CHAPTER 4

Achilles in Control? *Managing Oneself and Others in the Funeral Games*

Adrian Kelly

> Wenn man auch nur gelebt hätte, um den dreiundzwanzigsten Gesang der Ilias zu lesen, so könnte man sich nicht über sein Daseyn beschweren.
>
> Friedrich Schiller (*ap*. von Wolzogen 1885: 335)

> … wo … die mannichfaltigsten Preise, von den verschiedenartigsten Helden, auf die verschiedenste Art gewonnen werden.
>
> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (*ap*. Lehrs 1882: 428)

Though great poets may appreciate the artistry and interest of the Funeral Games in Book 23 of the *Iliad*, it must be admitted that the entire episode can seem an interlude between the death of Hector in Book 22 and the final, pathetic meeting between Achilles and Priam in Book 24. This 'intermediate' status has caused its own difficulties, and so the games tend to be one of the more understudied and/or oversimplified parts of the poem, either a 'happy interlude' to provide a final 'curtain call' for its major figures,[1] or a dark story which shows only the inability of the

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[1] Cf. Taplin 1992: 253 (and 251–60 more generally): 'It is one of the main poetic functions of the funeral games to show Achilleus soothing and resolving public strife, instead of provoking and furthering it. The anger and competitive quarrelling during the games is reminiscent of the early scenes of the *Iliad*; but it never reaches a really ugly or damaging pitch, largely thanks to the courtesy of Achilleus'; also Macleod 1982: 30–1. For similarly positive readings, cf., e.g., Willcock 1973, Clay 1983: 176–80, Dunkle 1981 and 1987, Donlan 1993, Richardson 1993: 165–6, Scott 1997, Hammer 1997 and 2002, Kitchell 1998, Wilson 2002: 124–5, Kyle 2007: 54–71, Clay 2007, Scodel 2008a: 153–7.

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characters to change or avoid conflict over *timē*.[2] Polarised readings of this sort underestimate the episode's importance within the *Iliad*, either by using it as a mere introduction to a discussion of the final book or by cherry-picking its episodes in order to construct a picture of Homeric society as a whole, though they do at least focus our attention on conflict in the *Iliad* as a matter of both poetic form and social content. The present volume is more directly concerned with the poetics of conflict, but any discussion of that must to some extent reflect or depend on the social structures assumed in the Homeric poems. As part of that project, this chapter will try to combine these perspectives, to demonstrate that Homer uses the Funeral Games to return to the major conflict driving the narrative since Book 1 and to reflect with particular clarity and force on that motivating quarrel, within a more general discussion of the relationship between conflict and consensus in the *Iliad*.[3] Given his centrality to Homer's exploration of these themes, Achilles will inevitably be close to the centre of this analysis and, against much previous scholarship,[4] we will find a great deal to criticise in the way he goes about trying to deal with the poem's perennial problem – how to manage the distribution and redistribution of *timē*.

The Funeral Games are not the only element in the narrative of Book 23, of course, for they are (a rather large) part of Patroclus' funeral, which begins in Book 18 when Achilles hears the news of his friend's death. This entire sequence is an enormously expanded version of the usual funeral, more contracted examples of which we find in Book 7 and again in Book 24.[5]

As you can see from Table 2, the games themselves comprise the typical 'community activity' – in Book 7 the construction of the Greek wall, in

[2] Postlethwaite 1995: 102: 'From his studied indifference during the reconciliation, through his organisation of Achaian manpower including Agamemnon himself, to his arrangement of a truce with the enemy king, Achilleus displays himself as the social and military superior. Thus his supposed recognition of Agamemnon as "best in power and years" not only misrepresents what he actually says, but manifestly runs counter to the pervading picture of his relations with Agamemnon in the final books of the poem'; cf. also Donlan 1993, Stanley 1993: 224–32 (more progressivist), Allan/Cairns 2011: 136.

[3] This chapter focuses on the individuals driving these events, and so sets itself against those scholars who believe that the people are an important factor in Iliadic politics; cf., e.g., Hammer 1997, 2002: 134–43, and Elmer 2013: 187–97. Though community approbation is often (*not* always) seen as a mark of a good decision, the people do not have any more than a symbolic role in the decision-making processes of their *aristoi*; cf. also below, n. 11.

[4] Almost all of the works cited above, nn. 1 and 2, take a favourable view of his behaviour. Allan/Cairns 2011 is a notable, and welcome, exception.

[5] Cf. Edwards 1986; also Andronikos 1968: 34–7, Weiler 1981: 79–88, Laser 1987, Pedaros 1988.

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Table 2 *Funerals in the* Iliad

	7.416–41	24.718–804	18.22–24.4
(**1a**) lamentation	7.427	22.405–36 / 460–515 24.718–76	18.22–77, 18.314–55 19.282–338, 23.12–23
(**1b**) gathering wood	7.416–17 / 418–20	24.784 (9 days)	23.110–28
1st day			
(**2**) burning	7.429 / 430–2	24.786–7	23.161–225
2nd day			
(**3**) gathering ashes, burial, mound	7.435–6	24.789–801	23.226–57
(**4**) communal activity	7.436–41 (wall)	24.802–4 (meal)	23.257–24.3 (games)

Book 24 the meal in Priam's palace – though this does not exhaust their significance. Consider firstly this episode's role within the structural patterns ending the *Iliad*, where the funerals for Patroclus and Hector are deliberately paired, their thematic differences and varied emphases notwithstanding.[6] Whatever else is going on in these two scenes, their enormous scalar disparity demands that we pay attention to what is happening in the Greek camp. Moreover, the connection with the start of the poem, in its return to the image of a *basileus* in charge of redistribution[7] – and not merely in the ring-compositional way it mirrors the mustering of the Greek (and Trojan) army in the Catalogue of Ships[8] – shows that the episode is integral to our understanding of the poem as a whole.

Nor is this particularly surprising, if we think of the number of such games (funeral and otherwise) to appear in early Greek epic: not only those on Scheria (*Od.* 8.94–256; cf. also 214–20) or those celebrated in Thebes at the outbreak of the Seven's expedition (*Il.* 5.802–8), but also the two funeral games referred to in Book 23 itself (for Oedipus 678–80 and Amarynceus 629–43), for Achilles (*Od.* 24.85–92, *Aethiopis* arg. 22 p. 69 Bernabé), and for Amphidamas in Hesiod (*Op.* 650–62).[9] This is a

[6] Cf. Kelly 2007a: 382–4.

[7] Cf. Collins 1988: 99–102 for the parallels between Achilles and Agamemnon; also Donlan 1993: 160–2, 170–1, Wilson 2002: 124.

[8] Cf. Whitman 1958: 262–4, Macleod 1982: 28–32, Stanley 1993: 225, Scott 1997: 214, Kitchell 1998: 168.

[9] Cf. also *Il.* 22.158–66, 9.124–7, 11.698–702, 16.589–92, [Hes.] *Sc.* 301–13; Willis 1941: 392–5, Andronikos 1968: 34–7, Laser 1987: 21–5, Kyle 2007: 54–5 more generally, and Roller 1981 for the evidence of art and literature in the post-Homeric period.

