existing ambiguity about flight in battle. We see a similar engagement with this debate elsewhere in Archilochus' poetry: even in the shield poem (*fr.* 5 W), which displays a far more flippant and humorous attitude to flight than the new fragment, the poet is careful to note that he was reluctant to drop his shield (κάλλιπον οὐκ ἐθέλων, 5.2 W).<sup>46</sup> We also find these themes in *Adesp. iamb.* 38, a poem attributed to Archilochus by Lobel and whose similarity to the new poem makes his authorship more likely (5–11).<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Conversely, Homeric heroes do talk up the prowess of an opponent they succeed in beating: *cf.* Nestor on Ereuthalion (*Il.* 7.136–55) or the way the poet emphasizes the power of Pandarus and Aeneas, making Sthenelus suggest flight (*Il.* 5.241–50). In this instance, the importance of the defeated party gives glory to the victor; by implication perhaps being defeated by a glorious opponent risks giving him too much *kleos*.

<sup>46</sup> Obbink (2005) 20–21 suggests that the new poem may have formed part of a continuous poem with *fr.* 5 W, but this seems unlikely to me. The shield poem

seems much more flippant and provocative in tone and the speaker's reluctance at dropping his shield is immediately countered by defiance, while the new poem, as argued above, demonstrates much more anxiety about flight. In addition, the existence of other fragments dealing with flight and battle (in particular *Adesp. iamb.* 38, but possibly also *frs* 88, 91, 94 W) suggests that this is a theme Archilochus dealt with regularly.

<sup>47</sup> *Cf.* West (2006) 12. I print here West's text with his supplements.

καὶ τὸ μὲν φυγεῖν ὅταν δη[ χρεώ τις, οἷα καὶ τότε  
 ἀνδράϊν κείνοισ χολωθει[ς θεὸς ἐπώτρυνε στρατόν  
 δυσμενέων κομηῆτα παιδ[ων, - - - x - - -  
 οὔ σε τοῦτ’ ἤϊσχυνεν οὐδὲ ν[έμεσίς ἐστιν, ἀπίδα  
 ὡς ἀπ’ εὐεργέα τινάζαο ἐτρ[άπησ x - - -  
 καὶ γὰρ ἀλκιμωτέροισ σέο κατα[λαβόντα δείματα  
 ταῦτ’ ἐπιβόλη[ς]ε· θεοὺς γὰρ οὐκ ἐνίκ[ησεν βροτόσ·

Fleeing when [there is need, as at that time] angry with those men [the god urged on the army] of the enemy, o long-haired boy ... This did not disgrace you, and nor [is there any resentment] that you shook off your well-wrought [shield] and [fled]. These fears have [caught] and mastered braver men than you. For [a mortal] cannot conquer the gods.

Despite the fragmentary nature of the text, the poet clearly takes a similar stance to that outlined by the new fragment: he stresses the power of the gods and the futility of resisting them (θεοὺς γὰρ οὐκ ἐνίκ[ησεν βροτόσ, 11) and uses this to justify a retreat in battle. Yet the fact that the addressee needs reassuring that he has not been disgraced (8) reminds us of the problematic nature of flight and the natural concern that by retreating one becomes vulnerable to accusations of cowardice. This poem, therefore, like the new fragment, juggles the need to retreat with the importance of bravery in battle; as we have seen, this tension also pervades the *Iliad* and seems to be an established problem in heroic ethics.

#### IV. Breaking with Homer: Archilochus the anti-hero

It is therefore wrong to read the new Archilochus as a piece of evidence for the poet’s subversion of epic values; rather, the poem shows a great deal of continuity with heroic morality. Yet it is also wrong to overlook the differences between Archilochus and Homer. For in its use of epic language and values, the poem also points to how it falls short of the world of epic. By evoking the Trojan War, and the morality associated with the heroic age, Archilochus sets up associations in his audience’s mind, yet these evocations demonstrate the gulf between the heroic conflicts of old and the world Archilochus in fact describes, creating a humorous and acerbic tone typical of Archilochus’ work.

The inglorious nature of Archilochus’ world is encapsulated by his choice of the Telephus myth, and it is this that explains the choice of Telephus rather than any other retreat during the Trojan War. In the retreats of the Achaeans in the *Iliad*, Zeus’s will is temporarily against the Achaeans, but the audience knows that this is part of a wider picture and that they will eventually be successful. Despite their setbacks, divine will ultimately favours the Achaeans and their campaign will be a great and glorious one which will bring them eternal *kleos*. The crucial fact about the Telephus myth, however, is that the Achaeans are in the wrong place, a point that Archilochus makes explicit several times during the poem.<sup>48</sup> We are reminded that the Achaean expedition is against Troy (Ἴλιον εἰς ἱερὴν ἦγε μαχηομένω[ς, 15); Archilochus then returns to the topic in order to further emphasize the Achaeans’ folly. Not only are they in error, having mistaken Mysia for Troy (φ[άντω γὰρ ὑψίπυλον Τρώων πόλιν εἰς[αναβαίνειν, 20), but the poet also stresses that their expedition to Mysia is futile in its own right (μ[ά]την δ’ ἐπάτεον Μυσίδα πυροφόρ[ω, 21) and explicitly criticizes the Achaeans for their folly (ἀφρ[αδί]η, 19). Thus the Achaeans’ bravery and Telephus’ exceptional heroism are set against the absurdity that the battle being fought is one which was never meant to happen, while the references to divine will only confirm this further.

