

EIRENE

STUDIA GRAECA ET LATINA

LVI / 2020 / I-II

Centre for Classical Studies
Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

TAKING LEAVE OF THE PHAEACIANS: ON *ODYSSEY*, XIII,125-187*

SEBASTIAAN VAN DER MIJE

“Here we leave the good Phaeacians standing around their altar, their fate uncertain for ever” – so Stanford ad *Od.* XIII,187. The central question this paper attempts to solve is whether their fate really is “uncertain for ever”. The commentaries by Hoekstra (1989), de Jong (2001) and Bowie (2014) think so. West (2014) writes that the poet leaves us in suspense but at the same time argues that the Phaeacians come to no harm. In the following, I will argue that this last position (that they come to no harm) can be shown beyond reasonable doubt to be true, but I will need more than a few words to get there, as I intend not merely to give my reasons, but also to discuss the reasons that have led others to a different conclusion. My excuse is that I think it is an important issue to settle, if only for its implications on how the gods deal with humans; also, I hope that my discussion of several aspects of XIII,125-187, ranging from single words to larger units and finally to the passage as a whole, may contribute to its interpretation beyond this one issue.

It has long been recognized that whether or not the Phaeacians are saved hinges on the advice Zeus gives to Poseidon in v. 158 in reply to the latter’s stated intention to cover (or possibly surround) their city with a mountain.

* This article was also published in an Open Access mode, under Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International Licence (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0).

I am grateful to the members of the “Amsterdamse Hellenistenclub” who commented on an earlier version of this paper, in particular to Irene de Jong for her most valuable comments on more than one version, to the anonymous reviewer of *Eirene*, and to Ela Harrison, who corrected numerous mistakes in language and style.

Unfortunately, the text is not certain here. The vulgate reading has μέγα δέ σφιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψαι, identical to Poseidon's words and thus an endorsement of his intention, while the scholia report that Aristophanes of Byzantium read μηδέ for μέγα δέ, which says the opposite.

Two short and incisive articles have addressed this twofold issue directly, one by Bassett (1933) and one by Friedrich (1989).¹ Their solutions are diametrically opposed: Bassett reads μέγα δέ in v. 158 and assumes that the Phaeacians are annihilated, whereas Friedrich argues for μηδέ and for the Phaeacians being spared.

The issue has been pronounced on in passing in several books and papers dealing with the *Odyssey*, and inevitably, every commentator of *Odyssey* XIII must address it and every editor must choose a reading for v. 158. The variety of positions taken, and of considerations advanced, is considerable, and consensus seems as far away as ever.² One reason for this may be that in most discussions (as in the papers by Bassett and Friedrich) arguments from Homeric, or more specifically Odyssean “theology” are advanced as decisive considerations; and since the books on that field are by no means closed (and probably never will be), any such arguments are unlikely to meet with general approval. I have therefore attempted to solve the issue as much as possible from the context itself. I have discussed theological and other extra-contextual considerations that have been advanced *against* my position, but have not advanced or used any such considerations in its support. This self-restriction has two advantages: I avoid the pitfall of explaining *ignotum per ignotius* and conversely, if any firm conclusions are reached from the direct context, these conclusions may in turn shed light on the wider issue. I will make some suggestions at the end of this paper. But let us now turn to the text.

¹ Despite its title, DE ROGUIN 2007 does not discuss our issues.

² The positions on the two questions in chronological order: ALLEN 1917²: μέγα δέ; VAN LEEUWEN 1917: μηδέ / no further punishment; AMEIS - HENTZE - CAUER 1920: μηδέ / no further punishment; BASSETT 1933: μέγα δέ / city covered with mountain; STANFORD 1958: μηδέ / open end (but ad VIII,569: city surrounded by mountain); VON DER MÜHLL 1971: μέγα δέ (but in app. crit.: *del. Bothe multi, iure ut vid.*); EISENBERGER 1973: μηδέ / no further punishment; HOEKSTRA 1989 *ad* 125-187: reading and fate “cannot be decided” (but prints μέγα δέ); FRIEDRICH 1989: μηδέ / no further punishment; PERADOTTO 1990: μέγα δέ / open end (?); VAN THIEL 1991: μέγα δέ; DE JONG 2001: *non liquet* / open end; ALLAN 2006: μέγα δέ / city covered with mountain; BOWIE 2014: μέγα δέ / open end; WEST 2014; 2017b: μηδέ / no further punishment.

1. Poseidon's and Zeus' First Exchange (125-145)

From XIII,78 on, we are told how the Phaeacian ship completes the voyage to Ithaca in one night and lands at the bay of Phorcys. The sailors lay the sleeping Odysseus on the beach, hide nearby the many presents he has been given by the Phaeacian nobles, and head for home. The scene changes abruptly in mid-verse: "But Poseidon had not forgotten his original threats against Odysseus and inquired after Zeus' will" (125-127).³ How exactly we are to understand the terms "threats" (ἀπειλάων) and "will" (βουλήν) will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

*

We use the word "threat" normally to denote a direct communication between two parties. This is not necessarily the case with the Homeric term ἀπειλαί. E.g. in *Il.* XVI,200, Achilles tells his Myrmidons "Do not forget the threats you uttered at the ships [i.e. away from the battlefield] against (i.e. concerning) the Trojans".⁴ Similarly, the "threats against Odysseus" are not to be imagined as having been spoken directly to Odysseus, but rather as spoken to another audience *concerning* Odysseus. As the word πρῶτον signalizes, we have to think of words uttered some time ago and with lasting impact.⁵ This strongly suggests that the reference is to the so-called Curse of Polyphemus: after Odysseus had blinded and derided him, Polyphemus prayed to Poseidon: "May Odysseus may never reach home, or if it is his lot (μοῖρα) to see his loved ones and reach home, may he arrive late and miserably, having lost all his companions, on another man's ship, and find further troubles at home" (IX,528-535). The narrator adds: "So he prayed, and Poseidon gave ear to him" (IX,536). Poseidon is in fact consistently seeing to the fulfilment of the curse, as we are told several times: by the narrator in I,19-21, more fully by Zeus in I,68-75 and most fully, with reference to each single term of the curse, by Tiresias in XI,10-17.

Any doubts that this is what Poseidon is recalling are removed by his words to Zeus: "I was expecting Odysseus to arrive home after much suffering - I did

³ οὐδ' ἐνοσίχθων | λήθετ' ἀπειλάων, τὰς ἀντιθέω Ὀδυσσῆϊ | πρῶτον ἐπηπείλησε, Διὸς δ' ἐξείρετο βουλήν. All translations and paraphrases in this paper are my own.

⁴ μή τις μοι ἀπειλάων λελαθέσθω, | ἄς ἐπὶ νηυσὶ θεῆσιν ἀπειλεῖτε Τρώεσσι. The word ἀπειλαί (always plural) occurs four more times in the *Iliad*, once more (XX,83) clearly in the absence of the one threatened, clearly not so in XIV,479, and unclear in IX,24 and XIII,219.

⁵ For the value of πρῶτον see LATACZ - NÜNLIST - STOEVE SANDT *ad Il.* I,319: "(nun) einmal", unterstreicht die Unumstößlichkeit [...]; in ähnlichem Kontext *Od.* 13.125ff."

not completely take away his return, because you had originally (πρῶτον!) promised this and confirmed it with a nod” (131–133).⁶ Poseidon is clearly invoking a mutual understanding between himself and Zeus regarding the punishment of Odysseus, and the wording echoes Polyphemus’ prayer. As the latter had foreseen, killing Odysseus was not acceptable (see also Zeus’ words I,75), but that the terms formulated by Polyphemus as second-best course are in operation is confirmed by Teiresias.

*

Poseidon complains that, contrary to his justified expectations, the Phaeacians have brought Odysseus home quickly and comfortably “and gave him glittering gifts, plenty of bronze and gold and woven cloth – in quantities he would not even have brought home from Troy, if he had suffered no adversities” (135 to 138). These are almost the exact words spoken by Zeus, in Poseidon’s absence, to Athena in announcing Odysseus’ future (V,38–40). Does this indicate that Poseidon has found Zeus out, comparable to V,286f., where Poseidon upon spotting Odysseus on his raft correctly infers from the situation what had been contrived behind his back: “Oh my, the gods have obviously taken a different decision concerning Odysseus while I was with the Ethiopians”?

This assumption is problematic for several reasons. (1) There is nothing in the text of this passage to support it. Poseidon does not say anything, either to himself or to Zeus, indicating that he suspects any god to have had a hand in Odysseus’ escort and riches. (2) If Poseidon had any such suspicions, would he not either confront the gods themselves (or Zeus himself) directly, or perhaps more indirectly, complain with Zeus about other gods disrespecting him, rather than, even more indirectly, complain to Zeus that other gods *might* start disrespecting him if he lets mortals get away with this? (3) Zeus’ reply that “it would be difficult” for other gods to disrespect Poseidon (141–142) would lose all its point if we were to assume that Poseidon suspects other gods but shrinks from confronting them.

But what about Διὸς δ’ ἐξείρετο βουλήν (127): does not the word βουλή suggest that Poseidon assumes Zeus to have a plan, a grand scheme, which included Odysseus’ royal escort? Again, we have a parallel passage which would appear to support this idea – the only other occurrence of this phrase, in fact, and again with Poseidon as subject. In *Il.* XX,15, Poseidon, who has been summoned, along with the other gods, to Mount Olympus at Zeus’ bidding, “inquired after

⁶ καὶ γὰρ νῦν Ὀδυσσῆι ἐφάμην κακὰ πολλὰ παθόντα | οἴκαδ’ ἐλεύσεσθαι· νόστον δέ οἱ οὐ ποτ’ ἀπήρῳν | πάγχυ, ἐπεὶ σὺ πρῶτον ὑπέσχεο καὶ κατένευσας.

Zeus' plan: Why have you called the gods together? Can it be that you have something in mind (ἦ τι μερμηρίζεις) concerning the Trojans and the Greeks?"⁷

Upon inspection, however (as with *Od.* V,286f.), there are significant differences between the two passages. In *Il.* XX, Poseidon was summoned and therefore naturally assumes that Zeus has something in mind. And more importantly, he *does* in fact inquire about it: the speech introduction is immediately followed up by Poseidon's question about Zeus' intentions. In *Od.* XIII, however, Poseidon has not been summoned, and he does *not* ask Zeus what he has in mind. What he does ask, in the second exchange, is Zeus' opinion on what he, Poseidon, himself has in mind. There is, in other words, no reason to think that Poseidon suspects Zeus of any intentions.

Against this background, Διὸς δ' ἐξείρετο βουλήν in *Od.* XIII should best be understood as "wanted to know Zeus' opinion / have Zeus' ruling / hear Zeus' will" – which is borne out in the sequel, as he will not leave before having heard Zeus' opinion.⁸

If we accept that Poseidon does not suspect any plotting by the gods and unwittingly repeats Zeus' own words about Odysseus' riches, is there any significance to this repetition? Unless one puts it down as a mere feature of oral composition,⁹ it must be interpreted as dramatic irony, i.e. a reference not intended by the speaker which the narratees (the poem's intended audience) are expected to notice – and sometimes another character too. What the dramatic irony does in this case is hard to pin down. It may signify to the narratee and to Zeus (1) the fact that Poseidon, had he guessed that he was quoting Zeus, could have made things difficult for him, which lends suspense to the passage;¹⁰ (2) the impotence of Poseidon's protest against Zeus' superior strategy; or (3) the degree to which Poseidon's position is in fact opposed to that of Zeus, who

⁷ *Il.* XX,15-20: (Poseidon) Διὸς δ' ἐξείρετο βουλήν | τίπτ' αὖτ' ἀργικέραυνε θεοὺς ἀγορήν δὲ κάλεσσας; | ἦ τι περὶ Τρώων καὶ Ἀχαιῶν μερμηρίζεις; [2 vv. Zeus:] ἔγνωσ ἐννοσίγαιε ἐμὴν ἐν στήθεσι βουλήν.

⁸ The elusive word βουλή by no means always denotes a premeditated "plan" and the traditional translation "will" fits many contexts – e.g., in the context just cited (*Il.* XX) "plan" fits the bill in v. 15 but not in v. 20 ἔγνωσ [...] ἐμὴν [...] βουλήν. And even the most famous "plan of Zeus", in *Il.* I,5, is contested: e.g. CLAY 1999, 2, argues for "plan", but LATACZ – NÜNLIST – STOEVESSANDT 2002 *ad loc.* translate *Wille* and comment "Zeus' Wille, Ratschluß, Plan". *LfggrE*, s. v. gives "Ratschlag, Ratschluß, Beschluß, Plan" – in this order.

⁹ MARKS 2008, whose firm allegiance to the oralist approach is not in doubt, thinks that "the *versi iterati* are part of a self-conscious link between books 5 and 13 that a Homeric audience could reasonably be expected to perceive".

¹⁰ If Zeus on hearing back his own words felt nervous for a moment, no indication of this has found its way into the text.

had willed the very thing Poseidon is complaining about. All three may well be true and relevant at the same time.

The unsuspecting Poseidon seems to assume that his brother will sympathize with his indignation at the actions of the Phaeacians – and we will see that Zeus does everything to confirm that impression. But the narratees know better: since the Phaeacians have done what Zeus wanted them to do, they will expect that Zeus will not be inclined towards punishing them – unless one were to assume that all he cares about is Odysseus and to hell with the Phaeacians, and there are readers of Homer who would not be surprised at that. But that assumption would be quite at odds with the original context in which his words were spoken: In V,38–40, Zeus announces his intention to indemnify Odysseus in reply to Athena’s point that if the gods forsake Odysseus, this will tell people (specifically kings) that virtue does not pay off. Zeus’ words are not meant merely to pacify Athena¹¹ but also to confirm her point that it is in the best interest of the gods to see to it that justice is done to (and among) humans. With this in mind, it is hard to assume that Zeus would be indifferent or cynical regarding the fate of the Phaeacians, whose hospitality towards Odysseus was not only willed by Zeus, but also the right thing to do in itself.