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prominent and often used narrative sequence, and emphasis is frequently and naturally herein placed on the potential for staged conflict to spill over into, or indeed from, the surrounding social relationships. It does in Thebes, for example, where Tydeus' athletic and military prowess inflicts a double defeat on his hosts (*Il.* 4.385–90), but it is precisely the desire to avoid complicating his relationship with his host Alcinous that leads Odysseus to avoid competition with the young Phaeacian men (*Od.* 8.208–10).[10] So Patroclus' Funeral Games are intrinsically interesting, casting a powerful light on the main characters and their quarrels as they are constructed in the *Iliad*.[11]

The major responsibility for managing these situations belongs to those in control, and Achilles' behaviour during the course of Patroclus' funeral is clearly extreme. His grief is such that Antilochus prevents him from self-harm (18.32–5), he utters formal lamentation himself three times for his friend (18.314–42, 19.314–39, 23.12–23; see above) and is the only male in the Homeric poems to 'lead off' formal lamentation (cf. 18.51, 22.430, 24.723, 24.747, 24.761).[12] He barely sleeps or eats from the moment he hears of Patroclus' death to the end of his funeral, and his delay over that funeral requires the intervention of Patroclus' shade (23.69–71). Moreover, Achilles' grief is still as strong at the end of the funeral as at the start: when Book 24 opens, he is unable to sleep and continues his mistreatment of Hector's corpse (24.1–18). Whatever else happens to his behaviour in the Funeral Games, they effect little in terms of his state of grieving, and that continuity can be matched by several others.

The contests are introduced by Achilles with little fanfare after the funeral is finished, as he 'keeps back' the Greeks and brings out the prizes

[10] Cf. Donlan 1993: 161–2, Thalmann 1998: 133–40, Spariosu 1991: 18–19, Purves 2011: 537–48.

[11] Cf. Redfield 1975: 209, Scott 1997, Macleod 1982: 29–32, Dickie 1984a: 10, Spariosu 1991: 12–17. The Funeral Games have in recent times been analysed as a sign of a 'new' ethic or cultural development in the Greek camp, reflecting or heralding the emergence of the *polis*; cf. Donlan 1993, Seaford 1994 *passim* but esp. 159–64, Hammer 1997: 14–17, Hammer 2002, Brown 2003, Barker 2009: 86–7. This kind of analysis ignores Homer's traditional background, and thus too readily thinks in terms of a big-bang moment (cf., e.g., Brown 2003: 139–47, or Barker 2009: 1–85) leading into a process of cultural progression, and is more than a little reminiscent of Snell's discredited *Entdeckungsmethode*; cf. also above, n. 3.

[12] Priam's initial speech on seeing his dead son from the walls does not begin in this way, though it closes ὣς ἔφατο κλαίων· ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο πολῖται (22.429: 'so he spoke wailing, and the citizens added their groans'), which leads straight into Hecabe's lament (430: Τρωιῆισιν δ' Ἑκάβη ἀδινοῦ ἐξῆρχε γόοιο, 'and among the Trojan women Hecabe led off the close lamentation').

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Table 3 *The contests in the Funeral Games*

Event	Prizes	Participants	Results
1. **Chariot** (262–652)	(1) woman / tripod; (2) horse; (3) cauldron; (4) 2 tal. gold; (5) urn	(1) Eumelus; (2) Diomedes; (3) Menelaus; (4) Antilochus; (5) Meriones[a]	(1) Diomedes; (2) Antilochus; (3) Menelaus; (4) Meriones; [(5) Nestor]; (extra breastplate)
2. **Boxing** (653–99)	(1) mule; (2) cup	(1) Epeius; (2) Euryalus	(1) Epeius
3. **Wrestling** (700–39)	(1) tripod; (2) woman	(1) Ajax; (2) Odysseus	draw
4. **Running** (740–97)	(1) silver *krater*; (2) cow; (3) half talent gold	(1) Ajax *lesser*; (2) Odysseus; (3) Antilochus	(1) Odysseus; (2) Ajax; (3) Antilochus
5. **Armed duel** (798–825)	(1) Sarpedon's armour (split); (extra) sword	(1) Ajax *greater*; (2) Diomedes	draw? (extra) Diomedes
6. **Iron throwing** (826–49)	(1) iron	(1) Polypoites; (2) Leonteus; (3) Ajax; (4) Epeius[b]	(1) Polypoites
7. **Archery** (850–83)	(1) 10 axes; (2) 10 half-axes	(1) Teucer; (2) Meriones[c]	(1) Meriones; (2) Teucer
8. **Throwing** (884–97)	?(1) spear; ?(2) tripod	(1) Agamemnon; (2) Meriones	no contest: (1) Meriones; (2) Agamemnon

[a] Standing order; competing order (after a lot) is Antilochus – Eumelus – Menelaus – Meriones – Diomedes.
[b] Standing order; competing order is Epeius – Leonteus – Ajax – Polypoites.
[c] Standing order; competing order (after a lot) is Teucer – Meriones.

(23.257). He introduces the first event – the chariot race – in what turns out to be a standard manner: the poet specifies in his own voice the prizes for each position, and then Achilles issues an accompanying speech challenging those who would compete in the contest to step forward. There are eight contests in total (Table 3).[13]

[13] For an 'original' pentathlon (chariot race, boxing, wrestling, running, spear throwing; cf. 23.630–40), cf. Andronikos 1968: 36, Bannert 1988: 135–6, 148–51; *contra* Dunkle 1987: 9 n. 17 (with earlier bibliography). For reasons to think of the games as a deliberately structured unity, cf. below, pp. 106–8. For general studies of structure, cf. Arend 1933: 120, Bannert 1988: 129–51, Lohmann 1992, Scott 1997.

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By far the longest and most important of these is the first, the chariot race, and here is where much of the interest lies for this current examination, for there are three quarrels woven into this contest, the first between Idomeneus and the lesser Ajax (23.450–98), the second between Achilles and Antilochus (534–65), and the third between Menelaus and Antilochus (566–613). Taken together, these three quarrels neatly encapsulate much of the *Iliad*.

The Chariot Race

In each case – one in the middle of the race, two after it – an older man makes a suggestion about the contest to which a younger man responds: (1) Idomeneus proposes that Diomedes is now leading the race, whereas before it was Eumelus, a report to which Ajax responds in an unmeasured manner; (2) Achilles suggests redistributing the prizes, against the order of the result, in order to reward Eumelus at Antilochus' expense, upon which that young man finds himself speaking in terms eerily reminiscent of his older friend in Book 1; (3) finally, Menelaus proposes that Antilochus should swear an oath that he did not use a trick to shackle Menelaus' chariot, in reply to which Antilochus backs down and avoids pressing his claim to the prize for which he had just stated his readiness to fight.

Note the progression: the first quarrel is between two figures of the second rank, the second between the poem's protagonist and his relatively unimportant friend (at least next to Patroclus), the third between Menelaus and that unimportant friend. The progression centres around Achilles, but in a largely oblique manner. In the first *neikos* he steps in to calm things down; in the second he causes the quarrel and then calms things down; and in the third he is entirely absent. Or is he? Though Neoanalysis has tremendous methodological defects, one thing it has shown is that Antilochus in the *Iliad* becomes significant, in terms of his relationship with Achilles, once Patroclus is dead.[14] Indeed, in the second quarrel, Homer specifies the strength of their relationship when Achilles concedes (23.555–6: ὣς φάτο, μείδησεν δὲ ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεὺς | χαίρων Ἀντιλόχωι, ὅτι οἱ φίλος ἦεν ἑταῖρος, 'so he spoke, and there smiled swift-foot godlike Achilles | taking joy in Antilochus, since he was his dear companion'). Scholars have been quick to notice that this is the

[14] Cf. Willcock 1973: 6–9.

