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IMMORTAL ACHILLES*

During the early archaic period, there was considerable interest in the heroic past and the acts of mythical ancestors, especially as embodied in epic. In particular, there are a number of archaic myths dealing with attempts to evade death and to gain immortality, mostly unsuccessful. All Greek heroes are descended from gods: having at least one god (or goddess) somewhere in the family tree is a prerequisite for achieving anything worthy of note. And in a few heroes, this sliver of divinity may be turned into full-blown immortality. It is a recurring theme in Greek myth, therefore, that there is a narrow window of possibility for a hero to escape his mortal status and not have to die. Behind such myths lies the fiction that, in a past age, immortality had been attainable; the heroes of the past might not have been immortalized often, but the chance had been there. This was contrasted with the present duller age, in which immortality was out of reach.

The interest which this possibility of immortality evoked is also evinced in the continuing fascination shown throughout the archaic period with the no-man's-land between life and death, and the corresponding increase in the number and scale of hero-cults throughout the archaic period. In the archaic period, myths in which a mortal hero (or heroine) becomes immortal are fairly rare; hero-cult, on the

* The following translations have been used: from the *Iliad*: R. Lattimore (trans.), *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago, IL, 1951); from the *Odyssey*: R. Lattimore (trans.), *The Odyssey of Homer* (Chicago, IL, 1967); from the Epic Cycle: M. L. West (ed. and trans.), *Greek Epic Fragments* (Cambridge, MA, 2003); from Diodorus Siculus: C. H. Oldfather (trans.), *Diodorus Siculus. Library of History, Vol. II. Books 2.35–4.58* (Cambridge, MA, 1935); from Apollodorus: J. G. Frazer (ed. and trans.), *Apollodorus. The Library, vol. II* (Cambridge, MA, 1921); from Hesiod and the *Homeric Hymns*: G. Most (ed. and trans.), *Hesiod. The Shield, Catalogue of Women, Other Fragments* (Cambridge, MA, 2007); from Lucian: M. D. MacLeod (trans.), *Lucian. Dialogues of the Dead, Dialogues of the Sea-Gods, Dialogues of the Gods, Dialogues of the Courtesans* (Cambridge, MA, 1961); from Strabo: H. L. Jones (trans.), *Strabo. Geography*, 8 vols (Cambridge, MA, 1917–32); from Philostratus: J. Rusten and J. König (eds. and trans.) *Philostratus. Heroicus, Gymnasticus, Discourses 1 and 2* (Cambridge, MA, 2014). Translations from Arrian are my own. I am grateful to audiences in Sydney and Wellington for helpful discussion, and to Jeff Tatum and the anonymous reader for their constructive comments.

other hand, is far more common. For the purposes of this article, 'immortalization' refers to the immortalization of a hero according to mythical narrative, rather than cult. 'Heroization' refers to the worship of a hero or heroine in cult, a process which is often independent of any myths which may be attached to his or her name. Mythical immortalization and heroization in cult have in common that they are both tools for thinking about the evasion of death and its consequences, yet the relationship between the two is far from straightforward. It might be expected *a priori* that an immortalized hero would be a likely candidate for cult, and that, on a broader scale, heroization and immortalization would place the hero in much the same situation. In fact, however, heroization and immortalization are different in nature and purpose, and, as far as those heroes who are both immortalized and heroized are concerned, myth and cult do not dovetail neatly one into the other. In this article I discuss the differing nature of the immortality belonging to each type of hero, and the ways in which their immortalities complement and contradict each other. Against this background, I will consider the fate of Achilles, a hero for whom the death-related elements of his myth interact with the salient characteristics of his afterlives to form a complex exploration of the state of semi-mortality which is inherent in many heroes and monsters, but rarely laid out in such detail.

I. Achilles' death and immortalization

It would seem, on the face of it, that Achilles is a prime candidate for immortality: not only does he have the requisite divine ancestry and patronage but he is also an exceptional fighter, far above others, and he does not have the betraying taint of mortal stupidity that is so often the downfall of heroes when immortality is – almost – within their grasp.[1] But, of course, it is fundamental to the myth of Achilles, as we are most familiar with it, that he will die at Troy. In fact, it is probably true to say that there is no other Greek hero whose death so markedly shapes his life: when Achilles enters the war, 'he is not only

[1] D. Burton, *The Search for Immortality in Archaic Greek Myth* (PhD thesis, University of London, 1997), 118–20; C. Sourvinou-Inwood, 'Crime and Punishment: Tityos, Tantalos and Sisyphos in Odyssey 11', *BICS* 33 (1986), 44; E. Vermeule, *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley, CA, 1979), 133.

risking his life, like all the others, he will be certain to *lose* it'.[2] The whole tenor of the *Iliad* is centred on this premise, and Achilles' character and actions gain much of their impact from it. This impact, of course, stems from the fact that he is the only character in the *Iliad* – the only hero in the Trojan War – who actually knows, for certain, in advance, that he will not return home. Moreover, it is a deliberate choice on his part:

> μήτηρ γάρ τέ μέ φησι θεὰ Θέτις ἀργυρόπεζα
> διχθαδίας κῆρας φερέμεν θανάτοιο τέλος δέ.
> εἰ μέν κ' αὖθι μένων Τρώων πόλιν ἀμφιμάχωμαι,
> ὤλετο μέν μοι νόστος, ἀτὰρ κλέος ἄφθιτον ἔσται·
> εἰ δέ κεν οἴκαδ' ἵκωμι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,
> ὤλετό μοι κλέος ἐσθλόν, ἐπὶ δηρὸν δέ μοι αἰὼν
> ἔσσεται, οὐδέ κέ μ' ὦκα τέλος θανάτοιο κιχείη.
>
> *For my mother Thetis the goddess of the silver feet tells me*
> *I carry two sorts of destiny toward the day of my death. Either,*
> *if I stay here and fight beside the city of the Trojans,*
> *my return home is gone, but my glory shall be everlasting;*
> *but if I return home to the beloved land of my fathers,*
> *the excellence of my glory is gone, but there will be a long life*
> *left for me, and my end in death will not come to me quickly.*
>
> (Hom. *Il.* 9.410–16)

The famous choice, between a short and glorious life and a long and obscure one, has thus been made before the start of the epic, and Achilles' fate is already sealed. We are frequently reminded of the fact that Achilles must die – Achilles predicts it, Thetis refers to it, even Achilles' horses warn of it, and much of the structure of the *Iliad* depends on it[3] – and that his actions and choices in the course of the *Iliad* lead this death closer. Most clearly marked in this respect is the death of Hector. As Achilles declares his intention to avenge Patroclus in Book 18, Thetis warns Achilles of the consequences:

> ὠκύμορος δή μοι τέκος ἔσσεαι, οἷ' ἀγορεύεις·
> αὐτίκα γάρ τοι ἔπειτα μεθ' Ἕκτορα πότμος ἑτοῖμος.

[2] O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings. The Shaping of the Iliad* (Oxford, 1992), 197, emphasis in original.

[3] Achilles predicts it: see above. Thetis refers to it: e.g. Hom. *Il.* 18.95–6. Achilles' horses know it: *Il.* 19.404–17. On Achilles' death and the structure of the *Iliad*, see in particular Taplin (n. 2); J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford, 1980), 73–6.

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Then I must lose you soon, my child, by what you are saying,
since it is decreed your death must come soon after Hector's.
(Hom. *Il.* 18.95–6)

And Achilles accepts them:

αὐτίκα τεθναίην...
νῦν δ' εἶμ' ὄφρα φίλης κεφαλῆς ὀλετῆρα κιχείω
Ἕκτορα· κῆρα δ' ἐγὼ τότε δέξομαι ὁππότε κεν δὴ
Ζεὺς ἐθέλῃ τελέσαι ἠδ' ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι...
μὴ δέ μ' ἔρυκε μάχης φιλέουσά περ· οὐδέ με πείσεις.

I must die soon, then...
Now I shall go, to overtake that killer of a dear life,
Hector; then I will accept my own death, at whatever
time Zeus wishes to bring it about, and the other immortals...
Do not
hold me back from the fight, though you love me. You will not persuade me.
(Hom. *Il.* 18.98, 114–16, 126)

And he appears prominently among the other dead in Hades in both *Odyssey* 11 and 24, where his burial is described at length.[4]

This progression towards death is deeply rooted not only in the *Iliad* but in Achilles' mythical narrative more generally. There are a series of episodes, some better preserved in the tradition than others, in which Achilles is told that some action, usually killing someone, will cause or hasten his own death.[5] Inevitably, he kills them, sometimes with full understanding of the consequences (Hector, for example), sometimes unknowingly. An example of the latter is Tennes, in one version a son of Apollo, about whom Thetis not only warns Achilles but also sends a servant to remind him: the servant fails, Achilles kills Tennes, Achilles realizes his mistake and kills the servant as well, and Apollo eventually takes his revenge.[6] Similar conditions surround the deaths of Hector and Memnon (though these

[4] Hom. *Od.* 11.467–540; 24.15–97. A poem by Stesichoros suviving only in fragments may have recounted the death and burial of Achilles; see R. Garner, 'Achilles in Locri: *P. Oxy.* 3876 frr. 37–77', *ZPE* 96 (1993), 153–65.

[5] J. S. Burgess, *The Death and Afterlife of Achilles* (Baltimore, MD, 2009), ch. 1 *passim*, esp. p. 9.

