THE MYTH OF THE DEATH OF AJAX IN GREEK POETRY
UP TO SOPHOCLES

With Special Reference to Pindar and Sophocles

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)

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ABSTRACT

It is not surprising that Ajax's horrible death, given his glorious mythological origins and connections, as well as his association with Athens and his cult there, attracted many poets from Homer to Sophocles. The picture of the Iliadic Ajax is almost flawless, though a few peculiarities seem to "predict" his committing suicide after the judgement of the Achillean arms. The account of his death in the Nekyia of the Odyssey does not offer a great deal of information, but it can be related with the scanty material of the Epic Cycle. The relevant fragments come from the Aethiopis, the Little Iliad and the Sack of Troy, and can give us a basis for a reconstruction of the versions -especially that of the Aethiopis. Main matters of concern are the question of how the award was decided and what followed the decision. Aeschylus' dramatization of the myth in a lost trilogy appears to depart from the Epic Cycle and may have been crucial for its later presentation by Sophocles. In the three Pindaric odes where Ajax appears as a mythological exemplum (I.4, N.7, N.8), the contrast between him and Odysseus is conspicuous. Sophocles in the Ajax presents facts and other characters in a way that functions in favour of the main hero, and is engaged in a subtle "dialogue" with the earlier literary sources. Thus he eventually manages to convey Ajax's greatness and to make his burial indispensable. As a further sample of Sophocles' dramatic art, there are sufficient clues in the play which undermine Odysseus' role, so that it can be read in a manner less appreciative than most scholars have held.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER I: AJAX'S ORIGINS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS</th>
<th>18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The mythological origins and relations of Ajax</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Ajax's connections with Athens</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER II: AJAX IN THE &quot;ILIAD&quot;</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER III: THE END OF AJAX IN THE &quot;ODYSSEY&quot;: THE FAMOUS SCENE OF THE NEKYIA</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER IV: FROM HOMER TO PINDAR AND SOPHOCLES: FRAGMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR THE STORY OF AJAX'S DEATH IN THE EPIC CYCLE AND AESCHYLUS</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. The &quot;Aethiopis&quot;</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The &quot;Little Iliad&quot;</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. One fragment from the &quot;Sack of Troy&quot;</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. An Aeschylean trilogy</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER V: THE AJAX VERSUS ODYSSEUS THEME IN PINDAR</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Some preliminary remarks</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The &quot;Fourth Isthmian&quot;</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. The &quot;Seventh Nemean&quot;</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. The &quot;Eighth Nemean&quot;</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER VI: THE AJAX MYTH IN SOPHOCLES</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. The presentation of Ajax's 'crimes'; some remarks on the first part of the play</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PREFACE

This study owes much to a number of people, a debt which I would like to acknowledge here.

First I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my Supervisor, Professor P.E. Easterling, for her constant guidance and friendly encouragement combined, in some cases, with a necessary, as well as gentle, criticism of eccentric notions. Her constructive comments and thorough knowledge of bibliography proved to be inestimable for my work. I also owe the improvement of my English style to her. The door of her office at UCL was always open for me; she offered me human warmth, too, whenever I was in need of it, being away from home.

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regarding more practical matters, such as bibliographical updating, in the period when I was working at Chios.

Last but not least, I express my gratitude to the "Panchiakon Idryma Hypotrophion Ioannis Diam. Pateras" for generously granting me a scholarship for all three years I studied in England. Without this financial help, the completion of my thesis would have been a much more difficult task.

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Nikolaos K. Haviaras
INTRODUCTION

The story of Ajax does not indeed have many common elements with those of other heroes of the Trojan or other cycles -such as Odysseus, Achilles, Heracles, Oedipus, to mention only a few names- with regard to the extent of relevant mythological material and its literary development. Ajax was a great hero, second only after Achilles among the Achaeans of the Trojan war; the fact, though, that Ajax was not the main figure in any mythological cycle or event of wider general interest, might have restricted the shaping and the literary exploitation of his myth. It is beyond all doubt, however, that the mythological material about the hero constitutes a typical example of one of the main characteristics of Greek mythology: the diversity of versions concerning one or more episodes of the hero's "career" is conspicuous, although one cannot claim, as I have already noted, that the relevant material is extensive.

Ajax alone among the Trojan heroes committed suicide. The "dark" and horrible manner of his death, however, seems to have favoured the formation of more than one account of this particular episode. This is the most important subject of the present survey: it attempts to elaborate the richness of the mythological material and to examine in detail every variant of the myth of the death of Ajax from epic poetry up to the homonymous play of Sophocles. At this point it would be useful to say that when I refer
to "the myth of the death of Ajax", I generally mean the story that begins with the rescue of the corpse of Achilles and its transportation to the Greek camp by Ajax and Odysseus, goes on with the judgement of the Achillean arms and their award to Odysseus, and ends with Ajax’s "reactions" to this decision, the most drastic of which was to commit suicide, and the posthumous treatment of the hero.

It becomes obvious, then, that the story of the death of Ajax unavoidably suggests Odysseus. It is impossible to think of Ajax in this phase of his "career" and not, at the same moment, think of Odysseus as well, his rival in the fatal contest. The "pair", of course, consists of contrasts, two "polar opposites"—to use Knox’s expression; in the contest it is two totally different heroic types, two kinds of social behaviour, two ways of thinking, two political models, two worlds, which are opposed. And it is very interesting to examine every facet in the literary treatment of the Ajax-Odysseus theme—for it becomes a theme. From the Homeric years on, as time goes by, the "ideologies", systems, and needs of individuals and communities change substantially; these developments are undoubtedly reflected in the creations of literature. The poets sometimes seem to be "out of vogue" regarding what they choose to stress; some of them, on the other hand, surprise us with their way of presenting familiar "events" or even with the account of the story itself, that is with what we would call the innovation, originality or, simply, the daring of the poet. This survey follows the course of the Ajax-Odysseus theme, although its concern is primarily Ajax. As I explained above, however, it is
impossible to dissociate Odysseus from Ajax's last days; even if, as is reasonable enough, one does not sympathize with what the Sophoclean Ajax feels and says about Odysseus (cf., for instance, "my destroyer" in v.573), at the same time one cannot deny that Ajax experienced trouble from the moment the son of Laertes entered into rivalry with him. The significance of this paradoxical connection between the two heroes is proved by the presentation and treatment of the myth especially by the two later poets, Pindar and Sophocles, on whom this work focuses. The chronologically last literary text to which this survey refers is, by no means accidentally, the Sophoclean Ajax. After this there is a rather big chronological gap at least in the surviving texts, and then only imitations. No new things in regard to the myth and its interpretation come up; with Sophocles we have the most substantial and systematic presentation and examination of the myth of Ajax's death.

The order of chapters in the present survey follows the chronological one of the literary sources examined. I shall now refer to every chapter separately, giving some guidelines which may hopefully make the task of the reader easier and facilitate the understanding of my attitude and method. I have to admit, for that matter, that this Introduction appears to be all the more necessary because of the absence of a chapter with general conclusions at the end of this survey, although there are broader discussions and/or conclusions at the end of almost all chapters, and I introduce some chapters with general discussions of the material to be presented.

Chapter I, the most general of all and the only one that does
not refer to a specific literary text, is concerned with the mythological origins and "relations" of Ajax. Already from the first part of this chapter the careful reader will be aware of the selectivity, which -and here is a proper place for me to say this- becomes one of the characteristics of the present survey: there is very short reference, or even none at all, to a few aspects of Ajax's origins and relationships, such as the Mycenaean origin of the hero, which do not bear on the events leading to his death. On the other hand, in the second part of the chapter, there is a detailed examination of Ajax's connection with Athens, a subject crucial for the hero’s treatment in Attic tragedy.

Ajax as presented in the Iliad is the theme of Chapter II. On the basis of the text of the epic, I examine Ajax's activities and the way in which they are described. In particular, I attempt to establish that there are no flaws, despite what some people have maintained, in the hero's depiction in the epic and, to put it in a different way, the Iliad fits Pindar's view expressed in 1.4.41-3 (ἀλλ' ὁμήρος τοι τετίμακεν [Ἀϊάντα] δι' ἀνθρώπων, ὃς αὐτοῦ / πᾶσαν ἀρεώσαις ἄρετάν κατὰ ἱράδον ἔφρασεν / εἰπείσιν ἐπέν ὁλοίᾳς ἀδύρειν). In the latter part of this chapter, the three scenes of the Iliad where both Ajax and Odysseus appear -and the contrast that starts to be shaped- are examined in detail.

Not much needs to be said about the third chapter, which is concerned with the renowned scene of the Nekyia, where Odysseus meets the shade of Ajax in Hades. Any information about the judgement of the arms that can be drawn from here is pointed out and a first reference to the content of the Epic Cycle is made —I hope that
this does not create any problems for the reader, since the main reference to those epics is found in the next chapter.

Chapter IV is one of the most important of the whole thesis. Three poems of the Epic Cycle, the Aethiopis, the Little Iliad, and the Sack of Troy, as well as a lost Aeschylean trilogy, referred to the story of Ajax’s death. Their scanty evidence is exhaustively examined; similarities, connections and differences among literary texts are pointed out - as these poems could have been sources of information or inspiration for later poets - and a re-establishment of their content in respect to the story of the death of Ajax, including in some cases new interpretation of fragments, is attempted. In the case of the Aethiopis, especially, and concerning the issue of what its last part included from the Ajax story, I suggest that this epic ought to be understood as having ended with Ajax killing himself: contrarily to the ancient information (the Aethiopis concludes, the last sentence of its summary by Proclus says, when "strife breaks out between Ajax and Odysseus over the arms of Achilles"), the epic ought to have related how the award of the arms was decided and the aftermath of this decision - Ajax’s grave disappointment with it and his consequent suicide.

In the fifth chapter I deal with Pindar’s version of the myth of Ajax’s death. The three odes that refer to the story at some length (Isthmian 4, Nemean 7, and Nemean 8) are examined, with stress laid on a detailed analysis of the relevant passages, the position and function of the Ajax reference in each ode, and its significance in regard to the structure of the poem. Seeing that Pindar seems to have been deeply touched by the horrible fate of
the hero, I attempt to point out which details of the Ajax story he underlines, as well as the common elements and the divergences between the different texts, in order to show that Ajax constituted a sort of "symbol" for the Theban poet. This was used, as we shall see, to express certain concepts and standards, and, moreover, it was adapted or modified (I do not want to speak about "evolution"; it is a dangerous term) according to the needs of the particular ode, winner and occasion. Moreover, it becomes obvious that in Pindar the "contrasting pair" Ajax-Odysseus has been definitely shaped, with the Theban poet being a partisan of the former hero and undermining the latter. Finally, as regards the Eighth Nemean, I also tackle the issue of the date of the ode and its supposed connection with the Ajax.

The last two chapters of this survey refer to the Ajax of Sophocles. Chapter VI deals both with rather general matters, including the manner of presentation of Ajax and his "crimes" in the first half of the play, and more specific ones, including an analysis of the hero's last monologue and of the other characters of the tragedy. I have written this chapter wishing to serve two aims. First, to stress that Ajax is what matters in this play; he is ever present in it, and whatever is said or done in the course of it refers to him or concerns him—perhaps nothing sensationally new in this statement. In support of it, however, I point out some elements of the play's plot and structure which, as I believe, function "in favour" of Ajax, and I lay emphasis on passages to which scholarship has given relatively less attention: for instance, I do not add anything to the plethora of writings about
Ajax's third "monologue" in the play (the "Deception Speech"), one of the most renowned Sophoclean passages, but I treat the hero's fourth —and last— soliloquy elaborately. Furthermore, the other characters of the play are examined in detail (especially Tecmessa and the Atreidae; I refer to Odysseus exclusively in the next chapter), though again "in relation to Ajax": they are divided into the categories of "friends" and "enemies" of the main hero. My other aim in this chapter is to pinpoint the relationship between the Sophoclean play and the earlier poetry on the myth of Ajax's death—or earlier poetry in general. The detection of similarities and diversifications among versions of the same myth, of allusions to other texts, the elaboration of this literary interplay of which Sophocles was a master, constituted a fascinating task for me.

Chapter VII, the last in this survey, is exclusively concerned with Odysseus' role in the Ajax. What he says and does in the play is thoroughly examined and this results in an appreciation of his role that differs from the one shared by most interpreters nowadays: Odysseus is surely not a villain, but not the embodiment of benevolence either. As I argue, "Odysseus in the Ajax is a basically good character in moral terms, but not at all faultless or great; and he is closer to Odysseus of the Philoctetes than what appears at first glance and what the majority of scholars generally accept" —and this without denying his decisive function in Ajax's burial and in the play's plot in general. This "unconventional" evaluation of Odysseus' character, based upon elements —I underline this again— offered by the Sophoclean text itself, is original, at least as an overall treatment of the hero's role, since very few
critics have expressed views similar to it—and only piecemeal ones, referring mainly to the prologue of the play. And I have to stress that this study of Odysseus’ character in the Ajax exemplifies and elaborates the general issue of presentation of character in Sophocles—all the more since we have to do with a character that lends itself to ambiguity, to susceptibility to more than one interpretation. It also shows the tragedian’s subtlety, assiduity in detail, and, as P.E. Easterling aptly puts it, his “distinctive originality [even when] finding expression through his reading of another’s work” (‘The tragic Homer’, BICS 31 [1984] 8).

This last chapter on Odysseus should be read as a continuation or a supplement of the previous one: Odysseus is an "enemy" of Ajax, who appears to change camp as the play ends. Chapters VI and VII together constitute a quite detailed examination of the Ajax, with attention often drawn to what may seem to be secondary elements. In fact, more than serving as a presentation of what functions in favour of Ajax in the play or how Sophocles accomplishes the vindication of the hero, these discussions are an attempt to delineate Sophocles’ masterly dramatic art in perhaps his most controversial play. Besides, when all is said and done, this survey as a whole is a study of the art of poetry, and of its effects—since, to bring Pindar to mind, ἀ δ’ ἀρετά κλειναίς ὀσίδαὶς χρονία τελέσει (P.3.114-5).

Continuing this discussion and speaking a bit more generally, it is time to face the often terrifying question, but unavoidable, I believe, to anyone who plunges into the deep waters of Greek literature: Does this survey produce anything new in any aspect?
The presentation of the "Ajax versus Odysseus Theme", following its course from Homeric poetry to a tragedy performed in the middle of the fifth century B.C. ought to be an answer; and as far as I know, this has not been the subject of a previous publication, although much has been written on many different aspects. All literary works concerned with the story of Ajax's death up to Sophocles are examined, both separately and through a study of the Sophoclean play, which constitutes an excellent example of literary interplay, of intertextual dialogue. One of the main purposes of a literary study is to find "keys" in order to make the interpretation of the texts which it treats easier -and the richest and most reliable source of these "keys" is the text itself. Concerning especially those of Pindar and Sophocles, this survey does not so much aspire to offer "invulnerable" interpretations or to solve controversial issues -though it sometimes makes such attempts; it prefers to indicate the aspects of a problem and to comment on or combine answers already suggested. Speaking of answers, there are no doctrines in our field; very few ideas have had the good luck to remain unassailable, to become "orthodoxies". Exquisite texts like the ones in question always leave space for new things to be said.

As this Introduction comes to an end, I have to refer to something that several people would consider as a deficiency of my work: there is no discussion of the archaeological evidence relative to the myth of the death of Ajax. This consists mainly of vase illustrations, as well as sculptures and statuettes, some of which may have been associated with performances of the Ajax. All relevant evidence is thoroughly presented in the Lexicon Iconographicum.
Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC) - entry: Aias I; vol.I(1) pp.312-36
(=article and descriptions of the illustrations by O. Touchefeu) and
vol.I(2) pp.232-52 (=illustrations). One has to admit, moreover,
that extensive and assiduous work appears to have been done on the
Ajax-representations in Attic and Etruscan art by acclaimed
specialists (I mention the names of J.D. Beazley, Mark I. Davies, and
Karl Schefold). Nevertheless, as regards the issues that concern
this survey - with some of them, like the question of how the award
of the arms was decided (e.g. agon, then voting?) or the enactment
of Ajax’s suicide (on stage?), being indeed so controversial - my
view is that the material in question does not add any decisive
information (cf. Mark I. Davies, ‘The suicide of Ajax: A bronze
Etruscan statuette from the Käppeli Collection’, AntK 14 [1971]
148-55; Karl Schefold, ‘Sophokles’ “Aias” auf einer Lekythos’, AntK
19 [1976] 71-8 - this lekythos, ascribed to the Alkimachos-maler
[460-450 B.C.], has been said to illustrate the Sophoclean Ajax,
thus providing external evidence for dating the play; who can speak
with safety about such a matter?). I therefore make only two main
references to archaeological sources in this survey; they are found
in Chapters I and IV, and their presence is absolutely necessary
there.

A schematic table of all versions of the myth of Ajax’s death
is given in an Appendix; it includes all details found in the
literary sources I examine here. They are organized so as to show
the relations among poets and versions as clearly as possible.

In conclusion, a note on more “technical” matters appears to be
useful. All books or articles to which I refer in the notes of this
survey are cited with the author's name alone and the number of page; only in the cases of the commentaries on Sophocles' Ajax I refer to verses and not to pages. In cases where two or more works of a particular author are included in my bibliography, I add the year in which his work was published to his name. Further, in cases where two or more works of a particular author are produced in the same year, I add a letter of the Latin alphabet to the year (e.g. Davies 1989b = Malcolm Davies, The Epic Cycle, Bristol 1989). A Roman numeral after the name or the year denotes number of volume. This manner of bibliographical presentation is followed even in case where a particular book or article is referred to only once in this survey. Speaking of bibliography, I would like to acknowledge here my debt to the work of W.B.Stanford –especially his book The Ulysses Theme (Oxford 1954) and his edition of Sophocles' Ajax (London 1963). I disagreed with him many times (if Homer was the ancient φιλοδοσοφεύς, according to Eustathius, then Stanford merits the title of the modern one), but I also appreciated and admired the majority of his remarks in those two books; through this "dialogue" my work benefited much. Besides, this survey is close in subject and style to The Ulysses Theme, having, of course, Ajax in Greek poetry, and the episode of his death in particular -namely much less material than in Stanford- as its reference point. Finally, as regards the transliteration of Greek names, I use the most popular forms (like Ajax, Achilles, Heracles, Odysseus); most times latinized names bring one closer to consistency.
I. AJAX'S ORIGINS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

a. The mythological origins and relations of Ajax

Ajax was son of Telamon and Eriboia. He was born in Salamis and came to Troy as the leader of the contingent of that island. There are only two references to Salamis as Ajax’s fatherland in the Iliad; apart from that of the Catalogue of the Ships which will be discussed later, Ajax himself says—as he prepares for his duel with Hector:

Ελπομαι ἐν Σαλαμίνι γενέσθαι τε τραφέμεν τε.

7.199

It seems that the Salaminian origin of Ajax was one of the few issues concerning him which did not raise dispute in antiquity. The Salaminians worshipped him as a hero a long time before the conquest of the island by Athens, as inscriptional evidence testifies. A temple and an ebony statue of Ajax were found in Salamis still in the age of Pausanias; also a festival in his honour (the Aianteia) was held in the island.

Ajax’s father Telamon had taken part in another Greek attack on Troy one generation before the Trojan war of the Iliad: that attack is mentioned in this epic and in the later poetic tradition as well. Telamon accompanied Heracles and won a princess of Troy (Hesione, who became the mother of Ajax’s step-brother Teucer) in
reward for his supreme valour*. Telamon and Peleus, the son of Aeacus and father of Achilles, were friends according to the logographer Pherecydes, who also held that Telamon was the son of Actaeus and Glauce, a daughter of the Salaminian king Cychreus\(^{10}\). Diodorus Siculus, however, following an older tradition, made Glauce Telamon's first wife\(^1\); after her death Telamon married Eriboia, Ajax's mother. The inconsistency of these accounts of the parents of Telamon was probably one of the reasons why another version became prevalent: in this Telamon was, like Peleus, a son of Aeacus, the king of the neighbouring island Aegina, and Endeis\(^12\). Aeacus was son of Zeus and the nymph Aegina; he became the founder of the most prominent heroic family. After his death he was said to become one of the judges in Hades\(^13\) and was worshipped in the island called after his mother\(^14\). According to Jebb\(^15\), who judged on the strength of the text of Herodotus and the sculptural representations of the temple of Aphaea in Aegina, the linking of Telamon and Ajax into the Aeacid family-tree must have gained general acceptance before the age of the great tragedians. As for Pherecydes' denial of that connection, Farnell\(^16\) reasonably holds that "it may only have been suggested by the negative evidence of Homer".

Ajax's mother Eriboia was the daughter of one of the sons of Pelops and Hippodameia, Alcathoos\(^17\), who was a king of Megara. Eriboia is recorded as the mother of Ajax in another interesting version; she was one of the girls who would be sent to Crete as a tribute of the Athenians to the Minotaur, when she conceived Ajax by Theseus\(^18\). The prevalent spelling of her name (Eriboia) is first met in Pindar\(^19\) and then in Sophocles' Ajax. In Xenophon,
Pausanias and Apollodorus, however, she is mentioned as Periboia\textsuperscript{20}, and a few more versions of her name are reported as well\textsuperscript{21}. Her Megarian origin was a stimulus for the cult of Ajax—and relevant propaganda for the hero—in Megara\textsuperscript{22}. In a somewhat puzzling passage, Pausanias writes that Ajax reigned over Megara after his grandfather Alkathoos and then made the statue of Athena (Aiantis) that existed in that city\textsuperscript{23}.

There is a last remarkable post-homeric development of the legend of Ajax: the connection of the hero with Heracles, apart from the friendship and collaboration between Telamon and Heracles which were mentioned above, and Heracles' being a half-brother of Aeacus—as both were sons of Zeus. In Pindar's Ithmian 6, a song for the Aeginetan Phylacidas, Heracles, entertained by Telamon in Salamis, foretells the birth of Ajax and prays to his father Zeus that the epoūç son of his host may be "unbroken in body" like the skin of the Nemean lion, which Heracles himself wears\textsuperscript{24}. Pindar seems to have developed the story along rather different lines elsewhere, saying that Ajax had been born before Heracles' coming to Salamis; the hero wrapped the infant in his lion-skin and made Ajax invulnerable except only one spot, under his arm, which had not been covered by the lion-skin\textsuperscript{25}.

An examination of the many significant implications of Ajax's genealogy and relationships with persons and places is now necessary. Firstly, Ajax's great-grandfather was Zeus himself; the hero claims that lineage, calling on Zeus twice in the Ajax of Sophocles\textsuperscript{26}.

As an Aeacid on his father's side, Ajax belonged to the
greatest heroic family, the members of which Pindar particularly loved and "delighted to eulogize beyond all others"\textsuperscript{27}. Ajax was at the same time one of the great ancestors of the young Aeginetan athletes who appear to have had a huge success in the panhellenic games and honoured their tiny native island so much. Pindar kept a special affection for Aegina and praised Aeginetan winners in one quarter of his extant epinician odes\textsuperscript{28}. He used the host of local heroes to set the right standards of heroic performance for the young athletes.

Pindar uses Ajax's links with Salamis in the same way. In Nemean 2 he praises the victory of the Athenian Timodemos, one of τῶν την Σαλαμίνα κατακληρονομάντων 'Αθηναίων (...) γεννηθέντα 'Αθήνης τετάρφει ἐν Σαλαμίνι, as a Scholiast on the ode writes\textsuperscript{29}. The poet refers to the main hero of Salamis, Ajax, who had been a perfect match for Hector in the Iliad; then (vs.13ff.) he connects Timodemos' victory with the achievements of his great compatriot. Following the poet's thought, the Scholiast notes: ώς ἐπιτηδεῖος Σαλαμίς ἔχει πρὸς τὴν τῶν ἡρώων γένεσιν\textsuperscript{30}. Sophocles in the Ajax, too, seems to insist on a similar sort of "psychological" approach; Ajax considers himself as a flawed descendant who was unable to live up to his father -since Telamon's success where Ajax has failed weighs heavily on the son\textsuperscript{31}.

Ajax's linking into the Aeacidae puts together all the heroes who represented the old heroic ἥεος, the so-called Achillean: "an ideal of warlike generosity, of rigid standards of honor, of insistence on time, the respect of the world -all this combined with the asceticism and physical beauty of the athlete (...)"\textsuperscript{32}, as Knox
vividly describes it; Pindar, far above all, praised that kind of heroic excellence, the polar opposite of which is represented by Odysseus—"an ideal of versatility, adaptability, diplomatic skill, and intellectual curiosity, insisting on success combined with glory rather than sacrificed for it".

On his mother’s side Ajax was a Pelopid. Pelops was another one of Pindar’s favourite heroes; Sophocles, though, pays no attention to this side of Ajax’s ancestry.

As for the association of Ajax with the greatest Greek hero Heracles (the ἠρώτες according to Pindar), apart from the undeniable affinity of Heracles to Ajax and Achilles in respect of the heroic ethos, one has to remark that the version that Ajax was invulnerable was explicitly adopted only by Aeschylus; the verses 833-4 in the Ajax of Sophocles are at best an implicit reference to Ajax’s invulnerability—and even that cannot be said with safety.

b. Ajax’s connections with Athens

The most important implication concerning the genealogy of Ajax—and subsequently the history of his cult—is doubtless the association of the hero with Athens. As we saw above, Ajax was regarded as the principal hero of Salamis and a native of that island. Let us labour the point of Ajax’s ancestry: as the son of a king of Salamis and a princess of Megara, also as a great-grandson of the nymph Aegina—and apart from being himself a king
of Salamis—Ajax constituted an ideal embodiment of the Athenian ambitions to lordship over the whole Saronic gulf\textsuperscript{39}. Since the last years of the seventh century and during the whole sixth, there was a renowned and persistent controversy between Athens and Megara over the possession of Salamis. The famous couplet of the Catalogue of the Ships of the Iliad refers to that quarrel between the two cities and also to the vexed question of the possible intervention of Athenian political propaganda in the Homeric text:

\begin{quote}
Αἴας δ' ἔκ Σαλαμίνος ἀγεν δωκαίδεκα νῆας

ταῦτα δ' ἁγὼν, ἵνα Ἀθηναίων ἱσταντο φάλαγγες.
\end{quote}

2.557-8

The second verse of the couplet in particular, was considered to be an interpolation and was rejected already by the scholars of the Alexandrian age\textsuperscript{39}.

Irrespective of the problems created by the Catalogue of the Ships as a whole\textsuperscript{40}, the focal point of our examination will be the issues which those two verses raise. The eleven verses (2.546-56) preceding our couplet in the Homeric text are a reference to the Athenians who took part in the Trojan expedition—a reference relatively lengthy and too laudatory, if one bears in mind the fact that the Athenians never played a conspicuous role\textsuperscript{41} in the Iliad. Menestheus, son of Peteos, a rather obscure figure\textsuperscript{42}, is mentioned as the leader of the Athenian contingent (2.552). In one of his rare appearances in the rest of the epic, Menestheus sends for Ajax to come to his rescue\textsuperscript{43}—can one think of that as a mere coincidence? Yet only a couplet is hardly a proper reference to such an important hero as Ajax\textsuperscript{44}. Willcock\textsuperscript{45} pointedly remarks that Ajax is not even
given his usual patronymic epithet Τελαμώνιος or Τελαμωνιάδης, which accompanies his name almost every time it is mentioned in the Homeric text -mainly to distinguish him from his namesake son of Oileus. Furthermore, the remark that Ajax’s ships were stationed at Troy with those of the Athenians is in contradiction with other passages of the Iliad.

A reference to some historical events is necessary here. Athens initially conquered Salamis in the period between the very last years of the seventh century and the very first of the sixth. During the sixth century, their possession of the island was often disputed by the Megarians -a short reconquest of it by them must have taken place in its first half. The leading Athenian figures of the struggle to (re)gain Salamis were Solon and Peisistratus; the latter was the one who took the island definitively, an achievement which helped him to become tyrant of Athens.

During the same period, another decisive event for Athens and for the issue that concerns us now happens; the great festival of the Panathenaea has begun to be held. The features of the Panathenaea are said to have included rhapsodic competitions where the Homeric poems were recited or sung. In the age of Peisistratus and his sons those competitions became so popular that Hipparchus, the art-lover son of the tyrant, introduced the important rule according to which "in recitations each rhapsode should start at that point in the story where the previous rhapsode ceased"; in all probability it was Hipparchus, too, who encouraged and supervised the task of arranging and writing down the Homeric epics.
in order. Those events, though, were also connected with Solon by tradition.

If this was the case, the Athenians had certainly a tempting opportunity to "interfere" in the Homeric text and thereby to forward their political plans—for instance, they could gain a strong argument in favour of their aspirations for Salamis through that couplet about Ajax. At least the Megarians believed so. They had a last chance to win Salamis in 510 B.C., when the Spartans seized Athens and drove out the Peisistratidae. The claims of the Megarians revived and a Spartan arbitration (the Spartans were allies of the Megarians) was called to settle the Salamis issue.

As Nilsson rightly holds, Plutarch in Solon 10 might have been expected to describe those events; the defeated Athens of that time could have been compelled to accept an arbitration of Sparta:

οὐ μὴν ἄλλα τῶν Μεγαρέων ἐπιμενόντων πολλὰ καὶ δρόντες [οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι] ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ καὶ πάσχοντες ἐποίησαντο Λακεδαιμονίως διαλακτάς καὶ δικαστάς. οἱ μὲν οὖν πολλοὶ τῷ Σώλῳ συναγωνίσασθαι λέγουσι τὴν Ὄμηρο ὄνται ἐμβαλόντα γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐπος εἰς νέον κατὰ λογον ἐπὶ τῆς δίκης ἀναγνώσαι·

Αἰτᾶς ἐκ Ἀθηναίων ἄγεν διοκαίδεκα νῆας, στῆσε δ' ἄγων ἵν' 'Ἀθηναίων ἱσταντο φάλαγγες. αὐτοὶ δ' Ἀθηναῖοι ταύτα μὲν οἴονται φλυαρίαν εἶναι, τὸν δὲ Σώλωνα φασιν ἀποδείξαι τοῖς δικασταῖς, ὅτι Φιλαίος καὶ Εὐρυδήκης, Ἀἴαντος ὡς, Ἀθήνηι πολιτείας μεταλαβόντες παρέδοσαν τὴν νῆον αὐτοῖς καὶ καταχθεῖν ὁ μὲν ἐν Βραυρώνι τῆς Ἀττικῆς, ὁ δὲ ἐν Μελίτῃ καὶ δήμον / ἐπώνυμον Φιλαίο τῶν Φιλαίδων ἔχουσιν, οἶον ἄν Πεισίστρατος. ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον ἐξελέγχει τοὺς Μεγαρέας Βουλόμενον ἰσχυρίσασθαι περὶ τῶν νε-
It is remarkable that the Megarians did not dispute Homer's authority but they declared that those particular verses were inauthentic and had been inserted by the Athenians into the Homeric text in their own interest. Fragments of two Megarian historians, Dieuchidas and Hereas, confute Solon's arguments for the Athenian possession of Salamis. Dieuchidas is explicit about the "contributions" of Solon and Peisistratos to the Homeric poems. Strabo is a source of the story as well; after mentioning the passages of the Iliad which are at variance with 2.557-8, he cites the Megarian version of the passage. According to it, Ajax had brought ships from territories of the Megarid:

Αἴας δ' ἔκ Σαλαμίνος ἄγεν νέας, ἐκ τῆς Πολικής
ἔκ τ' Αἴγειρούσας Νισαίης τε Τριπόδων τε.

This is certainly an obvious forgery, "if only because it records no specific number of ships." I shall come back to Solon's arguments mentioned by Plutarch later. The Spartans, in any case, seem to have been rather indifferent to the wishes of their Megarian allies, and the Athenian lordship over Salamis remained unchallenged.
M.M. Willcock makes an interesting suggestion: if the ancient tradition which insisted on the interpolation of the verse 2.558 by the Athenians is reliable, then that verse may have replaced a more lengthy reference to Ajax in the Catalogue of Ships.

Nevertheless, the prevalent tendency of contemporary scholarship appears to be to reject the late dating and the expediency of the interpolation of the passage. Van der Valk, indeed, is categorical about the genuineness of the couplet of the Catalogue. There are equally strong arguments to be put forward in favour of that opinion:

i) the inconsistency and the arbitrariness of the criteria which the Alexandrian critics often used to athenitize verses or passages of the Homeric text;

ii) the actual insignificance of Ajax’s kingdom;

iii) possible misunderstanding of the meaning of the verse 2.558;

iv) the pre-Trojan (Mycenaean) origin of Ajax; also, as Kirk remarks on the non-existence of any indication about Ajax’s genealogy in the couplet, the hero had not been linked yet into the Aeacid family-tree when the Catalogue and the whole Iliad was composed (only Achilles and Peleus are called Akidn in the Homeric poems): so, “further details about Ajax’s family and background were suppressed”;

v) the mention of Menestheus in the preceding reference to Athens, which is an indication of its antiquity (as Menestheus was dismissed in favour of Theseus’ sons in the later epic tradition) guaranteed the authenticity of the following entry about Ajax. In conclusion, I believe that Hope Simpson and Lazenby have rightly held that “the interpolator could surely have made a better job” if he had wanted to interfere with the passage in question—and the whole text of the Iliad as well—
in the interest of Athens. The issue is, however, still open to
debate.

A few years after the incidents, which, as we discussed above,
Plutarch seems to describe, the reforms of Cleisthenes took place
in Athens. Cleisthenes instituted the ten new Athenian tribes
(phylae), and one of them was named after Ajax (Aiantis).

Herodotus' account of the fact deserves attention: μετά δὲ τετρα-
φύλους ἐόντας Ἀθηναίους δεκαφύλους ἐποίησε ἐκ Κλεισθένης (...) ἐξευρόν δὲ ἐτέρων ἥρων ἐποικίας ἐπιχωρίων, πάρες Αιάντως τούτον
δὲ ἄττικα ἐπίσκεπτα καὶ σύμμαχον, δεῖγνον ἐόντα προσέποιετο.

Ajax was therefore the only non-Attic eponymous hero. Yet one
may find a parallel for him -after a fashion- among the rest of the
phyle-heroes: Hippothoon was actually an Eleusinian hero; there was
a sanctuary of his at Eleusis. Eleusis had been incorporated with
Athens after a struggle -certainly not so protracted as happened in
the case of Salamis- during the last quarter of the seventh century,
that is, some years before the conquest of Salamis by Athens.

At this point it is worth examining some details of the Athenian
conquest of Salamis. As literary and inscriptive evidence
testifies, an interchange of population took place. Athenian
clerouchs settled in Salamis; according to Pausanias, moreover, this
happened before the reconquest of the island by the Megarians.
We have already mentioned Timodemos, winner in the Nemean Games praised
by a Pindaric ode; he was a member of one of the families of the
Athenian clerouchs. Some of the old inhabitants were allowed to stay
in their island, but others -and as Garland interestingly
suggests, the nobler ones in particular, during the reconquest of
Salamis by Megara- were transported to Athens where they were granted Athenian citizenship. That reminds us of another of Solon’s arguments in the arbitration of Salamis mentioned by Plutarch —that Ajax’s sons, Philaeus and Eurysaces, became Athenian citizens, donated Salamis to the Athenians and lived in Attica⁶³; Pausanias agrees with that, but differs in connecting the donation of Salamis to the Athenians with Philaeus alone —and according to him Philaeus is the son of Eurysaces and the grandson of Ajax⁶⁶.

The Salaminians who came to Athens during the sixth century B.C. were given the right to form an artificial genos⁶⁵; most of them were installed in a large area near Sounion and others were dispersed in different places which, after Cleisthenes’ reforms, belonged to seven of the Athenian tribes⁶⁴. Some fifty years ago⁶⁷, a lengthy inscription was found in the Athenian district of Melite —the place where Eurysaces settled, according to Plutarch⁶⁸. This is an extremely important record of the organization and the cult of the Salaminians. It is an arbitration between the two parts of the genos of the Salaminioi, those of Heptaphylae and those from Sounion; it also constitutes a valuable sacrificial calendar⁶⁹. The inscription dates from 363/2 B.C., and it was found in the place where there was the Eûpúoακείον, the sanctuary of the son of Ajax⁷⁰. From line 44 of the inscription we are informed that Eurysaces’ cult was Athenian, not an importation. From 11.75-9 we learn that the ancestors of the two-branch (pseudo-)genos lived in Acharnai, Boutadai, Epikephisia, and Agryle in 508/7, when the ten tribes were instituted by Cleisthenes. Ferguson’s judgement, therefore, that the Eurysakeion was much older than the institution
of the ten phylae seems to be justifiable. Ferguson holds that there was a very old ἥρως of a nameless hero— with a shield as a possible cult object—in Melite, and it was baptized with the name of Eurysaces, but Nilsson's suggestion that the hero cult may also have been newly created is equally possible.

Irrespective of the date of the foundation of the Εὐπυρόκειον, Eurysaces must have been a post-homeric mythical figure. He is mentioned as the son of Ajax by Tecmessa and appears on stage in the Ajax of Sophocles. The poet seems to imply that Eurysaces is the only son of Ajax. Philaeus, on the other hand, is recorded as the son of Ajax by Lysidice, the daughter of Coronus; he is mentioned by Herodotus for the first time—as son of Ajax and ancestor of Peisistratus. That may have been devised in favour of the tyrant or precisely because Peisistratus was the one who won Salamis for Athens definitively, as we saw above. The term Φιλαδεφία raises a problem: when it is used for Peisistratus, it refers to a deme (δῆμος) of Athens; its use for the family of Miltiades, Cimon and Thucydides is later than the age of those eminent Athenians.

What concerns us particularly about the Εὐπυρόκειον is that the sanctuary was the assembly place of the genos of the Salaminioi and of the members of the tribe Aiantis, the centre of the cult of their eponymous hero. Also important is the reason why the Εὐπυρόκειον was founded, even before the Salaminians come to Athens, and one has to agree with Nilsson on that matter: "(...)the founding of the sanctuary of Eurysakes was an outcome of the struggle for Salamis. The Athenians wished to transfer the Salaminian hero to Athens.
to win him for themselves and through his favour to get hold of the island.\textsuperscript{102}

Continuing this discussion, 11.20-4 of the decree found in the sanctuary of Eurysaces tell us that the Athenian state contributed to the costs of the sacrifices of the Salaminioi, a significant and unexampled fact which, together with the information (from 11.12 and 45) that those immigrants furnished the priestesses of an old Athenian cult, shows the anxiety of the Athenians to attach Salamis firmly to their state and to win the favour of the newcomers.\textsuperscript{103}

The contents of the inscription in question constitute, above all, a sample of the habit of transference/interchange of cults; this interchange was used by the Athenians as an effective tactic in order to manage the possession of disputed territories and then to keep them loyal in their hands.\textsuperscript{104}

Our focus is again directed to Ajax as an eponymous hero of Athens. He is depicted on the eastern frieze of the Parthenon together with the other eponymous heroes of the Athenian tribes. Significantly, the sculpted representation of Ajax is the biggest in that particular part of the frieze; it appears that the sculptors followed the Homeric tradition according to which Ajax was taller by head and shoulders than any other Greek hero of the Trojan War.\textsuperscript{105}

The statue of the hero stood in the Agora of Athens (again together with those of the other phyle-heroes) although there is no unanimity whether the statues of the eponymous heroes were erected either at the time of or soon after the institution of the ten tribes by Cleisthenes, or later, during the age of Pericles.\textsuperscript{106}
Ajax was also associated with the Athenian epheboi. The Aianteia, a festival in honour of the hero, including games where the youths of Athens took part, were held in Salamis and, in all probability, in the course of time, in Athens as well.

Moreover, in the Scholia on Pindar's Nemean 2 (a reference to them has already been made above) the Athenian epheboi are reported to adorn a couch with a set of armour in honour of Ajax (κλίνην αὐτῷ μετὰ πανοπλίας κομψάν) ; this sort of lectisternium may have been connected with the Aianteia. The Athenians went on paying Ajax cult honours down to the years of Pausanias.

The tribe Aiantis is said to have been instrumental in the Persian Wars. It had held the right wing at the battle of Marathon and was chosen to offer a special sacrifice to the Σφραγίτιδες Nymphs on mount Cithaeron after the battle of Plataea.

Herodotus informs us that Ajax and his father Telamon had been invoked to help the Greeks before the naval battle in the strait of Salamis; apart from the fact that αὐτόθεν μὲν ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος Αἰαντά τε καὶ Τελαμώνα ἐπεκαλέοντο, the Greeks sent a ship to Aegina to summon "the rest of the Aeacidae allies" as well; and after their decisive victory at Salamis, they dedicated a Phoenician trireme to Ajax.

Megarian counter-propaganda about Ajax, though, was strong. We have already seen some of its aspects—for instance, Pausanias' information about the statue of the goddess Athena "Aiantis" in Megara. However, it is difficult to explain the existence of that epiclesis. On the other hand, a fragment of the historian Hesychius is worth mentioning. The Megarians transferred their cult
of Ajax to their important colony Byzantium, where the founder
Returning to Ajax as an Athenian hero, and concluding this
chapter, one may be certain, bearing in mind what we have
mentioned above, that an Athenian audience assembled to watch
a play on the theme of Ajax would in principle have been favourably
disposed towards the particular hero—regardless of the
perplexities suggested by the story of his career and, especially,
his tragic death. It seems as if every Athenian spectator of the
Sophoclean Ajax could accept easily the attestation of the hero’s
greatness and his “vindication”, which, as is argued, the poet
ingeniously managed in the play117, and would be pleased to hear
Ajax, in his last farewells, take leave of Athens as well:

[kleinaĩ τ' Ἀθηναϊ καὶ τὸ σύντροφον γένος118]
II. AJAX IN THE "ILIAD"

It would be impossible for this survey to avoid referring to Ajax as he is presented in the Homeric poems. Besides, Pindar and Sophocles—with the latter having been widely characterized as the "most Homeric" among the tragic poets already since the time of the Alexandrian critics—drew a lot of elements out of Homer's epics, mainly the Iliad (since in the Odyssey Ajax appears only once, in the famous scene in the Underworld, when the shadow of the hero remains "majestically" silent despite Odysseus' "honeyed" words; this, though, can hardly be considered an appearance in the normal sense).

It is beyond all doubt that Ajax occupies a prominent position in the Iliad. Our examination concerning his descriptions and appearances in it, however, will be rather concise; we shall focus our attention on Ajax's three shared appearances with Odysseus in the Iliad, as this is closest to the purpose of the present study.

Ajax was universally considered to be the greatest warrior in the Greek army after Achilles; this became a commonplace in Greek literature (cf. Il.2.768, 17.279-80, Od.11.469-70, 24.17-8, Alcaeus fr.183 Page, Pindar N.7.27, Soph. Ajax 1340-1 etc.). His warlike abilities were superb. He came to Troy with only twelve ships, but he was placed at the one end of the Greek camp, a post of honour, in such a way that he balanced Achilles himself, who was situated at the other end. In 13.324-5 Ajax is mentioned as being unsurpassed
in close fight:

οὐδ' ἄν Ἀχιλλῆϊ ἔρημήνορι ἐκρήγετεν
ἔν γ' αὐτοσταθίη.

Ajax distinguishes himself as a warrior particularly in the following incidents:

i) The duel with Hector (7.206ff.). As Jebb remarks, "in the absence of Achilles it is only Ajax who is a match for Hector". The other eight Greek chiefs, who were candidates for facing Hector in a single combat, and the whole Greek army, rejoiced (7.182) when it fell to the lot of Ajax to be Hector's rival. Ajax is likened to Ares, the god of war himself (7.208), and his normally grim face is lit up by a smile before that important warlike challenge (7.212). His appearance, though, frightens even Hector (7.216). Ajax faces the greatest Trojan warrior superbly; after throwing a stone against Hector, he shows his superhuman strength and wins a clear advantage (7.268-71); he does not manage to win completely because of Apollo's intervention (7.272). Then Ajax agrees to Idaeus' suggestion to interrupt the duel in a sort of a draw; he exchanges gifts with Hector (7.303-5) — gifts which will prove fatal, as is mentioned in Sophocles' Ajax. Ajax himself regards the duel as his victory (7.312). Later (14.402-20) he will wound Hector in another clash between them in the battlefield.

ii) The defence of the Greek ships (15.415ff., 16.102ff.). Ajax is the only Greek chief (the others have been wounded and so have withdrawn) who tries to prevent Hector's impetuous attack on the wall of the Greek camp and the ship of Protesilaus. Ajax fights desperately, but he obviously undertakes an ungrateful task; at the
same time, he attempts to raise the morale of the Greek soldiers with magnificent exhortations.

iii) The defence of the body of Patroclus (17.626ff.). The passage is significant -especially 17.629-47- because, apart from his martial valour in the battle over Patroclus' corpse, which Ajax and Menelaus finally rescue from the Trojans, Ajax shows his piety. His "prayer of light breathes reverent submission to the will of Zeus", Jebb remarks.

Ajax was said to be second only to Achilles in comeliness, too (cf. 17.279). His stature was gigantic; Homer presents him taller by head and shoulders than all the other Greeks (3.226-9, when Achilles is absent). He is called μέγας times without number, and πελάριος more often than any other hero in the Iliad; this adjective, as has rightly been noted, suggests, apart from gigantic size, some degree of dreadfulness; πελαριος is used five times for Ajax while only twice for Achilles and Periphas, and once for Agamemnon and Hector.

Ajax is loyal and always helps friends in need (cf. 8.266ff., 15.461ff., 17.114ff.).

It is significant, though, that Ajax is not presented by Homer merely as a superb warrior. He is not exclusively a doer, but corresponds with the heroic ideal (cf. 9.443), at the creation of which the education of a hero aimed:

μωσω τε ἡρη' ἐμεναὶ προκτηρά τε ἔργων.

Ajax speaks wisely and admirably on many occasions. He shows good sense in his brief but effective speech in the embassy to Achilles (9.624-42). According to Stanford, his appeals to
comradeship, manliness, sense of honour and self-respect during the worst moments ever for the Greek army in Troy - Hector's onslaught towards the Greek camp, which has been mentioned above - are "magnificent" and "superb in their terse boldness" (cf. 15.502-13, 561-4, 733-41). He plays a similar role elsewhere (12.265-76, in co-operation with the other Ajax, son of Oileus); his words, says the poet, are accordingly either μειλίχια or στερεά (12.267). After the interruption of their duel, Hector calls him "a man of wisdom":

Αἰαῖν, ἔπει τοι δῶκε ἑαυτὸς μέγεθος τε βίντι τε καὶ πινυτήν, περὶ δ' ἔγχει Ἀχαῖον φέρτατος ἔσσι

7.288-9

Apart from those references, many are the cases where Ajax is praised by the Scholiasts of the Iliad for his dignity in speaking, modesty, reasonableness, self-control, prudence, magnanimity and ἀποφασίζον ἡθος. So, one would support the notion that Athena's words about Ajax's "foresight" and "skill in timely action", which sound somehow strangely in the Ajax, are, on the evidence of the Iliad, absolutely justified.

For all that, there are some remarkable peculiarities in the presentation of Ajax in the Iliad, which have given to some interpreters the opportunity to indicate, with some justification, "a sort of negative quality" associated with the hero.