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first time Achilles smiles in the poem,[15] but it is also the first time that we have an explicit statement of any relationship between them. That is surely significant, especially as the second *neikos* straightaway devolves into the third: Homer has pointed us to Achilles' relationship with Antilochus immediately before Menelaus steps into the fray. We close, in other words, with mini-Agamemnon[16] and (a newly established) mini-Achilles.

It is not really surprising that these quarrels should reflect upon or involve Achilles. After all, his opening comments before the chariot race – stating the inevitability of victory, had he but taken part (23.275–86)[17] – foreground his sense of a particular heroic status, and he takes upon himself a role of authority in offering prizes and managing the contests. He is naturally under the microscope, and each *neikos* says something about the extent to which he can create consensus and manage conflict, but this time in a position of acknowledged authority over other characters.

The first *neikos*, between Ajax and Idomeneus, does not directly involve Achilles when it begins, and the episode has been noticed in scholarship mainly for the fact that Achilles leaps up and stops them fighting.[18] But it must be significant that Achilles jumps into the role of peacemaker only after Idomeneus has suggested another arbitrator – Agamemnon:

485 δεῦρό νυν, ἢ τρίποδος περιδώμεθα ἠὲ λέβητος,
ἴστορα δ' Ἀτρείδην Ἀγαμέμνονα θείομεν ἄμφω,
ὁππότεραι πρόσθ' ἵπποι, ἵνα γνώῃς ἀποτίνων.

485 Here now, let us wager either a tripod or cauldron,
and let us both set up Atreid Agamemnon as our judge,
whichever horses are in front, so that you know as you pay up.
Iliad 23.485–7

This does not cancel out the point that Achilles is now dealing out peace, whereas before he was a divisive figure, but it should give us pause:[19] Achilles acts in the way he should, given his role, but only when it is pointed out to him, implicitly at least, that he is not performing as he should. At least to Idomeneus, Agamemnon is still a viable authority figure

[15] Cf., e.g., Lateiner 1995: 42.
[16] The point is made even more obviously by the fact that Menelaus uses one of Agamemnon's horses (23.295–9), which was given him by Echepolus the son of another Anchises (cf. Richardson 1993: 207), so that he would not have to go to Troy. The reminiscence invokes Agamemnon specifically as the expedition's leader, and its most resource-rich *basileus*.
[17] Epeius speaks in similar vein before the boxing, but in a much more self-deprecating manner, contrasting his exceptional skill in one field with his weakness in others, especially in fighting; cf. Redfield 1975: 207, Dunkle 1987: 9–10, Scott 1997: 220–1, Kyle 2007: 61.
[18] Cf. above, n. 1; also Winnifrith 1992: 21, Macleod 1982: 28–32, Kitchell 1998: 165–6, Scodel 2008a: 56–7.
[19] Cf. *contra* Hammer 1997: 17.

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in this circumstance, and it is only this reminder which kicks Achilles into action. If this first *neikos* suggests some anxiety over how well Achilles can perform in this kind of role, the next one gives us reason to fear for the rest of the contests.

At the conclusion of the chariot race, Diomedes comes first and takes his prize (499–513), followed swiftly by Antilochus, Menelaus, Meriones, and Eumelus last of all (514–33). As there were five contestants, so are there five prizes mentioned before the start of the race.[20] There should, in theory, be no problem. Soon, however, we have one. On noting the last-placed finish of Eumelus, the figure who was said in the Catalogue of Ships to have the second best horses after Achilles himself (23.763–7), Achilles feels pity and suggests re-apportioning the prizes, or at least the second prize, which should now go to Eumelus. It would have a certain symmetry if Eumelus were to come second to Diomedes, the person who replaces Achilles for the majority of the poem (much as Ajax keeps coming off second best),[21] but his reasoning is important:

> λοῖσθος ἀνὴρ ὥριστος ἐλαύνει μώνυχας ἵππους.
> ἀλλ' ἄγε δή οἱ δῶμεν ἀέθλιον, ὡς ἐπιεικὲς,
> δεύτερ'· ἀτὰρ τὰ πρῶτα φερέσθω Τυδέος υἱός.
>
> Last does the man who is best drive his single-hoofed horses.
> But come let us give him a prize, as is fitting,
> the second; but the first let Tydeus' son take for himself.
>
> *Iliad* 23.536–8

In other words, the 'best' (ἄριστος) is always and everywhere to have a privileged access to material reward.[22]

This may not be surprising in the world of early Greek epic, since the physical and intellectual qualities of the *basileis* do entitle them to the best land, wine, and cuts of meat, as Sarpedon famously puts it (12.307–28). But it can get messy when more than one *aristos* competes for those privileges, and it is as much of a problem in the Greek camp as it is in Troy, or on Ithaca

[20] Cf. above, p. 91.

[21] He comes off with a draw with Odysseus in the wrestling, a loss to Diomedes in the fight in armour, and to Polypoites in the iron throwing; cf., e.g., Willcock 1973: 4–5, Hinckley 1986.

[22] Not the first prize, as that has already been claimed by the winner Diomedes, who does not have the close relationship with Achilles enjoyed by Antilochus. In effect, Achilles' repositioning of Eumelus into second place confirms the relative gradings at the end of the Catalogue of Ships, where Eumelus' team was second only to Achilles' own (2.761–7), and simultaneously the poet's decision to draw Diomedes as the Achilles figure in the first half of the poem.

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in the *Odyssey*. There is ever a need for a balancing act, and one which the lessons of Book 1 reflect on rather well: in short, when *timē* is apportioned, do not try to do it twice (cf. 1.122–9).[23] As Agamemnon was unwise in demanding an effective redistribution of settled *gera* because he loses Chryseis, so Achilles tries to redistribute after the fact because he regrets Eumelus' loss of one of the higher-placed prizes. It is too late to take the first-place prize, because Sthenelus was as punctilious in that regard after Diomedes' victory (23.510–13) as he had been in taking Aeneas' horses (5.319–27, cf. 259–73), so Achilles goes for the second-place prize. Almost no one anymore believes that Homeric *timē* is inevitably or even mainly zero-sum in nature,[24] but in this case it almost becomes so, and Antilochus – as Achilles in Book 1 – is about to lose out.

Why does Achilles do this? On one level, at least, it seems perfectly clear: he has not learned any lesson from the circumstance in Book 1, and when placed into a position of authority he simply allows his own extreme version of the usual basileutic drive αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων (*Il.* 6.208 = 11.784: 'always to be an *aristos* and pre-eminent over others')[25] to override all other considerations. But we should note immediately an important difference from that earlier episode – the crowd agree with Achilles and are about to hand over the prize (23.540), much in the same way as they had agreed with Chryses, not Agamemnon, at the opening of the poem (1.22–3). Crowds need not necessarily be correct, one hastens to add, as with the general Trojan approval of Hector's disastrous reply to Poulydamas (18.310–11), or with the failure of the Ithacans to rise to Telemachus' aid on Ithaca, or their (split) decision to join the suitors' families in Book 24 of the *Odyssey*. Nonetheless, whatever else is in Achilles' mind, the crowd's reaction suggests that he is completely serious about doing what he says.[26]

[23] Hesiod seems also to be of this view, criticising Perses for continually having their settlement revised (*Op.* 37–41).