[6] Apollod. *Epit.* 3.25–6; Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 28 (297d–f); Lyk. 232–42 with Σ Lyk. 232; the latter also presents Tennes as son of Apollo; in the others Tennes is usually a son of Cycnus, but the link to Achilles' death is still present. See T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore, MD, 1993), 591–2, for discussion.

may of course be related): Thetis warns him of the consequences of killing each of them.[7]

As is clear from both the Tennes and Hector episodes, Thetis' words and actions not only underline the certainty of Achilles' death but also act as a kind of counterweight to it. Even as she demonstrates her awareness of his fate, her actions are dedicated to preserving his life. She attempts to prevent him from fighting at Troy in the first place, by packing him off and hiding him at Skyros.[8] She tries to circumvent fate by averting the death of Tennes. She warns him – successfully, for once – not to be the first off the ships at Troy.[9] She gives him armour made by Hephaestus – in the *Iliad* she gives him two sets of it, in fact, since Hector takes the first set from Patroclus[10] – and, in later versions, she dips him in the river Styx to make him invulnerable.[11] As Achilles' death draws nearer and his options narrow down, so Thetis' actions move from attempts to change his fate to attempts simply to postpone it a little, and to make sure it is glorious. But, in the *Iliad* at least, she knows that she cannot save him.[12]

How, then, do we reconcile this absolute commitment to death with the *Aithiopis*, in Proclus' summary of which, after the death of Achilles, we find the following:

[7] Hector: *Il.* 18.94–6; see Taplin (n. 2), 197–8. Memnon: Proclus' summary of the *Aithiopis* states that, when Memnon arrives, καὶ Θέτις τῷ παιδὶ τὰ κατὰ τὸν Μέμνονα προλέγει ('Thetis prophesies to her son about the encounter with Memnon'). Although the content of Thetis' speech is unclear (and it is not referenced elsewhere), it is often taken, as in West's translation above, as a prophecy about Achilles' death: see M. W. Edwards, *The Iliad. A Commentary, Vol. V. Books 17–20* (Cambridge, 1991), at 18.95–6, for references and discussion. For the neoanalytic debate over the *Aethiopis*' influence on the *Iliad*, see W. Kullmann, 'Motif and Source Research: Neoanalysis, Homer, and Cyclic Epic', in M. Fantuzzi and C. Tsigalis (eds.), *The Greek Epic Cycle and Its Ancient Reception. A Companion* (Cambridge, 2015), 108–25; A. Rengakos, '*Aethiopis*', in Fantuzzi and Tsigalis (this n.), 315–17; B. Currie, 'Homer and the Early Epic Tradition', in M. J. Clarke, B. Currie, and R. O. A. M. Lyne (eds.), *Epic Interactions. Perspectives on Homer, Virgil and the Epic Tradition* (Oxford, 2006), 23–36. For the *Iliad* as earlier, see M. L. West, *The Epic Cycle. A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics* (Oxford, 2013), 41–2, 145–56.

[8] For the sources, see Gantz (n. 6), 581. On the controversial attribution of the story to the *Kypria*, see B. Currie, '*Cypria*', in Fantuzzi and Tsigalis (n. 7), 288–91; West (n. 7), 41, 104.

[9] Apollod. *Epit.* 3.29.

[10] On the second set, see Hom. *Il.* 18.127–44, etc.; as Homeric innovation, see Kullmann (n. 7), 113–14. On the fhe first set: see the discussion by Edwards (n. 70) at *Il.* 18.84–5.

[11] Stat. *Achil.* 1.133–4, 268–70, 480–1. The tradition is almost certainly earlier: see the discussion in Burgess (n. 5), 9–11.

[12] The motif is introduced at an early stage: Hom. *Il.* 1.415–18, 1.505–6. The ghost of Patroclus informs us that she has given Achilles a golden urn to hold the ashes of them both: *Il.* 23.91–2. See Taplin (n. 2), 194–6; Burgess (n. 5), 105.

καὶ Θέτις ἀφικομένη σὺν Μούσαις καὶ ταῖς ἀδελφαῖς θρηνεῖ τὸν παῖδα· καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐκ τῆς πυρᾶς ἡ Θέτις ἀναρπάσασα τὸν παῖδα εἰς τὴν Λευκὴν νῆσον διακομίζει. οἱ δὲ Ἀχαιοὶ τὸν τάφον χώσαντες ἀγῶνα τιθέασι.

Thetis comes with the Muses and her sisters, and laments her son. And presently Thetis snatches her son from the pyre and conveys him to the White Island. When the Achaeans have raised the grave mound, they organize an athletic contest.

(Arctinus, *Aithiopis*[13])

Jonathan Burgess has argued persuasively that this version in which Achilles is swept off to a better place may actually predate the Homeric epics, since almost every source that places Achilles anywhere after death agrees that he should be in a paradisical afterlife, and not in Hades.[14] Pindar places him on the 'shining island' (φαεννὰν...νᾶσον) in *Nemean Ode* 4, and on the Isle of the Blessed (μακάρων νᾶσος) in *Olympian Ode* 2; Ibycus and Simonides put him in Elysium, Euripides on the 'white shore' (λευκὰν ἀκτάν).[15] In fact, what Denys Page described as 'that eccentric legend' seems rather to be the mainstream version.[16]

The next question is exactly what Achilles is being granted in the *Aithiopis*. What precisely is Thetis doing here? Is the White Island to be seen as a form of immortalization, or just a rather nicer bit of Hades? And how can we tell the difference? According to mythical narrative, a hero who actually makes it and becomes immortal lives the life of the gods, with the gods, as if he were a god himself – but a circumscribed one. His mortality is completely lost in the process of immortalization. And this is clear from the ways in which he – or, more rarely, she – becomes immortal. One common way is by bodily abduction, usually to Olympus – Ganymede carried off by Zeus, Tithonus by Eos – but this is not necessarily always the case: Apollo, rescuing Croesus from the flames, takes him to the land of the Hyperboreans.[17] A parallel can be drawn with the transition undergone by figures, animals, and various objects turned to stars; Orion is just one of many.[18]

[13] Summary from Procl. *Chrest.*

[14] Burgess (n. 5), 41.

[15] Pind. *Nem.* 4.49–50; Pind. *Ol.* 2.70–1; Ibyc. fr. 291 = Simon. fr. 558; Eur. *IT* 435–8.

[16] D. L. Page, *Sappho and Alcaeus* (Oxford, 1955), 283. We should not make too much of the difference between these various places; they serve the same purpose and are more or less interchangeable. Note the similarity between Hom. *Od.* 4.564–9, Hes. *Op.* 167–73, and Pind. *Ol.* 2.68–80; see further Burgess (n. 5), 108–10; Vermeule (n. 1), 72 with n. 58; H. Hommel, *Der Gott Achilleus* (Heidelberg, 1980), 18.

[17] Bacchyl. 3.58–62.

[18] See Hyg. *Fab.*; Eratosth. *[Cat.]*.

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Alternatively, immortality may be gained by purifying elements, such as fire and water: Demeter anoints Demophoon with ambrosia and bakes him in the hearth fire; Asclepius is struck by the lightning bolt; Ino Leukothea dives into the sea.[19] Note that this is not just ordinary fire, but a lightning bolt, or fire and ambrosia; not just ordinary water, but the whole sea – to purify someone of their mortality takes something beyond the everyday. Or one might eat or drink something, the elusive herb of immortality which Glaucus the fisherman eats, and which Tydeus misses out on.[20]

Although the means and motivations for attaining immortality are variable, some common factors may be identified. One is that the immortality bestowed upon heroes is a corporeal immortality: none of these varied immortalizations leaves a body. Usually the hero is immortalized body and soul. Immortality of this kind is based on the swift removal of their bodies at the moment of death, as in the case of Memnon, or before it, as in the case of Ganymede, to a place where their wounds (if any) can be healed, and their death reversed and transmuted to immortality, where they can spin out their lives in utopian peace and plenty, enjoying the rewards of their fame and labour (or beauty) far from the toil and strife of the world in which those rewards were gained. If Ganymede is taken to Olympus κάλλεος εἵνεκα ('on account of his beauty'), as Homer tells us, he is unlikely to have left a body mouldering in the grave.[21] When Zeus abducts Ganymede, Tros notices that his son is physically missing; and in Diodorus' account of Heracles' death and apotheosis, when Heracles' pyre has burnt out, his friends find 'not a single bone anywhere' and therefore assume that he has been immortalized.[22] The immortalized hero has an immortalized body.

[19] Demophoon: *Hom. Hymn. Dem.* 231–55; for further sources, see Gantz (n. 6), 65–6. Cf. the myth of Thetis and Achilleus: Gantz (n. 6), 230–1; C. Mackie, 'Achilles in Fire', *CQ* 48 (1988), 329–38. Asclepius struck by lightning: Gantz (n. 6), 91–2; deified, Paus. 2.26.1; Hyg. *Fab.* 224, 251, although the story was certainly earlier. Ino: Hom. *Od.* 5.333–5; Gantz (n. 6), 176–9, 478.

[20] Glaucus: Paus. 9.22.6; Aesch. fr. 28 Radt: ὁ τὴν ἀείζων ἄφθιτον πόαν φάγων (*Anecd. Bekk.* 1.342.20). Tydeus: J. D. Beazley, 'The Rosi Krater', *JHS* 67 (1947), 4–5, lists and quotes all sources.

[21] Hom. *Il.* 20.231–5.

