The Cambridge Classical Journal (2015) 61, 91–98 doi:10.1017/S1750270515000020
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GLOSSING ACHILLES: HORACE, *EPODE* 13

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This paper argues that the final couplet of Horace, *Epode* 13 alludes both to the description of Achilles playing the lyre in *Iliad* 9 and to ancient scholarly debate about the Homeric passage. Horace's reworking of the *Iliad* underlines his transfer of epic material to a sympotic setting, and the scholarly allusion reinforces Horace's presentation of himself as a symposiastic speaker by drawing on the tradition of symposia as sites of learned conversation. This dual engagement with Homer encourages readers to see their own responses to Horace's poem as part of a continuum of literary debate.

In the final lines of Cheiron's address to Achilles in Horace, *Epode* 13, the centaur advises his young charge to lighten with wine and song the cares that he will face while fighting at Troy. Scholars have emphasised the connections between these lines and the passage in the *Iliad* where Achilles is found by the ambassadors playing the *phorminx* outside his tent (*Il.* 9.185–9),[1] but less attention has been paid to the relationship between Horace's appropriation and the scholarly debate that surrounded the *Iliad* passage in antiquity. Ancient scholars, like their modern counterparts, were perplexed by the passage and suggested numerous ways of interpreting it. In this article I shall argue that Horace draws on this scholarly debate in his construction of the poem's symposiastic speaker.[2] In doing so, he implicitly comments on the scholarly nature of his authorial activity, and draws on the notion of the symposium as a site of literary exchange. His resulting projection of the symposium as a communal space forms a crucial part of the poem's discourse of consolation.

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I would like to thank Armand D'Angour, and the journal's editors and anonymous referee for their comments.

1 See e.g. Lowrie (1992) 427–8, 431–2; Watson (2003) 436. It is important to distinguish between the textual prolepsis of the *Iliad* passage and the use of texts describing the prophecy itself, such as Bacchyl. 27.34–8 S–M: the Hesiodic *Precepts of Cheiron* are often mentioned as a possible model for the prophetic episode, and for allusion to Bacchylides see e.g. Lyne (2005) 5–6.

2 The notion of Horace's reading of classic authors being mediated by commentaries is now well established: cf. Lefkowitz (1991) 158–60; Bitto (2012) on his use of Pindaric commentaries. Nor is this an isolated phenomenon: Virgil's indebtedness to the Homeric scholia is explored at length by Schlunk (1974). Cairns (1991) demonstrates that *Tityre … auena* at Verg. *Ecl.* 1.1–2 draws on an etymology of Τίτυρος as a type of Italian Doric *aulos* (Σ Theoc. *Id.* 3.2a; Ath. 4.182d), derived from Artemidorus' *On Doric*. Σ *Id.* 3.2a shows that the etymology of 'Tityrus' was disputed: Virgil's intervention in the debate parallels Horace's here.

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A comparison of the relevant passages reveals important differences. Horace's Cheiron stresses the specifically sympotic nature of Achilles' song (*Epod.* 13.15–18):

> unde tibi reditum certo subtemine Parcae
> rupere, nec mater domum caerula te reuehet.
> illic omne malum uino cantuque leuato,
> deformis aegrimoniae dulcibus alloquiis.

> The Fates with their unerring thread have cut your return from there [*sc.* Troy]: your sea-blue mother will not receive you home. While there, lighten all your care with wine and song, sweet comforts for disfiguring distress.

The representation of song in the *Iliad* passage is somewhat more oblique (*Il.* 9.185–9):

> Μυρμιδόνων δ' ἐπί τε κλισίας καὶ νῆας ἱκέσθην,
> τὸν δ' εὗρον φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ
> καλῇ δαιδαλέῃ, ἐπὶ δ' ἀργύρεον ζυγὸν ἦεν,
> τὴν ἄρετ' ἐξ ἐνάρων πόλιν Ἠετίωνος ὀλέσσας·
> τῇ ὅ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν, ἄειδε δ' ἄρα κλέα ἀνδρῶν.