[24] Cf. esp. Cairns 2001 and, most recently, Scodel 2008a: 1–32. Wilson 2002: 36–7 (and 123–6 for the Funeral Games) sees the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles in terms of a struggle between zero-sum and more fluid positional influence, but she is refuted by Cairns 2011; also Redfield 1975: 207, Lohmann 1992: 311–12. For evidence beyond Homer, cf. Crowther 1992.

[25] Cf. 1.287, 13.631, 17.171; also Weiler 1975 for the several ways in which the verse is understood and invoked in modern scholarship (and culture).

[26] Elmer 2013: 1–2 wrongly describes this reaction (23.539–40: οἳ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐπήινεον, ὡς ἐκέλευεν. | καί νύ κέ οἱ πόρεν ἵππον, ἐπήινησαν γὰρ Ἀχαιοί, 'and they all approved, as he bade. | And now he would have given him the horse, for the Achaeans approved') as an expression of what 'should' have happened. Contrafactuals are not concerned with what 'should' happen under the best or ideal circumstances, but what would have happened in the actual narrative had not something else intervened, usually in order to return the story to its traditional, *correct* course; cf. Kelly 2007b: 128–32

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Achilles is stopped, of course, because Antilochus first of all has a particular claim on his affections (exercised once more after the running race: see below) and also because the younger man refuses to play ball, delivering instead a telling criticism:

μέλλεις γὰρ ἀφαιρήσεσθαι ἄεθλον,
τὰ φρονέων, ὅτι οἱ βλάβεν ἅρματα καὶ ταχέ' ἵππω
αὐτός τ' ἐσθλὸς ἐών. ἀλλ' ὤφελεν ἀθανάτοισιν
εὔχεσθαι· τώ κ' οὔ τι πανύστατος ἦλθε διώκων.

For you are about to take away my prize,
thinking these things, that his chariot and swift horses were harmed
and he himself, noble as he is. But he ought to have prayed
to the immortals; then he would not have come last of all in his pursuit.
Iliad 23.544–7

Prayer would not have helped Eumelus anyway, since he had the less successful divine helper (and Athena has already refused prayers directed against Diomedes; see *Il.* 6.311–12), but the point is that one's abilities and resources do not automatically entitle one to victory. Other things may happen, things which interfere with the direct translation of personal quality into material or competitive supremacy.[27] This disruptive potential is something Achilles seems not to understand.[28]

One may reply that this is all too harsh on Peleus' son, who at least comes off better than Agamemnon did in Book 1, for he does not end up going through with his intention.[29] Achilles is persuaded to take a *timē*

(with much bibliography). Elmer 2013: 187–97 (esp. 192ff.) also claims that the crowd is paramount in prize distribution, but when Antilochus objects and asserts the original result (to which Achilles assents), there is no mention of the crowd changing its mind, or of any *basileus* having to appeal to it in order to do so. Nor are they invoked when Menelaus challenges Antilochus (as we will see), since he calls for the opinions *only* of the Argives' leaders (573). Though Menelaus asks them to make their decision ἐς μέσον (574: 'into the middle'), the crowd is a spectator in the process, *not* an active participant (as Elmer 2013: 193–4 himself recognises); cf. also above, nn. 3 and 11.

[27] Cf. Thalmann 1998: 136: 'By itself, the contest does not always discover who is the best, and may not always be intended to do so.' Hammer 2002: 138–9 suggests that Antilochus is drawing in this episode a distinction between communalised and 'still personal property', but the distinction here is surely the usual one between reputation and its manifestation; cf. also above, nn. 3, 11, and 26 for other political interpretations of this sort.

[28] Cf., wrongly, Kitchell 1998: 166: '[Achilles] is faced with a difficult problem. Eumelus surely deserved to win. Indeed, he did not really lose. The gods *made* him lose. Yet Diomedes did win, and *he* did nothing to lose either. To the Achilles of Book 1 the problem would have been quite simple. The winner wins, the loser loses. He who does more, gets more.' Eumelus did not deserve to win, he did 'really' lose, the fact that gods were involved (in *and* against his favour) has nothing to do with an evaluation as to whether he 'really' lost, and there is no difference in Achilles' attitude.

[29] Indeed, a Press reader suggested that giving the second-placed prize to Eumelus should be seen as 'an act of generosity' and not a sign of Achilles' redistributive failure, but this entirely neglects the

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hit, as it were, and allot an extra prize to Eumelus in order to avoid giving him the last-placed prize (23.548–52, 555–65). But two things need to be kept in mind. Firstly, all this redounds to Achilles' credit, since he has the material possessions required to make such a gesture, and he accordingly announces its description and source with some pride:

δώσω οἱ θώρηκα, τὸν Ἀστεροπαῖον ἀπηύρων,
χάλκεον, ὦι πέρι χεῦμα φαεινοῦ κασσιτέροιο
ἀμφιδεδίνηται· πολέος δέ οἱ ἄξιος ἔσται.

I will give him the breastplate, which I took from Asteropaeus,
bronze, around which a stream of shining tin
has been circled; and it will be worth much to him.

Iliad 23.560–2

The mention of Asteropaeus also serves to remind of Achilles' victorious and bloody *aristeia* (21.139–204),[30] while Antilochus even makes a point of outlining Achilles' possessions and resources when suggesting this course of action:

εἰ δέ μιν οἰκτίρεις καί τοι φίλος ἔπλετο θυμῶι,
ἔστί τοι ἐν κλισίηι χρυσὸς πολύς, ἔστι δὲ χαλκὸς
καὶ πρόβατ', εἶσι δέ τοι δμωιαὶ καὶ μώνυχες ἵπποι·
τῶν οἱ ἔπειτ' ἀνελὼν δόμεναι καὶ μέζον ἄεθλον,
ἠὲ καὶ αὐτίκα νῦν, ἵνα σ' αἰνήσωσιν Ἀχαιοί.

And if you pity him and he is a comrade to your heart,
there is in your tent much gold, and there is bronze
and livestock, and there are slave girls and single-hoofed horses;
taking then from these give him an even greater prize,
than the one you offer right now, so that the Achaeans praise you.

Iliad 23.548–52

The same strategy was deployed earlier, of course, by Odysseus during the Embassy (9.225–8), but with markedly less success,[31] and the same point about resources leads Achilles to allot the unclaimed last prize to

fact that he's taking away Antilochus' prize to do so, and offers no account whatsoever of the poet's focus on Antilochus' reaction to this 'generosity'.

[30] Asteropaeus' sword is offered as the extra prize for the fight in armour (23.805–8), and reminders of this sort occur also before the running race (740–7), where the poet recalls the ransom of Lycaon (746) and Patroclus' role in his original capture (747); before the fight in armour (798–9), where Sarpedon's panoply is set down; before the iron-throwing contest (827–9), for the iron used to be thrown by Eetion but was brought to Troy with his other possessions when Achilles sacked Thebe. These biographies connect the Funeral Games to the rest of the poem, keep Achilles to the forefront of the audience's awareness even as he does not compete, and remind us of the actions valued and rewarded in basileutic society; cf. also above, n. 16, for a similar reminiscence about Agamemnon.

[31] Cf., e.g., Nagy 1979: 45–58, Danek 1998: 142–50.