*

We have seen that Poseidon appeals to Polyphemus’ curse, which he expected to be fulfilled. That he had reason to expect this, is confirmed by the seer Tiresias (XL,111–115), who repeats the terms of the curse one by one: Odysseus would come home (1) late, (2) miserably, (3) having lost all his companions, (4) on another man’s ship.¹² Let us see if Poseidon, in his protest to Zeus, could have appealed to any of these specific terms.

The element “late” may well still be an issue for Poseidon, because he was unpleasantly surprised to find Odysseus on his raft in book V (286–290) and the Phaeacians have in no way delayed their guest’s departure and arrival home. But he does not bring this up, perhaps because he acquiesces in the fact that “the gods” had so decided (V,286f.). Also, I,16f. suggests that this year was the accepted time for Odysseus’ return. The element “having lost all his companions” has been fulfilled. So has the element “on another man’s ship” – although Polyphemus and Poseidon will not have envisaged a luxury cruise but something as described by

¹¹ There is in fact more to be said for the opposite: that Athena appeals to notions which she knows will weigh with Zeus.

¹² I leave out the last term, “find more sufferings at home”, which at this stage of the story belongs to the future. This term (specified by Tiresias as referring to the suitors) will of course be fulfilled.

Odysseus in his lying tale to Eumaeus XIV,334ff.: as an escaped slave with no possessions other than the rag he is wearing. The god must feel tricked, but since the term “on another man’s ship” has been met, he cannot appeal to it here.

The one element in Polyphemus’ curse that is left and to which he can and does refer is the element *κακῶς*. This word can be taken in two ways: referring to Odysseus’ arrival home, i.e. in a miserable condition – and this would seem to be the more obvious way to take it – or referring to the whole *nostos*, i.e. after a journey fraught with suffering. Remarkably, in stating that he has been deceived in his expectation, Poseidon says Ὀδυσσῆ’ ἐφάμην κακὰ πολλὰ παθόντα | οἴκαδ’ ἐλεύσεσθαι (XIII,131-132), which can only refer to the journey as a whole. And taken this way, there is little to complain about: this term, too, has been fulfilled. It is Poseidon himself who says, with reference to the storm he unleashes, “I think I will drive you through sufficient misery” (V,290), “Now float about in the sea after suffering much misery” (V,377) and “You won’t complain, I think, that you didn’t get your portion of misery” (V,379).¹³ How can the god who himself inflicted “sufficient misery” on Odysseus now state that Odysseus did not suffer much?

Had Poseidon appealed to the “arrival” aspect of *κακῶς*, he would have had a stronger case and put Zeus on the defensive by claiming with some justification that the agreed miserable state in which Odysseus was to arrive has not been fulfilled.

Arguing on the basis of what Poseidon might have said may seem far-fetched, but it is not unreasonable to say that if the narrator were steering towards the obliteration of the Phaeacians, agreed to by Zeus, he would give us an effectual Poseidon, whose arguments would be hard to counter. What we get is the opposite – an ineffectual Poseidon –, which suggests that the narrator wants Zeus to be in position to deny Poseidon his wish for revenge.

Apart from the terms of the Curse, Poseidon refers to the Phaeacians, by whom he feels disrespectfully treated (129) and here too, he fails to make the most of his case. He could have advanced that he had long been displeased at the escorting practices of the Phaeacians, and that they were well aware of this – or at least their king Alcinous was. He (Poseidon) himself had told the first king of the Phaeacians, his own son Nausithous, about his feelings and specified the punishment awaiting the Phaeacians if they would carry on this way, a message that Nausithous passed on to his son Alcinous on several occasions (ἔφασκε VIII,565 ≈ XIII,173).

¹³ ἔτι μὲν μὴν φημι ἄδην ἐλάαν κακότητος (V,290), οὕτω νῦν κακὰ πολλὰ παθὼν ἀλώω κατὰ πόντον (V,377), and οὐδ’ ὥς σε ἔολπα ὀνόσεσθαι κακότητος (V,379).

Secondly, he could have pointed out that the Phaeacian rulers were aware that Odysseus was hated by him, their ancestor-god, because Odysseus had been quite open about this.¹⁴ Why then did they not treat Odysseus as (in his own account) he was treated by Aeolus after he was blown back to the island of the winds: “Leave this island immediately, miserable mortal! It is not right for me to entertain and help on his way one who is hated by the blessed gods?”¹⁵ True, the Phaeacians had promised Odysseus to take him home before Odysseus had revealed his name and had told them about his conflict with Poseidon, so they may have felt bound to escort him. But there are no signs whatsoever that their feelings for him cooled down after receiving this information – quite the contrary: they heap even more gifts on him (XIII,7–16). Poseidon might have argued with some justification that the Phaeacians had wilfully chosen to disregard his feelings in giving Odysseus those lavish presents and first-class passage and that they therefore deserve severe punishment. But the fact is that he does not. The only “aggravating circumstance” he mentions is that the Phaeacians are his own offspring (130).

And so, before Zeus has said a word, the parameters that determine the direction this episode will take are all in place. Zeus’ position is clear: the royal escort that the Phaeacians had given Odysseus coincided with his announcement and with his will – Poseidon’s unwitting quotation of Zeus’ own words brings it home to the narratees, should they have forgotten. It was his will because Odysseus needed to be indemnified for unjustified hardships, which might lead people to think that the gods do not care whether someone is just or not. For this very reason, he cannot now be indifferent to the prospect of the Phaeacians being punished for their hospitality. Poseidon’s position is also clear, and the narrator could have chosen to make him wield his weapons skilfully and put Zeus under considerable pressure: by having him suspect the hand of Zeus or “the gods” in Odysseus’ comfortable arrival home (as he did upon seeing Odysseus on his raft); by having him argue that this is not the “miserable arrival” he expected and was entitled to expect; by having him cite the escorting practices of the Phaeacians, about which they knew his feelings and for which he had

¹⁴ Odysseus told his Phaeacian audience that Poseidon gave ear to Polyphemus’ prayer (IX,536) and that Tiresias confirmed that Poseidon was angry with him because of Polyphemus and would make his return bitter (XI,101–103). One might object that we cannot be sure that Poseidon was listening in when Odysseus told his story to the Phaeacians and therefore he may not know that Odysseus had been open about his problems with Poseidon. But that objection seems too theoretical.

¹⁵ X,72–74: ἔρρ’ ἐκ νήσου θάσσον, ἐλέγχιστε ζώντων· | οὐ γάρ μοι θέμις ἐστὶ κοιμζέμεν οὐδ’ ἀποπέμπειν | ἄνδρα τόν, ὃς κε θεοῖσιν ἀλέχθεται μακάρεσσιν.

specified the punishment – a punishment now if ever appropriate, since at this occasion, they had granted the most luxurious kind of escort to someone who was quite open about the fact that he was hated by their ancestor-god. Such a barrage of accusations would have been hard to resist. As it is, the narrator has Poseidon miss all these opportunities, thus leaving Zeus ample room to manoeuvre him into a position that fits his own priorities.

*

Zeus replies: “Oh my! Broad-chested earth-shaker, how can you say such a thing! The gods are not treating you disrespectfully, not at all! It would indeed be hard to throw you, the most senior and valorous god of all, into disrespect.”¹⁶ By displaying such consternation, Zeus signals that he takes Poseidon’s concerns very seriously – in other words, he pays him the very respect that Poseidon feels to be in jeopardy. The four adjectives of praise serve the same purpose,¹⁷ and Zeus tops his accolade by suggesting that his superior strength allows him to teach any god who would “diss” him a lesson – the euphemistic “it would be hard” is rhetorically effective: the big boys understand each other.¹⁸

“And as to mortals (Zeus continues), if indeed any one does not honour you, giving in to his force and strength, you are always free to exact punishment, now and in future” (143f.: ἀνδρῶν δ’ εἴ πέρ τις σε βίη καὶ κάρτει εἴκων | οὐ τι τίει,

¹⁶ 140-142: πόποι, ἐννοσίγαι’ εὐρυσθενές, οἷον ἔειπες. | οὐ τί σ’ ἀτιμάζουσι θεοί· χαλεπὸν δέ κεν εἶη | πρεσβύτατον καὶ ἄριστον ἀτιμήσιν ἰάλλειν. For ἀτιμήσιν ἰάλλειν, an unusual phrase also in Greek, see BOWIE *ad* 128 and BECK, *Lfgre*, s. v. ἰάλλω.

¹⁷ The adjective πρεσβύτατον is remarkable. Bowie writes: “Different traditions made Zeus (*Il.* XIII,355) or Poseidon (*Hes. Th.* 453-491) the elder brother”. MARKS 2008, 50f. assumes (correctly, I think) that Hesiod’s account is not opposed to what Homer says: as all Olympians except Zeus were born twice (the second time after regurgitation by Cronus), “any Olympian [can] be described as older or younger than Zeus”. When Zeus confronts Poseidon in *Il.* XV,181f., he claims to be the elder, but here he would leave that honour to Poseidon. But even if one counts from the moment of conception, Poseidon is not the eldest son of Cronus, as Hades was conceived before him, according to Hesiod. One could explain this by assuming that Zeus takes Hades out of the equation as a god ever absent from Olympus and never taking part in divine squabbles, or by counting from the moment of regurgitation and assuming that Zeus here takes himself out of the equation (either as being *hors concours* or by way of suggesting that the thought that *he* would ever be disrespectful to his dear brother does not even enter his head). I would prefer this last option, which would bring all the Homeric instances in line: Hera’s claim in *Il.* IV,59, the narrator’s statement in *Il.* XIII,355, Zeus’ own claim in XV,166 (repeated by Iris in 182) and *Od.* XIII,142 would then all count from the “second birth”, the regurgitation.

¹⁸ It is understood in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that Poseidon is very strong. Apollo avoids a conflict with him in the *Iliad* (XXI,462-477), as does Athena in the *Odyssey* (VII,379f.; XIII,341-344). Even Zeus, who claims to be “much stronger” than Poseidon (*Il.* XV,165), says that a fight “would not have ended sweatless” (*Il.* XV,228).

σοὶ δ' ἐστὶ καὶ ἔξοπίσω τίσις αἰεὶ). He even adds in a concluding asyndeton: “Do what you will and as is dear to your heart” (145: ἔρξον ὅπως ἐθέλεις καὶ τοι φίλον ἔπλετο θυμῷ).

This last phrase is in line with Zeus’ emphatic assurance of Poseidon’s power. On the face of it, he has hereby given Poseidon *carte blanche* to do whatever he feels like doing, and this is how Bassett takes it.¹⁹ But that seems a bit fast: in XXIV,481 Zeus says to Athene: “Do as you like; but I will tell you how it is fitting” – he is much more diplomatic with Poseidon, but the situation is otherwise similar.²⁰ Poseidon, for one, is not assured; else he would now leave the scene and do “what is dear to his heart”, which is, as we are about to learn, to smash the returning ship in the open sea and cover (or surround)²¹ the city with a mountain. The fact that he does not do this shows that he perceives the strong condition formulated in 143f. to override the seemingly unconditional permission given in 145.

The condition is linguistically marked as strong by εἴ περ 143, which is more emphatic than simple εἰ and suggests doubt that the condition is actually met.²² And the term of the condition itself confirms this doubt, because “someone giving in to his force and strength” does not fit the Phaeacians at all.²³ They were driven by sympathy with Odysseus and may be criticized for taking Poseidon’s sensitivities too lightly, but not for being overweening or challenging Poseidon’s power, believing themselves to be mightier – which is what βίη καὶ κάρτεϊ εἴκων means.²⁴ Zeus’ words describe the behaviour of brutes, and that of the Phaeacians has, if anything, been civilized and decent to a fault.

More specifically, such violent and ruthless behaviour is typical of other offspring of Poseidon, such as the giants Otus and Ephialtes (XI,305–320), or

¹⁹ BASSETT 1933, 305.

²⁰ ἔρξον ὅπως ἐθέλεις: ἐρέω τέ τοι ὡς ἐπέοικεν.

²¹ On what ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψαι exactly entails, see section 2.

²² “If indeed” is Bowie’s translation, following DENNISTON 1954. BAKKER 1988, 229–232 describes this as an instance of the non-concessive use of εἴ περ, which he calls “sceptical” and is in effect not far removed from Denniston. WAKKER 1994, 315–329 names the non-concessive use of εἴ περ “exclusive”, which is even stronger: “only in the extreme case that”. Although such a strong condition fits my point very well, I find it not always convincing (e.g. not at *Il.* VII,378) and I therefore follow the weaker “sceptical” interpretation “if indeed” / “if really”.

²³ ALLAN 2006, 91: “The gap between the Phaeacians’ deeds and their fate is underlined by the wording of Zeus’s agreement [...] The phrase βίη καὶ κάρτεϊ εἴκων is hardly appropriate to the placid Phaeacians.” This is well observed, but what is the explanation of the inappropriateness? Since Allan accepts μέγα δέ in 158, he can only blame Homer for the inept phrase of v. 142. But if one reads μηδέ in v. 158, the inappropriateness is calculated and highly meaningful.

