

Homer and the Good Ruler in Antiquity and Beyond

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The Birth of the Princes' Mirror in the Homeric Epics

Irene J.F. de Jong

Introduction: Homer, Educator of the Greeks?

One of the topics of this volume is the reception of the Homeric epics as a Princes' Mirror, i.e. these texts having been read throughout the ages as a source of instruction for young elite readers. This educational reception can be compared to others, such as reading the *Iliad* as a poem about post-traumatic stress, or the *Odyssey* as a poem about nostalgia or as the first *Bildungsroman*. The Homeric epics share this long and colourful history of reception with other great works of world literature, and such multifarious receptions actually explain their status as classic or canonical texts.

When looking at different strands of reception it is always interesting to ask whether a particular later reading tallies with the intentions of the author himself. Thus Verdenius in his discussion of 'Homer the educator of the Greeks'¹ rightly suggests that we should distinguish between 'educational influence' and 'educational intention'.² Homer's educational influence is unmistakable, has been traced for both antiquity and modern times, and is tangible up until the present day in our word 'mentor'.³ But how about his educational intention? This, of course, is more slippery terrain, but there are some famous defenders: Jaeger, Havelock, and Verdenius himself.

Jaeger in his classic study *Paideia* goes furthest of all. He declares Homer not only the educator of the Greeks but 'the teacher of all humanity' and considers both poems *in their entirety* as forms of education, both explicit and

1 Verdenius with his title of course refers to Plato *Republic* 10.606e2–3 (τὴν Ἑλλάδα πεπαιδευκεν οὗτος ὁ ποιητής).

2 Cf. Griffith (2001) 33–34: 'Whether or not (as some have claimed) the original purpose of the *Iliad* was precisely to provide a comprehensive ethical reference work for the young, the poems certainly came to play such a role'. The *Homer Encyclopedia*, edited by Finkelberg (2011), distinguishes between 'Education in Homer' and 'Homer in Education'.

3 See e.g. Verdenius (1970) 5–19, Clarke (1981), Howie (1995) 142–146, Lamberton (1997), Den Boer (2004), and Finkelberg (2012). The origin of the concept of a mentor as derived from the figure of Mentor is to be found in Fénelon's *Les Aventures de Télémaque*.

implicit.⁴ Explicit education takes place in the conversation between Phoenix and Achilles in *Iliad* 9 or Telemachus' travels in *Odyssey* 1–4. Implicit education is inherent in the genre of epic poetry in general, whose 'educational aim and influence are far greater than that of all other types of poetry, because it gives an objective picture of life as a whole, and portrays men at hand-grips with destiny, struggling to win a noble prize' (43).

Havelock also sees both Homeric poems as in their entirety providing instruction in matters political, religious, and even technical. He notoriously speaks of 'Homer as a sort of tribal encyclopaedia', and contends that 'the tale is made subservient to the task of accommodating the weight of educational materials which lie within it'. If you want to know how to beach a ship, you only have to read *Iliad* 1.432–436.⁵

Verdenius, finally, argues that Jaeger and Havelock are going too far in seeing the Homeric epics as educational in their entirety but comes up with a list of stray didactic remarks, passages where information is given that is irrelevant within the context of the story but that the poet wishes to share with his addressees. One of his examples is 'Mentor'/Athena saying to Telemachus that 'few sons indeed are like their fathers; most are worse, and those better than their fathers are few' (*Odyssey* 2.276–277).⁶

It will be obvious that as a narratologist who has devoted much of her career to defending the art of Homeric storytelling I am not fond of an approach like that of Verdenius, which refuses to see the function of a passage within the context of the story itself, or that of Havelock, which sees the story as a mere vehicle for encyclopaedic information. At the same time, I do believe that Homer intended his own poems to be more than mere entertainment. His task is to keep alive the memory of the *klea andrōn*, and this endeavour arguably encompasses both a historiographical and an educational aspect.⁷ This opens the way to connecting Homer with the later genre of the Princes' Mirror, which

4 Jaeger ([1933] 1946) 3–56, quotation from p. 39. His idealistic reading of Homer is, of course, influenced by the dark historical times in which he wrote. Cf. his remark in the preface to the German edition: 'The book is meant not only for scholars, but for all who seek to rediscover the approach to Greece during our present struggles to maintain our millennial civilization' (ix).

5 Havelock (1963) 61–96, quotations from 66 and 61.

6 Verdenius (1970) 20–27. More recent defenders of an educational intent on Homer's part are Howie (1995) and Classen (2008).

7 For the Homeric epics as proto-historiography, see De Jong (2001) ad *Od.* 8.487–491, with references to further bibliography.

I define as a (narrative or discursive⁸) text used for the instruction of a young person destined to be a ruler.⁹

The reason why I dare to speak of the birth of the Princes' Mirror in Homer is the presence of quite a few passages where we see young rulers being educated via tales about model rulers,¹⁰ such tales being called 'the secret of Homeric pedagogy' by Marrou in his classic discussion of ancient education.¹¹ In what follows I will first select from the larger category of Homeric tales or embedded narratives those that can be considered proto-Princes' Mirrors and then discuss (a selection of) them.