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Nestor, since the old man is no longer able to win such prizes for himself (615–23).[32]

Secondly, consider the opponent: not a truculent warrior who has already pointed out Agamemnon's failure to act in saving his *laos*, but a close friend who has just flattered Achilles' material reserves, and so underlined his basileutic status in front of the entire army (as again at 785–93). The well-known fact that Antilochus' language seems to combine Agamemnon's initial refusal to hand over Chryseis (1.29: τὴν δ' ἐγὼ οὐ λύσω, 'and her I will not free' ~ 23.553: τὴν δ' ἐγὼ οὐ δώσω,[33] 'and [the mare] I will not give') and several expressions of Achilles' determination to defend his other goods (1.161: καὶ δή μοι γέρας αὐτὸς ἀφαιρήσεσθαι ἀπειλεῖς, 'and then you threaten yourself to take away my honour-prize' ~ 23.544: μέλλεις γὰρ ἀφαιρήσεσθαι ἄεθλον, 'for you intend to take away my prize'; 1.302–3: εἰ δ' ἄγε μὴν πείρησαι ἵνα γνώωσι καὶ οἵδε· | αἶψά τοι αἷμα κελαινὸν ἐρωήσει περὶ δουρί, 'come then, try, so that even these men may know it; | straightaway your black blood will flow about my spear' ~ 23.553–4: περὶ δ' αὐτῆς πειρηθήτω | ἀνδρῶν ὅς κ' ἐθέλησιν ἐμοὶ χείρεσσι μάχεσθαι, 'let him try for [the mare] | any man who wishes to fight me with his hands') reinforces the point of their relationship, as well as the reflective dynamic with the poem's opening quarrels.[34] If the world of early Greek epic is pockmarked with failures in (re)distribution, here at least is one failure averted.

Nonetheless, when the first *neikos* showed us Achilles' somewhat tardy performance of his duties in the situation of the Funeral Games, then the second shows him about to commit a *faux pas* which is only averted, unlike that in Book 1, by a friendly relationship and even friendlier rhetoric. The possibilities for rapprochement and accommodation seem limited, and always potentially under strain, especially when truly exceptional individuals are involved. It is in that light that we progress to the final *neikos*, where Achilles is conspicuously absent.

Menelaus now stands up, and demands that Antilochus swear an oath to the effect that he has not shackled Menelaus' chariot with a trick (23.566–85). Here we see once more the principle that superior quality should be translated into superior reward, for Menelaus feels the slight specifically because the lesser horses of Antilochus have beaten his own, better horses

[32] Cf. Kelly 2007b: 149; also Kyle 2007: 60–1 more generally.

[33] The use of this verb surely looks forward to its contested deployment by both Menelaus and Antilochus in the third *neikos*; cf. below, pp. 99–100.

[34] Cf., e.g., Lohmann 1992: 309–10, Richardson 1993: 202, 224.

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(571–2: ἤισχυνας μὲν ἐμὴν ἀρετήν, βλάψας δέ μοι ἵππους, | τοὺς σοὺς πρόσθε βαλών, οἵ τοι πολὺ χείρονες ἦσαν, 'you shamed my quality, and you harmed my horses, by casting yours in front, which were much worse'). This looks not much different from Achilles' assumption in the second *neikos* but, crucially, this proposal is to be carried out very differently: Menelaus wants the matter resolved not by his greater *biē* (cf. 575–8) but by the decision of others (23.573–4: ἀλλ' ἄγετ', Ἀργείων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες, | ἐς μέσον ἀμφοτέροισι δικάσσατε, μὴ δ' ἐπ' ἀρωγῆι, 'but come, Argives' leaders and counsellors, | cast your decisions into the middle, and not for favour'). Though he then declares an intention to give his own judgement (579: αὐτὸς δικάσω, 'I will give my own decision'), this takes the form of requesting an oath from his adversary, an oath Menelaus had earlier promised as Antilochus drove past him (439–51).[35]

There may be room to wonder whether Menelaus is actually justified in his claim that Antilochus had used a trick during the race,[36] but the important point lies in how the younger man reacts to the challenge. There is no attempt to answer Menelaus and invoke a procedure presumably like that depicted on Achilles' shield (18.497–508); instead, Antilochus simply backs down, acknowledges the impetuousness of youth, gives up the horse, and offers even further compensation (23.586–95).[37]

But the sackcloth is not worn easily. Antilochus does have a claim to this prize, since he won it,[38] and he knows it: the harsh run over of δώσω makes his point even more effectively (23.591–2: τώ τοι ἐπιτλήτω κραδίη· ἵππον δέ τοι αὐτός | δώσω, τὴν ἀρόμην, 'so let your heart endure; and the horse will I myself | give to you, [the mare] which I won'), the following relative clause stressing not merely agency but also possession. Despite this somewhat agonistic claim, concession then begets concession: Menelaus in turn backs down:

> Ἀντίλοχε, νῦν μέν τοι ἐγὼν ὑποείξομαι αὐτός
> χωόμενος, ἐπεὶ οὔ τι παρήορος οὐδ' ἀεσίφρων
> ἦσθα πάρος, νῦν αὖτε νόον νίκησε νεοίη.
> δεύτερον αὖτ' ἀλέασθαι ἀμείνονας ἠπεροπεύειν.

[35] For an analogous settlement with accompanying oath, cf. *Il.* 19.258–65, with Macleod 1982: 30.

[36] In its favour is the fact that no one in Homer ever pretends not to have heard what has been said to them, but the variety of opinions is wide. For critical tones, cf. Redfield 1975: 208, Dickie 1984a, Dunkle 1987, Roisman 1988, Kitchell 1998: 164, Alden 2000: 102–10 (also of Menelaus), Frame 2009: 149–56 (qualified); *contra* Willcock 1973, Walcot 1977: 34–6, Gagarin 1983, Taplin 1992: 256, Purves 2011: 534–7.

[37] This is another link with the second *neikos*, where Antilochus had suggested that Achilles should compensate Eumelus from his own vast stock (23.549–52).

[38] Cf. *contra* Dickie 1984a: 14.

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οὐ γάρ κέν με τάχ᾽ ἄλλος ἀνὴρ παρέπεισεν Ἀχαιῶν·
ἀλλὰ σὺ γὰρ δὴ πολλ᾽ ἔπαθες καὶ πολλ᾽ ἐμόγησας,
σός τε πατὴρ ἀγαθὸς καὶ ἀδελφεός, εἵνεκ᾽ ἐμεῖο.
τώ τοι λισσομένωι ἐπιπείσομαι, ἠδὲ καὶ ἵππον
δώσω ἐμήν περ ἐοῦσαν, ἵνα γνώωσι καὶ οἵδε,
ὡς ἐμὸς οὔ ποτε θυμὸς ὑπερφίαλος καὶ ἀπηνής.

Antilochus now will I myself yield to you
though I am angry, since you were not at all useless
or foolish before, (and) now your youth has overborne your mind.
In future avoid cheating your elders.
For no other Achaean man could swiftly have persuaded me.
But you did, since you have suffered much and toiled much
– and your good father and brother – on my behalf;
so will I comply with your entreaty, and the mare here
will I give to you though she is mine, so that these men here know,
that my spirit is not overbearing and harsh.