²⁴ νικώμενος ὑπὸ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ βίας καὶ τῆς ἰσχύος, ὥστε διὰ τοῦτο ἔξυβρίζειν (*scholion V ad 143*).

more to the point, Polyphemus himself, on whose behalf Poseidon is now acting, and who had said to Odysseus: “you are naïve, stranger, or from far away, that you are telling me to fear or to heed (ἀλέασθαι) the gods: Cyclopes do not care (οὐ ... ἀλέγουσιν) for Zeus or the gods, because we are much stronger. As for me, I would not, in order to heed the enmity of Zeus (Διὸς ἔχθος ἀλευάμενος), spare you or your companions if that went against my own impulse (θυμός).”²⁵ The Cyclopes’ lack of respect for the gods is obvious from these words, as is their reliance on their own strength. The word βίη itself is not used by Polyphemus, but it is used by the narrator to refer to the behaviour of the Cyclopes towards the Phaeacians that occasioned Nausithous to resettle to Scheria (VI,5f.). By his choice of words, then, Zeus appears to point away from the Phaeacians and, if anywhere, to the likes of Polyphemus.

Before leaving this section about the first exchange between Poseidon and Zeus, let us compare one more parallel passage that is, once again, instructive both for its similarities and for its differences. At the end of book VII of the *Iliad* (443ff.),²⁶ Poseidon complains to Zeus about the wall the Achaeans have built around their camp, saying that they have omitted sacrificing to the gods before building it, and that if we let this pass, no mortal will heed the will of the gods any longer. Moreover, this wall might overshadow the fame of the wall around Troy which he himself and Apollo built one generation ago.

As in our passage, Poseidon vents his indignation and his fear of loss of respect and does not (right away) suggest a course of action himself. Also, the opening line of Zeus’ reply is identical with the one in *Od.* XIII: ὦ πόποι, ἐννοσίγαι’ εὐρυσθενές, οἷον ἔειπες. He goes on to assure that “a god much weaker than you are might have such concerns. Your fame will [always] remain as far as dawn stretches”. The similarities to our passage are obvious.

But from now on the scenes go different ways, because in *Il.* VII, Zeus proceeds to give tailored advice: “When the Achaeans have left, destroy the wall, flush the debris into the sea and cover (καλύψαι!) the place with sand.”²⁷ One can see why the narrator chose to have Zeus refrain from making such a spontaneous

²⁵ IX,273-278: νήπιός εἰς, ὃ ξεῖν’, ἢ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας, | ὅς με θεοὺς κέλευαι ἢ δειδίμεν ἢ ἀλέασθαι· | οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν | οὐδὲ θεῶν μακάρων, ἐπεὶ ἢ πολὺν φέρτεροί εἰμεν· | οὐδ’ ἂν ἐγὼ Διὸς ἔχθος ἀλευάμενος περιδοίμην | οὔτε σεῦ οὔθ’ ἐτάρων, εἰ μὴ θυμός με κελεύοι.

²⁶ This passage about the Achaean wall will also feature in section 3.4 about the absence of the Phaeacians from the audience’s world.

²⁷ At the beginning of *Il.* XII, the destruction of the wall in the way Zeus suggested is described by the narrator in a unique prolepsis of events taking place after the *Iliad*, even after the Trojan war.

suggestion in our passage: Poseidon's threat to punish the Phaeacians in a specific manner was introduced with a purpose in VIII,567-569, and the narratees would expect this threat to surface here and now. If Zeus would at this point propose an alternative measure, that would create an awkward situation.

But apart from this, the situation is parallel in many respects: Poseidon complains to Zeus that humans have done something which threatens his status. Zeus in reply emphasizes Poseidon's unassailable glory, which serves two purposes: first, he takes the edge of off Poseidon's anger by thus emphasizing his status – and a threat to his status was the subject of his complaint, so Zeus' praise is as it were a "speech act": it produces what it asserts – and second, by stressing the security of Poseidon's status Zeus implicitly suggests that not every negligence by humans needs to be met with "zero tolerance". Poseidon can afford a looser rein.

Another thing we find in both passages is that Zeus avoids commenting on the offence itself – the omitted hecatombs in *Il.* VII, the riches of Odysseus and the insouciance of the Phaeacians in *Od.* XIII – and suggests measures in the future (*Il.* VII) or subject to a condition (*Od.* XIII), thereby avoiding that anyone comes to harm.

Like the Greeks when they built their wall without hecatombs, Alcinous and his countrymen were arguably insouciant in carrying on escorting strangers. But by saying "the god may either fulfil these things or leave them unfulfilled, as is dear to his heart" (ὥς οἱ φίλον ἔπλετο θυμῷ), Alcinous is not challenging Poseidon's power, as Polyphemus challenged the power of the gods – on the contrary, he explicitly recognizes that it is in Poseidon's sovereign power to do or not to do this. He obviously hopes for the god's magnanimity – and Zeus is implicitly suggesting to his brother to show just that.

At the end of this first exchange, Poseidon's position, which seemed strong, is perceptibly weakened, and that of Zeus is strengthened: Zeus, who after Poseidon's "harmless" complaint is not put in the defensive, has emphasized Poseidon's unassailable honour but thereby also dismissed Poseidon's idea that he must act to protect it. He has confirmed Poseidon's right to exact punishment anytime, but also formulated conditions that hardly apply to the case at hand. Poseidon cannot but feel that the punishment he has in mind may be out of proportion to the offense. He has no choice but to get back to Zeus and ask him explicitly.

This assessment of the situation is confirmed by the difference in pitch between Poseidon's first blustering address to Zeus and the far more uncertain tone of his second speech – a difference that would be hard to explain if Poseidon had really felt unconditionally backed by Zeus.

2. Poseidon's and Zeus' Second Exchange (146-158)

Poseidon's second turn starts as follows: "As far as I'm concerned, I would do so [i.e., do what is dear to my heart, v. 145] right away; but I always respect and heed your temper" (αἰψά κ' ἐγὼν ἔρξαιμι, κελαινεφές, ὡς ἀγορεύεις | ἀλλὰ σὸν αἰεὶ θυμὸν ὀπίζομαι ἢ δ' ἀλεείνω).²⁸ "Now here is what I intend to do: shatter the returning ship out in the open sea, so that they finally stop escorting people, and cover/surround the city with a big mountain" (vv. 147-152).

*

What exactly does κ' [...] ἔρξαιμι convey? According to *CGCG* 34,13 (with example 21), "the first-person potential optative can indicate that someone cautiously takes permission to do something, or complies with an order or request". Similarly KÜHNER - GERTH II § 396,2: "So erscheint der Optativ mit ἄν [...] in der I. Person ähnlich dem Futur als schwächerer (oft auch entschiedenerer) Ausdruck des Willens." In the same vein Hoekstra: "The potential opt. can express politeness, cf. e.g. XV,506. [...]." But in the parallel adduced by Hoekstra, the force of the potential optative is in fact difficult to pin down: what is the function of a "polite" touch if (as is the case in XV,506) one is not taking a liberty but making a promise? It may be better to take the optative there as a true potential: depending on my coming home in time, I'll send you gifts tomorrow.²⁹ And here as well, the sense "I will then do so now" (politely phrased but all the more determined) is not what we need, because Poseidon will in fact *not* do so now but will ask again; and the very wording, with the emphatic contrast ἐγὼν ... ἀλλὰ σὸν (etc.), precludes the idea of determination. A potential sense (here bordering on the counterfactual), "this is what I might/would do" is better suited to the context.³⁰

²⁸ VAN BENNEKOM, *LfggrE*, s. v. θυμός 2a (Vol. II col. 1082.1) takes θυμὸν more neutrally as "deine jeweilige Laune" (i.e. "your mood"), but that seems weak as an object to both ὀπίζομαι and ἀλεείνω. The word "temper," semantically located between "mind" (seat of emotion) and "anger" (emotion in action), is close to the core meaning of θυμός. Compare also *Il.* XV,223f. (Zeus to Apollo about Poseidon) οἴχεται εἰς ἄλα δῖαν ἄλευάμενος χόλον αἰπὺν | ἡμέτερον and *Il.* I,192 (Achilles pondered whether he should kill Agamemnon) ἦε χόλον παύσειεν ἐρητύσειέ τε θυμόν.

²⁹ ἦῶθεν δέ κεν ὕμῖν ὁδοιπόριον παραθείμην, In fact Telemachus does not return to the town that evening (see XVI,476-481), and the banquet for his companions is never mentioned again.

³⁰ Another explanation is given by BOWIE *ad loc.*: "I have long wanted to get on and do'. The optative + κε can express something that was potentially the case in the past but was not actually realised; the combination can thus express long-held desires. [...] Poseidon tactfully indicates that he does not need Zeus's promptings, just his permission". Bowie refers to CHANTRAINE 1958,

The words Poseidon uses (148 σὸν αἰεὶ θυμὸν ὀπίζομαι ἢ δ' ἀλεείνω) almost read like a reversal of Polyphemos' hubristic words referred to above, οὐ γὰρ Κύκλωπες Διὸς αἰγιόχου ἀλέγουσιν and οὐδ' ἄν ἐγὼ Διὸς ἔχθος ἀλευάμενος περιδοίμην (σεῦ).³¹ And if we accept that by the wording βίη καὶ κάρτει εἴκων Zeus hinted at Polyphemos and his kind, we may also take Poseidon's reply to indicate that he has understood it and is, equally implicitly, distancing himself from his uncouth offspring. But even if one is not convinced that the hint was taken – or even that a hint was intended by Zeus – Poseidon is, by his declaration, *de facto* distancing himself from the ways of the Cyclopes and thereby (if anything) weakening his claim that Polyphemos must receive full satisfaction.³²

The phrase νῦν αἶ (149) has been taken to mean “but now that I am sure of your approval”,³³ but that cannot be right here: why should Poseidon bother spelling out the punishment he has in mind – indeed, why should he address Zeus a second time at all – if he were sure of his brother's approval? It does not fit the preceding two lines either: His words “I would do so right away, but I always take care to avoid your displeasure” (147f.) make perfect sense if Poseidon is not sure of Zeus' approval and therefore spells out what he has in mind, whereas taking νῦν αἶ as “now that I am sure of your approval” would make the preceding lines meaningless or at best insincere.

Moreover, if the articulation of his plan were made in a confident spirit, Zeus' ensuing suggestion to *change* the punishment (petrify the ship near Scheria instead of smashing it in the open sea – I leave the “mountain” part out of consideration for the moment) would be completely unprepared for. But if we take seriously Poseidon's wish to consider Zeus' opinion, he has practically invited Zeus to make a suggestion.

I therefore suggest reading νῦν αἶ (149) in connection with Poseidon's αἰεὶ (148) which in turn echoes Zeus' αἰεὶ (144): “(even if you grant me that I can *always* exact revenge) I am *always* careful not to displease you (so I will ask

II,220 (§ 325) for this use, but that section deals with the past potential (typical example: III,220 φαίης κε ζάκοτόν τέ τιν' ἔμμεναι), in which the potential is situated in a time *prior* to that of the utterance. That is not the case here.

³¹ IX,273–278, quoted in n. 34. Another point of contrast is that, whereas Polyphemos will only listen to his own θυμός (IX,278), Poseidon will take account of Zeus' θυμός, Zeus responds by saying “what I think best ἐμῶ θυμῶ” (154).

³² Neither Zeus nor Poseidon were present when these words were spoken by Polyphemos, but the lawlessness of the Cyclopes was not unknown to the gods. But the bottom line is that we, the narratees, are in a position to notice the verbal echo and to appreciate the correspondences, whether intended or not.

³³ AMEIS – HENTZE – CAUER *ad loc.*: “Jetzt hingegen, da ich deiner Zustimmung sicher bin”, similarly BOWIE: “αἶ has a contrasting force: ‘(I was afraid of your anger), but now...’”

for your approval in particular cases). Now *in this particular case*, what I have in mind is ...” This not-contrasting value of $\nu\tilde{\nu} \alpha\tilde{\nu}$ is borne out by its usage elsewhere in the *Odyssey*.³⁴

*

As argued above, Poseidon’s case for punishing the Phaeacians harshly was not argued very effectively in the first exchange – mainly because of the points he could have but did not advance, among them his long-standing annoyance at their escorting practice. In the second exchange, he does address the issue, but in a remarkably veiled way: “in order that they now (or: at last) stop escorting people”. Again, no indication that he had told them about his displeasure long ago, and had specified the consequences. It would have made his case much more compelling if he had mentioned that. When, if not now, is the moment to follow up on his threat?

Also remarkable is the placement of this newly advanced reason for punishment, after the first part of the punishment (smashing the ship) and before the second (enveloping the city with a mountain). It is thus syntactically and conceptually connected to the first part of the punishment only, while the second and more drastic part (the mountain) is left without a clear purpose.

What may be the reason for this – for Poseidon’s veiled indication of the escorting issue and for the “isolated” position of the sterner part of the punishment? I see two explanations. On the “actorial level”, the reason may be that (as indicated above, see the end of section 1) Poseidon himself senses that the punishment by mountain will appear out of proportion and so adds it as a kind of afterthought. Should Zeus dismiss it, it will not be a complete rejection of Poseidon’s plan, which would mean loss of face. The same can be said of the “prophecy” which he fails to mention: what if Zeus should not be convinced? Poseidon would cut a poor figure with his ineffectual threats.

On the “narratorial level”, the purpose is clear: like the instances of Poseidon’s “harmlessness” in his first address, this “isolation” of the mountain part of the

³⁴ $\nu\tilde{\nu} \alpha\tilde{\nu}$ is used 7× in the *Odyssey*, where it always indicates an addition to or specification of an existing state of affairs: In IV,727.817.518 and XIV,174, the context is “bad enough that Odysseus is lost – *and now* Telemachus is gone/at risk”. In XIII,303, Athena assures Odysseus that she has always been at his side “*and now* I have come here to help you”. In XVI,65, Eumaeus says that his guest (Odysseus incognito) has allegedly strayed about “*and now* he has escaped from a Thesprotian ship to my place”. In XVI,233, Odysseus tells his son that the Phaeacians “who escort others too” [present tense! Another dramatic irony...] have taken him to Ithaka, *and now* I have come here (to Eumaeus’ stable). In the *Iliad*, we find this same usage in IX,700; elsewhere (II,681, XVII,478 ≈ 672 ≈ XXII,436, 21.82) there is a marked contrast. I owe the list to AMEIS – HENTZE 1900.

punishment from its aim and the vague hint to a longer-standing issue with escorts enable Zeus to avoid any harsh punishment without antagonizing Poseidon.