> They came to the Myrmidons' tents and ships, and found him delighting his heart with a clear-sounding *phorminx*, a beautiful, intricate thing, on which a silver cross-piece was fitted. He had taken it from the spoils when he destroyed Eetion's city. With this he was delighting his heart, and singing the famous deeds of men.

For Michèle Lowrie, Horace's lines are a generically inflected reworking of the Homeric passage:[3] both feature Achilles using music as a salve for his troubles, but the phrase *uino cantuque* 'stands for the symposium just as κλέα ἀνδρῶν stands for epic'.[4] Lowrie sees this generic shift primarily in terms of the poem's argument; Horace's phrasing enacts his sympotic transformation of epic material.[5] I shall argue that this generic shift takes place in part through scholarly engagement with Homer's text.

Homer's Achilles 'delights his heart with the *phorminx*' at 186, and the repetition of the lexis at 189 (τῇ ὅ γε θυμὸν ἔτερπεν) precedes mention of his song's subject (κλέα ἀνδρῶν). As modern scholars have noted, Achilles' τέρψις is simultaneously simple and opaque: we recognise that he is taking pleasure in his activity, but the specific nature of this pleasure, its

3 Given that the scene in *Iliad* 9 is the only occasion in the poem when Achilles is seen singing and drinking wine, it is to be expected that readers would have recalled that passage when reading *Epod.* 13.17–18. Mankin (1995) 225 is sceptical about seeing allusion to this scene on the grounds that Achilles has at that point not yet lost all chance of returning home (cf. *Il.* 9.412–20), but this misunderstands the generalising nature of the prophecy, which emphasises Achilles' spatial location at Troy (*unde … illic*) and conflates different temporal moments: cf. Lowrie (1992) 428 n. 3, and Watson (2003) 436.

4 Lowrie (1992) 427.

5 Lowrie (1992) 428.

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relation to his wider situation and the nature of his subject matter are not specified, and are all matters of debate.[6] Horace, however, uses terms of greater precision than those found in Homer, and arrogates to (his own) sympotic poetry a role that develops the one given to song in the *Iliad*. The injunction *omne malum uino cantuque leuato* is more specific than the *Iliad*'s description in that it relates Achilles' future performance to a particular subjective experience (*malum, deformis aegrimoniae*) and gives it a more developed psychological function (*leuato*). Horace's description effectively fills in the gaps left by Homer's scene. Horace's text constitutes not just a generically couched 'strong misreading', but a *supplementation* of the Iliadic hypotext.[7]

While the idea of song as a consolation for sorrows is conventional, especially in sympotic contexts,[8] a connection has been noted between Horace's *alloquiis* and the language used in a scholium on the Homeric passage,[9] which says that it is not ἀνοίκειον for Achilles to be singing: παραμυθία γὰρ τοῦτο θυμοῦ καὶ λύπης ('for this [song] is a consolation for his anger and anguish', ΣbT *Il.* 9.186). The scholium proceeds to justify Achilles' behaviour further in relation to his status as a heroic figure: ἔστι δὲ νέος καὶ φιλόμουσος καὶ λάφυρον ἔχων τὴν κιθάραν· καὶ οὐ θηλυδριώδη μέλη, ἀλλὰ κλέα ἀνδρῶν ᾄδει ('he is a young man and fond of music and the *cithara* is a spoil of war. And he sings not womanly songs, but "the famed deeds of men"').[10] As scholars have pointed out, *alloquium* occurs here for the first time in extant Latin, and 'is a calque on Greek παραμύθιον'.[11] The morphological similarity between *al-loquiis* and παρα-μυθία is reinforced by the use of object *aegrimoniae* in the genitive, which follows the construction of the Greek but is not found with *alloquium* or *alloquor* elsewhere.[12] I suggest that this verbal link is designed to be recognised as an allusion,[13] constructing 'an intention-bearing authorial voice'.[14] The allusion underlines the different ways in which Horace and Cheiron are positioned in relation to the Iliadic material: Horace qua author looks backwards, transforming and commenting on the Homeric text, whereas Cheiron's prophecy anticipates the *Iliad*'s events. Importantly, Achilles in *Iliad* 9 goes beyond what is suggested in Cheiron's paraenesis by singing of κλέα ἀνδρῶν. Whereas *omne malum … leuato* spoken by Horace the sympotic *praeceptor* rewrites the Iliadic φρένα

6 See e.g. Halliwell (2011) 72, who calls the passage 'the most symbolically condensed and puzzling of all Homeric depictions of song'.