[22] Tros misses Ganymede: *Hom. Hymn. Aph.* 202–17. Heracles: Diod. Sic. 4.38.5–39.1: οἱ μὲν περὶ τὸν Ἰόλαον ἐλθόντες ἐπὶ τὴν ὀστολογίαν, καὶ μηδὲν ὅλως ὀστοῦν εὑρόντες, ὑπέλαβον τὸν Ἡρακλέα τοῖς χρησμοῖς ἀκολούθως ἐξ ἀνθρώπων εἰς θεοὺς μεθεστάσθαι· διόπερ ὡς ἥρωι ποιήσαντες ἁγισμοὺς καὶ χώματα κατασκευάσαντες ἀπηλλάγησαν εἰς Τραχῖνα ('When the companions of Iolaus came to gather up the bones of Heracles and found not a single bone anywhere, they assumed that, in accordance with the words of the oracle, he had passed from among men into the company of the gods. These men therefore performed the offerings to the dead as to a

If Achilles is not being made immortal, then, why does Thetis have to 'snatch' him (ἀναρπάσασα)? Why cannot she just let him head down to Hades, and speak nicely to Persephone about which part of the underworld her son should inhabit?[23] Thetis' removal of Achilles' body from the pyre itself seems more in tune with immortalization, with its similarities to Heracles' apotheosis and its intimations of the fire that strips away the mortal part of a hero.[24] However, Leuke is not Olympus, and seems usually to have been thought of as a more desirable corner of the afterlife, rather than an escape from it. Its ambiguous status is well illustrated in Apollodorus' *Epitome*:

> θάπτουσι δὲ αὐτὸν ἐν Λευκῇ νήσῳ μετὰ Πατρόκλου, τὰ ἑκατέρων ὀστᾶ συμμίξαντες. λέγεται δὲ μετὰ θάνατον Ἀχιλλεὺς ἐν Μακάρων νήσοις Μηδείᾳ συνοικεῖν.
>
> [The Greeks] buried him with Patroclus *in the White Isle*, mixing the bones of the two together. It is said that after death Achilles consorts with Medea *in the Isles of the Blest.* (Apollod. *Epit.* 5.5, emphasis added)[25]

In this case, Leuke seems to be not even the site of Achilles' afterlife but only of his tomb.[26] Moreover, if Achilles is being made immortal, we have to contend with the rather ambiguous language of the description in Proclus' summary, as opposed to Memnon, whose fate (earlier in the same summary) is made much clearer: 'Ἀχιλλεὺς Μέμνονα κτείνει· καὶ τούτῳ μὲν Ἠὼς παρὰ Διὸς αἰτησαμένη ἀθανασίαν δίδωσι' ('Achilles kills Memnon. And Eos confers immortality on him after prevailing on Zeus').[27] It is also worth noting that Achilles, unlike Memnon, has a

hero, and after throwing up a great mound of earth returned to Trachis'). Diodorus then goes on to relate Heracles' adoption by Hera, his marriage to Hebe, and honours among the gods. For other sources (and variants), see Gantz (n. 6), 460–3; see further below.

[23] Burgess (n. 5), 101, rightly notes that the verb ἀναρπάζειν implies the removal of something tangible.

[24] On Heracles' apotheosis, see J. Boardman, 'Heracles in Extremis', in E. Böhr and W. Martini (eds.), *Studien zur Mythologie und Vasenmalerei. Festschrift für Konrad Schauenburg zum 65. Geburtstag* (Mainz am Rhein, 1986), 127–32; T. C. W. Stinton, 'The Apotheosis of Heracles from the Pyre', in L. Rodley (ed.), *Papers Given at a Colloquium on Greek Drama in Honour of R. P. Winnington-Ingram* (London, 1987), 1–16. Fire as immortalizing: Burton (n. 1), 131–7; Burgess (n. 5), 102–3.

[25] On Achilles buried at Leuke, note Frazer's comment ad loc. that the interment on the White Isle must be an error, whether on the part of Apollodorus himself or a later copyist. Burgess (n. 5), 103, agrees. The Leuke interment is also found in a few later sources (Burgess [n. 5], 153, n. 14).

[26] On Achilles' tomb, see further below.

[27] Arctinus, *Aithiopis*, summary from Procl. *Chrest.* Here I am dependent on the accuracy of Proclus' summary; see J. Burgess, 'Coming Adrift: The Limits of Reconstruction of the Cyclic Poems', in Fantuzzi and Tsigalis (n. 7), 47–8, 56–7.

tomb (τάφον) and funeral games. I suggest that to claim that Achilles is being immortalized is at least doubtful.

Nevertheless, the boundary between the two states, for heroes at least, is somewhat tenuous. A hero who is immortalized, like Memnon in the *Aithiopis*, does not in fact become a god (in the full-blown Olympian sense); he merely becomes immortal. He does not usually possess any particular powers, as the gods do; having received his immortality from the gods, he then generally adopts an inactive life and is rarely heard from again. Tithonus, for example, appears in the *Iliad* solely as Eos' consort, and (for all the poet tells us) this is his only role.[28] Certainly he shows no interest, in any version of his myth, in the sufferings of his kin in Troy.

Even clearer is the case of Heracles. He has the most active life of any hero, travelling, killing monsters, fighting battles, sacking cities, raping virgins, and so forth. His afterlife, however, as is clear from numerous sources, is spent tamely on Olympus, married to Hebe, and doing precisely nothing:

> νῦν δ' ἤδη θεός ἐστι, κακῶν δ' ἐξήλυθε πάντων,
> ζώει δ' ἔνθά περ ἄλλοι Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες
> ἀθάνατος καὶ ἄγηρος, ἔχων καλλ[ίσ]φυρον Ἥβην...
>
> Now he is already a god, and has escaped from all evils,
> and he lives where the others do who have their mansions on Olympus,
> immortal and ageless, possessing beautiful-ankled Hebe...[29]
>
> (Hes. *Cat.* fr. 22.25–8 Most)

Unlike the gods, he does not leave Olympus, nor does he wield any power over mortals. (This picture offered by mythical narratives differs strongly from the very active version offered by the cult of Heracles; the distinction will be discussed below.) The same pattern can be seen in other figures, such as the Dioscuri. Immortalization is viewed as an escape; the hero immortalized in myth has earned, through *arete* (courage, hard work) or nepotism, the reward of respite from that work. So he lives in a place free from the ills that afflict humankind. Alternatively,

[28] Hom. *Il.* 11.1. It has been argued that Tithonus as he appears in the *Iliad* (immortal and apparently unaging) is representative of another (older?) version of his myth, in which his immortality is less two-edged. Whether this is the case or not does not affect the underlying principle: the immortalized hero is distanced from the living.

[29] See also Hom. *Od.* 11.601–4; Hes. *Theog.* 950–5. Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.7.7 does allow him two sons, Alexiares and Anicetus (but nothing further is known). For further sources, see Gantz (n. 6), 460–3. On the problems with dating the first appearance of Heracles' apotheosis see E. Stafford, *Herakles* (London, 2012), 173–4.

he may earn his blissful afterlife by exceptional beauty (as Ganymede does) or, as in Menelaus' case, simply by a successful marriage.[30] Odysseus, too, is offered immortality by Calypso if he will live with her on her island, cut off from the rest of humanity.[31] Here, then, is another factor common to mythical narratives of heroic immortalization: once immortal, such heroes do nothing further for the living, and they do it a long way away. They are also temporally distanced from the historical present: mythical immortalizations form part of a narrative of decline from a past in which mortals were closer to the gods and such things were possible.

The pleasant and inactive life in a delightful place far from the land of the living, from which the hero does not depart, is the essential feature for both Heracles and Achilles: mythical immortality for the hero is in essentials the same as the pleasanter forms of afterlife, except that the former gets a better class of neighbours. This ambiguity is particularly clear in the fate of the heroes at the end of Hesiod's Heroic Age: possibly a wholesale immortalization but, situated in the Isles of the Blessed, more often linked with the afterlife.[32] Similarly, in the case of Memnon (although, as we have seen, Proclus' summary of Arctinus' *Aithiopis* is unambiguous about his immortalization), other sources clearly consider him to be dead and place him in Hades or Elysium.[33] And Achilles, like Heracles, has a wife to share his paradisical afterlife: Polyxena, Helen, Iphigeneia, and (rather startlingly) Medea are all offered as candidates.[34] He is also frequently in the

[30] Ganymede: Hom. *Il.* 20.231–5; for other sources, see Gantz (n. 6), 558–60. Menelaus: Hom. *Od.* 4.561–70.

[31] Hom. *Od.* 5.135–6, 206–10.

[32] Hes. *Op.* 166–73, with comm. by M. L. West (ed. and trans.), *Hesiod. Works and Days* (Oxford, 1978) ad loc.; see also Hes. *Cat.* fr. 155.98–103 Most.

[33] Simon. fr. 539, Memnon buried on the coast in Syria; Pind. *Ol.* 2.83, Achilles consigned Memnon to death; Pind. *Nem.* 6.51–5, Achilles killed him. Apollodorus' silence on the subject (*Epit.* 5.3) is also telling, as he tends to mention any tradition of immortality. The artistic sources also tend to indicate death rather than immortality: see the discussion in Burton (n. 1), 47–56; cf. Burgess (n. 5), 35–8.