Ajax does not carry out any ἀποθεία; there is no book of the Iliad devoted to his deeds exclusively - as there is for Diomedes, for instance. In the fifteenth book of the poem, where Ajax can be considered as the leading figure, he fights in defence against superior forces and finally retreats (cf. 15.727-9). Indeed, the
The great majority of the scenes where Ajax distinguishes himself are scenes of defence, moments of crisis on the battlefield. Even his most famous piece of armament is defensive—the sevenfold shield. Moreover, Ajax and his shield share a "defensive" characterization: "tower" (μυργος, cf. Iliad 11.7.219 and Od. 11.556). The other "title" of Ajax recalls defence, too: "bulwark of the Achaeans" (προς Ἀchaiων 3.229; cf. also 6.5, 7.211).

Ajax, unlike many of the other Greek chiefs, is never associated with any protecting deity in the battles; also, he is not the "favourite" hero of any god or goddess.

Furthermore, Ajax does not speak in the council of the Greek generals; nor does he give any advice of general interest. The depreciatory aspect which a Scholiast finds even in Ajax's rank (next to Achilles) deserves attention; he calls the hero δευτερος.

Despite his eminent strength and size, Ajax does not win in any of the three games in which he takes part at the funeral games of Patroclus: in the wrestling between him and Odysseus (23.700-39) a draw was proclaimed; in the duel with spears (23.811-25), after Ajax's bad thrust and before Diomedes' striking back, the Greek chiefs, Αἰαντί Περίδεσσαντες, stopped the game and gave equal prizes to the two competitors. In his third participation, in the weight-throwing contest (23.836-49), although Ajax had a lead, he was eventually defeated by Polypoites, this time clearly. It is worth mentioning at this point Plutarch's information: the Athenian tribe Aiantis (which was named after Ajax) should never be judged last in the competitions among the tribal choruses, because it was hard for
Van der Valk argues that Diomedes is presented as more glamorous than Ajax in the *Iliad*. Stanford speaks about "a certain slowness of mind and temperament" of Ajax; yet, to me, he stresses some passages of the *Iliad* overmuch. For instance, when Hector (who, as we have seen, and as Stanford admits, praises Ajax elsewhere) calls him ὑμωρτονές, Bouydê (13.824), this is, I think, an outburst or provocation by no means unexpected of an angry warrior against an enemy in the middle of the battlefield. Besides, no boast or impiety on Ajax's part is implied anywhere in the *Iliad*.

There is another controversial passage: the simile in 11.558-62, and especially vs. 558-9, where Ajax is compared to a "stubborn ass" - a comparison rather unusual for a hero. I do not think of it as depreciatory. The adjective ἠνεχ are completely balanced by the way Ajax is presented in 15.679-86; the whole picture of the simile is also balanced by the preceding - and much more lengthy - comparison of Ajax to a "blazing lion" (11.548-57). On the other hand, the comparison to an ass emphasizes, I believe, Ajax's warlike stubbornness whilst he is pushed back by force of numbers. If Ajax's characteristic role in the *Iliad* was indeed that of the "steady, immovable defender" who very rarely retreats, then this is an apt comparison. There is, besides, an analogous simile in 13.470-6: it refers to Idomeneus, who, like a mountain boar confident in its strength, does not retreat from the uproar of many men and dogs.

As we have already seen, Ajax assented to the interruption of his duel with Hector. The Trojan chief had been in a tight corner
and the soundness of Ajax's decision may be questioned; however, one has to consider that a god (Apollo) intervened to help Hector in the most crucial phase of the duel and that daylight was also running out. Stanford, judging mainly from the second confrontation between the two heroes, stresses that Ajax nearly killed Hector; the same scholar assumes that the word "nearly" accompanied many of Ajax's actions and deeds, and his remark that Ajax had "a recurrent inability to win final success" seems to be justifiable.

It is time now to get closer to the three shared appearances of Ajax and Odysseus in the Iliad. There is certainly no trace of any quarrel between the two heroes in this epic. They merely oppose each other in an athletic game in their third common appearance. One should note, however, that there are some moments in those scenes when a contrast between Ajax and Odysseus becomes conspicuous.

The first time they appear together is in the Embassy scene (9.162ff.). The make-up of the three-member embassy of the Greek army to Achilles is significant: Ajax, the second greatest warrior; Odysseus, the eloquent and resourceful chief; Phoenix, Achilles' ex-tutor.

Odysseus makes the first—and "official"—speech (9.225-306). Its structure is admirable. He gives Agamemnon's terms for a reconciliation tactfully—leaving out their most provocative part—, appeals to Achilles to pity the whole Greek army and promises him glory if he should fight Hector. The beginning of Achilles' response deserves attention; he addresses Odysseus with his common adjective
and stresses that his own speech will be straightforward (9.309); then he implies insincerity on Odysseus' part - contrary to his own "self-proclaimed simplicity":

\[ \epsilon\chi\varepsilon\rho\acute{o}\varsigma \gamma\acute{a} \mu\omicron \kappa\varepsilon\iota\nu\omicron \varsigma \circ\mu\omega\varsigma \ 'A\acute{i}d\acute{a}o \ \pi\upsilon\lambda\omicron\sigma\iota\varsigma \nu \ \dot{\alpha}z \ \dot{x}' \ \dot{e}\acute{t}e\rho\omicron\nu \ \mu\acute{e}n \ \kappa\varepsilon\omega\eta \ \epsilon\nu \ \varphi\rho\varepsilon\sigma\iota\nu, \ \dot{a}l\lambda\alpha \ \dot{a}\dot{e} \ \dot{e}\iota\pi\eta. \]

9.312-3

Next Achilles rejects Agamemnon's proposals.

Phoenix's attempt to move his ex-pupil (9.434-605) fails as well. Then Ajax intervenes; it is he who realizes first - probably for the psychologically proper reason that his mentality is closer to that of Achilles - that their efforts to persuade the angry hero are hopeless and they have to stop pressing him (9.625-6). Ajax indicates pointedly that anger predominates over friendship in Achilles' heart (9.628-36). He ends his speech by saying that Odysseus, Phoenix and himself claim respect as guests and representatives of the whole army (9.640-2), thus reminding Achilles of their status as envoys.

Achilles seems to have been moved by Ajax's words, which are of the type he likes - frank and straightforward. In sharp contrast to his response to Odysseus, he tells Ajax:

\[ \pi\acute{a}nta \ tî \ \muoi \ k\acute{a}tâ \ \varepsilon\upmu\omicron\nu \ \epsilon\acute{e}i\sigma\sigma\acute{o} \ \mu\nu\epsilon\acute{a}\eta\sigma\sigma\acute{e}ai. \]

9.645

Furthermore, Ajax's relatively short speech obtains the sole concession on Achilles' part: contrary to what he had announced in his replies to Odysseus (9.356-63, 427-9) and Phoenix (9.617-9), Achilles now does not adhere to his decision to sail home next morning (9.650-5). Among the three envoys Ajax is the one who
receives the best reaction to his words from Achilles. Thus I would suggest that Ajax and Odysseus become the two poles of a contrast through Achilles’ dealing with them.

In the eleventh book of the Iliad a fierce battle takes place. Odysseus is cut off from his comrades-in-arms and gets wounded by the Trojans. In a display of personality rather than warlike ability, the hero gets the better of his opponent Socus, who had previously thrown his spear against him, but then he finds himself surrounded by many Trojans. His life is in danger. He shouts to his comrades for help three times “as much as his head could hold” (i.e. as loudly as he could). Menelaus hears his call and immediately calls upon Ajax, who was close, to run to Odysseus’ rescue. Although Menelaus leads the way, the poet seems to lay emphasis on Ajax: ὁ δ’ ἄμως ἔσπερος ἔσπερος φῶς (v. 472). The two heroes approach Odysseus and the scene is vividly presented through a long simile:

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ἄμφι δ’ ἀρ’ αὐτῶν
Τρῶες ἔπονετ’ ὃς εἶ τε δαφνίνοι εῶς ὀρεσφίν
ἄμω’ ἔλαφον κεραίς βεβηλημένον, ὅν τ’ ἔβαλ’ ἀνήρ
ἰὼ ἄπο νευρῆς· τὸν μὲν τ’ ἠλωξε πόλεμοιν
φεύγων, ὅψ’ αἰμα λιαρόν καὶ γούνατ’ ὄραρ’·
αὐτάρ ἐπει ὅτι τὸν γε δαμάσεται ὁκὺς ὁιστός,
ὡμοφάγοι μὲν εῶς ἐν σώτει δαρδανοῦσιν
ἐν νέμει σκιέρῳ· ἐπὶ τε λίθν ἥγαγε δάμων
σίντην· εῶς μὲν τε διέτρεσαν, αὐτάρ ὁ δάπτει·
ὕς ὅρα τότ’ ἄμω’ Ὄμωσα ὁδύφρανα ποικιλομήτην
Τρῶες ἔπον πολλοὶ τε καὶ ἄλκιμοι, αὐτάρ ὅ γ’ ἄρης
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It becomes obvious that Ajax's (and Menelaus') intervention saves Odysseus' life—remarkably, the two heroes will play the same roles in the recovery of Patroclus' body in Book 17. Ajax stands beside Odysseus and shields his fallen comrade; the mere presence of the giant of a hero and his equally huge shield is sufficient to make the Trojans "scatter one way and another". The simile describing the episode represents the lion/Ajax as scattering the "bloodthirsty" Trojan jackals, which had surrounded the wounded stag/Odysseus. In v.481, though, there is the single disagreement between the narrative and the metaphoric level: the lion eats the stag that the scavengers abandoned in terror—while Ajax rescues Odysseus. Bradshaw holds that this single exception "suggests a deliberate rather than an infelicitous breakdown of metaphor" and his question that follows seems to be well put: "Is there implicit in the simile a sense of radical antagonism between the two heroes that could not, with propriety, be part of the narrative text?" This passage, then, may well foreshadow the subsequent rivalry between Ajax and Odysseus in the contest for the arms of Achilles; further, the image of Ajax as the devourer of the stag may be related to the later presentation of the slaughter of the cattle.

In the third scene, the wrestling match (23.700-39), which no doubt foreshadows Ajax’s and Odysseus’ rivalry in the contest for the Achillean arms, the contrast between the two heroes is
more obvious. It is significant which qualities of Ajax and Odysseus the poet stresses, already before their match:

\[ ώρτο δ' ἔπειτα μέγας Τελαμώνιος Αἴας, \]
\[ ἄν δ' Ὀδυσσέως πολέμητις ἀνίστατο, κέρδεα εἰδὼς. \]

23.708-9

They are physical strength for Ajax, resourcefulness and cunning for Odysseus. The fight between strength and intelligence - both equally necessary qualities for the Iliadic hero - remains indecisive for a long time (cf. 23.721) until Ajax makes a proposal: that the one should lift the other (23.723-4). The moment Ajax lifts his opponent, Odysseus shows that indeed δόλου οὐ λήθετο (23.725): he hits Ajax’s knee and throws him backward; Odysseus falls upon Ajax’s chest and the Greeks enεύντο τε εἴμβησάν τε (23.726-8). After Odysseus’ temporary ascendancy, the second bout remains indecisive again: Odysseus is unable to lift Ajax (23.729-31). Before the third bout Achilles stops the match, proclaims victory for both and gives them equal prizes (23.736-7).

Did Achilles favour Ajax? Stanford implies that he did - as, besides, happens more flagrantly in the second entry of Ajax in those games, when he competed with Diomedes in a duel with spears: Ajax’s comrades in arms seemed to have been aware of his difficulty in accepting defeat, so they tried to placate him whenever such situation was likely to occur.

Homer, following his invariable tactics of presenting his noble heroes without insisting on their possible weak spots, is very careful about that point; he does not give us any clue to suggest any favour towards Ajax by the other Greeks - for instance, noone
remonstrates about the decisions concerning Ajax’s matches, not even his opponent. This being the case, the poet himself does not encourage us to be quite explicit about the issue.

Nevertheless, there are some things which we can be sure of. In his third—and last—athletic attempt, the weight-throwing contest, Ajax was clearly defeated. Despite his undeniable splendour throughout the whole epic, the last appearance of that great hero in the Iliad is a moment of failure—and, as a rule, the last impression remains memorable. In any case, Homer left abundant material for his successors in poetry to adapt.
III. THE END OF AJAX IN THE "ODYSSEY": THE FAMOUS SCENE OF THE NEKYIA

With regard to the Iliad and the Odyssey, only in the latter does one come across any references to the death of Ajax. The sequence of events leading to and concerning the hero’s terrible end took place after those described in the Iliad, close to the fall of Troy. We have already seen, moreover, that in this epic there is neither any clear indication of a tragic death that is to befall the hero, nor any reference to his committing a crime worth being punished¹. In one of the opening books of the Odyssey, "warlike Ajax" is briefly mentioned as having met his death in Troy, in Nestor’s speech to Telemachus during the visit of Odysseus’ son to Pylos². That, and an equally short mention of Ajax among the shades of the heroes of the Trojan War whom the slain suitors meet as they enter Hades³, might have been the only information about Ajax’s fate coming from the Odyssey, if Odysseus himself had not recounted to the Phaeacians what was possibly the most fascinating of his wanderings —his visit to the Underworld. This constitutes the Nekyia, the eleventh book of the epic and the central episode of those describing Odysseus’ "adventures", but also, as it is widely considered, the most "detachable" one, presenting many of the thorniest points of the Odyssey even for a keen "unitarian"⁴.

In his penultimate encounter with the departed spirits, Odysseus meets three of his former comrades in the Trojan expedition,
Agamemnon, Achilles and Ajax in succession. Ajax is presented with his conventional "rank" (vs.469-70 -cf., for instance, II.17.279-80) in Odysseus' reference to the heroes-friends of Achilles. We can now proceed to the main Odysseus-Ajax encounter and the information it gives us about the death of Ajax. The text (Odysseus is speaking) is as follows:

οἷς δ’ Ἀϊάντος ψυχή Τελαμωνιάδας
νόσφιν ἀφεστήκει, κεκαλωμένη εἶνεκα νίκης,
τὴν μὲν ἐγὼ νίκησα δικαζόμενος παρὰ νησί
τεύχεσιν ἀμφ’ Ἁχιλλῆς. ἔθηκε δὲ πότνια μήτηρ.
παῖδες δὲ Τρώων δίκασαν καὶ Παλλᾶς Ἀθήνη.

ὡς δὴ μὴ ὅφελον νικάν τοιῶδ’ ἔπ’ ἄεθλῳ.

τοιὴν γὰρ κεφαλὴν ἔνεκ’ αὐτῶν γαῖα κατέσχεν,
Αἰαν’, ὡς πέρι μὲν εἶδος, πέρι δ’ ἔργα τέτυκτο
τῶν ἄλλων Δαναῶν μετ’ ἀμύμονα Πηλεῖωνα.

τὸν μὲν ἐγὼν ἐπέεσσι προσηύδων μειλιχίοισιν.

Αἰαν, ποι Τελαμὼνος ἀμύμονος, οὐκ ἄρ’ ἔμελλες

οὐδὲ θεανόν λήσεσαι ἐμοὶ κόλου εἶνεκα τευκέων

οὐλομένων. τὰ δὲ πῆμα θεοὶ θέσαν Ἀρχείοισι,

τοῖος γὰρ φίλιν πύργος ἀπώλεσε. σεῖο δ’ Ἁχαιοὶ

ἰσον Ἁχιλλῆς κεφαλὰ Πηλιάδας

ἀκνύμενα φειμένοις διαιμερέσ. οὐδὲ τις ἄλλος

αἰτιός, ἄλλα Ζεὺς Δαναῶν στρατῶν αἰχμητῶν

ἐκπάγλως ἤχησε, τεῦν δ’ ἔπι μοῖραν ἔθηκεν.

ἄλλ’ ἄγε δεύρο, ἄναζ, ἵν’ ἔποι ἔποιον ἄκοουσις

ἡμέτερον. δάμασον δὲ μένος καὶ ἀγήνουρα θυμόν.

Ῥός ἐφὰμην, ὡ δὲ μ’ οὐδέν ἀμείβετο, ὥδ’ δὲ μετ’ ἄλλας
Odysseus, then, at first gives to the listening Phaeacians an account of the events that led to Ajax’s death: together with Alcinous and his court, we learn that Odysseus contended with Ajax for the arms of Achilles, which had been set as a prize after his death by his mother Thetis (v.546). The judges, "the sons of the Trojans and Pallas Athena" (v.547), awarded the arms to Odysseus; this brought Ajax his death and, furthermore, Odysseus finds out that Ajax’s anger against him over the award remains unappeased.

One has to admit that the information about Ajax’s end drawn from this passage is quite scanty; Odysseus rather outlines the story than narrates it. The Scholiasts on v.547 inform us that "the story comes from the Cyclic epics" and go on to cite it: "φυλαττόμενος ου 'Αγαμέμνων το δόξαν εισέρων καιρίσασθαι τον περι τον 'Αχιλλέως ὄπλων ἁμρισβητούντων, αἰχμαλώτους τῶν Τρώων ἁγαγῶν ἠρώτησεν ὑπὸ ὀποτέρου τῶν ἠρών μᾶλλον ἐλυπηθέντωσιν. εἰπόντων δὲ τὸν 'Οδυσσέα τον αἰχμαλώτων, ὑπάλη ἐκεῖνον εἶναι τὸν ἀριστον κρίναντες τὸν πλείστα λυπῆσαντα τούς ἔχεροις, ἐδώκεν εὐθείας τῷ 'Οδυσσεῷ τὰ ὄπλα." The award of the Achillean arms, we now know for sure, was included in two of the poems of the epic cycle, the Aethiopis and the Little Iliad. Mainly on the basis of verse 547 (the authenticity of which, despite Aristarchus’ rejection of it in
antiquity, is, by the way, well established by modern commentators\(^1\), that is the indication of who decided the award, in combination with the other information drawn from our passage, it seems very probable that the *Odyssey* version of the story is in accord\(^1\) with that of the *Aethiopis*. Although it appears to be certain that the story of the ὀνὸς κρίσις and Ajax's suicide is prehomeri\(^1\), one cannot be equally sure about all the details of it (such as the hero's madness and the slaughter of the cattle) being of the same age; furthermore, we are unable to speak with full conviction about which of the two versions, that of the *Odyssey* or that of the *Aethiopis*, is the earlier.

Continuing the discussion about the suggested "agreement" between the versions of the *Odyssey* and the *Aethiopis*, it is now worth noting: i) With regard to the detail that the Trojans were the judges, in the *Little Iliad*, as we know from a scholion on Aristophanes' *Equites* 1056, the award of the arms to Odysseus was decided on the basis of the opinions about the two contenders expressed during a conversation between two Trojan maidens inside Troy; those were overheard and reported to the Greek camp by spies sent to the walls of Troy on Nestor's advice; on that report the Greek chiefs gave the arms to Odysseus\(^1\). Verse 547 of our passage, in combination with the Scholia on it which speak about "prisoners" (ἀίχμαλωτοὺς) and Odysseus' saying that the ὀνὸς κρίσις took place inside the Greek camp (cf. δικαζόμενος παρά νησι—ν.545) seems to diverge a great deal from the version of the *Little Iliad*. The alternative to linking the story of the *Odyssey* to that of the *Little Iliad* is to presume that it may have been in
the *Aethiopis* that the ναὶς Ἳρων/prisoners were the judges.

The only difficulty for our argument is presented by the mention of Pallas Athena as judge, too, in v.547; this element seems to be relevant to the *Little Iliad* version (the second Trojan girl speaks in favour of Odysseus 'Ἀεινάς προνοεῖ; also, in Proclus’ summary of that epic it is again mentioned that Odysseus gets the arms κατὰ Βοῦλαν οὖν 'Ἀεινάς'). An analogous influence on the minds of the Trojan prisoners by the goddess in favour of Odysseus, however, may be implied in the *Odyssey* as well; as Jebb remarks, "when the Homeric poet associates 'Pallas Athena' with the Trojan judges, he need not be understood as conceiving that she actually presided over the award -as in the *Eumenides* she presides at the first session of the Areiopagus".

ii) The *Little Iliad*, almost certainly later than the Nekyia and the *Aethiopis*, contained the details of Ajax going mad after the award and then slaughtering the cattle of the Achaeans, mistaking them for the Greek chiefs, before committing suicide. Those elements of the story are completely ignored in our passage of the *Odyssey*; not only are there no hints at them at all, but Odysseus speaks explicitly about the grave and proper mourning, equal to that in the case of Achilles, in which the Greeks had been engaged by Ajax's death (vs.556-8). Certainly Ajax would not have been mourned if his death was not honourable, if it was clouded by such misdeeds (cf., contrarily, ἔργα in v.550) as described in the play of Sophocles. One has to admit at this point that in the *Odyssey* it is not explicitly said how Ajax died, but v.549 implies, I think, the hero’s committing suicide; it also implies that Ajax’s death
was the immediate consequence of the award; the motive of the suicide was exclusively resentment at the decision, which, he felt, dishonoured him. Eustathius, commenting on or, rather, citing the version of the Aethiopis, writes: "and immediately [after the adjudgement of the award] Odysseus received the arms and Ajax left and fell on to his sword"\textsuperscript{10}. Thus, neither in the Odyssey nor in the Aethiopis do we have any mention of an outbreak of anger and violence on the part of Ajax after his defeat in the judgement for the arms, of his planning to murder his comrades in arms, of slaying cattle instead of them, owing to an illusion imposed on the hero by Athena, or even, as Kamerbeek adds, referring to the Pindaric version of the story, of any "foul play" connected with the award\textsuperscript{17}. Jebb suggested that the "older and simpler" version of the myth of Ajax's death knew nothing of his insane attack on the cattle; in this, resentment at the award is what drives the hero almost immediately to suicide, as we have already discussed, and "not that feeling combined with a sense of disgrace incurred by his own action"\textsuperscript{20}. We can place, I believe, both the Odyssey- and the Aethiopis-versions in that older tradition of the myth of the end of Ajax\textsuperscript{21}.

Coming back to our passage, we have Odysseus regretting his victory in the contest, since it caused the death of the second best hero among the Achaeans (vs.548-51). Those words exude sorrow and sincerity, but, as happens in the analogous occasion in the Sophoclean Ajax, they come a bit late.

Then Odysseus goes on to address Ajax's shade, although it stayed apart, still filled with anger. Odysseus' speech is short,
but his words are indeed "soothing" and "honeyed" (cf. μειλιχίοιοιν -v.552). He calls the Achillean arms, the root of the trouble, "accursed" (cf. ούλαμένον -v.555). As he did previously, Odysseus stresses the gravity of the real ðελαν of the contest -Ajax’s death- which was a bane (πῆμα) to the Greeks sent by the gods (vs.555-6 -cf. vs.548-9). Ajax is called a tower of the army -a characterization very close to the hero’s most flattering Iliadic title (Ερκος Αχαϊων -3.229). His death, Odysseus says, was mourned by the Achaeans equally to that of Achilles (vs.556-8). Odysseus proceeds to elaborate a point which he has already hinted at: he attributes Ajax’s death to Zeus, who, at the moment of the contest, had borne terrible hatred against the Greeks and laid that χωρα on Ajax (vs.559-60). Odysseus’ last exhortation to Ajax to lay his wrath aside is, too, careful and flattering towards the latter; Ajax is called ἀνδρες and his anger is not explicitly mentioned (μένος is "vehemence", more an element of mentality, and I would prefer a rendering such as "proud spirit" for ἄγνωρα εὐμόν, instead of "obstinate" [soul]). One would hardly expect Odysseus’ last words not to be in accordance with the vein that prevails in his whole speech.

Despite its brevity, Odysseus’ speech is, I think, an exceptional sample of rhetorical art. It is certainly appropriate to the hero’s renowned ability in words. Furthermore, one would say that the poet of the Odyssey presents here a speech very close to those of tragedy. The ten verses of Odysseus’ address manage to exude genuine sincerity, heartfelt sadness over his former comrade’s terrible fate and high esteem towards Ajax. The speech is of a ring
structure; the main argument is found in the middle: Odysseus not unreasonably places Ajax's fate in a theological context\(^{24}\); Ajax has to understand that Odysseus cannot be held responsible for opposing Ajax in the contest for the arms and being awarded them -Zeus is to be blamed for that\(^{25}\). Odysseus here is no exception to the Greek habit, or rather convenience, of attributing everything to the gods.

Five words are the "answer" to the mastery and the generosity of Odysseus' speech -ό δὲ μ' οὐδὲν ἀμεῖβετο (v.563): silence. Ajax remains unmoved, his anger towards Odysseus unappeased, and without a word his shade moves away into the darkness together with the other departed spirits. Ajax's "silent response" constitutes one of the highest and most admired scenes in Greek poetry. It was directly imitated by Virgil (Aen.6.469-72) and also offered a great deal of ground for "literary interplay" to later master-technicians like Sophocles\(^{26}\). For our passage leaves indeed several questions of the Ajax story unanswered on the one hand, but also an unforgettable, though momentary, representation of a heroic ἅρῳς of inflexibility and pride to the point of magnificence on the other. The author of Περὶ Ὀμοιότητος, having defined Ὀμοιότης (sublimity) as μεγαλοφοροσύνης ἀπήκημα, detects this in Ajax's silence in the Nekyia: it is, he holds, "great and more sublime than every utterance"\(^{27}\). And, indeed, Odysseus' preceding eloquence pales beside that magnificent silence of Ajax.

We have already pointed out the emotional impact of the scene, despite its brevity -Stanford elsewhere stresses the skill of the poet of the Odyssey "in expressing profound emotion with a single
touch (Economy of phrase). One has to admit, therefore, even if one accepts Finley's opinion that in the Nekyia, as possibly in the whole Odyssey, there are only few moments of "overpowering emotion", since Odysseus here mainly "sees and learns", that the scene in question is definitely one of them. At this point, it is worth noticing that all three encounters between Odysseus and his former comrades in Troy that take place in the Nekyia end in emotion, perhaps of a different and ascending quality each time: the, so to speak, almost "usual" sort in the case of Agamemnon (vs.465-6); Achilles' turning away without saying a word, but full of pride and joy, having learnt from Odysseus about the achievements of his son Neoptolemus (vs.538-40); and, finally, the meeting that, in fact, never was one —Odysseus' "honeyed" words are uttered in vain; they face Ajax's eternal resentment and silence.

The last three verses of our passage (565-7) represent one of its major problems. Those verses, though they seemingly belong to the Odysseus-Ajax encounter, are at the same time an introduction or a transition to the final scene of the Nekyia, a passage (up to ν.635) which some commentators consider to be an interpolation. Odysseus says: "And there nevertheless [Ajax's shade] would have spoken to me, despite his anger, or I to him; my heart within me, though, desired to see the ghosts of the other dead people". It is difficult to accept that these verses are merely "somewhat harsh, but in keeping with the context"; let us see how they were paraphrased by a Scholiast: ὁμοίως καὶ ἑγὼ ἔφην ἀν πρὸς τὸν Ἀίαντα κεχω­λμένα ἱρήματα εἰλίσως. ἀλλ' ὁ θεμάς ὁ ἐμός ἠειλὲ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν τενεώτων ἴδειν, καὶ σχολὴν οὐκ εἶχον. Thus not only do
the three verses weaken the effect of Ajax's majestic silence, but also call the sincerity of Odysseus' preceding words into question. Denys Page has presented the issue well: "What drabness now intrudes upon the sombre beauty of the poet's thought, merely in order to make way for Minos and his vassal ghosts? (...) The silence of Ajax, then, was accidental, imposed by the requirements of a time-table. Given another moment he would have spoken. And Odysseus' plea, that Ajax might forgive and speak to him, was nothing but formal politeness: Ajax was about to reply, but Odysseus is in a hurry, he cannot wait for the answer; another day, perhaps, but just now time is pressing. Surely we are justified in concluding with certainty that whoever conceived the image of the silent ghost of Ajax did not at once proceed to destroy his own conception?" Page then goes on to athetize vs.565-635 -"introduced at such heavy cost to the preceding episode"- as "beyond all reasonable doubt inserted in its present place by a later poet". The fact is that, even if one does not consider vs.568-635 as an interpolation, the three verses 565-7 are surely problematic. In my opinion, though, strong reservations can be entertained as to the likelihood of the last scene of the Nekyia being interpolated, at least for one reason that relates to the Ajax-episode and has "literary value": indeed, after Ajax's silence, the rest of the Nekyia is silence. Odysseus does not converse with any of the six legendary figures he meets in the Minos-area, that of rewards and punishments, in Hades. Only one poet, I would say, the same in both scenes, would have conceived and conveyed that, thus making the impact of Ajax's silence even greater and more memorable, the last heroic image left by the Nekyia.
Coming to the end, a few remarks concerning secondary means used by the poet in order to "distinguish" Odysseus' encounter with Ajax need to be made. It is significant that only Achilles and Ajax among those shades which approach Odysseus do not drink of the blood of the sheep so as to be able to speak with him (of course, Ajax does not speak eventually). Since among the "Trojan heroes" Agamemnon does drink of the blood to converse with Odysseus, why does the poet not represent the two others doing the same? Commenting on the fact that Achilles does not drink of the blood, Stanford quotes an interesting suggestion made by H.W. Parke: "Homer has adopted this device to deal with the special case of Ajax, on the one hand to spare him the humiliation of drinking the blood in the presence of Odysseus and, on the other, to make it clear that his subsequent silence was voluntary."

Furthermore, it is worth examining in sequence the references to Ajax in the Nekyia, as they culminate in a climax. The first of them is found at vs. 469-70, where the shade of Ajax is seen among those of the heroes—friends of Achilles; it is just before Odysseus' encounter with Achilles and in a sense it prepares us for the Odysseus-Ajax meeting. Ajax is referred as Ἄριστος ἕν ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων Ἀχαῖων μετ' ἀμύμονα Πηλεῖων—as we have already noted, this is the conventional mention of the hero. In our passage, just before Odysseus' address to him, Ajax is again mentioned in a couplet that differs from the previous one (vs. 550-1): Ἁίσανε' ὃς πέρι μὲν εἴδος, πέρι δ' ἐργα τέτυκτο / τῶν ἄλλων Ἀχαιῶν μετ' ἀμύμονα Πηλεῖων. Here the reference does not confine itself to Ajax's physique, but praises his deeds.
(not necessarily the warlike ones only) as well. The measure of
the comparison remains always Achilles, with whom Ajax is eventually
"equalled" in Odysseus’ speech (vs.556-8): τοῖος γὰρ σφίν πύργος
ἀπόλέο. σεῖο δ’ Ἄχαιοι / ἵσσον Ἀχιλλῆος κεφαλὴ Πηληίδαο / ἀξνύμεθα
φεῖμένοιο διαμπερές.\(^318\).
FROM HOMER TO PINDAR AND SOPHOCLES:
FRAGMENTARY EVIDENCE FOR THE STORY OF AJAX'S DEATH
IN THE EPIC CYCLE AND AESCHYLUS

a. The "Aethiopis"

The Aethiopis, attributed to Arctinus of Miletus, related the events of the Trojan War that took place immediately after those of the Iliad. The epic has been anything but favoured by the good god of philology; the surviving fragments are too scanty, and any knowledge we have about it is mostly based upon the "summary" in the Χρηστομάθεια Γραμματική of Proclus1. The main heroic figure of the poem appears to have been Achilles, since his exploits at the expense of two of the mightier and more renowned allies of the Trojans, both children of gods and newly arrived at Troy, were described in four of its five books. The hero slays the Amazon queen Penthesileia and then the Aethiopian prince Memnon. In the fifth book of the Aethiopis, however, Achilles himself is killed by the collaboration of Paris and Apollo, and indeed it is there that our concern with this epic starts2. The concluding lines of Proclus' summary run as follows: τρεπόμενος δ' Ἀχιλλεύς τοὺς Τρῶας καὶ εἰς τὴν πάλιν συνεισπεσών ὑπὸ Πάριδος ἀνατίναι καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος καὶ περὶ τοῦ πτώματος γενομένης ἱσχυράς μάχης Αἴας ἀνελόμενος ἐπὶ τᾶς ναύς κομίζει, 'Οδυσσέως ἀπομαχουμένου τοῖς
Taking things in order, we will start from the reference to the "fierce battle" that broke out over the corpse of Achilles—a scene foreshadowed by the analogous Iliadic one over Patroklos. The Greeks managed to defend the body and the armour of their best warrior and to carry them to their camp. As we learn from Proclus’ abstract, Ajax and Odysseus were the ones who played a foremost part in the action of this episode of the Aethiopis: the former carried the body to the ships, while the latter kept off the Trojans in rear-guard action.

Since it came as the result of the joint efforts of Ajax and Odysseus, the rescue of the arms and the corpse of Achilles gives them each a good case for any future contest for "primacy". The next stage of the action, the judgement of the arms, is therefore suitably prepared. Although one has to admit that this performance by the two heroes does not appear to have played a role in all the known versions of the story, any detail that we learn about it acquires added significance if it is put in the aforementioned perspective.

Before proceeding to the actual contest, there are some details that deserve attention. Firstly, the account of the Aethiopis regarding the roles of the two heroes in the defence of Achilles’ body seems to be in agreement with that of the Odyssey given by Odysseus himself: reduced to despair by the hardships of his wanderings, he wishes he had died gloriously during the battle...
over the fallen Achilles, obviously the most difficult situation he found himself in at Troy, when many spears had been thrown against him. In a scholion on the Nekyia, moreover, the Trojans killed by Odysseus whilst Ajax was carrying Achilles’ corpse are mentioned, a bit bafflingly, as the ones who decided the award of the arms to him. Apollodorus, too, who draws from the Aethiopis up to a point in his account of those events, says that Ajax, after distinguishing himself by killing Glaucus during the battle over Achilles, distinguished himself by killing Glaucus during the battle over Achilles, тό ὅπλα δίδωσιν ἐπὶ τὰς ναῦς κομίζειν, τὸ δὲ σῶμα βαστάσας Αἴας βαλλόμενος βέλεσι μέσον τῶν πολεμίων διήνεγκεν, 'Ὁδυσσέως προς τοὺς ἐπιφερομένους μαχημένου. The issue, though, is more complex than it seems. There are other references which suggest that it was Odysseus who carried the fallen Achilles to the Greek ships, and Ajax the one who protected his retreat. Leaving aside the scholiast on Pindar’s N.8.48—who constitutes one of those by misreading the passage of the Odyssey in question—another scholiast, commenting on this very passage (Od.5.310), informs us: ὁτι ὑπερεμάχησαν τοῦ σώματος Ἀχιλλέως ὕδυσσεώς καὶ Αἴας. καὶ ὁ μὲν ἐβάστασεν, ὁ δὲ Αἴας ὑπερήψισεν, ὡς καὶ ἐπὶ Πατρόκλῳ. Eustathius also follows the same version, possibly recalling the previous scholion.

Particularly striking is a scholion on II.17.719, occasioned by the defence of the fallen Patroclus. With clear disapproval, the scholiast attributes to the νεώτεροι, the poets of the Epic Cycle, the invention of Ajax carrying the body and Odysseus fighting to protect his retreat towards the ships: ὁτι ἐνεύθεσεν τοῖς νεώτεροις ὅ βασταζόμενος Ἀχιλλέως ὑπ’ Αἴαντος, ὑπερασπίζων δὲ
To continue our discussion, it is useful to remind ourselves of Ajax's conventional/Homeric role in battle: the best in defence. This is certainly more in accord with the idea of him fighting bravely in order to protect the carriage of Achilles' corpse to the Greek camp, something, besides, that he successfully carried out, as we have said before, in the equally difficult case of the slaying of Patroclus. And since, as we shall see later, the respective roles of Ajax and Odysseus in the recovery of Achilles' body were decisive for the award of the arms to the latter in the version of the Little Iliad, one wonders, in fact, whether the task of carrying a dead body is honorific for a warrior especially in comparison to fighting to protect that action. Odysseus, on the other hand, was not the ideal warrior in Homer, to be sure: excellent though he is in counselling and in planning war operations, he rarely distinguishes himself in battle in the Iliad; besides, the Epic Cycle deals with several events that are rather embarrassing for him. I think, then, that we cannot totally exclude the possibility that the account of the recovery of Achilles' body in the Aethiopis, particularly concerning the roles of the two heroes in this scene, was different from what was generally believed to have happened. The case underlines the richness and the diversity of the mythological material regarding even details of our story.

As we have seen, the last sentence of the argument of the
Aethiopis in the Chrestomathy of Proclus mentions that a quarrel arises between Odysseus and Ajax for Achilles' armour. The story continues, we are led to suppose, in the Little Iliad, the abstract of which comes immediately after that of the Aethiopis in Proclus, and indeed it begins with the completion of the contest and its consequences. A fragment from the Aethiopis (fr.1 Davies), however, incidentally the only one that is securely attested, coming from a scholion on Pindar's I.4.58, informs us that "the author of the Aethiopis says that Ajax killed himself about dawn" -nep tov òpepov- being in agreement on that with Pindar's version (òmìa ev vukti -cf. I.4.38-9)\(^1\). It becomes obvious, therefore, that the story was brought down further by Arctinus, that is, to the ultimate consequence of the judgement of the arms, Ajax's suicide, but Proclus omitted that in his summary of the Aethiopis. Ajax is mentioned as having killed himself in the argument of the Little Iliad. Proclus' reliability is widely accepted\(^2\), but well-known, too, is his characteristic "system" in compiling the summaries of the Chrestomathy: according to Monro "the portion of narrative assigned to each poem in the abstract of Proclus does not always represent the plan and argument of the original work; consequently the continuous and consistent narrative of the abstract is not due to the ancient 'Cyclic' poets themselves"\(^3\). And this happened, Davies argues, because of the aim for which Proclus wrote the summaries: "to remind the reader of the Iliad of episodes in the story so as to facilitate his understanding and enjoyment of Homer's epic. But the other Trojan epics from the Cycle, though their final
form was influenced by a wish to fill details before and after Homer’s two poems, may have originally been independent compositions, and in consequence sometimes disagreed with Homer’s version of events. These disagreements had to be removed (together with repetitions of events also present in Iliad and Odyssey) from Proclus’ original summary when this was transformed into a preface to the Iliad: otherwise there would be unnecessary confusion. "^17 With the same guidelines in mind, Proclus eliminated any overlapping material between the poems of the Cycle themselves, any "doublets", to use Davies’ term^20, despite possible differences in detail of the versions of each epic. In this case, for some reason, Proclus chose to preserve the Little Iliad’s version of the judgement of the arms and Ajax’s death, although the same events, in a different version, were described in the Aethiopis as well.

The question of how the διδικής was related in the Aethiopis is very difficult to resolve. The relevant evidence is almost non-existent, so most of the following discussion will be conjectures and suggestions. As we have already seen dealing with the same matter in the Odyssey, the main points of the story that concern us are two: how the award was decided and what followed the decision. The first question has been discussed in the preceding chapter on the Odyssey. It appears that the Aethiopis adopted a line very similar to that of the Odyssey with regard to the judges of the contest; on the basis of the scholia on v.547 of the Nekyia (cf. ἡ δὲ ἱστορία ἐκ τῶν κυκλίκων) Trojan prisoners were consulted by the Greeks or decided themselves as to whether Odysseus or Ajax was the more deserving of the Achillean arms. Very remote is the
possibility that the epic followed the simplest—and oldest—version, that the judgement was made by the Greek chiefs, a variant adopted by Pindar and Sophocles, who presumably followed an earlier source.

The second question, regarding what followed the award of the arms, will be treated at length here. It is very difficult to speak positively about whether in the Aethiopis Ajax’s defeat in the contest was followed by his being struck by insanity. Proclus’ omission of the relevant account of the epic does not necessarily mean that the Aethiopis described Ajax’s madness, as the Little Iliad did. The view held by most commentators who have studied the Epic Cycle, that the Aethiopis is possibly the closest poem to the Iliad in style and spirit, in combination, moreover, with its chronological proximity to the two Homeric epics, by contrast with the later poems of the Cycle like the Little Iliad, may constitute good reason to believe that such “unhomeric” elements as Ajax’s madness and his treacherous plans against his comrades-in-arms which were stopped by Athena, were not presented in Arctinus’ epic. This view was shared among others by Jebb. On the basis of the information given by the fragment mentioned above, that Ajax killed himself about dawn, "doubtless on the morning after the award", he suggested: "There is no reason to think that Arctinus mentioned that delusion of Ajax by Athena which caused his slaughter of the cattle. The scanty evidence rather suggests that the rage in the hero’s soul was not expressed in any deed of violence, but that he passed in seclusion, perhaps within his tent, the few hours of darkness between his defeat and
his death."^22^5 Jebb held that, as happens apparently in the Odyssey, the single motive of Ajax's suicide had been resentment at the award and "not that feeling combined with a sense of disgrace incurred by his own action."^26^ The fact that Arctinus and Pindar "agreed" on a relatively minor detail like the exact time of Ajax's death leads to the assumption that they may have done so concerning other details of the story as well. Pindar "ignored", too, Ajax's madness and murderous intentions, but he differs from the Aethiopis in two aspects: i) the identity of the judges of the ἐπίλων κρίσις —if what is suggested here is tenable—, and ii) the possibility of something being crooked about the award —no trace of the latter is met anywhere in the Cycle.^27^.

Jebb's "reconstruction" of Ajax's last hours in the Aethiopis, however plausible it may appear, presents two weak points: The few hours of the night that Ajax is supposed to have spent "in seclusion" are enough to be used, as in Sophocles, for the series of events concerning the hero that the dramatist —or the Little Iliad— described: insanity, plan to murder the chiefs, delusion by Athena, onslaught on the cattle, becoming sane again and feeling shame, suicide; besides, time in Greek poetry is handled peculiarly: sometimes everything seems to happen very quickly. Moreover, Jebb was inclined to follow the incorrect view that a fragment in which Podaleirius is mentioned as having spotted the first signs of deep mental trouble in Ajax belonged to the Aethiopis, instead of to the Sack of Troy; he also misinterpreted it slightly in order to support his line of argument.^28^.

Apollodorus, who might have helped us here, since he follows
the *Aethiopis* up to a point, seems to have changed his source immediately after the funeral games in Achilles' honour. The *Epitome*'s account of events concerning and following the award of the armour to Odysseus appears to derive from the *Little Iliad*: ή δὲ πανοπλία αὐτοῦ τῷ ἄριστῳ νικηθήριον τίεται καὶ καταβάίνουσιν εἰς ἀμιλλαν Αἴας καὶ Ὀδυσσέας. προκριέντος δὲ Ὀδυσσέως Αἴας ὑπὸ λύπης ταράττεται καὶ νόκτωρ ἐπιβουλεύεται τῷ στρατεύματι. καὶ ὑπὸ Ἀθηνᾶς μονεὶς εἰς τὰ βοσκῆματα ξιφῆς ἐκτρέπεται καὶ ταῦτα κτείνει σὺν τοῖς νέμουσιν ὡς Ἀχαιοὺς. ὢστερον δὲ σωφρονήσας κτείνει καὶ ἑαυτόν.φ

There is no trace, by the way, of an intervention by Athena in the *Aethiopis*, either in the procedure of the adjudgement of the arms (though one cannot exclude completely an "influence" on the minds of the judges by the goddess here—as hinted in the *Odyssey*) or by imposing delusion on Ajax. This does not much weaken the possibility that Ajax was presented mad in the *Aethiopis*, but rather supports the idea that events such as the slaughter of the cattle were not related in our *epic*.g

The view that Ajax is pictured insane in the *Aethiopis* acquired one argument in its favour by the discovery, a few centuries ago, of the so-called *Tabulae Iliacae*. These are sets of inscriptions dated from the first century B.C. to the first A.D., in which the contents of the Homeric epics and the poems of the Epic Cycle are mentioned in a brief and peculiar form, apart from some depictions of known scenes and figures, that is as the names of the persons/heroes who take part in the action. The main riddle concerning these *tabulae* was the use for which they were intended:

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66
A. Sadurska suggests three possible purposes: i) scholarship - teaching and giving children practice in mythology; ii) a means of supporting Aeneas' genealogy (and thus that of the gens Iulia); iii) decoration using the ever-popular Trojan legend. In the last line of one of the inscriptions of the Tabula Iliaca Capitolina (the inscription bears the title Αἰειόνις κατὰ 'Αρκτίνον τὸν Μιλήσιον) we read: Αἶος [μανί]ώδης. Although only the last four letters of the word μανίωδης are readable, this reading seems to be the most plausible and has not been disputed. However, no other of the Tabulae Iliaca that refer to the Aethiopis mentions Ajax as mad, and the lateness of the tablets, in combination with the several mistakes - even of spelling - in their inscriptions and the uncertainty about their precise aim and function, takes away some of the authority from their testimony concerning this element of the contents of the Aethiopis.

So, the issue about Ajax presented mad in the Aethiopis cannot be considered settled, although there is circumstantial evidence - at least - in favour of a μανιωδής hero at the end of the epic. Perhaps one should provisionally guess that his outbreak of frenzy - a consequence of the injustice of the award - made Ajax commit suicide; I would not support the presence in the Aethiopis of stories such as Ajax's murderous intention against the Greek chiefs and Athena's "intervention" so that the hero in his deluded state canalizes his frenzy in the direction of the cattle.

Finally, concerning the tradition of Ajax being invulnerable (certainly a non-homeric heroic element) and therefore facing difficulty in committing suicide (cf. my sub-chapter on Aeschylus'
trilogy below), Davies\textsuperscript{39} makes what seems to me to be a far-fetched suggestion, that the hero may have been presented as invulnerable in the Aethiopis. We simply are unable to speak about that with any amount of certainty, although one may expect the story of Ajax's invulnerability to have been older\textsuperscript{39} than its first certain appearances in Pindar's Isthmian 6 and Aeschylus' Thessae.

\textbf{b. The "Little Iliad"}

In contrast to the Aethiopis, the Little Iliad, an epic in four books ascribed to Lesches of Mytilene, had much more good fortune concerning its survival: we have several fragments from it; also, apart from Proclus' abstract, information about the contents of the poem can be drawn from the Poetics of Aristotle\textsuperscript{40} (where the philosopher refers to the tragedies derived from the Little Iliad) and the passage of Pausanias\textsuperscript{41}, in which he describes Polygnotus' paintings at Delphi, representing scenes from the taking of Troy and following, we are told by the geographer, the account of the Little Iliad. The events related in the epic, therefore, extend as far as the sack of Troy.

In Proclus' summaries, the Little Iliad occupied a position between the two poems by Arctinus -after his Aethiopis and before the Sack of Troy. We have already mentioned that its first part overlapped with the concluding part of the Aethiopis and, indeed, the two fragments of the Little Iliad that will concern us here
belong to its opening part. The contest for Achilles’ arms, how it was decided, and its consequences, were narrated there and treated differently from in the Aethiopis. We cannot be certain, though, as to whether the judgement of the arms was the very first event that the Little Iliad described. Proclus may well have “arranged” the beginning of the poem to fit the end of the Aethiopis. M. Davies’ suggestion that “a plunge in medias res with the quarrel between Ajax and Odysseus would have been epically proper” is interesting, but, apart from the obvious risk in a speculation of this sort, one may consider it rather lofty in artistic terms for a poem of the relatively undistinguished Epic Cycle. In any case, Aristotle’s mention of the judgement of the arms as one of the themes treated in the Little Iliad may lead one to suggest that the events relative to Ajax’s fate were described in the poem at possibly greater length than in the Aethiopis.