Embedded Narratives as Proto-Princes' Mirrors

Homeric embedded narratives can be divided into two groups: those told by internal (secondary) narrators, i.e. characters telling about events from their own past, like Nestor, Phoenix, Eumaeus, Menelaus, Agamemnon, and Odysseus, and those told by external (secondary) narrators, i.e. characters telling about events in which they have not participated themselves and which often belong to a more distant past, like Phoenix telling the story of Meleager, Agamemnon recounting the story of Zeus' delusion at the moment of Hercules' birth, Achilles relating the story of Niobe, and Antinous the story of the Centaurs and Lapiths.¹²

8 By 'discursive' I mean a text that takes the form of a series of instructions, such as we find e.g. in Hesiod's *Works and Days* and Machiavelli's *The Prince*, but also in the Iliadic parting speeches of Peleus and Menoetius to be discussed below.

9 Cf. Schulte (2001) who calls the Homeric epics 'Vorläuferliteratur' and M. Roberts in the *Brill New Pauly*, s.v. Princes' Mirror: 'Homeric poetry formed the basis for the tradition of the PM for a millennium'.

10 Discussed briefly by Jaeger ([1933] 1946) 32–34 and 40–41, Verdenius (1970) 24–25, and Howie (1995) 150–154.

11 Marrou (1948) 38. He defines the tales as 'de grands exemples empruntés à la geste légendaire, exemples qui doivent éveiller en eux l'instinct agonistique, le désir de rivaliser'.

12 Lists of embedded narratives can be found in Gaisser (1969) 6–7 (she also includes narratives, or 'digressions' as she calls them, told by the primary narrator), De Jong (2004) 18–22, and Minchin (2007) 35–36. The 'para-narratives' of Alden (2000) is the broadest category since she includes the Shield of Achilles. Note that gods too can tell stories, e.g. *Il.* 1.590–594, 14.249–261, 15.18–30, 18.395–405, 21.441–457. Although having a paradigmatic function these never are a Princes' Mirror: the nature of the gods in Homer is set and they are not educated.

Most embedded narratives have an 'argument' function: they are told by one character to another character to make a point.¹³ Even narratives that answer questions for factual information like 'who are you?' or 'what happened?' usually also bring across a message. That message or argument is often of a paradigmatic nature: the character tells a story in order to encourage or dissuade his addressee to act in a certain way. Yet not all paradigmatic stories are Princes' Mirrors and conversely non-paradigmatic stories too can serve as Princes' Mirrors. My main criterion for considering a Homeric tale a proto-Princes' Mirror is that it is told to a young person or to a person who is at least considerably younger than the speaker and who therefore can be expected to learn from the model held up to him. This means that the Niobe paradigm, told by Achilles to Priam, is not included. I have also excluded negative or dissuasive paradigms. Of course one can teach someone a lesson by telling him which model *not* to follow, as Phoenix famously does when telling Achilles about Meleager, and this embedded narrative is mentioned by both Verdenius and Marrou as an instance of an educational tale. But I think it belongs to the essence of the Princes' Mirror that the young ruler is given a positive model to follow. The 'mirror' he is given to look at is a person to be imitated rather than rejected. This leaves me with the four autobiographical tales told by Nestor about his own younger self (*Iliad* 1.267–273, 7.132–156, 11.671–761, 23.629–643), the Orestes story told to Telemachus (*Odyssey* 1.298–302, 3.193–200), and a series of tales told about fathers to their sons: the tale about Tydeus told to Diomedes (*Iliad* 4.372–399, 5.800–813), the tale about Peleus and Menoetius told to Achilles and Patroclus (*Iliad* 9.252–259, 438–443, 11.765–790), and the tales about Odysseus told to Telemachus (*Odyssey* 1.255–264, 3.120–129, 4.240–264, 266–289).

It need not come as a surprise that more than half of the Homeric 'Princes' Mirrors' involve fathers and sons. Lacking a public educational system, education in the archaic Greek world was in the hands of fathers. 'For most free, non-elite Greeks, the main occupation for which they had to be trained was that of their father', and the education of the elite likewise operated 'entirely through family networks'.¹⁴ The Homeric epics amply illustrate such education by fathers or members of the family: we see old Phoenix instructing, or rather trying to instruct Achilles in Troy, continuing the work he started when Achilles was still a toddler (*Iliad* 9.432–605); Nestor advising his son Antilochus how to drive his chariot in the funeral games for Patroclus (*Iliad* 23.306–348); 'Men-

13 For the term 'argument', see Andersen (1987) 4–5.

14 Griffith (2001), quotations from pp. 29 and 35.

tor'/Athena, an old friend of Odysseus, accompanying Telemachus on his first trip abroad (*Odyssey* 3.13–30); and Odysseus coaching his son Telemachus during the run up to their revenge on the suitors (*Odyssey* 16.300–303, 476–477; 20.385–386; 21.129, 431–434).