7 This phenomenon differs somewhat from the 'incorporation' discussed e.g. by Hinds (1998) 100–3, in that the primary text aims to modify how its model is understood as a ground for its own operation.

8 See Watson (2003) 436.

9 Kiessling and Heinze (1917) 11–18; Lowrie (1992) 431 n. 48; Watson (2003) 436. The latter comments that *alloquium* 'here making its first appearance in extant Latin, is a calque on Greek παραμύθιον', citing Soph. *El.* 130.

10 For further justification in these terms cf. Porph. *Quaest. Hom.* ad *Il.* 9.186.

11 Watson (2003) 436, citing Soph. *El.* 130 as an additional parallel for παραμύθιον.

12 See Lowrie (1992) 431 n. 48 for further comment.

13 The change from singular παραμυθία to plural *alloquiis* emphasises that both wine and song are 'consolations' for grief when combined, thus underlining the sympotic aspect of Horace's appropriation. Cf. *Il.* 9.202–4 for the presence of wine in the scene.

14 Hinds (1998) 49.

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τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ, the same words spoken by Cheiron constitute a prolepsis that is exceeded by Achilles' generically inflected statement: the subject matter implied by κλέα ἀνδρῶν makes his song not only an *alloquium* but a marker of his engagement with his situation. In creating this contrast between speakers, Horace emphasises his own creative transformation of Homer, but also deftly stresses how the significance of previous texts is informed by their reception.

The significance of this scholarly allusion becomes clearer when we recognise that numerous different ways of understanding *Il.* 9.185–9 were current in antiquity. Beside the scholium cited above, another pair of interpretations are offered (ΣbT *Il.* 9.186):

> ἢ οἰόμενος ἥξειν αὐτοὺς σοβαρεύεται. καλῶς δὲ ἀπούσης τῆς ἐρωμένης ᾄδει, ὅπως μὴ δοκοίη κωμάζειν. ἢ ὅτι πεφρόντικε μὲν τῆς τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἀσφαλείας, προσποιεῖται δὲ καταφρονεῖν· φησὶ γοῦν· "δῖε Μενοιτιάδη, | νῦν ὀΐω περὶ γούνατ' ἐμὰ στήσεσθαι Ἀχαιούς", καὶ πάλιν· "ὄρσεο, διογενὲς Πατρόκλεις, ἱπποκέλευθε. | λεύσσω δὴ παρὰ νηυσὶ πυρὸς δηΐοιο ἐρωήν."
>
> Or expecting that they [the ambassadors] will come he gives himself airs. And he sings in a noble manner [i.e. of the deeds of men] in the absence of his mistress, so that he might not appear to be in a komastic mood. Or because he is concerned about the Greeks' safety, but is giving the impression of disdaining them. At any rate, he says 'lordly son of Menoetius, now I think the Achaeans will gather around my knees' [*Il.* 11.608–9], and again, 'rise, well-born Patroclus, minister of horses. I see the rush of destructive fire by the ships' [*Il.* 16.126–7].

These interpretations offer an alternative to song-as-consolation. According to the first, Achilles sings as he does in order to avoid giving an impression of levity that would risk undermining his opposition to Agamemnon. According to the second, he attempts to give the impression that he does not care about the Greeks. Both readings see his song as designed to project an image of himself to the ambassadors. Another scholium sees Achilles' performance as the aesthetic equivalent of training for war: οὐκ ἤθελε δὲ ἀργῶν σώματι καὶ ψυχῇ ἀργεῖν, ἀλλ' ἡτοίμαζεν αὐτὴν πρὸς τὰς πράξεις καὶ ἐπ' εἰρήνης τὰ τοῦ πολέμου μελετῷ, ὡς καὶ οἱ Μυρμιδόνες ('he did not wish being idle in body to also be idle in his soul, but he directed it to actions and even in peace took care of the matters of war, just like the Myrmidons', Σ bT *Il.* 9.186).[15]