The opening words of Proclus’ summary leave much to the imagination: ‘Η τῶν ὀπλῶν κρίσις γίνεται καὶ Θοδωσεῦς κατὰ βούλησιν Ἀθηνᾶς λαμβάνει, Αἴας δὲ ἐμμανός γενόμενος τὴν τε λείαν τῶν Ἀχαιῶν λαμαίνεται καὶ ἑαυτόν ἄνασε. With fr.2(I) Davies our idea of the judgement of the arms as represented in the epic is well elaborated. The fragment comes from a Scholion on Aristophanes’ Equites 1056; it is necessary for the purposes of the present examination to cite the words of the Scholiast as well: ἡ ἱστορία τούτον τὸν τρόπον ἔχει. ὅτι διεφέροντο περὶ τῶν ἄριστεῖν ὁ τε Αἴας καὶ ὁ Ὀδυσσεύς, ὡς φησίν ὁ τὴν μικρὰν Ἰλιάδα πεποιηκώς τὸν Νέστορα δὲ συμβουλεύουσα τοῖς Ἑλλησθείς πέμφει τινὰς ἢς αὐτῶν ύπὸ τὰ τείχη τῶν Τρώων, ὧτακον-στήσοντας περὶ τῆς ἀνδρείας τῶν προειρημένων ἥρων. τοὺς δὲ πεμφέ-
The last line and a half are in fact quoted in the text of Aristophanes. The second Trojan girl undoubtedly added that it was Odysseus who covered the retreat. So, after hearing the report of the spies, the Greek chiefs gave the arms to Odysseus.

Commenting on the fragment, one should start, I believe, from the fact that the whole episode is distinctively different from the style of the Iliad and, even, as far as we can tell, from that of the Aethiopis. Commentators have maintained that it is characteristic of the "temper" of the Little Iliad, which contains "more of the lighter Ionian vein, and a larger element of romance", and is closer to the spirit of the Odyssey; on a more specific and "pragmatic" level, though, I cannot see the phrase παίδες δὲ Τρώων [Σίκασαν] (Od. 11.547) -despite the presence of Athena in the account of the Odyssey, too- corresponding in any way to the two Trojan maidsens. Other assessments of the story include such terms as "fanciful" or even "perverse". Jebb suggested that the "ingenuity" of the account of the Little Iliad regarding the judgement of the Achillean arms "indicates the desire [of the poet] to avoid
imitation of some earlier poet who had referred the award to the Trojan captives\textsuperscript{4} (the poet of the \textit{Aethiopis} I would suggest); it certainly proves its lateness in relation to the simpler versions\textsuperscript{5}\textsuperscript{6} of the \textit{Odyssey} and the \textit{Aethiopis}.

Nevertheless, it seems a bit ludicrous\textsuperscript{7}, one would say, for the Greek army, or, rather, for such great chiefs, to leave a matter of such gravity, like the award of the arms of Achilles, and, moreover, \textit{πειρὶ τῶν ἄριστων}, to be decided on the basis of overhearing a conversation between two Trojan girls "with their implausible knowledge of and interest in military matters"\textsuperscript{8}\textsuperscript{9} - and Nestor being the one on whose advice this was done! The collective paranoia is of course explained by Athena's intervention, a prevalent element\textsuperscript{10}\textsuperscript{11} in the version of the \textit{Little Iliad}: she may have inspired Nestor to suggest the whole thing (Davies rightly notes that there is no contradiction between the fragment's reference to Nestor as the advisor of this line of action to the Greeks and Proclus' mention of Athena's interference\textsuperscript{12}); she may have directed the spies so as to hear the conversation in question, and may have inspired the second Trojan girl to rebuke the other's opinion, and so on\textsuperscript{13}. Odysseus' victory drives Ajax mad and he attacks the cattle (again \textit{Ἀεινωτὰ ὁπωίον?} Proclus' summary fails to speak explicitly about Ajax's murderous intentions against his comrades, contrarily to Apollodorus, who, however, could have followed the \textit{Little Iliad} in that\textsuperscript{14}). Then, coming back to his senses and feeling shame for his actions, Ajax commits suicide.

The second fragment from the \textit{Little Iliad} that concerns us is fr.3 Davies, a quotation of Porphyrius by Eustathius\textsuperscript{15},
according to which Ajax did not receive the customary heroic burial by being cremated, but his body was buried placed in a coffin, because of Agamemnon's anger against the hero— at Ajax's act of treachery, evidently, having planned to murder him.

This is a detail on which Apollodorus and Philostratus agree. The former says that Ajax was the only one among those who died at Troy whose body was buried; his tomb was at the cape Rhoiteion. The latter adds that Ajax's posthumous treatment was recommended by the seer Calchas, ως ούχ ὅσιοι μυρί εὑπτεσαίοι έλαυτούς ἀποκτείναντες. An analogous, "relatively late rationalization" is suggested by Davies in order to explain the "motivation" of this fragment of the Little Iliad.

It is worth noticing at this point that the account of the Little Iliad has three elements in common with the Ajax of Sophocles: the hero's madness, his following onslaught of the cattle, and the notion that, after his death, his body was treated with some sense of dishonour and his burial was not achieved without hindrances. All elements belong to the part of the story after the actual judgement/award of the arms; at least the second and third ones, being in sharp contrast to what we learn from the Nekyia, were in all probability included in only the Little Iliad amongst the Homeric epics and those of the Cycle. Of course, despite Sophocles' apparently close knowledge of the account of the Little Iliad, the dramatist chose to differ from the storyline of that epic regarding the way the award of the arms was decided—although his genre might have found quite expedient the episode with the two Trojan girls, and this constitutes a substantial differentiation indeed.
c. One fragment from the "Sack of Troy"

It is accepted that the Sack of Troy was written by the same poet as the Aethiopis, Arctinus, who probably continued the story that ended with the capture of Troy in this epic; as is widely held, the two poems attempted to supply a sequel to the Iliad—an analogous task was undertaken by the author of the Little Iliad.

It is obvious, then, that the contest for the Achillean arms and Ajax's death must have fallen well outside the confines of the Sack of Troy, which, according to Proclus' Chrestomathy, began with the Trojans being suspicious about the Wooden Horse. No reference to Ajax is made in Proclus' abstract of the epic. Nevertheless, one of its fragments (fr.1 Davies), actually the lengthiest one, coming from a scholion on Il.11.515, mentions Ajax:

αὐτὸς γὰρ σφίν ἐδώκε πατὴρ ἔννοσίγαιος πεσείνειν
ἀμφοτέροις, ἔτερον δ' ἐτέρου κυδίον ἔθηκε:
τῶι μὲν κοιματέρας κείρας πάρεν, ἐκ τε βέλεμνα
σαρκὸς ἐλεῖν τιμῆξαί τε καὶ ἐλκεα πάντ' ἀκέσσασαι,
τῶι δ' ἀρ' ἀκριβέα πάντα ἐνι στῆθεσσιν ἔθηκεν
ἀσκοπά τε γνώναι καὶ ἀναλεύ αἰάσσασαι.
ὡς ἃ θα καὶ Ἀιαντὸς πρῶτος μᾶς χωμένοιο
ὀμματά τ' ἀστράπτοντα βαρυνόμενον τε νόημα.

The fragment refers to Machaon and Podaleirius, sons of Poseidon, the two Homeric doctors, who were given medical skill by their father. The former was able to heal wounds—the surgeon—and the
The latter was given the ability to diagnose and treat medical disease—the physician. We are told that the physician Podaleirius "was, in fact, the first to detect the fury in Ajax, his eyes flashing and burdened mind".

The reference to Ajax led a lot of commentators in the last century to presume that the Scholiast had confused the two poems of Arctinus and, since the events concerning the hero were related in the Aethiopis, this fragment should have come from it. Kinkel included it in the fragments of the Aethiopis in his edition of the Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta, and Jebb, as we have already seen, preferred to consider it as belonging to that poem. Monro, by contrast, strongly maintained that the passage should have come from the Sack of Troy. He rightly noted that "the two lines about Ajax have rather the appearance of a parenthesis, brought in to illustrate a later part of the story." In our fragment the person who speaks seems not to follow the "neutral" style of a mere narration/listing of facts; he wishes to stress the healing abilities of the two doctors. Monro went on to suggest plausibly that the context of our fragment had been the healing of Philoctetes, brought back from Lemnos shortly before the capture of Troy, an event related, according to the Chrestomathy, in the Little Iliad, but, in all probability, in the Sack of Troy as well: Sophocles, in his Philoctetes, did follow an account different from that of the Little Iliad, possibly the one of the Sack of Troy. Indeed, in Quintus Smyrnaeus—who certainly draws from earlier sources—Podaleirius heals Philoctetes; Proclus' abstract of the Little Iliad says that the hero was cured by Machaon—his care was the
responsibility of both doctors, I would say. Thus, the "speaker" in our fragment adds, as an example of the physician's skill, that in the past it was Podaleirius who first identified the symptoms of the coming frenzy in Ajax.

This is a good point at which to return to Jebb's view regarding an Ajax reaching his death "in serenity" in Arctinus. This view is not weakened by the fact that our fragment belongs to the Sack of Troy instead of the Aethiopis, as Jebb held; and he was right to assume that the two verses mentioning Ajax presuppose a lengthy treatment of the relevant events elsewhere (=in the Aethiopis). One may indicate here that it would have been highly improbable if the same poet presented contrasting versions of the same story in two different works by him. Jebb considered the "symptoms" in the last verse of our fragment as merely "the precursors of [Ajax's] end", and not as indications of his coming madness. He claimed that insanity never manifested itself in Ajax in Arctinus' version, precisely because "the acute physician" Podaleirius was the first who detected symptoms of mental trouble in the hero (thus they were not obvious to everybody). This view is based upon a peculiar interpretation given by Jebb to the phrase πρῶτος μόνος, as the scholar himself suspects for a moment, and upon what the vocabulary of the last couplet (χωμένοιο, ὄμματα ἀστράντωντα, βαρυμένου νόημα) suggests: heroic wrath or insanity. Regarding this last point, M. Davies, not completely unreasonably, but still, I think, over-cautiously, expresses the same line of argument, maintaining that "from the wording of our fragment it would be both difficult and dangerous to conclude how strictly the
poet ever distinguished between genuine lunacy and the sense of
heroic aggrievement at failure to win Achilles' armour which may
have been the starting-point of that madness. But would special
abilities be needed to diagnose "normal heroic resentment"?
Indeed, what would be the use of a physician of renowned skill,
such as Podaleirius, just to indicate something that was visible
to any non-specialist? I believe that Podaleirius is here meant
to have been the first to have detected what the others had been
unable to see; what the non-specialists saw as anger or distress
or realized in the light of Ajax's following suicide, the skilled
doctor saw as mental disease. Concerning now the reservations
about the phrasing of vs.7-8 of our fragment, I think that,
although one cannot say the same about χωρέων, at least
Bορυνόμενον νόμα suggests deep mental disorder, a situation beyond
even grave wrath and/or disappointment. It has to be noted again
that Ajax's probable μαθια in Arctinus' version may not necessarily
entail all the details given in the Little Iliad - plan to murder
the other chiefs, attack on the cattle and generally any action
shameful for the hero; succinctly, it may have been a rage visible,
but not expressed in violence.

So, in continuation of our discussion of the Aethiopis some
pages above, while we can exclude the story of the onslaught of the
cattle from Arctinus' account, in the light of this fragment from
the Sack of Troy, it is rather difficult to suppose that in his
version Ajax spent his last hours, after the award, completely
peacefully. An outbreak of frenzy resulting from his defeat
in the contest for the arms led him to commit suicide; quite

--- 76 ---
differently, in the *Little Iliad* the hero kills himself when sane, out of shame for his actions during the delusion imposed on him by Athena in order to prevent his murderous plans against his comrades who, as he felt, failed to do him justice.

**d. An Aeschylean trilogy**

The story of the end of Ajax was dramatized by Aeschylus in a trilogy. From the three tragedies, which are, in turn, *The Judgement of the Arms* (Ὀλιγῆς κρίσις), *The Thracian Women* (Βραδίσσαι) and *The Salaminian Women* (Σαλαμίνις), only a few short fragments have survived. Jebb holds that the "AİÎντεια" may have been one of Aeschylus' earlier trilogies, "written, perhaps, while the new lustre shed on Ajax by the victory at Salamis was still fresh". Despite the time distance of nearly three decades, Sophocles, in particular - and possibly Pindar, earlier - should have been familiar with and even influenced by the material offered by the three Aeschylean plays. The present examination is mainly concerned with matters relevant to the mythological material; an attempt will be made to view some issues of the Sophoclean *Ajax* under the light thrown by the previous treatment of the same myth by Aeschylus. It is taken for granted, right from the beginning, that, owing to the fragmentary and mostly circumstantial evidence, a large portion of what will be mentioned here consists of suggestions and conjectures.

The first of the plays of the Aeschylean trilogy, as its title
demonstrates, deals with the judgement of the arms of Achilles, for which claims were put forward by Ajax and Odysseus, and with their award to the latter. These events were not dramatized by Sophocles; his Ajax starts with the award having been decided and the hero having already slaughtered the cattle instead of the Greek chiefs in his madness\(^{102}\). It would have been interesting to know positively which version of the way the award was decided Aeschylus followed, namely that of the Odyssey/Aethiopis (i.e. Trojan captives are the judges) or that of the Little Iliad (i.e. two Trojan girls talk about the two heroes inside Troy; the words of one of them, inspired by Athena, favour Odysseus; the conversation is overheard, reported to the Greek camp and influences the decision)\(^{103}\). Although Aristotle\(^{104}\) apparently includes the title "Ονων κρίσις in a list of tragedies the subjects of which were derived from the material of the Little Iliad, scholarship seems to favour the possibility of Aeschylus having followed the version of the Aethiopis. Welcker, the first scholar who dealt with the issue, used a supposed second title (Φύγες)\(^{105}\) of The Judgement of the Arms to sustain a relation between the Aeschylean play and the Aethiopis. Jebb\(^{106}\), though in accord with Welcker's view that the dramatist must have followed the account of the Aethiopis in his tragedy, rightly considers Welcker's argument about the second title as untenable; he goes on to argue plausibly that "it is obvious that tragedy [especially Aeschylean tragedy, I would add] could not use the almost playful romance of the Little Iliad" - the version of the Aethiopis, with the decision coming from the Trojan captives in the Greek camp, is certainly more suitable\(^{107}\). Jebb's other argument about the later
writers who also follow the same version—which would have become
popular and attractive by its use in the Aeschylean play—is even
more persuasive. Nevertheless, a positive answer to this matter
cannot be given.

It appears that a considerable part of the "OnAwv krísiç—the
Chorus of which consisted possibly of the Nereids—was a sort of
agon, a rhetorical competition in which each of the two heroes
argued his claim to the arms with speeches. Ajax would have been
the person who speaks in fr.175:

άλλ' Ἀντικλείας ἄσσον ἤλεξε Σίσυφος,
tῆς οὖς λέγω τοι μητρός, ἢ σε ἔγεινατο.

and maybe in fr.176, too:

ἄπλα γάρ ἐστι τῆς ἀληθείας ἕη.

Taunting Odysseus with being the son of the disreputable
trickster Sisyphus, however, is not an utterance which could
have given us an idea about the "level" of this peculiar "duel"
a scene that, apart from literature, formed a source of inspiration
for the vase-painters. It remains difficult, though, to imagine
the straightforward, or even "tongueless", Ajax having been
entangled with that sort of competition—the more since this
happens in rivalry with Odysseus, by tradition the specialist in
this kind of activity. Thus Aeschylus undertook a delicate task
in the play: regardless of Odysseus' eventual victory, the speeches
of the two heroes needed to be well-matched and also consistent
with their conventional "characters". Another point which can
usefully be raised here is the attitude of the audience towards a
"rhetorical competition", since the play was in all probability
performed during only the third decade of the fifth century. With regard to that, the Athenian audience of the period in question differs from that of three or four decades later, just as Aeschylus is different from Sophocles or Euripides. Jebb holds that Aeschylus' style is "remote" from such rhetoric as that of the second half of the century in Athens^53; I believe that if more extant fragments from a play like The Judgement of the Arms had survived, this might have added something to our knowledge about Aeschylus' "style", particularly his debating technique^56. Quite sensibly, Jebb goes on to mention Aeschylus' superb handling of the trial scene in the Eumonides, where he treats "a subject of the forensic type without loss of tragic and heroic elevation"^57. For all that, it remains hard to guess how the Ajax versus Odysseus agon was presented by Aeschylus. The form of speech and counter-speech is no doubt a thoroughly exciting one for a dramatist to utilize, particularly in order to articulate characters. This is proved by Sophocles' and Euripides' frequent use of it in later years when, besides, the Athenians were more accustomed to it from their political life. Following Jebb, I cannot imagine Aeschylus presenting the two heroes in an "encounter of wits" in Euripidean fashion; the Aeschylean "debate" may have been closer to an Iliadic one^58. Finally, this is, I think, a suitable point at which to note that a part of the Sophoclean Ajax controversially criticized in the past, the debates between Teucer and the Atreidae, may have been influenced by Aeschylus' presentation of the agon between Ajax and Odysseus; generally, in this survey I follow the idea that some passages of the Ajax can be more easily understood in view of an
The last fragment of the Ὀλλων κρίσις on which we can comment is fr.177:

τι γάρ καλόν πίναραν ζῆν +Βίον+ ὡς λύμας φέρει;

If we assume that, again, Ajax is the speaker here, the meaning and the spirit of the verse is very close to that of the verses 473-80 of the Sophoclean play. The fragment presumably comes from the end of the Ὀλλων κρίσις; the award has already been decided in Odysseus' favour and Ajax seems to start being overtaken by thoughts of death.

On the basis of frs.175 and 176, Stanford, still not without some reservation, maintains that Aeschylus may have shown an implied preference for Ajax in The Judgement of the Arms in comparison with the "wordy" Odysseus. His chief argument is his notion of "Aeschylus' own temperament", which might have inclined the dramatist in that direction. Arguments of such a kind comprise always a certain amount of risk. I do not intend to oppose Aeschylus' suggested preference for Ajax, but I would prefer a sounder argument in its favour, like the Athenian reverence towards one of their tribe and cult heroes; the great tragedians often satisfied that feeling.

Judging from the surviving fragments and from the well-founded probability that Aeschylus may have followed the version of the Aethiopis about the award of the arms, it looks as though Kamerbeek is right: the poet, unlike Sophocles, probably did not speak about Ajax’s subsequent madness and especially the onslaught of the cattle in the plays; "there is every reason to suppose that
Ajax decided on suicide immediately after the award (…) had been given against him. Thus in Aeschylus the death of the hero is likely to have been the result of his indignation exclusively at the injustice of the judgement about the Achillean arms.

Ajax's suicide takes place in the second play, the Thessae. Its Chorus was formed by Thracian women, captives from one of Ajax's successful campaigns in the neighbourhood of Troy. Jebb notes aptly that "the function of this Chorus was similar to that of the Salaminian sailors in Sophocles, to express reverence for Ajax, to mourn with him in his unjust defeat, and especially to sympathize with Tecmessa, a captive like themselves, and one whose lot was to be reduced, by the hero's death, to a level with their own"; those remarks seem to be confirmed by a scholion on Ajax 134.

As we learn, too, from the Scholiasts on the Sophoclean Ajax, the suicide was reported by a Messenger in the Thessae. This, of course, is in accord with the "conventional" dramatic practice (violent and horrible scenes are not presented on stage but they are narrated as vividly as possible by an eye-witness), yet in sharp contrast to the way Sophocles chose to represent Ajax's death. In the light of that - and I now start discussing the only one of the four surviving one-line fragments of the Thessae that deserves attention as concerns the present examination (fr.83) - one is tempted to see naivety on the part of some Scholiasts. Aeschylus, they say on Ajax 833, followed a mythological variant according to which Ajax was invulnerable except for a small spot of his body, the armpit, and Sophocles, ἕρισθαι μὲν τι ὡς πρεσβυτέρῳ μὴ θυμηθείς οὔ μην παραλίπειν αὐτὸ ὁκιμάζων, ψιλῶς φησί.
In order to stress Sophocles' respectful alignment with his great predecessor Aeschylus, the Scholia point out minor details based, moreover, on a highly debatable interpretation of a vague verse. They insist on Sophocles following Aeschylus with regard to the tradition about Ajax's invulnerability, at the same time making no comment at all on the striking handling of the hero's suicide presented "on stage" by Sophocles - something that might have thrown some welcome light on this scene which still baffles the modern commentators of the Ajax, particularly those concerned with questions of stagecraft and scenic economy.

So, judging from fr. 83, the Messenger in the Thessae seems to have described Ajax's agonizing attempts to find the sole vulnerable spot of his body and to thrust the sword into it, ὡστε καταρχὴ τῆς πληγῆς γενομένης μη προσγένεσαι σπασμόν μηδὲ πολλὴν ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ διατριβήν. This became possible only after the aid of a female deity (παροῦσα δοκίμων - a very significant detail implying Ajax's "reconciliation" with the divine world before his death); till then, the Messenger recounts, the sword bent against the hero's body τόξον ὡς τίς ἐντείνων.

I presume that the Messenger's narration would have captivated the attention of the audience. Details like that of fr. 83 may give us some idea of the quality of his descriptive speech. On the other hand, this way of presenting Ajax's death is not to be compared with the Sophoclean treatment of the subject, the psychologically sublime isolation of the hero, alone, in Jebb's wonderful words,
with his "complex feelings which imperiously required that his deed should be done in complete security from the witness of human eye or ear."^{106}

From the third play of the Aeschylean trilogy, The Salaminian Women, only five fragments, four of them consisting of just one word, have survived^{107}. Commentators hold, almost as a certainty, that its plot dealt with Teucer's return to Salamis where he faces the anger and the reproaches of old Telamon, who blames him for Ajax's death; vs.1008-20 from the Ajax "predict" this. Teucer is then exiled and founds the new Salamis in Cyprus^{108}.

We know—from Aristophanes’ *Ran.* 1041—that έμοιλέων Teucer was the prominent figure in an Aeschylean play, something that can hardly refer to any role Ajax's half-brother may have played in the two preceding tragedies of the trilogy; furthermore, no lost Aeschylean play is known by name in which Teucer could have had a leading role^{109} apart from the *Salaminiae*.

In relation to the title of the play—obviously given by its Chorus—Jebb^{110} went on to suggest a rather prominent presence in it also for Eriboia, Ajax's mother. He points out that "when the protagonist of a Greek play is a man (as Teucer here), but the Chorus female, this regularly denotes that a woman has some important, though secondary, part in the action"; the Chorus of Salaminian women, then, may have stood "in a like relation" to Eriboia. The commentator's interesting conjecture is that the *Salaminiae* included a large lyric element, mainly Κόμμοι performed by Eriboia and the Chorus. Therefore, the vivid and detailed passages of the Sophoclean *Ajax* about Eriboia's grief and wailing on hearing of the
terrible news about her son possibly echoed or were in a sense imposed by the ample laments made by her and her handmaids in the *Salaminiae*.

Finally, the play, if we follow Jebb's attractive conjecture, may have ended impressively, with the institution (by Telamon?) of festivities in honour and in memory of Ajax.

Speaking now more generally, after having acquired some idea about the content of the Aeschylean trilogy, it would be worth examining its "structure" and possibly proceeding to a rough comparison with the *Ajax* of Sophocles. We have already indicated that Aeschylus, contrarily to Sophocles, chose to dramatize the judgement of the arms. Then follows the suicide of the hero and finally his "glorification", being properly mourned and established as a local and cult hero for Salamis (and Athens). These three elements seem to constitute three theatrical events of equal importance, since each of them occurs in one play of the trilogy. One would note, furthermore, that this "scheme" is genuinely Aeschylean: "the moral progression that characterizes Aeschylean theatre" is easily discernible in it; Golder in a recent article argues that "the trilogy exhibited a redemptive pattern: Ajax's anger was the 'Fury' that, in the final play, was redeemed". Both the dramatist and the audience attending the performance of the trilogy are smoothly led to its ulterior purpose—the vindication of the hero, Golder believes.

In the *Ajax* of Sophocles, on the other hand, the suicide of the hero is the core of a single play. Events before it were not dramatized; Sophocles treated those after it in two of his lost
plays, the Teucer and the Eurysaces, where it seems probable that the fate of Teucer was the main subject. Nevertheless, Sophocles' genius succeeds triumphantly in presenting the story of the great Ajax in a single play, where the hero (re)confirms his greatness with his death. How this is managed will be examined in detail in a later chapter of this survey.
V. THE AJAX VERSUS ODYSSEUS THEME IN PINDAR

a. Some preliminary remarks

The figure of Ajax holds a special position in Pindaric poetry. The tragic end of such a great hero seems to have excited the poet's interest and stimulated his imagination. References to Ajax in the odes of Pindar may not be so frequent as happens in the case of Heracles, for instance. The Aeacid Ajax is mentioned mostly in the odes that praise Aeginetan winners, which is not surprising. Apart from the short references to the hero, though, there are three lengthy ones in the Fourth Isthmian, the Seventh Nemean and the Eighth Nemean - mentioned in their most likely chronological order.

It is admittedly true, however, that the largely idiosyncratic treatment of themes by Pindar as well as their great diversity, and, furthermore, the gap of almost twenty years between the first and the last of the odes in question, are factors which may prevent the interpreter from speaking about a possible evolution in the thought of the poet on the particular theme. What mainly concerns me here is Ajax in contrast with Odysseus, since the rest of the ground regarding the same three odes has been mostly covered by two previous scholars, though from different viewpoints.

Some facts are really so remarkable that, despite the fact that the three extracts will be examined separately below, one has to
point them out from the very beginning. Pindar, as we saw, turns to the end of Ajax three times; the death of the hero, from a six-verse reference in the Fourth Isthmian, becomes one of the two mythological exemplars the poet uses in the Seventh Nemean, and comes to be one of the major themes of the Eighth Nemean; that is, from the chronologically first ode to the last, the reference increases in length and importance in the context of the poem. Thus the following discussions are shaped accordingly; the reader will notice that an almost full-scale analysis of the Eighth Nemean is attempted, combined with treatment of more general issues (such as dating, for instance), something which does not happen in the cases of the Fourth Isthmian, especially, and the Seventh Nemean, where only the relevant extracts are examined and then their position in connection with the structure of the respective ode is pointed out.

Secondly, the treatment of Odysseus by Pindar is noteworthy. The explicit references to the hero in the odes are only two — very few in number if one brings to mind the Homeric epics — and Odysseus appears exclusively as the counter-example to Ajax. It seems as if Pindar remembers Odysseus only from the destruction of Ajax, and denies him any sympathy because of that. The Theban poet, far from bestowing upon the "darling of Homer" lavish praise, has no single word of approval for him. Such treatment of the hero of the Odyssey impelled Stanford to write that Pindar, the first who made a direct attack on Odysseus in literature, "came close", together with Euripides, "to ruining Odysseus' character for ever".

Another point that has to be stressed is the mention of Homer
in the extracts in question. His name appears in two of the three Pindaric extracts which will detain us below, and is easily detected in the third as well - just as is the case with Odysseus in the first of the extracts. A recent book has indicated the difficulty in determining "Homer": does Pindar mean the poet of the Iliad and/or the Odyssey, or does the Theban poet share the opinion "typical of his time", according to which "Homer" means the author of the whole Epic Cycle? Both versions, in any case, point to the undisputed recognition of "Homer" as an authority on rating the heroes. We shall also see Pindar's attitude towards that.

b. The "Fourth Isthmian"

The Fourth Isthmian was written to praise the victory of Melissos, a fellow-citizen of the Theban poet, in the pancratium. Pindar introduces the issue of fame during life and after death in the verses preceding the extract that concerns us. Then:

καὶ κρέσσον ἀνδρῶν χειρών
ἔσφαλε τέχνα καταμάρθασσά· ἱστε μάν
Αἰαντος ἄλκαν, φοίνιον τὰν ὤψις
ἐν νυκτὶ ταμῶν περί ὁ φασιγάνο μομμάν ἐχει
παίδεσσιν Ἐλλάνων ὥσοι Τροίανδ' ἔβαν.

ἀλλ' θυμράς τοι τετίμακεν δι' ἄνερωπων, ὡς αὐτοῦ
πάσαν ὀρεώσας ἄρεταν κατὰ 'ράβδον ἐψαρσεν
εἰσπεσίων ἐπέων λαίποις ἁθύρειν.

I.4.34-911
The extract begins with a general remark on human affairs; the crafty inferior men often prevail over the better in life. Odysseus is not mentioned by name; most interpreters of the ode, though, have detected "a sinister reference" to him, "a hint at his obliquity", in vs.34-5. Adolf Köhnken, furthermore, suggests interestingly that Pindar's phrasing in those verses recalls the wrestling match between Odysseus and Ajax described in the Iliad (23.700-39).

Then Ajax is introduced as an example of those better men who became victims of the craft of the lesser. The strength of the hero is underlined by the periphrasis Αἰαντὸς ἄλκαν, with which he is first mentioned; that periphrasis, in combination with the whole context (vs.35-35b), has a special function: Pindar poetically says that Ajax "cut his own strength", thus avoiding elaborately a pedestrian reference to the suicide of the hero; he also gives the impression of the body enveloping the sword (instead of the more usual image of the sword piercing the body), and in that way, as Bury rightly noted, Pindar makes the scene more vivid.

The story of Ajax's death is supposed to be familiar to the poet's audience (cf. Ἑστε μάν). No details are therefore given as regards the cause of his suicide, the award of Achilles' arms to Odysseus instead of himself, or how this was decided. Nevertheless, the people responsible for Ajax's tragic end are mentioned: "all the sons of the Greeks who went to Troy" (v.36b); a strong periphrastic expression is used again to stress the blame (μομφάν ἔχει -v.36) - a simple verb is considered insufficient. Further, as Nisetich notes, the use of the present tense here indicates that they
continue to be held responsible.

There is no reason to reject the view of the great majority of scholars that the ancient source from which Pindar’s audience was supposed to know the story of Ajax’s death would have been one of the Cyclic Epics, the *Aethiopis* by Arctinus. Their strongest argument for this identification was a scholion on the verse which includes the only detail in regard to the summarily treated story of Ajax’s suicide in our ode. The Scholiast notes that the Pindaric version of the time at which Ajax’s death took place (واجب الإن ٍ) -v.35b-36- late in the night, presumably towards dawn) seems to be in agreement with that of the *Aethiopis* (أَلْيَرَ تِئْنِيِّيِّدَغُ رَطْفُو َةَلَّيِّنِّيِّنُهْلَيْنِّيِّنُه�...
compared to κειμέριον ζώον (v.18). As Farnell has rightly remarked, Ajax was a "counterpart" to the noble but unsuccessful genos of Cleonymus. The Cleonymidae should have won, like the Salaminian hero, the victories which they failed to win; this is underlined by the introduction of the Ajax myth immediately after the reference to the attempts made by the victor's clansmen to win the chariot race. In further connection to the contrast between light and darkness mentioned above, one has to note the word φοίνιον (v.35b), the "striking conjunction" of which with the following ὄμη ἐν ψυχῇ "is the mirror-image of dark winter followed by red roses" (φοίνικές τέκνης -v.20) in Melissos' family.

In vs.37-9, Pindar changes his tone. Despite his dishonourable end, Ajax finally was honoured in a way that suited his prowess; Homer exalted the virtue of the hero completely with his divine words, to the delight of the coming generations. One of the main problems that come up in these verses is the question whether Pindar saw Homer as solely the poet of the Iliad and the Odyssey or shared the "wider meaning of Homer" as the author of the whole Epic Cycle; this problem has two aspects: first, what is the relation of "Homer" to the preceding literary source of Ajax's end, and, then, in which of his poems "Homer" τετίμακεν Ajax and ὤρεωσεν πάσαν ἀνταύ of the hero. Frank Nisetich gave some apt answers to those questions. It is doubtless difficult even to speculate what Pindar had in mind by "Homer". We can be almost certain, though, -at least, the context of the extract testifies it sufficiently- that the poem which described Ajax's death (presumably, as we saw, the Aethiopis) and the Homeric one which honoured Ajax must be
different; they seem to be contrasted by Pindar, as the strong adversative ἀλλὰ τὸι in v.37 shows. Was the latter the Iliad? Ajax has indeed many great moments in this epic and the surviving fragments of the epics of the Cycle do not provide us with a possible alternative.

Entering from now on into a more general discussion, Pindar's way of praising Melissos and his family in this ode deserves attention. Even the Scholiasts seem to have been "unhappy" with some passages of the Fourth Isthmian —although this fact should not be overrated. The young, successful athlete Melissos is depicted ὁ νοτὸς ἰδέσθαι (v.50) and, furthermore, Pindar states that οὐ γὰρ φῶς ἤ ἔρισθεν ἔλαξεν (v.49). The poet appears to insist on the failures and defeats of the house of the Cleonymidae at rather unnecessary length. Surely, Pindar's frankness and boldness are well-known and, furthermore, Farnell's view that the way in which the poet alludes to the past defeats of the Cleonymidae is "tactful" seems to be justified. On the other hand, few people would disagree with the same scholar that in v.48 Pindar reaches his lowest moral point: κρη δὲ πᾶν ἔρδοντ' ἀμηρωδοὶ τὸν ἔχοτον. G.Norwood was the most extreme among the scholars who studied the ode and noticed those points; he found himself "compelled" to reject the authenticity of the Third and the Fourth Isthmian because of them. These may well have been a reason that made Wilamowitz undervalue bluntly the art of 1.4. Nevertheless, contemporary scholarship considers the quality of the ode indisputable and offers a lot of sound arguments in its favour; Privitera justly stresses that the Fourth Isthmian "is in fact one of the most beautiful and suggestive
In a simile (vs. 45-7), Melissos, in regard to his wrestling spirit and ability, is compared with a loud-roaring lion (τόλμη) and a fox (μῆτιν). One may easily say that the first comparison suggests Ajax and the second —even more characteristically— Odysseus. In the second part of the simile, Pindar has presumably in mind a trick that Melissos used, in all probability in "ground wrestling," as the fox "lies on her back and withstands the swoop of the eagle" (αἰετοῦ —another animal that recalls Ajax, and this time even etymologically). Following that picture and description of the fox, v. 48 with its alleged "low morality" comes almost naturally. Farnell thinks that "Pindar allows us to suspect that there were some people who complained that Melissos had won by unfair means." In any case, Köhnken's indication mentioned above about a possible allusion to the Ajax versus Odysseus wrestling match of the Iliad in I.4.34-5, now acquires a broader meaning; after all, Odysseus nearly won —because of his craft— against the much taller and stronger Ajax. This similarity between Odysseus and Melissos may probably be the reason why Pindar does not refer to Odysseus by name in our ode. Here lies, in my opinion, the answer to Köhnken's baffling question why Odysseus is treated relatively "mildly" by Pindar in the Fourth Isthmian. Despite his boldness, Pindar could not have vilified Odysseus explicitly, since his athlete/patron appeared to have some common traits with the hero. As we saw above, the poet says some things in an implicit way, but we understand that even a Pindar is sometimes under pledge; or rather, if one feels that the previous notion does the poet an injustice, Pindar has to
strike a balance between his freedom to construct and organize his material and the local particularity which is an integral part of each ode. We have already mentioned that in the Fourth Isthmian’s version of the end of Ajax, Pindar felt no need to refer to the destruction of the hero in much detail. Ajax faced injustice, but what concerns the Theban poet is that in the end, through Homer’s poetry, the wrong has been righted and the real virtue of the hero has been established. The reference to those responsible for that injustice is brief, although the poet is not at all indifferent to that—he will prove it, as we shall find out, in the next extracts. Much more important for Pindar is the fact that another poet gave Ajax the honour he deserved with a voice that will never die. This generalizing view on the part of the Theban poet is elaborated through his phrasing in vs. 37-9; especially the words ἐχθραῖον and ἀείπέραν show wonderfully the two-sided effect of poetry, something that Pindar was quite aware of: its power as well as the pleasure it creates for the audience.

With regard to the view mentioned above, that Pindar is here concerned more with the fact that Ajax, through poetry, has been finally given the honour he deserved than with the wrong done to the hero and those responsible for it, one may think of the audience of the particular ode. It consisted of Thebans, who had no reason to be over-sensitive about Ajax’s end, since there was not any relationship between the hero and Pindar’s native town—contrarily to what happened, for instance, between Ajax and Aegina. As Nisetich holds, the Thebans "would have known the story of his [Ajax’s]
defeat and death and could have heard it told as Pindar tells it without feeling the need to qualify or change it in any essential detail (...) The evocation of his end (...) would not touch a sore spot in them or call for any extraordinary measures to allay hurt feelings."

Pindar does for Melissos and his family just what Homer did for Ajax. The ode itself informs us (vs.16-8) about the calamity that hit the Cleonymidae; four of its members were killed in a battle on a single day -- the worst day of that "winter murk" of the family. Now Melissos' victory and Pindar's praise of it restore everything; the light of happy days shines in the house of Cleonymos; it is that ἀοίδεσσις ἀκτίς καλῶν ἔργων (v.42) which applies both to Ajax -- after Homer's praise -- and to Melissos and his genos -- after the athlete's victory and Pindar's μυστήριον (v.43). As the ode progresses, mortal achievement (in succession: the Cleonymidae, Ajax, Melissos, the sons of Heracles) comes into contact with eternity and immortality. Beyond and above all, of course, as Segal notes, "the unconditioned immortality of Heracles (cf. vs.55ff.) stands as the furthest goal, the unattainable standard."}

c. The "Seventh Nemean"

The Seventh Nemean was written to praise the victory of the young Aeginetan Sogenes, son of Thearion. It is universally considered as Pindar's most "difficult" ode. The first half of the second of its sections, which contains the passage referring
to Ajax, does not itself lack one or two dark points and certainly belongs to the most difficult part of the poem. Before our extract, Pindar deals with the relation of song to glory and with death as the common lot for mankind, both themes that come up again and again in his poetry. Then he makes an announcement:

εγὼ δὲ πλέον ἐλπιμαί

λόγον Ὀδυσσέας ἐπέαν

διὰ τὸν ἀδύμητο γενέσθε Ομηρον·

ἐπεὶ ψεύδεσί οἱ ποταν ἡ μαχανά

σεμνόν ἐπεστὶ τι· σοφία

δὲ κλέπτει παράγοισα μύθοις. τυφλὸν δ’ ἔχει

ὁτορ ὁμιλος ἀνδρόν ὁ πλείστος. εἰ γὰρ ἦν

ἐ τὰν ἀλάθειαν ἰδέμεν, οὐ κεν ὅπλων χολωσεῖς

ὁ καρτερός Αἰας ἐπαξε διὰ ψευδῶν

λευρὸν ξίφος· ὃν κράτιστον Ἀχιλέως ἄτερ μάχα

ξανθῷ Μενέλα δάμαρτα κομίσαι θεαίς

άν ναυσὶ πάρεωσαι εὐθυνόνου ζεφύροιο πομπαὶ

πρὸς Ἰλιοὺ πόλιν.

N.7.20-31

In the first verses, Odysseus is introduced together with Homer, without anything about Ajax having been said yet. The words that Pindar uses seem to suggest an expression of a strong personal belief (ἐγὼ...ἐλπιμαί); λόγον is contrasted with πάεαν, as the poet stresses boldly that Odysseus won fame unjustly, more than his merit, thanks to Homer’s sweet words.

Pindar seems to have had the Odyssey in his mind; for he does not focus his doubts on Odysseus’ martial achievements. As Most
holds, basing his argument on the word ἔννοια—which no doubt functions as an immediate reminder of the Odyssey, the "song of praise" for Odysseus—Pindar seems to suggest that "the general reputation enjoyed by Odysseus among all the Greeks was not justified by the true extent of his sufferings" after the fall of Troy, "and perhaps he is referring more specifically to Odysseus' own account of his wanderings at Alcinous' court (Od.9-12) for which, after all, Odysseus is the sole witness." Homer, that is to say, ought to have "checked" the truth of Odysseus' account instead of narrating it in his own sweet words and, with the power of poetry, making Odysseus undeservedly famous. Such a point of view becomes more significant if the reader of those books of the Odyssey brings to mind Alcinous' words after a narration of a part of his ἐνέσταμα by Odysseus in the eleventh book:

โ 'Οδυσσέα, τὸ μὲν οὐ τίς ἐγκομεῖν εἰσορώντες ἡπερουής τ' ἐμεν καὶ ἐπίκλον, οἵα τε πολλοὺς δόσκει γαία μέλαινα πολυσπερέας ἀνερώπους ψεύδεα τ' ἀρτύνοντας, οὗν κέ τις οὐδὲ ἰδοῖτο· σοι δ' ἐπὶ μὲν μορφὴ ἑπέων, ἕνι δὲ φρένες ἔσθελαι, μύθοιν δ' ώς ὅτ' ἀριστάς ἐπισταμένως κατέλεξας, πάντων Ἀργείων σέο τ' αὐτοῦ κήδεα λυγρά.

Od.11.363-9

The vocabulary of this extract displays many similarities with that of the Pindaric passage in question (vs.22-3 in particular). Another analogous passage of the Odyssey, and equally significant from my viewpoint and for the interpretation I am trying to suggest, is one of the most remarkable scenes of that Homeric poem: the playful
encounter between Odysseus and the disguised Athena, just after the hero’s arrival at Ithaca (13.254-310). Odysseus does not hesitate to tell a false story even to the goddess—and his constant helper:

οὐδ’ ὃ γ’ ἄληθεν εἶπε, πάλιν δ’ ὃ γε λάζετο μῦθον,
οἷς εὖ στήσεσθι νόσον πολυκερδέα νωμᾶν.

Let us see the first part of Athena’s response, full of significant words:

κερδαλέος κ’ εἰῇ καὶ ἐπίκλοπος, ὡς σε παρέλαοι
ἐν πάντεσσι δόλοισι, καί εἶ θεός ἀντιάσειε.
σχέτλει, ποικιλομῆτα, ὁλων ὁστ’, σῴκ ἄρ’ ἐμέλλες,
οὐδ’ ἐν σῇ περ ἐὼν γαία, λῆσει ἀπότάων
μῦθων τε κλησίν, οἳ τοι πεδάθεν νίλοι εἰσίν.

On the basis of these passages of the Odyssey, there is, in my opinion, at least circumstantial evidence—that Pindar meant this specific poem of Homer by mentioning his name. On the other hand, especially the comparison of Odysseus with a bard by Alcinous, in the first of the extracts, makes a lot easier the approach to the most "problematic" part of the Pindaric passage (ἐπεί πειράτεσι οἳ ποταμῷ ἕως ἐποιεῖσθαι σῷ ἡμῶν ἐπεστὶ τι οὐσίᾳ δὲ κλέπτει παράγω σε μῦθοι.). The characteristic mendacity of the hero starts to be transferred to the
poet and the two (Homer and Odysseus) are intermingled in such a way that it seems impossible to distinguish the one from the other. The vocabulary used by Pindar in those verses and the skilful placing of the words play a decisive role in conveying that fusion.

Some interpreters have involved themselves in the attempt to attribute the "key-words" of the verses to each of Homer and Odysseus separately. In a short article, Kromer suggests that σεμνὸν ἐπετί, ποταμό μακανό and σοφία are associated with the poet, while ἴως, κλέπτει and ἱπποδομα with the hero. C. Carey follows the view that the whole couplet refers to Homer, who is "censured" and not Odysseus. The relevant scholia simply make the issue more complicated.

I think that Kromer, probably realizing the futility of his initial effort, gives a good answer to the issue at the end of his article; he holds that the ambiguity of the verses is intentional, as Pindar deliberately intermingles Homer and Odysseus, so that "the power of song is demonstrated by the hero and the poet inseparably." That is correct. The interpreter eventually has to go beyond the attempt to determine whom every word refers to; since the words are "equally applicable to Odysseus and to the poet", and since "it seems unavoidable that the two are understood together", it is not necessary to become entangled with the question what refers to whom.

Pindar, therefore, closely associates the poet with the man he praises in the case of Homer and Odysseus. This motif is in parallel with the comparison -familiar in the Pindaric odes- of the task of
the poet with the task carried out by the winner. The poet is seen as a kind of hero himself; if he suitably praises great deeds, glory will come to himself as well as to the doer; so, for Pindar, the association of the poet with the person he chooses to praise is as vital as it is justifiable. I shall return to this issue in more general terms later.

Thus, then, poetry, and in the particular case Homer's, with the help of its "sweetness", "deceives men, misleading them with its tales". The verb of the phrase (κλέπτει) is not so usual in Pindar and forms the strongest evidence in terms of vocabulary that the Theban poet has the Odyssey in his mind (cf. especially the passage from Book 13 quoted above); Pindar thinks of Homer's tale of Odysseus as "the product of the poet's skill", not as the gift of the Muses - who are connected with the ideal (truthful) poetry in the preceding verses 11-16. Homer's poetry about Odysseus becomes a sort of ἔξοπα σοφία, to speak in Pindaric fashion; Homer is attacked explicitly by Pindar, but, since, as we discussed above, the poet is closely associated with the person he praises, the suggestion that Odysseus is also attacked, implicitly at least, appears to be justified; Köhnken remarks after quoting the same passage of the Odyssey mentioned above "Dies ist genau der Odysseus, wie Pindar ihn vor Augen hat".

In any case - regardless of the skilful, sweet, but ἔξοπα, wisdom of Homer - the human mass, the poet goes on, is blind to the truth. The transition to Ajax's fate, then, seems absolutely normal. As Gildersleeve had noted, the mention of Odysseus suggests Ajax. I think that vs. 23-4 and 25, τυφλὸν δ' ἔχει ἔτορ (ὁμίλος ἄνδρων

--- 101 ---
ό πλεϊστος) and ει (... ταν ἀλάσειαν ἴδεμεν, are connected by meaning: they suggest double blindness, respectively a moral one, in the heart (cf. ἄτοπο), and a mental one, in the mind (cf. ει (... ταν ἀλάσειαν ἴδεμεν)²⁴. The word ὄμιλος is used pejoratively here; I agree with Nisetich’s suggestion that the main connotation of the word here is similar to that in Heraclitus (ignorant mass)²⁵.

That ignorant mass, people who may easily be misled by false poetry, by ἀδεξαίδελμενοι ψεύδεσι ποικίλοις μύθοι (0.1.29), are responsible for Ajax’s tragic death. The inability of the crowd to see the real merit finds an example²⁶ in the decision of the Greeks to award the arms of Achilles to someone other than Ajax; and the consequence of that decision was Ajax’s suicide.

Pindar does not go into the details of the contest itself in the next verses (26-30)²⁷; he did that in the Fourth Isthmian. Odysseus, Ajax’s rival in the contest, is not accused²⁸. The poet speaks about the sword that Ajax drove through his breast “in wrath about the armour”. The Greeks are to blame for the death of the hero – this element from I.4 remains as well. Ajax’s strength is again indicated emphatically: ὁ κράτιστος Αἴας and κράτιστον Ἀχιλέως ἀτερ μᾶχα; with the second phrase Pindar reminds his audience of the conventional rank of the hero among the Greek chiefs at Troy — this kind of strength, valour, should have been the criterion for the award of the arms²⁹. The passage ends in Homeric fashion³⁰. Ajax represents great achievements which received small credit, and is contrasted with Odysseus who received praise beyond his real merit.

In the verses preceding our extract, Pindar marked the limits
of poetry, which, as C. Segal has written, stands "between truth and falsehood. It mediates between the two final realities of human existence, life and death. When rightly used, it bestows immortal life; when wrongly used, it destroys good men (...) and right relation to the gods". The two sides of poetry are the issue that Pindar deals with here; they had been indicated already by his fellow-countryman Hesiod, in the Theogony, but the younger poet elaborates that view, one may say, "in his own personal vein".