[34] Polyxena: Sen. *Tro.* 938–48; Philostr. *V A* 4.16 (Polyxena committs suicide in order to be with Achilles). Iphigeneia: Lycoph. *Alex.* 183; Ant. Lib. *Met.* 27. Helen: Paus. 3.19.13. Medea: Lycoph. *Alex.* 139–74; Ibyc. fr. 291 = Simon. fr. 558. G. M. Hirst, 'The Cults of Olbia I', *JHS* 22 (1902), 250, suggests that the match with Medea perhaps arose because she and Achilles are 'the two semi-divine personages most closely connnected with the Euxine'. On the chthonic links of Iphigenia, Helen, and Polyxena, see S. B. Ochotnikov, 'Achilleus auf der Insel Leuke', in J. Hupe (ed.), *Der Achilleus-Kult im nördlichen Schwarzmeerraum vom Beginn der griechischen Kolonisation bis in die römische Kaiserzeit. Beiträge zur Akkulturationsforschung*, International Archäologie 94 (Leidorf, 2006), 70–1.

company of other heroes; this, too, indicates death rather than immortality.[35]

What is unusual about Achilles in particular is that he is both buried *and* translated: Thetis removes Achilles *and* the Achaians raise a grave mound over him. Whatever the nature of Achilles' afterlife, this burial mound is one thing that most ancient sources do agree on. Why is it so central to the tradition that Achilles should have a grave mound? In the passage from Diodorus mentioned above about the disappearance of Heracles' body from his pyre, Heracles' friends raised a mound even though there was no body.[36] For Heracles, it signifies his much-discussed ambivalent status between cult hero and god – but the motif is not necessary to his myth, nor is it as pervasive as Achilles' grave mound. For Achilles, the funeral mound is an essential expression of the kind of hero he is; it embodies the gravitational force of the Homeric concept of fame and memory as dependent upon one's grave marker. As the shade of Agamemnon notes enviously in the *Odyssey*, Achilles' 'great and noble tomb...would be seen from afar from the sea both by men that now are and that shall be born hereafter' (Hom. *Od.* 24.80–4), and will become a *mnema* and focus for his *kleos*.[37]

Achilles' combination of apotheosis and burial is not unique: as noted, the same motif sometimes appear in Heracles' death and apotheosis. But it is unusual, and has perplexed scholars. Erwin Rohde therefore argues that the mound erected by the Greeks is in fact a cenotaph.[38] Wolfgang Schadewaldt suggests that Thetis took an *eidolon*, leaving the body to burn.[39] Jonathan Burgess argues that there is actually no contradiction here, and that the mortal part of Achilles remains as burnt ashes and is buried by the Greeks, while the immortal part is collected and removed by Thetis.[40] He cites the

[35] E.g. Strabo 13.1.32: with Ajax, Patroclus, and Antilochus. Paus. 3.19.13 adds Ajax son of Oileus to these three. Pind. *Ol.* 2.70–80: with Peleus and Cadmus. Arrian notes that Patroclus also receives offerings alongside Achilles on Leuke (Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 21.3). It should be noted that the archaeological finds refer only to Achilles.

[36] Diod. Sic. 4.38.5–39.1.

[37] μέγαν καὶ ἀμύμονα τύμβον...ὥς κεν τηλεφανὴς ἐκ ποντόφιν ἀνδράσιν εἴη | τοῖς οἳ νῦν γεγάασι καὶ οἳ μετόπισθεν ἔσονται.

[38] E. Rohde, *Psyche. The Cult of Souls and Belief in Immortality Among the Ancient Greeks* (Chicago, IL, 1925), 84, n. 29, citing Diodorus' account of Heracles (4.38.5–39.1) as a parallel. For further references, see Burgess (n. 5), 153, n. 2.

[39] W. Schadewalt, *Von Homers Welt und Werk*, fourth edition (Stuttgart, 1965), 162, n. 2.

[40] Burgess (n. 5), 101, cites Rhesus and Memnon as parallels. But Memnon, as we have seen, is immortalized only in the *Aithiopis*, in which he has no mound; and, in the case of Rhesus, Hector is

Thessalian hymn to Thetis sung over the grave of Achilles in Philostratus' *Heroicus*:

> Θέτι κυανέα, Θέτι Πηλεία,
> τὸν μέγαν ἃ τέκες υἱὸν Ἀχιλλέα, τοῦ
> θνατὰ μὲν ὅσον φύσις ἤνεγκε,
> Τροία λάχε· σᾶς δ' ὅσον ἀθανάτου
> γενεᾶς πάις ἔσπασε, Πόντος ἔχει.
> βαῖνε πρὸς αἰπὺν τόνδε κολωνὸν
> μετ' Ἀχιλλέως ἔμπυρα,
> βαῖν' ἀδάκρυτος μετὰ Θεσσαλίας,
> Θέτι κυανέα, Θέτι Πηλεία.
>
> Sea-blue Thetis, Pelean Thetis,
> who bore your son great Achilles, of whom
> what mortal nature provided
> Troy obtained; but what from your immortal
> race the boy derived, Pontus has.
> Journey to this steep mound
> to the offerings of Achilles;
> Journey without weeping, join Thessaly.
> Sea-blue Thetis, Pelean Thetis.
>
> (Philostr. *Her.* 53.10)

This is a problematic passage, given the corporeal nature of Greek immortality: as noted above, when the gods make someone immortal, they generally do so by taking and altering the body, not by just taking the soul or some equivalent thereof. Nor is there any clear precedent for being both in Hades *and* immortalized.[41] As Burgess notes, however, the hymn does seem to refer to a corporeal mortal part that was burnt and buried, and an equally corporeal immortal part that now

ready to build a pyre (Eur. *Rhes*. 959–60) but subsequently the Muse his mother apparently takes his body with her, and there is neither pyre nor burial – in fact, his final fate seems to be a form of hero-cult (962–73). See the discussion in V. Liapis, *A Commentary on the Rhesus Attributed to Euripides* (Oxford, 2012), at 970–3.

[41] The Dioscuri are a special case, as they are either in Hades or on Olympus, rather than in both places at once. Burgess (n. 5), 103, notes the much-debated two forms of Heracles at Hom. *Od.* 11.601–4, citing G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans. Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore, MD, 1979), 208, who interprets this as present death and eventual immortalization for Heracles. I think it more likely that this passage is an interpolation to bring Heracles to Olympus where he belonged without deleting any of the scene with Odysseus in the underworld: see the discussions by W. W. Merry and J. Riddell, *Homer's Odyssey, Vol. 1. Books I–XII* (Oxford, 1886) at 11.601; A. Heubeck and A. Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey, Vol. 2. Books IX–XVI* (Oxford, 1990) at 11.601–27. For similar passages, see Gantz (n. 6), 460–3.

resides in the Black Sea. It is possible that the tradition of the mound at Troy has given rise to the idea that some part of Achilles is buried there, especially since this is the first text to specifically state that the mound actually has some part of Achilles in it. Perhaps more to the point, we should not push too hard for a tidy and coherent picture where Greek religion is concerned, and even less so where hero-cult and underworld beliefs are concerned – two notoriously fluid and contradictory areas. In fact, the hymn's own description of the separation of Achilles' mortal and immortal parts is to some degree contradicted by the ritual that attends it, for which the oracle tells the Thessalians to 'burn and slaughter every year to Achilles some offerings as to a god, others as proper to burials' (θύειν ὅσα ἔτη τῷ Ἀχιλλεῖ καὶ σφάττειν τὰ μὲν ὡς θεῷ, τὰ δὲ ὡς ἐν μοίρᾳ τῶν κειμένων; Philostr. *Her.* 53.8–9). The Achilles who receives these (and takes vengeance when the Thessalians neglect the rite) is clearly more than just bones in a tomb, and indeed Philostratus mentions that, like other Trojan War heroes, he is occasionally to be seen hunting or even conversed with.[42] Whatever else is going on here, Philostratus (or the vine-grower) is clearly making a statement about the importance of the cult in the Troad, even while acknowledging Leuke as the preferred residence of Achilles. But the emphasis on the burial of Achilles in the Troad also make a statement about what kind of cult this is: a hero-cult, a cult for one who has been mortal and is now deceased.

II. Heroization and immortalization

At this point, since we have now established some parameters for immortalization in myth, it is useful to consider a very different form of immortality: hero-cult. Nicholas Coldstream aptly described hero-cult as 'a rather untidy subject, where any general statement is apt to provoke suspicion'.[43] The form and functions of hero-cult vary considerably from region to region, and the exact nature of the hero is also subject to variation. Lucian (*Dial. Mort.* 340) records a dialogue in Hades between the hero Trophonius and the confused Cynic

[42] Philostr. *Her.* 22.1–2.

[43] J. N. Coldstream, 'Hero-cults in the age of Homer', *JHS* 96 (1976), 8. As is equally well known, hero-cult is variable and difficult to define precisely, and there are plenty of exceptions to the very brief and general outline given here. For a good recent survey with further bibliography, see R. Parker, *On Greek Religion* (Oxford, 2011), ch. 4.

philosopher Melanippus, in which Melanippus demands, 'But in the name of prophecy, what is a hero? Because I haven't a clue.'[44] Trophonius defines the hero as ἐξ ἀνθρώπου τι καὶ θεοῦ σύνθετον, 'a sort of compound between human being and god'. As late a source as Lucian is, it is appropriate to cite his definition here in view of the widely varying answers put forward by most modern scholars, which often echo not only the terms used by Trophonius but occasionally also the perplexity shown by Melanippus.[45]

For the purposes of this article, I will use as a starting point a definition offered by Antony Snodgrass: a cult hero is a person

> who was once alive but has been heroized *only* through death; who is honoured by sacrifice and cult, specially at his grave where his power is felt to be located; and whose repute and influence are normally confined to the region near the grave, which is a fixed dwelling-place after death.[46]

The hero to whom a cult is dedicated occupies a position abutting the worlds of both the living and the dead; he is placed, mythologically as well as in terms of ritual and religion, on the borderline. Such a hero exists in a limbo between the world of the dead, in which he belongs by virtue of being himself dead, and the world of the living, in which he has influence and power. That is, although he ought to be in Hades, he has returned to (or failed to leave) the world of the living, demonstrating an ability to cross the divide between the living and the dead which weakens the corresponding divide between mortal and immortal, and allows him, to a degree, to cross that as well; for the hero undoubtedly shares in the longevity and power characteristic of the gods. This immortality is, however, strictly limited. The hero is bound to his

[44] E. Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica, BICS* supplement 57 (London, 1989), 1.