15 This last reference presumably refers to *Il.* 2.773–7 (so Erbse ad loc.). Ancient commentators also recognised the metapoetic resonance of the passage. In explaining why Achilles sang about famous men, one gloss reads ὅτι ἀειμνήστους δεῖ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς εἶναι· οἱ γὰρ ἀοιδοὶ διὰ τῶν παλαιῶν ἱστοριῶν τοὺς ἀκούοντας ἐσωφρόνιζον. προσέθηκε δὲ τὸ ἀνδρῶν, ἐπειδὴ καὶ θεῶν ᾄδουσι γάμους ('because good men should always be remembered. For the bards taught their listeners good conduct by means of the ancient tales. And he has inserted "of men" because they also sang about the weddings of the gods', ΣAbT *Il.* 9.189b). As well as seeing Achilles' song as reflecting epic poetry's moral purpose (τοὺς ἀκούοντας ἐσωφρόνιζον), this scholium imputes a generic self-consciousness to Homer, who has specified Achilles' subject matter (προσέθηκε δὲ τὸ ἀνδρῶν) in order to distinguish the song from genealogical hexameter poetry performed by other bards (ᾄδουσι).

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It is likely that some if not all of these views were current in Horace's time.[16] If this were the case, at least some of Horace's readers would have recognised that *leuato … dulcibus alloquiis* presents a picture of Horace adjudicating on a scholarly debate and picking out the 'correct', or at least most productive, way of interpreting the *Iliad* passage.[17] This picture is complemented by several other points in the poem's final lines where allusions to Homer and engagement with Homeric scholarship combine. One such is the phrasing of *nec mater domum caerula te reuehet* (16). This line modifies its Iliadic model (18.59–60), where Thetis says that she will not convey Achilles δόμον Πηλήϊον εἴσω. Whereas Thetis specifies not returning to Peleus' house, Horace's Cheiron associates Thetis with the sea by metonomy,[18] and does not mention Peleus. This modification references a scholarly quibble with Thetis' δόμον Πηλήϊον εἴσω recorded by ΣA *Il.* 18.60, which claims that 'Homer did not know, as later poets did, that Thetis did not remain with Peleus after Achilles was born' (ὅτι Ὅμηρος οὐκ οἶδεν, ὡς οἱ νεώτεροι ποιηταί, κεχωρισμένην τὴν Θέτιν ἀπὸ τοῦ Πηλέως ὑπὸ τὴν Ἀχιλλέως γένεσιν). By omitting mention of Peleus and referring only to (Thetis') *domum*, Horace playfully (and somewhat pedantically) makes the point that it would not have been 'Peleus' house' to which the prospective return would have been directed, and hints at Cheiron's having a more precise knowledge of the future than Homer's Thetis, and even Homer himself. Another scholarly reference is at work in the depiction of Cheiron and Achilles' relationship, again to a passage where Homer's supposed ignorance is at issue. ΣT *Il.* 9.486, glossing Phoenix's account of Achilles' youth, asserts that Homer did not know of the tradition in which Achilles was brought up by Cheiron, although later poets did (οὐκ οἶδεν ὁ ποιητὴς παρὰ Χείρωνι τραφέντα αὐτόν, ἀλλ' οἱ νεώτεροι). Positioning Cheiron as a foster parent by referring to Achilles as his *alumnus* (11) nods to this reading, underlining that Horace's use of Cheiron is a deliberately un-Homeric gesture. Taken together, these lines constitute a nexus of scholarly allusions that allows readers to understand Horace's text as both a creative appropriation of Homeric material, and a corrective, critical engagement with the *Iliad*.

Far from being merely a parade of scholarly knowledge, however, these nods to Homeric scholarship contribute to the projection of Horace's poetic persona within the poem's sympotic setting. The symposium was, among other things, a space for literary discussion, often specifically relating to comparisons of texts: Plutarch records a tradition that Alexander the Great and his companions '[compared] Homeric verses as a way of passing the time or at symposia' (τῶν Ὁμήρου σύγκρισις ἐπῶν ἐν ταῖς διατριβαῖς ἢ παρὰ τὰ συμπόσια, Plut. *Mor.* 331c), and Aulus Gellius pictures a group of friends comparing

16 The scholia closely reflect the discussion of the line in Porphyry's *Homeric Questions*: cf. MacPhail (2011) 148–51. Porphyry's gloss in turn indicates that debate about the passage was long-standing when he wrote.