Iliad 23.602–11

Once more, Menelaus shows his awareness of his rights, with δώσω again in the emphatic run-over position (609–10) (note also the relatively unusual synezesis in δώσω ἐμήν).[39] So Antilochus keeps the horse, but – though Menelaus has the third-placed prize – no one has been *forced* to lose out. Instead, Antilochus recognises the *aidōs* required towards one of superior standing (as in Diomedes' reply to Sthenelus in the *Epipōlēsis*: 4.411–18), and Menelaus appreciates the support of his subordinates (and equals).[40] The longer-term view has triumphed. Antilochus, incidentally, is a master of these situations: in both the second and third *neikea* he ends up with what he had won, against the wishes of two higher status *basileis*.

This third *neikos* shows precisely how the quarrel of Book 1 could have been solved, i.e. as Nestor had suggested:

μήτε σὺ τόνδ᾽ ἀγαθός περ ἐὼν ἀποαίρεο κούρην,
ἀλλ᾽ ἔα, ὥς οἱ πρῶτα δόσαν γέρας υἷες Ἀχαιῶν·
μήτε σύ, Πηλείδη, ἔθελ᾽ ἐριζέμεναι βασιλῆϊ
ἀντιβίην, ἐπεὶ οὔ ποθ᾽ ὁμοίης ἔμμορε τιμῆς
σκηπτοῦχος βασιλεύς, ὧι τε Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκεν.
εἰ δὲ σὺ καρτερός ἐσσι, θεὰ δέ σε γείνατο μήτηρ,

[39] Cf. West 1982: 13.

[40] Brown 2003: 143 utterly mischaracterises the episode: 'Menelaus *can only respond* by hasty deflection of the gesture' (my italics). Not only does this ignore the reasons Menelaus gives for his change of heart, but it makes no mention of Homer's simile – or the apostrophe – which describes that change (23.597–600); cf. above, n. 11 for Brown's intellectual background. Bafflingly, Kitchell 1998: 169 thinks that Menelaus admits he was wrong!

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ἀλλ᾽ ὅδε φέρτερός ἐστιν, ἐπεὶ πλεόνεσσιν ἀνάσσει.
Ἀτρείδη, σὺ δὲ παῦε τεὸν μένος· αὐτὰρ ἐγώ γε
λίσσομ᾽ Ἀχιλλῆϊ μεθέμεν χόλον, ὃς μέγα πᾶσιν
ἕρκος Ἀχαιοῖσιν πέλεται πολέμοιο κακοῖο.

Neither do you, good man though you are, take away his girl,
but leave it as the sons of the Achaeans first gave it to him as his honour-prize;
nor do you, Peleid, be willing to strive with the king
in might opposed, since not ever of the same portion is the allotment
of the sceptre-wielding king, to whom Zeus granted honour.
And if you are strong, and a goddess mother bore you,
yet this man is mightier, since he rules over more.
Atreid, do you stop your anger; and I
plead with you to let go your anger at Achilles, who is a great
protection for the Achaeans from evil war.

Iliad 1.275–84

In both situations, the higher-status individual has to take the short-term *timē* hit, principally for longer-term considerations, and the lower-status individual should, for all the short-term gain (or more accurately, lack of loss), nonetheless acknowledge their status disparity. Avoiding the conflict – or more accurately the moment at which someone is *forced* to lose out – is a victory in itself.[41]

Given this parallel, and the characters involved, this *neikos* should be momentous enough for our reading of the *Iliad*, and of the social dynamics of Homer's world. But, since this is the final quarrel out of three all centred upon the chariot race, since Achilles had already suggested his own primacy in the activity at its start, and since Achilles has been the troubled and troublesome source of authority and eventual calm in the first two quarrels, I suggest that this is one of the most important *neikos* episodes in the *Iliad*, and that the chariot race as a whole is of paradigmatic importance. Many of the most important issues surrounding Achilles in the entire poem are repeated here in microcosm – his discomfort with Agamemnon's authority, his replacement for much of the *Iliad* by Diomedes, and his somewhat extreme application of the basileutic ethos.

If the system breaks down in Book 1 because Agamemnon and Achilles are inherently more difficult (and thus interesting) characters than their avatars Menelaus and Antilochus in Book 23, the poet has shown us the reasons why Achilles does not quite work in this kind of circumstance – for all his relative diminution in the last third of the poem, Agamemnon

[41] Cf. esp. Cairns 2001.

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is still potentially a greater authority figure in the first *neikos*, and Achilles' own conception of αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων simply too impractical and extreme in the second *neikos* for him to manage the particular balance of qualities required by this role. The third and final *neikos* thus sees him supplanted, and looks forward – as so many elements in the Funeral Games, indeed in the last third of the *Iliad* – to his own imminent absence from the camp.[42]

The Rest of the Contests

Any study of the Funeral Games should at least mention that there are seven other contests to come, though all together they comprise a little over half the verses of the chariot race. The provisional conclusions derived from this first episode naturally extend into the rest of the Funeral Games, for Achilles continues as *agōnothetēs* until the very end. There are four particular moments of interest.

Firstly, after the wrestling competition, where Odysseus seems to be getting the better of things but cannot quite finish the contest, Achilles suggests that the victory is shared and they should split the prizes equally (23.736–7). But the prizes were labelled clearly by the poet as unequal, a tripod worth twelve cattle for the winner (702–3) and a woman worth four cattle for the loser (704–5). How an equal division of this prize is to be made is left unclear, for the two contestants 'obey' and depart the area. Ruth Scodel suggests that 'presumably … Achilles adds other gifts to make the value of the second prize equal',[43] but there is no evidence for this in the text. Moreover, there are other signs here that things are not going well: Achilles stops the contest before the traditional stalemate of the 'three times' pattern,[44] which the poet summons by inserting the word τρίτον into the apodosis of the contrafactual conditional sentence:[45]

καί νύ κε τὸ τρίτον αὖτις ἀναΐξαντ' ἐπάλαιον,
εἰ μὴ Ἀχιλλεὺς αὐτὸς ἀνίστατο καὶ κατέρυκεν·

and now for the third time once more they would have leapt up and wrestled, if Achilles himself had not stood and prevented them.

Iliad 23.733–4

[42] Another Neoanalytical discovery is that the *Iliad* poet is alluding to the story of Achilles' death (not only) in the last third of the *Iliad*; cf. Burgess 2009 *passim*.
[43] Scodel 2008a: 40; Taplin 1992: 258 sees Achilles' solution as a joke.
[44] Cf. Kelly 2007b: 194–7.
[45] Cf. Kelly 2007b: 128–32.

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That is, rather than allowing the contest to reach its traditional moment of crisis and resolution, where the aborted fourth attempt signals the end of the activity, the poet has Achilles step in – too early.

Secondly, after the running race, Achilles responds to Antilochus' flattery by awarding him an extra prize, continuing the younger man's rhetorical success hitherto, though this time he has flattered Achilles' skill at running rather than the general wealth to which he had drawn attention at the end of the chariot race (see above):

εἰδόσιν ὔμμ᾽ ἐρέω πᾶσιν, φίλοι, ὡς ἔτι καὶ νῦν
ἀθάνατοι τιμῶσι παλαιοτέρους ἀνθρώπους.
Αἴας μὲν γὰρ ἐμεῖ᾽ ὀλίγον προγενέστερός ἐστιν,
οὗτος δὲ προτέρης γενεῆς προτέρων τ᾽ ἀνθρώπων·
ὠμογέροντα δέ μίν φασ᾽ ἔμμεναι· **ἀργαλέον δέ**
ποσσὶν †ἐριδήσασθαι† Ἀχαιοῖς, εἰ μὴ Ἀχιλλεῖ.
ὣς φάτο, **κύδηνεν δὲ ποδώκεα Πηλείωνα**.