In what follows I will discuss briefly the (well-known) tales about Nestor, Tydeus, Orestes, and Odysseus, and devote most of my attention to the tale about Peleus and Menoetius, which has been analysed less often.

Nestor as Model for Patroclus

Four times Nestor recounts stories about his younger self which function as paradigms. In Book 1 he tells Achilles and Agamemnon how he once gave advice to the Lapiths in their battle against the Centaurs (he does not specify on what matter) and how these heroes listened to him, the obvious message being that Achilles and Agamemnon should listen to him now (which they do not). In Book 7 he recalls how he once successfully fought a duel against the frightening Ereuthalion when all others were afraid, thus successfully encouraging the hesitating Greeks to accept Hector's challenge. And in Book 23 he recounts how in the funeral games for the Epeian king Amarynceus he was beaten in a chariot race, thus implicitly exhorting Menelaus not to quarrel over his second prize in the chariot race which forms part of the funeral games for Patroclus.¹⁵ These three paradigmatic tales show Nestor as a quintessential 'doer of deeds', both martial and athletic, and 'speaker of words', in short as the embodiment of the heroic ideal (*Iliad* 9.443), and thus function clearly as an early form of a Princes' Mirror.¹⁶

The fourth and longest of Nestor's tales is more complex. In Book 11 he tells Patroclus about a skirmish between the Pyliaans and Epeians in his youth. The Eleans steal cattle from the Pyliaans, who are weakened because Heracles had killed many of their best men. The Pyliaans retaliate, attack and defeat the Epeians, but then the Epeians invade Pyliaan territory to seek vengeance.

15 This last interpretation derives from Alden (2000) 103–110. Nestor's tales are discussed in the general studies on paradigms in Homer (Austin [1966], Gaisser [1969], Alden [2000], and Minchin [2007]) and in specific studies (Pedrick [1983], Toohey [1994], Primavesi [2000], and Minchin [2005]).

16 Cf. Austin (1966) 303: 'Having already proved his worth in heroic encounters, he sets his life before the young heroes as paradigm. Now it is their turn to prove their character.' On the reception of the good ruler as a 'doer of deeds and a speaker of words', see esp. Klooster in this volume.

Nestor's father forbids his son to participate in the fight, but Nestor disobeys and plays a major role in defeating the invaders, among other things by killing their leader Moulos and chasing the enemy into their own territory until he is stopped by Athena. Upon his return he is looked upon as a god by the grateful citizens. Having told this autobiographical tale Nestor then goes on to remind Patroclus of what his father Menoetius had once said to him (a tale I will discuss in the last part of the chapter), and concludes by advising Patroclus to try and persuade Achilles to return to battle and, if Achilles will not listen, to put on the latter's armour himself and lead the Myrmidons into battle.

Nestor's story about his role in the fight with the Epeians provides Patroclus with a model, as ancient scholiasts already saw.¹⁷ Nestor shows Patroclus how, just as he himself dared to oppose his father, he could come up with a line of action that goes against the will of Achilles, viz. to lead the Myrmidons into battle again.¹⁸ In this way Patroclus could become the saviour of the Greeks, who like the Pylans in Nestor's story are weakened by the death or wounding of many of their best men, and chase the Trojans from the Greek ships. Patroclus lets himself be instructed by Nestor and follows his example but the result will not be the same: he does oppose Achilles' refusal to aid the Greeks and asks him to let him lead the Myrmidons into battle in his stead; like Nestor, he kills a champion of the enemy, Sarpedon, and many Trojans, chases them into their own territory, right until the walls of Troy, and is eventually stopped by a god; but instead of returning home he is killed by Hector.

This case shows that, just as in financial matters, 'past performance is no guarantee of future results'. What was successful behaviour for Nestor in the past is not successful behaviour for Patroclus in the present.¹⁹ Behind Nestor

17 Schol. bT *Il.* 11.717–718: τεχνικῶς τῷ παραδείγματι τὸν Πάτροκλον διδάσκει, εἰ καὶ Ἀχιλλεὺς αὐτὸν εἴργει, λαθόντα προσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν μάχην, 'he artfully teaches Patroclus through the paradigm that, even if Achilles withholds him, he should go to battle secretly', and schol. A *Il.* 11.717–718: προτρέπει τὸν Πάτροκλον, δι' ὧν αὐτὸς καὶ νέος καὶ ὑπὸ πατρός κωλυόμενος ὕμῳς πεζὸς ἐξῆλθεν, 'he encourages Patroclus in that he himself, although young and restrained by his father, nevertheless went to battle on feet (i.e. lacking a chariot)'. In general for the discussion of paradigmatic stories in the Homeric scholia, see Nünlist (2009) 261–264.

18 Cf. Vetten (1990) 85–93, Hainsworth (1993) ad *Il.* 11.670–762, Alden (2000) 88–101, and Primavesi (2000) 57. Many scholars argue that Nestor's tale is actually meant for Achilles: Schadewaldt ([1938] 1966) 87, Austin (1966) 302–303, Pedrick (1983) 59–61, and Martin (1989) 80–81. This interpretation is impossible, however, in that Patroclus when facing Achilles in Book 16 does report Nestor's suggestion that he should fight in Achilles' armour but does *not* repeat, not even in abbreviated form, his autobiographical tale.