By indicating that he wants the escorting to stop *now*, Poseidon is in effect dropping his wish for revenge and is inviting Zeus to think of a way to accomplish this new objective. If that can be achieved, Poseidon's honour would be safe. And this is just what Zeus will do.

What exactly μέγα δὲ σφιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψαι means is not entirely clear: *cover* the city with a mountain (i.e. crush it and all its inhabitants) or *surround* the city (i.e. the peninsula it is situated on) with a mountain, thus blocking their harbours and their access to the sea? Scholars are divided on the issue.³⁵ Friedrich is to my knowledge the only one to offer a reason for his preference: “[if the punishment were a mere shutting off of Scheria from the rest of the world by the closing of its two harbours], why should the Phaeacians be so alarmed and engage in propitiating Poseidon by rich sacrifices in order to avert such punishment?” One could add: is blocking the harbours so drastic a punishment that Poseidon has to seek Zeus' approval? Also, if Homer had blocking the harbours in mind, he made things quite complicated for Poseidon: by situating the city on a peninsula with harbours on both sides (VI,236 καλὸς δὲ λιμὴν ἐκάτερθε πόλιος) he would have the god erect a horseshoe-shaped mountain ridge. Why would the poet do that? On the whole, I tend to the “crushing” variant, also because it seems more in line with “smashing” the ship, but I cannot prove it beyond doubt,³⁶ and so I will refrain from making a choice and use neutral wording. One thing is clear: the expression must denote a very harsh punishment.

*

³⁵ HAINSWORTH *ad* VIII,569: “throw a great mountain about the city, i.e. blockade it and separate it from the sea so as to put a stop to Phaeacian seafaring rather than to crush Scheria out of existence”; AMEIS – HENTZE *ad* XIII,152 and ERBSE 1972, 145 agree. The other position is taken by BASSETT 305 (“The τίσις proposed by Poseidon is the blotting-out of the city” and 306 “the Phaeacians were annihilated”), FRIEDRICH 1989, 395 (“cover their city with a great mountain under which all Phaeacians are to disappear”) and BOWIE *ad* 152 (“The phrase implies the obliteration of the city, not, as some have suggested, just the blocking of the harbour”). GARVIE *ad* VIII,569 gives both opinions and does not express a preference. Stanford seems to have changed his opinion as his commentary proceeded: *ad* VIII,569 he opts for blocking the harbours, but *ad* XIII,152, he adds “but it might mean ‘overwhelm,’ i.e. destroy all the Phaeacians, as the rulers of Laputa crushed rebellious towns”.

³⁶ Friedrich examined the use of the verb elsewhere and found that it clearly points towards “crushing”. My own lexical investigations do not confirm this – but neither do they clearly point to “surrounding”. For reasons of space, the evidence will not be presented here. I will gladly make it available to anyone interested.

In his reply, Zeus is taking care, as he did in his earlier reply, not to antagonize Poseidon. The word μέν in ὧς μὲν ἐμῷ θυμῷ δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα (154) indicates that he is “merely” giving his opinion – the unspoken δέ clause conveying that Poseidon is still free to do as he likes.³⁷

Interestingly, ἐμῷ θυμῷ δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα is a unique phrase in Homer. We have ἐγὼν ἐρέω ὧς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα four times in the *Iliad* and once in the *Odyssey*.³⁸ The insertion of ἐμῷ θυμῷ may well be intended to echo Poseidon’s σὸν θυμόν (148), thus reassuring him that he merely does Poseidon’s bidding in letting him know his feelings.

The meaning of the first part of Zeus’ advice: to turn the ship, when it is in sight of the island and seen by everyone, into a rock resembling a ship “for all people to marvel at” (155-157) is not controversial apart from this last phrase, ἵνα θαυμάζωσιν ἅπαντες | ἄνθρωποι, which is taken by some as “for all people for all time to marvel at” instead of “for all Phaeacians present to marvel at”, which in my opinion is the more natural way to take it in the context. I discuss this question in more detail in section 4.1.

The second part of Zeus’ advice (158) is much disputed. Is Zeus merely echoing Poseidon’s proposal (μέγα δέ σφιν ὄρος πόλει ἀμφικαλύψαι) or should we assume that Zeus says the opposite (“and *not* to envelop...”) by reading, with Aristophanes of Byzantium, μηδέ instead of μέγα δέ? This may well be the most serious textual issue in all of Homer, more so than the famous one in *Il.* I,5, where Zenodotus read δαῖτα (“their bodies a prey for dogs and a feast for birds”) instead of the vulgate πᾶσι (“... for dogs and all birds”). It is more serious because in *Il.* I,5, choosing one reading rather than the other has no wider implications for the story or for the “moral fabric” of the poem. But here, it matters a lot.

*

From what we have seen, everything has been preparing for a “no” from Zeus – an answer one would expect from the start, because the Phaeacians have acted in line with Zeus’ expectations and his wishes, the context being that people should see (by the example of Odysseus) that virtue is rewarded in the end. If the operation to accomplish this were to entail that others (the Phaeacians) were punished for their virtue (hospitality), Zeus’ plan would be less than impressive.

³⁷ Thus AMEIS – HENTZE – CAUER 1920. Bowie takes μέν as “emphatic”.

³⁸ *Il.* IX,103; IX,314; XII,215; XIII,735; *Od.* XXIII,130. I owe these references to AMEIS – HENTZE – CAUER 1920.

In the first exchange, the narrator has presented us a Poseidon who fails to put Zeus under pressure: he does not capitalize on the fact that Odysseus does not arrive home “miserably”, as he had reason to expect; he does not openly suspect that the gods have been thwarting his policy regarding Odysseus, and he does not mention his long-standing intention to punish the Phaeacians for their escorting. Zeus in his reply gives him “emotional satisfaction” but ignores the issue at hand; he confirms in general terms that Poseidon is free to punish wrongdoers, but the condition he attaches does not apply to the current situation. As a result, Poseidon after this first exchange is further removed from attaining his aim than he was at the start.

In the second exchange, Poseidon continues to play his cards poorly and spontaneously weakens his case for revenge. He emphasizes that he will take care not to do anything Zeus would disapprove of. His avowed goal is no longer to take revenge on the Phaeacians for their treatment of Odysseus, but to stop future escorting. To underpin this, he could have mentioned the history of this issue, but once again he fails to do so. The focus is now on finding a way to stop the escorts, and this Zeus does.

The indications gained in sections 1 and 2 suffice, in my opinion, to settle the matter: after this, it is hardly conceivable that Zeus would advise Poseidon to erect that mountain, or that Poseidon would do so against his brother’s will. We must therefore read μηδέ in v. 158 (or delete the line). But there are two more, and major, indications from the direct context confirming the results reached so far: (1) Zeus’ suggestion to modify part 1 of Poseidon’s intended punishment (from “shatter the ship in the open sea” to “petrify the ship in sight of the city”) makes sense only if it is accompanied by a change in part 2 (erect a mountain); and (2) Poseidon is in fact seen to go away after petrifying the ship. No mountain is erected, which in turn implies that Zeus never suggested that it should be.

These two clear pointers in the context have (unlike the more subtle conversational moves detected above) been advanced before. But for those in favour of keeping the vulgate text in v. 158, considerations not taken from the direct context have carried more weight. It seems therefore best to discuss these first.

3. Extra-Contextual Reasons for Keeping the Vulgate Reading μέγα δέ (158)

3.1 The Transmission of the Text

The overwhelming majority of manuscripts have μέγα δέ, some read μέτα δέ (which would mean: do the mountain part *later*). *Scholion Q* tells us that Aristophanes read μηδέ and that Aristarchus rejected this.³⁹ We are not told the reasons of either scholar. At the end of section 2, I cited Zenodotus' reading δαῖτα in *Il.* I,5, which is seriously considered against the vulgate reading πᾶσι by all commentators and editors (it is actually preferred by several, among them the Basle commentary). This should *a fortiori* be the case for μηδέ in XIII,158, given that Aristophanes is considered a more prudent critic than Zenodotus; that the reading μέγα δέ can be easily explained as a repetition of 152,⁴⁰ whereas it is not easy to see how πᾶσι would have replaced an original δαῖτα; and that (unlike πᾶσι) the reading μέγα δέ leads to very serious problems of interpretation. Even without ancient testimony, then, a modern conjecture μηδέ would have to be seriously considered – again unlike a modern conjecture δαῖτα. In point of fact, nobody has (to my knowledge) claimed that μέγα δέ should be preferred *because* it is the vulgate reading. Still, one may ask if, had μηδέ been the vulgate reading and μέγα δέ a variant, the latter would have been accepted as readily as it has been.

In modern times, it has been suggested to delete v. 158, which would have the same net effect as printing μηδέ.⁴¹ It is difficult to choose between these two ways to get rid of μέγα δέ: we have seen in sections 1 and 2 that Zeus avoids confronting Poseidon, and one may feel that a “don't” would be too direct. But one could also argue that Zeus expressing his disapproval by silence would be even more unpleasant for Poseidon. Added to the absence of ancient support for omitting 158, the case for μηδέ seems somewhat stronger than for the deletion of v. 158. But for my argument, both are equally acceptable.

³⁹ It has been transmitted with XIII,152, but it is generally accepted that it refers to 158, see e.g. VON DER MÜHL (app. crit.) and MARKS 2008, 55, n. 20.

⁴⁰ The variant reading μετὰ δέ looks like coming from someone who saw that Poseidon did not erect the mountain immediately, could not accept the idea that he did not erect it at all and concluded that it must have happened later; and as Poseidon would have done what Zeus said, this had to be suggested by Zeus. But why would Zeus suggest to Poseidon that he deploy the mountain *later*? It would imply that he wants Poseidon to enjoy the sacrifices first and then punish them nevertheless. For such a shockingly cynical Zeus there is no support elsewhere in the poem. Neither is there for adverbial μετὰ “later”: the Homeric word for that is ὀπιθε(ν)/ὀπισθεν.

⁴¹ VON DER MÜHL (app. crit.): “158 *del.* Bothe, multi, iure ut vid.”

Then there is Nagy's theory of multiformity, which holds that there is no such thing as a "right" reading because of the inherently unstable and shifting state of an orally composed and transmitted text.⁴² Marks, an adherent of this view, sees the variants in v. 158 as a case in point: "traditional singers would presumably not have missed the fact that [...] the issue of the Phaiakes' fate could be altered so simply, and without affecting the flow of the main narrative, by substituting one metrically equivalent expression for another" (MARKS 2008, 56). Given "the prominence of the Phaiakes in epichoric traditions" (MARKS 2008, 57) it is likely, in his opinion, that a singer performing in Corfu (i.e. before people who, although they knew themselves to be colonists from Corinth, considered the Phaeacians as somehow their ancestors) might have wanted to see the Phaeacians spared, whereas a Corinthian audience (which would have been, at least in the fifth century, anti-Corcyrean), might have cheered at their undoing.

It cannot be excluded that something like this happened in the practice of performance. But that is not to say that the two variants are equally "right". In fact, Marks' own investigation of the *Odyssey* speaks against this: throughout his book, he shows Zeus controlling the course of things from beginning to end and harnessing other gods to his agenda while making them think they are getting their way. This pattern bespeaks a highly organized composition, which does not sit well with "multiformity" in any but trivial matters – the alternative readings δαῖτα and πᾶσι in *Il.* I,5 would be an acceptable candidate. This case is different: even if, as Marks says, the reading of v. 158 either way does not affect "the flow of the main narrative" (i.e. Odysseus' homecoming), it makes all the difference for this episode of 62 lines and beyond.

Regarding our passage, Marks concludes (p. 61): "Zeus' strategy is to co-opt Poseidon again, granting the subordinate god apparent freedom to follow his own desires but covertly guiding his actions. In Zeus' crucial speech, a narrative 'switch' seems to have allowed the manipulation of Poseidon to play out in different ways in response to different constituencies in the Homeric audi-

⁴² Nagy has expressed this view in many publications – to quote a readily accessible one, his BMCR review of West's edition of the *Iliad* (vol. I): "If indeed Homeric poetry, as a system, derives from traditional oral epic diction, then we can expect such a system to be capable of generating multiform rather than uniform versions, and no single version can be privileged as superior in and of itself [...]". (<http://bmcr.brynawr.edu/2000/2000-09-12.html>). MARKS 2008, 56, refers to Nagy in n. 26 and detects in XIII,158 "a locus of multiformity that arose in the context of the performance tradition". For a general critique of a multiform Homer see FINKELBERG 2000. Her conclusion: "We should continue [...] to speak of this [i.e. the Homeric] text in terms of emendations, interpolations, scribal errors, and other phenomena that are characteristic of manuscript transmission."

ence.” Zeus manipulating Poseidon is exactly what we have found in sections 1 and 2, but that manipulation pointed in a distinct direction: towards sparing the Phaeacians. A two-way switch as conclusion would be inexplicable.

Finally, “the prominence of the Phaiakes in epichoric traditions” invoked by Marks existed, no doubt about it. But as we will see in 3d, the Homeric narrator goes out of his way to dissociate Scheria from Corfu. Should Homer in v. 158 throw wide open the door he has been at such pains to shut?