17 Scholars have noted that various details of *Epod.* 13 anticipate the *Iliad*: *lubricus* at 14, which has the secondary meaning 'slippery', has been plausibly read as an allusion to Achilles failing to keep his footing at *Il.* 21.263–72; Watson (2003) 434–5.

18 Thus Watson (2003) 436, comparing Callim. *H.* 2.18–20.

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passages in Theocritus and Virgil's *Eclogues* at a dinner party (NA 9.9.4).[19] While such texts reflect real-life practice,[20] there is also a tradition of literary symposia, going back at least to Plato's *Symposium*, in which close readings of poetic texts, and the quotation of poetry to support one's argument, play a crucial role.[21] Therefore, while the poem's engagements with the *Iliad* have generic force, they also help to articulate Horace's poetic role as symposiarch.[22] The function of *Epod.* 13.17–18 in pointing to a scholarly interpretation and drawing on that interpretation to support the exemplary use of Achilles can be read as an intertextual equivalent of the discussions and interventions that took place in symposia and sympotic texts. As such, the text blurs the distinction between author and internal speaker: the internal audience is implied to be sensitive to Horace's scholarly aside (as *persona loquens*) in the same way as the reader.

In relation to the various interpretations of the *Iliad* passage quoted above, Horace's use of *alloquiis* is agonistic, suggesting that Achilles' song in the *Iliad* should be read as a form of self-consolation as opposed to the other ways of interpreting it. This intervention, seen in the light of the other interpretations' emphasis on deception (σοβαρεύεται, προσποιεῖται), has a moralising edge: Horace's implied reading sees Achilles as a more honest character than the one pictured by those that see his performance as an act. At the same time, however, the phrasing of *omne malum … leuato … alloquiis* marginalises the readings of the *Iliad* passage that emphasise the content of Achilles' song as connected to his status as a martial figure. In figuring song as an *alloquium*/παραμυθία, Horace aligns his picture of Achilles with a scholarly interpretation that supports his sympotic agenda. We can now also see more clearly that *Epode* 13 bears different relations to the text of the *Iliad* itself and the scholarship on it. Whereas Horace's consolatory reading adds detail to the *Iliad* by imputing a particular psychological aim to φρένα τερπόμενον φόρμιγγι λιγείῃ, it operates selectively with regard to the scholarly debate on the lines. By means of this double manoeuvre, Horace underlines his credentials both as a sympotic *praeceptor* and as a scholarly reader engaged in learned response to the literary canon.

This scholarly engagement also has wider consequences for the poem's consolatory discourse, implicitly asking readers to adjudicate the validity of the poem's 'interpretation' of the *Iliad*, and to reflect on how their reading is influenced by the cultural situation in which it occurs.[23] Much of the debate about *Epode* 13 has concerned the question of whether the emphasis on Achilles' death at lines 15–16 serves or subverts

19 Literary quotation is also a standard feature of texts such as Plutarch's *Quaestiones conuiuales* and Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*. On the symposium in Horace see e.g. Murray (1985).

20 While Plutarch and Aulus Gellius are referring to the practices of the πεπαιδευμένοι during the Second Sophistic, it is likely that the literary culture of Horace's time would have included at least some of this type of sympotic discussion.

21 See e.g. Pl. *Symp.* 195d–196b.

22 On which see Lyne (2005) 3–4.

23 There is also the suggestion that Horace's text will itself be subject to the kind of scholarly scrutiny directed towards the *Iliad*: for Horace anticipating the scholarly reception of his work cf. e.g. Eidinow (2009).