19 Nestor gives sensible advice but is overruled by the will of Zeus (cf. *Il.* 16.688–691), who

holding up himself as a mirror to Patroclus we may discern Homer showing his narratees, amongst whom will have been many a young aristocrat, how a positive and successful model may actually effect a tragic result.

Tydeus as Model for Diomedes

With the figure of Tydeus we encounter our first proto-Princes' Mirror involving a father-son relationship. Indeed, as Andersen notes, there is no other Homeric hero for whom the image of his father is so important.²⁰ Twice the martial and athletic valour of his father Tydeus is held up to Diomedes as a model to follow, by Agamemnon and by Athena, the two passages referring to the same event. When the army of the Seven against Thebes approached the city, they sent Tydeus as an ambassador. He beat all Thebans in athletic contests and then, upon being ambushed on his way back, killed nearly fifty Thebans. His exceptional courage is stressed by his fighting alone against many opponents (cf. *πολέας*: 4.385, *μῦνος* ... *πολέσιν*: 389, *πολέας*: 5.804).²¹

Both speakers hold up the example of Tydeus by way of contrast, claiming that Diomedes is lagging behind his father (4.370–371, 399–400; 5.800, 812–813). This claim is hardly to be taken at face value. Rather, it is (in the case of Agamemnon) part of the genre of the *neikos* and (in the case of Athena) of the *paraenesis*: both exhortatory types of speech tend to contain an element of (usually feigned) criticism which serves to stimulate the addressee.²² Indeed, Diomedes accepts, first in silence (4.401–402), then with words (413–414), Agamemnon's *neikos* and follows the example of his father in performing a major *aristeia*.²³

already in 8.476 had decided that Patroclus would die. On Nestor as counsellor, see Roisman (2005).

20 Andersen (1978) 34.

21 As Andersen (1978) 34–35 notes, both speakers of course avoid mentioning the battle of the Seven itself, since on that occasion Tydeus lost his life and the Seven lost the war.

22 Cf. Andersen (1978) 39 and Alden (2000) 120.

23 Cf. Pratt (2009) 150. Differently Graziosi & Haubold (2010) 38, who contend that Tydeus is a problematic role model for Diomedes: 'Whether or not Diomedes has any direct memory of his father, other characters in the *Iliad* keep reminding him about Tydeus and telling him to be like him [...] and the audience know what that means: in the *Iliad* Tydeus is remembered as a savage warrior. He marched against Thebes disregarding the will of the gods and thus played a leading role in one of the greatest disasters described in the poem: *Il.* 4.370–400 and 4.404–410. Diomedes wavers between emulating his father when he is on the attack (*Il.* 5.115–117, 10.283–294; cf. 5.252–256) and rejecting him as a model when

One detail demands our attention in the tale about Tydeus: both Agamemnon and later Diomedes himself stress that they only know about Tydeus' exploits from hearsay: 4.374–375, 6.222–223 (and cf. 14.125). Scholars have given different interpretations of this fact: Diomedes, by pretending or stressing that he had never seen his father, would distance himself from him²⁴ or would be characterized as a fatherless hero, who as a result of lacking a father has no empathy and is an 'utterly pitiless' warrior.²⁵ I would suggest a different reading: the references to hearsay acknowledge that Tydeus has already become a figure of legend or *kleos*. Even people who have never seen him know about him from the tales told about him. Thus Tydeus is more than just a model for a son learning from his father: his exploits are encoded in tales and he has already become a 'literary' model for many more young persons.

A similar and perhaps even clearer example of such a 'literary' proto-Princes' Mirror is the figure of Orestes.

Orestes as Model for Telemachus

The 'Oresteia' story is a well-known foil to the *Odyssey*, in which as a rule 'Agamemnon parallels Odysseus, Clytemnestra Penelope, and Orestes Telemachus'.²⁶ The part of the story in which Orestes kills the murderer of his father, Aegisthus, is twice explicitly held up as mirror to Telemachus, by 'Mentes'/Athena and by Nestor, partly in identical words. It is meant to encourage him to contemplate revenge on the suitors, if he should find out that his father has died and is unable himself to take revenge. If a young man like Orestes could do it, then he can, too. Moreover, Orestes won *kleos*, glory, with his revenge (*Odyssey* 1.299), an attractive prospect to Telemachus, who deplors his lack of *kleos* (1.237–241) and craves for it (3.201–209). Athena using the word *kleos* in connection with the tale of Orestes makes explicit that we are dealing here with a 'literary' Princes' Mirror: it is the *terminus technicus* for the fame which is enshrined in a poem (and hence, according to the epic singers' own conceit, is eternal or undying).

he chooses to be less extreme, as here [in the meeting with Glaucus: *Il.* 6.119–236]. This interpretation of T. as a negative role model is hardly convincing in view of the fact that the disaster of the Seven against Thebes is *not* 'described in the poem' (see above n. 21).