<sup>48</sup> Thus whether or not Archilochus went on to tell the myth of Telephus’ wounding is irrelevant, for the Achaeans still had to return to Greece in disgrace, so

Telephus’ wounding does not affect the broader point about the mistaken nature of the Argive campaign: see Mayer (2006) 16–17.

Read in this light, the Homeric echoes take on further resonance, for if we regard them as associated with typical Trojan-War poetry, they serve to remind the audience of the mistake the Achaeans are making: many of the formulaic details (the ‘swift ships’ (νεᾶς ὠ[κ]υπόρ[ο]υς, 13), the ‘much-resounding sea’ (θῆγα πολυφλοῖςβοῖ[ο] θαλάσσης, 10)) are those associated with heroic battles and the Trojan War, as are the ‘well-greaved Achaeans’ themselves, yet these details serve to exemplify the Achaeans’ confusion, as the Achaeans believe themselves to be fighting the Trojan War (φ]άντο γὰρ ὑπίπυλον Τρώων πόλιν εἰς[αναβαίνειν, 20) when they are fighting quite another, and less glorious, battle. Subtle details in the poem’s language highlight this theme of mistaken identity and the futility of the battle they are actually fighting. For example, lines 9–10 describe the cramming of the river and the plain with the corpses of the Achaeans: πιπτόντων νεκῶν στείνετο καὶ [πεδῖον / Μύσιον. In the *Iliad*, the πεδῖον is rarely qualified as the plain of Troy, but nearly always left unidentified: since the battle is fought at Troy, there is no need for the poet to clarify which plain he means.<sup>49</sup> The line is a particularly evocative one, for the slaughter in the river may well remind the audience of the myth of Achilles’ *aristeia* at Troy, yet this image of heroic slaughter is then qualified in the following line with Μύσιον. The enjambement adds to the sense of anticipation followed by bathos, while the description of the plain as Mysian again emphasizes the mistake the Achaeans are making and the degree to which they are fighting the wrong war.

This failure to live up to the world of the heroes is also evoked by the couplet 18–19, which describes the Achaeans first as fierce and eager for battle and then as despondent and foolish (ἔ]νθα [μ]έγος πνειόντες ὁμῶς αὐτοῖ τε καὶ ἵπποι / ἀφρ[αδί]ηι μέγλωσ θυμὸν ἀκηχέ[δατο·, 18–19). Since the Achaeans do not appear to have recognized their mistake (they are suffering from ἀφραδίη), they are presumably despondent because of their humiliating defeat at the hands of a single man.<sup>50</sup> The couplet therefore evokes the absurd speed of the Achaeans’ turnaround from fierce warriors ready for battle in 18 to despondent defeated men in 19. Far from the long drawn-out retreats of the Achaeans in the *Iliad*, these warriors seem to put up ludicrously little defence, as Archilochus tells the story in such a way as to encourage us to view them as in retreat only moments after their proud advance. West’s supplement at the end of line 18, if correct, adds a further layer of humour: αὐτοῖ τε καὶ ἵπποι.<sup>51</sup> The breathing of *menos* (‘battle-might’) is a common Homeric formula to indicate eagerness for battle and usually evokes the fearsome nature of the warriors.<sup>52</sup> Yet when these ferocious warriors are described as behaving like their own horses, the effect is to undercut humorously the previous epic grandeur. While horses certainly snort, the sense in which they do so is surely very different from the image of the Homeric warrior ‘breathing battle-might’, and comparing the fierce warriors to their own snorting horses portrays them in a somewhat comic light.<sup>53</sup> Thus the couplet (as printed) takes us from an image

<sup>49</sup> The only times when the πεδῖον is qualified as referring specifically to the plain of Troy are πεδῖον τὸ Τρωϊκόν, *Il.* 10.11; πεδῖον Ἰλῆϊον, *Il.* 21.558; Τρωϊκόν ἄμ πεδῖον, *Il.* 23.464. In the few other instances where πεδῖον is qualified, it is to refer to a plain other than the one at Troy (cf. πεδῖον τὸ Ἀλῆϊον, *Il.* 6.201), while πεδῖον without qualification is used dozens of times to indicate the plain of Troy. πεδῖον can of course simply mean a plain, as in the *Odysssey*, and one might imagine that in Theban epic πεδῖον could have been used without qualification to indicate the plain of Thebes. Yet here the identification of the πεδῖον serves to remind the audience that the Achaeans are not where they think, thus using formulaic language to highlight one of the poem’s main themes.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Obbink (2006) 8.