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the poem's consolatory rhetoric, and scholars have proposed various answers to this question. For some, Achilles' fate serves as a positive foil: no matter how bad the situation faced by Horace and his friend(s), they have more hope for the future than Achilles does,[24] while others have asserted that the exemplum has a more pessimistic force.[25] What I want to stress here, however, is the social aspect of Horace's text in contrast with its Iliadic model. Although Patroclus is present in *Iliad* 9, Achilles' song is not in any obvious sense an act of communication with him, and was certainly not explained in that way by the scholiasts. For some ancient commentators, as we have seen, the song was a deceptive mode of communication intended to inflect the ambassadors' response to him, while on the παραμυθία-based reading, the song is directed inwards towards Achilles' own feelings. By contrast, Horace figures song as a productively communicative act, with Cheiron communicating to Achilles, the speaker to the internal audience, and the author to the reader. Whether or not one accepts the *amici* of the manuscripts in line 3,[26] the poem's positioning of its readers expands Achilles' situation, broadening the dialogue between Cheiron and Achilles into a reading situation in which an individual's understanding of the poem is filtered through the situation of the internal speaker and symposiasts, and through the historical community of readers and commentators gestured to by Horace's scholarly allusion.

Although the poem's setting emphasises the contextual instability and the contingency of the interpretative moment, poised between the storm and the uncertain future,[27] the *horrida tempestas* . . . *niuesque* of the opening give way to the scholarly reflection implied by the final lines.[28] By positioning readers as part of a cultural dialogue that includes Homer and Homeric scholarship, as well as numerous other models,[29] Horace creates a reading community, a virtual symposium that reaches beyond the *hic et nunc*. The process of *leuare* . . . *pectora* is also extended in terms of individual readerly experience, as the intertextual

24 Cf. e.g. Mankin (1989) 135. For an assessment of this debate see Watson (2003) 421–2. Some other readings: Fraenkel (1957) 65–6; Rudd (1960) 383–6; Kilpatrick (1970); Davis (1991) 11–16, 146–50.

25 See e.g. Lowrie (1992) 432: 'the generic and logical alignment of the exemplum according to the demands of the symposium cannot completely transform Achilles into a reassuring mythological precedent'. Cf. also Davis (1991) 15–16. Lyne (2005) 7–8 stresses the similarity between Cheiron's speech and the function of the poem. The positioning of the speaker complicates the relation between Horace and Cheiron as speakers by emphasising the former's scholarly voice.

26 See Watson (2003) 425–6 for a persuasive defence.

27 Cf. the remarks of Oliensis (1998) 97–8; Lyne (2005) 10–11 on the unsettling effect of the 'silence' the poem projects into its future.

28 On attempts to read the storm politically see Watson (2003) 417–20, 422, with further references. Allegorical employment of storms was common (cf. e.g. Archil. 105 W with Heraclit. *All. Hom.* 5.2), and although the *tempestas* need not have a political as opposed to a more generally symbolic force, this backdrop is likely to have suggested such a reading. A related approach would be to point out that the very indeterminacy of the reference, the fact that the *tempestas* cannot be definitively connected to a particular event or set of events, adds to its unsettling quality, while also allowing it to function as a transcontextual signifier. Read thus, the *tempestas* as a diachronic structure would anticipate the emphasis later in the poem on reading as a transcontextual activity.

29 See n. 1. We can now also add Sappho's 'Tithonus Poem' (5–6) to the texts that lie behind *dum uirent genua*.

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density of the poem's final lines reminds the readers of previous literary experiences (of Homer, Catullus[30] and other sympotic poetry) that mediate their interpretative activity. The poem therefore situates readers' understanding of the injunction *uino cantuque leuato* against a historical background of concrete interpretative acts,[31] and prompts reflection on the social, textual and scholarly negotiations by which such understanding is sustained and made meaningful.

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30 Cf. Lowrie (1992) 426–7; Lyne (2005) 9–10.

31 Cf. Lowrie (1992) 432, for whom the contrast between the poet's tentative hopefulness (*fortasse*) and the 'depiction of Achilles' inevitable death serves to deepen the various fears expressed in the poem'. Yet the exemplum's 'sense of universality' offsets this by promoting an 'impression … of similarity in human circumstances over time'. Even though Lowrie is sceptical of Achilles' function as a consolatory exemplum, she suggests that the mere fact of being put in relation to him and his sufferings 'makes us feel less alone'.

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