24 Graziosi & Haubold (2010) 38 (quoted in n. 23) and their note ad *Il.* 6.222–223.

25 Pratt (2009), quotation from p. 143.

26 De Jong (2001) ad *Od.* 1.32–43 with bibliography.

Apart from Orestes Telemachus is also, like Diomedes, given his own father as model.

Odyseus as Model for Telemachus

Telemachus is the prime example given by scholars who argue in favour of an educational intention on the part of Homer, and Porphyry was the first to speak of the *paideusis* of Telemachus.²⁷ As a result of his journey to Pylos and Sparta we see him change from a shy, inactive, uncertain youth into a man who takes initiatives, speaks out and assumes responsibility and who is hence mature enough to be introduced to the scheme of Odyseus' incognito return at an early stage and to take revenge on the suitors shoulder to shoulder with his father.²⁸ As always in Greek literature, the development of a character is not radical but rather entails the realization of inborn—and often inherited—qualities.²⁹ Thus already in Book 1 Telemachus instinctively adopts the cunning of his father when he does not reveal to the suitors what he has just discussed with 'the stranger'/Athena, let alone the stranger's true identity as a god, and from the beginning he is given the epithet *πεπνυμένος*, 'shrewd'.³⁰ But it is also clear that his first journey abroad and encounters with adults like Nestor, Helen, and Menelaus (who moreover tell him stories about his father Odyseus) have a 'decisive formative influence on the youth'.³¹ In a way we could compare Telemachus' situation with that of Diomedes: he too has never seen his father, at least not consciously (he was a baby when Odyseus left), and rather than being educated directly by his own father must rely on tales about him. The difference is, however, that he hears about his father from named eyewitnesses

27 Schol. *Od.* 1.284. Cf. Jaeger ([1933] 1946) 31–32, d'Arms & Hulley (1946) 208, Clarke ([1967] 1989) 32, Austin (1969) 56, and the subtitle of Petropoulos (2011) 'The Homeric Education of a Little Prince'.

28 For discussions of the maturing of Telemachus, see Klingner ([1944] 1964), Millar & Carmichael (1954), Rose (1967), Clarke ([1967] 1989) 30–44, Austin (1969), Scheid-Tissinier (1993), Roisman (1994), Heath (2001), and Petropoulos (2011). According to Olson (1995) 65–90, he does not develop.

29 For the principle of the apple not falling far from the tree, see *Od.* 4.206–211 and 16.300–304. For characters saying that Telemachus resembles his father, see *Od.* 1.206–212; 2.270–280; 3.122–125; 4.141–146, 149–150, 611.

30 On this epithet see Roisman (1994) 7–9 and Heath (2001).

31 Cf. Austin (1969) 56: 'Through the stories which his hosts tell him he is introduced to the models of the heroic life. [...] Of all the paradigms held up before him, by far the most important, the one to which most attention is given, is that of his father.'

rather than from the anonymous collective voice of tradition ('they say'), as Diomedes did, which makes his education via the model of his father a more forceful one.

The model of his father that is presented to Telemachus is overwhelmingly that of a cunning man and this clearly is the 'pre-eminent characteristic of his father's which he should emulate'.³² Nestor puts it summarily: in Troy 'no man ventured to vie with him in counsel, since noble Odysseus far excelled in all kind of wiles, your father' (*Odyssey* 3.121–122). And Helen and Menelaus flesh out Nestor's qualification by telling about Odysseus' visit to Troy disguised as a beggar and his leadership of the men inside the Wooden Horse, who forced them to keep silent when Helen addresses them. Telemachus is thus taught that *mētis* sometimes is more effective than *biē* and that in certain situations it is better not to speak out one's mind. In the revenge on the suitors he will show himself a model pupil who, now further coached directly by his own father, knows when to keep silent and how to keep a secret.³³

The fact that the inculcation of cunning should form part of a Greek prince's education need not come as a surprise and it was also well understood by Machiavelli (e.g. in *The Prince*, Chapter 18). But it is interesting to see Jaeger struggling here with Homer's role as 'teacher of humanity'. His distaste of 'the cunning storm-tossed adventurer' Odysseus is unmistakable: his role in the fall of Troy 'made it necessary to glorify his character', but 'the Greeks themselves, especially those of the mainland, did not accept this ideal without some objections'.³⁴

Peleus and Menoetius and the Instruction of Achilles and Patroclus

My last instance of a Homeric scene that can be interpreted as a forerunner of the Princes' Mirror concerns Peleus and Menoetius instructing their sons Achilles and Patroclus when they depart for Troy. This event forms part of the tale of the visit of Odysseus and Nestor to Phthia in order to recruit

32 Austin (1969) 56–57. ('Odysseus is presented as the heroic man, favoured by Athena, who fought bravely, but he is also presented as the supremely cunning strategist. Of the two aspects it is his cunning which receives greater recognition than his heroic conduct.')