Taken together, my objections against the “two-way switch” are based on the observable narrative coherence of the central character of Zeus, of the portrayal of Scheria (as not to be identified with Corfu), and of the run of the episode itself. In its most radical form, the multiformity theory might not accept narrative coherence as a criterion – but if we abandon that criterion, the theory would become circular and thus irrefutable, as Friedrich (2011, 277) has pointed out. He concludes (in connection with Achilles’ words in *Il.* IX,312–313): “in an assumed multiform text the incoherence of Achilles’ ἠθοποιία and of the epic μίμησις πράξεως [...] would be unobjectionable, indeed normal and even welcome, as it would confirm its multiformity (287).” One has only to replace “Achilleus’ ἠθοποιία” by “Zeus’ ἠθοποιία” to see the relevance of this for our issue.

In short: the fact that μέγα δέ is the vulgate reading is not a weighty point in its favour, the change from μηδέ to μέγα δέ can be easily explained, and the idea that there is no such thing as a right reading in Homer is at odds with the consistent picture of Zeus in the *Odyssey*.

3.2 Prophecies Must be Fulfilled

Poseidon has announced the punishment he intends to visit on the Phaeacians (149–152) long ago to his son Nausithous, who has more than once (ἐφασκε VIII,565) reported this to Alcinous, his own son and his successor as king of the Phaeacians. Bassett comments: “in Homer prophecies of this kind are never unfulfilled, e.g., that of Calchas (B 326–29), of Halitherses, (β 174–76), and of Telemus (ι 511 f.).”⁴³

⁴³ BASSETT 1939, 306; cf. ERBSE 1972, 146. Emphatically also PERADOTTO 1990, 77 – he cites our passage as one of the two examples to the contrary, but if I understand him correctly, he assumes that its fulfilment is not annulled, but placed outside our *Odyssey*, like that other unfulfilled prophecy concerning Odysseus’ inland voyage to placate Poseidon (XI,118–134 ≈ XXIII,267–281). This notion may be traceable to Antiquity, see *scholion* V. *ad* v. 183: κατὰ τὸ σιωπώμενον, ἠφρανίσθησαν. τὰ γὰρ κυρωθέντα ὑπὸ θεῶν ἐξ ἀνάγκης πληροῦται. (By implication, they were annihilated. For what is decreed by the gods is of necessity fulfilled). Theoretically,

First of all, one may question whether Poseidon's words to Nausithous constitute a "prophecy of this kind". The examples cited by Bassett involve human prophets who have knowledge of what is ordained. We do not have any indication that this threat by Poseidon to Nausithous has this "fated" status. The fact that Poseidon does not invoke it in his address to Zeus rather suggests it has not – whereas he does invoke the circumstances of Odysseus' arrival, which he feels to be at odds with his justified expectations (ἐφάμην "I was assuming"). This suggests that he considers the latter as more "fated" than his own words to Nausithous, which should perhaps better be regarded as a "divine warning" than as a "prophecy" in this narrow sense of fated-to-happen. I will explore this line in the next section.

It is true that Alcinous, upon witnessing the petrification of the ship, uses the word *θέσφατα* and this word almost invariably denotes something that is bound to be fulfilled.⁴⁴ But this is quite natural in the situation: he sees Poseidon's words coming true and thus declares it a prophecy *ex eventu*, so to speak. Alcinous is not a seer, and the terms he chooses have no authority for us narratees. But for what it is worth: even now, after calling it *θέσφατα*, he obviously sees their complete fulfilment as not inevitable – he orders sacrifices "so that he [Poseidon] may take pity and not cover/surround the city with a mountain" (182f.). His position has, in other words, not essentially changed since he said in book VIII "The god may either fulfil these things or leave them unfulfilled, as is dear to his heart" (ὣς οἱ φίλον ἔπλετο θυμῷ).

And finally: the intended punishment as spoken to Nausithous and repeated to Zeus is not fulfilled in any case, since Zeus changes its first part, "smash the ship while out in the open sea" (*Od.* VIII,568 = XIII,150), into petrification of the ship within sight of land, a change which Poseidon accepts and carries out without protest. Bassett sees in it "nothing more than a suggestion of the way in which Poseidon's first purpose, i.e., to destroy the ship, is to be carried out" (BASSETT 1933, 306). But this seems special pleading: smashing a ship in the open sea is in itself a perfectly simple concept, not in need of "a suggestion of the way in which it is to be carried out". The suggestion to petrify (not smash) it and to do so within sight of land (not in the open sea) is a substantial change. It also has a substantial reason: as I will argue in more detail in section 4.1, the

this must not refer to Poseidon's words to Nausithous but can also refer to v. 158, if we assume that the scholiast followed the vulgate reading: Zeus said "erect the mountain" so that is what must have happened (even if it is not explicitly told).

⁴⁴ V. 172: "ὦ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δὴ με παλαίφρατα θέσφαθ' ἰκάνει (Oh my, clearly the old prophecy has reached me)."

witnessed petrification removes the need to erect the mountain. The change of the one part of the punishment is thus not only significant as a *precedent* for a change in part two: the two are *causally connected*. It is because he wants to get rid of the “mountain part” (and still help Poseidon prevent future escorts) that Zeus suggests changing the “ship part”.

To sum up: the idea that Poseidon’s words to Nausithous constitute a prophecy which for that reason alone must be fulfilled is to be rejected for several reasons, the weightiest being that the substantial change in the first part of the punishment means that the “prophecy” is not fulfilled in any case. The words are probably better viewed as an instance of a divine warning.

3.3 Divine Warnings Unheeded Are Followed by Punishment

People who ignore divine warnings will suffer – this is a theme that is central to the *Odyssey*. In Zeus’ programmatic speech in I,32-43, it is applied to Aegisthus; at the end of the poem, to the suitors; and in the middle, to Odysseus’ crew. Are the Phaeacians a case in point?

The destruction of Odysseus’ crew is closest to our context: the first point of comparison is the Olympic scene (XII,374-390):⁴⁵ Helios accosts Zeus (through a messenger) and demands that Odysseus’ companions be punished for eating his cattle, and Zeus replies (and complies). But once again (as in the other “parallel scenes” in sections 1 and 2), the similarities bring out the differences all the more clearly. Helios demands retribution and threatens that he will not shine on earth anymore if he will not have his way. That is a far cry from Poseidon carefully seeking Zeus’ approval in two instalments and assuring that he “always respects [Zeus’] feelings”. The whole dynamic is completely different and clearly leaves room for – or rather, makes us *expect* – a different reply from Zeus.

Another point of comparison is the people concerned, Odysseus’ crew and the Phaeacians: while Aegisthus and the suitors are wilful and criminal offenders, Odysseus’ crew are not: they acted under duress and did not harm anybody. But then, they did commit sacrilege; they forcibly took (and killed) livestock that belonged to a god, as they well knew, and in doing so they may be said to have “shown disrespect towards the god, relying on their force and strength”,

⁴⁵ As part of Odysseus’ story to the Phaeacians, this Olympic scene is unusual information, and Odysseus accounts for it by saying that he heard it from Calypso, who heard it from Hermes (XXII,389f.). Interesting as these aspects are, they have no bearing on our discussion.

the condition for punishment formulated by Zeus in XIII,143f.⁴⁶ The Phaeacians, however, did not *take* anything, they *gave* liberally and committed no sacrilege of any kind. Their acts are in themselves praiseworthy rather than blameworthy.⁴⁷

If we look at the three parallel warnings themselves, they are all quite specific. Aegisthus was specifically warned by Hermes not to kill Agamemnon and marry his wife, because retribution from Orestes would ensue (I,35–43). The suitors are warned more than once by a divine omen followed by a pronouncement by a seer that destruction is near if they do not stop squandering Odysseus' household: from Zeus' bird omen (II,146–176) to Athena's blood omen (XX,345–370). The crew, finally, is told by Odysseus (citing Circe's authority) to avoid Thrinacia, advice they reject, and after landing there, they are told to abstain from the cattle of Helios, "a formidable god" – a taboo equally broken. In all three cases, the addressed were in no doubt whether the warning applied to their situation.

In the case of the Phaeacians, however, the warning was spoken a generation ago, was unspecific (should they stop escorting altogether, or just reduce the frequency?), and conflicted with another religious obligation, that of hospitality. No such conflict is discernible in the case of Aegisthus, the crew, or the suitors.

Finally, one might reason as follows in defence of the idea that punishment is inevitable: Poseidon's warning to Nausithous had in view from the start this very situation, i.e. that the Phaeacians would one day escort Poseidon's enemy Odysseus. This would mean that another warning at this juncture would be pointless. But this is not the line taken by Poseidon himself: he wants to punish the Phaeacians "in order that they finally (ἤδη) stop [their escorting practice] and no longer escort people" (151f.), which implies that this is still relevant for him, even after the Odysseus case. This is not to deny that this specific escort was an especially hard one for Poseidon to stomach, as is clear from the fact that he has in mind to put into effect his old threat *now*, but the continuing relevance of his wish implies that another warning is not ruled out.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Their act is characterized by the narrator (I,7) as ἀτασθάλια, "culpable recklessness" (HEUBECK *ad loc.*).

⁴⁷ See GARVIE 1994, 24–26, and the quote from Bassett in section 4.2.

⁴⁸ Poseidon's irritation at the escorting practices is usually connected with his position as lord of the sea, who resents the privileges he has bestowed on his offspring being extended to others. ERBSE 1972, 147: "Im Wahrheit hat das im 8. Buch mitgeteilte Orakel ja gar keine Beziehung auf Odysseus [...]. Das [Orakel] kundet von der Mißgunst Poseidons, der den märchenhaften Vorgängen, die sich da auf seinem Element abspielen, eines Tages ein Ende setzen werde." ALLAN 2006, 19, n. 88: "In ending the Phaeacians' ability unfailingly to convey travellers by sea [...] Poseidon is not only defending his own prerogative [...] but also reinforcing the distinction between human and divine, since such exceptional privileges as that enjoyed by the seafaring Phaeacians are (from the audience's view) a thing of the past."

To sum up: to say that the Phaeacians have been warned by a god, have not heeded the warning and are therefore in for punishment, just like others in the *Odyssey*, is to disregard several factors that set the Phaeacians apart: their offense is less serious, their virtue greater, and the warning less unequivocal than in the other cases. A more lenient treatment would be in line with this.

3.4 The Absence of the Phaeacians from the Audience's World

There was a strong tradition in Antiquity that pictured the Phaeacians on modern Corfu (Κερκύρα/Κορκύρα). Thucydides (I,25,4) reports it as an established belief among these islanders. Alcaeus also seems to allude to this tradition;⁴⁹ it is furthermore assumed in Apollonius Rhodius (IV,1209ff.), Callimachus (*Aet.* I, fr. 12 PFEIFFER) and Vergil (III,291).⁵⁰ The fitting genealogy is given a.o. in Dioid. Sic. (IV,72): Asopus (a river god in the Peloponnese) had two sons and twelve daughters, among them Corcyra, who was carried off by Poseidon to the island that was then named after her. She bore a son Phaeax, who became the ancestor of the Phaeacians. Both the scholia and Eustathius connect ἐμῆς ἕξιςιοι γενέθλης (XIII,130) to Corcyra and Phaeax.

Homer, however, names Nausithous, not Phaeax, as Poseidon's son and ancestor of the Phaeacians.⁵¹ And as Nausithous' mother Homer gives not Corcyra but Periboea, daughter of Eurymedon, the king of the Giants (VII,56 to 62). Like the Giants, the Phaeacians live "far from the grain-eating people" (VI,8; narrator text) and as Nausicaa says, "we live in a remote place, surrounded by sea, at the end of the world and no humans mingle with us, except when an unfortunate individual gone astray arrives here" (VI,204f.).

In Homer, they are not just close to the Giants but also to the Cyclopes, who were originally their direct neighbours (VI,5). Alcinous likewise compares the Phaeacians with the Cyclopes and the Giants as peoples close to the gods, who visit them undisguised (VII,201-206). And they have more privileges that

⁴⁹ See GARVIE 1994, 19 and MARKS 2008, 57-60.

⁵⁰ *Scholion Q* on 152 says that the Phaeacians must be covered up ἵνα μὴ ζητῶμεν νῦν ὅπου οἱ Φαίακες εἰσιν· φαίνεται γὰρ τὰ περὶ αὐτῶν. Bassett interprets the second part of this scholion as testimony for Aristophanes' reading, but one can construe it otherwise: we should not go looking for the Phaeacians, [which we could do because] we know where they lived (on Corfu) [but you won't find any Phaeacians there, because they were annihilated]. See also EUSTATHIUS *ad* 183 (quoted in n. 73).

⁵¹ The name Nausithous may well be Homer's invention, see HAINSWORTH *ad* VI,7.

set them apart from ordinary people: they enjoy perennial crops (VII,117-128) and have self-navigating ships that move at supernatural speed and invisibly (VIII,557-563) and always have smooth passages (VII,193-196). Odysseus is taken home on one of these, which is said to sail faster than the flight of a falcon, the swiftest of birds. It nevertheless takes the ship all night to reach Ithaca (XIII,35.86-88.93) – another indication of literal and “cultural” distance.⁵² Taken together, these indications of distance are so numerous and so emphatic as to suggest that the poet was familiar with the tradition of Corfu as the Phaeacians’ habitat and was at pains to “de-authorize” it.⁵³

Despite all this evidence, many readers of Homer find it hard to shake off the association with Corfu.⁵⁴ Even Garvie, who in his introduction (p. 20) agrees with Eratosthenes’ view that Scheria is fictitious (a minority view in Antiquity, see also HAINSWORTH *ad* V,5), nevertheless reasons *ad* VII,321-326 “If [Scheria] was already identified with Corcyra [...] it would certainly require the extraordinary ships of the Phaeacians to make the return journey [from and to Euboea] in a single day.” Identified with Corcyra – by whom? Not by Homer, as Garvie himself argues in his Introduction.⁵⁵

The only thing that connects the two traditions is the rock near Corfu which the Corcyraeans identified with the petrified ship from the Homeric account.