I will speak to you all, friends, who know it, how even now still
the immortals honour men of an older time.
For Ajax is a little older than me,
but this man is of a former race and men of old;
an active old man they say he is; **and it is difficult for the Achaeans**
†to strive† (with him) in running, except for Achilles.
So he spoke, **and he honoured the swift-footed Peleid**.

Iliad 23.787–93

Achilles himself recognises that this was an *ainos* (a gain-driven speech),[46] but the direct connection with that earlier episode is clear, since (i) Antilochus comes in *last* and so takes the λοισθήιον ἄεθλον (785: 'the last prize') to match Eumelus' λοῖσθος (536) position in the chariot race, and (ii) he successfully receives the extra prize he suggested earlier for Eumelus.

Thirdly, in the fight in armour, Achilles responds to the Greeks' fear for Ajax's safety and their consequent wish to allot the prizes evenly by not doing so:

καὶ τότε δή ῥ᾽ Αἴαντι περιδδείσαντες Ἀχαιοί
παυσαμένους ἐκέλευσαν ἀέθλια ἶσ᾽ ἀνελέσθαι.
αὐτὰρ Τυδείδηι δῶκεν μέγα φάσγανον ἥρως
σὺν κολεῷ τε φέρων καὶ ἐϋτμήτωι τελαμῶνι.

Even then the Achaeans, fearful for Ajax,
bade them, ceasing, to take equal prizes.

[46] Cf. Richardson 1993: 240–1.

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But the warrior gave to Tydeus' son the great sword
bringing it with its scabbard and well-cut sword-strap.
Iliad 23.822–5

That is, he does stop the fight and split the armour of Sarpedon evenly, as he said he would do regardless of the outcome (809–10), but he awards the extra prize for the person who draws first blood (Asteropaeus' sword) to Diomedes, in spite of the fact that no blood was drawn, and Ajax had actually struck Diomedes' breastplate first.[47] The mismatch here is between the crowd's desires and his own decision, and his initial speech and his eventual action; again it would seem to be rather significant that this extra item belongs to the same panoply which was partially given to Eumelus as a compensatory prize after the chariot race (560–2). The poet is, in other words, going out of his way to connect these later episodes with Achilles' second, problematic intervention in the chariot race.

All of this arbitration leads to the final contest, the spear throwing, which Achilles prevents from starting:

αὐτὰρ Πηλείδης κατὰ μὲν δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος,
κὰδ δὲ λέβητ' ἄπυρον, βοὸς ἄξιον, ἀνθεμόεντα
θῆκ' ἐς ἀγῶνα φέρων· καί ῥ' ἥμονες ἄνδρες ἀνέσταν,
ἄν μὲν ἄρ' Ἀτρείδης εὐρὺ κρείων Ἀγαμέμνων,
ἄν δ' ἄρα Μηριόνης, θεράπων ἐΰς Ἰδομενῆος.
τοῖσι δὲ καὶ μετέειπε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς·
Ἀτρείδη· ἴδμεν γὰρ ὅσον προβέβηκας ἁπάντων
ἠδ' ὅσσον δυνάμι τε καὶ ἥμασιν ἔπλε' ἄριστος·
ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν τόδ' ἄεθλον ἔχων κοίλας ἐπὶ νῆας
ἔρχε', ἀτὰρ δόρυ Μηριόνηι ἥρωϊ πόρωμεν,
εἰ σύ γε σῶι θυμῶι ἐθέλοις· κέλομαι γὰρ ἐγώ γε.
ὣς ἔφατ'· οὐδ' ἀπίθησεν ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν Ἀγαμέμνων·
δῶκε δὲ Μηριόνηι δόρυ χάλκεον· αὐτὰρ ὅ γ' ἥρως
Ταλθυβίωι κήρυκι δίδου περικαλλὲς ἄεθλον.

But Peleus' son set down the long-shadowing spear,
and he set down the cauldron unfired, worth a cow, flowered,
bringing it into the contest; and the casting men stood up;
up stood Atreus' son, wide-ruling Agamemnon,
and up stood Meriones, strong retainer of Idomeneus.
And among them spoke swift-foot godlike Achilles;
'Atreus' son; for we all know how far you are in front of all
and how far you are the best in strength and throwing;

[47] Scodel 2008a: 40 suggests 'we may be again [i.e. after the wrestling; cf. above, n. 43] supposed to understand that Achilles has achieved equality in prizes by adding a gift to Ajax beyond his share in Sarpedon's armour'. Once more, there is no evidence for this in the text.

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but do you taking this prize go to the hollow ships,
whilst let us give the spear to the warrior Meriones,
if you are willing in your spirit; for I am the one who bids it.'
895 So he spoke, and lord of men Agamemnon did not disobey;
and he gave the bronze spear to Meriones; while the warrior
gave the very fine prize to Talthybius the herald.

Iliad 23.884–97

This is a famous crux: is he denying Agamemnon the chance to prove his worth in the only contest he decides to compete in, or saving him from the possible disgrace of defeat?[48] Or is there another possibility? Before this contest, Achilles has not had the best of days: aside from the chariot race and its aftermath, he does not do things he said he would (spear fight), he awards prizes equally where they cannot be equally divided (wrestling), he stops contests before they have finished (wrestling). In short, he is no Pier Luigi Collina. Equally, as shown in the gift to Nestor after the chariot race, or in his encounters with Antilochus after the chariot and running races, neither is he the Australian cricket umpire Peter McConnell who, when asked by the English bowler Phil Tufnell how many deliveries were left in his over, replied 'count 'em yourself you Pommy c***'.[49] If Achilles is not superlatively good, he is not execrably bad either.

But in these previous contests, Homer gave enough information to make inferences about Achilles' performance. In this final episode, by contrast, the usual markers are absent. This is the only contest with no indication of the prizes' relative value (in terms of winner, second placed, etc.) either in the poet's voice or an accompanying speech by Achilles. The poet's practice is not automatic in these circumstances, of course: in the chariot race, wrestling, and running race we find the first (263–70, 702–5, 740–51) but not the second; in the fight in armour only the second (805–10); and both elements in the boxing (653–6 / 660–3), iron throwing (832–5), and archery (855–8). These last three contests are also the only ones in which Achilles does not intervene, and the only ones in which there is no disagreement, reallocation, or augmentation of the prizes. In short, Homer exerts the most control over the story when Achilles is not involved, almost as though he was commenting on the difficulty of accommodating his own main character within the narrative's usual parameters.

[48] Cf. (negative) Spariosu 1991: 16–17 with n. 25, Lohmann 1992: 314–15, (positive) Clay 1983, Dickie 1984a: 16–17, Scodel 2008a: 153–7; Wilson 2002: 125–6 tries to have it both ways; cf. also nn. 1–2 above.

[49] Tufnell 1999: 99.

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In other words, Achilles' somewhat magnetic personality distorts both the poem's traditional structure and the smooth progression of its story.[50]

Perhaps the relative value of the prizes can be inferred from the order in which they are set down (the spear first and then the cauldron), since where multiple prizes are laid down – i.e. all but the fight in armour (805–10), in which Sarpedon's armour is to be divided equally (though Achilles then further differentiates with an additional prize), and the iron throwing where there is one prize (832–5) – the victory prize is always set out first.[51] The intimation would seem to be that the spear, awarded to Meriones, is the first-placed prize.