[45] Kearns (n. 44), 1–9, gives several examples and discusses possible definitions. See, for example, A. M. Snodgrass, 'The Archaeology of the Hero', *AION(archeol)* 10: *La parola, l'immagine, la tomba* (Naples, 1992), 20; M. P. Foucart, *Le Culte des héros chez les grecs* (Paris, 1918), 67 ('Les Grecs n'ont jamais douté que leurs Héros avaient été des hommes'; 'The Greeks never doubted that their heroes had been men'); A. D. Nock, 'The Cult of Heroes', repr. in Z. Stewart (ed.) *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World,* vol. 2 (Oxford, 1986), 593 ('The term *heros* often meant "minor deity" and not "man who lived and died and subsequently received veneration"'); B. C. Dietrich, *Death, Fate and the Gods* (London, 1965), 31 ('The hero was a spirit of the dead who even when alive possessed powers far surpassing those of any mortal'). To discuss this controversial and complicated area in any sort of detail would take rather more space than is available here. Inevitably, much of what follows must be couched in general terms, and not every cult hero will fit this model.

[46] Snodgrass (n. 45), 20, emphasis in original. Not all heroes can be regarded as 'heroized *only* through death'; Nock (n. 45), 596, n. 81, offers the famous example of the non-human Clouds called ἠρῷναι by Strepsiades (Ar. *Nub.* 315).

cult-site, often his grave, which is the link between his two worlds; he is not able to exert influence for any great distance beyond it.[47]

Hero-cult is therefore local cult. Many sites honoured heroes who were only known locally.[48] So cult was often offered to the eponymous hero of a place, to autochthons, or to those with a particular local affiliation.[49] The tie between hero and community ensured that localized cults such as these flourished; a hero-cult could develop around a man (or woman) who was only known and celebrated within a small community. The vital factor is that these powerful beings were once men and women; they are, whether mythical or genealogical ancestors or historical figures, a sort of cultural or community ancestor, and therefore they are often more intimately part of the community than the gods are, and may be called upon for help if the gods are unwilling to give it. This base in the community and the hero's affiliation with that community confer upon him a unique willingness to use his abilities on its behalf. To the community of which he is a part, the most important thing about the hero of cult is that, whatever the precise nature of his status as living or dead, he is bound to them, and bound to assist them, even if only by refraining from harm. Without the worship of the community, the hero does not exist; without the hero's assistance, the community is vulnerable. So the cult hero has a far more active afterlife than the hero immortalized in myth, who vanishes out of the world of men and ceases to interfere.

The corollary to this local status is that cult heroes are often heroes who are not known to us from mythical narratives. Hero-cult should not be confused, therefore, with the kind of mythical apotheosis discussed above. The immortalized hero always has a mythical narrative behind him to explain how and why he attained immortalization. Unlike the hero of myth, the hero of cult need not have any story, or even any name.[50] Hero-cult posits a hero who exists in a state between

[47] R. Seaford, *Reciprocity and Ritual. Homer and Tragedy in the Developing City-state* (Oxford, 1994), 114. Hence the importance of securing a hero's bones in order to secure his favour: e.g. Orestes in Hdt. 1.67–8. For other examples, see Rohde (n. 38), 143 nn. 35–6.

[48] Kearns (n. 44), 139–207 (Appendix 1, 'Catalogue of Attic Heroes'), gives a good idea of the enormous number of heroes who were offered cult in Attica; a large proportion of these make no appearance in myth (at least, not in surviving sources) outside the ambit of their cult.

[49] Examples from Attica: the eponymous heroes received cult at their statues in the agora at Athens; Erichthonius was worshipped on the Acropolis; Herse had a part in the Arrephoria. Kearns (n. 44), Appendix 1, s.v. Ἐπώνυμοι ἥρωες; Ἐριχθόνιος; Ἔρση.

[50] For example, the puzzling hero Basile, prominent in Attic cult but for whom no myth is known (Kearns [n. 44], 151; H. A. Shapiro, 'The Attic Deity Basile', *ZPE* 63 [1986], 134–6). Compare unnamed heroes such as ἥρως ἐπὶ τῇ ἁλῇ, 'the hero of the salt-pan' (Kearns [n. 44], 144).

the world of the dead, in which he belongs by being himself dead, and the world of the living, in which he is presently active and exerts his influence and power, and he is bound to both worlds by the existence of his grave site or bones. The mythical narrative of apotheosis, in contrast, leaves the hero no contact at all with the living since his long-ago immortalization, nor with the dead (as we have seen in the myth of Heracles). Furthermore, a hero whose mythical narrative excludes any kind of apotheosis may still receive hero-cult (for example, Agamemnon), and a hero who is made immortal in myth may be cultically ignored (for example, Ganymede).[51] So these are separate categories, and the conventions for each are not only different but sometimes entirely incompatible.

This incompatibility is particularly clear in the case of the little group of heroes who receive both immortalization and hero-cult. To give an example: in the *Odyssey*, Menelaus is told by Proteus that he will not die in Argos but will be taken to the Elysian Fields.[52] Since the only reason for this divine exemption is that he is Zeus's son-in-law, we may safely assume that the invitation is also meant for Helen. However, Helen and Menelaus had a cult at Therapnai in Sparta from the eighth century right through to the Hellenistic period.[53] The two states of immortality are incompatible. Helen and Menelaus in Therapnai live (if that is the word) in the centre of their community, and their status there depends on their active participation in the life of that community. In Elysium, however, they are not able to return to or influence the world of the living, nor (by implication) would they wish to. In sum, the status of one depends on him being immortal and inactive, and bodily elsewhere, and that of the other depends on him being dead and active, with his bones here. The corporeal aspect of this, in particular, has been seen as a problem. The hero is literally required to be in two places at once.[54]

[51] Agamemnon: Coldstream (n. 43), 10; R. Hägg, 'Gifts to the Heroes in Geometric and Archaic Greece', in T. Linders and G. Nordquist (eds.), *Gifts to the Gods, Boreas* 15 (1987), 96–8; C. Antonaccio, *An Archaeology of Ancestors* (Lanham, MD, 1995), 147–52.

[52] Hom. *Od.* 4.561–70.

[53] H. W. Catling, 'Excavations at the Menelaion, Sparta, 1973–76', *AR* 23 (1976–7), 24, 34–7, 42 (esp. 36–7, seventh- and sixth-century dedications inscribed to Helen, figs. 25–9); Antonaccio (n. 51), 155–66.

[54] Indeed, in Lucian's dialogue, Trophonius appears to be in both places at once. Melanippus, having established that the hero is 'something neither man nor god, but both at once', demands of Trophonius, 'Well, then, where has your divine half gone at present?' On being told that it is prophesying in Boiotia, the Cynic replies, 'I don't know what you mean, Trophonius – but I can see quite clearly that all of you is dead' (Lucian, *Dial. mort.* 340). This should not, however, be taken as paradigmatic for 'mainstream' belief.

Attempts to reconcile this contradiction illustrate the dangers of treating Greek myth and cult as a seamless unity. One thing that has become clear is that the functions of the two sets of heroes – immortalized and heroized – are very different. The hero of cult derives his importance, and in fact his existence, from his relationship to the worshipper and his assistance to the community. The immortalized hero, in contrast, does not serve this kind of social function but should rather be regarded as a way of thinking about the unthinkable. Myths dealing with an attempt to break the barriers of mortality – particularly since so many attempts are unsuccessful – explain why most of us die. The select few who actually succeed provide reassurance that this state of affairs is not inevitable. From this point of view, the hero of cult and the hero of myth would appear to impinge on each other only indirectly. The inconsistency, by its very nature, is inevitable. What we have here is not so much a contradiction between two different forms of immortality for a small group of heroes. It might better be viewed as a necessary tension between two differing modes of thought concerning the interface between death and divinity, which happen to coincide in only a small group of cases.

Having established some working parameters for immortalization and hero-cult as separate entities, and having offered some grounds for the disparities between them, I now wish to take a closer look at the small group of heroes who entirely fail to abide by the conventions established above. These are heroes who are both recipients of hero-cult *and* whose mythical narrative includes immortalization: Heracles, the Dioscuri, Amphiaraus, Helen. Remarkably, most of these figures do not, like Menelaus, simply lead two separate afterlife existences, one in the local community and the other on Olympus. Instead, they operate outside the conventions of either category. Unlike most cult heroes, their cult sites are multiple and their powers wide-ranging; in fact, they more closely resemble the cult and abilities of gods, and, in the case of Heracles, he is indeed (at least sometimes) considered to be so.

For example, the Dioscuri, in their myth, gain a shared and partial immortality, so that they spend one day on Olympus and one in the underworld, quite probably alternating with each other, so that they are not in the same place at the same time.[55] Thus Lucian presents a

[55] E.g. Proclus' summary of the *Kypria*; Pind. *Nem.* 10.80–2; Pind. *Pyth.* 11–61–4. Most literary sources are inconclusive with regard to whether the Dioscuri are together or whether they

dialogue in which Apollo complains to Hermes that he cannot tell the Dioscuri apart as they both look exactly the same and only one of them is ever around at a time.[56] Yet in cult they are always worshipped together, whereas according to their myth they were probably separated. They can range widely, whereas according to their myth they should spend all their time in either Hades or Olympus. So their behaviour is not compatible with the normal conventions of mythical immortalization – but nor is it compatible with the normal conventions of hero-cult. The hero-cults of the Dioscuri are not only located where they are buried, in Sparta. In fact, they have cult sites throughout Greece, especially around the Peloponnese and in Attica, and they move freely well beyond the borders of their local communities. They are known and called upon as helpful to sailors, whereas, according to their myth, after apotheosis they have no duties or obligations, and hero-cult should normally restrict them to a small area. This is neatly epitomized by *Homeric Hymn* 33, which describes them as:

> σωτῆρας. . .ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων
> ὠκυπόρων τε νεῶν, ὅτε τε σπέρχωσιν ἄελλαι
> χειμέριαι κατὰ πόντον ἀμείλιχον· οἱ δ' ἀπὸ νηῶν
> εὐχόμενοι καλέουσι Διὸς κούρους μεγάλοιο
> . . .οἱ δ' ἐξαπίνης ἐφάνησαν
> ξουθῇσι πτερύγεσσι δι' αἰθέρος ἀΐξαντες,
> αὐτίκα δ' ἀργαλέων ἀνέμων κατέπαυσαν ἀέλλας,
> κύματα δ' ἐστόρεσαν λευκῆς ἁλὸς ἐν πελάγεσσι,
> ναύταις σήματα καλὰ πόνου σφίσιν.
>
> . . .saviours of men on earth and of swift-faring ships when winter tempests race over the implacable sea, and the men from their ships call upon the sons of great Zeus in prayer. . .suddenly they appear, speeding through the air on tawny wings, and at once they make the fierce squalls cease and lay the waves amid the flats of a clear sea – fair portents, and release from travail.
>
> (*Hom. Hymn* 33.6–10, 12–16)[57]

Even if we take the less likely alternative, and assume that they may appear together but only every second day, when they are immortal,

alternate. Hom. *Od.* 11.301–4 implies that they are together, but see Lucian, *Dial. D.* 25 and the discussions in Burton (n. 1), 87–9; Gantz (n. 6), 327–8.