Pindar is fully conscious of the power of poetry. What poetry can do must be constantly in the mind of a poet. Homer is accused of being "irresponsible" regarding that. Pindar's attitude towards Homer is thus consistent with that of 1.4—and with his general views:

In the Fourth Isthmian Homer was praised because he made right use of the power of poetry by giving Ajax the glory he deserved. In the Seventh Nemean the same poet is censured for using poetry wrongly, giving Odysseus glory beyond his merit. Odysseus and Ajax in the ode constitute the two negative mythological examples that demonstrate the power of poetry, one of the main concerns of Pindar. "The aesthetic and moral spheres overlap", as the poet wants to show to the "ignorant mass" through the counter-examples of Ajax (a great man who faced injustice and ended in destruction) and Odysseus (a lesser man who was honoured much more than he really deserved) how important may be the effects poetry may have on the world. It would be useful to bear in mind some of these points for the forthcoming discussion.

To consider another significant aspect of Pindar's epinican poetry, the Ajax-Odysseus reference conveys a message for the victor
Sogenes: due to the ease with which the majority of people can be deceived and the stupidity of mankind in general, Sogenes' future renown is in danger; fame is precarious if it depends on other people, to say nothing of the possibility of great deeds, like Ajax's, remaining unrewarded.

It is time now to enter into a more general approach to the ode in an attempt to examine some of the numerous problems that appear in it. Those problems are—at least—toned down if seen in the light of the suggested reference of the ode to an earlier Pindaric poem (the ancient Scholiasts were the first to do that), identified now as the Sixth Paean, which included a supposed disparagement of the Aeacid hero Neoptolemus in its account of the death of the hero at Delphi. Attention will also be drawn to the "incorporation" of the myth of Ajax into the structure of the Seventh Nemean.

Most critics have been engaged in efforts to define Pindar's "position" in the ode: Is the poet apologizing for what he wrote in Paean 6? What he said particularly in vs.77-89 might be expected to have given offence to the Aeginetans, who felt a proprietary interest in the members of the Aeacid family. Or is Pindar, on the other hand, defending himself from unjust and groundless accusations by people who did not understand what he had said about Neoptolemus? Is indeed the praise of Sogenes and his victory the main theme of the Seventh Nemean or is the ode used primarily for Pindar's private affairs? It becomes obvious that a discussion of the foregoing questions is unavoidable, although it is not the chief purpose of the present examination; it will make easier, however, the subsequent discussion of the Ajax theme.
The main arguments of the people who question the connection between *Paean 6* and *Nemean 7* are two. Firstly there has been a tendency of some recent interpreters, such as Bundy, Thummer, and Köhnken", to resist the evidence of the scholia -and of the text of the ode itself, as we shall see below- and to claim that there is no actual connection between the two poems. They dismiss the often-occurring explanations of the Scholiasts to passages of the *Seventh Nemean* as a mere "literary-critical inference" and deny their possible conveyance of a historical reality or a tradition. Thummer, moreover, argues that the comparison of the treatment of Neoptolemus in *Paean 6* and *Nemean 7* is not important for the interpretation of the latter, a view which I cannot accept. Anyway, to dismiss so easily the information of the scholia is certainly debatable and sometimes unwise”.

The second argument, expressed mainly by G.Norwood, is considerably weaker, in my opinion. The critic does not in fact oppose the possibility that Pindar may have in mind his previous poem and the resentment that it brought to the Aeginetans. He goes on to argue, though, that the main myth of the ode, the myth of Neoptolemus, is "irrelevant" to the victory of Sogenes; Pindar "foists the original 'hero' Neoptolemus upon poor Sogenes and his ode, proceeding to explain away the offensive paean by a cool insistence that he has not said what he had said therein". G.Kirkwood has objected properly to those views: Pindaric practice in the choice of myths is extremely varied, but the poet does use the Aeacidae as his myth material in all but one of the eleven odes for Aeginetans; furthermore, there is anything but
"cool insistence" (the adjective, particularly, has nothing to do with Pindar) in certain passages of *Nemean 7*, such as:

\[
\text{ēōn ᾿eγγὺς ᾿Αχαῖος οὖ μέμψεται μ' ἄνήρ} \\
\text{'Ἰονίας ύπερ ἀλὸς οἰκέων}
\]

vs. 64-5

and even more emphatically:

\[
\text{εὐφύνυμον ἐς δίκαι τρία ἔπεα διαρκέσει} \\
\text{οὐ ψεῦδις ὁ μάρτυς ἐργασίν ἐπιστατεί,} \\
\text{Αἴγινα, τεῦν ὁ ὁ ἐκγόνων ἑρασὺ μοι τὸ ἐπείν.} \\
\text{φαενναίς ἀρεταῖς ὃδεν κυρίαν λόγων} \\
\text{οἴκοευν:}
\]

vs. 48-51

\[
\text{τὸ δ' ἐμὸν οὐ ποτε φάσεῖ κέαρ} \\
\text{ἀτρόποισί Νεοπόλεμον ἐλκύσαι} \\
\text{ἐπεσι.}
\]

vs. 102-4

There is, then, sufficient evidence in our text to accept the suggested connection between *Paean 6* and *Nemean 7*, particularly in the passages mentioned above, for the tone of which critics have offered adjectives like "personal", "urgent", "emotional", "unconventional". I therefore find myself in accord with C. Carey: "That the Aeginetans should resent a slight to their hero, and that Pindar should respond to this unusual situation with a defence of his actions in an Aeginetan ode, is by no means impossible." Concerning, now, the "attitude" of the poet in the *Seventh Nemean*, I agree with most of the views expressed by E. Tugendhat, G. Kirkwood and C. Carey. First of all, there is certainly no
apology in the ode. Anyone who has been in touch with Pindar's poetry cannot imagine him apologizing. Carey rightly implies that the people who reached the so-called "Apology theory" were excessively influenced by the sometimes exaggerating Scholiasts—and that justifies up to a point Bundy's argument, to which I referred above. Although the poet is deeply concerned about the acceptability of his attitude towards Neoptolemus, he explicitly denies that he might have offended the hero (v.102-4). What we have in *Nemean 7* is self-defence in respect of two aspects: Pindar defends firstly his authority as a poet and in particular his motives; secondly, his account of Neoptolemus. We have already seen some characteristic extracts concerning the first aspect; one point has to be stressed, though: the "urgency" or the tone of self-justification of passages like vs.33-52 (especially 44-7, 49-52), 61-9 (especially 64-5), 70-4 and 102-4 detracts nothing from the value and the poetic art of the ode. Farnell had unjustly spoken about Pindar's "returning attack of egoism"; Kirkwood rightly argues that if similar judgements are correct, then "the implications are disastrous for the poem; a passage that is to be explained solely as a manifestation of the poet's egoism is very bad encomiastic poetry indeed." The ode is by no means unusual as an epinician one, which, anyway, "has no set proportions". Kirkwood also insists that "nothing in the ode cannot be understood in the usual terms of Pindar's encomiastic style."

Let us now concentrate on the way Pindar applies and manages his self-defence for the story of Neoptolemus. It is worth noting at this point that those two (*Paean 6* and *Nemean 7*) are the only poems
where Pindar deals with Neoptolemus' story at length; the other Aeacidae appear far more often than he does in the odes. Carey lists the "differences" between the accounts of N.7 and Paean 6 on the myth of Neoptolemus and discusses them. The most important among them is that the death of the hero, from being a just punishment for Priam's murder in Paean 6, becomes a fulfilment of a benign destiny in N.7. Additionally, Pindar stresses that the hero serves a hieratic function at Delphi. If one studies the six "differences" mentioned by Carey and Tugendhat, one will discover that the poet simply "readjusts" the story, altering the emphasis in the presentation of some details according to the needs of the particular poem. As Carey notes, "there is no parallel in Pindar for a mythic account which completely refutes another account" (used by the Theban poet in another work of his). The previous poem, Paean 6, was written in honour of Apollo, the patron-god of Delphi and the slayer of Neoptolemus. Details about the hero, then, were suppressed (as, for instance, happens with the theme of the posthumous glory of Ajax -thanks to Homer's poetry [cf. I.4]- in N.7) because Pindar aimed to emphasize other points. This was probably the reason for the Aeginetan resentment against Pindar; but that was unfair, says the poet -on the present occasion, in N.7, since ἐκέπται δὲ λόγῳ δίκαις ἄντος ἔσολον αἰνεῖν, Neoptolemus will be praised properly, according to his achievements. As Kirkwood holds, "Pindar is not ready to retract what he has said about Neoptolemus, but Neoptolemus' career can be interpreted with an entirely different emphasis when the context makes it fitting; and this is the case in N.7."
One last point about the issue of the Pindaric defence of his previous account should be raised. We must not forget that Pindar is defending his previous account of the myth of Neoptolemus at the same time as he is doing this for himself as a poet; the two are, I think, almost identical - in the very same N.7, Pindar stresses, as we have already seen, the importance of truthful/ideal poetry.

The length, the central placing, and the points at which the poet returns to the story of Neoptolemus show clearly, apart from anything else, that this is the "main myth" of N.7. Now, the connection of the "Ajax [and Odysseus] reference" with the main mythological one in the ode, that of Neoptolemus, remains to be considered - beyond what has been suggested about the function of the former in the poem. The latter immediately follows the former in N.7, but there is no universal agreement among the critics regarding the transitional role of the verses 30-4. It has been reasonably suggested, though, that the words ἄδοξοντος and ὄξωντα apply respectively to Neoptolemus and Ajax. The motif of death as common lot, too, closes in a ring the Ajax-Odysseus reference. The story of Neoptolemus is introduced after a general maxim concerning honour after death, the very element that Ajax was deprived of, despite his merit, due to human ignorance and stupidity, while Odysseus earned it in unfair proportion, thanks to a lying poet. In contrast to those negative examples, Pindar will praise Neoptolemus - whom he was unjustly accused of having attacked - properly; here we have the positive example of achievement rewarded with "posthumous glory by divine dispensation" and the power of poetry in bringing and securing this glory. The Ajax-reference,
therefore, suits the case of the contradistinction of the mythological examples, both in itself (Ajax vs. Odysseus) and in connection to that of Neoptolemus (Ajax, Odysseus vs. Neoptolemus), as well as of the two sorts of poetry (Pindar [positive] vs. Homer [negative]); it also constitutes a suitable "introduction", a skilful transitional passage to a very "delicate" mythological reference and the more important one for the particular poem. It is now easier to see in a different light the Neoptolemus story of N.7: both Ajax and Neoptolemus were underestimated; Pindar explains in the ode why this happened to Ajax, and in the case of Neoptolemus it was because the Aeginetans laid emphasis on a simple aspect of his story that Pindar had told in Paean 6. Other elements of Ajax's story which the Theban poet might have taken advantage of, using it as a transition to that of Neoptolemus, are: Ajax, too, was an Aeacid, a very dear hero to the Aeginetans; he also met an untimely and dreadful death, like Neoptolemus; he was a real victim of human injustice and deceptive words, in Pindar's opinion.

To conclude, let us wonder, following a point made by Kirkwood: would Pindar have ever placed in a poem that praised an Aeginetan victor a main myth which did not afford intimations of greatness, a mythological account the material of which did not constitute an appropriate xópis for that young winner?
d. The "Eighth Nemean"

Two distinguished Pindarists, L.R. Farnell and C. Carey, have remarked that the Eighth Nemean is generally not an ode with particular difficulties, something rather uncommon in Pindar — suffice it for one to bring to mind the Seventh Nemean. Yet N.8 is one of Pindar’s most skilful odes, a creation of the period of his maturity.

The ode is divided into three metrical units (triads: vs.1-17, 18-34, 35-51). Each of them can easily be considered a section with a distinct subject as well. Following Kühnken, though, it is worth noting that the first verse of the second triad (18) belongs to the first section of the ode. The reference to Ajax constitutes the whole of the second section (vs.19-34); it occupies the centre of the ode and thus gives the impression of being the core of the poem.

After a first section which is suffused with the flourishing of youth and love (vs.1-5) and coloured by the first — and shorter — mythical example of the ode (Aeacus — vs.7-12), the prosperity of a past age is presented and associated with the happy present situation of the victory of the Aeginetan Deinias (vs.13-7). According to Carey, the "idyllic atmosphere" created by the reference to Aeacus, "is summed up by the bliss of Cinyras" (v.18), the king of Cyprus, beloved of Apollo and priest of Aphrodite, who had been a fine example of human happiness secured by divine favour — one of the Pindaric ideals. Then:

Τοιαύτα δι' ησσαί κούρσοις, ἀλληνέν τε πρὶν τι φάμεν.
παλλα γάρ παλλα λέλεκται, νεαρὰ δ’ ἐξευρόντα δόμεν βασάνω
ἐς ἔλεγχοι, ὡς κινδύνοις· ὄσον δὲ λόγοι φεονεροῖσιν,
ἀπτεταί δ’ ἐσόρων ἀεί, κειρόνεσσεί δ’ αὖκ ἐρίζει.
κεῖνος καὶ Τελαμόνος δάψευν μίῳ,
φασάνω ἀμφικυλίσσαις.

η τιν’ ἀγλωσσὸν μὲν, ἢτορ δ’ ἀλκίμον, λάθα κατέχει
ἐν λυγρῷ νείκει· μέγιστον δ’ αἰῶν ψεῦ·
δεί γέρας ἀντέταται.
κρυφίασι γάρ ἐν ψάφοις Ὀδυσσῆ Παντοῦ ἕφερευσαν·
κρυσέων δ’ ἡ ἡμις στερησεῖς ὑπὸν φῶς πάλαισεν.

η μᾶν ἀνάμοιρα γε δάοις ἐν ἐρυμῷ χροὶ
ἐλκεσ ἡμησ πελεμιζόμενοι

ὐπ’ ἀλεξιμβρότῳ

λόγχο, τά μὲν ἄμφ’ Ἀχιλεὶ νεακτὸν, ἐλλων τε μόχεν ἐν πολυφόροις
ἀμέραις· ἐχερά δ’ ἄρα πάρφας ἢν καὶ πάλαι,
αιμύλων μύθων ἀμέφοι,

τός, δολοφραδῆς, κακοποίοιν ὄνειδος·
α τά μὲν λαμμρόν βιάται,

τάν δ’ ἀφάντων κύδος ἀντεὶνει σαβρόν.

N.8.19-34

It has been noted that the transition to the reference to Ajax, the second mythical example of N.8, is sudden and abrupt; the atmosphere of the preceding verses is shattered, as Carey holds, and "Pindar wrenches his audience back from the fairy-land of Cyprus to fifth century Aegina."129s4. The poet does not let himself be carried
away by the fate of the happy Cinyras, as happens in P.2; he is not concerned with Cinyras now, but has other things in his mind — even the Aeacus-reference was short: it is not happiness that matters for Pindar here. So the theme of Cinyras is dropped and passes as a mere mention of one sole verse. From v.19 the mood of the poem has changed.

The way Pindar chooses to introduce the reference to Ajax deserves special attention. As the scholia say, ἐπιλαμβάνεται ἐκεῖνοῦ ὁ Νίκωρος, and the poet uses an agonistic metaphor in v.19. He is compared to an athlete and in the present case — properly enough, since Deinias had won in the stadion — he stands "on feet lightly poised", ready to start a foot-race. Pindar, as Carey aptly remarks, "confesses a certain uneasiness; he is gathering all his resources, he says, before continuing". "Many tales have been told in many ways", Pindar goes on to say in the next verse — "without incurring any risk", Carey again supplies the right meaning. But danger lurks in both the cases of discovering and "testing" a new song. The same sentiment had been expressed by Pindar in 0.9.80-3. The anxiety of the poet being εὐρησίενῆς ἐν Μοισάν δίψῳ is justified since "tales are a treat to the envious" (v.21). Pindar is introducing the major theme of the ode, that of envy. In v.22, in a chiastic scheme (envy always attacks the noble and with the mean it does not quarrel), Pindar seems to say what the Chorus in the Ajax say when they address themselves to and refer to their leader (vs.154-61). The message for the victor Deinias becomes obvious here: as a winner in athletic games, an ἐστάλος, he is exposed to envy.
Envy is directly and explicitly held responsible for Ajax’s tragic fate (v.23) right from the beginning of the reference to the hero. The “abrupt” transition to Ajax, therefore, does not function to the disadvantage of the ode poetically but, on the contrary, it properly conveys the spirit of the poet.

Carey thinks that the attribution of Ajax’s death to envy "shows the opportunism which characterizes the use of myth by the lyric poets". We shall trace from now on the Pindaric version of the judgement of the Achillean arms, how the poet’s thought moves forward and reaches its climax.

Ajax is represented with two epithets where words are contrasted with deeds (v.24): one "negative" (ἀγλωσσον) and one positive ([ήτορ] ἀλκιμον). For ἀγλωσσος I consider Nisetich’s rendering ("lacking the ability to defend himself in a contest of words") as after than "dumb" or "inarticulate"; in my opinion, ἀγλωσσος is close in meaning to εὐθυγλωσσος ἄνηρ of P.2.86, the straightforward man, the type that Pindar would prefer beside the eloquent man (eloquence often seems to presuppose cunning and immorality for the Theban poet). Thus Odysseus, Ajax’s rival in the contest for the arms, is automatically suggested before being explicitly mentioned. His cunning eloquence would be decisive in a competition for votes; it is significant that Pindar follows the version of voting for the award of arms (cf. v.26), where a manipulation of public opinion would be easier. I shall return to that below.

Nisetich holds that it seems "worth pursuing" the possibility that Homer might have been in Pindar’s mind, since the poet deals
with Ajax, "the hero whose fate moved Pindar to mention Homer explicitly in two other poems." Such an allusion to Homer is detectable in λόγος κατέχει (v. 24), the meaning of the phrase having to do with fame and the deceptive power of words. ψεύδει of v. 25 may be connected with λόγοι of v. 21; vs. 24-5 have, in my opinion, an analogous meaning with the familiar Pindaric idea that deep darkness wraps great deeds if they remain unsung; of course, the emphasis here is on distortion of great deeds. In a chiasmus again, the phrase has such a masterly structure that no translation can do it justice; the adjectives (μέγιστον — σιόλω) and the nouns (ψεύδει — γέροντα), though contrasted, are ingeniously put next to each other.

Pindar becomes more specific and bold in v. 26, where he reaches the most extreme point of his attack on Odysseus, as he goes on to deal with the way the contest was decided, something that seemed not to have been one of his main concerns in the Seventh Nemean. Odysseus is openly accused of being awarded the arms because "there was something fraudulent about the voting":

κρυφίαις γὰρ ἐν ἡμέραις ὁ Οδυσσής Ἀδαμός ἄρπασσαν.

Verse 26 raises a series of problems, probably the most important of our extract and, as will be seen, of the whole poem — especially from the viewpoint of the present examination. This is the proper place, I think, for the issues of the date of N.8 and the relationship of the ode with the Ajax of Sophocles to be discussed; the community in vocabulary and meaning between N.8.26 and Ajax 1135 is obvious.

The meaning "fixed voting" — suggested particularly by the
words εσπάνευσαν ἐν κρυψίνι γάφος— is rejected by Carey, who renders the verse as follows: "the Greeks paid court to Odysseus in secret votes". He goes on to say that Pindar means that "the voting was unfair, not corrupt. Such an implication would obscure Pindar's point that all noble men are in danger from envy. κρυψίνι refers not to malpractice by the umpires but to the shameful, secret way of envy." This is perhaps the only point in which I disagree with Carey's excellent analysis of N.8. First of all, I do not understand why Pindar's point would be obscured if the consequence of the envy of the Greeks had been a crooked ballot—instead of a secret one—against Ajax's claim on the arms. If, as seems to me certain, in N.8 we have the chronologically latest Pindaric reference to the story of Ajax, then the element of dishonest means and corruption in the judgement of the arms, as a result of the envy of the lesser Greeks against the great Ajax, should be the particular νεαρόν, the specific element in the "narrative" that Pindar submits to possible hostile criticism (cf. vs.20-1). There are no other differences between the present version and the other two relating to Ajax (those of 1.4 and N.7, which have been already discussed) in surviving Pindaric poetry.

Furthermore, if one focuses attention on the phrasing of v.26, one will notice that κρυψίνι and εσπάνευσαν open and close the verse. There is a notional chiasmus here: Pindar stresses the malicious action and the well-matched manner in which it has been carried out. Apart from that, speaking about the precise meaning of the words, it is worth noting that Pindar uses the adjective κρυψίνι— and not the more common κρυψίνι for which I would accept the, so to
say, "innocent" meaning "secret" almost unhesitatingly; κρύψις has, more often than κρυφόν, a sinister connotation ("implying something crooked or fraudulent")\(^{155}\); there are such examples in Pindar for both adjectives\(^{156}\). Moreover, one might argue, with Brown, that if Pindar made the ballot secret, this would have been "an endorsement of the voting as fair, because secret"\(^{156}\). To me, the meaning "secret" would stand with some justification only if we follow Nisetich: "the army might have been ashamed to choose as it did in an open ballot; the specious skills even of an Odysseus depend upon darkness, in the end, for their effectiveness."\(^{156}\)

On the other hand, ἐσπονεύω means both "heed", "devote oneself to" and "do service to", "favour"\(^{157}\); the latter meaning easily slips into an immoral sense\(^{158}\). Finally, the idea of rigged voting in combination with Odysseus' rhetorical supremacy over Ajax may be associated with his μῆτις which Pindar disliked, the τέξυο of I.4 and μακροα of N.7, the elements that push mean people forward at the expense of the truly great.

Concerning the question of the date of the Eighth Nemean, the fact is that there is not any safe indication either in the text or in the Scholia to determine when the ode was composed; the same clues from the text have led interpreters to different views\(^{159}\). For many of them have tried to detect allusions to political and historical events of the fifth century in some verses of N.8. In the chronological note in my preliminary remarks on the present chapter, the Eighth Nemean was the only one of the three odes examined here for which I demurred at accepting the date Bowra suggested (459)\(^{160}\).
Although it should have been apparent that in style and subject matter N.B belongs to the mature poetic period of Pindar\textsuperscript{161}, the nineteenth-century tendency was to date the ode in 491\textsuperscript{162}. Since then, the arguments in favour of that association of N.B with the submission of Aegina to Persia and her subsequent coercion by Sparta to send hostages to Athens have rightly been rejected by more recent scholars\textsuperscript{165}. Many interpreters of the twentieth century put the ode in the period 463-457 and connect it especially with the three years of crisis between Aegina and Athens (460-457)\textsuperscript{166} that ended with the capitulation of the island to Athens. No decisive information about the status of Aegina can be derived from the ode, so one is unable to say whether it should be dated either before or shortly after her fall\textsuperscript{167}. However:

i) It is reasonable to say that it would have been difficult for a poem like N.B, or, more generally, for a celebration of any sort, to be performed during the years of a crisis\textsuperscript{168}; I would prefer the period 463-461 rather than that of 460-457 for the performance of the ode if I had to choose between them. ii) Certain passages of N.B (vs.13-4, 40ff.) suggest a sense of hope after recovering from a calamity rather than anxiety about a coming menace, which would fit 463-461\textsuperscript{169}, and if Wilamowitz’s argument that Aegina had not been deprived of a sort of autonomy after her capitulation in 457 is justified\textsuperscript{170}, a date after 457 seems to be more likely. iii) Concerning the enmity between Aegina and Athens—which applies to the situation of 460-457—it is hard to understand Ajax being chosen as the leading mythical figure of the ode—in spite of his being a member of the Aeginetan heroic family and of his story being
suitable for Pindar’s main theme in the ode, that of envy; for he was the Aeacid who was greatly honoured by the Athenians. If Pindar had composed the ode shortly before or during the crisis between Athens and Aegina, he might have taken advantage of, or even invented, another mythical tale of envy. The mention of Aeacus, moreover, who symbolizes the glorious past of Aegina, cannot be used for chronological proof; it is natural at any time in an Aeginetan ode, since Aeacus was the arch-hero of the island, the founder of Aegina’s heroic family.

At all events, there is a striking similarity between N.8.26 and Ajax 1135 (Teucer is speaking to Menelaus: κλέιτης γὰρ αὐτοῦ ἄφο- μοιος ήπειρεν) both in vocabulary and meaning. Brown was the most categorical of the commentators, talking about “virtually identical terms” and characterizing the latter verse as a “paraphrase” of the former. He used this similarity, as well as the two passages on “the envy that always attacks the powerful”, to support his theory that N.8 was composed in 445, shortly after the Thirty Years’ Peace, which did not restore Aegina’s power but, more importantly, in his opinion, marked the end of the epoch of aristocrats and the final defeat of the old social order. After his dating of N.8 as the chronologically latest Pindaric ode, Brown, considering the two common passages mentioned above as sufficient arguments, puts the production of the Ajax “in either 444 or 443 B.C.” Brown’s whole attempt is a very risky one, since, almost obsessed by his tendency to discover allusions to contemporary political and historical events in every verse, he tries to propose such precise dates for two of the chronologically most problematic poems of the fifth
century. Brown’s article was properly criticised by V. Ehrenberg for these and other, even more "biased", views. Unfortunately, some really valuable observations of his were undermined by the other weaknesses of his paper.

Concerning the suggested relationship between N.8 and the Ajax, the similarity between N.8.26 and Ajax 1135 is, to be sure, a strong argument in favour of it. The theme of envy towards the powerful, however, appears to have been a locus communis in fifth-century poetry and thus loses some of its strength as an argument. Nevertheless, there are some more or less significant echoes of the Eighth Nemean in the Ajax—but they are not mentioned by Brown: for instance, the use of αἴμωλος in connection with Odysseus or, even, the phrasing regarding Ajax’s suicide act. And on a more general level, there are indeed reflections of passages from other Pindaric odes in the play.

Brown, as if he wants to weaken his argument more, remarks that the reference to crooked voting in Ajax 1135 is "an incidental remark" whilst Pindar "elaborates the idea". In the next chapter, though, it will be argued that Sophocles seems to be particularly concerned with laying stress on what the Ἐταῖροι of Ajax say, especially about the hero and his "rights".

J.H. Finley, too, although he does not adopt Brown’s dating of the two poems, is convinced that the Ajax "is clearly affected by the ode and seems in many ways a reply to it." However, he goes on to mostly unnecessary identifications as well.

Concluding this chronological discussion, I refer now to the most probable dating suggestion for N.8 and one that is in accord
with my previous arguments—the one made by Wilamowitz: between 456, after the surrender of Aegina, and 447 (Coroneia) and rather away from both extremes; I would consider a date around 450 ideal.

Having in mind, moreover, that the Ajax of Sophocles is generally dated to the 440s, the supposed relationship—which I find a fascinating idea—can still be suggested, of course with N.8 being something like a stimulus for Sophocles; to say, as Brown, Finley and Whitman did, that the Ajax is a reply to the Pindaric ode, is surely to exaggerate.

Coming back to our extract, Ajax, the victim of envy manifested by a crooked ballot and abuse of persuasive speech, “wrestled with death” (v.27 -φόνω πάλαισεν, an expression that suggests, as Bury has noted, “agony” and “a violent death attended with bloodshed”: φασάνω ἄμφικυλίσσις of v.23 is thus elaborated and, at the same time, Ajax’s supreme prowess is implied. The epithet χρυσέων (ὄλαων) is the first word of the verse; as Carey notes, following Kühnken, the offence done to Ajax is aggravated by stressing the value of the arms “in contrast to the bare ὀλων χολωσείς” in N.7.25. Kühnken, translating ἀπερνείς as “robbed”, conveys, I think, the colour of the language and the spirit of the poet.

Moving forward, Pindar stresses the magnitude of the crime of the Greeks; an ἀξιωτικά of Ajax as a warrior is given again (vs.28-32), as in N.7, after the sad and bitter mention of the hero’s suicide. Ajax had offered warlike services dissimilar to those of Odysseus, especially as defender of the Greeks with his spear (cf. vs.29-30).

The observation (vs.30-2) that not only “through other labours
during those days of slaughter" but also "over the new-slain Achilles" Ajax’s valour had been greater than that of Odysseus raises some questions. Ajax, according to the epic tradition, was the one who carried Achilles’ corpse on his shoulders, while Odysseus distinguished himself fighting the Trojans bravely and protecting their retreat. This struggle played a decisive role in one version of the award of the arms in the epic. Is Pindar following a literary source unknown to us or an Aeginetan version here? Or do we have one more Pindaric "novelty" as concerns the Ajax-Odysseus story? More strangely, the Scholia go on to indicate the differentiation made by the Theban poet: they quote a passage of the Odyssey referring to Odysseus’ struggle over the body of Achilles as referring to Ajax.

Be that as it may, Nisetich rightly remarks that the passage (vs.28-32) "has a more profound intent than merely to differ, in detail, from the cyclic epics: the great emphasis given to àvômoia draws attention to the failure of the Greeks to pay Ajax for his service in kind." The same scholar goes on to say interestingly that "such is the force of saying that, under Ajax’s protection, they dealt their enemies 'different' wounds, leaving us, for a moment, with the notion 'than they dealt him'. The implication is metaphorically, if not literally, true: the Greeks did 'wound' Ajax."

A more specific reference to Pindar’s attack on Odysseus is worthwhile here, before moving to the last verses of our extract. Farnell thinks that the "defamation" of the hero is "original"; his assertion that "it contradicts flagrantly all the older epic
(...) account may not be justified if he does not mean exclusively Homer, since the Cyclic epics included some incidents about Odysseus which could have been interpreted to the disadvantage of his character. It remains a fact, though, that in Pindar we have the earliest surviving direct "vilification" of Odysseus' character in literature, which "may be partly responsible for the odious characterisation of the old Homeric hero which Attic tragedy occasionally permits itself". Another interesting view of Farnell is that Ajax's glorification "could have been effected without the bitter calumny on Odysseus", a thought, nonetheless, that did not lead him to adopt the theory of contemporary political or historical analogues. Yet Farnell -like Ehrenberg in his criticism of Brown's article mentioned above- holds that "it is [Pindar] himself who must be the object of the envy and detraction which was in the air"; I do not agree with this view either -it is as "strained and unnatural" as Farnell thinks the former one.

We come now to the last verses of our extract (32-4). Carey thinks that Pindar, after having put the record straight concerning the contest for the arms, "proceeds to draw the logical conclusion essential to the myth". Envy, says the poet, confining it to the aspect of malignant deceit (έχεια μάφωσις), the distortion of truth, responsible for the destruction of Ajax, has existed from old times -but applies today as well. Pindar turns to Deinias indirectly. The characteristics of μάφωσις are given with a striking list of appositions; the tone and the style of the passage are close to that of a lyric in tragedy -it has been noted that this constitutes the most Aeschylean passage in Pindar. Many
words "correspond" to ones in the previous verses: ηλατι refers to vs.21-2; αἵματα μορφών and δολοφοβής may suggest Odysseus and may be connected with ὁμοι δὲ λόγοι: ὑψονεροῖσιν (v.21), λόγοι κατέχει ἐν λυγρῷ νέικῃ (vs.24-5) and αἵματα ψεύδει (v.25): βιάζοι and ἄντεινει, especially the latter, with ἄντειτοτα (v.25)⁴⁰²; there is again the contrast between light and darkness in λαμπρόν and ὁμόντων; the lameness of the glory of ἄρανοτοί is stressed by the position and the power of the epithet οἰφρόν. ἄρανοτος is, in my opinion, very close to the ψευδήνος ἀνήρ of Ν.3.41⁴⁰³.

The contrasts and the correspondences of words and phrases continue in the third section of the ode as well, particularly in its beginning, which consists of an apparently personal prayer of the poet (vs.35-9)⁴⁰⁵. Carey rightly holds that "the sentiments expressed here are commendable under any circumstances"; so "we may better take this passage as an example of the first person with general reference."⁴⁰⁶

Entering now into a more general analysis—which, however, will give us the opportunity to return to the last triad of the ode—one may start from the point that Pindar's main concern in the reference to the story of Ajax's death in both the Fourth Isthmian and the Seventh Nemean is later fame and the redeeming power of poetry⁴⁰⁷. We have seen the "optimistic" viewpoint of 1.4, on the one hand, where (Homer's) poetry is applauded because it restored the fame of the unfortunate hero and, on the other, in N.7, the accusation against Homer for paying tribute to the guileful and non-deserving Odysseus, whilst the truly great Ajax was blatantly underrated, as a result of the ease with which people are misled by
sweet words and the human inability to discern true value. In the
Eighth Nemean this theme is not ignored but it seems to slip into
second place, since Pindar not only deals with a "dark" heroic tale,
Ajax's end, but explicitly throws the blame for it on to envy
—and, as has been remarked, to the "active" envy of his rival
in the fatal contest and the "passive" one of the other Greeks. Emphasis is thus given to Pindar's opinion about the cause of
Ajax's death. The virtues of the "tongueless" Ajax and, conversely,
the meanness and immorality of his wordy rival are more profound
in N. 8, although they existed or were implied particularly in N. 7.

C. Carey, justifiably enough, believes that if the myth of Ajax
is associated with the victor Deinias, all the questions about
allusions to Pindar's personal situation or to political and
historical events will be avoided. It is quite difficult,
to be sure, to imagine an epinician ode without sufficient concern
for the victor, especially in connection with its mythical examples.
The first example in the ode is, as we have seen, that of Aeacus,
who was—and Pindar stresses this—"a combination of physical
and moral-intellectual excellence" willingly recognized
(cf. vs. 7-12). The poet makes a first attempt to link the fortunate
Aeacus with Deinias in vs. 13-6. Ajax by contrast has, as in N. 7,
eminent strength and virtue, but unfortunately his merit is envied
and not appreciated. It is significant that the "negative" example
(Ajax) is much more lengthy than the "positive" one (Aeacus) in N. 8.
—the reverse of what happens in N. 7. The Ajax-myth is rightly
considered as the main myth of N. 8. Envy goes along with victory,
with every sort of excellence, achievement or success in general,
almost as a normal attitude. Young Deinias’ attention should be drawn to the bad but most likely way his achievement will be received —not to the ideal one of Aeacus. Pindar’s insistence on envy in N.8 is no doubt passionate; it is, of course, very difficult to speculate about the cause of this disposition of the poet.

Now, where (between the two cases of Aeacus and Ajax) does Deinias fit in? According to Carey, we have to find the answer in the last triad of N.8, after the Ajax-reference. There is again an abrupt change in the mood of the poem from v.35 on. The ἔχερας πορφύρως (that of Ajax), and ὁμοῖοι and δίκαιοι men (v.41) with ὡσεβρήσαν (v.21). The poet will go on ἄινεποι οἴνιοτά, μομφῶν δ’ ἐπισείρων ὀλιπροῖς (v.39). Poetry, as always, can amend envy and deception. Pindar’s prayer and the whole last section of the ode in general, with the themes of excellence and friendship, is a sort of catharsis; the “sense of rottenness” created by the reference to the unhappy fate of Ajax must be dispelled. This is managed by the transition of the verses 35-9; there are such passages in analogous situations in other Pindaric odes.

In the happy time of victory, the athlete should be aware of the possibility of an envious reception of his achievement, but not overwhelmed by that dark prospect; if any unhappy association is not dismissed, it may constitute a “poor omen”. The Ajax-myth is therefore surrounded by happier matters; the spirit of the first triad comes back in the third, a gap between Ajax and Deinias is eventually created. As the ode comes to its end, Pindar gives an
answer to the question put above: Deinias' excellence will be praised; the athlete will not suffer as Ajax did - the poet will be his champion. Pindar's friendly approach - in contrast with ἔξερα θάνατος - dominates the ode, opposes the attack of ὑσόνος and prevails over it.

In vs. 44-5, this "friendliness" of the poet to the victor is displayed in an extraordinary way: Pindar expresses his inadequacy to bring Megas, Deinias' father, back to life. This "negative" aspect is used only momentarily, so that it will highlight in an ingenious way what follows (vs. 46-8): it is an easy task, though, to praise the family of Chariadai. The text presents a problem here. I use "easy" for τ' ἀλλαμμόν - which, as Carey holds, is "unavoidable" in our case - some people read τε λάβρον or even τε λαμβόν in v. 46, but the former has pejorative value elsewhere in Pindar, while the latter simply does not make sense. ἀλλαμμός λίτος seems to contain a play of words and meaning as well: an apparent oxymoron - although the task of poetry is not a light, an easy one (cf. κύματος in v. 50 - applying both to the athlete and the poet), the task of praising the Chariadai, especially after Deinias' victory, is.

Thus the Theban poet, in a very subtle way, relates the fate of the victor Deinias with the dissimilar ones of Aeacus and Ajax. The athlete, as we have seen, will not be unfortunate as the latter; a song by the well-disposed and delighted Pindar, the poet's own ἄλλημα, will protect him from αἰώναν ὑσόνος and ἔξερα θάνατος, the danger of envy. The ode ends stressing the power of poetry, ἐπικαμένος ὑμνος, moreover, is older than θάνατος; Pindar
emphasizes the antiquity of his art as well, apart from its redeeming power which will secure Deinias' fame for ever.
VI. THE AJAX MYTH IN SOPHOCLES

a. The presentation of Ajax's 'crimes': some remarks on the first part of the play (up to v. 814)

The Ajax of Sophocles follows a remarkable course from the mad Ajax of the Prologue, perpetrator of despicable deeds, to the hero whose burial becomes indispensable. In the next pages attention will be drawn to elements of this process with regard to the first part of the play, that is up to the hero's suicide speech, which is separately examined in the next subchapter.

The following discussion will not be exhaustive. It aims to point out certain things that bear importance for anybody who wishes to give a balanced view of Ajax's character in Sophocles. I have learned much from previous scholarship, especially from the work of Ivan M. Linforth, W. B. Stanford, and Malcolm Heath, even in the cases I disagreed with the overall position or specific views of them. Although the elements that will be pointed out appear to "function in favour of Ajax", to put it in a rather simplistic manner, I do not wish to imply that the play has as its aim the vindication of the hero, or to propose any other obvious interpretation of the sort.

Our concern here, then, is how Ajax's "crimes" and "guilt" are presented by Sophocles. The parts of the play on which our interest will focus are the Prologue (vs. 1-133) and the Messenger
scene (vs. 719-814). One does not need a thorough-going examination to show that these two scenes are closely related, particularly in regard to what we may call dramatic time. This element is used peculiarly by Sophocles in the Ajax, as we shall see.

Taking things in order, I may say right from the beginning that there are certain elements and peculiarities in the Prologue which undermine categorical views like the one of Stanford that "on the whole the opening scene puts Ajax in an unfavourable light". What is crucial for the audience is the choice of elements of the story provided by the Prologue. The play begins in the morning after Ajax's murderous attempt upon the Greek chiefs; Athena, robbing him of his senses, has canalized his rage on the cattle and now directs the whole course of action, as Odysseus enters the stage to verify the rumours about last night's outrage. Ajax is still struck with frenzy, bereft of his senses, with Athena virtually in control of his perception. A madman normally excites either terror or pity, or both, in his viewers, not aversion; one has also to consider the cruelty of the goddess -she is "playing" with him-, and thus there is much difficulty for an unfavourable picture of Ajax to be shaped. We have, of course, the brief picture of Ajax expressing pleasure at the prospect of torturing Odysseus (vs. 105 and 116 -cf. also v.114; in v.111, moreover, he ignores Athena's admonition to spare Odysseus). In the second place, Ajax's patronizing manner towards the goddess, in combination with the relative lucidity with which he appears to be speaking to her, may not function to his advantage. However, I think that these cannot seriously count against Ajax; he is still under delusion,
and, in any case, some of his words to the goddess show respect to her.

Further, Athena, mentioning Ajax's terrible enterprise of the preceding night when he took justice in his own hands and thought that he could undo the past and retrieve his wounded honour, indicates the two main characteristics of the hero during it: νῷκτωρ...δόλιος (v.47). Both are undoubtedly foreign to his conventional character. And in the very significant vs.119-20 Athena asks Odysseus -showing that she, who appears to be Ajax's punisher, knows and virtually dictates his answer:

τούτοις ἂν σοι τάνδρος ἢ προνοοῦστερος
ἡ δὲν ἄμεινων ηὐρέθη τὰ καίρια;

ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδέν' ὁ δ' (v.121) is Odysseus' answer. It is strongly suggested, then, that the Ajax of the Prologue is in a temporary and exceptional situation.

I have noted above that Athena "appeared to be Ajax's punisher" and I would like to refer to this notion in more detail. I have already mentioned the tendency of most interpreters to see Athena as, so to speak, an inhuman goddess. Her cruelty is undeniable, but is it "personal"? In v.127 Athena tells Odysseus to take a lesson from what he has just seen. Ajax is "exhibited" to Odysseus -and to the audience- by the goddess as an example illustrating the frailty and transience of man in contrast with the power of the gods. In her generalizing words Athena does not mention Ajax's murderous attempt upon his comrades; no charge regarding this is brought against him in vs.127-33. The matter that bears more importance here is the message to all mortals that everyone of them, even an Ajax, is
liable to the danger of a fall so "sudden" and so "great". Linforth's view on the opening scene, then, contrasted to that of Stanford mentioned above and just as categorical ("Sophocles has so composed the Prologue as almost entirely to suppress the guilt of Ajax") may be closer than the other one to the truth.

And to conclude this discussion on Athena's role, I think that Sophocles' approach (and this is an indication of his superb art) gives one ground to wonder whether, in the final analysis, Athena is not in a sense friendly to Ajax. Imposing delusion on him is, after all, an act of protecting him from committing a crime of the utmost gravity.

As happened with the "Deception Speech", the Messenger scene that follows comes rather unexpectedly: one might have expected a messenger to come, but only to announce Ajax's death and describe it. Sent by Teucer, this Messenger brings news from the Greek camp, and, in particular, the "prophecy" of Calchas concerning Ajax, which puts the action concerning Ajax into the frame of a time limit and illustrates the reason for the gods' anger at the hero. The scene has not drawn particular attention on the part of most interpreters of the play, although, as Crane reasonably holds, its role within the Ajax may be significant "in complementing, even glossing, the mysterious and difficult deception speech".

What particularly concern us in the Messenger's/Calchas' words are the two incidents from Ajax's career that generated Athena's wrath at him; they are not connected with the present action, but, as Linforth remarks, they are narrated in circumstantial detail, so that it may be assumed that the Athenian audience had not been
especially familiar with them—although they may have appeared in posthomerica epic poetry. A scholion on v. 127 says: ἵνα τὸν Ἀἴαντα τρίτον ἰσεβηκέναι περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς. πρῶτον μὲν ἐκβάλων τοῦ διήθου τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν ὑπολομένην αὐτῷ συμμαχεῖν. δεύτερον τῷ ἀπαλείψαι τὴν γλώκα τὴν ἐγγεγραμένην τῷ ὁπλῷ αὐτοῦ ἢ ἔσος πατρόφυ. τρίτον ὅτι οὐκ ἐπέδειξεν τῷ πατρὶ συμβουλεύοντι πείθεσει τοῖς θεοῖς. Sophocles uses here the first and the third incident with some modifications: i) vs.762-9: Ajax disregarded his father’s words advising him not to seek victory without help from the gods; ii) vs.770-5: on the battlefield Ajax told Athena to stand by the other Greeks, since where he was the enemy would never break through. With the mention of these incidents the Messenger scene is clearly connected with the Prologue, as Athena’s words in vs.127ff., which sounded out of context there and appeared to be irrelevant to Ajax’s murderous attempt, now find an explanation. So that is why the goddess is angry with Ajax: the hero is guilty of οὐ κατ' ἄνερχονον φρονῦν (v.777), of having uttered ὑπέρχονον ἐνος (vs.127-8), of showing undue pride towards the gods. A god can be angry with Ajax at this as with any mortal.

Proceeding to treat the important questions relevant to the two incidents—why are they presented at this stage of the play and what are the consequences of this late presentation—we may start from the fact that, as it has been mentioned in a previous chapter, there is no evidence of any presumptuous attitude on the part of Ajax in the Iliad. On the basis of the surviving fragments from the Epic Cycle the same seems to happen there, although the evidence is so scanty that we cannot exclude the possibility that one of
those epics may have been the source of the picture of an impious /presumptuous Ajax. Besides, the first word of the scholion quoted above (παυξάν) seems to rule out any suggestion that the two incidents may have been invented by Sophocles. Moreover, these episodes contrast sharply with vs.119-20, since, on the basis of the first one, Ajax appears to have been a conscious scioner of the gods, an ἐπίστημος, already before coming to Troy. Thus the view that Sophocles undermines the incidents rather than laying emphasis on them seems more apt. And it is further strengthened by their "nature" itself: they may well be regarded as demonstrations of an overzealous warrior, conventional, even though excessive, expressions of self-sufficiency and high heroic spirit.

Furthermore, their placing in the play has to be considered. For Ajax's "impiety" is "slipped in" at moments when the audience's attention focuses on his fate, and just after the hero's lofty response to loss of honour (conveyed in the exquisite poetry of the "Deception Speech" in particular). The suppression of the ugly initial crime of Ajax carries on, too (there is no reference at all to it in Calchas' words). All these elements weaken the effect of the two incidents as indications of what may be called Ajax's guilt.

Coming now to the one-day limit (vs.756-7, 778), it is surely significant that the wrath of Athena will pursue Ajax only for that day. A first and rather simplistic interpretation would have been that the anger of the goddess is not relentless, so there may be a way of escaping death for the hero. From what Athena says in the Prologue, as we have seen above, there is no evidence that
the goddess is moved by (personal) spite against Ajax himself. In the Messenger scene the duration of Athena’s wrath is limited to a single day, but it seems as if it is Ajax himself who holds his life and death in his hands. When Calchas refers to the goddess’ anger at Ajax in vs.755-6, the audience, who know more than the seer about Ajax’s latest situation —and, anyway, know from the myth that death is inevitable for the hero—, can take those verses as meaning that Ajax is sent to his doom by the disgrace he still feels, having realized the results of the delusion imposed on him by Athena. The hero expiates his “crimes” and affirms his greatness with his death. I therefore think that a subtle process of a gradual reconciliation of Ajax with the gods is in operation in the course of the play, and is completed with the hero being granted burial in its end—with the intervention of Athena’s “favourite”, Odysseus, at that. In this context, it is certainly no accident that Calchas’ last word (σωτήριοι -v.779) is identical with that of Ajax’s in the “Deception Speech” (σωσίμενον -v.692); the audience would have noticed this similarity, as well as the underlying differentiation in what “save” (or “safe”) meant in each case.

The use of dramatic time in the part of the play examined here is certainly peculiar and thus constitutes a means on the poet’s part to obscure Ajax’s “guilt” and establish his greatness. The play is concerned with three main elements: the aftermath of Ajax’s madness —after only a brief presentation of it— and his adjustment to the present, his death (it becomes clear by Ajax’s words and actions as the plot develops, that his ἰηος cannot survive defeat
and disgrace\(^\text{30}\) and the issue of his burial. Ajax's act of treachery is not stressed in the Prologue, while his alleged "hybris" is given in such a manner and put in such a position in the play that it loses almost all its strength. On the other hand, the exhibition of Ajax's character in the part of the play up to his suicide is sufficient in itself to show what a great man he was (and to justify his cult in Athens)\(^\text{31}\). Linforth aptly summarizes the effects of Sophocles' "strategy" in the Ajax: "By this process the mind of the audience has been diverted from the ugliness of the initial events, and pity for his [Ajax's] degradation has given place to respect and a measure of awe. They have been led to contemplate his innate nobility. They have observed with admiration his instinctive response to the loss of honor."\(^\text{32}\)

The preceding examination may seem selective - and is so. However, I believe that every episode of the play, every twist in its plot, every, apparently minor, detail throws light to some aspect of Ajax's character and story; any one-sided approach would be very "narrow" and even unjust in relation to the subtlety of Sophoclean tragedy. Moreover, and beyond this notion that surely allows the rebuttal of any interpretation based on the notion of a guilty Ajax\(^\text{33}\), Linforth acutely reminds the student of the Ajax who is distressed by the horror of the hero's crime, or, even, by the fact that almost nothing is said about it, that one has to examine not the legend on which the play is based, but the play itself\(^\text{34}\).
b. Ajax's last monologue

In vs. 815-65 we have Ajax's last speech in the play, delivered just before he leaps on his sword. It would be worth imagining the setting, first of all: the hero stands entirely alone on an empty stage that the audience will have no difficulty in associating with Ajax's words at vs. 654-5. From v. 892 it has been suggested that the setting may have been indicated by some movable scenery representing bushes. As soon as he enters the scene, he fixes the sword in the ground, point upwards. Then he delivers this soliloquy, the words of a man at death's door. The audience might have been watching breathless, although they should have been familiar with the outcome of the myth. With the several alterations of mood that he has already had in store for them up to this part of the play, Sophocles should have made them pay attention even to the slightest detail of words and actions.