<sup>51</sup> αὐτοῖ τε καὶ ἵπποι is a hexameter formula: West (2006) 14 cites *Il.* 13.684 and 17.644.

<sup>52</sup> For warriors ‘breathing *menos*’, cf. *Il.* 2.536, 3.8, 11.508, 24.364; *Od.* 22.203. In all cases the formula evokes the warriors’ ferocity and their commitment to battle: most famously at *Il.* 3.8 where the Achaeans’ breathing of *menos* is part of their discipline, also emphasized by their silence (3.8) and their resolution to stand by their comrades, and contrasted with the Trojans’ noisiness and disorder.

<sup>53</sup> West (2006) 14 cites Aesch. *Sept.* 393 (ἵππος χαλινῶν ὡς καταθμαιῶν μένει) as a parallel for horses snorting *menos*, but it is the subversion of the epic formula which makes Archilochus’ usage humorous rather than grand. μένος πνειόντες is a phrase commonly associated with humans behaving in a dignified and ferocious way; conversely καταθμαιῶν indicates noisy panting or snorting, and therefore better encapsulates the snorting noises made by the energetic horse.

of epic grandeur and ferocity, through to a description which encourages us to view these fierce warriors in a wry and humorous light, and finally to the embarrassingly swift reversal of their fortunes.

Even the mythological world which Archilochus describes, then, falls short of our expectations of grandeur, for he is at pains to stress that while the Achaeans believe themselves to be fighting the glorious Trojan War, they are in fact embroiled in a very different battle, and one which stands out for the fact that it was never meant to happen (μ[ά]την, 21). Although the Battle of Mysia is part of the epic cycle (and hence part of the glorious heroic world), it stands out for being a battle fought in error, by a group of heroes who believe themselves to be besieging an entirely different city. This raises further questions about the paradeigmatic function of the myth: for while it is introduced simply as an *exemplum* for flight in battle, the problematic nature of the battle in the myth may give it further resonance. While we cannot know the details of the contemporary situation Archilochus alludes to, it is tempting to conclude that his choice of the Telephus myth is designed to cast aspersions on a contemporary war.<sup>54</sup> For both in choosing the Telephus story rather than the battles at Troy itself and in the strategies he uses to present the myth, Archilochus presents a paradigm of a mistaken and embarrassing campaign, and a battle fought for the wrong reasons. Moreover, by portraying the Achaeans as convinced that they are participating in the Trojan War, yet foolishly mistaken in that assumption, the poet perhaps undercuts and pokes fun at his own use of Homeric material. For, as he implies, the contemporary soldiers who compare themselves to the great Achaean heroes of old may be as foolish and mistaken as the Achaeans who mistook Mysia for Troy.

## V. Conclusion

A close examination of the new Archilochus, and similar passages in Homeric epic, demonstrates that reading Archilochus as a straightforward subverter or affirmer of epic values is an oversimplification both of Archilochus' poetry and of Homer's. The new Archilochus fragment presents a highly complex and ambivalent portrayal of flight: one which attempts to defend it by stressing the inevitability of yielding to divine will, yet which also recognizes the potential loss of face involved and the desirability of being the conqueror rather than the conquered. On analysis, this attitude to flight is remarkably similar to that portrayed in the *Iliad*, where flight is never unproblematic but is nevertheless regarded as the appropriate option when the gods are against you. Thus Archilochus not only uses a paradigm which evokes heroic epic, but he does so in a way which fundamentally conforms to epic values.

However, Archilochus also seeks to point out the discontinuity between the great and glorious world of Homer and the world he describes: the Achaeans' battle in Mysia is an embarrassing mistake, not part of a campaign which will bring eternal glory. The Achaeans' conviction that they are fighting the real Trojan War also adds to this sense of a degraded world, where aspirations to behave like true epic heroes inevitably fall short. Within what appears to be a consolatory poem, we therefore find elements of mockery and abuse, as the contemporary campaign is judged to be more like a Mysia than a Troy, and those who support it are as deluded as the Achaeans in Mysia. Thus while the essential values of the poem are those of epic, the use of these values confirms the gulf between the grand world of epic and the embarrassing battle which Archilochus describes. Archilochus evokes heroic morality in order to undercut its applicability: while it is true that the Achaeans are right to flee since the gods are against them, we are also reminded of their un-Iliadic folly for being in Mysia in the first place. The Achaeans are fated to withdraw not because of a grand plan of Zeus, but because they have foolishly mistaken Mysia

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Mayer (2006) 17.

for Troy. This discontinuity between Archilochus and epic therefore adds further force to the poem's central point: fleeing may not be dishonourable if the gods will it, but it is also only common sense for men fighting the wrong war. Thus the new fragment helps us to reassess the traditional dichotomy between Archilochus the subverter and Archilochus the follower of Homer, by demonstrating the subtlety and variety in Archilochus' use of epic material, and the nuanced use Archilochus makes of epic in order to achieve his own poetic goals.

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