⁵² Literal distance: Corfu is about as far from Ithaca as Ithaca is from Pylos, and Telemachus too took one night for his journey there (II,383-III,5) on his ordinary ship. Put otherwise, a ship sailing four hours at the speed of a falcon would cover a distance of several hundreds of kilometres. I am not suggesting that one could calculate the distance of Scheria, but Corfu was not “at the end of the world” even in Homer’s time. Cultural distance: the “Saturnian” features of the Phaeacian world. Also, a voyage during the night is unusual and is in this case often given metaphorical significance by commentators: Odysseus wakes up in his own world and the past seems a dream.

⁵³ I adopt this term from MARKS 2008, who assumes that the *Odyssey* in several instances “de-authorizes” rivalling “epichoric” versions of the tale of Odysseus’ return. The role of Zeus is often to do just this: supplant such local traditions by a “panhellenic” account in which the Panhellenic god Zeus is shown as guiding the other gods: MARKS 2008, 8-13 (method), 27 (Penelope), 30 (Hermes), 63 (mnesterophonía). In the case of Scheria, however, he does not detect de-authorization at work.

⁵⁴ HOEKSTRA *ad* 113.157-158: “νήϊ ... ἅπαντες ἄνθρωποι makes the impression of giving an αἴτιον for the fact that the rock which rises from the sea just outside the harbour of Corfu was taken to be Odysseus’ ship”, which would imply that this identification predated the *Odyssey*. But νήϊ ... ἅπαντες ἄνθρωποι is best explained as referring to the Phaeacians, see next section. MARTIN 2016, 84 is also open to the identification with Corfu.

⁵⁵ GARVIE 1994, 18ff. gives a good overview of the scholarly debate about the Phaeacians. A more recent overview is given by LUTHER 2006, who himself connects Scheria with Euboea, but adds (n. 29): “Um an dieser Stelle keine Mißverständnisse aufkommen zu lassen: Es geht mir nicht um eine Lokalisierung von Scheria. Das homerische Phaiakenland gehört der Märchenwelt an und läßt sich selbstverständlich *nicht* auf eine Landkarte verorten.”

Theoretically, there are two possible explanations for this. One is that Homer subscribed to the tradition that the Phaeacians were living on Corfu and made his story about the petrification fit the local geography. But we just saw that he emphatically located Scheria outside the *oikoumene*. The other is that the Corcyraeans “appropriated” the Homeric account and pointed to a rock near the island, claiming that it was the petrified ship of the *Odyssey*. That scenario is not at all unlikely, and the fact that at least three rocks still to be seen at Corfu have been identified with the petrified ship (GARVIE 1994, 19) supports the idea that the petrified ship was a secondary element in the Corfu narrative.

In arguing for the destruction of Scheria, reference is often made to the episode of the destruction of the Achaean wall in the *Iliad* (*Il.* VII,443-464), which is in many respects the model for our episode – see the discussion in section 1:⁵⁶ Poseidon assails Zeus with a complaint about people treating the gods with disrespect, and Zeus suggests that he destroy the wall when the Greeks have left. Four books later, in a rare “external prolepsis” by the narrator (*Il.* XII,3-33), Poseidon and Apollo are seen to follow Zeus’ advice: they destroy the wall, flush the debris into the sea and cover the place with sand. Zeus himself contributes rain.

The most common explanation of this remarkable Iliadic episode⁵⁷ is that the narrator had to remove an embarrassment: in the time of the *Iliad*’s performance, there was no wall to be seen near Troy – and the location of Troy, as of Achilles’ (assumed) burial mound nearby, was known and accessible to Homer’s audience. As Aristotle puts it, “the poet who created the wall made it disappear”.⁵⁸

Does this apply to the Phaeacians as well? I see little reason for assuming so: Homer did not feel the need to remove from sight the other inhabitants of the remote world of Odysseus’ journey: the Laestrygonians, Aeolus’ island, the Lotus-eaters, the Cyclopes, etc. They were remote enough as it was. It may be that the Phaeacians were in comparatively more frequent (though still sporadic) contact with the Greek world: Odysseus was not the first one to be escorted home. But he was the last one, as per Alcinous’ decision (179-181). The Phaeacians are therefore far removed both in space and in time from Homer’s audience. In other words, Homer did not need the mountain to make them disappear. The petrified ship, leading to the cessation of all Phaeacian naval traffic to the Greek world, had the same effect.

⁵⁶ E.g. ALLAN 2006, n. 89: “For the negative aetiology here, explaining the absence of the Phaeacians from the world of the audience, cf. *Il.* VII,459-463, XII,3-33.”

⁵⁷ The complex issues surrounding the Achaean wall are admirably discussed by PORTER 2011. SCODEL 1982 and DE ROGUIN 2007 discuss the two passages in connection with the “end of the Heroic Age”.

⁵⁸ ὁ πλάσας ποιητῆς ἠφάνισεν (STRABO, I,36).

In sum: Scheria is pictured as far, far away – not on Corfu. If the poet wanted to make the Phaeacians disappear from the world of his audience, he did not need to resort to a mountain blocking or covering their city; it sufficed to put a stop to their escorting practice.⁵⁹

4. More Contextual Reasons for Rejecting the Vulgate Reading μέγα δέ (158)

After thus dismissing Corfu as well as the “theological” reasons why Poseidon’s punishment should have to be meted out in full, we may now resume the interpretation of the text on its own terms and examine two more major textual indicators for Zeus not supporting Poseidon’s punishment by mountain and for Poseidon not executing it.

4.1 The Ship’s Petrification Makes the Mountain Redundant

As argued above (in section 3.2), Zeus’ proposal in v. 155–157 regarding the returning ship from “smash it in the open sea” to “petrify it within sight of land” (with everybody watching) is more than just “a suggestion of the way in which Poseidon’s first purpose, i.e., to destroy the ship, is to be carried out” – it is a substantial change. The question is: why does Zeus suggest this change? If the Phaeacians are about to be crushed by a mountain shortly afterwards, as Bassett and others assume, why have them witness the petrification first? In order that they know *why* they are going to perish? What sense would that make? Or if the city is “merely” surrounded by a mountain and the Phaeacians lived to draw their conclusions, the reason why this mountain arose would be plain enough on account of the prophecy recalled by their king, especially in combination

⁵⁹ Thus EUSTATHIUS *ad* 183: οὐκ ἄρα οὐδὲ ζητητέα ἐστίν, ὡς ἤδη ἀφαντωθεῖσα κατὰ τὰς τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος ἀπειλᾶς. οὕτω δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ τινα ἱστορισθῆναι πομπὴν ἑτέραν ξενικὴν ἐκ Φαιακῶν καὶ μεγαλοπρεπῆ φιλοξενίαν ἐν τῷ ἀθεσφότῳ χρόνῳ, πιθανὸν ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων φαίνεται. αἰστωθεῖσα μὲν γὰρ ἡ Φαιακία οὐκ ἂν οὔτε πέμποι τινά, περιούσα δε οὐδ’ ἂν οὕτω τοιούτων τι ποιήσοι. ἀπόμοτον γὰρ ἤδη τοῦτο τοῖς Φαίαιξιν, εὐλαβουμένοις τὸν τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος χόλον. (“And thus it is not to be searched for, as already vanished according to Poseidon’s threats. That nobody has reported another guest-escort and magnificent hospitality from the Phaeacians in the enormous span of time, is plausible for such reasons. For if annihilated, Phaeacia would not escort anyone, and if surviving, it would do nothing of that kind either. For that was sworn to by the Phaeacians, wary of Poseidon’s anger.”)

with a not-returning ship – plainer even than with a petrified ship that was *not* part of the prophecy. In other words, the change Zeus suggests does not really make sense in combination with an advice to erect the mountain.

Some take the people who are to marvel at the petrified ship to be not the Phaeacians, or not primarily the Phaeacians, but “mankind”: BOWIE *ad* 156: “as a permanent warning to others”; COOK 1995, 124: “an eternal admonition, not only for the Phaiakes, but ‘so that all men will marvel at it’” (XIII,157-158); ALLAN (2006, 19): “Indeed, Zeus not only approves of Poseidon’s plan [...], but also suggests turning the ship to stone, making it a permanent memorial to the Phaeacians’ punishment.” In this way, the combination of petrification and mountain deployment would make sense after all.

The Greek text, however, does not favour this explanation. Zeus says (155 to 158): ὀππότε κεν δὴ πάντες ἐλαυνομένην προΐδωνται | λαοὶ ἀπὸ πτόλιος, θεΐναι λίθον ἐγγύθι γαίης | νηὶ θεῆ ἵκελον, ἵνα θαυμάζωσιν ἅπαντες | ἄνθρωποι. The people referred to by πάντες ... λαοὶ ἀπὸ πτόλιος can only be the Phaeacians. Zeus wants the ship turned into stone *at a time when* (ὀππότε) they will all witness the petrification – and this is just what happens, as we can see from the words of the ordinary, uncomprehending Phaeacian (167-170) and of Alcinous (172ff.). If one accepts that the intended spectators are primarily the Phaeacians, then taking ἄνθρωποι in a wider sense would mean that Zeus were to give two reasons for the petrification: so that all the Phaeacians see the petrification *and* so that all mankind afterwards may marvel at the petrified ship. One would at least expect this “and” to be expressed. It is true that ἄνθρωποι is not as clear a reference to the Phaeacians as is λαοὶ ἀπὸ πτόλιος, but it can perfectly well be interpreted as all *the* people (i.e. “all present”), and the choice of the word ἄνθρωποι (instead of the more fitting λαοί) is easily explained as an echo of v. 152 – the two lines are almost identical. And the echo does not stop there: one line higher, ἵνα θαυμάζωσιν (157) takes up Poseidon’s ἵν’ ἤδη σχῶνται (151). The most natural subject of θαυμάζωσιν is the same as that of σχῶνται: the Phaeacians.

Second, the idea of a permanent memorial smacks of Alexandrian aetiology. There is in fact another case of petrification in Homer, which is quite instructive: the snake and the birds at Aulis as recounted by Odysseus in the second book of the *Iliad* (II,318ff.).⁶⁰ There as here, it is the petrification itself at which

⁶⁰ BOWIE *ad* 156 cites the petrified Niobe (*Il.* XXIV,617) as an example of “turning to stone as a punishment”. But this is a difficult and highly contested passage, see BRÜGGER 2009, *ad loc.*, who suspects (p. 215) that this element was invented to explain that the Niobids were not buried for nine days, parallel to the period Hector lay unburied. In any case, the petrification of Niobe (and her people: XXIV,611) is not a sign and is less similar to our episode than the Aulis portent.

the people marvel (θαυμάζομεν/θαυμάζωσιν), not the stone object. The event, performed with many to witness it (at a public sacrifice at Aulis/within sight of the Phaeacian city), constitutes a divine sign (σῆμα *Il.* II,308), which is interpreted by Calchas in *Il.* II, as it is by Alcinous here. Signs are events, not objects. I don't think anyone has yet suggested that there must be a rock near Aulis looking like a tree with a snake and birds on it.⁶¹

But the biggest problem with the assumption that "all mankind" is to marvel at the ship-shaped rock is of course the fact that in Homer's account, Scheria lies outside the world inhabited by humans, as shown above (section 3.4). With Scheria shut out from contact to the outside world, whether by a mountain or because they followed Alcinous' promise to stop escorting, there simply are no non-Phaeacian men to marvel at the supposed monument.

With "mankind" out of the way, we are back at the question: why would Zeus want the Phaeacians to witness the petrification if he wants the mountain deployed too? No answer offers itself. For the petrification to make any sense, one must assume that he wanted the mountain part skipped. Once this perspective is taken, everything falls into place: the petrification is intended as a warning sign to the Phaeacians; its effect is that they are made keenly aware of the danger they are in and at once start sacrificing and praying and making promises no longer to escort strangers, which is what Poseidon has just before stated as his aim (151f.). By revising the first part, Zeus removes the need to implement the second part. We also see why Zeus chose this form of sign: it could not be any sign (e.g. a bird sign), it had to remind the Phaeacians of Nausithous' words. But why, one could ask, does not Zeus stay still closer to the original plan and advise Poseidon to smash the ship in everyone's view? Why petrify it? I see several plausible explanations, by no means mutually exclusive: 1) to spare the sailors,⁶² 2) to create a more spectacular effect, unmistakably of divine provenance (bird

⁶¹ Calchas refers to it as: ἔφηνε τέρας (...) Ζεὺς (...), ὅου κλέος οὐ ποτ' ὀλεῖται (*Il.* II,324f.). It's the τέρας (the event) that counts, and its fame will not die because it will be ever recalled and retold (and is hereby encoded in the epic; BRÜGGER – STOEVESSANDT – VISSER 2003, *ad loc.* use the term *Selbst-Referenzialität*), not because it is fixed in stone.

⁶² Bassett thinks the petrification of the ship entails the death of the sailors, Friedrich thinks not – in line with their respective views on whether the Phaeacians are harshly punished or not. The text does not give any indications and one can only speculate. On the one hand, Poseidon's action is violent enough: the wording is similar to (πληξεν) χειρὶ καταπρηνεῖ, which describes Apollo stunning (but not killing) Patroclus (ὄν ἐλάσας see NORDHEIDER, *LfggE*, s. v. ἐλάυνω I.2). On the other, in sections 1 and 2 of this paper it was found that Zeus would probably want to avoid casualties. If they were not killed by the act of petrification itself, its occurrence near the coast may have allowed the sailors to swim ashore, an impossibility in the open sea.

signs are often contested); 3) to inculcate the lesson also for later Phaeacian generations – in this sense, there may be a “monument” function to it after all; 4) as a symbolical stand-in for the mountain Poseidon had wanted to erect; 5) with a view to Poseidon’s greater satisfaction: this spectacular display of his power means that his honour is secure.