This passage has not raised a great deal of attention among students of the Ajax. This is justified, at least up to a point, since both the words and the intentions of the hero are now absolutely clear. Ajax is not trying to "deceive" anybody here - if we accept that he had such an intention, for any motive, in his previous, renowned speech. The passage does not present special difficulties of interpretation, any particularly "ambiguous" points. Most of it consists of prayers and invocations, as well as affectionate memories of dearest persons and places.

This certainly does not mean that the passage is not an important one. Critics hold that Ajax here comes back to his
"real self"—unless we follow Bowra, who sees in the monologue a return of the hero to madness after the sanity of the preceding "Deception Speech".

To start a closer examination of the passage—although it is not my intention to examine exhaustively everything that Ajax is saying—one has to note, first of all, that this soliloquy is "nobly phrased", to use Stanford’s expression. It may not equal the sublimity of Ajax’s previous speech, but most of it conveys the same greatness of spirit and it certainly comes second after that speech as the finest words of the hero in the play.

At the beginning Ajax speaks about the sword which will be his σφαγεύς: this word is rightly considered as a full personification (cf., too, εὐνοοῦστατον in v.822 and φονέως in v.1026) and, also, as carrying a further, ritual implication—which, as Stanford notes, "gives a solemn tone to Ajax’s opening words and helps to justify his references to religious rites in 655-6". The sword will be "most cutting" (τομώτατος—v.815) for three reasons, the first two being "psychological": it was a gift (cf. II.7.303-5, Ajax 661-5) from his enemy Hector (vs.817-8) and is embedded into the hostile land of Troy (vs.819-20). It is as if Ajax’s death is being caused by his foes. Lastly, the sword is carefully "arranged" by Ajax himself (vs.821-2). The personification of this "humane", even welcome, killer is carried on in the striking word εὐνοοῦστατον, the superlative form drawing attention to its peculiarity in the context.

From v.823, Ajax launches into prayers to divinities. The first one is addressed to Zeus (vs.824-31)—to save his corpse from dis-
honour by sending Teucer word to come; according to Stanford, "this introduces the motivation of the rest of the play —whether Ajax’s body is to have honourable burial or not". The second prayer is to Hermes (vs.831-4) —to grant a swift death; an appropriate heroic prayer. The third one is an imprecation; the Erinyes are summoned to avenge him on the Atreidae (vs.835-44). Then Ajax asks the Sun-God to bring the news of his death to his parents in Salamis, as he now moves to the west across the sky (vs.845-9). Fifthly, Death is asked to "release" the hero (vs.854-5). At the end, Ajax invokes and bids farewell to the natural phenomena and places both at home and in Troy (vs.856-64).

As the scholia indicate, in relation to this chain of prayers in Ajax’s last words, καὶ ἔστιν εὔσεβοῦς ἄνδρός ἐξεμενίζειν πρὸ τοῦ ἑκάτου ἕος, τόπους, κόμο, πατρίδα, γονεῖς, ἀδελφοῦς, ὡστε μετ’ εὐφημίας ἀποθανεῖν. Stanford seems to be in agreement with this view of the Scholiast; with the whole speech, he holds, Sophocles establishes that Ajax "is not fundamentally a scorner of the gods [despite the two incidents related in the Messenger’s speech in vs. 762-77], but in fact is (...) a man of conventional piety".

Some other parts of the passage deserve attention. Firstly, Sophocles represents Ajax once more —after the opening lines of the "Deception Speech"— thinking about beloved persons with tenderness, in this case about his parents, especially his mother (cf. vs.849-51; two and a half of those three verses refer to her). The Scholiast reasonably thought of this as καὶ τὰῦτα περὶπατεῖ καὶ ἀνερώπων and reminds us of Heracles in the Trachiniae, who, too, ἔνι τοῦ ἑκάτου τὴν μετέρα μετανέμεται. Coming back to Ajax, "the essential
pathos of this momentary flash-back" given "in a single word
uncommonly used" (τροφό -v.849) is well pointed out by Stanford'".

We have already seen that Ajax calls the Erinyes for revenge on
the Atreidae, who caused his death by unjustly failing to award the
arms of Achilles to him. A curse (cf. vs.839-42) of a dying man was
considered very powerful, and the Scholia note what the Athenian
audience knew well, that is that Ajax's imprecation was fulfilled
as concerns Agamemnon. Stanford remarks that Ajax "notably omits
Odysseus [as object of his revenge], presumably because he was not
a judge in the award of the arms (and also perhaps because Sophocles
wants to prepare the way for the favourable portrait of Odysseus
later in the play)"50. In the following verses (843-4), though, Ajax
extends the curse against the whole Greek army "as having acquiesced
in the unjust award of the armour"51. Ajax's vindictiveness in the
passage may seem inconsistent with the ὑπηρετόντων that he claimed he
acquired (cf. v.677) and with some of his other utterances (cf.
vs.667-8 and 678-83) in the "Deception Speech"52. In that speech,
however, Ajax had realized that he had to respect the Atreidae
for their authority as rulers, whilst here, in his implacable
resentment for a wrong done to him, he calls down curses on
the people responsible for that and considers them as enemies.
Jebb's arguments on the "morality" of this issue are still valuable
and perfectly sound. He aptly compares Ajax's attitude here to that
of Oedipus towards his sons -although the latter is on his way to
consecration as a hero53. Yet Jebb seems to have seen the inclusion
of the whole army in the curse as excessive54.

As Ajax is heading for his death, his words are "illuminated" by
the presence of light in various forms (cf. vs.846-7 -Sun-God; note also the epithet χρυσώωτον; 856 -daylight, atmospheric light; 857 -the sun in his chariot; 859 -sunlight). Ajax's references to light here possibly echo his famous prayer to Zeus in the Iliad (17.645-7), where the hero, with true grandeur, asks the king of the gods, if his wish were to slay the Greeks, at least to do it in the light, thus showing the sort of death Ajax preferred for himself:

Zeû náter, ἄλλα σὺ 'ροσαί ὅτε ἔρος υἱὰς 'Αχαιῶν,
ποίησον ὃς αἰέρην, δός ὃς ὀψαλμοῖσιν ἰδέσσεαι.
ἐν ὃς φάει καὶ ὀλέσσον, ἐπεί νῦ τοι εὐαδεν οὕτως.

Ajax's monologue concludes as follows (v.865):

τὰ δ' ἄλλα ἐν 'Αϊδου τοῖς κάτω μνήσομαι.

"I shall tell the rest in Hades to those who are down there."
The last words of the main hero of the play deserve, to be sure, a great deal of attention. As one should have expected from a master of dramatic art like Sophocles, what his hero utters just before killing himself functions in many ways and carries various implications. It is time now to indicate them.

Stanford, quite appositely, compares Ajax's words to those of Hamlet -who committed suicide, too ("the rest is silence"). The commentator goes on to remark that Ajax's sense of the continuation of life after death is stronger than that of the Shakespearean hero. With τὰ δ' ἄλλα[α], as again Stanford puts it, Ajax "adjourns 'the high debate' to another time and place." This first phrase of the verse conveys vividly, in my opinion, a sense of abrupt interruption which applies not only to Ajax's preceding speech, but to his whole life as well, interrupted by a violent and
bloody death.

One of the most important implications of v.865, nonetheless, is that Ajax is going to meet other heroes in the Underworld. Sophocles seems to lend a colour of subtle anticipation to the verse; Ajax leaves this world looking forward to that meeting. From what he says throughout the play, one gets the feeling that the hero is aware that by dying he is irrevocably dissociated from dishonour\(^\text{1}\). In Hades Ajax will meet, among others, his ancestors (cf. v.387) and, of course, his former comrades-in-arms already killed in the Trojan War\(^\text{2}\); great men, heroic figures like Achilles, related to Ajax both in blood and in character, who may well "understand" him and his claims (cf. vs.442-3), whose nobility and mentality, whose θεος, would sympathize with Ajax's maxim:

\[ \text{αλλ' ή καλῶς ζήν ή καλῶς τεθνηκέναι τὸν εὔγενὴ χρῆ.} \]

vs.479-80

Sophocles -we shall see this clearly below- was undoubtedly inspired by the Nekyia concerning the verse in question -and the play in general\(^\text{3}\). But it is worth noting that Achilles, the "Ajacian type", responds almost angrily to Odysseus' comforting compliment (cf. Od.11.485-6) that he now rules over all the dead:

\[ \text{μὴ δὴ μοι εάνατον γε παραύδα, φαίδιμ' όδυσσεῦ.} \]
\[ \text{Βουλοίμην κ' ἐπάρουρος ἐὼν ἑπτευέμεν ἄλλω,} \]
\[ \text{ἀνδρὶ παρ' ἀκλήρῳ, ζὴ μὴ βίοτος πολὺς εὖ,} \]
\[ \text{νὴ πάσιν νεκύεσσι καταφειμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.} \]

Od.11.488-91

Commentators on this passage show their embarrassment "since the
expression of an unconditional preference for life appears not to be in keeping with the attitude expressed by Achilles when alive (II.18.88-93, 98, 115)."^\textsuperscript{62}

With regard to Ajax joining the other heroes in the Underworld, Stanford holds that "the φιλία and ἐταφεία which he has lost on earth [cf. v.682-3] may be regained once more"^\textsuperscript{63}. This enables us to come to another significant point: Ajax will not face in Hades, verse 865 implies, what he was enveloped by when alive, particularly during his last moments: loneliness. This trait of the hero is one of the features most stressed in the play (cf., for instance, Ajax's desperate call for Teucer in vs.342-3, or the first stasimon, esp. vs.609ff.). It is true that almost every Sophoclean hero is solitary, but the poet seems to insist strenuously on Ajax's loneliness, both spiritual and actual^\textsuperscript{64}. We have to remind ourselves of the setting during the last soliloquy of the hero: in the middle of an entirely empty stage Ajax is absolutely on his own; his sword has already been fixed in the ground, Tecmessa, the Messenger and the Chorus, divided into the two sections, have all gone to look for him along the coast or to call Teucer^\textsuperscript{65}. Furthermore, it has been rightly observed that the dramatically powerful invocation by Ajax of the natural phenomena (vs.856-8)^\textsuperscript{66} and of the lands that had been his "nourishers" (vs.859-63)^\textsuperscript{67} in the preceding verses underlines his loneliness; the hero knows that he has nobody attentive to his words except nature -amongst the Greeks there was a feeling of communion with its divine forces^\textsuperscript{68}.

The verb ἑωνομαί is the very last word of the verse and, apart from continuing the implications discussed above, it creates more.
Kamerbeek is probably right to remark that the motif of v.855 comes back here "in a somewhat altered form" (cf. προσαμεθύσω - μυενομαι, καίτοι - τά δ' ἄλλ', κάκει - ἐν "Αἴδου"); he finds "an unpleasant sound", though, in μυενομαι -an assertion which I cannot understand and the commentator himself does not go on to explain.

It is in a sense ironic that a hero like Ajax, the type of action and not of words, leaves this life having as his last and surely everlasting "echo" a verb relative to speech, something that can hardly be automatically associated with his character and temperament. Suffice it to recall Pindar's epithet for Ajax (Δυῖωρος) and, most of all, the scene of the Nekyia between Odysseus and Ajax, where the latter, still resentful about the award of the arms, remains silent towards the unreserved, but late, tribute to his merits from the former. Several commentators on this verse of the Ajax indicate Sophocles' intention to draw a contrast here with the version of the Odyssey, with the hero's "majestic silence", a scene surely well remembered by the Athenian audience of the play. They would have known that Ajax had not spoken at all, even though approached by "honeyed words" -would he ever do it of his own accord? It is worth mentioning, besides, that μυενομαι in a way corresponds to Odysseus' request in the Nekyia (ἲν' ἑνος καὶ μῦθον ἀκούσῃς / ἡμέτερον -11.561-2); the selection of the particular verb by Sophocles was indeed anything but accidental.

What other implications may be suggested by Sophocles' masterly "intertextual dialogue" with Homer? The dramatist, as we have seen, seems to evoke the idea of an Ajax neither silent nor alone in the
Underworld. Perhaps Sophocles' well-known humanity and elevation of thought could not accept the Homeric version of the shade of Ajax, silent, "standing aloof wrathful", in spite of the sublimity of that scene⁷³. The hero will speak in Hades, even regardless of the fact that his λυμεώνες⁷⁴ on earth will be among τοῖς κάτω sometime. Ajax's wrath, Sophocles' message would be, may not remain implacable⁷⁵.

Moreover, one may detect an allusion to the injustice done to Ajax. The hero anticipates that, at least, the shades in Hades will listen⁷⁶ to his story. Is it possible that this very thing was one of those which Ajax was deprived of when alive? There was indeed no "audience" for him on earth, neither for his claims in the award of the Achillean arms nor for his greatness in general.

After v.865, Ajax falls upon his sword. His body lies on the ground when the two sections of the Chorus enter the orchestra seeking him (vs.866ff.). They do not see the corpse until Tecmessa discovers it (vs.891ff.).

What will concern us from now on is the fact that Ajax's suicide is enacted in front of the audience. I do not have the relevant "stage-management problems" in mind—which, besides, have been discussed in detail by others⁷⁷. Nonetheless, this is certainly an appropriate place to refer to the superb skill that the leading role of Ajax should have required from an actor: the representation of ferocious madness in the opening scene of the play, the various possible modulations of voice during the "Deception Speech" and now the convincing enactment of the fall upon the sword⁷⁸. Let us see first what the Scholia have to say about the issue of Ajax's suicide.
presented on stage: ἔστι δὲ τὰ τοιαύτα παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς σπάνια. εἰώθασι γὰρ τὰ πεπραγμένα δι’ ἀγγέλων ἀπαγγέλειν. τι οὖν τὸ αίτιον; φεύγει Αἰσχύλος ἐν θρήσσαις τὴν ἀναίρεσιν Αἰαντος δι’ ἀγγέλου ἀπαγγείλας. ἴσως οὖν [ὁ Σοφοκλῆς] καινοτομεῖν δεόντων καὶ μὴ κατακαλούσει τοῖς ἔτεροις ἀρχαῖοι, ὡς δὲ ἐκεῖ τὸ δρώμενον ἡ μᾶλλον ἔκπληξαι δεόντων.

As happens often in the case of the Scholiasts, there are some important as well as some naive views here. On the other hand, most commentators of the play have found it "remarkable" that Ajax commits suicide on stage and have been content with that. However, the fact that in the Ajax we have the unique suicide on stage in extant Greek tragedy is, to say the least, striking. In Greek drama any ignominious, "ill", dishonourable, horrible thing, any "dark deed" in general, happens as a rule off-stage, not in the presence of the audience, "inside", most of the times ἐν κρυπτῷ, in the darkness, certainly not under the sunlight. Our play itself offers a good example; the indignant and disgraceful misdeeds of Ajax, when, struck with frenzy, he tortured some of the animals of the herd fancying that they were the Greek chiefs, took place during the night (the whole attempt of Ajax to kill his fellow-chiefs happens νύκτωρ; Ajax comes to his senses shortly after dawn) and —the last part— inside his tent (Sophocles seems to emphasize, too, Athena’s call to Ajax to come outside —cf. vs.71-6 and 89). The audience see very little or nothing of those horrible actions, whilst the sight of the sane Ajax presented to them wailing among the bloody results of his frenzied delusion (vs.348ff.) serves, I think, to enhance their sympathy and pity for the hero.
Sophocles' genius as a dramatist decides on the particular sort of "public" presentation of Ajax's self-imposed death, in the sunlight and in the presence of the audience only. In my opinion, an intention to differentiate himself from Aeschylus may have been the last thing that led Sophocles to this "innovation". The poet may have judged that Ajax's committing suicide on stage, after this powerful speech, is in accord to his character as it has been presented throughout the play, and even functions in further favour of it. The greatness of the hero is thus conveyed in the most effective way; a "report" of the same scene through a messenger's speech, however vivid it might have been, even with the ability of a Sophocles, could be insufficient in rendering the scene in all its "dimensions". We should not forget what Ajax had said in vs.479-80 (ἀλλ' ὁ καλὸς ζῆν ὁ καλὸς τεθηκέναι / τὸν εὐγενή χρή). Since he could not achieve the former, the only way for him is the latter. Death is considered as his "salvation" by Ajax himself (cf. v.692); also Tecmessa thinks that it should indeed have been αὐτῷ δὲ τεθηκός (v.967). The great man finds in death a "haven" from the "storms" that life had lately had in store for him. Ajax's death, then, welcomed by the hero himself, is probably one of his "crowning" moments in the play, appropriate and in accord with the ardent temperament and magnificent spirit he displayed during its course; as such, it had to be enacted in the light, as Ajax always wished (here we have to recall again his noble and passionate prayer in 11.17.645-7) and in front of the eyes of the audience in order to leave an unforgettable impact of greatness and heroic spirit on them.
c. Ajax's 'friends'  

1. Tecmessa  

The presence of Tecmessa in the play can be divided into three "sections". The first one -her "report" on Ajax's hideous misdeeds (vs. 284-327; Tecmessa enters the stage at v. 201)- has to do more with "stage directions". The other two are more important for the appreciation of her role in the play: firstly her plea to Ajax (it virtually starts from v. 368, but the main plea is at vs. 485-524; the two sets of stichomythia between Tecmessa and Ajax [vs. 529-44 and 585-95] that follow, can be considered as a prolongation of it); and, secondly, Tecmessa's words and actions after Ajax's leaving the stage after his "Deception Speech"; the "conduct" of the search for Ajax, the discovery of and the lament over his corpse, and her last speech in the play -which is about Ajax. Tecmessa presumably stays on stage for a while after that, and she certainly re-enters it at v. 1168, but she does not speak again.

Until the last few decades, critics of the Ajax do not seem to have considered Tecmessa in view of her presence and character in the play. Nowadays such an issue does not arise, since some of the most eminent students of the play have dealt with Tecmessa's character, especially after G. Kirkwood had pointed out that it is a most underrated one. Besides, to see Tecmessa as an insignificant figure would be hasty and unfair regarding Sophocles, whose feminine
figures mostly play a leading or a decisive role in his tragedies. Despite the fact that there are diverse opinions concerning her, one has to accept that the ground in relation to the presentation of her character, even from the perspective of "the effect of the action upon her rather than upon Ajax," has been well covered. This examination, therefore, will be concerned mostly with the issue of how and where Tecmessa is "connected" to Ajax in the play.

This presents some difficulties. Tecmessa and Ajax are rather contrasted, sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly, in our play. Tecmessa is not a case of a "friend" of Ajax who, like Teucer for instance, constantly champions him and stresses his value. These difficulties are underlined by the "rude" and "contemptuous" way in which Ajax treats her before his "Deception Speech." One cannot be sure, however, that this harshness is to be assumed as the normal way in which Tecmessa was treated by the hero. There are some factors that one has to take into consideration: first, Ajax's "old heroic ἕος" - which Tecmessa seems to know well; secondly, Tecmessa's status - she was a princess but, still, is now a concubine, not a wife; and, thirdly, the fact that she has to face an Ajax who has just recovered from madness; the last point indeed marks an "exceptional" and "temporary" situation, in spite of the objections of some interpreters. There also are clues in the play suggesting that the normal nature of the relationship between Ajax and Tecmessa is to be understood as having been far better than it is at the moments described by our tragedy and that it was not based on force.

Concerning Tecmessa's plea to Ajax (cf. mainly vs. 485-524),
most commentators\textsuperscript{9} have indicated and analyzed its logic, its admirable and "psychological" structure (she mostly appeals to heroic -Ajacian- standards of conduct), and skilful shifts in argument (this element is also found in Odysseus' masterly appeal to Agamemnon to permit burial for Ajax towards the end of the play\textsuperscript{95}). The main function of Tecmessa's plea, though, is emotional, and her strongest argument -as will be proved by the opening lines of Ajax's "Deception Speech"- is that Ajax should consider the fate that awaits Tecmessa herself and -especially- their son after his death (cf. vs.510-22 and, also, 587-8). In her speech Tecmessa, as it has been rightly noticed, "is far from timorous or obsequious" and "many of the acutest criticisms of Ajax come from her" -although she carefully avoids contradicting any of Ajax's previous pronouncements\textsuperscript{96}. Thus references to Tecmessa's "weakness"\textsuperscript{97} before and, in particular, during her plea to Ajax are in my opinion rather exaggerated; the only element that can suggest them may possibly be her stated dependence on Ajax (cf., for instance, vs.518-9)\textsuperscript{98}. This scene with Ajax, Tecmessa and little Eurysaces has been paralleled to the Iliadic one between Hector, Andromache and Astyanax (6.407ff.), but the view that, apart from some similarities and vocabulary echoes, the two scenes are basically contrasted seems to me more apposite\textsuperscript{99}.

After Tecmessa's appeals it is very strongly suggested that Ajax is moved and made to think. Jebb holds that he "silences her appeals, curtly and roughly -but the very roughness indicates that a struggle is going on within him."\textsuperscript{100} One has to recall at least his words at vs.650-3\textsuperscript{101} to see the effect that Tecmessa's
arguments have on him. Nevertheless, he finally committed suicide, namely he did what Tecmessa pleaded with him not do. We may say, therefore, that this "connection" between Tecmessa and Ajax is completed after the latter's death, and we now proceed to examine that.

Tecmessa's words and actions after the discovery of Ajax's corpse are remarkable. First of all, she is the one who finds it—and this detail may have special importance since it seems to be an innovation on the part of Sophocles. Moreover, another relevant detail—apart from theatrical necessity—is the covering of Ajax's body by Tecmessa with a robe. As Stanford comments, "her first instinct now is to hide the blood-drenched corpse of her husband, once so handsome and strong, from all other eyes". C. Segal sees in Tecmessa's protective and emotional gesture an anticipation of Ajax's ultimate burial.

In regard to Tecmessa's "connection" with Ajax, very significant are also her last words in the play, in fact a short speech (vs. 961-73), in which she mainly attempts to evaluate the meaning of Ajax's death for anybody "involved". Although the speech includes a few problems of interpretation and some of its verses have been considered spurious, it is a powerful one. Stanford acutely notes that "a spirit of pride and defiance" becomes evident in Tecmessa in response to the Chorus' reference (vs. 955-60) to the likely exultation of Odysseus and the Atreidae at the news of Ajax's death; her words are "worthy of her noble husband and of her own royal birth. Now she rises above her own sorrows and speaks for Ajax the hero." Her words could indeed have been uttered by Ajax himself.
Tecmessa is here "embodied" in the Ajacian ἁπάξ. The structure of the speech, with its peculiar, but conspicuous, personal construction (cf. vs.966ff.), where the masculine adjectives πίκρος, γλυκύς, τερηνός are more powerful than the pronouns ἐμόι, κείνοις, αὐτῷ (twice), shows, as it has been rightly suggested, that "the emphasis and contrast is more on the persons than on the feelings", and Ajax's "personal supremacy", in contrast to his enemies, is vividly stressed. At the same time, Tecmessa, who did not speak immediately after the "Deception Speech" unlike the Chorus, who expressed their sheer joy at once—shows that she has realized two things: her husband's greatness (the foolish Greeks will soon feel his loss—cf. vs.964-5) and the "meaning" of his death (I follow Stanford here: "it does not matter how she and the Greeks regard his death, he himself (...) has characteristically done what he pleased and is beyond their malice now." K.Synodinou also remarks that Tecmessa here "comes to realize that death was the only desirable outlet for Ajax". I find hard to accept, however, the main aspect that Synodinou detects in the representation of Tecmessa after Ajax's death, namely her success in "recovering and asserting her personality", "her liberation from his [Ajax's] dominating presence"—in contrast to the supposed weakness before it.

Most critics of the Ajax have indicated that Tecmessa, too (apart from Odysseus), is "on the side of σωφροσύνη" in the play. Defining the term as regards Tecmessa, Stanford holds that "she sees it mainly as consideration and kindness towards one's kith and kin. She stands for the principle of 'togetherness' [cf. v.267] against
Ajax's lonely pride.  

Continuing this more general approach, we may now focus on Tecmessa's past. She herself, who now appeals to Ajax not to kill himself as a xáρις owed to her (vs. 520-4, esp. v. 522), who invokes φιλότης (cf. v. 529; also vs. 328-30 and 941), was not very long ago an "enemy" of Ajax, who conquered her homeland and took her, the Phrygian princess, as his reward and concubine. Tecmessa indeed stresses this in her plea (cf. vs. 487-90 and 514-7). Fate, ἡ ἀναγκαία τύχη (v. 485), transformed her from a princess into a "slave" and from an "enemy" of Ajax to a "friend" of his, his companion, even his οὕτωσις (v. 501). She reminds the disgraced, obstinate Ajax that he has had an example of the mutability and transience of human affairs in front of his very eyes for years. Tecmessa's life constitutes an "illustration" of vicissitude and, of course, a perfect example of it in the play. Her σωφροσύνη, furthermore, has come as a consequence of direct experience, of suffering -possibly contrasted with or complementary to that of Odysseus, which is the result of an experience, again, but not such a powerful one. Odysseus' σωφροσύνη, as is suggested in the opening scene of the play and especially by its relevant vocabulary, is the result of seeing. Tecmessa's role thus functions as a significant contribution to the articulation of the theme of vicissitude in the Ajax.

Tecmessa, perhaps above all, shows that nobody is or can be immune in the play, and this experience should have made a human σωφρων. She causes Ajax to think and possibly to realize, although he does not adopt, some important things about human life. Her other main function in the Ajax, on the basis of the preceding discussion,
is that she gives us a different perspective and a different sense of Ajax. As a feminine figure, naturally distinct from Ajax's personality and "ideology", she is still a "friend", favourable, well-disposed and devoted to him. With her final tribute to Ajax, she identifies herself with him and elaborates his greatness excellently, probably even better than some of the words of Ajax himself in the early stages of the play.

2. Teucer

Teucer's appearance is prepared at vs.720, 797-8, 804, 827 and 921. In vs.342-3 Ajax refers to his brother with impatience at his delay in arriving -notably, back from hunting down enemies- and assumes that Teucer will do everything to protect his dependants in vs.562-4 and 608-9. When Teucer enters the stage, only after Ajax is dead, he indeed sees his duties immediately, something duly acknowledged by the Chorus. As a Scholiast notes, it is appropriate to have Teucer in Ajax's defence at this stage, since Tecmessa cannot meet the new developments and requirements regarding the hero's fate. The most important implication of the fact that the two brothers never meet in the play is that their likeness is emphasized, since the part of Teucer is in all probability played by the same actor who had played Ajax. Teucer is like his brother as regards the attitude towards women; after his cries of grief, his first words are addressed to the Chorus, not to Tecmessa, though they refer to Eurysaces. Further, Teucer appears to accept naturally the load of his brother's
responsibilities. However, as has been already shown by
the hostile reactions against him by the Greek army (cf. vs.723-32),
the burden he shoulders is very heavy and Teucer seems
to overstress this fact at vs.1005-23, something which may be
inappropriate for the heroic code that Ajax represents.

Teucer's presence in the play can be divided in four distinct
sections:

i) His lament for Ajax (vs.975-1039), to which reference has
already been made.

ii) The encounter with Menelaus (vs.1047-1162). The two men
do not seem to have a point of contact and their last exchange is
threats and abuse. Teucer displays rhetorical skill and certainly
is much more likable than Menelaus to the audience. When
Menelaus leaves the stage, Teucer himself departs to hasten burial.
According to Heath, this contributes to his presentation as "active
and in control of the situation; he must be seen doing something
at this point, and cannot be left on stage during the act-dividing
song, passively awaiting developments." Teucer's resolution is
manifest at v.1184 in particular.

iii) The encounter with Agamemnon (vs.1223-1315). This scene is
significant in respect that we have, for this one and only time in
the play, an explicit reference to Ajax's superb warlike services.
In vs.1266-89, Teucer, abandoning self-important language in
a passage that exudes genuine nobility (reflected on him as well),
reminds the ungrateful Agamemnon—and the audience—of his
brother's finest moments at Troy: the defence of the ships during
Hector's attack and the duel he fought with Hector, chosen by
lot as every Achaean hoped\textsuperscript{131}. In a sense, this ἀριστεία of Ajax shows the hero's "co-operative virtues" (since his activity as a warrior put himself at the service of many), an aspect that comes up for the first time in the play\textsuperscript{132} -where Ajax is mainly presented as solitary and inflexible. Finally, Teucer, on the basis of his answer to Agamemnon's accusations of servile birth at vs.1289-1307, contributes to further articulation of the theme of vicissitude in the play, like Tecmessa\textsuperscript{133}.

iv) The encounter with Odysseus and the speech at the beginning of the funeral procession (vs.1376-1401 and 1402-17 respectively). Teucer listened without intervening to the dialogue between Odysseus and Agamemnon, in which Odysseus gained Ajax's burial, and now, with the scene between him and Odysseus, the play can end in reconciliation. Teucer sincerely praises Laertes' son\textsuperscript{134}, but, apart from the curse he calls down upon the Atreidae at vs.1389-92 -which reminds us the one of Ajax in his last monologue (vs.839-42)-, he seems to still keep some reservations about Odysseus, too: λόγοι in v.1382 can be interpreted either "for your words [only]" or "with words" (as opposed to deeds)\textsuperscript{135}; the latter rendering is in agreement with the following exclusion of Odysseus from taking an active/significant part in the funeral (vs.1394-7). Also, in Teucer's last speech, Odysseus may correspond to the seemingly unnecessary phrase "anyone who says he is a friend" at vs.1413-4\textsuperscript{136}. On the other hand, the last powerful echo of this speech -and of the whole play- is an unreserved praise of Ajax: "noble in all respects" (νάντ' ἀγαθόν -v.1415).

A quarrel has developed among the interpreters of the Ajax
in regard to the appreciation of Teucer's character in the play. According to some critics, he is a "strong, engaging figure", a worthy representative of the Ajax faction, a competent defender of the hero's rights, even decisive for the unity of the latter part of the play\(^{(137)}\); others see him as a poor Ajax-substitute, with "vitriolic temper" and pathetic responses, who proved to be inadequate in Ajax's defence\(^{(138)}\). As happens in such cases, the truth lies somewhere in the middle. One can appreciate Teucer's sense of responsibility and his firm determination to give his brother burial, but one can keep doubts as to whether these characteristics would have been sufficient\(^{(139)}\) to secure burial for Ajax, since his debates with Menelaus and Agamemnon seem to be leading anywhere but close to this end—and burial is granted only after Odysseus' calm intervention. Admittedly, Teucer appears to sink with the Atreidae to a low level in their disputes, which are full of exchanges of sometimes irrelevant accusations, abuse and personal insults, petty things in which an Ajax could never have been engaged\(^{(140)}\). Thus, although Teucer appears to be similar to his brother in many respects, there are a few points where Sophocles takes pains to ensure that we are shown that Teucer's reaction differs from that of Ajax, already demonstrated in the course of the play. Teucer's reference to Telamon is one of them, in my opinion. In vs.1010-1 and 1017-8, Telamon is strikingly presented as a man who "never smiles even in good fortune", "bad-tempered, resentful in his old age" and "getting angry at nothing", indeed a troublesome heroic father that is, especially for a failing son. Ajax's previous references to Telamon (vs.434-6, 462-5 and 470-2), although the hero
was referring, just like Teucer, to his reception by his father, magnanimously do not describe him unfavourably in an explicit way. This is perhaps the contrast -given subtly- between the mind of the common hero and the lofty concept of the great one

Another example of this contrast deserves to be examined in more detail. In v.1135, after Ajax's own hints at the procedure of the award of the arms (vs.449 and 572 -in the latter verse the reference to ἄγωνάρχαι [unique word for the normal ἄγωνος] may suggest some manipulation), Teucer accuses Menelaus that he proved to be a "cheating vote-maker". This constitutes an open denunciation of the voting as fraudulent, an element which, even though coming here from a member of the Ajax-party, is met, as we have seen, in Pindar's Eighth Nemean and may follow an earlier tradition. Apart from the brief and rather naive scholion on the verse in question (μία ψηφωφια κατακριέναι τον Αϊάντα υπό Μενελάου -it appears to suggest an open ballot), it may be noted: i) One should think of ways of falsifying votes or, generally, influencing the result of the ballot with some intrigue; Stanford, after noting that ψηφονοικός is unique word and its exact meaning is uncertain, mentions fabrication of false voting-symbols, addition of non-existent votes to the final count, suborning of other voters. In this context, vs.1285-7, where Teucer refers to the voting urn, may be relevant. ii) In his answer (v.1136) Menelaus himself does not refute the possibility of some intrigue in the procedure of the award, but renounces any responsibility on his part for its outcome -this lies with the jurymen, he seems to say. The notion of κλέπτης/ manipulator, however, goes on to exist in Teucer's next utterance
Teucer is basically Ajax-like, then, but there are moments, particularly in his debates with Menelaus and Agamemnon, when he appears, so to speak, Atreidae-like. Yet the explicitly disparaging references to him by some critics, which were mentioned above, seem to me unjustified and exaggerated. They are unfair to Sophocles, too, who would never assign Ajax's "defence" to an unworthy character. By presenting Teucer on stage the dramatist undertakes a delicate task. As has been noted above, among Ajax's friends Tecmessa certainly cannot resume the role of Ajax's defender in the latter part of the play. Amidst threats, abuse, pressure and uncertainty Teucer has to stress Ajax's worth and to defend his claims and right to burial with passion, resolution and dignity. At the same time, though, he should not be shown as magnificent as his brother, since the one who lies dead at the middle of the stage must be the only truly great man in the play—and we have pointed out some details with which Sophocles conveys this notion. Despite these "lapses", Teucer is an engaging figure and sometimes a character of pathos, as Heath holds. An overall estimation of his role may not justify the other notion of Heath about "effective defence" of the corpse—suffice it to wonder what would have happened if Odysseus had not intervened, but Teucer manages to sustain the audience's sympathy towards the Ajax-party with his loyalty, directness, courage and sense of responsibility.
d. Ajax’s 'enemies'

The Atreidae

The two sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus, are mentioned, almost always unseparated, as "Atreidae", many times in the course of the play. Their appearance on the stage near its conclusion, first Menelaus, then Agamemnon, is not contrary to expectation for the audience. Apart from the more "practical" need of the poet to prolong the plot and to increase the tension, much more important is the fact that the representation of the Atreidae in the play functions in favour of Ajax. Stanford and Kamerbeek have stated the case well: "There are two obvious methods of proving someone’s greatness, the positive and the negative. Positively you can concentrate on his achievements and temperament (...). On the whole this is what Sophocles does in the earlier part of the play. Negatively you can show how your hero compares with other persons of outstanding reputation. (...) Already, as we have seen in his wide use of the epithet μέγας (...), Sophocles had prepared the way for this kind of comparison." It is dramatically fully warranted, nay even indispensable that the enemies of Ajax should be put on the scene so that his greatness may be measured by their littleness." The present examination aims at pointing out this implicit contrast between Ajax and the Atreidae; as in analogous parts of this survey, I have to mention here, too, that my primary intention is not to analyze exhaustively what Agamemnon and Menelaus say.
The announcement of Menelaus' arrival by the Chorus does not predispose the audience in his favour. Right from his very first words, he forbids Ajax's burial (vs. 1047-8). His anger is understandable, since Ajax had attempted to kill him. His reasoning for refusing to allow Ajax to be buried runs through his speech (vs. 1052-90 - its structure is well pointed out by Stanford).

Two accusations are imputed to Ajax by Menelaus: i) the transformation of Ajax from ἔμμαχος and φίλος into a plotter to kill στρατῶν ἐμμακτι (vs. 1052-6); this, of course, is undeniable, although it ends up with the exaggeration that Ajax intended to murder the entire army; Menelaus exaggerates again concerning this in the stichomythia when he equates attempted murder with murder successfully carried out (vs. 1126 and 1128); ii), after Menelaus has broadened his argument, insubordination (vs. 1067-70; then he generalizes again on authority in a city or army - vs. 1071-86). There is a proportion of truth in this allegation as well - Ajax lacked any "social discipline", what Adkins has called "co-operative virtues". As Whitlock-Blundell holds, "Menelaus accurately pinpoints several of Ajax's faults". However, his arguments are undermined by his "ugly authoritarian tone" (cf. v. 1050, where δοκοῦντε' ἕμοι comes first; also vs. 1089-90), his inferiority complex towards Ajax (cf. vs. 1067-70 - his statement, expressed with pleasure, "now that he is dead we shall rule him, since we could not do that while he was alive", sounds almost ludicrous) and his meanness of spirit (cf. vs. 1064-5).
which reaches its climax in vs.1087-8: he denounces Ajax as αἱ ἔον ὑβριστὴς (he had previously [vs.1054 and 1056] implied that Ajax was "by nature a treacherous companion" and boasts: νῦν δ' ἐγὼ μέγ' αὖ φρόνω. What an irony to see a man like Menelaus claiming great-mindness! The irony, this powerful device used by Sophocles, especially in undermining characters, can be detected in other words of Menelaus as well: he has referred to οὐφροσύνη (v.1075), the key value the play brings out—for Menelaus it is merely subordination to the rulers. αἰδώς (vs.1076 and 1079—as αἰσχύν) is also undermined; it is linked with fear (cf. φόβου —v.1076, δέος —vs.1074 and 1079) which he sees "solely as something to use against his inferiors, not as something from which to protect them" (in contrast with Ajax; the Chorus saw their leader as ἐνυξίου δείματος [...] προβολὰ —vs.1211-2). Menelaus invokes the danger of unruliness in a community and denies burial for a dead man, just like another abuser of power in Sophocles, the Creon of the Antigone.

One has to admit that Teucer finds himself in difficulty as regards Ajax's defence; the charges, disloyalty accompanied by attempted murder, and insubordination, are true and grave. Menelaus, however, does not confine himself to them; his arrogant, gloating and preaching speech gives Teucer a lot of ground to take advantage of and creates new arguments for him. It is significant that the Chorus, the kind of people who would not easily object to what is said by commanders, feel that they have to admonish Menelaus (cf. vs.1091-2). The stichomythia between him and Teucer that follows (vs.1120-41), lowers the level even more, although Menelaus
certainly has the worst of it. His brief "allegory" (vs.1142-9) is almost parodied by Teucer\(^1\). Menelaus leaves the stage with a vague threat of appeal to force (vs.1159-60), on which Stanford aptly remarks: "The ambiguity resulting from the omission of 'me' (as egoists sometimes affect to do) adds to the unpleasantness of Menelaos' portrait, especially as these are his last words in the play."\(^2\)

Stanford, again, says it all about Menelaus in one phrase:

"Obviously to be abused by a man like that amounts to praise."

Menelaus does not find a single word even for Ajax's warlike services\(^3\). His odious character, though, should not have surprised Sophocles' audience in Athens. Menelaus' status as the king of Sparta might have been instrumental in his unfavourable representation in the play, since the Athenian audience would have gladly recognized in him certain negative traits attributed to the Spartans—arrogance, narrow-mindedness, a tendency to abuse authority\(^4\). Nevertheless, it remains risky and exaggerating to try to find allusions to contemporary events or relations between Athens and Sparta on the basis of passages that echo the political contrast mentioned above\(^5\); most of all, it is likely to be misleading as regards the poet's intentions.

Menelaus is a caricature of a Homeric ruler/hero (cf. especially Teucer's portrait of him at the beginning of his counter-speech—vs.1093-6). I have the feeling that Menelaus' meanness was one of the main reasons that prompted several commentators of the play to speak about a lowering in its atmosphere after Ajax's death. This is correct up to a point, especially in relation to the ethical
A few scholars have gone to the extreme of criticizing the structure of the play, considering the second part of it not so successful—a view initiated by the Scholia (ἐκτείνοντα τὸ δράμα ἐσχερεύσατο καὶ ἔλυσεν τὸ τραγικὸν πάθος); some of them even suggested that the latter part of the Ajax was not the work of Sophocles but of an inferior poet, tacked on to an early, possibly unfinished, play of the great tragedian. Those arguments have recently been given a vigorous answer.

2. Agamemnon

Agamemnon enters the stage in v.1226. His appearance is preceded by the return of Tecmessa and Eurysaces, whom Teucer settles beside Ajax’s corpse as suppliants. "This tableau remains in place for the rest of the play, hinting at Ajax’s subsequent hero-cult (...) and reminding us what is at stake for his son as well as his corpse", Whitlock-Blundell notes. The Chorus, too, underline their own uncertain fate in their significant, last full lyric in the play (vs. 1185-1222). With these elements, and in combination with Teucer’s announcement of Agamemnon’s coming and his indication, at the same time, that he does not expect anything better than σκακιότης from the general, Sophocles skilfully leads the present crisis, and our emotions, to a climax.

Agamemnon’s presence in the play can be divided into two parts: his confrontation with Teucer, which, in fact, is a long speech (vs.1226-63) which Ajax’s step-brother rebuts, and his dialogue with Odysseus (vs.1320-73). Agamemnon is generally considered more odious
in the former part.

Right from the beginning of his address to Teucer, his tone is aggressive (we assume that Agamemnon has been informed by Menelaus about Teucer's attitude in their encounter), scornful and peremptory —cf. the repetition of σὲ in vs. 1226 and 1228, and the references to Teucer's origin: τὸν ἐκ τῆς σίκυλωτίδος (v. 1228), ἢ ποι τραφεὶς ἄν μητρὸς εὐγενοῦς ἀπὸ (v. 1229), οὐδὲν ὤν (v. 1231), πρὸς δούλων (v. 1235); concerning especially the last phrase, Stanford rightly finds it "outrageously untrue")

Contrarily to Menelaus, Agamemnon refers to Ajax's past services to the Greek army. He claims, though, that they had been no greater than his own. Agamemnon was a very good warrior in the Iliad, but, as Knox aptly remarks, when he wonders "Has he [Ajax] been anywhere, fought anywhere, where I have not?", this is a question which anyone familiar with the Iliad could answer at once. Most of the critics hold that Agamemnon belittles Ajax's military achievements here.

Without refuting this view, I would suggest that Agamemnon's primary intention may be to show the importance of his own martial achievements. An arrogant man shows off whenever he finds the opportunity; such a "psychological" interpretation -on the basis of Agamemnon's mentality displayed in the play- is, I think, more appropriate to Sophocles' unequalled presentation of characters. Besides, the indisputable denigration of Ajax as a warrior comes several lines later in Agamemnon's speech.

The most "sensible" part of Agamemnon's argumentation is vs. 1246-9. He reasons that if the disappointed losers in a verdict try to take justice in their own hands wishing to reverse the legally
sound decision with the use of violence, the basis of "institutionalised justice" will be undermined, which is intolerable. This corresponds indeed to Ajax's thoughts (cf. vs.447-9) on the one hand, and attempts to remove the matter from the personal area on the other. Agamemnon, moreover, claims that the award of the arms to Odysseus was made by a majority (cf. v.1243) "hinting at a democratically fair procedure". These views, particularly the latter, are confronted by Teucer. He has already told Menelaus that the voting was corrupt (v.1135) and now, as Whitlock-Blundell notes, he will contrast "Ajax's forthright courage" with "various ways in which lots could be biased".

Like Menelaus, the more his speech proceeds, the more deplorable Agamemnon becomes, displaying arrogance, harshness and meanness of spirit. One may detect an inferiority complex in his words, since, when he actually tries to undermine "the warrior Ajax", he starts from the point of his (Ajax's) enormous physical size, stressed in the Iliad. Agamemnon (vs.1250-4) thinks that "a mere broad-shouldered ox of a man is less useful, for all his bulk, than those with 'good sense'". This is not an unreasonable view. In fact, Agamemnon conveys here the general contrast "brawn versus brains". Hinting that Ajax had more of the former than of the latter, he implicitly justifies the decision for the award of the arms, a decision, moreover, which he took part in. But as Stanford comments, "coming from Agamemnon, himself no shining example of intelligence or wisdom at home or abroad, the argument loses most of its force". Besides, Whitlock-Blundell is right to maintain that "when Agamemnon contrasts mere brawn with brain,"
he is less interested in piety than in devaluing the kind of arete that Ajax represents.\textsuperscript{195}

Agamemnon's contemptuous references to Teucer's status continue in the conclusion of his speech (cf. vs.1259-63, again it is worth observing the use of the pronouns in vs.1261-2). Those are too vulgar and far from worthy of the Commander-in-Chief of the Greek army. The critics who have written that he echoes Menelaus in many ways may have had this passage in their minds; some have even questioned the use of both Atreidae where one might suffice -their "similarity" might have been more marked by the fact that they were presumably played by the same actor.\textsuperscript{196} Agamemnon, too, alludes to recourse to violence (vs.1255-6) as a ψάρμακον for Teucer in order to acquire some "sense."\textsuperscript{197} Agamemnon, in an insensitive remark to Teucer, refers to Ajax as being ἁντικ (v.1257); this recalls Odysseus' words about the frailty of man in vs.125-6.\textsuperscript{198} Sophocles' play with words, of course, does not stop there. The "sense" which Teucer is called to acquire is ὀψφρώσιν (cf. vs.1256 and 1259). As happened in the case of Menelaus, the word is used ironically by Sophocles here. This is underlined by the Chorus' reaction immediately after Agamemnon's speech; they use the same word again (v.1264) indicating tactfully that Agamemnon himself may lack that virtue.\textsuperscript{199}

Teucer tends to "seize" arguments offered by his opponents; he therefore does not appeal to common humanity to gain Ajax's burial, irrespective of his brother's great deeds in the war, but he responds to the denigration by recalling the best of them (vs.1273ff.), and to the references to his origin by reminding
Agamemnon of his own ancestral failings (vs.1291ff.).

After Teucer's counter-speech things have come to a complete deadlock. However, Odysseus reappears. His dialogue with Agamemnon ends up with the solution: the Commander-in-Chief is persuaded to grant Ajax's burial. This part of the play is discussed in the next chapter—with main reference to Odysseus' character and behaviour.

From now on, in an attempt at a general assessment of Agamemnon's role in the play, we shall focus our attention on his last words.

One remark only before we proceed. In vs.1350 and 1352, Agamemnon starts showing signs of yielding, which are illustrated with two "maxims". Both of them (the first one in particular), apart from other implications, raise an important issue for the play—and our approach from here on: that of inflexibility and the conflicts it may entail.