Yet, if that is clear, why does Agamemnon acquiesce so quickly (895: οὐδ' ἀπίθησεν, 'did not disobey')?[52] Perhaps the situation is analogous to the wrestling, when the impossibility of the equal division is left hanging, possibly because the poet's focus is on Achilles and his actions at these moments, or possibly because it is just not the done thing openly to criticise the decision of the *agōnothetēs*. Granted, we did see Antilochus do that earlier, but this rather anomalous encounter was at least as much the result of Achilles' poor exercise of his authority as it was Antilochus' breach of etiquette, and both its solution and its reprise after the running race shows the limits to which friendship may allow someone to go.

Another source of information could be structural, in that there seems to be a patterned alternation between the events based on the number of competitors (Table 4).[53]

The progression is therefore between events involving a group of more than three competitors and those involving only two.[54] The first unit covers events 1–3, the second 4–5, the third 6–8, so that the basic pattern falls

[50] This point can also be made in terms of traditional referentiality, whereby the usual connotations of narrative units are only and repeatedly challenged by Achilles. For instance, the expression for dawn in *Il.* 24.11–13 (describing Achilles' continued grief) is the sole example of such a temporal marker occurring in periods of indefinite time; cf. Kelly 2007b: 67–8, and 67 n. 3 for a list of over thirty other such exceptions in the *Iliad*.

[51] Cf. *contra* Richardson 1993 *ad loc.*, 23.884–97, 269: 'It becomes clear that the spear will be the second prize, the valuable cauldron the first.' Kyle 2007: 64 suggests, without argument or parallel, that spear and cauldron together were to be first prize, while (e.g.) Dickie 1984a: 16–17 and Stanley 1993: 230 simply assume that Meriones gets the first prize.

[52] For these sorts of reactions, cf. Kelly 2007b: 152–4.

[53] Bannert 1988: 147–8 articulates differently: after the chariot race, (a) boxing–wrestling–running (each about fifty verses), then (b) fight in armour–iron throwing–archery (about thirty verses long) and then (c) spear throwing; cf. also Stanley 1993: 224–32.

[54] One might suggest, as a Press reader did, that there is not much difference between a group of three and one of two, yet the distinction in prize giving is clear; where there are only two contestants, there are only two options, first or last. In the other cases, intermediate levels of achievement and reward are possible.

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Table 4

I	1. Chariot race	Group (5 contestants)
	2. Boxing	2 contestants
	3. Wrestling	2 contestants
II	4. Running	Group (3 contestants)
	5. Fight in armour	2 contestants
III	6. Iron throwing	Group (4 contestants)
	7. Archery	2 contestants
	8. Spear throwing	2 contestants

into a simple ring. Moreover, in each unit's final element (I.3 wrestling, II.5 fight in armour, and III.8 spear throwing) Achilles intervenes to stop the contest, and progressively earlier in the event: in the first case (I.3) before the expected stalemate has been reached, in the second (II.5) before Diomedes has drawn blood,[55] and in the third (III.8) before the contest has even started. If the audience is recognising this pattern as the narrative proceeds,[56] they might be expecting the spear throwing not to come to a determinative point at all, so that Achilles' intervention is less surprising than it has seemed to modern scholars.

But the parallels still bring their own intimation: if the earlier quick draws were problematic interventions, then this final one is too. Achilles is just not very good in these situations. It may be, perhaps, that this is less a case of active dishonouring of Agamemnon, and more a question of a certain agonothetic incompetence. If Achilles could admit to his mother that he is not pre-eminent in the exercise of speech (18.105–6: τοῖος ἐὼν οἷος οὔ τις Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων | ἐν πολέμωι· ἀγορῆι δέ τ' ἀμείνονές εἰσι καὶ ἄλλοι, 'since I am such as none of the bronze-tunicked Achaeans | in

[55] Though after a 'three times' motif (817), not before as in I.3; cf. above, pp. 102–3 and 104 n. 47. In this case, the resolution is continually deferred, as first Ajax strikes Diomedes' breastplate (819: νύξε) and then Diomedes is looking for an opening (821: κῦρε) but denied an actual strike of his own, as the crowd bids (823: ἐκέλευσαν) Achilles to stop the fight. The change of tenses – from aorist to imperfect (NB αἰέν 821) and back to aorist – reveals a performative curve to the episode, in which the audience is first encouraged to think that Ajax's strike will prove the decisive one, and then that Diomedes' preparation (820–1) will lead to that strike, before the internal audience intervenes.

[56] For an analogous sequence in the *Odyssey*, consider the 'guest strikes Odysseus' motif, which occurs three times in decreasing scale (17.411–91, 18.349–411, 20.291–319), with a different attacker (Antinous, Eurymachus, Ctesippus) and with decreasing effectiveness (Odysseus struck but unmoved, Odysseus missed but wine pourer struck, Odysseus missed) and followed by an increasingly aggressive stance from Telemachus (silence, qualified criticism, threat) which is probably not unconnected with the change in personnel; cf. Fenik 1974: 180–8; also Kelly 2008b: 187–8 on Odysseus' fake tales.

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war; but in counsel there are truly others better'), then we might wish to extend his fallibilities to a situation in which these competing demands – *biē* and *mētis*, to use that rather clichéd dichotomy[57] – are very closely related.

In conclusion, the Funeral Games reflect powerfully and constantly on the relationship between conflict and consensus in the *Iliad*, largely through showing Achilles trying to exercise the determinative, regulatory power so clearly abused by Agamemnon in Book 1. When that boot is on his foot, however, and even in a somewhat less lethal environment, Achilles finds kicking those *timē* goals no less difficult than Agamemnon had. Nor, as the start of Book 24 shows, have the games led him any closer to abandoning his anger. If the *Iliad* has drawn for us an extraordinary figure attempting to fit into a world whose rules always threaten to frustrate his exceptionality, if his closest friend can describe him as a δεινὸς ἀνήρ· τάχα κεν καὶ ἀναίτιον αἰτιόωιτο (11.654: 'terrible man; swiftly would he fault someone without fault'), then perhaps we should not be surprised.

After all, the poem's macrostructure encourages us to return at the end to the central question effectively posed at the beginning – what does one do with a character like Achilles? – but by this penultimate stage of the *Iliad*, no single or simple answer seems possible, and Book 23 plays a crucial role in expressing that indeterminacy. As we mentioned earlier, the narrative of this book is paired with the assembly of the Greek army and the Catalogue of Ships in Book 2, but it is also deployed to mirror Hector's funeral in Book 24, thus drawing together earlier reflections about Achilles with his role in these two paired deaths and concluding commemorations. It is entirely fitting, then, that Achilles' arbitrations in the Funeral Games show his shortcomings, and his exceptionalism, all too clearly, both in terms of what he does and what others achieve without him. However one chooses then to read Book 24 and the interaction with Priam, and I am inclined not to follow the entirely positive readings of Macleod, Taplin, and Scodel *inter al.*, it is clear that something more or something different is required, before both the poem and the wrath of its central character can find some kind of ending. This is the purpose of the Funeral Games of Book 23 – to show us that everything, even the very possibility for structural and thematic resolution, is still up for grabs as the *Iliad* comes to its conclusion.

[57] For an attempt to read the chariot race as an exercise in this dichotomy, cf. Dunkle 1987, drawing freely on Nagy 1979, and most recently Frame 2009: 149–56, though I find this analysis opaque.

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