33 Cf. Austin (1969) 57: 'Telemachos' journey had been the largely theoretical side of his education; in Ithaka comes the chance for practical education, in Telemachos' observation and imitation of *il maestro*, Odysseus himself.'

34 Jaeger ([1933] 1946) 22. Classen likewise is struggling: he wants to distil 'Wahrhaftigkeit' as a Homeric ideal (2008: 175–181), cannot pass over Odysseus' cunning, yet quickly adds 'Doch sonst wurden Täuschung und Betrug immer wieder verurteilt' (180).

Achilles. This recruiting visit is referred to on six occasions (*Iliad* 7.124–131; 9.252–259, 438–443; 11.765–790; 18.324–327; 23.144–149), which together yield the following picture. Odysseus and Nestor arrive in Phthia to seek participants in the expedition against Troy (11.769–770). Achilles and Patroclus are eager to participate (11.782), but Peleus is reluctant to let his only son go and asks Nestor who else is joining the expedition (7.127–128). When he hears the names of illustrious heroes he allows his son to go, realizing that it will be an opportunity for him to win *kleos*. But since Achilles is still young and inexperienced Peleus sends his tutor Phoenix with him. At the moment of his departure he gives his son instructions (9.252–258, 11.783–784), as does Menoetius with his son Patroclus (11.785–789). Achilles promises Menoetius to bring back Patroclus (18.324–327), while Peleus promises the river Spercheius that Achilles, upon his safe return home from the war, will sacrifice his hair and a hecatomb (23.144–149).³⁵

This ‘Princes’ Mirror’ is somewhat different from my previous examples in that it *tells about* fathers educating their sons in the form of a series of *instructions* and thus combines the narrative and the discursive. The parting scene actually is an instance of a recurrent theme in Homer. There are two other places where we hear about a father instructing his son upon his departure for war, and verbal echoes confirm the traditional nature of the theme:

Lycaon instructs Pandarus (*Iliad* 5.197–200):

ἦ μὲν μοι μάλα πολλὰ γέρων αἰχμητὰ Λυκάων
 ἔρχομένῳ ἐπέτελλε δόμοις ἔνι ποιητοῖσιν·
 ἵπποισίν μ’ ἐκέλευε καὶ ἄρμασιν ἐμβεβαῶτα
 ἀρχεῦειν Τρώεσσι κατὰ κρατερὰς ὑσμίνας·

Truly the old spearman Lycaon instructed me many times in his strong-built house as I went here: he urged me to mount a chariot and lead the Trojans in the strong encounters.³⁶

Hippolochus instructs Glaucus (*Iliad* 6.207–211):

πέμπε δέ μ’ ἐς Τροίην, καὶ μοι μάλα πόλλ’ ἐπέτελλεν
 αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων,

35 For a similar reconstruction, see Avery (1998). I agree with most of his interpretation but not with his central thesis that Agamemnon should be seen as Achilles’ third father (after Peleus and Phoenix).

36 Since my concern is to show the resemblances in phrasing I give my own translations.

μηδὲ γένος πατέρων αἰσχυνέμεν, οἱ μέγ' ἄριστοι
 ἔν τ' Ἐφύρῃ ἐγένοντο καὶ ἐν Λυκίῃ εὐρείῃ.

And he sent me to Troy and instructed me many times always to be bravest and to excel over others and not bring disgrace on the stock of my forefathers, who were by far the bravest in Ephyra and broad Lycia.

Peleus instructs Achilles (*Iliad* 9.252–259):

ἦ μὲν σοί γε πατήρ ἐπετέλλετο Πηλεὺς
 ἤματι τῷ ὅτε σ' ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπε·
 'τέκνον ἐμόν, κάρτος μὲν Ἀθηναίη τε καὶ Ἥρη
 δώσουσ' αἶ κ' ἐθέλωσι, σὺ δὲ μεγαλήτορα θυμὸν
 ἴσχειν ἐν στήθεσσι· φιλοφροσύνη γὰρ ἀμείνων·
 ληγέμεναι δ' ἔριδος κακομηχάνου, ὄφρα σε μάλλον
 τίωσ' Ἀργείων ἡμὲν νέοι ἢ δὲ γέροντες·
 ὡς ἐπέτελλ' ὁ γέρων, σὺ δὲ λήθεαι·

Truly your father Peleus instructed you on the day when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon: 'My dear child, strength Athena and Hera will give you, if such is their wish, but you must restrain your passionate *thumos* in your breast. For good will among friends is better. And you must stop evil-bringing quarrelling, in order for the Greeks, both young and old, to honour you all the more.' Thus the old man instructed, but you are forgetting his words.

Peleus instructs Phoenix to educate Achilles (*Iliad* 9.438–443):

σοὶ δέ μ' ἔπεμπε γέρων ἱππηλάτα Πηλεὺς
 ἤματι τῷ ὅτε σ' ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπε
 νήπιον οὗ πω εἰδὸθ' ὁμοίου πολέμοιο
 οὐδ' ἀγορέων, ἵνα τ' ἄνδρες ἀριπρεπέες τελέθουσι.
 τοῦνεκά με προέηκε διδασκόμεναι τάδε πάντα,
 μύθων τε ῥητῆρ' ἔμεναι πρηκτῆρά τε ἔργων.