With regard to the granting of Ajax's burial, the majority of critics—not unjustly—insist on Odysseus who is the one who "gains" it. Agamemnon permits it with the following words, his last in the play:

άλλα ἐνο γε μέντοι τοῦτον ἐπίστασα, ὡς ἐγὼ
σοὶ μὲν νέμοισιν ἅν τῆσθε καὶ μείζω κάριν,
οὗτος δὲ κάκει κάνειδος ὄν ἐμοίγι ὁμός
ἐχεῖσθαι ἔσται, σοὶ δὲ ὃπον ἔξεσθε ἀρχᾶς.

vs.1370-3

In these verses it is emphatically stated that Agamemnon's consent to Ajax's burial comes as the result of φιλότητα; it is a favour done to Odysseus by Agamemnon because they are good friends. The Commander-in-Chief had so far shown a rigidity almost identical
to that of Ajax, who, we remember, had not yielded to the passionate
—but futile—appeals of his "friends"—Tecmessa (vs.485-524, 587-8,
592, 594) and the Chorus (vs.350, 483-4); in fact, Ajax was more
irritated at them (cf. vs.591-5). Agamemnon, however, responds to
an appeal by a friend right from the beginning; among his first
words to Odysseus, he declares that he would not be εὖ φρονŷν if he
did not listen to his greatest friend in the Greek camp (vs.1330-1).
We possibly have here the only non-ironical use of a term relating
to the mind by the Atreidae in the play. Whitlock-Blundell aptly
notes that, in reference to Teucer’s disparagement towards Agamemnon
in v.1272, "now Agamemnon shows he can also display 'good sense'
(presumably of a prudential kind) in relation to a tactful and
loyal friend". And that attitude surely enables or encourages
Odysseus to proceed with his arguments.

Despite Odysseus’ references—and the analogous ones in
important passages elsewhere in the play—to the mutability of
friendship, it is indeed this particular characteristic of
Agamemnon, the "Ajax-like" maintenance of the "code of honour"
concerning friendship, that eventually leads to Ajax’s burial. The
steady friendship of the old heroic age is proved and honoured by
tokens like great favours. Agamemnon’s words at 1370-1 (ὦς ἔγὼ
σοί μὲν νέμοιμ οὐ τῆσσε καὶ μεῖζω χάριν) exude, in my opinion,
genuine warmth and are not far from nobility. In his "Deception
Speech", Ajax claimed with bitterness that he had realized that
friendship, as well, is in accord with the natural law of
mutability (vs.678-83). Let us think now, if Agamemnon shared the
opinion expressed by Odysseus ("many a man is an enemy one day and
a friend the next ἐνομο—cf. v.1359), would he ever go so far as to do such a favour to an unstable, an "uncertain" friend? (We may well recall here the attitude expressed in vs.680-2 in particular: ἕς τε τὸν φίλον τοσσάρι ὑπουργῶν ὁμαλαίνην ἐπιθάνουσα, ὑς αἴεν ὠν ἔνεντα. Ajax could not live with the thought of such friendship). Sophocles certainly does not put the question mentioned above to the reader explicitly, but it is subtly raised through the course of the last part of the play. Agamemnon permits Ajax's burial because his concept of friendship (and enmity, of course; his hatred for Ajax will not cease—cf. vs.1372-3) is like Ajax's, the "old", the "inflexible" one. Agamemnon, partly because of his petty-mindedness as well, cannot understand or even misinterprets Odysseus' attitude; he shows his surprise seeing his friend "changing camps" with ease (cf. vs.1346, 1356, 1360, 1366). Whitlock-Blundell holds that "Agamemnon's favour to Odysseus cannot be reconciled with his enmity for Ajax". May this perhaps be too narrow for Sophocles? I would prefer to say that in the case of Agamemnon, even unconsciously, permanent friendship prevails over permanent enmity. It is a risky business to speak about "messages" of the play; I am tempted, though, to raise a question: is it a sort of "vindication" for Ajax's death that his burial is in effect gained due to a "virtue" like his?

R.Garner, in his remarkable and detailed survey on allusion in Greek tragedy, notes that "in the second half of the play (...) the embassy scene [from the Iliad] in particular was in Sophocles' mind". Contrarily, though, to what he does with most of the possible allusions to other passages of the Iliad in the Ajax, the
critic confines himself to quoting only three references, none of which concerns us here. Garner does not mention any trace of an intertextual dialogue between the Embassy scene and Agamemnon’s yielding. However, there are, first of all, connections between persons: Odysseus appeals in both scenes; in the *Iliad* it is Achilles, offended by Agamemnon, the one who is requested to yield (but he does not); Achilles is, as we have previously said, the hero most like Ajax in respect of the heroic hlyosis; Ajax "appeals" to him in the *Iliad*, but in the *Ajax* Odysseus appeals to Agamemnon on Ajax's behalf.

More detailed elements of the two scenes are remarkably similar, too: Ajax in his short but memorable speech in the *Iliad*, refers in an indirect and dignified manner to friendship, which should have been an important motive for Achilles:

> αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
> ἄγριον ἐν στήθεσι έτεο μεγαλύτερα ημόν,
> σχέτλιος, οὕδε μετατρέπεται φιλότητος ἑταῖρων
> τῆς ὑμῶν παρὰ νυσίν ἕτειμεν ἔξοχον ἄλλων,
> νηλῆς.

9.628-32

Ajax's words do not make Achilles give in, although, as we have discussed in a previous chapter, they touch him much more than the preceding long speeches of Odysseus and Phoenix.

Furthermore, a passage from Achilles' response to Phoenix's appeals is similar in form and meaning to Agamemnon's first reaction to Odysseus' arguments. Here are the passages; one may focus special attention on the function of the pronouns:

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Sophocles’ "dialogue" with Homer is here evident. Odysseus’ "embassy" to Agamemnon is eventually successful, mostly thanks to φιλότητα212. But Agamemnon does not want to accept the credit for permitting the burial, promised "regardless" by Odysseus213; he has already dissociated it from himself (οὐκ ἄρα τούργον, οὐκ ἔμοι κεκλήσται —v.1368). Agamemnon’s last utterance, before leaving the stage, is surely unpleasant—but "consistent"214. Refusing to accept the transience of friendship and enmity, he exclaims that Ajax will remain ἔχειστος to him (vs. 1372-3), just as Ajax takes his enmity to Hades to remain implacable for ever.

It is generally considered, and I think this discussion has shown the truth of that view, that Agamemnon is represented more favourably than his brother in the Ajax. We have pinpointed his negative characteristics; both he and Menelaus, above all, lack σωφροσύνη, the "key-value" of the play, despite their numerous references to it215. Agamemnon, though, as Stanford says, retains some of his Iliadic "aura"216. He is more substantial than Menelaus, since he represents supreme authority, as the Commander-in-Chief of the whole Greek army in Troy217. The decision about Ajax’s burial
rests with him alone. Jebb has underlined Agamemnon's superiority to
Menelaus: "If he is not gracious or generous, he at least indicates
a wish to see his duty, and is capable of yielding to wise
counsel." Concerning Ajax's burial, and thanks to Odysseus'
intervention, Agamemnon ceases to be δυστράπελος for a while, enough
to grant Ajax what he deserved.
VII. ODYSSEUS THE ΖΩΟΠΟΝ: THE POSSIBILITY OF A DIFFERENT READING OF HIS CHARACTER IN THE "AJAX"

The large majority of scholars share the opinion that Sophocles portrayed Odysseus very appreciatively in his Ajax. Odysseus, they believe, maintains his better qualities from the Homeric poems and has even more in this tragedy. "He is god-fearing, intelligent, energetic, co-operative, (...) self-disciplined, tactful and skilful in handling people"¹, "a man of moderation, wisdom and human insight"², in one word a "faultless"³ character. Some interpreters, moreover, have gone so far as to argue that Odysseus was the real hero of the play, morally at least, or to suggest that Sophocles "made Odysseus his own spokesman"⁴!

As Bowra has written, Odysseus "almost had to have a part in the play"⁵ mainly because of the renowned hatred between him and Ajax caused by their rivalry in the contest for the arms of Achilles. Odysseus appears in the tragedy twice — in the first scene, talking to Athena and viewing the mad Ajax from a safe vantage point, and in the last, before Ajax’s burial, which is undoubtedly the result of Odysseus’ intervention to Agamemnon. There are also many references to him during his absence from the stage; they are, not surprisingly, negative, as all come from the lips of his enemies. So, one may argue that Sophocles wanted his audience to believe that Odysseus would indeed be a decisive figure for the plot of the play. Nevertheless, as I suggested in the previous chapter, the reader of
the play has to bear in mind that its central character is Ajax and he, "dead and alive, imposes his gigantic personality on every turn of the action, every speech". Odysseus, with all his qualities, remains a secondary figure.

Sophocles ought to have been particularly interested in representing Odysseus' character just for that reason. Character in Greek drama is rightly considered as a dynamic phenomenon which must not be separated from what people do and say. One has to pay attention to the characters' words and actions "which are susceptible of varying shades of interpretation" and therefore have "great dramatic potential": here lies the dramatist's art, ability and experience. Sophocles, I strongly believe, showed great care and skill in representing Odysseus in the Ajax manifesting behaviour which could be variously explained, and I shall go on to suggest that many scholars have based their conclusions about Odysseus' high morals on some of these "ambiguous" passages.

After a general remark that these "enigmatic" words of Odysseus are met mainly in his second appearance in the play - which brings the solution of the crisis and due to which Odysseus has been considered as the embodiment of the two highest ethical qualities, ἐπισκόπησις and μιασμονία - it is time to start examining those passages.

Even Stanford, one of the most important defenders of Odysseus' goodness in the Ajax, admits that the impression that Odysseus gives by his appearance in the opening scene is "not very prepossessing". Coming closer to the text, the first words of the play are Athena's and addressed to Odysseus, whom we may imagine entering with extreme
caution and anxiety:

'Ael μέν, ὡ ναὶ λαρτίου, ἀεδορκά σε
πεῖράν τιν’ ἔχερὼν ἀρνάσαι ἀπρόμενον’

vs.1-2

Odysseus has come to face (to spy upon, we shall learn some verses below) an enemy of his; and he always hunts for some way of snatching at his enemies. The presence of words relative to canine activities is noticeable in the next verses as well: κυνηγητοῦντα καὶ μετροῦμενον ἰχνη τὰ κείνου νεοχάραχο (vs.5-6), κυνὸς λακαίνης (v.8), παπαίνειν (v.11), ξυναρνάζω (v.16), βάσιν κυκλοῦντ’ (v.19), ἰχνεὺς (v.20), κατ’ ἰχνος ἄσσω (v.32), κυναγία (v.37). These words and phrases constitute the "Hunting metaphor" which functions to the disadvantage of Odysseus. In v.24, in an obvious attempt to draw attention to himself, Odysseus stresses that he is a volunteer in the difficult and dangerous task of spying on Ajax. He is unable to hide his fear of Ajax, though. Athena directly accuses him of cowardice (v.75) —not unjustly, since, according to the heroic code, even reluctance (cf. v.81) constitutes cowardice— as Odysseus is reluctant to view the maniac and insists on the goddess leaving Ajax inside his tent. Athena has to tell Odysseus twice (vs.68-70 and 83-5) that she will make him invisible for Ajax so that Odysseus gives in and stays, reluctantly again (μένοιμ’ ὄν —v.88). His very next words (νέαλον δ’ ὄν ἐκτός ὃν τυχεῖν) are a fine example of ambiguity; do they mean that he wishes himself somewhere else because of the prospect of seeing something unpleasant or, even, out of compassion —any hint of which has not appeared yet— or does he do that merely out of fear —and thus his
wish sounds almost comic\textsuperscript{13}. Odysseus' fear, though, becomes evident through his strong appeals in the previous verses ($\mu$ηδαμ̣ος σφ' ἔξω κάλει (v.74), μη πρὸς θεῶν (v.76)). Even if we accept that Ajax was awesome even when sane and, therefore, how dreadful he would be in his madness, it is difficult to see Odysseus' attitude simply as "prudence"\textsuperscript{14}. After all, he is accompanied by a goddess. Only in v.82 does Odysseus seem to be offended at last, stating that he would face a sane Ajax without reluctance. These last words are not enough to change the impression. Odysseus tacitly accepts the charge of cowardice or, anyway, never rejects it. He is presented as almost unheroic, something that made one critic go so far as to propose that "Sophocles meant to represent Odysseus in this scene a poltroon to the point of the ludicrous"\textsuperscript{15}, while Stanford, embarrassed in the role of defender, thinks that Odysseus' first appearance merely "suggests his Autolycan nature"\textsuperscript{16}. Some lines below, however, things seem to start changing. One first indication is met after v.79: despite Athena's invitation, Odysseus does not rejoice in his enemy's disaster. There is no doubt that his words in vs.120-6 sound wise, modest, pious and humane —although one may find, with Knox, Odysseus' pity sudden\textsuperscript{17}. We could say that Sophocles makes the hero speak like Pindar at that point:

\begin{quote}
όρω γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ὄντας ἄλλο πλὴν
εἰδωλ' ὀσοίπερ ζώμεν ἢ κρύφην σκιάν.
\end{quote}

\textit{v.125-6}\textsuperscript{18}

Just before this philosophical generalization, Odysseus had stated his compassion for his arch-enemy whom, in a state of madness, he has right in front of his eyes. One may follow the
opinion that in vs.121ff. Sophocles himself "is perhaps expressing here through Odysseus his own profound compassion for humanity"\(^1\), but only until v.124:

οὐδὲν τὸ τούτου μᾶλλον ἢ τούμων σκοπῶν.

This idea, by no means accidentally, comes up again in another decisive part of the play, near the end of it, and is expressed by Odysseus again\(^\text{20}\). Many critics get round the obstacle speaking, not unreasonably, about the famous "enlightened egoism of classical humanism"\(^\text{21}\). On the other hand, compassion and pity are the virtues/feelings which should be the most spontaneous. Could Sophocles' belief in humanity have accepted any compromise of those virtues with self-interest? This point will be further discussed at the end of this chapter.

During Odysseus' absence from the stage, Ajax and his "friends" (the Chorus, Tecmessa, Teucer) have every opportunity to refer to him in Pindaric fashion\(^\text{22}\). Firstly, when Athena has darkened Ajax's vision so that he cannot see Odysseus, despite the fact that he is on the stage, Ajax calls his opponent "that knavish fox" (τοῦνί-τριτον κινδόνος -v.103). The fox already formed "a common emblem for low cunning" in antiquity, although "this is the first time in European literature that Odysseus receives his often recurring title of the fox"\(^\text{23}\). This animal, of course, is particularly resourceful, a main characteristic of Odysseus as well, and the reason for most of the well-known adjectives attributed to him\(^\text{24}\). For Pindar with his preference for ἄπλοὸν ἥεος and εὐεὐγλωσσὸς ἀνήρ\(^\text{25}\), such qualities reasonably gave rise to his antipathy towards Odysseus. Furthermore, it is worth quoting again here one of the fragments

- 178
of the Aeschylean tragedy Ὀπλὼν κρίσις -which dealt with the same myth:

ἄπλα γὰρ ἐστὶ τῆς ἀληθείας ἑπὶ.26

This fragment could be a hostile allusion to Odysseus and his morals, since, as we have seen, the existing evidence suggests that Aeschylus, too, handled the hero unfavourably in the play in question.

The first reference to Odysseus while he was actually absent from the stage is made by the Chorus of Salaminian sailors. After accusing Odysseus of whispered calumnies against their leader27, Ajax’s fellow-countrymen introduce the issue of Odysseus’ lineage:

χώ τάς ἀδώτου Σισυφιδάν γενεὰς

v. 189

The tradition according to which Odysseus was the son of Sisyphus, king of Corinth, a "trickster figure"28 and unfavourably presented in the literature of the fifth century -and not of Laertes- is first found, according to Stanford29, in another fragment of the Ὀπλὼν κρίσις cited by a Scholiast on the Ajax (v. 189 generated a lot of Scholia):

άλλ’ Ἀντικλείας ἄσσον ἠλεε Σίσυφος,

τῆς σής λέγω σοι μητρός ἢ σ’ ἐγείνατο30

Anticleia, mother of Odysseus and wife of Laertes, was said to have been pregnant by Sisyphus when Laertes married her31. The Scholiast recounts the story with details and adds: τὸν δὲ Ὅδυσσέα Σισύφου συνήσως φησὶ Σοφοκλῆς καὶ ἐν Συνδείπνω:

ὁ πάντα πράσσων, ὡς ὁ Σίσυφος πολὺς

ἐνδηλος ἐν σοὶ πάντα κὼ μητρός πατὴρ32

- 179
Sisyphus was so crafty that according to Hyginus he "is said to have laid Death himself by the heels, so that nobody died till Ares released Death and delivered Sisyphus himself into his clutches." A second version reports that Zeus had secretly carried off Aegina, daughter of Asopus; Sisyphus betrayed the secret to Asopus, who was looking for her. Both versions, though, agree on Sisyphus' punishment: κολάζεται δὲ Σίσυφος πέτρον ταῖς χερσὶ καὶ τὰ κεφαλὰ κυλίν, καὶ τοῦτον ὑπερβάλλειν θέλων· οὕτος δὲ θεούμενος ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ῥαταὶ πάλιν εἰς τούπισών. So, Sisyphus' name became a synonym for cunning. People who disliked Odysseus called him son of Sisyphus.

One must bear in mind, moreover, that Odysseus was, anyway, the grandson of Autolycus and he therefore had, this time with greater certainty, another crafty trickster among his ancestors.

Ajax in his frenzied lamentation after realizing his misdeeds refers to Odysseus twice:

ιὼ πάνε' ὄρον, ἀπαντ' ἄιων,
κακόν ὀργανόν, τέκνον Λαρτίου,
κακοπινέσατον τ' ἀλῆμα στρατοῦ,
ἡ ποιν' πολύν γέλωθ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς ἄγεις.

vs.379-82

tὸν αἰμυλώτατον,
ἐχερὸν ἀλῆμα

vs.389-90

A little later, in his first "monologue", when he is more composed, Ajax alludes to Odysseus with the unusual παντούργῳ (v.445).

The vocabulary of the three references is significant. Odysseus is represented as a villain who spies on everybody's business and is
capable of any crime, stopping at nothing. There is a repetition of κακο— in the first passage and ἄςει reflects another ἄςει, the very first word of the play, which also referred to a constant, not so flattering, attribute of Odysseus. Ajax (as the Chorus at vs.955-8) believes that Odysseus cannot feel anything but exultation now that his enemy is defeated and disgraced. Odysseus is thus surprisingly called "son of Laertes", not "son of Sisyphus", in such a passage. Stanford stresses that ἄλημα, like other neuters in -μα, is used by Sophocles "to express contempt or scorn for a person". This rare word is repeated twice in only ten verses. The also rather unusual adjective αἰμύλος is met in N.8.33, where Pindar, as we saw in a previous chapter, refers to the "deceptive" myth of the conflict between Ajax and Odysseus; the coincidence is certainly remarkable. Euripides, too, who seemingly preferred to make use of the hostile tradition in relation to Odysseus, uses the same epithet for the hero. Ajax’s last reference to Odysseus is met in his second monologue; he calls Odysseus "the man who worked my ruin".

Odysseus reappears in the last scene of the play and, as Winnington-Ingram rightly indicates, "his first utterance sets the tone". Odysseus calls Ajax’s corpse ἀλκίμω νεκρῷ (v.1319), thus making an initial declaration of his respect for Ajax. We shall examine separately Odysseus’ attitude towards Ajax —what he says about his dead enemy— and then Odysseus’ attitude towards Agamemnon —what is said between the two and how Odysseus gains Ajax’s burial. The following conversation between Odysseus and Ajax’s "friends" (Teucer, mainly, and the Chorus) has to do more with our first
category. After ἀλκίμῳ νεκρῷ, Odysseus is speaking about Ajax again in the very significant verses 1336-41:

κάμοι γὰρ ἂν ποθ’ οὖτος ἔχειστος στρατοῦ,
ἐξ οὗ 'κράτησα τῶν 'Αχιλλείων ὄπλων,
ἀλλ’ οὔτον ἐμπας ὁντ’ ἐγὼ τοιόνυ’ ἐμοὶ
οὐ τὰν ἀτιμᾶσαιμ’ ἄν, ὥστε μὴ λέγειν
ἐν’ ἄνδρ’ ἰδεῖν ἄριστον Ἀργείων, ὅσοι
Τροίαν ἀφικόμεσσα, πλὴν Ἀχιλλέως.

The passage presents some important questions. Firstly, Odysseus admits the enmity between him and Ajax, which does not now exist (cf. v.1347, too) as far as he is concerned, of course. The superlative ἔχειστος possibly means both "hating" and "hated", and gives emphasis to Odysseus' past hostility to Ajax. Then Odysseus himself, for the first time in the play, mentions the cause of the enmity, his victory in the contest for the Achillean arms. The last two verses of the passage, although expressing a common view of Ajax's valour, are important in the sense that this admission is made exactly by Odysseus, who was Ajax's opponent in the fatal contest. It is significant that all the adjectives which Odysseus attributes to Ajax (cf., also, γενναίος in v.1355, the repetition of ἄριστος in v.1380 and the ambiguous ἐσελὼν [= a man of ἀρετῆ, but what kind? - v.1345]) seem to refer exclusively to Ajax's eminent martial abilities and services. The award of the arms, we pointed out before, should have put a premium on exactly that sort of virtue; the criterion of the judges must have been valour, warlike ἀρετῆ. Thus Odysseus' words sound like an indirect admission on his part that the award of the arms to him was wrong and unjust.
In v.1357 we may have another phrase of Odysseus referring to Ajax:

νικᾶ γὰρ ἀρετὴ μὲ τῆς ἔχερας πλέον.

Such verses show Sophocles' ability as a dramatist. The absence of the possessive pronouns of the two nouns ἀρετή and ἔχερας create a variety of meanings. The majority of interpreters share the opinion that the two words refer to Ajax: "his (Ajax's) worth weighs far more than his (Ajax's) enmity [towards me (Odysseus)]". This interpretation is supported by what Odysseus and Agamemnon say in the preceding verses 1355-6. However, Odysseus' -even enlightened- selfishness (cf. below vs.1365 and 1367) and the generalizing spirit expressed through the two words may easily make them apply to Odysseus equally: "my virtue weighs far more than my enmity (towards Ajax)". Furthermore, the alternation of the pronouns creates two more possible interpretations, each of them giving a different sense to Odysseus motives and morals: "his worth weighs more than my enmity" -probably the best version for Odysseus' morality- and "my virtue weighs more than his enmity" -probably the worst.

Examining now how Odysseus manages to obtain Ajax's burial from Agamemnon, one has no doubts that the Athenian audience should have enjoyed the dialogue between them and especially Odysseus' ability to initiate, to adapt and to strengthen his arguments. In the beginning he attempts to secure Agamemnon's good disposition towards him. The verses 1322-3, despite the prevalent opinion that Odysseus tries to justify Teucer, may refer equally to Agamemnon. Then Odysseus appeals to Agamemnon's friendship with him (vs.1328-9).
At first he argues that the refusal of burial is cruel, an act of violence, and unjust (vs.1332-5). The argument becomes stronger in 1343-4, as Odysseus perhaps feels that Ajax's merit cannot surpass his disloyalty in Agamemnon's eyes: you do not merely dishonour Ajax by leaving him unburied, but you destroy the laws of the gods, since divine law demands that the dead must be buried. Ajax's merit ceases to be one of Odysseus' arguments for a while. Then (vs.1344-5)
Ajax's virtue and the issue of justice come up again. Agamemnon's astonishment at Odysseus' attitude is obvious (cf. v.1346 with its "emphatically polarized" pronouns, and v.1348). In v.1349 Odysseus tells Agamemnon not to take pleasure in dishonourable gains; the word κέρδος is very significant. The first signs of Agamemnon's yielding appear from v.1350. He is not completely persuaded by Odysseus' arguments yet; besides, he is "interested in two points which touch him personally: the issue of authority (1350) and, above all, the issue of personal enmity. (After all, Ajax had tried to kill Agamemnon)." His attempt to remind Odysseus of his enmity towards a person to whom he now tries to do a service (vs.1354 and 1356) fails. Agamemnon starts to rebuke Odysseus (v.1358; he calls him ἕμπλακτος, "unstable" or "changeable" according to the Scholiast). Odysseus answers that the majority of people are so, preparing us for a demonstration of this sort of behaviour in his words to Teucer (vs.1376-7). After some "provocative" questions by Agamemnon and careful answers by Odysseus (vs.1360-3), the former asks for a final assurance that the latter indeed wants and recommends Ajax's burial (v.1364). Odysseus says yes because (v.1365)
καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐνεάδ' ἵξομαι.
Agamemnon answers bitterly, but almost reasonably (v.1366):

νόησεν δόμοιας πάντα ἀνηπ αὐτῷ πονεῖ.

Stanford finds those words cynical; Agamemnon has misinterpreted Odysseus’ words and motives\(^1\). Odysseus, though, answers again (v.1367):

τῷ γὰρ μὲ μάλλον εἰκός ἡ ὑποτέ πονεῖν;

Those words evidently have caused embarrassment even to the strongest defenders of Odysseus’ character in the play. The hero accepts the accusation of common selfishness, though, according to Stanford, “it is clearly not his true motive -and appeals in justification to τῷ εἰκός\(^2\), like a sophist, because he "assumes a self-centred philosophy here in order to win over the self-opinionated Agamemnon"\(^3\). Others think that Odysseus "is self-interested only in so far as he is upholding a practice that benefits all in the long run, including himself"\(^4\) or, moreover, praise his Greek "directness"\(^5\), as he "does not try (...) to dress his motives up as moral or political principle; he is thinking of himself and he says so"\(^6\). The fact remains, one may argue, that under Odysseus’ noble words and deeds there are personal motives and self-interest. When hostility no longer contributes to success, Odysseus is ready to turn it into friendship, aiming at personal κέρδος\(^6\). He is given an opportunity to reject the accusation of selfishness, particularly in v.1367, and, though so eloquent and intelligent, does not catch it.

After a last expression of flattery by Odysseus (v.1369), Agamemnon gives in. He states, however, that although he would be willing to do Odysseus a favour greater than that, Ajax will remain
hated by him even in the other world (vs.1370-3). What is the reaction of Ajax’s “friends”, the Chorus and Teucer—who witnessed the dialogue between the two chiefs—to Odysseus’ achievement to gain burial for their leader? It is very significant that neither Teucer nor the Chorus speak about Odysseus’ ἀληθερωμία. Why did Sophocles not make them mention Odysseus’ humane attitude if there was really such? On the contrary, they both praise his ἀρετή, the other great virtue; in my opinion, ἀριστος, the epithet with many meanings with which Teucer addresses Odysseus, refers precisely to his ἀρετή. The Chorus, too, calls him ὑλος (v.1374), an adjective also ambiguous enough for those who rebut Odysseus’ “admirable” character to belittle his ὑλος into the worldly and practical wisdom which, combined with flexibility, is suitable “to extract the greatest advantage from this life” or to handle a crisis aptly in a world where “the tongue is mightier than the sword”. Teucer’s praise is certainly sincere (cf. vs.1381-2, although that ἄγοιος is problematic even if, in the simplest case, it means “[I praise you] for your words [only]”, 1393 and 1398-9). Teucer, though, nowhere accepts Odysseus’ announced offer of friendship explicitly. Moreover, he cannot accept Odysseus participating in the burial; he adduces the dead Ajax’s feelings. Odysseus is vaguely invited to συμπαράσσειν in secondary parts of the funeral. Odysseus accepts Teucer’s attitude with approval and leaves the stage.

In the preceding discussion I have made an attempt to “read” Odysseus’ character in the Ajax using elements and clues offered to the interpreter by the Sophoclean text itself. My intention was
to present a new possibility of rating that character, based on several "ambiguous" passages that either have not been given much attention or have been interpreted only one way. I do not aim at showing that the Odysseus of the Ajax is a villain or to class him with the truly lesser Odysseus of the Philoctetes. Sophocles, indeed, seems to have been particularly interested in Odysseus' character. He had a huge and diverse range of material about the hero at his disposal: Homer— with a clever Odysseus, "a man of many turns", having perhaps some peculiar qualities or characteristics in comparison with the other heroes of the Homeric poems, but without hints of any malice; the rest of the Epic Cycle—possibly describing some episodes where the so-called "Autoiycan flavour" of Odysseus was more obvious; Pindar—who found Odysseus too clever to be good; Aeschylus—who seems to have started treating the hero unfavourably in some of his tragedies, contributing, in this way, to the creation of an anti-Odyssean prejudice among the Athenian audience of the dramatic competitions. Thus a literary tendency against the resourceful hero had been shaping. Sophocles could have chosen some elements from all his predecessors and, under the influence of his genius and the needs of the particular play, the Odysseus of the Ajax was the result. His main characteristics are his παπαγώγυν—its "ingredients": piety, modesty, self-control, co-operative and compromising spirit, intelligence, sense of the weakness and transience of everything human; his adaptability and flexibility—contrarily to the στερεόφρων and δυστράπελος Ajax of the play; and finally his self-interest, which, in combination with the aforementioned elements, formed Odysseus' νοος so decisively that
this "higher selfishness" prevailed as the particular characteristic of the hero—a "value" certainly more understandable by Sophocles' contemporaries. The oxymoron between the noun and the adjective shows the problem faced by scholars when interpreting some of the passages discussed above. The whole play raises the question of Odysseus' consistency. The unique dramatic art of Sophocles keeps open the possibility for a "different" reading of Odysseus' character in the Ajax almost every time you attempt it—from magnificent and irreproachable to cynical and utilitarian, with all the intermediate points on the scale. The dramatist constantly offers hints and stimuli to the reader, clues for a potential way of looking into Odysseus' character; sometimes things co-exist in the Sophoclean text not so much logically as emotionally.

And those clues are sufficient, there is no doubt, to rebut characterizations as Bowra's "faultless" or Stanford's "thoroughly admirable" Odysseus, even more Kamerbeek's view that Odysseus in the Ajax is directly parallel to Theseus in the Oedipus Coloneus. My suggestion would be that Odysseus in the Ajax is a basically good character in moral terms, but not at all faultless or great; and he is closer to the Odysseus of the Philoctetes than what appears at first glance and what the majority of scholars generally accept.

As we come towards the end of this chapter—and of the whole study as well—a wider discussion, generated mainly by the preceding views but also relevant to other parts of this work, seems to be an appropriate sort of epilogue. Easterling rightly indicates
as an element of the Ajax "Sophocles' nostalgic harking-back to aristocratic ways of thinking and behaving"\textsuperscript{23}, something that is a meeting-point of the tragic poet with Pindar. She also believes that Odysseus and Ajax are ultimately linked in the play\textsuperscript{24}. This can be one of the answers to the question raised by Winnington-Ingram\textsuperscript{25}: "Where does Odysseus stand?" (=Is he a friend or an enemy of Ajax?). And in a play like the Ajax where one person "passes or seeks to pass from one camp to the other"\textsuperscript{26}, that is a major issue. Odysseus seems to have realized by nature what Ajax mentioned, and apparently admitted, in his "Deception Speech" - the mutability of human relationships, such as friendship and enmity. Ajax could not accept a compromise with this idea. For him the world was polarized between friends and enemies\textsuperscript{27}; friendship and enmity lasted for life. That sort of heroic code, however, "proves useless in a world where friends and enemies change places, a world in which nothing is permanent"\textsuperscript{28}. Ajax died filled with hate for Odysseus who, having once become a foe, could never again be treated as a friend. An action like that of Laertes' son, who used his persuasiveness and influence on Agamemnon to make Ajax's burial possible - regardless of motives - would make no sense to Ajax, even though in his opinion Odysseus was the man who would do anything\textsuperscript{29}. Besides, Sophocles has given us proof that Odysseus and Ajax could not have been linked, even in the end of the play: Teucer, as we saw, rejects Odysseus' offer to take an active part in Ajax's burial out of consideration for the feelings of the dead hero. "Odysseus does not belong", Winnington-Ingram notes\textsuperscript{30}. Ajax would keep his hatred for Odysseus implacable and eternal. We are inevitably reminded - once more - of
the fine scene of the Nekyia: Ajax οὐκ ἔμελλεν οὐδὲ τανόν λήσεσαι χόλου.
# APPENDIX

The Literary Versions of the Myth of Ajax's Death from Homer to Sophocles

## A Table of Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DETAILS</th>
<th>LITERARY SOURCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rivalry between Ajax and Odysseus in the contest for the Achillean arms</td>
<td>Odyssey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges of the contest / How the award was adjudged</td>
<td>&quot;The sons of the Trojans and Pallas Athena&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hints at use of unfair means in the procedure of the award</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment - Shame I</td>
<td>✔️?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disappointment - Rage / Madness</td>
<td>✔️?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madness - Murderous attack</td>
<td>✔️?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Athena's intervention</td>
<td>✔️?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Slaughter of the cattle</td>
<td>✔️?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shame II</td>
<td>✔️?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committting Suicide</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## "Obstacles" with regard to Ajax's posthumous treatment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Obstacles&quot; with regard to Ajax's posthumous treatment</th>
<th>Exact time</th>
<th>Invulnerability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;In the last part of the night&quot;</td>
<td>✔️?</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Late in the night&quot;</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Quite Contrary)</td>
<td>✔️</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 191
NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. Cf. I1.2.557-8; see below pp.23-8.

2. This reference of Ajax to Salamis seems to imply (cf. also the preceding verses 197-8; it has to be noted that the passage has never been atheitized) that it was common knowledge that the island was his birthplace and, further, that his origin was itself a "motive" for heroic behaviour (for this cf. N.2.13 and below p.21).

3. The relevant references of the *Iliad* are admittedly very few in number. On the other hand, this may constitute an indication that Ajax's Salaminian origin was considered indisputable. See Farnell 1921, 307; Von der Mühll, 36-7; Kullmann, 84; Kron, 171; Kearns, 141. For Ajax as a Mycenaean/prehomeric hero - a rather controversial issue to which I cannot refer in detail in this survey since it does not bear on the events leading to Ajax's death - see Whitman 1958, 67-71; Page 1959, 147 and 233-5; Webster, 101-3 and 115. Relevant issues are: i) the existence of two *Aigvs* (this dual may mean either the Telamonian and the Locrian Ajax or Ajax and Teucer) - whilst perhaps there was one hero named *Aig* originally (see Von der Mühll, 14-8 and 25-33); ii) the possible Aeolian origin of Ajax (see Van der Valk 1952, 270-3); iii) the gigantic body-shield, Ajax's famous piece of armament, which is connected with Mycenaean times. Cf. its description in I1.7.219-23 and the word-play relating to it.
in Ajax's family (Τελαμών, Εὐρυδάκης) -see Von der Mühll, 35 and Van der Valk 1952, 273; also below n.93 and Chapter II p.38 and n.21.

4 Cf. IG II² 1035.

5 Cf. Paus. I.35.3.

6 See Jebb, xxiii. For the Aianteia in Athens see below p.32.

7 Cf. II.5.638-42 -though without mentioning Telamon's participation in the expedition (but cf. the Pindaric and Sophoclean passages in n.8 below).


9 Cf. Apollod. 2.6.4 and 3.12.7. Cf. II.8.283-4 (with the Scholiast on v.284) and 330 -it has to be noted, though, that 15.439 implies that Ajax and Teucer were sons of the same father and mother; cf. also Soph. Ajax 1299-1303.

10 Cf. FGrHist 3 F60 (=Apollod. 3.12.6). See Jebb, xvii.

11 Cf. Diod. Sic. 4.72.7.

12 Cf. Apollod. 3.12.6. See Jebb, xvii with n.4. Apollodorus (3.12.7) describes how Telamon came to be king of Salamis.

13 Cf. Plat. Apol. 32a; Apollod. 3.12.6.

14 See Jebb, xviii.

15 Ibid. Herodotus 8.64 (see below p.26) shows, as Jebb rightly notes, that "though Ajax had been thoroughly adopted into the Aeacid cult of Aegina, this had been done without weakening the immemorial tradition which made Salamis his home".
See Farnell 1921, 307.

Cf. Apollod. 3.12.7.

This version is derived from a vase dated in the early 6th century B.C. See Kron, 172; Shapiro, 155-6 with nn.120 and 121.

Cf. I.6.45.

Cf. Xen. Cyn.1.9, Apollod. 3.12.7 and Paus. I.42.4.

See Kron, 172(n.819).

See Kamerbeek, 7 and Whitman 1958, 69. For Megarian connections of other Athenian heroes see Kearns, 88.

Cf. Paus. I.42.4: Αϊόντα οὖν τὴν ὄρχην τὴν Ἀλκάεου διαδέσμευσαν ποιήσας το ἄγαλμα ἤγοϋμαι τῇς Ἀθηναῖς.

Cf. I.6.45-7. Pindar also implies that Heracles was the author of Ajax's name (cf. vs.49-53 with the scholia ad loc.).

Cf. fr.276 Bowra; see below Chapter IV pp.82-3.

Cf. vs.387 and 824.

See Norwood, 51.

For Pindar's affection for Aegina see below Chapter V n.1.

See sch. on N.2.19; also on 13 and 21.

Ibid. Cf. above n.2.

Cf. Soph. Ajax 434-40 and 462-5. Stanford 1963, xiii holds that this is an innovation by Sophocles.

See Knox 1964, 121.

Ibid., 122.

Cf. O.1.28-9, 36ff. and especially 52-3, where Pindar "purifies" the myth of Pelops.

See Stanford 1963, xii.

Cf. N.3.22.
See below Chapter IV pp. 82-3.

See Stanford 1963, xii-xiii.

See Van der Valk 1964 II, 519-20. I present the arguments held in favour of and against the authenticity of the verse below pp.26-7 (I am inclined to consider it genuine).

For discussion of the issue of Athenian intervention in the text of the *Iliad*, or, rather, as Whitman 1958, 67 puts it, of the suspicion that has grown around almost every mention of Athens or of Athenian heroes in Homer, see Van der Valk 1964 II, 519-22 (with nn.147-53 for further bibliography); cf. also below n.53. Incidentally, Odysseus, too, brought twelve ships to Troy (cf. v.637).


See Sealey, 347. Athens, though, was significant in both Mycenaean and Homeric times -see Kirk, 206.

See Sealey, 347; Page 1959, 145-6 and 172-5; Kirk, 179-80 and 206-7. For Menestheus’ appearances in the *Iliad* see next note. However, to dismiss them as "a dismal record" (Page 1959, 145) is exaggerating.

Cf. 12.331-77. Also Menestheus fights close to Ajax in 13.190-7. Whitman 1958, 68 opposes the notion that Ajax is nowhere in the *Iliad* associated with the Athenians (he goes on to say, in fact, that "Ajax is the great Athenian hero of the *Iliad*" [p.701]) and Kirk, 206 finds Menestheus’ association with Ajax in Books 12 and 13 "apparently organic". Menestheus is mentioned three more times in the epic: 1) in the inspection of the Achaeon troops...
by Agamemnon, where Menestheus and Odysseus are rebuked by the Captain General (4.327-48); ii) in the μάκην ἐν τοῖς ναύσιν, found among some unknown lieutenants (13.689-91); iii) when an equally undistinguished Achaean warrior is killed close to him (15.329-31); this is Menestheus' last mention in the Iliad. See also below n.72.

44 See Kirk, 208; cf. also below n.63.

45 See Willcock 1978 I, 208.

46 Cf. 3.225-30 (Ajax stands between Odysseus and Idomeneus when Helen, from the wall of Troy, "introduces" the Achaean chiefs to Priam), 4.273 and 327-9 (the two Ajaces stand between Idomeneus and Nestor in the inspection of the troops, whereas, as we have seen, Menestheus stood close to Odysseus) -but cf. 8.222-6 and 11.7-9 (Ajax's ships and tent were at the one end of the camp, while those of Odysseus in the middle; cf. also 10.112-3). Van der Valk 1952, 283 argues that such passages appear to be at variance with each other for specific reasons and needs of the poem and not because some of them are later interpolations.

47 Certainly after the incorporation of Eleusis at the end of the 7th century B.C. (see below p.28 and n.78). See Nilsson 1951, 27-9 and Kearns, 46-7.

48 Nilsson (1938, 386 and 1951, 28-9) puts this reconquest of Salamis by the Megarians circa 580 (others -e.g. Beloch- in 550). For further discussion and bibliography on this controversial issue see Shapiro, 155 (with the notes).

49 Cf. Plut. Solon 8-10; also Ael. V.H. VII.19. Most of the events
described by those authors could not have taken place in the
times of Solon. See below pp.25ff., when I refer to Solon 10,
and Nilsson 1951, 29-30. Generally, an Athenian warlike activity
against Salamis led jointly by Solon and Peisistratus is
improbable (cf. ibid., 27).

Ibid., 28.


Ibid.

Cf. Plat. Hipparchus 228b; also Ael. V.H. XIII.14. See Sealey,
342-4. The issue of the composition of the Homeric poems in
writing during the years of Peisistratus or Hipparchus (with
the relevant question of possible Athenian recension of the text
of the epics -cf. above n.39) is certainly a controversial one
and has initiated protracted discussions; cf. Merkelbach, passim
and Davison, passim.

See Sealey, 342-3 and Whitman 1958, 67.

See Nilsson 1951, 29-30 (cf. above n.49).

See Nilsson 1938, 386-7.


FGrHist 485 F6.

Ibid., 486 F1.

Cf. Strabo IX.394.10.

See Kirk, 208.

See Nilsson 1951, 30.

See Willcock 1978 I, 208. Van der Valk (1964 II, 522) holds
that one can understand why only two lines are devoted to Ajax,
since "well-known heroes (...) who occur in the Iliad again and
again, are in the Catalogue only described in a concise manner”, whilst the less distinguished commanders or contingents are presented with a lot of interesting details. Thus, according to Van der Valk, the briefness of the reference constitutes an indication of authenticity.

6-8 See Van der Valk 1952, 281-3 and 1964 II, 520-2.

6-9 See Van der Valk 1964 II, 522.

6-10 See Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 59, 60(n.1) and 156.

6-11 Ibid., 59 and 60(n.2).

6-12 See Kirk, 208 (with the relevant references).

6-13 Ibid., 209.

6-14 Ibid.

6-15 Ibid.

6-16 Ibid., 180 and 206-7; also Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 56.

Theseus, the greatest Athenian hero, is mentioned only once in the Iliad (1.265; see Van der Valk 1964 II, 519-22 for a defence of the disputed authenticity of the verse) and not even in the lengthy reference to Athens in the Catalogue of the Ships. Theseus’ sons, Acamas (see also below n.75) and Demophon, are virtually absent from the Trojan story as told in the Iliad; however, they were involved, especially the former, in incidents related in later epics, such as The Sack of Troy—with even further restriction on Menestheus’ role. See Page 1959, 145-6 and Kearns, 105 (with nn.4-9) and 108.

6-17 See Hope Simpson and Lazenby, 60(n.2).

6-18 In 508/7 B.C.

6-19 See Kron, 29ff. and Kearns, 80ff. The ten Athenian tribes were
named after the following heroes: Erechtheus, Aigeus, Pandion, Leos, Acamas, Oineus, Cecrops, Hippothoon, Ajax, and Antiochus. It is obvious that Ajax, together with Acamas (who, though a purely Athenian hero, did not have a very illustrious record as a participant in the Trojan expedition -see above n.72) "represented" the epic heroes and the Trojan cycle in the Cleisthenic eponymoi. See Kron, 243-4.

76 Herodotus 5.66.
77 Cf. Paus. 1.38.4. See Kron, 30 and Kearns, 81-3; also Nilsson 1951, 37.
78 See Nilsson 1951, 36-7.
81 See Nilsson 1951, 31.
82 See Garland, 87.
83 Plut. Solon 10 (see above p.25).
84 Cf. Paus. 1.35.2.
86 See Nilsson 1938, 387 and 1951, 32.
87 In 1936. It was edited by W.S. Ferguson in 1938.
88 Plut. Solon 10 (see above p.25).
89 See Nilsson 1951, 32.
90 Ibid., 30.
91 See Ferguson, 18. Nilsson 1938, 388 aptly adds that "this hieron of Eurysakes represents the first step of the Athenians on their way to win Salamis." See also below p.31.
92 See Ferguson, 16.
Ibid. Eurysaces appears to have been named after the most famous piece of armament of his father, the broad shield (cf. Il.17.132: σάκκος εὐρύ). Cf. also Soph. Ajax 574 (and Stanford 1963, 132-3; Kearns, 108[n.16]).

See Nilsson 1951, 31. For the cult of Ajax in the Εὐρυσκείον, introduced during the sixth century and developed there as years went by, see Kearns, 82 (with nn.9-13) and Shapiro, 154 and 156.

See Nilsson 1938, 308.

Cf. vs.545ff., especially 574-5.

On Lysidice as the mother of Philaeus by Ajax, cf. Tz. Lyc. 53. A scholion on Il.15.439 mentions Cheirobaphia as his mother.

Herodotus 6.35. Pherecydes, too, appears to have reported Philaeus as son of Ajax (FGrHist 3 F2). Cf. also Plut. Solon 10.

Cf. Plato Hipparchus 224b: Πεισιοτράτου ἰε ὢιει, τοῦ ἐκ τῶν Φιλαιῶν, Ἰννάρξω (the term Φιλαιῶν is used as in Plut. Solon 10 -see above p.19- and refers to the δῆμος). See Nilsson 1938, 388-9(n.11) and 1951, 63; also Shapiro, 156.

See Nilsson 1938, 388-9(n.11). As for the term Εὐρυσκεία, it is not met as frequently as Φιλαιῶν, but such a family certainly existed -cf. Plut. Alc.1: τὸ Ἀλκιβιάδου γένος ἀνώτερον Εὐρυσκείαν τὸν Ἀἰαντος ἀρχηγόν ἔχειν δοκεῖ.

See Nilsson 1951, 30.

Ibid., 30-1; also Garland, 105. Cf. Herodotus 5.89 and Plut. Thes.10 for the analogous cases of Aeacus and Cythereus respectively. See Kearns, 46-7.

See Nilsson 1938, 389-90 and 1951, 35; also Garland, 87 with bibliographical references.
See Nilsson 1938, 393.

See Kron, 213.

Cf. II.3.227 (see below Chapter II p.36); so Kron, 213.

Cf. Paus. I.5.1; see Jebb, xxx with n.2.

See Jebb, xxiii and xxx(n.1).

For details of the features of the Aianteia see Deubner, 228, Kron, 173, and Kearns, 141.

See sch. on N.2.19.

See Jebb, xxx(n.1).


Cf. Plut. Mor.628 and Paus. IX.3.9; for another special distinction enjoyed by the tribe Aiantis see also below Chapter II p.38.

Cf. Herodotus 8.64 and 121.

The only "connection" between Athena and Ajax is found in literature (cf. mainly Sophocles' Ajax), but its nature hardly seems to justify the epiclesis. See Kamerbeek, 7 and below Chapter VI p.132 on this. Kearns, 82(n.14) mentions an Athenian cup, the illustration on which may be relevant to this discussion, although its mythological details are uncertain. It is dated to 440-30 and shows Ajax and Menestheus as departing warriors, accompanied by Athena and two other figures.

Cf. FGrHist 390 F1.16.

See below Chapter VI pp.129ff.; cf. Jebb, xxxii; Stanford 1963, xi-xii; Golder, 9 and 14-6.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 I refer to these two poets because this survey lays special emphasis on them. For the relation between Homer and Pindar see Nisetich, passim. For the renowned relation between Homer and Sophocles, see Stanford 1963, x, 266(n.16) and 280; Kirkwood 1965, passim; Easterling 1984, passim; Davidson 1988, passim; Garner, 49ff.; Perysinakis, 79-82. For a few elements of the Iliadic Ajax which are not examined in detail here, see above Chapter I n.3.