[56] Lucian *Dial. D.* 25. Hermes tells him to look for Polydeuces' boxing scars.

[57] See also *Hom. Hymn* 17, which also addresses them together.

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this hardly makes them suitable heroes for sailors to call upon. Storms cannot be relied upon to follow this two-day cycle. It seems that the apparently contradictory discourses of immortalization and heroization feed into each other to create a deity (or pair of deities in this case) who is not restricted by the conventions of either.

Another example is Amphiaraus, who, according to his myth, was swallowed by the earth during the battle of the Seven Against Thebes, but continued to prophesy under the earth, in the place where he was swallowed. He too has cult in many places, the emphasis being on healing rather than oracles.[58] Here again is a hero with an unusual number and range of sites, acting in a capacity which one would not have expected from his mythography. And of course there is Heracles, who is certainly more mobile than the average cult hero, whose cult is widespread throughout Greece, and who is worshipped as both god and hero – and yet who is peacefully married to Hebe, and dwells in Olympus.[59]

It becomes clear that, when heroization and immortalization coincide, the resulting contradiction produces an interaction resulting in figures who share in the best of both worlds. In other words, it is precisely this small group of figures who are both heroized and immortalized who tend to operate outside the usual conventions of hero-cult and mythical immortalization. The convergence of these two distinct types of immortality has created a small group of 'superheroes' – powerful figures in both spheres. In short, these are figures whom the Greeks use to think about the parameters and possibilities of what it means to become not merely immortal but also godlike.

III. Achilles' heroization

How does Achilles fit into this? He, too, receives cult in many places: at his burial mound at the Troad; in Laconia, where he turned up (posthumously) to sue for Helen's hand in marriage; in Croton in south Italy, where he is lamented by choruses of women; in Astypalaia in the Cyclades; in Erythrai in Asia Minor, along with Thetis and the

[58] Earliest mention: Pind. *Nem.* 9.24–7, *Nem.* 10.8–9 (swallowed by earth); Pind. *Pyth.* 8.38–56 (prophesies to the Epigonoi as they set out). Paus. 1.34.2: the Oropians tell that he rose up through a sacred spring and became a divinity.

[59] God and hero: in ancient sources, most famously Hdt. 2.44; see Stafford (n. 29), ch. 6.

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Nereids; in Pharsalus, Tanagra, Elis, Locri, Miletus, and elsewhere.[60] From what little we know, his cult often reflects his character in myth, but not always. For example, youths in Laconia sacrifice to him before contests, which seems apposite; but he prevents Athens being flattened by earthquake, which does not (though admittedly this story is very late).[61] It has often been argued that the widespread nature of Achilles' cult is not typical of hero-cult, and this (in addition to the importance of his role at Olbia) has led some scholars to categorize it as divine.[62] I will argue that it is not (in its early stages) characterized as divine cult, and is not exactly like the cult of Heracles, the Dioscuri, or the rest, either – although these latter give us some clues as to how to understand it. I will focus on two cult areas of Achilles in particular. I do not wish to argue whether these are specifically divine cults or hero-cults (as will become clear, I think that to try to make too sharp a distinction between the two here is counterproductive); I am more concerned with the nature of the cult as perceived in and shaped by the literary sources (a picture also, I think, borne out by the characteristics of the finds).

First, the Troad. This is where one would most expect to find the cult of Achilles, as it is the site of his grave, though ancient and modern commentators alike are uncertain of exactly where that was – which did not stop it from becoming a tourist attraction, both then and now. The evidence of the Epic Cycle, in which Achilles appears at his tomb to

[60] Troad (discussed below): Strabo 13.596; Philostr. *Her.* 207 f.; Plin. *HN* 5.125. Laconia: Paus. 3.20.8 (the heroon may not be entered; youths sacrifice before a contest); 3.24.5 (annual festival); Anaxagoras in Σ Ap. Rhod. 4.814 (divine cult). Croton: Lycoph. *Alex.* 856–65 (women mourn). Tarentum: *Mir. Ausc.* 106 (Achilles has his own temple, other heroes share). Astypalaia: Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.45. Erythrai: *Syll.*[3] 1014.50–2 (cult of Achilles, Thetis, and the Nereids). Pharsalus: Σ Hom. *Il.* 23.142; Σ Plat. *[Sisyphus]* 387c; Paus. 10.13.5; Strabo 9.431; Luc. 6.350 (a Thetideion, and Achilles' homeland). Tanagra: Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 37 (299c–e); Paus. 2.1.7. Elis: Paus. 6.23.3 (Achilles has a cenotaph in the Xystos gymnasium, because of an oracle; in the evening at the beginning of the festival, the Elean women honour him especially by bewailing him). Locri: Σ Pl. *Phdr.* 243a. Miletus: Ath. 2.43d (Aristoboulus) (a sacred spring called Achilles' Well). Further references: J. Escher-Bürkli, 'Achilles', *RE*, i.221–4; Ochotnikov (n. 34), 49, with n. 1.

[61] Athens: Zos. 4.18.1–4; see C. P. Jones, *New Heroes in Antiquity*, (Cambridge, MA, 2010), 89.

[62] For the argument that Achilles' cult is divine rather than hero-cult, see Hommel (n. 16), on whom see the comments in S. B. Bujskich, 'Kap Bejkuš – Kap des Achilleus: eine Kultstätte des göttlichen Heros im Mündungsgebiet des Bug', in Hupe (n. 34), 129. Against Hommel, see J. T. Hooker, 'The Cults of Achilles', *RhM* 131 (1988), 1–7; Burgess (n. 5), 111–16, 128, who sees the cults of Achilles as initially hero-cults, which in some cases later increased in status to divine cult (e.g. in Olbia with the Roman period epithet Pontarches: J. Hupe, 'Die olbische Achilleus-Verehrung in der römischen Kaiserzeit', in Hupe [n. 34], 165–234). In this article I am less concerned with the cult's origins than with its form and the early perception of Achilles' status in it.

greet Neoptolemus (*Ilias Mikra*), and to warn the Greeks against sailing (*Nostoi*), may indicate an early development of hero-cult; so may the sacrifice of Polyxena at Achilles' tomb (*Ilioupersis*), and certainly the treatment of the latter episode in Euripides' *Hekabe* is couched in terms of hero-cult.[63] Unfortunately, as the temple and grave of Achilles remain unidentified (in spite of Schliemann's best efforts), our only evidence for a local hero-cult is literary, although that is interesting enough.[64] As one might expect, the local inhabitants offered cult to Achilles at his tomb (and also to Patroclus, Antilochus, and Ajax).[65] Philostratus also gives a detailed account of Thessalian cult to Achilles here; they sail in from Thessaly bringing with them not only the animals for sacrifice but also wood, wreaths, and even fire. Having made their sacrifice, they take their portion of the feast with them when they sail off 'to avoid celebrating the banquet in enemy territory' (ὡς μὴ ἐν τῇ πολεμίᾳ εὐωχοῖντο).[66] This systematic exclusion of local elements reflects the fact that Achilles is buried in enemy land. So this is a hero-cult that acts as a 'local' cult not only for the inhabitants of the area where he is buried but also for those of the area whence he came – though there are some hints in the sources that Achilles also received cult at the Thetideion at Pharsalus in Thessaly. There are, of course, several examples of heroes' bones being repatriated;[67] it is a little more unusual to bring the cult to the hero, and clearly reflects the strength of the mythical tradition of Achilles' death and the site of his tomb. At the same time, there is a balance here between the strength of the tradition that places his tomb at Troy and the hero's un-Homeric tendency to appear and expect cult.

His most prominent cult, however, was in the Euxine, on the north shore of the Black Sea. Here his worship was widespread, but two areas

[63] Eur. *Hec.* 35–44, 93–5, 108–26, 529–41, etc. See the discussion in Gantz (n. 6), 659. The Persians offer libations to the heroes at Troy before the expedition in 480 BC, but the army is seized by panic at night: Hdt. 7.43.

[64] Note, however, the hero-cult-esque iconography of the Polyxena sarcophagus from Gümüşçay: N. Sevinç, 'A New Sarcophagus of Polyxena from the Salvage Excavations at Gümüşçay', *Studia Troica* 6 (1996), 251–63.