The old horseman Peleus sent me to you on the day when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon, still a child and not yet experienced in war or debate, where men can become distinguished. That is why he sent me to teach you all these things, to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.

Peleus instructs Achilles and Menoetius instructs Patroclus (*Iliad* 11.765–790):

ὦ πέπον, ἦ μὲν σοί γε Μενοίτιος ὦδ' ἐπέτελλεν
 ἤματι τῷ ὅτε σ' ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπε,
 [...]

τὼ δ' ἄμφω πόλλ' ἐπέτελλον.

Πηλεὺς μὲν ᾧ παιδί γέρων ἐπέτελλ' Ἀχιλλῆϊ
 αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων·
 σοὶ δ' αὖθ' ὦδ' ἐπέτελλε Μενοίτιος Ἄκτορος υἱός·
 'τέκνον ἐμὸν, γενεῆ μὲν ὑπέρτερός ἐστιν Ἀχιλλεύς,
 πρεσβύτερος δὲ σύ ἐσσι· βίη δ' ὅ γε πολλὸν ἀμείνων.
 ἀλλ' εὖ οἱ φάσθαι πυκινὸν ἔπος ἢδ' ὑποθέσθαι
 καὶ οἱ σημαίνειν· ὃ δὲ πείσεται εἰς ἀγαθὸν περ·
 ὡς ἐπέτελλ' ὁ γέρων, σὺ δὲ λήθεται.

My dear, truly Menoetius instructed you thus on the day when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon [...] They both instructed much. Old Peleus instructed his son Achilles always to be bravest and to excel over others. And you Menoetius the son of Actor instructed thus: 'My child, by birth Achilles is superior to you, but you are older. In force he is much stronger. But you must expertly speak sensible words to him, advise him, and guide him. And he will listen to you all for the best.' Thus the old man instructed, but you are forgetting his words.

We see that in all cases a father instructs his son (or has his son instructed) about how to show himself a true hero in the war to which he is about to depart.

Let us now take a closer look at the instruction by Peleus and Menoetius. In 9.252–259 it is Odysseus who, addressing Achilles, reminds him of the instructions of Peleus and even quotes the words spoken by his father in direct speech. The powerful effect, already noted by ancient scholiasts, is that Achilles seems to be hearing his father himself speaking to him.³⁷ At the same time, Peleus' words reveal some puzzling details: why would he, at the moment when Achilles departs, say 'stop quarrelling'. Scholars have adopted different solu-

37 See schol. bT *Il.* 11.786–789: ἵνα μὴ δόξωσιν οἱ ἀκούοντες μήτε Ὀδυσσεῖα μήτε Νέστορα τοὺς λέγοντας, ἀλλὰ τὸν πατέρα, 'in order that those who are listening do not think that they hear Odysseus or Nestor speaking, but their fathers'. In narratological terms we are dealing with metalepsis, in that the levels of narration collapse and tertiary narrators address secondary narratees. In De Jong (2013) I discuss more examples of metaleptic speech in epic and especially lyric.

tions: Ameis-Hentze write 'Achills leidenschaftliche Natur hatte sich schon früh gezeigt',³⁸ which means that Peleus already at the moment of departure foresees that his son would end up quarrelling sooner or later. In the same spirit Hammond translates 'And if a quarrel begins its mischief, you should abandon it'.³⁹ A more radical solution is that adopted by Hainsworth (1993: ad 9.251–258), who assumes the conversation between father and son never to have taken place: Peleus' words 'are too apposite to be other than virtually an example of what later rhetoricians called *prosopopeia*, the orator's assumption of a convenient personality in whose name he affects to speak. [...] the direct quotation of Peleus' alleged words is emotively effective. The quotation is an oblique way of saying δάμασον θυμὸν μέγαν (496), words that at this juncture would be unpolitic coming from Odysseus.⁴⁰ I find this an implausible solution: if Odysseus wants to persuade Achilles it seems a bad idea to do so via a lying tale about his father, a lie that his interlocutor could easily detect since he himself was supposed to have been present. Rather, Odysseus freely quotes Peleus' words and adapts them to suit the present situation: Achilles should make an end to the 'evil-bringing' quarrel with Agamemnon; if he does so, the Greeks will honour him more, i.e. they will restore the *timē* that Agamemnon, taking away Briseis, had diminished (cf. ἡτίμησεν: 1.507) and will increase it by bringing him the lavish compensation Odysseus has just listed.⁴¹ Such adaptation of the details of a story to the situation at hand, including even the adaptation of *ipsissima verba*, is a phenomenon often observed in the Homeric epics. In a society without writing there is less fixation on exactitude when representing the past: what counts is the general idea of what happened or what was said.⁴²

Shortly afterwards, in the course of the same embassy scene, Phoenix too recalls the parting scene: 9.438–443. The fact that we are dealing with the same scene is brought home to the narratees by the verbatim repetition ἤματι τῷ ὅτε σ' ἐκ Φθίης Ἀγαμέμνονι πέμπτε, 'on the day when he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon'. Phoenix' reference to the parting scene ostensibly serves to make clear that if Achilles returns home he will join him, since his father had sent him to accompany him (wherever he would go). But his reminder, like that of Odysseus, actually is aimed at exhorting Achilles to stay and return to

38 Ameis & Hentze (1930) ad *Il.* 9.257.

39 M. Hammond. 1987. *Homer. The Iliad: A New Prose Translation*. London.

40 Willcock (1977) 45–46 and Martin (1989) 61–62 also speak of 'the conversation which allegedly took place' and 'alleged instructions' (my italics).