4.2 No Mountain Is Erected in the Sequel

After Zeus’ last words, we hear that Poseidon “went on his way to Scheria, where the Phaiacians live,⁶³ and waited there. The ship, sailing fast, came very close [to the land] but the earth-shaker went near, turned it into stone and rooted it from below, with one stroke of his flat hand. And he was gone”. This is the last we hear of Poseidon, not just in this episode (which continues for 22 lines) but in the whole of the *Odyssey*.

*

If one accepts that Zeus advises against the erection of the mountain, the interpretation of Poseidon’s action is plain sailing: Poseidon petrified the ship and that was it. One does not miss a “and he did not erect the mountain”. But if one sticks to μέγα δέ in 158 and assumes that Poseidon did erect the mountain (or leaves open this possibility, assuming an “open end”), this absence of any indication of further action is a real problem.

Apart from the negative evidence (no further action indicated), we have some positive evidence in the text that Poseidon did nothing more: right after rooting the ship to the ground, “he was gone” (ὁ δὲ νόσφι βεβήκει). The pluperfect βεβήκει suggests that he left the scene the moment he had done his job, as in *Il.* I,221 ἦ δ’ Οὔλυμπονδὲ βεβήκει, where Athena is off to Olympus before Achilles has pushed his sword back into the scabbard. Even Hoekstra and Bowie, who both print μέγα in 158, agree on this value of βεβήκει and thus on Poseidon’s absence from the scene.⁶⁴ The word νόσφι “far away” points in the

⁶³ For WEST 2014, 232 n. 144 and 2017, 127, ὅτι Φαίηκες γεγάασιν (144) “implies that there are still Phaeacians in Scheria (and certainly not in an underground city)”. But Hoekstra calls it “a flat stopgap”, (cf. V,35) and he may be right.

⁶⁴ HOEKSTRA: “The plpf., in accordance with its original function of expressing the state of the subject in the past, here denotes the result of the action of βῆναι: ‘he was (already) far away’”. BOWIE: “‘but he had already gone on his way’ cf. *Il.* I,221 ἦ δ’ Οὔλυμπονδὲ βεβήκει. The pluperfect stresses the completion of an action (92n.), and the phrase strikingly conveys the ease with which Poseidon almost contemptuously destroys the ship and passes on.”

same direction.⁶⁵ So we have in this short phrase two markers, one aspectual and one lexical, that Poseidon has left the scene. The fact that we are not told where Poseidon went is immaterial: in the parallel *Il.* I,221, Athena's destination is relevant, but Poseidon's here is not, and the absence of a destination is by no means unique.⁶⁶

*

We have several indications that Poseidon will follow Zeus' lead. 127: Poseidon inquires after Zeus' βουλή (the "heading" of the whole episode); 147: Poseidon specifically asks for Zeus' opinion, despite being given allowance to punish; 148: "I always take your feelings into consideration"; 160-164: in petrifying the ship, Poseidon follows Zeus' advice. All this strongly suggests that he will follow Zeus' advice regarding the mountain too.

That Poseidon will follow Zeus' advice is explicitly confirmed by Friedrich (1989, 397) and Marks (2008, 54), accepted by Bassett, and not directly challenged by anyone. Nevertheless, Stanford entertains the possibility that Poseidon erected the mountain against Zeus' advice.⁶⁷ The opposite option, considered by Bowie, that Poseidon did not erect the mountain against Zeus' advice⁶⁸ is less likely

⁶⁵ The idea that Poseidon might have settled somewhere nearby, ready to intervene (i.e. erect the mountain), is at odds with the use of νόσφι(v) connected with a verb elsewhere in Homer, where the person concerned invariably is, or is going, away from the scene of action and in no position to intervene, see MARKWALD, *LfggrE*, s. v., esp. B 1, νόσφι(v) without genitive. Differently DE JONG 2001, 320: "[...] it could be no more than the corresponding phrase to 'he came *near* (the ship)' in 162."

⁶⁶ In the Iliadic passage, Athena has been described as sent down "from heaven" (οὐρανόθεν) by Hera (I,194f.) and she repeats this to Achilles (I,206f.). That she returns there indicates the completion of her mission. Poseidon's destination in *Od.* XIII is quite irrelevant – although we somehow sense that he does not return at Zeus' side. When gods depart, their destination is not always mentioned. In *Il.* XV,218, Poseidon (likewise after an altercation with Zeus in which he did not get his way) is merely said to "leave the plain and enter the sea". Examples from the *Odyssey* include I,319 and III,371f., where Athena flies off in the likeness of a bird. DE JONG 2001 *ad* VI,41-47 lists the destinations of departing deities, but not the cases where no destination is mentioned.

⁶⁷ STANFORD *ad* 156-158: "I have adopted Aristophanes μηδέ, in 158, being unable to find any point in the MSS. μέγα δέ". But *ad* 187 he comments: "...we leave the good Phaeacians standing around their altar, their fate uncertain for ever" – quoted in the very first sentence of this paper. FRIEDRICH 1989, 398 n. 12 aptly comments: "Why uncertain? Once one accepts Aristophanes' reading, [...] it is clear that Poseidon follows and refrains from destroying the Phaeacians." In fact, Stanford does not seem to have reached a clear position on the issue. In his comment on VIII,569, he assumes that a mountain was erected.

⁶⁸ Bowie on p. 125f.: "The question whether the sacrifice will dissuade Poseidon from his long-intended purpose [...] admits of no answer."

still: why should Poseidon refrain from doing what he has been wanting to do all along (VIII,376-369), wants to do now (149-152) and for which he asks and (hypothetically) obtains permission, even encouragement, from Zeus (158)? And if Poseidon were open to be swayed by the Phaeacians, one would at least expect him to stay and enjoy the sacrifices, not leave the scene immediately after the petrification.

This is not to say that the sacrifices and promises of the Phaeacians are irrelevant. They are vitally important both to our issue and to the episode as a whole, as will be argued below. But it is Zeus, not they, who determine Poseidon's decision not to exert further punishment. An "open end", in other words, is ruled out.

*

If this principle is accepted, there are only two options left: that Zeus advised against the mountain and that Poseidon refrained from erecting it, and the opposite position, that Zeus advised for it and that Poseidon accordingly erected it. The one modern scholar to openly argue for this latter option is Bassett.⁶⁹

Bassett recognizes that the text suggests that Poseidon does not erect the mountain. But he cannot accept this, because in his opinion, "the evidence for the annihilation of the Phaeacians is exceedingly strong".⁷⁰ His explanation for this apparent inconsistency is that Homer is misleading his audience into thinking that the punishment by mountain did not take place (whereas in fact it did) in order to spare its feelings: "the poet leaves their fate uncertain [...] to the casual listener or reader. [...] Homer, master of the narrator's art, is always considerate of the feelings of his audience. [...] The destruction of the family of Alcinous, above all, of Nausicaa, for acts of kindness which deserved a reward and gratitude rather than punishment would be σκέτλιον."⁷¹

⁶⁹ The position of PERADOTTO 1990 is unclear: on p. 77, he names Odysseus' reconciliation with Poseidon and the end of the Phaeacians as the two prophecies that are not fulfilled in the poem, apparently because they are both to be imagined as fulfilled outside the poem, which would make his position on the Phaeacians identical to that of Bassett, who is not really assuming an open end but a "disguised" end. But on p. 83, he cites this case alongside that of an ambivalent Penelope as evidence that Homer could not decide between Märchen and tragedy and wanted to have it both ways, which would suggest a real open end. DE JONG 2001 opts for an open end, citing Peradotto.

⁷⁰ His evidence is: (1) Zeus has given Poseidon carte blanche in 145 (discussed in section 1); (2) prophecies must be fulfilled (discussed in section 3.2); and (3) if the prophecy were to remain unfulfilled, the mountain would have given birth to a mouse (discussed in section 5).

⁷¹ BASSETT 1939, 306.

Examples of the notion that Homer “is always considerate of the feelings of his audience” would have been welcome. Instances do not readily spring to mind, whereas those to the contrary do, e.g. Athena’s deception, with Zeus’ blessing, of Pandarus in *Il.* IV, leading to a renewal of the bloody Trojan war. The poet makes no effort to hide the ugly truth from us that his gods are happy to have enumerable men die for the sake of their honour.

Evidence is also missing for the notion that Homer composed with different audiences in mind, the casual listeners and the more discerning ones. In fact it seems to me almost as far removed from Homer’s art as conceivable. Homer is not Apuleius.

The position of Bassett’s “casual listener”, who reads μέγα in 158 but thinks that Poseidon might hold back with the mountain after all, is that of Bowie, discussed above. But Bassett’s discerning listener would have to swallow an ugly truth indeed. Not only that the gods willed the destruction of this sympathetic and decent people, but also that Poseidon would delay their execution until after they had finished their devout prayers and sacrifices, including their promise to stop the escorting – the very thing that Poseidon wanted to achieve (151)! And Zeus, with his dual advice to petrify the ship for all to see (and thus elicit sacrifices) and then erect the mountain nonetheless, would be the mastermind behind this sordid business. If Zeus had just said “yes” to both of Poseidon’s ideas, the mountain would have surprised the “insouciant” Phaeacians and the punishment would be hard indeed, but not *this* ugly. Wanting to avoid the σχέτλιον in the eyes of the casual listener, as Bassett assumes, the poet has made it even more σχέτλιον in the eyes of the discerning listener.⁷²

To conclude: Bassett faces the fact that the annihilation of the Phaeacians (which he sees as inevitable) does not sit well with what the text suggests (that Poseidon leaves without erecting a mountain). On top of that, the solution he offers to explain away this inconsistency is untenable in itself.

⁷² Assuming – against all evidence – with the “casual reader” that Poseidon could be swayed, despite Zeus’ advice to erect the mountain, leads one into a similar quagmire: either Zeus did not count on the Phaeacians sacrificing: that would make his suggestion to petrify the ship unintelligible, his advice ineffectual and his assessment of the situation quite inadequate; and Poseidon would be more humane than he. Or if he did anticipate their reaction but did not tell Poseidon to wait, how could he expect him to do so? But saying “wait” is no option either – see n. 40.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

I hope to have shown that we must accept Aristophanes' reading μηδέ in v. 158 and that the Phaeacians are not punished by way of a mountain on top of or around their city. My argument rests on three cornerstones: (1) that the conversation between Poseidon and Zeus leads up to a "don't" in 158; (2) that Poseidon will do what Zeus advises; and (3) that Poseidon leaves without erecting the mountain. These three cornerstones were each independently argued for on the basis of the text, and if they are accepted, they not only add up, but logically reinforce each other: *if* (3) Poseidon does not erect the mountain *and* (2) he will do what Zeus advises, *then* (1) Zeus must have advised not to erect the mountain; similarly, (1) plus (2) leads to (3).

The arguments that have been or could be advanced against this – (1) that 145 implies a *carte blanche* for Poseidon (the only contextual argument), (2) that prophecies must be fulfilled (and that here we have a case in point), (3) that those who ignore a warning must be punished (and that here we have a case in point), and (4) that we need to get rid of the Phaeacians because we don't find them anymore on Corfu – were all examined and were seen to break down upon scrutiny.

The only sustained attempt to make sense of μέγα δέ, that by Bassett, involves two cases of special pleading: that Zeus' suggestion to petrify the ship in sight of the land is "nothing more than a suggestion of the way in which Poseidon's first purpose, i.e., to destroy the ship, is to be carried out", and that we must assume that the Phaeacians were annihilated, even if the text, as Bassett recognizes, suggests the opposite. Both assumptions have been examined and found untenable.

The opposite reading, which I have defended, is never forced to bend the text: Zeus manoeuvres Poseidon into accepting that the Phaeacians are not really in for a harsh punishment, and that his aim, to make them stop their escorts, can be reached without resorting to violence. Poseidon, who has stressed several times that he respects Zeus' will, follows his advice.

Having made my central point, let me zoom out a little and take a look at the significance of the episode as a whole. I have argued above (section 4.2) that the prayers and sacrifices of the Phaeacians do not influence Poseidon's decision not to erect the mountain: he was following Zeus' advice and did not wait to witness the result. But their actions are of course vital in that they vindicate Zeus' advice. Their sacrifices honour Poseidon, which was the central theme in his first address; and by promising to stop escorting, they pay lasting respect to Poseidon's wish and fulfil his stated aim in his second address.

Zeus has thus succeeded in satisfying Poseidon – who, even when he has left the scene right after petrifying the ship, will of course hear of the resulting sacrifices and promises. And at the same time, he has kept his own agenda, which is to secure the reverence (and offerings) by humans to gods by showing them that virtuous and god-fearing people are, mostly, in the end, rewarded or at least not punished by the gods for their good behaviour. This agenda was announced in book 1 and appealed to, in book I and V, by Athena. It was Zeus' idea to see justice done to Odysseus by involving the Phaeacians, and it would not have looked good if by doing Zeus' wish, i.e. by showing hospitality, they would have brought about their own ruin. That eventuality has been avoided. The episode as a whole, therefore, gives us a picture of Zeus' way with gods and men. And since the annihilation of the Phaeacians is assumed not only by scholars who take a bleak view of Zeus' justice⁷³ but also by some who are less sceptic,⁷⁴ the results reached here may help setting the wider issue on a firmer footing.

Bassett had one more card up his sleeve which has not been discussed so far: “One might also query why, if the mountain were to play no part in the outcome, it should be mentioned five times (θ 569; ν 152, 158, 177, 183). If this five-fold repetition leads to nothing, ὠδινεν ὄρος, ἔτεκεν δὲ μῦν is true with a vengeance, and Horace is wrong about Homer (*Ars poet.* 139 ff.)!”⁷⁵ One may ask with more justification why Poseidon would go to Zeus in the first place and asks him *twice* for his opinion, if Zeus were to simply say “yes, go ahead”; would that not be a mouse begotten by a mountain? Nevertheless, Bassett touches an issue that deserves an answer: why did we need to have this “prophecy” in the first place if nothing came of it?