[65] Strabo 13.1.32 notes the presence of 'a temple and a monument' (ἱερόν ἐστι καὶ μνῆμα) of Achilles near Sigeium, 'as also monuments of Patroclus and Antilochus; and the Ilians offer sacrifices to all four heroes, both to these and to Aias' (Πατρόκλου δὲ καὶ Ἀντιλόχου μνήματα, καὶ ἐναγίζουσιν οἱ Ἰλιεῖς πᾶσι καὶ τούτοις καὶ τῷ Αἴαντι).

[66] Philostr. *Her.* 53.8–13; Burgess (n. 5), 114–15; but see I. Rutherford, 'Black Sails to Achilles: The Thessalian Pilgrimage in Philostratus' *Heroicus*', in E. Bowie and J. Elsner (eds.), *Philostratus* (Cambridge, 2009), 244, arguing that the rite is probably fictional.

[67] See Rohde (n. 38), 143, nn. 35–6, for references.

stand out: at and around Olbia, where the cult was extensive and long-lived, and the hero gave his name to the town of Achilleion (site uncertain) and to the long narrow spit of sand called the 'Racecourse of Achilles' just to the south of Olbia;[68] and on the tiny island of Leuke, roughly 180 kilometres to the south of Olbia.[69] Here his cult was established in the archaic period – the association of Achilles with this area was widely known at least from the sixth century BC, when Alcaeus referred to 'Achilles lord of Scythia' – and was still flourishing some 900 years later.[70] It reached its height in the Roman period, during which (in the second and third centuries AD) Achilles in Olbia was worshipped under the cult title of Achilles Pontarches, the patron of the college of archons.[71] Dio Chrysostom notes that the Olbians honour Achilles as their god, and indeed his dedications are not significantly different from those given to Hermes and Apollo in their roles as patrons of the generals and magistrates.[72] However, it is the character of the early cult with which we are concerned here.

The earliest sites of the Olbian cult seem to have been Berezan Island and the adjacent Cape Beikuš, some 40 kilometres west of Olbia. Here cult was established at least as early as the second half of the sixth century BC, as has been borne out by recent finds.[73] The finds at Cape Beikuš indicate the likely presence of a grove and a temple, and have produced a rich and varied range of offerings from a context that shows clear evidence of cult activity, including ritual dining.[74] Finds both here and at Berezan include inscriptions on clay discs made from pottery fragments (both local and imported[75]), which have the name of Achilles inscribed (either in full or abbreviated) and also

[68] Achilleion: Strabo 7.4.5, 11.2.6 (town with temple to Achilles). Racecourse of Achilles: first in Hdt. 4.55, 76; for the problematic sanctuary here see I. V. Tunkina, 'Arcivmaterialien aus dem ersten Drittel des 19. Jhs. über das Achilleus-Heiligtum auf der Landzunge von Tendra', in Hupe (n. 34), 89–110. Cults in Olbia: A. S. Rusjaeva, 'Forschungsgeschichte des Achilleus-Kultes in der russischen und ukrainischen Wissenschaft', in Hupe (n. 34), 19–48; Bujskich (n. 62), 111–54.

[69] On the Leuke cult, see Ochotnikov (n. 34).

[70] Alc. fr. 354.

[71] Hupe (n. 62).

[72] Dio Chrys. *Or.* 36.9 and 14. G. Hedreen, 'The Cult of Achilles in the Euxine', *Hesperia* 60 (1991), 315.

[73] Bujskich (n. 62), 133–43, for a summary of recent finds in Cape Beikuš.

[74] Grove and temple: Bujskich (n. 62), 131, n. 178, citing A. S. Rusjaeva, 'Religija antičnych gosudarstv Severnogo Pričernomor'ja' (The Religion of the Ancient Cities of the Northern Black Sea), in S. D. Kryžickij (ed.), *Archeologija Ukrainskoj SSR II. Skifosarmatskaja i antičnaja archeologija* (Kiev, 1986), 552 (unfortunately unavailable to me at the time of writing).

[75] E.g. Cape Beikuš, Area A: Chiot, Attic, Corinthian, North Ionian and Fikellura ware: Bujskich (n. 62), 135, 143–4, pl. 33.1, 37–8.

include graffiti of snakes, branches, stick figures, swords, daggers, arrows, boats, and water; one shows a hoplite with a votive form of Achilles' name, and a fragmentary graffito which may be the name of the dedicator.[76] This iconography is a mixture of that which is appropriate to Achilles' warrior status (weapons, hoplites) and that which befits his cult (snakes – common for heroes – and boats, to which we shall return).[77] Guy Hedreen has pointed out that these discs turn up throughout the Greek world as gifts to heroes, and are also found in graves; he concludes that they may represent pieces for gaming boards, which would be appropriate for Achilles given the very popular series of board-game scenes in his iconography.[78]

The cult on the island of Leuke was established at a similar date, with the earliest finds dating to the first half of the sixth century BC.[79] The island is identified by several ancient sources which give fairly accurate details of its location. So Pausanias:

ἔστιν ἐν τῷ Εὐξείνῳ νῆσος κατὰ τοῦ Ἴστρου τὰς ἐκβολὰς Ἀχιλλέως ἱερά: ὄνομα μὲν τῇ νήσῳ Λευκή, περίπλους δὲ αὐτῇ σταδίων εἴκοσι, δασεῖα δὲ ὕλῃ πᾶσα καὶ πλήρης ζῴων ἀγρίων καὶ ἡμέρων, καὶ ναὸς Ἀχιλλέως καὶ ἄγαλμα ἐν αὐτῇ.

In the Euxine at the mouths of the Ister is an island sacred to Achilles. It is called Leuke, and its circumference is 20 stades. It is wooded throughout and abounds in

[76] A few examples from many. From Beikuš, *Vertiefung* no. 9, clay disc made from Chiot amphora with incised snake, branch, lines (waves?), inscr. ΑΧΙΛΛΕΥΣ (Bujskich [n. 62]135, pl. 34.8). From Beikuš, *Grube* no. 13, Chiot amphora fragment sanded smooth with stick figure, arrow, inscr. A (Bujskich [n. 62], 136, pl. 35.2). From Beikuš, Rusjaeva's Group II includes clay discs from amphorae, one with a graffito of man and fish, inscr. A, another with graffito of a sword, inscr. A and ΜΑΧΑ (μαχαίρα?) (A. S. Rusjaeva, 'Kul'tovi predmety z poselennia Beikush poblyzu o-va Berezan' [Ritual Objects from the Settlement of Beikuš near the Island of Berezan], *Arkheolohiia* fasc. 2 [1971], 23, fig. 1). Her Group III includes a disc with a stick figure on one side, and on the other a small sailing vessel with a raised prow (ibid., 23–4, fig. 2). Achilles the hoplite: a large ceramic fragment (height 8 cm) of an Ionic amphora, sanded smooth, warrior with sword, helmet, round shield, inscr. ΑΧΙΛΛΕΙ | ΠΑΡΚ[—] | ΠΑΩ[—] or ΠΑC[—] (Bujskich [n. 62], 140–1, pls. 35.1, 36.1). See further on the discs, Rusjaeva (this note), 22–8; V. P. Yailenko, 'Graffiti Levki, Berezani I Ol'vii' (Graffiti from Leuke, Berezan, and Olbia), *VDI* 152 (1980), 72–99; Bujskich (n. 62), 133–43, pls. 32–6.

[77] See also a bronze ring found on Leuke showing a snake inside the temple: Ochotnikov (n. 34), pl. 15.25, 69, noting that Thetis also has a connection with snakes.

[78] Hedreen (n. 72), 317–18. See also Ochotnikov (n. 34), 73–4: bone 'dice' with numbers on the sides were also found in Leuke. On Achilles and board games, see Vermeule (n. 1), 80–2; on the setting (Troy, Aulis, Hades?), see S. Woodford, 'Ajax and Achilles Playing a Game on an Olpe in Oxford', *JHS* 102 (1982), 180. Against this interpretation of the finds, see Bujskich (n. 62), 130. For other suggested uses, see Rusjaeva (n. 76), 26 (religious objects? spindles?), who also notes that their function may differ from site to site.

[79] J. Hupe, 'Introduction' in Hupe (n. 34), 16: the cult is archaeologically visible from the first half of the sixth century.

animals, wild and tame, while on it is a temple of Achilles with an image of him.
(Paus. 3.19.13)[80]

The island is all the easier to identify for being the only one in the area (that only Leuke is shown on maps is not because other islands are too small to be shown but because there are no other islands in the vicinity). It is a small lump of limestone, only 0.15 square kilometres, populated largely by the birds that kept Achilles' temple swept with their wings, and by snakes, which may well have added to its mystique.[81] It was otherwise uninhabited.[82] Inscriptions from it seal the identification; for example, that on the base of a fifth-century *lekythos* reads: Γλαῦκός με ἀνέθηκεν Ἀχιλλῆι Λευκῇ μεδέοντι, παῖ⟨ε⟩ς Ποσιδέō ('Glaucus son of Posideius dedicated me to Achilles lord of Leuke').[83] An early survey in 1824 also identified limestone blocks, the remains of the temple of Achilles, although these have subsequently been obliterated by the building of a lighthouse.[84] A plan drawn by N. D. Kritskij in 1823 shows a quadrangular temple with several rooms; it included Ionic columns somewhere, and one fragment of sculpture survives, a leaf or griffin wing.[85] Roof tiles dated to the sixth century BC and to the first centuries AD indicate that it was in use for a long time; parts of anchors spanning a similar date have been found in a bay to the south of the island.[86]

The cult had several functions.[87] Ancient sources tell us that Achilles' role is as protector of sailors and sea voyages (not surprising, as he is the son of a sea-goddess): he suggests safe anchorages to those near the island and may even appear, says Arrian, in visible form on the mast

[80] Pausanias' accuracy does not extend to the description: the island could never have been wooded and was most unlikely to be abounding in animals (Ochotnikov [n. 34], 57–8). Arrian's account of 'a few goats' which supplied offerings for Achilles (*Peripl. M. Eux.* 21.2) is more realistic.