41 This interpretation already in De Jong ([1987] 2004) 173–175.

42 See Andersen (1990).

battle. For days now Achilles has not been active in the assembly or on the battlefield (cf. 1.490–491), and reminding him, this time in indirect speech, that his father had asked him (Phoenix) to teach him (Achilles) ‘to be a speaker of words and doer of deeds’, he hopes to bring him back to action. Thus the tale forms part of Phoenix’ sustained strategy, involving other tales too (his autobiography and the Meleager story), to appeal to Achilles to give up his anger and resume fighting. Indeed, his position as Achilles’ tutor in the end allows him to say directly what Odysseus in 9.252–254 had only suggested obliquely via his reminiscence of Peleus’ parting instructions: ἄλλ’, Ἀχιλλεῦ, δάμασον θυμὸν μέγαν, ‘come, Achilles, curb your great anger’ (9.496).

The parting scene figures one last time in the context of Nestor’s long speech to Patroclus (Book 11) in which he also tells the autobiographical tale that I discussed earlier. Since the addressee this time is Patroclus, Nestor only briefly refers to Peleus’ instruction of Achilles.⁴³ Whereas Odysseus had quoted Peleus saying to Achilles not to quarrel, Nestor now recalls the part of his speech in which Peleus had said to his son ‘always to be bravest and to excel over others’. Thus Nestor focuses on Achilles as a doer of deeds, which is understandable in view of Menoetius’ instruction of Patroclus, which Nestor goes on to quote in direct speech, and which runs that since Achilles is the better fighter, Patroclus as his senior might give him sound advice. This reminder of his father’s instruction should, of course, persuade Patroclus to dare to stand up to Achilles, advising him to let him, Patroclus, fight with the Myrmidons.⁴⁴ As in Nestor’s earlier paradigmatic use of his own younger self, there is an element of dramatic irony in his words: Menoetius is quoted saying that listening to Patroclus will be ‘all for the best’ (εἰς ἀγαθὸν περ) for Achilles, and Nestor himself adds that ‘persuasion by a friend is good (ἀγαθή)’, but actually the result will be good for the Greeks at large but *not* for Achilles and Patroclus themselves, who both pay with their lives for listening to Nestor.

The parting scene is a special case, in that it is a *mise en abyme* or minor replica of the main story. Both the main story and the embedded story recount the instruction of a young man by an older man: in the past Achilles and Patroclus were instructed by their fathers, in the present they are instructed by

43 Hainsworth (1993) ad 11.786–789: ‘Here the pressure is on Patroklos and the important words are not those of Peleus (who are reduced to a formulaic verse in an indirect construction) but those of Menoitios.’

44 Nestor even urges Patroclus to remind Achilles of Menoetius’ words (790–791), which he does not do, however. Cf. Achilles urging Thetis to remind Zeus of her earlier assistance (*Il.* 1.396–407), which she does not do.

Odysseus, Phoenix, and Nestor. Once again we see the instruction of younger men by older ones misfire in Homer: the reminder of his father's instruction does *not* persuade Achilles, while it does persuade Patroclus but with fatal results for himself (and eventually Achilles).

Conclusion

A strong case can be made for the birth of the Princes' Mirror in Homer, i.e. Homer already knowing the principle of narratives or discourses being used to educate young men, those represented in his own text and arguably those listening to his poems. The Greeks at large are lectured by the old man *par excellence* in their ranks (Nestor), an adolescent is given a famous figure from 'literature' as a source of inspiration (Orestes), and sons are told about their fathers (Tydeus, Odysseus) or reminded of their fathers instructing them in the past (Peleus, Menoetius). What is striking is that looking in the mirror so often has a fatal effect for the young prince concerned. This fact in itself fits the tragic outlook of the *Iliad*, in which human beings do not know what the future has in store for them and their good intentions may be overruled by the plans of the gods.⁴⁵ But it is interesting to observe that the negative aspect of many Homeric proto-Princes' Mirrors has not precluded the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* themselves and many of its heroes from becoming role models for later generations. Readers have picked out from the text those elements they needed and closed their eyes to the less pleasant bits. Looking in a literary mirror, thus, is just as subjective and selective an activity as looking at reality.

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45 This tragic outlook, also evident in many other respects, is of course well known and much discussed, see e.g. Griffin (1980), Rutherford (1982), and Rinon (2008).

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