2 Apart from the scene of the Nekyia, there are only two brief mentions of Ajax in the Odyssey. The first one is made by Nestor (3.108-9): he speaks to Telemachus about the Trojan War and rates Ajax among the ἀριστοι who were slain at Troy. The other (24.17-8) mentions the conventional rank of Ajax (next to Achilles). See below p.46ff.

3 There has been only one attempt by a modern scholar (Van der Valk 1952) to establish that another hero (Diomedes) is presented as second after Achilles in the Iliad. I refer to this otherwise valuable article below.

4 It also continued to exist in later Greek and Latin literature —cf., for instance, Hor. Sat.II.3.193.

5 2.557.

6 11.5-9. Sophocles retains that element in the Ajax (cf. v.4).
See Jebb, x. For a detailed list of Ajax’s activities in the *Iliad* see Kullmann, 79–80.


See below p.37.

See Jebb, xi-xii. For a different but not very convincing view on the same passage, see Stanford 1963, xi-xii with n.56.


See Von der Mühll, 5 and Stanford 1963, xv(n.16).

See Jebb, xi; I refer to this in detail below p.41.

Some of the many appreciative scholia for Ajax (for a more complete list see Van der Valk 1979, 236-8) speak about his ἄνδρεία (BT Γ 225 -see also below n.22), γενναίοτητας (BT Η 212, BT Ψ 818, BT Ο 513), πράον θεος (BT Η 284), φιλαδελφία (BT Θ 268), προεμία (BT Θ 331), μεγαλοπρέπεια (BT N 203). The simplicity (ἄπλοτης) of his character is also stressed (BT Ψ 818, A P 720). He is called σεμνός, μεγαλόφρων (BT I 622) and, for his γνώμη, ἄριστος σύμβουλος (BT Ο 509). For Ajax as a speaker (in the Embassy scene) see below p.41.


- 203
Cf. Book 5 of the Iliad, the ἄριστεία; also 11 (᾿Αγα-
μέμνονος ἄριστεία), 17 (Μενελάου ἄριστεία). On the ἄριστεία
see Schein, 12 and 80-2.

See Jebb, x and Van der Valk 1952, 269-71.

Cf. 7.219-23, 11.527 and Soph. Ajax 575-6. See also Stanford
1963, xiv, 133 and 276-7. On the implications of the shield
see above Chapter I nn.3 and 93 with the relevant references.

Ajax is aided by a god only once in the Iliad. It is Poseidon
—in the shape of Calchas—who encourages him and his namesake,
the son of Oileus (cf. 13.43-82). A Scholiast seems to be
astonished by that (cf. T N 59: ὄμηωτέου δὲ ὅτι ἑξὸς Αἴαντι
tοῦ Τελαμώνιῳ βοηθεῖ). Cf. also Eust. 621, 53 (2 5): τῆς μάχης
μονωθείσης εὐδοκίμει ὁ Τελαμώνιος, σὺ τὰν μὲν ἄλλων παρουσία
eποὺ ἀναρίζομενων, τοῦ δὲ Αἴαντος καὶ ἐαυτῶν. Self-reliance is
a characteristic of the hero prominent in the Sophoclean Ajax
as well, the more since it may constitute the first step to
a presumptuous attitude and impiety—see also below n.32 and
Chapter VI pp.132-4.

Cf. the two councils of the Greek chiefs described in the Iliad

The great majority of the depreciatory scholia for Ajax (for a
complete list see Van der Valk 1979, 236-7) refer to his ἄρραξ-
to or ὄμενεία; those words mean a double inflexibility
—slowness (of the body) and stubbornness (slowness of spirit).
The suggestion of Stanford rather than Homer (see Stanford 1963,
xvii) about the "great bodies which tend to move slowly" is not
unjustifiable—but he expands it overmuch (cf. p.39 and n.33).
Here are some scholia: Ajax δὲ οὐ λέγει· ἑρμής γὰρ ἔστι καὶ μεμψάμενος (BT I 223); νωπῆς ὥστι, κινηθεὶς δὲ ὁργῆν ἐνδείκνυται (BT H 225). He is said to be not so swift as the other Ajax: ὡς ἰδίαν ἔχων δύναμιν οὐ ταξέως ἔσται τῆς ἐπικουρίας [τοῦ Ποσεϊδώνος]. ὡς δὲ ἀσθενέτερος ὁ Ναυκράτης ἐπέγνυ ταχύ· ὃ δὲ νωπῆς ὁ Τελεμάχιος, ὃ δὲ δυνάτερος (BT N 66). Cf. also the scholia on Bouyāie (e.g. Eust. 961, 49 [N 824]).

25 See below pp. 43-4.
26 23.823: see below n. 49. Diomedes, though, is said to have received the prize destined for the winner (cf. 23.824-5); verses were athetized by the Alexandrian critics as being at variance with 23.823. See Van der Valk 1952, 270.
27 23.844-9.
28 Plut. Mor. 628.
29 See Van der Valk 1952, 269-81.
32 On the contrary, Ajax prays to Zeus in 17.629ff., as we have seen in p. 36. Before his duel with Hector, he urges the Greeks to pray to Zeus (7.194-5). Also, his speech in 13.810-20 is followed by a favourable omen: a bird flies forth on his right (13.821-3). According to a few Scholiasts, Ajax’s presumptuous behaviour like that in Soph. Ajax 762-77 was already found in the Iliad, but this is undoubtedly an incorrect view —see Van der Valk 1952, 271(n. 6).
33 Ajax’s agility is vividly given through a simile in that passage, as the hero speeds on over the ships.
The lion simile is frequently used by Homer when he describes a warrior who distinguishes himself in the battle, although he faces a large number of enemies—see also Pucci, 174-6; Lonsdale, passim. Lonsdale, 46-7 treats this double simile (lion, ass) exclusively in regard to structure and classification.

See Golder, 10-1. Cf. 17.747-53. Also, for the Homeric attitude towards herd or farm animals as reflected in the similes used, see Lonsdale, 19-20.

It becomes evident that we do not have to do with depreciatory similes in the cases in question, but rather with a conventional manner used by Homer to represent heroes in rigid defence; see Garner, 58. The comparison to a boar is used for Ajax, too, in 17.281-5, where the hero scatters the Trojans when he rushes to defend Patroclus' corpse.

See above p.35 and Stanford 1963, xv.

With regard to Ajax's selection as one of the three envoys, it may be noted that he was the most "similar" Greek chief to Achilles (cf. above Chapter I pp.21-2). Generally, there is a frequent association of Ajax with Achilles (cf., apart from Achilles' reply to Ajax's speech and Ajax's rank, their common representations on vases—see Most, 152-3(n.80) and the relevant entries in LIMC). See also Nagy 1979, 57-8 with n.4.

Odysseus begins his speech as soon as Ajax gave Phoenix a nod (9.223). This detail may bear special significance on the basis
of Soph. Ajax 119-20, as well as for a balanced picture of the Iliadic Ajax (see above pp.36-7); cf. also the preceding note. For a good discussion of the Embassy scene, with emphasis on Achilles’ behaviour, see Schein, 104-115. On Achilles’ reaction to Odysseus’ speech, I mainly follow Clay, 104.

See Clay, 104.

I refer to those words of Ajax again below Chapter VI pp.171-2. It may be noted that Ajax begins his speech addressing Odysseus, not Achilles.

See Adams, 93; he aptly notes that Ajax speaks to Achilles “as one soldier to another, more in denunciation than in appeal”. One first, very slight concession, though, had appeared in Achilles’ reply to Phoenix (cf. 9.619-20: ἤμα δ’ ἄοι φαινομένη: φροσομεύει κε νεῶμεν’ ἐφ’ ἡμέτερ’, κε μένωμεν). See Schein, 113-5; Edwards, 229-30; also Perysinakis, 81-6.

v.462.

See Bradshaw, 101(n.7).

Ibid., 102.

Bradshaw, 102(n.9) doubts that there is such connection; but cf. the vocabulary in the Iliadic passage (ὡμοφάγοι -v.479; σάντει -v.481) and Sophocles' Ajax (ὡμοκρατης -v.205; also v.219). Even if the story of Ajax’s attack on the cattle was later than the Iliad, one cannot exclude the possibility of the poet of the Little Iliad, for instance, having been influenced by this picture. Besides, Bradshaw goes on to say that "it may, however, prove instructive to keep in mind this matter of devouring one’s enemies" for later literary versions of the Ajax myth (cf.
Pindar's N.9). For the image of Ajax-devourer see also Garner, 57-8.

See Whitman 1958, 263-4 ("the panorama of the Games foreshadows the future in certain details, and draws into the scheme of the Iliad hints of the traditional events later told in the Little Iliad, The Sack of Troy, and the Returns"); Schein, 25; also the illuminating article by Willcock, 1973. Bradshaw, 103(n.10) adds that Ajax's "defeat" in the fight in armour with Diomedes, in particular, foreshadows the later loss of the Achillean arms, since the prize of the contest was the fine armour of Sarpedon, and also "predicts" Ajax's suicide falling on the sword (cf. Achilles' ruling on how the winner of the match would be adjudged in 23.806: πολλὰς ἐν τὲν ἐντεσα, καὶ μέλαν οὖς: the Achaeans stop the contest just before Ajax would be attacked in this fashion by Diomedes).

Cf. 9.443 (mentioned above p.37); see Most, 156(n.95) and, especially on the forces opposed to one another in the match, Bradshaw, 103.

See Stanford 1963, xv-xvi. I am not satisfied with Stanford's explanation. If things were so, one would expect the Greeks to award the arms of Achilles to Ajax without further ado. On the other hand, some Scholiasts (referring to the fight in armour between Ajax and Diomedes) give interesting interpretations to that issue. Cf. (on 822): ἐώρων γὰρ [οἱ Ἀχαιοὶ] τοὺς κρείττονας ἐν τῷ ἐπιταφίῳ τούτῳ δυστυχοῦσας καὶ ἠπτωμένους (Eust. 1331, 23); (on 824): διὰ τὸ προκρίνει Ἀἰαντός; διὰ τὴν στάσιν ἔρασιν γὰρ ὡς οὐκ ἦν ἡνέσχετο ὧ καὶ ἐτι πολεμήσας ἠθέλησεν ὃ (BCE34).
Golder, II has some interesting thoughts on Ajax's failure in Patroclus' funeral games: "He is, by nature, too inflexible to play 'games'. He is most himself when most serious (...). Standing firm against a worthy adversary or impossible odds is the real genius of Ajax." It has to be noted here, though, that according to Apollodorus (Epit. 5.5), Ajax won in the discus event in Achilles' funeral games.

By contrast, there were disputes and quarrels among the competitors after the most important contest, the chariot race -despite the assent of the Greeks (cf. 23.539) to Achilles' decision to declare Diomedes, who had been helped by Athena, winner; cf. especially 23.540-611 - the quarrel between Antilochus and Menelaus.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1 See above Chapter II, especially pp. 36 and 39. See Kamerbeek, I.
3 24.15-8. It is significant that Ajax is in the company of Achilles there, too - cf. n. 6 below.
4 For this controversial issue see Heubeck II, 75-7 (with bibliography). In his commentary (pp. 77-116) Heubeck defends the authenticity of most athetized passages of the Nekyia.
5 From v. 385 on, after his meeting with the Heroic Mothers, Odysseus is found in the Meadow of Asphodel (cf. v. 539). The meeting with three of his ex-comrades in arms is the fifth
one he has in the Nekyia, after those with Elpenor, Teiresias, Anticleia, and the fourteen Heroic Mothers); see Heubeck, 77. One has also to pay attention to the fact that Odysseus' encounters with the three heroes come after an intermezzo (vs.333-84) and, further, the one with Ajax is somehow dissociated from the other two (cf. vs.541-2).

vs.467-70. Stanford 1964 I, 396 rightly noted that "the friendship of those heroes is resumed in Hades". Cf. also 3.109-12 and 24.76-84; somehow unexpectedly (despite the preceding reference to him -cf.above n.3), Ajax is not mentioned among the "Achillean" heroes in the latter passage.

ένεκε δὲ πῶςια μὴ τρίο (v.546) seems to me to be a minor detail, rather unnecessary to be mentioned given the concise character of the whole reference. It sometimes surprises us what elements the poets appear to particularize and, in view of v.547 and the examination attempted here, what others they leave unexplained.

And Η ἀθετοφία ἐκ τῶν κυκλικῶν. See below n.18 and Chapter IV.

Cf. below n.18. The scholia appear to indicate that the story is not given in detail in our passage. It becomes obvious that the Odyssey here presupposes a prehomeric form of the story of the judgement of the arms and Ajax's suicide -see Heubeck, 109-10. See also below n.12.

See Van der Valk 1949, 237-8. The most serious problem regarding v.547 is the phrase ποιός ὃς Τρῶν, which is unusual in Homer; (for this and other reasons of rejection of the line, see Merry and Riddell, 492; also Jebb, xii(n.2), who, however,
is convinced of the authenticity of the verse).

For further discussion about the content of (the last part of) the Aethiopis (as well as the first one of the Little Iliad) the reader is referred to the relevant sections of the next chapter (pp.57ff.). The only aspect which I unavoidably treat here in detail is the issue of the judges of the award; v.547 constitutes, I think, a sufficient excuse for this anacolouthon.

For the prehomeric forms of the story see Kullmann, 79ff.

See below Chapter IV pp.69-71.

See Jebb, xvi.

See below Chapter IV pp.64 and 70 with n.46.

One certainly has to choose between two possibilities, either suppression (of any shameful detail of Ajax's death by the speaker Odysseus) or ignorance (of those details by the Odyssey poet). The nature of the situation, and the compromising spirit and tactfulness in Odysseus' speech as a whole seem to favour the former possibility—which, of course, has to do also with the poet. Besides, in v.464 Odysseus tactfully dodges Agamemnon's question about Orestes' fate. It is worth noting that there is clear suppression, particularly as regards the matricide, concerning Orestes again, when Nestor, speaking to Telemachus, refers to the fates of the Atreidae after the sack of Troy (3.306-12). On the other hand, if we had suppression in our passage, there would be no need for Odysseus to refer with such emphasis and sincerity to the grief and unclouded renown in which Ajax died (see Jebb, xiv[n.3]). I think that the most
reasonable explanation of the issue should be related to
the state of the story of Ajax's death at the time of the
composition of the Nekyia (which elements of the story had been
already shaped then). One may also combine the two possibilities
—we have ignorance as regards Ajax's planning to murder the
chiefs, his madness and the attack on the cattle (see Severyns,
331) and suppression as regards Ajax's way of death, since
committing suicide, which is only an implication in our passage,
was unhomer (see Davies 1989b, 63).

See Kamerbeek, 2.

The question of Eustathius' reliability regarding this point
was raised already by Jebb, xv (with n.1). I cite the passage,
where it is evident that there are two versions (I think that
the first one may be that of the Odyssey —and of Aeschylus? see
below Chapter IV pp.77-86— and the second one that of the
Aethiopis): 'Ιστεν δὲ ὡς ὁὶ μὲν ἀπλοῖκότερον φασὶ Τρῶς καὶ
'Αθηνάν δικάσαι 'Οὔωσεί καὶ Αἰάντι περὶ τῶν 'Αχιλλέως ὦλων
ἐρίζοντα, καὶ δὴ Κόιντος διασκευάζει ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῦ τὴν δίκην
'ηπτορικός. ἔτεροι δὲ φασίν ὅτι ἐπίτηδες 'Αγαμέμνων ψυλλατάμενος
to δόξαν εισέρω τῶν ἡρώων χαρίσασθαι αἰχμαλώτους τῶν Τρώων
συναγαγόν όρετο αὐτοὺς ὁπάτερος τῶν δῶν τοῦτων ἡρώων πρὸς κακοῦ
μᾶλλον αὐτοῖς ἐγένετο, τῶν δὲ εἰπόντων ὡς ὁ 'Οὔωσεύς, ἐκρίθη
λοιπὸν ἀριστον εἶναι τὸν πλείστα μᾶλλον λυπήσαντα τοὺς ἑχεροῦς,
καὶ εὐθὺς ὁ 'Οὔωσεύς μὲν ἔλαβε τὰ ὀπλα, Αἴας δὲ ἄνθηε δίπει
πεσόν. M.M.Willcock (oral communication) even finds that
Eustathius' Greek in the latter part of this passage (this
ἄνθηε in particular) is odd.
The majority of scholars believe that the *Aethiopis* was later than the *Odyssey*, though the incidents contained in it may well have been known to the *Odyssey* poet. Severyns, 313, dates it as early as the eighth century. See also Van der Valk 1949, 237; Griffin, 39 with n.9; Heubeck, 105.

The word μῷγος is uniquely used for Ajax here (it referred to his shield in its occurrences in this context in the *Iliad* -cf. above Chapter II p.38 and n.21). I follow Heubeck, 110.

It is obvious that I disagree with Heubeck only in the rendering of δήνοπα -it would have been tactless of Odysseus to speak about his rival’s "obstinate" soul at this point. The terminology here, though, denotes permanent elements of character (cf. Finley’s remarks below n.27). Vs. 561-5 are a significant passage with regard to terms of anger in the Homeric epics and recall Book 9 of the *Iliad* (cf. vs.33, 107, 112-3, 119, 157-8, and especially Phoenix’s plea to Achilles [ἀλλ’ Ἀχιλή ζήνοσσον εὐμόν μᾶγαν: οὐδὲ τί δε χρή / νηλευς ἢτορ ἔσχεν -vs.496-7], a passage very similar to v.562. I refer to the same subject again below Chapter IV pp.75-6). For a good discussion on μῆνις in Homer, see the two articles by Considine (1966 and 1986). Further, the rather rare expression ἔμοις καὶ μοῦνον (v.561) indicates graciousness and extra-politeness on Odysseus’ part.

Apart from that, one may argue that the *Iliad* seems to imply
(cf. 6.357-8) that the action in the last period of the Trojan war is animated by Zeus' hostility towards the two sides.

26 Cf. Golder, 25; see below Chapter VI p.138.

27 Cf. 9.2. See, among modern commentators, Stanford 1954, 92-3 (especially) and 1963, xi (with n.6). Finley 1978, 125 notes on the "eloquence" of this silence that "Ajax's inflexibility contains a sense of form, the form of the self, without which a man is unrecognizable."


29 See Finley 1978, 110. I do not agree with this extraordinary judgement. There is a vast amount of emotion in the Odyssey.

30 See, for instance, Stanford 1964 I, 381 and 401. Contrarily, and confuting the ancient commentators, see Van der Valk 1949, 229-30.

31 See Heubeck, 111.


33 Ibid., 27. Contra see Heubeck, 110-1.

34 At least as far as Odysseus is concerned. Heracles speaks to him (vs.617-26), of course, but Odysseus does not answer. Heracles' speech is "necessary" in the sense that it stresses, as the Nekyia ends, Odysseus' most dangerous enterprise, the descent into Hades (cf. also vs.474-6), something, besides, that Heracles and Odysseus have in common. See Heubeck, 114 and 116.

35 Cf. v.390. Heubeck (100-1), though, argues against the authenticity of the line. (Odysseus, following Teiresias' instructions, had slaughtered a sheep in order to facilitate
his contact with the shades -cf. vs.48-50).

See Stanford 1964 I, 397; also Heubeck, 100.

See Heubeck, 109.

Cf. Eust., 428.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

\(1\) See Davies 1989b, 6-8. Proclus' Chrestomathy is of unknown date, but possibly close to Apollodorus' Bibliotheca, dated to the first century B.C. (ibid., 7). For its purpose and "system" see below pp.62-3.

\(2\) See Davies 1989b, 7, and Monro, 12; cf. below n.44; cf. also the inscription Tabula Veronensis, giving an outline of the contents of the epic (Sadurska, 56ff.).

\(3\) Cf. 11.17.712ff.

\(4\) See Monro, 14.

\(5\) Cf. Sophocles' version in the Ajax.

\(6\) Cf. Od.5.309-10: \(\omegaτε \muοι πλείστα χαλκήρεα δούρα / Τρώες ἐπέρρη-\)

\(\) ψαν περὶ Πηλείων θανόντι. Admittedly, Odysseus does not actually say that he was fighting off the Trojans while Ajax carried the body; his words may be understood as a general reference to the battle over the fallen Achilles. I am inclined, however, to consider them as referring to the more particular phase when Ajax carried Achilles' corpse, because this could certainly have been a suitable situation for spears to be thrown against Odysseus -who was protecting Ajax’s action. Cf. also
below nn.8 and 9.

7 Cf. sch. on Od.11.547: οἱ φονευέντες ὑπὸ Ὁδυσσέως ὁτε Αἴας τὸ πτώμα Ἀχιλλέως ἐβάστασεν. How this could possibly have happened? In the cyclic epics, though, there is room for the miraculous; see Griffin, 40-2.

8 Epit.5.4. Strangely, Apollodorus’ picture of Ajax ἐβάστασεν seems to recall Od.5.309-10.

9 τῇ δὲ Αἰαντος ἀνδρείᾳ καὶ Ὀμηρος μαρτυρεῖ [and Od.5.309-10 are quoted] (III, 145).

10 Eust. 1542, 9: ὅτι ὁπλαθῇ Ὁδυσσεύς μὲν ἐβάστασε τὸν Ἀχιλλέως νεκρόν, Ἀἴας δὲ ὑπερήψιζεν.

11 The νεότεροι may well have been the poet of the Aethiopis: was there, though, any earlier poem presenting Odysseus as carrying the body and Ajax as fighting off the Trojans? This question may never receive an answer. Cf. also below n.62.

12 See Monro, 35.

13 Having in mind the version of the Little Iliad (see below pp. 70-1), one indeed can hardly think that an argument inspired by a god would have been a weak one. On the other hand, in support of Ajax’s "suitability" to carry Achilles’ body, it may be argued that Ajax was rated second after him among the Achaeans—and that certainly includes second in stature, if epics were concerned with "practical" details, so that he could carry him more easily than the short Odysseus (cf. Il.3.168, 193 and 227).

14 See Stanford 1954, 256-7(n.2). On Odysseus in the Iliad ibid., 13-9, 66-80, and, especially as a warrior, 254(n.2).
This is much more probable than believing that some Scholiasts simply confused the roles of Ajax and Odysseus in the rescue of Achilles' corpse. This may have been the case concerning the Little Iliad as well. In the new Teubner edition of Poetarum Epicorum Graecorum Testimonia et Fragmenta (for a sometimes severe criticism of it see Davies 1989c, passim) the editor A. Bernabé includes in the fragments of the Little Iliad (= Iliades Parvae, see below n. 40) a fragmentum dubium (fr. 32) in which the occasion seems to be the rescue of Achilles' body: Odysseus appears to tell Ajax that he will carry the corpse and indeed does that. The fragment, which has many lacunae, is not included in Davies' edition. West, 22 believes that it must come from a late composition, despite its "homerizing" style. See also Kakridis, passim.

ο τὴν Αἰειοπιδα γράφων περὶ τὸν ὀρθὸν ψηφὶ τὸν Αἰαντο ἕαυτον ἀνελείν (III, 230). The word ὀρθὸς meant in early Greek the last part of the night (and only later the dawn) — see Davies 1989b, 60 (Severyns, 324-5 and 328-31, too, seems to have accepted that the Aethiopis brought the story further). See also below Chapter V p. 91.

See, for instance, Davies 1989b, 8; cf. also below n. 22.

See Monro, 2.

See Davies 1989b, 7-8.

Ibid., 8, 60 and 62.

Cf. Jebb, xiv-xvi.

It is obvious that the narration of the same events was considered by Proclus as a "doublet", irrespective of even quite
substantial differences in details; this attitude is warranted by the fact that he wrote summaries (see Davies 1989b, 8).

See Jebb, xvi: for discussions on the similarities between the Iliad and the Aethiopis see Monro, 14-8 and Davies 1989b, 56 (both pointing out differences between the two epics as well). For the issue of the date of the Aethiopis -and of the Epic Cycle in general- see n.21 of the preceding chapter and Davies 1989a, passim.

Cf. Davies 1989b, 65 and 77.

See Jebb, xiv.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid., xiii with n.2. I refer to this below p.69.

Apollod. Epit. 5.5-6. See below p.71. However, the possibility that Apollodorus may have followed Sophocles' Ajax cannot be excluded.

Much discussion can be held about the nature of Ajax's madness (cf. below -in the subchapter on the Sack of Troy- pp.69-70. Collinge, 55, and Holt 1980, 22-5 treat this issue. Furthermore, the association of Athena, already from the Nekyia, with [this part of] the Ajax myth may constitute an indication that the goddess ought to have played a role in the hero's death (only Pindar did not connect her with the story). On Ajax and Athena see Kamerbeek, 7-8; also, above Chapter I p.32 with n.115, and below Chapter VI pp.131-2.

See Severyns, 331; Kamerbeek, 3. Holt 1980, 26 and 32(n.29) notes that the older sources made no mention of the madness;
see also Grossmann, 65-71.

32 See Sadurska, passim. For the date of the inscriptions ibid., 16-7.

33 Ibid., 18-9.

34 Ibid.


36 Ibid., 30. Holt 1980, 32(n.29) remarks that "the Tabula Iliaca is willing to depart from the epic cycle to incorporate material which became popular in Roman times".

37 See Jebb, xiv; Holt (ibid.) says that in the Aethiopis Ajax "seems to have brooded and killed himself in his tent". See also the relevant discussion in the subchapter on the Sack of Troy below pp.75-6.


39 Cf. below p.82 and n.101.


41 Paus. X.25-7.

42 See Davies 1989b, 63. I think, though, as I tried to show in my discussion of the Aethiopis above, that the case may well have been the other way round: the end of the Aethiopis was arranged to fit the beginning of the Little Iliad.

43 Davies himself admits this (ibid., 10).

44 See Monro, 19-20. One of Proclus' criteria for eliminating
overlapping material may have been the length of the reference. Monro, 36 also suggested that in Arctinus' poems Achilles and the heroes akin to him (Ajax and Neoptolemus) were the prominent figures, whilst in the Little Iliad Odysseus played a more important role.

45 See Jebb, xvi; Davies 1989b, 64.
46 See Jebb, xvi; Monro, 27 and 36. Cf. also above n.44. For matters of chronology (the Little Iliad is certainly later than the Aethiopis), see above n.24. For the unhomeric elements of the Little Iliad see Davies 1989b, 64-5. On the other hand, Monro, 24-5 has located a large proportion of material derived from Homer.

47 See above Chapter III pp.49-50. Cf. Monro, 25 and 35. Contrarily, Kamerbeek, 3 and Davies 1989b, 64 do not seem to exclude this possibility. See also below n.53.

48 See Monro, 24 and 35; Davies 1989b, 64; cf. also below nn.51 and 62.

49 See Jebb, xvi.

50 See above pp.64-5 and n.46; also Jebb, xvi; Davies 1989b, 64.
51 Cf. Monro, 21, 35, and, especially, 24 ("having an unmistakeable air of comedy"); Jebb, xix. However, it seems as if there was a propensity of the Greeks in archaic years to make up their minds about something in response to the occurrence of some accidental event, such as chance utterances; this idea may have been in accord with archaic thinking. In the Odyssey (20.98-121), a woman slave in Odysseus' household suddenly stopped grinding barley and wished that the suitors would die that very day;
this was considered by Odysseus as an omen of success for his task to kill the suitors. Cf. also 18.112-6 and 122-3. This may be a way of understanding the "logic" of the version of the Little Iliad.

52 See Davies 1989b, 64.

53 This constitutes the one and only common element between the versions of the Odyssey and the Little Iliad. Cf. Od.11.547 and the "perfect agreement" (Kamerbeek, 3) in κατα θωλήσιν Ἀθηνᾶς in Proclus' summary and Ἀθηνᾶς ἑπόνοια in fr.2^ of the Little Iliad.

54 See Davies 1989b, 64.

55 Ibid.

56 See above p.66 and n.29. Apollodorus' reliability is generally accepted. In the Introduction to the Loeb edition of The Library Frazer notes (vol.I, pp.xviii-xix): "The fidelity with which he reproduced or summarized the accounts of writers whose works are accessible to us inspires us with confidence in accepting his statements concerning others whose writings are lost". Following Wilamowitz, Kamerbeek, 4 believes that Apollodorus drew on Sophocles' Ajax concerning the elements of Ajax's madness and Athena's interference. Further, it is worth noting that both Apollodorus in the Epitome and Proclus in the summary of the Little Iliad fail to speak about how the award of the arms to Odysseus was decided.

57 Porphyr. ap. Eust. on 11.2.557 (285, 30).

58 Cf. Apollod. Epit.5.7.

See Davies 1989b, 65. He goes on to argue that "the original purpose behind the treatment of Ajax's corpse will probably have related to his suicide: the belief that those who have died by their own hands must be buried differently from those who die normally is primitive and world-wide and takes many manifestations."

See Monro, 24 and 35-6; also my Appendix (p.191).

See Davies 1989b, 62 and 74.

See above pp.62-3; also Davies 1989b, 62.

According to a more popular myth, Machaon and Podaleirius were sons of Asclepius, the physician god and son of Apollo (cf. Il.2.731-2, Soph. Phil.1358). Poseidon, though, was connected with medicine (cf. Od.9.520ff). In Soph. Phil.1468-9 the homonymous hero, according to Heracles' prophecy, will be healed by Asclepius himself. For the distinctive skills of the two doctors, cf. Il.4.191-5 (for Machaon), sch. on Il.11.515 (see Erbse III, 222), and Eust. (in Il.) 859, 42.

Cf. fr.3 Kinkel.

See above p.65; also Jebb, xiii with n.2.

See Monro, 29. Davies 1989b, 77 agrees with this.

I am inclined to agree with Monro, 29 that the tone of the passage is not the usual, neutral one of the poet/narrator.

See Monro, 29; Severyns, 358ff.

Postnom. ix.325ff.

(...). Διομήδης δὲ Λήμνου Φιλοκτήτην ἀνάγει. ἰδεῖς δὲ οὗτος ὑπὸ Μαχαόνος καὶ μονομαχῆς 'Αλεξάνδρῳ κτείνει. On Machaon's various fates in poetry, see Davies 1989b, 65-6.
See Jebb, xiii (n.2).
Ibid., xiii.
Ibid., xiii (n.2).
Ibid.
See Davies 1989b, 77.
Ibid.
Ibid.
See Monro, 29. For xwouévoio I think that the rendering "anger" or "wrath" is sufficient. Cf. II.9.107 and n.23 of the preceding chapter.
See TrGF 3, 289-91 (=frs.174-8).
See Jebb, xxii (n.2).
For the presentation of the Ajax myth by Sophocles see below Chapter VI (pp.129-37 in particular).
See above pp.40-66.
Poet. 1459a.
See Welcker, 53.
See Jebb, xix.
Ibid.
Ibid., xix-xx.
Cf. fr.174. See Kamerbeek, 5; he also suggests that the Nereids could have been the judges of the contest.
Ibid.; also Jebb, xx.
Cf. also Ovid Metam.13.1-398. For this scene see Stanford 1954, 138-41.
See Jebb, xx.
Ibid. Cf. also the end of the Danaid trilogy (the trial of Hypermnestra).

For debating techniques in Aeschylus cf. Suppl. 333ff. and Cho. 904ff. Stichomythia is important in his plays as well (cf. Agam. 931ff. and Eum. 585ff.).


See Kamerbeek, 5.

See TrGF 3, 205-8 (=frs.83-5).

See Jebb, xxi with n.21; his interpretation of the scholion is as follows: "He [the Scholiast] means that the condition of the captives is well suited to the expression of sympathy (κνόημονικόν), but not, on the whole, suited to their part (εὐπρόσωπον): for it is unseemly that captives should censure Menelaus. Hence we learn that the Chorus in the Βρῆσσαι denounced the part taken by the Ατρείδαι in the award of the arms."

See Jebb, xxi. Cf. sch. on Soph. Ajax 815: φεύγει Αἰσχύλος ἐν Βρῆσσαι τὴν ἀνοίξειν Ἀιάντος δι' ἀγγέλου ἀπαγγέλας.

Cf. Pind. I.6.47-8: τὸν μὲν ἄρρηκτον φων., ὃσπερ τόδε δέρμα μὲ νῦν περιπλανάται οἰνός. This passage, of course, constitutes only an implicit reference to Ajax’s invulnerability.

Cf. also the ancient 'Ὑπόθεσις of Sophocles' Ajax ad fin., which seems to have misread Pindar: περὶ δὲ τῆς πλευρᾶς, ὅτι μόνην οὕτων τρωτὴν εἶχεν, ἱστορεῖ καὶ Πίνδαρος, ὅτι τὸ μὲν σῶμα,
For a detailed reference to Ajax's invulnerability, including a list of the ancient sources of it and modern bibliography, see M.I. Davies, 153-4 with n.33.


See below Chapter VI pp.146-8.

See Golder, 13.

See Jebb, xxii, and Kamerbeek, 5.

See TrGF 3, 333-5 (=frs.216-20).

See Jebb, xxii, and Kamerbeek, 6.

See Welcker, 56-7, and Jebb, xxii(n.2).

See Jebb, xxii.


See Jebb, xxiii, and Kamerbeek, 6.

See Golder, 13. As regards terminology, though, I am a bit uneasy at his using the word "redemption".

See Jebb, xlvii; Sutton, 49-56 (on Eurysaces) and 132-9 (on Teucer).

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

Pindar used to draw material out of the myths about the heroes of the particular city of the victor he praised —without this being an absolute rule (see Bowra 1964, 297-302, and Stoneman, passim). The Aeacidae (as successive generations and two major family branches —from Aeacus to Peleus, Achilles, Neoptolemus —
and from Aeacus to Telamon, Ajax) were regarded by the Aeginetans as their ancestors (cf. P.8.21-7, 93-100 and also N.3.65-6, I.5.39-45). Ajax is mentioned in the following poems of Pindar: I.4.34-9, N.7.20-31, N.8.21-34—the more lengthy references which are examined in this chapter—N.2.14, N.4.48, I.5.48, I.6.26, and fr.184. More specifically, Ajax is mentioned in five of the eleven odes written for Aeginetan victors (N.4, N.7, N.8, I.5, I.6). Nisétich remarks that in three of them (N.4, I.5, I.6) the hero "serves to exemplify the renown of Aegina. His immemorial connection with Salamis is no obstacle to this Aeginetan claim on him" (see Nisétich, 14 and 76[n.24]). For Pindar's affection for Aegina see Fogelmark, 123-4(n.38), Huxley, 9, and Mullen, 143-8. One of the greatest examples of that affection in Pindaric poetry is the Eighth Nemean, where the poet seems to have been concerned more with the ancient glory of Aegina than the victory of Deinias (cf. also Pindar's epiclesis Αἰγίνα φίλο ματέρα in P.8.98). There were close links between Thebes (Pindar's native town) and Aegina; besides, in mythology the nymphs Theba and Aegina were sisters, both daughters of Asopos. Pindar often emphasizes the ties between the Theban-born, pannonic hero Heracles and the Aeacidae Peleus and Telamon, Ajax (see above Chapter I pp.18-21; cf. N.3 and N.4—first Trojan expedition with Heracles and Telamon—and also I.6.50-4, where Heracles foretells to Telamon the birth of Ajax. See also Huxley, 27-8).

The issue of the chronology of the odes is still one of the thorniest questions in the study of Pindar. Bowra 1964, 406-13
("Pindaric Chronology"=Appendix II) has placed, not without any
doubt, though, I.4 in 476, N.7 in 467 and N.8 in 459. In the
Teubner edition of the Pindaric odes Snell gives the following
I am inclined to follow Bowra's chronology, I would favour
a later date for N.8 (see below p.121). Regarding the major
difference between Bowra and Snell in the date suggested for
N.7, the ode was placed in 467 mainly after J.H.Finley's article
in 1951 (HSCP 60, 61-80) in connection with the earlier
and thematically relevant Paean 6 (see below pp.107-10).
N.8 is generally placed between 460 and 457, the years of
the dramatic crisis between the island and Athens. An attempt
by N.O.Brown (TAPhA 82 [1951] 1-28) to date the ode as late as
445 did not gain any acceptance. That article is discussed below
pp.119-21.
I aim, though, to show something relevant here: that there is
a concern about the hero's fate on the poet's part, which comes
up in the case of each ode.
I refer to Adolf Kühnken (see Kühnken, 24-33, 42-72, 94-113) in
Nisetich is concerned with Homer's presence and influence in the
odes of Pindar. In his Part I he examines the same three odes as
myself. Kühnken's valuable work (for some just objections to it,
though, see Carey 1981, 3) stresses the function of the
mythological material; he examines the odes in reverse order to
Nisetich and myself.
In N.7, however, it is obvious that the main myth is that of
Neoptolemus. See Nisetich, 76-7(n.26).

Those are included in our extracts (N.7 and N.8). There is one more reference to Odysseus in Pindar's surviving poetry; it is depreciatory as well, since Palamedes is considered as κυριώτερος τοῦ Ὅμηρου εἰς σοφίας λόγον in it (fr.260).


See below pp.90 and 95. For the few other references to Homer in Pindaric poetry see Nisetich, 1-2. The same scholar remarks that "the mention of Homer by name seems to have been the determining factor in the study of Pindar's relationship to him". Indeed, Homer is "present" even in Pindaric passages where he is not mentioned by name.

See Nisetich, 1-23, esp. 1-3 and 22-3. Concerning "Homer" in Pindar, I am in accord with most views of Nisetich.

Apart from Nisetich, see also Fitch, passim—with Nisetich's objections—, and Farnell II, 352.

Although I regard 1.3 and 1.4 as a single poem, according to the view accepted by most interpreters of Pindar (see Segal 1981a, 69-70 and, for further bibliography, 84[n.9]; contra, but still with some valuable remarks, see Privitera 1978/9, passim). I keep the separate numbering of the verses considering it more convenient.

See Nisetich, 10.

See Farnell II, 352.

See Königken, 109(nn.94 and 95); also Hubbard, 110-5; Krummen, 83-4.

See Bury 1892, 170.
See Nisetich, 11. The phrase may well refer to familiarity through the influence of poetry -cf. I.3.15; see Farnell II, 348.

See Nisetich, 11. One has to follow the scholion on 58e (ὅνειδος τοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς περιποίησε τὴν κακοκρισίαν αὐτῶν ψανεράν ποίησας) in order to interpret μομφᾶν ἔχει rightly -cf. Thummer II, 72-3 and Nisetich, 11 and 13; cf. also Soph. Ajax 179. The way Pearson 1922, 135 misread μομφᾶν ἔχει: "Ajax was blamed by the Greeks" is indeed surprising.

See Thummer II, 72; Nisetich, 11-2; Krummen, 84-5(n.20). On the Aethiopis see also above Chapter IV pp.58ff.

See Köhnken, 105.


See Farnell I, 259.

See Segal 1981a, 75. Segal also suggests that Pindar is playing on the similar sounds of the two epithets.

I am in accord with Nisetich, 11-2 arguing for the rendering "exalt" or "extol" ("completely" or "to the full" -in combination with πᾶσαν) for ὑπερώοςις instead of "redeem" or "restore"; cf. Thummer II, 74 and Köhnken, 111; also Segal 1981a, 82 and 66(n.48).

See Fitch, 58 and Nisetich, 1-3; cf. above p.90.

See Nisetich, 10-3. It is worth noting here that the Scholiasts appear to cast doubt upon the notion that τετίμωσεν refers to Ajax: ἡ χρύσινης ἀμφίβολον φησι τούτο εἶναι, πότερον ἐν Ἀϊάντος ἢ ἐν ὁ ὁδυσσεός λέγει, πάντως γὰρ ὁ Πίνδαρος τὸν Αϊάντο εἰμά-
Cf. Nisetich, 75(n.2), who cites views of previous critics on the "Oμηρος of v.37. See also next note.

See Nisetich, 11-3 and, especially, 76(n.20), where he eloquently refutes Fitch's arguments (58-9) in favour of the view that the "Homer" of 1.4 had to be the author of the Aethiopis. Farnell II, 352 and Bowra 1964, 71 and 283 also argued that the Iliad may have been the "Homeric" poem in question. In her recent book, Krummen, 85(n.20) seems to share Fitch's view. However, one should not confine Ajax's ἀπειρώς in Troy exclusively to his conduct over Achilles' body (= Aethiopis). Nisetich, 75(n.10) rightly rejects the Odyssey (Book 11) as well: "the 'Homer' of 1.4 is not likely to be the poet who gave the base, cunning Odysseus alluded to at lines 34-35 a voice; it is unthinkable, also that Ajax would have received his due of praise from such a character."

Cf. above Chapter II pp.34-45.

See Nisetich, 9 and 12-3; cf. also the notion that in the Cycle Ajax shares the ranking "first after Achilles" with Odysseus (Kullmann, 82).

See Norwood, 173 and 268(n.44).

This striking presentation of a young athlete is analogous with the one of Heracles (μαρτυρίων Βραχύς, ψυχάν δ' ᾠκομπτος -v.53) that follows it. The fact that Melissos is likened to Heracles, his most famous compatriot and the greatest Greek hero, who, too, was "short" in comparison to the giant Antaeus, shows that the question about Melissos' looks should not be pressed too
far. One has to bear in mind that Pindar is and feels at home in this ode -see Finley 1955, 66; cf. below n.43. Pindar is not Archilochus and that is why statements like those of v.53 had been considered, rather hastily, as "shocking" (Farnell II, 354); cf. below n.33. Finley assumes that Melissos "had to face some Goliath of an opponent and was contemptible only on first impression"; he won "by the arts of the fox as well by the lion" (69). Farnell's suggestion (I, 258) that "Pindar allows us to suspect that there were some people who complained that Melissos had won by unfair means" is surely far-fetched.

32 See Farnell I, 259.
33 Ibid., 258; cf. Norwood, 172-4. However, I think that a similar sentiment is expressed in P.2.83-4.
34 See Norwood, 172.
35 See Wilamowitz, 340: "künstlerisch nicht eben bedeutend".
36 See Privitera 1982, 57: "Per la complessa e nitida euritmia degli elementi compositivi, la vivezza delle imagini, la perfetta funzionalità dei segni, l' Istmica quarta (...) in realtà è una delle odi più belle e suggestive. Simmetrica come un cristallo, essa rifiuta aggiunte e ampliamenti: suppone che lo stesso Pindaro abbia potuto sconciarla, premettendole come proemio la terza, e assolutamente incredibile." Cf. also Finley 1955, 67; Segal 1981a, 70 and 81.
37 See below Chapter VII p.178 with nn.23 and 24.
38 See Farnell II, 353.
39 Cf. I.6.53.
40 See Farnell II, 353.
41 See Farnell I, 259.
42 See Kühnken, 108.
43 A recent book by Eveline Krummen pays particular attention to
this element in the Pindaric odes. On I.4 see especially pp.
79-94.
44 On song bringing lasting fame cf. also P.6.7-18.
45 ðεûπειν (v.39) has a different meaning from ðεûπε at N.3.44;
see Slater, s.v. ðεûπε. For the rather problematic κατά ἱππόδοιν
see Thummer II, 74; Kühnken, 111-3; Krummen 85-6 with n.22.
46 See Nisetich, 14.
47 See Kühnken, 111; Privitera 1982, 55; Nisetich, 13.
48 This may well have been the battle of Plataea, as Farnell I, 257
suggested. The brevity of the reference, Farnell went on to say,
may show that Pindar was not happy with the position adopted by
his compatriots in the Persian Wars.
49 See Segal 1981a, 79.
50 See Segal 1967, 431-2 with n.2; Kirkwood 1975, 56-7.
51 I follow Segal’s division. Vs.17-43 constitute the second
section of the ode (among four). For the thorny difficulties
which they contain see Kirkwood 1982, 266.
52 See Most, 148 with n.56.
53 Cf. the opening of the Odyssey (1.1-2 and 4). See Nisetich, 16;
also Most, 149 -with the notion (n.65) that Frankei was the
first who suggested that Pindar refers to the Odysseus of the
Odyssey here. I agree with Most that Pindar cannot have in mind
the judgement of the Achillean arms in vs.20-2. The view of
Carey 1981, 143 (the reference to Odysseus in vs.20-2 and
the following myth of Ajax "must be distinguished") seems to me to be too categorical. He is right to note, though, that the Scholiast, when interpreting vs.20-3 (ἐγὼ δὲ, φασίν, ἐλήφω (...) μὴ τοσοῦτα περαχέναι (...) τὸν Ὀδυσσέα (...). ἄγεθοι γὰρ τοιχῶν ποιητοὶ ἐνδοξόστερα καὶ μείζονα ἔορθαν ἔργα ἢ κατώρχεσε), confuses πάθεια with πράξιν.

See Most, 149.

Odysseus is explicitly compared to a bard (cf. also Od.17.514-5 and 518-21) and the vocabulary used by Alcinous is similar to that of N.7.20-3. There is a relevant idea in the scholia, where μοτανδᾶ μαχανᾶ is said to reflect the Homeric ἐνεμο περόστατο -see Kirkwood 1982, 267.

Note that κέρασσ has negative meaning in Pindar -cf. P.1.92, P.2.78; see Kirkwood 1982, 266.

So Nisetich, 15.

See Carey 1981, 144. Also, to read γε instead of τε in v.22, as some scholars do (see Kühnken, 53; Kirkwood 1975, 79 with n.34), presents difficulties regarding syntax and meaning; see Most, 148(n.54).

For a good presentation of the issue and critical reference to previous attempts at its solution, see Carey 1981, 144-6. Carey concludes, however, that the whole sentence refers to Homer, a view with which I disagree. I would probably accept that vs.22-4 refer exclusively to Homer, if the Ajax-reference did not follow them. See also below p.102.

See Kromer, 437.

See Carey 1981, 143 and 146.
See Kromer, 438.

Ibid. (so Most, 151 and Segal 1967, 442).

See Lefkowitz 1984, passim. Cf. the end of N.4, where poetry is compared to wrestling, and I.2.35. See also Steiner, 16-21.

See below pp.108-10.

See Carey 1981, 146.

See Slater, s.v. κλέπτω.

See Carey 1981, 144.

Cf. 0.9.38. See Most, 152.

See Nisetich, 19.

See Kühnken, 57.

See Gildersleeve, 130.

See Nisetich, 15; he rightly connects the epithet τυφλόν with perception.

See Nisetich, 77(n.4); he also holds that ὠμίλος cannot refer to Od.11.547 (=to the judges of the contest for the Achillean arms).

So Segal 1967, 443(n.28); Most, 152-4 and Nisetich, 16. Cf. 0.7.24-6 and 30-1, O.12.7-9; also II.9.318-20, where Achilles says that the Achaeans could not discern real value (cf. Most, 154: "If the Homeric heroes were incapable of seeing reality, then how much more careful Pindar's own listeners must be to avoid making a similar mistake!").

See Nisetich, 16.

See Most, 152.

Cf. Ἐλεύθερος (v.29), ἐπειδὴ Ἡρώδεις (v.30). For the significance of those Homeric reminiscences see Most, 153 with n.88.

See Segal 1967, 441.

Cf. Theog.27. See further Segal 1967, 441(n.22).

It may appear that in regard to this there is a contradiction between the two odes. I do not think this is the case; one has to bear in mind that Pindar presents two contrasting aspects of the same thing (the power of poetry) through the same subject (Homer) in each passage. And after exemplifying the "side effects" of poetry in N.7, he proclaims his own (different/truthful) mission (cf. v.63 -see especially Nagy 1990, 423 with nn.42 and 45).

See Segal 1967, 442; Carey 1981, 146 and 181; Most, 155-6.

See Segal 1967, 442.