[81] Birds sweeping the temple: Philostr. *Her.* 54.9; see further Ochotnikov (n. 34), 58 for sources, 71 for a connection between birds and the souls of the dead. Snakes: the modern name of the island, Zmeinyj, means 'snake island', perhaps given on account of the number of sea-snakes there (Ochotnikov [n. 34], 57, 69).

[82] Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 32; Philostr. *Her.* 54.10–11.

[83] Yailenko (n. 76), 84–5, 98, fig. 3.1–1a; Hedreen (n. 72), 319, with n. 42; Ochotnikov (n. 34), pl. 10.7–8, 16.1a–b.

[84] On the temple, see Ochotnikov (n. 34), 58–61.

[85] S. B. Ochotnikov, and A. S. Ostroverkhov, 'Les sources historiques et archéologiques de l'île Leuké', in O. Lordkipanidzé and P. Lévêque (eds.), *Sur les traces des Argonautes. Actes de 6e Symposium de Vani (Colchide)* (Paris, 1996), 273, fig. 1, and 274, fig. 2.7; Ochotnikov (n. 34), pl. 5.1–2.

[86] For the anchors, see Ochotnikov (n. 34), 65–6.

[87] Ochotnikov (n. 34), 67–75.

or the yards.[88] It is this role, presumably, that gives rise to the boats on the Olbian discs. The *lekythos* from Glaucus has a further inscription saying, Γλαῦκος, ἐσπλῖν αἴδεο ('Glaucus, be careful sailing in!'): clearly Achilles helps those who help themselves.[89] The temple also contained an oracle.[90] The votives indicate that even in its early stages the cult's importance extended well beyond the Black Sea area.[91]

The two cults are closely related – Leuke seems to have functioned in part as an ideological boundary marker for Olbia – but not entirely homogeneous.[92] Although Olbia was a Milesian settlement, the cult does not seem to have come from Miletus, but, conversely, the local Scythian culture does not seem to have had any influence on the cult either: whatever its exact origins, it was a Greek cult of a Greek hero in a Greek *polis*.[93] While it is possible that the existence of the cult fuelled Arctinus' choice of Achilles' destination in the *Aithiopis*, it is equally plausible to see Leuke as originally a mythical location placed at the periphery of the known world, which over time became more concrete, as the area became better known and the hero's cult became established.[94] Whatever the case, the fusion of myth and cult has yielded the remarkable result of a place which is characterized as a mythical otherworldly location and yet is a place which one can actually visit. As has often been noted, the Greek dead were thought of as being at one and the same time present at the grave and also present in Hades. Similarly, Achilles is present at his grave in the Troad and also independently present in the afterlife – at Leuke. That the island still maintained its credibility as the dwelling place of Achilles even in late sources must in part be due to its isolation and its appearance. As a focus for cult, Leuke serves the same purpose as Achilles' tomb: both sit on the shifting boundary between geography and myth, actual

[88] Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 34.

[89] Or, perhaps, 'I, Glaukos, ask with submission to be permitted to sail in': see Ochotnikov (n. 34), 74.

[90] Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 34.

[91] Hupe (n. 79), 16.

[92] For the role of the cult in the establishment of Olbian territory, see Bujskich (n. 62), 150–2.

[93] Bujskich (n. 62), 148: 'den *griechischer* Kult eines *griechischen* Heros und Gottes auf dem Territorium einer *griechischen* Polis' (emphasis in original). On the debated origin of the cults of Achilles in the Black Sea area, see Ochotnikov (n. 34), 67–8; Bujskich (n. 62), 147–52.

[94] 'À cette haut époque, le nom de l'île ne désignait pas un endroit concret: c'était un lieu mythique' (D. D. Kačarava, 'L'île Leukè', in O. Lordkipanidzé and P. Lévêque [eds.], *Religions de Pont-Euxin. Actes de VIII*[e] *Symposium de Vani [Colchide] 1997* [Paris, 1999], 61). Burgess (n. 5), 126. Bujskich (n. 62), 145, notes also that the Greeks associated the far west with the underworld, an association which might well extend to the Black Sea area: he notes the orientation of Achilles' cult sites to the west. On the dating of *Aithiopis*, see Rengakos (n. 7), 313–14.

locations which owe their existence to mythical narratives. Both cults, too, attracted attention well beyond their local catchment areas: both achieved panhellenic fame.

But there is another aspect to these cults as well. Achilles is remarkably active and present in them, in a way that heroes often are not. He is not only manifested as the recipient of offerings and the unseen giver of benefits but he also accrues narratives based on non-cultic actions: he can be heard singing or riding horses; he races along the spit of land called the Racecourse of Achilles; he demands a girl who is descended from Priam, and then rips her to pieces; he sings love songs to Helen.[95] These are all based more on his myth than on the functions of his cults, so that even in his afterlife he shows a certain liveliness and independence of action that is often lacking in hero-cults. What *is* characteristic of hero-cult, however, is the nature of these actions. The cult hero cannot be proactive: that is, he cannot form a new relationship. He must draw upon the network of friends, enemies, families, and obligations established during his life. Achilles' actions, too, befit his mythical character: ripping girls to pieces is not characteristic of the Achilles of the *Iliad*, but war against Priam's descendants is a recognizable motif.[96] Racing along the beach is certainly apt for 'swift-footed Achilles', and who is not susceptible to Helen's charm?[97] Dramatized, or perhaps over-dramatized, these actions may be, but the epic Achilles is visible at the back of them.

Conclusion

Achilles' active nature, as well as the number and diversity of his cults, seems at first glance to draw him into the same group as Heracles and the Dioscuri: figures whose immortalization in myth *and* cult gives them divine status. However, there is a difference. Although Achilles' cult on Leuke attracted dedications from far afield, his capacity for

[95] Singing and playing: Philostr. *Her.* 55.2–3; Max. Tyr. 9.6–7. Sounds of horses, clash of armour, war cries: Philostr. *Her.* 56.2. The racecourse: Lycoph. *Alex.* 192–200; Plin. *HN* 4.83; Pomponius Mela 2.5. Priam's descendant: Philostr. *Her.* 56.6–10. Love songs to Helen: Philostr. *Her.* 54.12.

[96] E.g. Achilles and the deaths of Priam's sons in the *Iliad*: Griffin (n. 3), 119–20, 113 n. 20; note also the sacrifice of Polyxena at the behest of Achilles' eidolon (*Ilioupersis* in Procl. *Chrest.*; Eur. *Hec.* 107–29, 304–5, 389–90). Another example may be found in the relationships which affect his cult at Tanagra (Plut. *Quaest. Graec.* 37 [299c–e]).

[97] Helen and Achilles in *Cypria*: summary in Procl. *Chrest.*; Currie (n. 8), 292–3.

action was restricted to his local sphere – and this is also true of the early cults of Achilles elsewhere. So whereas both Achilles and the Dioscuri can help you if you are in a storm at sea, Achilles can only help you if you are near Leuke, whereas the Dioscuri can help you anywhere, as Arrian makes clear:

Οἱ δὲ καὶ ὕπαρ λέγουσιν φανῆναί σφισιν ἐπὶ τοῦ ἱστοῦ ἢ ἐπ' ἄκρου τοῦ κέρως τὸν Ἀχιλλέα, καθάπερ τοὺς Διοσκόρους· τοσόνδε μόνον τῶν Διοσκούρων μεῖον ἔχειν τὸν Ἀχιλλέα, ὅσον οἱ μὲν Διόσκουροι τοῖς πανταχοῦ πλοϊζομένοις ἐναργεῖς φαίνονται καὶ φανέντες σωτῆρες γίνονται, ὃ δὲ τοῖς πελάζουσιν ἤδη τῇ νήσῳ.

And some say that Achilles appears to them on the mast and at the ends of the yards, like the Dioscuri; and in this alone Achilles is lesser than the Dioscuri, that they appear to those sailing everywhere and in appearing they keep them safe, but Achilles appears only to those sailing near the island.

(Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.*)

While the finds indicate a much broader scope for the hero than just the area around Leuke, they do not indicate the capacity for action outside Olbian territory.

As noted above, and unlike Achilles, the Dioscuri operate outside the normal parameters for hero-cult and for mythical immortalization, according to which they should be constitutionally unable to fly across the sea to one's aid. The difference is that, with regard to the Dioscuri or Heracles or the rest, we are looking at figures who are used to explore the ramifications of different *kinds of immortality*. They are tools to think about what different forms immortality may take, and which aspects of it are most desirable. The long-lived, happy, isolated lives of mythical heroes, and cult heroes' ability to influence the lives of men and give benefits, usually considered as separate and debatable concepts, are united in the Dioscuri to form entities who are to all intents and purposes gods. In Achilles, conversely, we are looking at different *aspects of death*. The hero of hero-cult exists between the living and the dead: for Achilles, the scales are weighted towards death. The tradition of Achilles' choice and consequent death, found in its most absolute form in the *Iliad*, is deeply rooted in all his myths, and underlies even the version in which he is snatched away to a better place *after* death.

Paradoxically, it is the certainty of his death that allows him such a rich variety of afterlives. Unlike Heracles and the Dioscuri, Achilles' myth and cult do not arise from a contradiction: they match each other perfectly. The hero of hero-cult draws his power, and the degree

of immortality which he possess with it, from the underworld: he is a hero and an object of cult because he is dead. Both as epic hero and as cult hero Achilles is ineluctably committed to death. The totality of his identity in myth and cult fulfils his extraordinary potential; his life after death explores every kind of variation, with the one proviso that he is, always, dead.

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