First and foremost, it was necessary in narrative terms: in order for Poseidon's plan *not* to be fulfilled, it had to be known to Alcinous. That is why “the prophecy” had to be spoken, and passed on. This enables the poet to make the prophecy a “self-defeating prophecy”. He gives us the uncomprehending reaction of the ordinary Phaeacian to the ship's petrification (ν. 168f.): “Who has fastened the ship to the sea ...?” Without the prophecy, Alcinous would have reacted likewise. But because he knows about it, he is able to make sense of the petrification of the ship, to order sacrifices to Poseidon, and to promise no longer to escort strangers – actions which obviate the fulfilment of the second part of the “prophecy”: the mountain.

⁷³ This is what one expects; for a recent case see HEATH 2019, Appendix 4.

⁷⁴ E.g. ALLAN 2006, n. 88 and LEFKOWITZ 2003, 102.

⁷⁵ BASSETT 1933, 306.

And not just Alcinous needed to know about the prophecy; so did we, the narratees; we would otherwise be quite bewildered at Alcinous' sudden mention of it after the petrification. Bassett's "five-fold repetition" suggests overdetermination, but it is in fact very economical storytelling. If we read μηδέ in 158, four are left: two by Alcinous after the petrification, the recollection of Poseidon's threat and the wish that he may not carry it out; and two by Poseidon himself, in stating his aim to Zeus and in announcing it to Nausithous at the end of book VIII. All four are quite indispensable.

All in all, the episode is very artfully told, both in detail and regarding its place within the poem. This result in itself constitutes progress, compared to Hoekstra's negative view on the passage.⁷⁶ But one may zoom out even further and ask why the whole episode, including the prophecy in book VIII, was told by the poet at all. Merely to explain the fact that we get no more reports of people returning from the Phaeacians? Living in a world without mass media, Homer's intended audience would not greatly worry about the absence of such reports. There is more sense in another explanation, which is in line with what was said above concerning the sacrifices of the Phaeacians: that by inserting this episode, the poet wanted to tell us something concerning the gods' and more especially Zeus' way with men. But this is to enter a discussion that must be carried on elsewhere. For now, let us take leave of the Phaeacians, knowing them safe by divine consent.

Bibliography

- ALLAN, W. 2006, "Divine Justice and Cosmic Order in Early Greek Epic", *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 126, pp. 1-35.
- ALLEN, T. W. 1917², *Homeri opera* [ed. *Odyssey*], Oxford.
- AMEIS, K. F. - HENTZE, C. 1900, *Anhang zu Homers Odyssee, Schulausgabe*, Leipzig.
- AMEIS, K. F. - HENTZE, C. - CAUER, P. 1920¹³, *Homers Odyssee für den Schulgebrauch erklärt*, Leipzig - Berlin.
- BAKKER, E. J. 1988, *Linguistics and Formulas in Homer: Scalarity and the Discription of the Particle Per*, Amsterdam - Philadelphia.

⁷⁶ HOEKSTRA 1989, *ad* 125-187.

- BASSETT, S. E. 1933, "The Fate of the Phaeacians", *Classical Philology*, 28, pp. 305-307.
- BOWIE, A. M. 2014, *Homer: Odyssey Books XIII and XIV*, Cambridge.
- BRÜGGER, C. 2009, *Homers Ilias, Gesamtkommentar (Basler Kommentar)*, VIII: vierundzwanzigster Gesang (Kommentar), Edited by A. BIERL - J. LATACZ, Berlin - New York.
- BRÜGGER, C. - STOEVE SANDT, M. - VISSER, E. 2003, *Homers Ilias, Gesamtkommentar (Basler Kommentar)*, II: zweiter Gesang (Kommentar), Edited by J. LATACZ, München - Leipzig.
- CGCG = VAN EMDE BOAS, E. - RIJKSBARON, A. - HUITINK, L. - DE BAKKER, M. 2019, *Cambridge Grammar of Classical Greek*, Cambridge.
- CHANTRAINE, P. 1958, *Grammaire homérique*, II: Syntaxe, Paris.
- DENNISTON, J. D. 1954, *Greek Particles*, Oxford.
- STRAUSS CLAY, J. 1999, "The Whip and Will of Zeus", *Literary Imagination*, 1, pp. 40-60.
- DE JONG, I. J. F. 2001, *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey*, Cambridge.
- EDWARDS M. W. 1991, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, V: Books 17-20, General Editor G. S. KIRK, Cambridge.
- EISENBERGER, H. 1973, *Studien zur Odyssee*, Wiesbaden (Palingenesia, 7).
- ERBSE, H. 1972, *Beiträge zum Verständnis der Odyssee*, Berlin.
- FENIK, B. 1974, *Studies in der Odyssee*, Wiesbaden (Hermes Einzelschriften, 30).
- FINKELBERG, M. 2000, "The *Cypria*, the *Iliad*, and the Problem of Multiforimity in Oral and Written Tradition", *Classical Philology*, 95, pp. 1-11.
- FRIEDRICH, R. 1989, "Zeus and the Phaeacians", *American Journal of Philology*, 110, pp. 395-399.
- FRIEDRICH, R. 2011, "Odysseus and Achilles in the *Iliad*: Hidden Hermeneutic Horror in Readings of the *Presbeia*", *Hermes*, 139, pp. 271-290.
- GARVIE, A. F. 1994, *Homer: Odyssey, Books VI-VIII*, Cambridge.
- HEATH, J. 2019, *The Bible, Homer, and the Search for Meaning in Ancient Myths*, London - New York.
- HEUBECK, A. - WEST, S. - HAINSWORTH, J. B. 1989, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, I: Books I-VIII, Oxford.
- HEUBECK, A. - HOEKSTRA, A. 1989, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*, II: Books IX-XVI, Oxford.
- KÜHNER, R. - GERTH, B. 1898³, *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, II: Satzlehre, Hannover - Leipzig.
- KULLMANN, W. 1955, "Ein vorhomerisches Motiv im Iliasproömium", *Philologus*, 99, pp. 167-192 (= KULLMANN, W. 1992, *Homerische Motive: Beiträge zur Entstehung, Eigenart und Wirkung von Ilias und Odyssee*, Stuttgart, pp. 11-35).

- LATACZ, J. – NÜNLIST, R. – STOEVE SANDT, M. 2002², *Homers Ilias, Gesamtkommentar (Basler Kommentar)*, VIII: *erster Gesang (Kommentar)*, Edited by J. LATACZ, Berlin – New York.
- VAN LEEUWEN, J. 1917, *Homeri Carmina*, II: *Odyssea*, Leiden.
- LEFKOWITZ, M. R. 2003, *Greek Gods, Human Lives. What We Can Learn from Myths*, New Haven – London.
- LfggrE = Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, im Auftr. der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen vorbereitet und hrsg. vom *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*. Begr. von BRUNO SNELL, 1955–2010.
- LUTHER, A. 2006, “Die Phaiaken der Odyssee und die Insel Euböia”, in: A. LUTHER (ed.), *Geschichte und Fiktion in der homerischen Odyssee*, München, pp. 77–92.
- MARKS, J. 2008, *Zeus in the Odyssey*, Washington D. C. (Hellenic Studies Series, 31).
- MARKS, J. 2016, “Herding Cats: Zeus, the Other Gods, and the Plot of the *Iliad*”, in: J. J. CLAUS – M. CUYPERS – A. KAHANE (eds.), *The Gods of Greek Hexameter Poetry. From the Archaic Age to Late Antiquity and Beyond*, Stuttgart, pp. 60–69.
- MARTIN, R. P. 2016, “Poseidon in the *Odyssey*”, in: J. J. CLAUS – M. CUYPERS – A. KAHANE (eds.), *The Gods of Greek Hexameter Poetry. From the Archaic Age to Late Antiquity and Beyond*, Stuttgart, pp. 76–94.
- VON DER MÜHLL, P. 1971⁴, *Homeri Odyssea*, Basel.
- PERADOTTO, J. 1990, *Man in the Middle Voice. Name and Narration in the Odyssey*, Princeton.
- PORTER, J. I. 2011, “Making and Unmaking: The Achaean Wall and the Limits of Fictionality in Homeric Criticism”, *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 141, pp. 1–36.
- DE ROGUIN, C.-F. 2007, “*Et recouvre d’une montagne leur cite!*” – *La fin du monde des héros dans les épopées homériques*, Göttingen (Hypomnemata, 169).
- ROTHE, K. 1914, *Die Odyssee als Dichtung*, Paderborn.
- SCODEL, R. 1982, “The Achaean Wall and the Myth of Destruction”, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 86, pp. 133–150.
- STANFORD, W. B. 1958², *The Odyssey of Homer*, London.
- VAN THIEL, H. 1991, *Homeri Odyssea*, Hildesheim – Zürich – New York.
- WAKKER, G. C. 1994, *Conditions and Conditionals. An Investigation of Ancient Greek*, Amsterdam.
- WEST, M. L. 2014, *The Making of the Odyssey*, Oxford.
- WEST, M. L. 2017a, *Homeri Odyssea*, Berlin (Bibliotheca Teubneriana).
- WEST, M. L. 2017b, “Editing the *Odyssey*”, in: C. TSAGALIS – A. MARKANTONATOS (eds.), *The Winnowing Oar. Studies in Honor of Antonios Rengakos*, Berlin – Boston.

Summary

What happens when the Phaeacian ship returns to Scheria in book XIII of the *Odyssey* has been a vexed question ever since Antiquity. It is clear that Poseidon turns it into stone on Zeus' advice, but does Zeus advise anything beyond that, and does Poseidon do anything beyond that? In v. 158, where Zeus gives his advice, the text is uncertain: according to the vulgate reading, Zeus approves of Poseidon's intention to place a mountain on top of (or around) the city, but according to an ancient variant, he advises against it. Modern scholarship is no less divided on the issue (or issues) than the ancients. Considerations from Homeric "theology" have dominated the debate: must the prophecy given to Nausithous, which included the mountain, be fulfilled, or would it be out of character for Zeus to go along with Poseidon's ruthless punishment? This paper argues that the conversation between Zeus and Poseidon leading up to v. 158 shows that Poseidon will do what Zeus advises, and that Zeus' advice in v. 158 must have been "no". That Poseidon in 162f. petrifies the ship and then leaves confirms this. "Theological" and other non-contextual considerations that have been advanced against this reading are scrutinized and found to be unconvincing. If the issue can thus be decided from the context alone, the outcome may in turn inform wider "theological" and other discussions.

Keywords: *Odyssey*; Zeus; Poseidon; Phaeacians; prophecies; divine warnings; divine signs

SEBASTIAAN VAN DER MIJE

Independent scholar

Amsterdam

Netherlands

srvdmije@gmail.com

EIRENE STUDIA GRAECA ET LATINA

ISSN 0046-1628

Founded 1960

Eirene. Studia Graeca et Latina is an international refereed scholarly journal of classics which is published by the Centre for Classical Studies at the Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague. It welcomes and publishes original research on classics, reception of Antiquity and classical traditions. It also brings up-to-date reviews of scholarly literature on these subjects. ■ The journal accepts submissions in English, German, French and Italian. All contributions (except for reviews) are sent anonymously for peer-review. ■ *Eirene. Studia Graeca et Latina* is abstracted / indexed in following scientific databases: L'année philologique; The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (CEJSH); European Reference Index for Humanities (ERIH PLUS); Modern Language Association International Bibliography; Scopus; Web of Science; EBSCO. ■ For manuscript submission guidelines, contents of previously published issues and more, please visit the journal's homepage: <http://www.ics.cas.cz/en/journals/eirene>. ■ All article submissions and subscription / exchange orders (back issues are also available for purchase) are to be sent by e-mail to: eirene@ics.cas.cz. Books for review and other correspondence should be mailed to:

Eirene. Studia Graeca et Latina

Centre for Classical Studies at the Institute of Philosophy of the
Czech Academy of Sciences
Na Florenci 3
110 00 Prague 1
Czech Republic
tel.: +420 234 612 330
fax: +420 222 828 305

EIRENE STUDIA GRAECA ET LATINA

LVI / 2020 / I–II

© Centre for Classical Studies at the Institute of Philosophy
of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

Prague 2020
ISSN 0046-1628

Editor-in-chief
PETR KITZLER
Centre for Classical Studies,
Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

Assistant Editors

NEIL ADKIN (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) – JAN BAŽANT (Centre for Classical Studies, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague) – JAN BOUZEK † (Charles University, Prague) – JAN N. BREMMER (University of Groningen) – KATHLEEN M. COLEMAN (Harvard University) – SIEGMAR DÖPP (University of Göttingen) – HERMANN HARRAUER (University of Vienna) – STEPHEN HARRISON (Corpus Christi College, University of Oxford) – HERBERT HEFTNER (University of Vienna) – BRAD INWOOD (Yale University) – IRENE J. F. DE JONG (University of Amsterdam) – DAVID KONSTAN (New York University) – WALTER LAPINI (University of Genova) – GLENN W. MOST (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa / University of Chicago) – PAVEL OLIVA (Centre for Classical Studies, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, emeritus) – JIŘÍ PAVLÍK (Charles University, Prague) – ROSARIO PINTAUDI (University of Messina) – ILARIA L. E. RAMELLI (Angelicum – Sacred Heart University – Oxford) – ALAN SOMMERSTEIN (University of Nottingham) – DMITRY VL. TRUBOTCHKIN (Russian University of Theater Arts – GITIS, Moscow)

Managing Editor
JAKUB ČECHVALA
Centre for Classical Studies, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

cover and graphic design © Markéta Jelenová
typesetting © Jana Andrlová
print © Karolinum Publishers
English proofreading Pavel Nývlt