See sch. on 70, 94a, 95b, 100a, 123a, 150a. See Lloyd-Jones, 128 with n.109, and 135-6.

Cf. Paean 6, 105-20.

Cf. the scholia mentioned above (n.85).


Cf. Norwood, 84; Gerber, 184-5 with n.10.

See Bundy, 4, 9 and 28-9; Thummer I, 94-8; Künneken, 42-60.

See Bundy, 4 and 28-9; he discusses the information of the scholia, but not always with his customary accuracy.

See Thummer I, 96; cf. also, more recently, Lefkowitz 1980.
39-48. For some eloquent arguments against these views, see Kirkwood 1975, 59-63.

95 So Kirkwood 1975, 60 (with nn.9 and 10) and 75.

96 See Norwood, 84.

97 See Kirkwood 1975, 59 and 74-5.

98 Ibid., 74-5. That single exception is P.8.

99 Cf. also vs.70-3. These extracts, particularly vs.102-4, appear to be "autobiographical"; see Fogelmark, 115-6; Carey 1981, 135, 159-62 and 177.

100 Ibid., 135 and 177; Kirkwood 1975, 85 and 1982, 259.

101 See Carey 1981, 133.

102 See Tugendhat, passim.


106 See Farnell I, 209.

107 See Kirkwood 1975, 58.

108 Ibid.


110 See Carey 1981, 134-5 (following Tugendhat, 369ff.).

111 See Tugendhat, 391-400; Carey 1981, 135-6.


113 Ibid., 134-6.

114 N.3.29; cf. also P.3.114-5.

115 See Kirkwood 1975, 77.

116 The problems of the passage are carefully examined by Gerber, passim—with reference to all previous attempts at their
solution.

Ibid., 182-3 and 186-7; also Kirkwood 1975, 81-2 with n.38; Carey 1981, 147-8. I accept, with them, the interpretation "on him who does not expect [death] and him who does" (=Neoptolemus and Ajax) for ἄσωκτος καὶ ὅκεντος.


See Kirkwood 1975, 79.

See Tugendhat, 399.

See Kirkwood 1975, 79.

Cf. ibid., 76.


See the chronological discussions above n.2 and below pp.118-20.

See Kühnken, 24.


See Brown, 6-7.


Ibid.

See Kühnken, 31-2 (with nn.48-53). For bibliographical reference to the question of what is the "new thing" of N.8, see Miller, 111-2(n.2). He concludes (114) that veipó refers "neither to originality in mythic narrative nor to 'new song' in general but to a specific category of subject matter" (=to a "rhetorical context", to Deinias' victory as a poetic subject). I do not agree with this view; I think Pindar puts a new ingredient in the Ajax-myth -see below p.116; also, against Miller's opinion,
see Nisetich, 78(n.19). On novelty in Pindar see Thummer I, 151; Künnken, 32; Crotty, 61-3 with n.26. Other relevant passages from the odes: O.9.47-9, P.1.60, N.6.53-4.

I prefer the rendering "tales" (cf. Bury 1890, 153) since the word was used with the same connotation in N.7. Cf. also N.4.31.

φεονον understood is the subject of ἀντεταί. See Farnell II, 306; Künnken, 33 with n.57; Miller, 115. Contra Nagy 1979, 225 with nn.3 and 4 (subject of ἀντεταί is "one who has phthónos").

Cf., for instance, P.11.25-30 (envy towards the happy man), O.6.74-6, P.1.81-6 (envy towards the victor/the person praised by a song). Cf. also Soph. Ajax 154-9, where the same idea is expressed. For envy as an important theme in the Pindaric odes, see Thummer I, 80-1; Künnken, 24 and 26ff.; Nagy 1979, 222-8; Kirkwood 1984, passim -especially 177-8.


See Brown, 6. Cf. the words of the Scholiast (on 37): ἀνὸς τῶν φεονοντων ἑν τὸν φεόνον ματηγας τὸν λόγον.

See Künnken, 25. For ἀλκίμων cf. I.4.35b and N.7.26-7 (also N.2.13, I.6.53); also Soph. Ajax 1319. Cf. also below my comments on v.27 (p.121).

For the meanings I reject, cf. Bradshaw, 105, and Miller, 115 respectively. Ajax was not at all presented such in the Iliad, a fact which Pindar could not refute, particularly in front of Aeginetans. Cf. κελεύοντας ἰπλόοις ζωᾶς (v.35b-36), which "corresponds" to Ajax -see Carey's relevant remarks (34); also below p.126.

Cf. O.13.11-2, P.1.66, P.2.86-8. See Carey 1976, 34; Nisetich,
See Farnell I, 216. Miller, too, seems to agree with that (cf. 116).

See Nisetich, 3; also 22 (for some reasons why Homer is not mentioned explicitly in N.8).


Cf. N.7.12-3; also P.3.112-5, I.7.16-9.

See Brown, 15.

See Bury 1890, 154; Farnell II, 306; Brown, 15. Cf. also the commentators on the Ajax (Jebb, Kamerbeek) ad loc.

See the references in the previous note. Most recent scholars, though, tend to ignore this similarity -even Kühnken, despite his viewpoint regarding the function of the myth in the Pindaric odes, seems to do that.

See Carey 1976, 31; so Miller, 116, and Nisetich, 78(n.18).


Here the issue of how a ballot could have been corrupted comes up. I refer to this issue below Chapter VI pp.158-9 (with the relevant notes, and with bibliography).

See below pp.118-20.

I am in accord with Brown, 15 with n.23 regarding this. Carey 1976, 31 holds that the whole idea that envy was responsible for Ajax's tragic death is "new", a view close to that of Brown.

See Brown, 15(n.23).

Ibid.; see also Kühnken, 27(n.29). Cf. O.1.47, O.2.97, N.9.33, and, especially, P.1.84. Significantly, we again have κρυφίου δὲ λόγου in connection to Odysseus in fr.260 (v.2).
See Brown, 15(n.23).

See Nisetich, 17.

See LSJ, s.v. άσπάναυγω.

See Bury 1890, 148 and especially Brown, 15(n.23) ("the verb άσπάναυγω, with its connotation of servility"); also Kühnken, 27(n.30). Cf. 1.8.8.

See below p.118.

See above n.2.

See, for instance, Farnell II, 303; Brown, 13; Finley 1955, 156.

See Bury 1890, 145-6.

See Farnell II, 303.

See Brown, 11.

There is neither sufficient nor conclusive evidence about this in N.8, not even in vs.13-4.

See Wilamowitz, 411; Brown, 12.

See Brown, 12.

See Wilamowitz, 410-1.

See above p.114.

Cf., for instance, the analogous mention of Aeacus in vs.71-2 of N.4 (surely earlier than N.8 -473?).

See Brown, 15(n.23) and 16.

Ibid., 16, 18-23.

Ibid., I, 17, and 28.

See Ehrenberg, 178-82 (=Appendix C).


Cf. Soph. Ajax 157; for analogous passages see Jebb, on 157.

On envy in Pindar see above n.135. An analogous locus communis
is the theme of the insignificance and transience of everything human (cf. P.8.95-6 and Ajax 125-6, 131-2; see Frankel, passim. Cf. also P.2.51 and Ajax 127-30 -the punishment by the gods, which is their unavoidable and merciless "answer" to any mortal who transgresses human limits and "thinks big" (cf. Ajax 760-1, 766, 777).

Cf. N.8.33 and Ajax 388: the epithet is rarely used in both poets. (I take it that in ἀμώλων μέσων ὀμόφορος there is a hint at Odysseus, who was favoured by the "deceptive myths" according to Pindar -cf. N.7.22-3; see below p.124; cf. also the other correspondences in words between vs.32-4 and 21-5 -see Carey 1976, 32; Miller, 117).


Cf. O.2.86, O.9.100, O.11.19-20, O.13.13, P.8.44-5, N.3.40-2, and Ajax 162-3, 472-80, 549, 595 (on the [aristocratic] perception of ψωλ/ψφοι -for bibliographical references see Blundell 1988, 147[n.1]; the theme is even more prominent in Sophocles' Philoctetes -ibid., passim); O.2.86-8, N.3.80-2 and Ajax 167-71 (on excellence contrasted with inferiority through a bird metaphor -see, though, Stanford 1963, on 167-71, for echoes of other poets in the passage). I would say that the Parodos of the Ajax is very much Pindaric in vocabulary and ideas (cf. also N.7.23 and Ajax 188; P.2.75 and Ajax 148-50).

See also Brown, 16-7 with n.26.

See Brown, 16.

See below Chapter VI p.159 and n.128. Cf. Brown, 23.

See Finlay 1955, 150. The same view has been recently held by
See Finley 1955, 151.

See Wilamowitz, 411.

See Brown, 17, 26, and 28; Finley 1955, 150-1; Whitman 1951, 42-6.

See Bury 1890, 154. Can one interpret this unusual φόνω πάλαισθεν on the basis of the tradition about Ajax's invulnerability, which, as we have seen above (Chapter IV, pp.67-8 and 82-3 with n.102), may have been known to Pindar? I think that one may deduce the meaning "struggled to die" (=had difficulty to kill himself) from this phrase.

See Carey 1976, 31. It is worth noting that Pindar uses the Homeric word φόγαγον in 1.4.36, too, but ἔθρος in N.7.27.

Cf., besides, μάχεστον γέρας (v.25). See Künnken, 27 with n.31, and Carey 1976, 32. Both interpreters rightly indicate the "strong", particularly in the shape of powerful epithets, language of the passage -cf. also next note.

See Künnken, 26; he adds that "die Formulierung (...) zeigt Pindars persöhnliches Engagement: die Waffen hatten Aias zugesprochen werden müssen, sie standen ihm zu."

ἀλλων τε μόχαιραν, in combination with the preceding ἢ μᾶν... λόγχα, may well refer to the Iliad (and thus to Homer), which illustrated Ajax's superiority as a warrior in Troy.

These matters have been discussed in detail above (Chapter IV pp.58-61, 69-71). M.M.Willcock (oral communication) suggests that Pindar, as well as the Scholiast in question, may have had in mind a massive fight (related in a cyclic epic -cf. Proclus')
summary of the *Aethiopis*, in which Ajax played a major part, before he lifted up Achilles' body.

192 See Nisetich, 30.

193 Ibid. This, though an interesting notion, may go too far from what the text says.

194 See Farnell I, 215.

195 See Stanford 1954, 81-9 and 256-7 (nn.2 and 3).

196 See Farnell I, 216.

197 Ibid.

198 Ibid. The same view was held by Wilamowitz, 409.

199 Ibid.

200 See Carey 1976, 32.

201 See Finley 1955, 155. On the meaning of ἀνάφωσις see Carey 1976, 32-3 and Miller, 117-8 with n.17.

202 See Carey 1976, 32; Miller, 117.

203 Cf. also P.11.30; see Carey 1976, 40(n.38).

204 On this passage see also below p.126 and next note (Nisetich's remark). The vexed issue of the first person in Pindar, what is personal and what is not, is brought up here; it has been carefully scrutinized by Lefkowitz 1963, passim; 1978, passim; 1980, passim. See also Bundy I, 8 and 10 (on the "rhetorical pauses" and the "hesitatory priamels" in Pindar); Fogelmark, 118-9 with nn.9 and 10; Carey 1981, 4-6, 8-9 (on the "oral subterfuges"), and 16-7(n.37).

205 See Carey 1976, 33-4; for a different, but not very persuasive, view (the "I" in vs.35-9 is more "personal" and is as suitable for the encomiast as for anyone else) see Lefkowitz 1980, 36-7
and Miller, 119(n.21). Miller is right, however, when he defines τοιούτων Ἀθηνειός as that of Odysseus (119). Nisetich, 21 finds "one further nicety" in the prayer: "the fact that Pindar’s sketch of the person he would rather be occurs in the course of his fervent prayer to Zeus: Odysseus, his opposite, had invoked Zeus’ name to account for the destruction of Ajax" (Od.11.358-60).

See Carey 1976, 33-4; also Finley 1955, 150.

See Carey 1976, 37.

Ibid.

Ibid., 28-9; see also Brown, 6-7.

As Carey 1976, 35 aptly puts it, "the relation of the victor to the differing fates of Ajax and Aeacus" is what concerns Pindar in the ode. The Theban poet, as a φίλος, feels it is his duty to warn Deinias about the possible "reception" of his achievement and, then, to contrast his own position regarding the victor’s success; Pindar, with the gift of poetry, will function as remembrancer of Deinias’ great deeds. On this cf. N.7.61-3 and see Nagy 1979, 236-42.

Developing a suggestion by Bury 1890, 148, I am tempted to suppose -perhaps with the risk I previously accused others of (cf. above p.123)- that Deinias might have faced demonstrations of envy in the period between his athletic victory and the composition/performance of the ode.

See Carey 1976, 33ff.

Ibid., 35; Miller, 119. On the contrasts in words that go on until the end of the ode, cf. Carey 1976, 36.
NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1 Of course, reference to other parts of vs.1-814 is made in the whole of this chapter.


3 See Linforth, 2. On the issue of where Athena stood in the Prologue, see Calder, passim, and Heath, 166 with n.3.

4 See Linforth, 7-8.

5 See Brown, 22; Stanford 1963, liv; Heath, 170-1 with n.11.
Ajax himself speaks of Athena's cruelty in his first speech (vs. 401-2 and 450-2; cf. also v. 656).

Cf. vs. 112 and 116-7; see Stanford 1963, xxv; also Blundell 1989, 64 with nn. 17 and 18.

Cf. vs. 91-3 and 105.

The only other time in the play that δυσλογία is attributed to Ajax is at v. 1245 (by Agamemnon). The general refers, of course, ἁπάντως ἐπιθέσεως τοῦ Ἀἴαντος, as the Scholiast holds, and "not figuratively: Ajax cannot be accused of artful slander"—see Kamerbeek ad loc. Cf. Pindar's notion of a straightforward Ajax (see above my Chapter V). Further, Sophocles may imply that the onslaught of the cattle is not characteristically Ajaxian, since it was carried out with Hector's sword. On the Sword Theme see Stanford 1963, 277-8.

Cf. Kirkwood 1965, 62; Winnington-Ingram, 21 (n. 30). Critics hostile to Ajax tend to discount those verses, as Heath notes (168-9).

Cf. Linforth, 7-8 and 25; Heath, 172.

See Linforth, 4 and 8-9; Stanford 1963, liii.

See Linforth, 6; cf. also Heath, 169.

See Linforth, 8. Heath does not agree with the notion that the attempted murder is suppressed, but he, too, holds that Ajax is not presented as contemptible in the Prologue (173).

I cannot accept Linforth's view that Athena "seems to feel little interest in Ajax except as a creature who had threatened her favorite and had had to be brushed aside" (9). There was a famous case in II. i. 188ff., when Athena redirects Achilles,
who was on the point of killing Agamemnon, of course more favourably than she does to Ajax (Achilles restrained himself, though); see Blundell 1989, 70(n.50). The role of Athena as constant ally of the Achaeans in the Trojan war has also to be taken into consideration here. Blundell also discusses the interesting notion of Ajax "resembling" Athena and having divine stature (1989, 65-6).

15 See Crane, 99.

16 See Linforth, 21.

17 The verb ἐφήσει significantly conveys the sense of defence (associated with Ajax from the Iliad—see above Chapter II pp.37-8); Stanford 1963, xxxviii(n.51) makes a relevant remark.

18 See Linforth, 21-2; Stanford 1963, xxvi and xxxvii-xxxviii; Blundell 1989, 66.

19 See above Chapter II p.36.

20 Cf. Linforth, 26.

21 See Linforth, 26; Heath, 191; Crane, 100; Blundell 1989, 67 with n.34.

22 The audience at this stage of the play, after what they have seen and heard, are not meant to quiver at the implications of Ajax's ὑπέρτις—as must have happened, for instance, in OT 946ff., when Jocasta questioned divine oracles. Cf. Linforth, 23-4; contra Heath, 191(n.53).

23 Emphasis is laid on this—it is mentioned three times (vs.756, 778, 801-2). It certainly is an "impressively oracular" detail (Linforth, 23) and adds a measure of suspense (Gellie, 18). One is reminded of vs.131-2 of the Prologue, and of OT 438
(almost identical to Ajax 802). One day is the essential time unit in Greek tragedy.

An extension of this notion is made by Stanford 1963, xxxvii: the fact that Athena put a limit to her anger means that no impediment remained to prevent Ajax becoming one of the tribe and cult heroes of the Athenians.

See above pp.131-2.


Ibid., lii; see also below p.147.

Cf. Crane, 99. Another detail in this process is Calchas' well-disposed treatment of Teucer (cf. the cordial gesture of the seer -a representative of the divine- at v.751) amidst so many hostile demonstrations in the Greek camp.


See Linforth, 24; Wigodsky, passim -with Stanford's objections (1963, 237-8).

See Brown, 24. In this context, Winnington-Ingram, 43(n.96) aptly notes that the question of what would have happened if Ajax had refrained from suicide "so obviously will not arise that perhaps Sophocles did not mean us to consider it."

Ibid., 21; also Linforth, 27.

See Linforth, 25-6.

Cf., for instance, Bowra 1944, 49; even Winnington-Ingram, 14.

See Linforth, 28.

See Stanford 1963, on 815ff.

See Hester, 253.

See Bowra 1944, 43-4 -criticized by Knox 1961, 10-11 and 32 (n.63).

Cf. Kitto 1956, 192. Further, themes from the "Deception speech" significantly come up in this monologue as well—for instance, the instability of human relationships (vs. 817-22); cf. Heath, 194.

See Jebb and Kamerbeek, on 815.

Cf. Kitto 1956, 192. Further, themes from the "Deception speech" significantly come up in this monologue as well—for instance, the instability of human relationships (vs. 817-22); cf. Heath, 194.


Ibid., on 817-20. The scholia (on 818) find μεγαλοφορούμη in Ajax's hatred for the Trojans.

Cf. Kamerbeek, on 822.


Ibid., on 823ff.

Sch. on 962.

See Stanford 1963, on 823ff. Perhaps the latter part of this view, particularly as regards the epithet "conventional", goes too far.

Cf. sch. on 849a and Trach. 1148.


Ibid., on 835ff.

Ibid., on 844.

Cf. Hester, 253.

Cf. OC 1348-96. See Jebb, xxxix-xl.

Ibid. See also (and rather excessively) Winnington-Ingram, 45; the contrary view is persuasively stated by Heath, 194. Besides, in v. 408 Ajax considers "the whole army" as his killer; this reminds us of Pindar (I. 4.36—see above Chapter V p. 84).

There is a strong case, though, for suspecting interpolation.
in vs. 854-8 -possibly by an actor. See Heath, 195 with n.66; Lloyd-Jones and Wilson, 28-9. On light and darkness in the monologue see Stanford 1978, 195, and Cohen, 32 (both articles, as well as Segal 1981b, 124-6, treat the development of this theme in the whole play).

Cf. Περί Ὀμοιες 9.10. See below p.148.

See Stanford 1963, on 865.

Ibid. It is worth noting that the famous modern Greek poet C.P. Cavafy has put "Τὸ δ’ ἄλλα ἐν “Ἀδων τοῖς κατὰ ἔννοιαν" as the title in one of his poems -see his Ανέκδοτο Ποιήματα (1882-1923), ed. G.P. Savidis, Athens 1982, p.155.

Cf. vs. 361, 394-400, 457-480, 684-6, 690-2; in Ajax's last monologue one may indicate v. 854 (though disputed), where, with the medical term ἔνδοκωα, Ajax's desire to die is emphatically given and death appears to be a remedy for him (see Kamerbeek and Stanford 1963, ad loc.). See also above p.135; Knox 1964, 34-6; Winnington-Ingram, 27 with n.51; Heath, 181; Blundell 1989, 71-2 and 86.

Stanford 1963, on 865 (cf. also xlii) speaks about a "Communion of Heroes", "something like the Christian Communion of Saints", to which Ajax looks forward. I think that this parallelism goes too far.

Cf. Stanford 1963, on 865; Goldhill, 193.

See Heubeck II, 106. Stanford 1964 I, 398, though, notes that this was the typical early Greek attitude to existence after death; in later years attempts were made to dispel it (e.g. the Mysteries).

Cf. vs. 29, 47, 294, 457-9, 467, 614-5, 619-20, 682-3, 1276, 1283. Knox 1961, 21 stresses the fact of the frequent application of the word μόνος to Ajax in the play, "in peace as well as war". Note also that the four long speeches of the hero in the play are considered - neither accidentally nor unjustly - as monologues/soliloquies by most interpreters, although technically only the suicide speech is such; besides, isolation is typical of the Sophoclean hero. See Errandonea, passim; Reinhardt, 19; Winnington-Ingram, 24.

Cf. vs. 804-6; see Stanford 1963, on 866ff.

Ibid., on 856-65.

On the "Nurture theme" Ibid., on 849-51.

Ibid., on 856-65 (with bibliographical reference).

See Kamerbeek, on 865.

N.8.24; see above Chapter V p.114 with nn.137 and 138.

Od.11.553-64; see above Chapter III pp.51-7.

Cf. Stanford 1963, on 865; Goldhill, 193.

Cf. Περι ουος 9.2. See above Chapter III p.53.

Cf. v.573.

See Stanford 1963, on 865.

Ibid.

See Arnott, 114 and 131-3; Stanford 1963, on 865-6; Gardiner, passim; Seale, 163-6; Heath, 192-3. One has to note, however, the undoubtedly striking facts of the daring change of scenery, as the play "follows" the lonely steps of its hero, and of the Chorus' removal from the orchestra.
This, especially, must have been a very difficult part of the role of the actor playing Ajax. Cf. Stanford 1963, on 865-6; also sch. on 864a—referring to Timotheus, the actor who was nicknamed ὁ Τιμόθεος, because he became famous for his performance in this scene.

Cf., for instance, Hester, 253. Other commentators who openly accept the view that Sophocles broke the convention and Ajax's suicide was enacted on stage are: Knox 1961, 2; Collinge, 49-50; Stanford 1963, lxii, on 815ff., and on 865-6; Gellie, 14-5 and 21.


I refer in detail to these words of Tecumseh's below (pp.151-2).

Cf. vs.682-3 (in combination with the pictures of vs.206-7, 257-8 and 670-1); see Stanford 1963, on 683, and 275.


Ibid., on 134-71, 201, 263, 301-3; also Winnington-Ingram, 23-4, who notes, though, that a certain passage from this part of the play (vs.263ff.) "may appear frigid and not to advance the drama in proportion to its length" (24).

Ibid., on 984-5, 1168 and 1165ff.; also Heath, 198 and 200.
Cf. Stanford 1963, 1. Also, Synodinou, 99 rightly holds that Tecmessa "has been usually considered from the point of view of Ajax, in regard both to the relationship between the two characters and to the impact which her words and presence have on him and on the wider dramatic action."

See Kirkwood 1958, 103.

See Synodinou, 99.

Cf. Stanford 1963, 11 (in xxx-xxx1, though, he is rather excessive); also Synodinou, 100-1 -quoting vs.292ff., 368-9; also 339, 342, 349, 359 (by implication); 580, 586, 530, 578.

I believe that Synodinou attaches too much weight to the last eight quotations and her conclusion that "up to his 'conversion' speech (...), Ajax behaves towards Tecmessa like a tough, cruel, naughty master, who hardly regards her as a companion in life, much less a human being in her own right" is indeed excessive and contrasts sharply with Tecmessa's words in v.808.

Cf. Bowra 1944, 23; Hester, 247; Synodinou, 102-3; contra Adams, 101; Knox 1961, 10. Of course, the much disputed issue of the position of women in fifth-century Athens is connected with this disagreement: see, with references, Stanford 1963, on 292-3 -contra Synodinou, 101 with nn.18 and 19.

Cf. Bowra 1944, 23.

It is remarkable that Tecmessa mainly appeals to heroic/Ajacian standards of conduct; this enhances the power and quality of her speech. See Stanford 1963, on 485-524; Winnington-Ingram, 29-30; Easterling 1984, 3-4; Heath, 182.

See below Chapter VII pp.183-4.

Cf. Synodinou, 100ff.

Cf. Blundell 1989, 74-5, who appears to be less extreme than Synodinou regarding this.

See Kirkwood 1965, 56-9; Winnington-Ingram, 16; Easterling 1984, 1-5; Synodinou, 100-1; Golder, 18. On the relationship between Ajax and Hector in particular, see W.E. Brown, passim.

See Jebb, xxxiii.

The majority of critics consider those lines—responding to Tecmessa's plea in v.594 (μολαδισσού)—as the most sincere part of the "Deception Speech" (even if one accepts the view that Ajax deliberately deceives his hearers in this speech), regardless of the probability that the hero may reject the weakening he describes ("his feelings have been stirred, but his will is unmoved"—Heath, 186): cf. Jebb, xxxiii; Adams, 104; Kitto 1956, 189; Easterling 1984, 5-6; Heath, 186; Synodinou, 103. Contra Dale, 223; see also the references of Easterling 1984, 8(n.18).

vs.891ff. And as Synodinou, 105 remarks, despite Ajax's prayer to Zeus that Teucer should find it (vs.826ff.), Easterling 1984, 6, rightly holds: "She, we feel, is the right person to find it: she knows what to do and say, and this is more than just a matter of making lamentations."

The covering of the body makes its substitution by a dummy easier and less visible by the audience—cf. Arnott, 133.

See Stanford 1963, on 915.

See Segal 1981b, 118 (cf. also 151). Also, Synodinou, 105 aptly
notes: "The irony of the situation is beyond dispute. The woman who was pathetically pleading her master for protection proves to be in a way his 'protector'."

106 See Lloyd-Jones and Wilson, 31.


108 Cf. Synodinou, 106.


110 Can this be a hint on the part of the poet that Tecnessa was not deceived by Ajax's speech? She knew his ἀγορασκον很有 well, as her words in vs. 485-524 and 961-73 show, but I have to admit that two things appear to contradict this suggestion: 1) Tecnessa feels ἀμαθηπειν in v. 807 (see Adams, 103 and 105) and 2) the placing of the "Deception Speech" as a whole episode of the play (thus no other character could have spoken after Ajax, except the Chorus who sing their ὀνόρογον). See also Taplin 1979, 129.


112 vs. 967-8; see Synodinou, 106.

113 Ibid., 106-7. This is, I would say, a feministic approach.

114 See Stanford 1963, 1; cf. also Blundell 1989, 103.


116 See Blundell 1989, 75-6.

117 Cf. vs. 66-7, 81, 118, 125, 127; see also below Chapter VII pp. 177-8, 187-8, and nn. 78 and 80.

118 This reminds us of Odysseus' entrance in the Prologue (cf. vs. 2, 5-6, and 996). Perhaps there is a touch of irony here; see Blundell 1989, 80(n. 97).

120 vs. 990-1.

121 Cf. scn. on 1024: καλῶς δὲ τῷ μὲν Τεκμήσας περιήψε τὸ σκεπάσσαι ὁμόν ὡς γυνικί, τῷ δὲ Τεύκρῳ ὡς ἀνδρὶ καὶ ἀδελφῷ τὸ ὁμοίοι καὶ δάοντα ποιεῖν περὶ τὸ σῶμα. See Heath, 198; also below p.159.


123 On the problem of whom Teucer's words are addressed to (I take them as addressed to the Chorus), see Stanford 1963, on 984-5.

124 See Heath, 205; Blundell 1989, 80-1. Ajax was sure that Teucer would do this (cf. vs. 562-4).

125 Reference to Teucer is also made in the sections on the Atreidae and in the next chapter on Odysseus.

126 See above n.8 and p.154; also Heath, 199.

127 Cf. vs. 1159-62. On the preceding fable and its parody see Heath, 200. On the lowering in the atmosphere of the play see below p.163-4 and nn.175 and 176.

128 See Heath, 206. All "friends" of Ajax in the play sustain the audience's sympathy; as they constantly champion Ajax, what they say receives added gravity. This applies to the Chorus as well (cf., for instance, their words about [the same] Ajax in the Parodos -vs. 154ff.; see Davidson 1977, mainly 163-71).

Heath in his Chapter 5 (pp.165-208) has good remarks on this.

129 See Heath, 201. On the tableau see below p.164 and n.177. Teucer returns to the stage in a hurry, following Agamemnon.

130 Cf. II.15.415ff. There seem to be differences in detail -Sophocles may have another version of the fight in mind (Stanford suggests that of Aeschylus' Myrmidons; see Kamerbeek
and Stanford 1963, on 1273-80).

117  Il. 7.38ff. See above Chapter II p.35.

118  See Segal 1981b, 145; Davidson 1985, 23.

119  See above p.153.

120  Cf. vs.1381-2 and 1399; see also below Chapter VII p.186.

However, on the basis of my view about Teucer's "reservations"
in the passage, I do not agree with Heath, 203, speaking of
a "warm rapprochement" between Teucer and Odysseus.

125  See Kamerbeek, on 1381-2.

126  See Blundell 1989, 105.

127  See Heath, 205-8. Stanford 1963, xlv, is basically favourable,
too.

128  See Bowra 1944, 51; Winnington-Ingram, 61 and 64 with his notes.

129  See Davidson 1985, 23.

130  Cf. Stanford's references to Ajax's μεγαλωμιχία or μεγαλομορφούνη
(1963, xi-xii with n.6, xlv with n.60, i, lxii).

131  See Stanford 1963, lviii; also xlv, on 1019-21 (on the sequel
to the story concerning Teucer in tragedy) and on 1036-7.

132  Ibid., on 572-3. Jebb includes Ἐνπαξαν (v.446) in this context.

133  See Stanford 1963, on 1135; also Jebb's Appendix. A scholion
on 1135 gives λαμπροίων as a synonym to κλέπτης.

134  See above Chapter V pp.116-8.

135  See Stanford 1963, on 1135.

136  See Kamerbeek, ad loc.; he refers to a version according to
which Menelaus gave some jurymen pieces of clay which would not
come out of the voting urn.

137  Cf. Heath, 205-8.
See Knox 1961, 2.

See Heath, 207.

Cf. vs.56-7, 97-8, 188 (by implication), 445-9, 461, 667-8, 717-8, 931, 946-8, 959-60.

Cf. v.1163; Blundell 1989, 90.


See Kamerbeek, 13.

Cf. vs.1042-3: βλέπω γὰρ ἔχερον φῶτα, καὶ τάξιν κακοῖς / γελῶν
d ἐν κακοφύρος ἔξικοι τ' ἀνήρ. Cf. also v.1045 (its ἐν is considered by Stanford 1963, ad loc., as sarcastic). See also Stanford 1963, on 1046.

Ibid., on 1052-90; see also Bowra 1944, 50-3.

The former is not so much an exaggeration (cf. vs.44, 458-9, 726 and 844—see Knox 1982, 10-11 and Blundell 1989, 90[n.154]), while the latter evokes Teucer's mockery (on this see, though, Blundell's comments and references [1989, 92 with n.164]).

See Adkins, 6-7; cf. Blundell 1989, 90-1.

See Blundell 1989, 91.

Ibid.; cf. also Heath, 200.

On θείου for Ajax cf. also v.222 and see Stanford 1963, xxx with n.43, xlii, on 222 and on 1087-8. He remarks that the epithet, already charged with noble meaning in v.222, is meant by Menelaus to be abusive in v.1088, "though in fact it serves to remind us of the warmth and ardour of Ajax's temperament". Cf. also Il.11.548 and 15.690 (in this case on Hector, but in an encounter with Ajax); see Garner, 55; also Cohen, 27.


--- 258
Cf. especially vs. 132 and 677; see, for instance, Knox 1961, 16-7 and Stanford 1963, xxvi, xliii, lvi, on 132, and 282-3; also below Chapter VII pp.176 and 187-8 with n.78. See Blundell 1989, 91 with n.160. Cf. also the irony in the use of ὀψηπία (v.1080- cf. vs.692, 779, 854 and 972-3) and παραλλαξ (v.1087, cf. also ἐνήλαξαν in v.1060 -cf. vs.646-9, 678-83).

Some people compare Creon with Agamemnon, too, (cf. Goldhill, 195), but I think that the comparison with Menelaus is more apt, since Agamemnon yields before it is too late, contrarily to Creon. Cf. Winnington-Ingram, 63-4; Kamerbeek, on 1350 and 1361. Further, Heath, 200 notes that Menelaus "echoes Athene’s speech of institution in Eumenides; but that is typical of the stage-tyrant."


Cf. Winnington-Ingram, 62.

See Stanford 1963, xlvii; contra Heath, 206—particularly regarding Teucer’s role.

See Stanford 1963, on 1150ff.

Ibid., on 1159-60.

Ibid., xlvi.

This seems to be even more preposterous, since in the Iliad, as the Athenian audience may well have remembered, Menelaus calls on Ajax for help, or they fight together, more than once. See above Chapter II pp.42-3.

Cf. Adams, 107; Stanford 1963, on 1102-4; also Easterling 1984,

- 259
For such an attempt see Brown, passim —cf. above Chapter V pp.119-20.

Cf. Stanford 1963, xliii, xlv-xlvi; also xlix(n.64), where he refers to the occurrence of "rather ignoble terms" in this part of the play and lists them —cf., besides, Odysseus' attitude and Agamemnon's admission in vs.1322-4. On the "vulgarity" of the Atreidae see also Winnington-Ingram, 63-5.

See Heath, especially 195-7 and 204-8; also Gellie, 23-6; Holt 1981, passim; Davidson 1985, passim. Prof. D.N.Maronitis (oral communication) has the interesting view that what makes the latter part of the play organic and laughs away any doubts about the unity of the Ajax is what he calls the nostos of the dead hero (towards burial —cf. the analogous case of Hector in the Iliad). On the arguments about the authenticity of the latter part of the play see Jebb, xlv, and Pearson 1922, 128 (both with references).

See Blundell 1989, 93; for the tableau see also Burian, passim; Taplin 1985, 64-5 and 108-9; Heath, 200-1 and 207; Easterling 1988, 93-9. Garner, 59-61 persuasively connects 11.17.128ff., where Ajax struggles in defence over Patroclus' corpse, with Eurysaces' call by Teucer to stand as a suppliant over the helpless body of his father (vs.985-7, 1168ff.).

For the significance of this song see Heath, 201.

See Stanford 1963, on 1235.

See Knox 1983, 13.

Cf. Winnington-Ingram, 65; Heath, 201; Blundell 1989, 93-4.

vs. 1250-4.

See Blundell 1989, 89.

Ibid. However, this attempt is undermined by vs. 1370-1:
(Agamemnon permits Ajax's burial because he likes Odysseus - see below p. 172).

See Blundell 1989, 89.

Ibid., 89(n. 47); see also above pp. 158-9.

See above Chapter II p. 36.

Cf. especially II. 13.703-8, where Ajax and his namesake, the son of Oileus, are compared to oxen; cf. also Menelaus' words about the fall of big bodies in vs. 1077-8.

See Blundell 1989, 93-4.

See Stanford 1963, xlvii (cf. also xvii-xviii and xx1).

Cf. Blundell 1989, 94.


See Blundell 1989, 94.

See Stanford 1963, on 1226ff.

See Blundell 1989, 94.

Cf. also v. 1231 (Oτ' οὖδεν οὐ τοῦ μισεῖν [ἄντος] ἀντίστην ὑπερ) For the recurrent theme of "nobody" in the second half of the play, see Stanford 1963, xlvii(n. 62). It goes without saying that Odysseus' words in v. 126 do not bear the same, contemptuous sense as those of Agamemnon in v. 1257.

See Stanford 1963, on 1264-5.
See above p.155.

See below Chapter VII pp.181-5.

See Blundell 1989, 101-3.

I hereby follow Blundell 1989, 95-9 and 101-2.

Ibid., 96. The references to φιλία/φιλοτης by both Agamemnon and Odysseus go on after vs.1328-31: cf. vs.1351, 1353, 1354, 1359, 1360, 1361.

Certainly as regards his feelings towards Odysseus. Cf. Stanford 1963, on 1370-1.

The translation is Kitto's (1956, 195).

I refer to this in the next chapter pp.184-5.

See Blundell 1989, 103.

See Garner, 58.

Ibid., 59-9 (referring to Tectessa's vain plea to Ajax) and 232(n.26) (quoting Jebb).

See above Chapter II p.41.


Cf. v.1369; see Blundell 1989, 99.


For this use of irony on the part of Sophocles, see especially Stanford 1963, xlv-xlvii and 271; also on 1087-8, 1259-61 and 1264-5.


See Jebb, xliii.
NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

1 See Stanford 1963, lv.
2 See Musurillo, 23.
3 See Bowra 1944, 37.
4 See Weinstock, 56-9 (cf. Kitto 1958, 122); von Blumenthal, 132
   (cf. Opstelten, 14, 100, 114 and 154).
5 See Bowra 1944, 37.
6 See Knox 1961, 1-2. Cf. also Kirkwood 1958, 49; Stanford 1963,
   1; Winnington-Ingram, 72.
7 See Easterling 1977, 126.
8 Ibid.
9 See Stanford 1963, lvi.
10 See Stanford 1954, 104 (cf. also 105: "In general Sophocles' 
   presentation of the scene (...) is rather ignominious for 
   Odysseus, if not explicitly discreditable"). Stanford is not 
   very persuasive a few pages below (107-8), trying to find 
   excuses for Odysseus' first appearance in the Ajax. Cf. also 
   below n.77.
11 See Stanford 1963, on 2; also Leinieks, 193. The latter goes on 
   to note that "one's first assumption that this image is 
   connected with the character of Odysseus (...) turns out to be 
   false" because the image does not reappear in the exodos. I do 
   not agree with this view; see next note.
12 According to Blundell 1989, 60, through this image Odysseus 
   is presented as "an adherent of Harm Enemies: he is tracking 
   down an enemy as usual, in a manner worthy of his traditionally
tricky persona". Significantly, Odysseus appears in the opening scenes of both the extant Sophoclean plays in which he has a role, and in an almost identical manner: apart from his first appearance in the Ajax, he shows caution to the point of cowardice in the Prologue of the Philoctetes, too—he stays behind and sends Neoptolemus to spy out Philoctetes' condition.

13 See Post, 94 and 121.
15 See Post, 94.
16 See Stanford 1954, 106 (cf. also 105).
17 See Knox 1961, 6.
18 Cf. Pindar P.8.95-6. See Frünkel, passim, especially 141; Opstelten, 142.
19 See Stanford 1963, on 121; also ibid., on 124-6; Whitman 1951, 71 with n.34; Opstelten, 142.
20 Cf. vs.1365 and 1367.
23 On this subject see Stanford 1954, 105 and 262(n.8); 1963, on 103. Cf. Pindar P.2.76-7.
24 Cf. πολύτροπος (Od.1.1), πολύμητις (Il.23.709), ποικιλομήτις (Od.13.293), πολυμήχανος (Soph. Phil.1135), ποικιλόφων (Eur. Hec.131). It is worth noting that the last epithet is used by Alcaeus for the fox (ἀλύων ποικιλόφων —fr.116 Page; it probably refers to Pittacus, the resourceful tyrant of
Mytilene). See also Nagy 1979, 47.

Cf. P.2.52-5 and 86, and N.8.36; see above Chapter V pp.114 and 126.


Cf. vs.148-53.

See Kirk 1974, 50.

See Stanford 1963, on 189.

fr.175. See above Chapter IV p.79; also sch. on 190. Sisyphus is mentioned in the Iliad (6.153-4): ἐνεά δὲ Σίσυφος ἔσκεν, ὁ κέραστος γένετ' ἀνήργον, Λίμυρος Αἰολῖνης.

See sch. on 190 and Pearson 1963, 206-7.

fr.567 (in TrGF 4). See sch. on 190.

Hyg. Fáb.60; cf. Phil.622-5. See also Frazer’s comments in his edition of Apollodorus (Loeb) pp.78-9(n.3). Cf. Alcaeus fr.110 Page.

Apollod. 1.9.3.

Ibid. Cf. Od.11.593-600. On Sisyphus’ punishment in Hades see also Sourvinou-Inwood, 47-54.


The Ajax is rightly considered as "a play with many unique words" -see Stanford 1963, on 1339.

Ibid., on 379-82. On ἐὶ in the play see Knox 1961, 18-20; Blundell 1989, 63-4.
Odysseus is unfavourably presented in Hecuba and Rhesus, as well as in Troades and Iphigenieia at Aulis —where he "lurks in the background". Among the extant Euripidean plays Odysseus has a reputable part only in Cyclops, a satyr play; one, of course, should bear in mind that the Euripidean authorship of Rhesus is uncertain. See Stanford 1954, 111-7 and 263-4 (nn. 20, 21, 24, 25, 26, and 28).

O. Rhes. 498-9, 709. οἰμαλύτωτον κρότημα', in particular, may well reflect Sophocles' πάνσοφον κρότημα of fr. 913, which refers to Odysseus. Cf. also κρόταλον ὁριῳ (Cycl. 104).

Cf. Winnington-Ingram, 66.

Cf. N. 6. 24. Referring to ἀλκίμω νεκρῷ, Winnington-Ingram, ibid., notes that "it is the basic contention of Odysseus that the warlike services of Ajax should not be forgotten in his death". Stanford 1963, on 1318-9, seems to find a more general meaning in the phrase. ἀλκίμω νεκρῷ may well be contrasted to θων Ἀτρις ὡν at the beginning of the same line —see Kamerbeek, on 1319; contra Stanford 1963, ibid.

See Stanford 1963, on 1336.

έπελος in the Ajax has different meanings according to whom it refers to —cf. also vs. 1352, 1399. See Blundell 1989, 97 (on the epithets attributed to Ajax by Odysseus) and 100-1.

Cf. Knox 1961, 23 ("he [Achilles] would have recognized the truth that Ajax is the greatest of the Achaean warriors after him, a truth which Odysseus himself states at the end of the play, thereby admitting that the tribunal which awarded him
the arms made the wrong decision") and 36(n.112); also Segal 1981b, 148: "his [Odysseus'] first-person verb in 1340 ranks Ajax above himself, thereby reversing the judgement of the arms". Contra see Kirkwood 1958, 72 and, milder, Hester, 245.

99 See Winnington-Ingram, 68(n.32); Blundell 1989, 98(n.187).
97 Ibid.: also Stanford 1963, on 1356-7.
96 See Winnington-Ingram, 68(n.32); Blundell 1989, 98(n.187).
95 See Musurillo, 23 (for the former interpretation). Not to my surprise, I have found the latter nowhere.
92 See Blundell 1989, 95 with n.176. She goes on to remark aptly that "Odysseus does not object to retaliation per se and reserves the right to reprove whoever started the quarrel".
90 See Stanford 1963, on 1346; Weinstock, 55.
87 Odysseus, though, is the one who has been associated with képaoç (a word usually bearing a negative meaning -cf. above Chapter V n.53 and the Sisyphus reference in n.30 above) already in Homer -cf. II.4.339 (Agamemnon is speaking to Odysseus), 23.709, and Od.13.255 and 291ff. One may wonder what Odysseus' képaoç will be if Ajax is buried -the respect of Ajax's friends (and of the audience), perhaps? On these matters see Stanford 1954, 249(n.21) and 1963, on 1349; Winnington-Ingram, 67; Blundell

57 See Winnington-Ingram, 67.

58 See Stanford 1963, on 1358; also Frankel, 140(n.33). Cf. sch. on 1358: ἐμπληκτοὶ βροτῶν: οἳ μὴ ἐμμένοντες τῇ ἀρχαῖᾳ ἀρετῇ καὶ φιλίᾳ, ἀφρονες παρὰ τοῖς ἀνερφόσις ἄλλως: καύφοι, εὐμεταβλητοὶ ἀνειδίζει ὁ Ὺόδωρος ὡς εὐμεταβλήτω (...). The best rendering of ἐμπληκτος is surely Stanford’s “unstable” —see Blundell 1989, 98(n.188). I take ἐμπληκτοι as referring to Odysseus (cf. the scholia above; Knox 1961, 25; Stanford 1963, on 1358), not to Ajax (Winnington-Ingram, 68-9 with n.33; Blundell 1989, 98 (n.190)).


60 Ibid., on 1365-6. Cf. the scholiion on 1366: καὶ ὁμολογεῖ ὁ Ὀδυσσεὺς τὸ φίλανθροπὸν ἵνα μὴ δῶσῃ πᾶσιν ἀντιληγεῖν.

61 Ibid., on 1367. Cf. also ibid., on 124-6; Weinstock, 58.


63 See Blundell 1989, 99.

64 See Kamerbeek, on 1367.

65 See Knox 1961, 25.

66 Cf. above n.56.

67 In the new Oxford edition of Sophoclis Fabulae, the editors adopt χρᾶς as the last word of v.1373 —instead of χρῆ (cf. the mss. and Stanford 1963). This, as Blundell 1989, 99(n.193) notes, “has the attraction of sustaining Agamemnon’s personal interpretation of Odysseus’ motives.”

68 Cf. v.1380, where Odysseus refers to Ajax using the same epithet; it cannot bear the same meaning in both cases. Cf. 268

67 See Post, 93; cf. also Blundell 1989, 103.
68 Cf. Phil. 96-9.
69 See Stanford 1963, on 1381ff.; cf. also Kamerbeek, on 1381, 1382.

70 v. 1376-7. Contrarily, see Blundell 1989, 101 (n. 198). As Blundell herself admits (105), vs. 1413-4 (ψίλος Ἕκτος ἄνηρ ἄνειποι ἀπορέην) seems to support the view that Teucer cannot set aside every reserve regarding the friendship offered to him by Odysseus; see also above Chapter VI p. 157.

71 vs. 1394-5. As Knox 1961, 28 aptly notes, "these words of Teucer remind us, as they must have reminded and were doubtless meant to remind the Athenian audience, of Odysseus' own account, in Homer, of his meeting with the shade of Ajax in the lower world" (Od. 11. 543ff. - see above my Chapter III).

72 v. 1396. See Blundell 1989, 104.
73 v. 1401.
75 See Stanford 1954, 103-4 and 261 (n. 1).
77 vs. 926 and 913. See Knox 1961, 21-2 and 24-5.
of Odysseus", but a few years later he holds that Odysseus is "not heroic" (1963, lv). Although I agree with Blundell that Ajax and Odysseus are "incommensurable" (1989, 100), the fact that Odysseus has not got "heroic excellence" remains. Knox 1961, 29 has the best remarks on this issue. This is a proper place to refer to Guthrie's article on Odysseus in the Ajax, since it offers some good observations on the closeness of Odysseus' character to the Athenian of the fifth century B.C. As for the rest, Guthrie's paper is far away from my viewpoint here; it is pretty generalizing and its main concern appears to be Odysseus' appearance in the Prologue of the play and his "relationship" with Athena.

91 See Bowra 1944, 37; Stanford 1963, lvii.
92 See Kamerbeek, 14 and on 1367.
93 See Easterling 1984, 8.
94 Ibid.
95 See Winnington-Ingram, 67.
96 Ibid.
98 See Knox 1961, 18.
99 Cf. ibid., 22 and 29.
100 See Winnington-Ingram, 72.
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Note: Abbreviations: Apart from the abbreviations explained below (§I.i), I have used two more in this survey: LIMC = Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae, [vols. I(1) and I(2)], ed. Fondation pour le LIMC, Zürich and München [1981].
Periodicals are indicated or abbreviated as in L’ Année Philologique. As for the titles of literary texts and the names of their authors, I use the most popular abbreviations.

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ii) Fragments: Fragments of the Epic Cycle are cited from Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta (EGF), ed. M.Davies, Gottingen 1988. Fragments of Greek historians are cited from Die Fragmente der Griechischen Historiker (FGrHist), ed. F.Jacoby. Fragments of Aeschylus and


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