A Rudimentary Motif in Greek Epic (Pylos Combat Agate and the *Iliad* 3. 369–376)*

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In 2015, Jack Davis and Sharon Stocker, while excavating the so-called "Tomb of a warrior with a griffin", discovered an agate seal with an extraordinarily detailed depiction of a combat scene. It shows a warrior armed with a sword only, bending over his adversary's shield, grabbing him by the crest of his helmet and using it as leverage to render him absolutely powerless. The article studies the image on the Pylos combat agate as a reflection of an early epic narrative. It is shown that the account of the combat between Menelaus and Paris in the *Iliad* (3. 369–376) is an elaboration on a traditional epic narrative that was preserved in the text of the Iliad as a rudimentary motif (following Th. Zelinsky's terminology). The comparison of this narrative with the Pylos combat agate allows us to comment the Homeric episode in a new way, insofar as it preserves the description of the type of helmet that was in use in the 16th–15th centuries BCE. This helmet would have permitted the adversary to turn the helmeted warrior's head in the way that is depicted on the Pylos combat agate. It is noteworthy that the Homeric account begins with "were it not for…", negating the version of events that was the basis of the earlier epic narrative. As a result, we are able to reconstruct several fragments of the heroic epos going back to early Mycenaean times, unsurprisingly connected (as already surmised by Ruijgh) with Peloponnesus of the 17th–15th centuries BCE.

Keywords: Greek epic, Homer, *Iliad*, rudimentary motif, Pylos Combat Agate, combat of Menelaus and Paris (*Il.* 3. 369–376).

The present study is engaged both with linguistic analysis of Homer's text and with the poetics of epic narrative. In 2015, Jack Davis and Sharon Stocker, excavating the so-called "Tomb of a warrior with a griffin" in Pylos, discovered an agate seal with an amazingly thorough depiction of a battle scene between two warriors. The attacker armed only by a sword is leaning on the upper rim of the enemy's shield and gripping the crest of the helmet forcing his opponent's head back.

The article considers the image on the Pylos Combat Agate as a reflection of the early heroic epic narrative. An attempt is made to show that the description of the fight between Menelaus and Paris in *Iliad* 3. 369–376 represents a change in the traditional narrative, preserved in the text of the Iliad as a rudimentary motif (according to Th. Zelinski's definition). The paper offers a new comment on the episode of *Iliad* 3. 369–376, on the basis of the form of helmet used in 16th–15th centuries BCE. Such a helmet allowed attacker to turn the enemy's head as it was depicted on the Pylos Combat Agate. The Homeric description contains the clause εἰ μὴ ἄρ᾽ "if it weren't for", denying what the previous epic tradition said. As a result, a reconstruction of several fragments of the early Mycenaean heroic epic of the 17th–15th centuries BCE is proposed.

1. The Pylos Combat Agate

In 2015, Jack Davis and Sharon Stocker, who have headed the excavations at Pylos for decades, discovered a tomb of a noble warrior there. He died at the age of 30–35 years and may have belonged to a royal family. The tomb, once topped by a stele, which subsequently fell inside it, preserved various extraordinarily rich offerings.[1] On the basis of those objects, the tomb was dated to ca. 1450 BCE.[2] Davis' and Stocker's first publication included a thorough comparison of the artifacts discovered in the grave with similar ones known from other sites, and the inventory of their findings proved distinctly similar to those attested in other West Messenian burials (Davis, Stocker 2016, 634).

Among other objects, a 36-mm-long agate sealstone engraved with an exceptionally fine image of a combat scene was found in the grave (Fig. 1). Stocker and Davis published a separate study dedicated to this fascinating piece of artwork, now commonly known as the Pylos Combat Agate (Stocker, Davis 2017). It has been shown that the image carved on the gem, is influenced by Minoan art in a variety of ways (Figs 1–2), as is the case with much contemporary artwork found in Greek mainland.[3]

The following hypothesis proposed already in the first publication of the gem appears most plausible: the image, fine and elaborate as it is, must have been copied onto the sealstone from an object on which it had been represented in larger scale. Davis' and Stocker's

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[1] "In addition to hundreds of amber, amethyst, agate, carnelian, glass, and gold beads, grave goods included a gold necklace; over 50 sealstones; carved ivories, including several combs, a pyxis lid, and the carved plaque with a griffin; gold, silver, and bronze vessels; bronze tools; bronze weapons; and a unique bronze finial for a staff, in the form of a bull's head. Cloth fibers and fragments of wood were occasionally preserved where they adhered to bronze or silver; in one instance the cloth was likely the remains of a burial shroud" (Davis, Stocker 2016, 632).

[2] "We conclude, therefore, that LH IIA is the likely date of the burial, and that LH IIA is a *terminus ante quem* for the finds that accompanied the Griffin Warrior to the hereafter" (Davis, Stocker 2016, 635).

[3] Fritz Blakolmer (Blakolmer 2007, 223) notes that one of the common features of Minoan and Mycenaean art is the "basically undefined, unconcrete character" of the image. It is important to note that Minoan art lacks subject parallels with Homer's descriptions, even though Minoan iconography was highly poetical, lyrical and narrative.

Fig. 1. Pylos Combat Agate
(Stocker, Stocker, Davis 2017)

Fig. 2. Drawing by Tina Ross, published by
Sh. Stocker and J. Davis (Stocker, Davis 2017)

Fig. 3. Combat scene on a golden ring from
Shaft Grave III (circle A) at Mycenae (CMS I 11)
(https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/1150048)

Fig. 4. Combat scene on a golden seal from
Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae
(Corpus 1964)

Fig. 5. Combat scene on a Cretan seal (CMS I 12)
(https://arachne.dainst.org/entity/1150049)

comparison of the image's subject with that of the Mycenaean gold cushion seal from Shaft Grave III (circle A) at Mycenae is quite convincing: on the latter a warrior, similarly lacking any protective armour, is piercing his enemy's throat with a sword (Fig. 3). Similar features can be found on the seal CMS I, 16, even though the latter image is different both in subject and in regard to the details of the armour (Fig. 4). The same combat technique may be represented on the seal CMS I, 12 (Fig. 5).

The affinity of the scenes depicted on the gems from Mycenae and Pylos results, I would argue, from a generally wide diffusion of this subject throughout the Peloponnesus rather than from close relations specifically between these two centres. There must have been a verbal description, written in Greek language, of a combat in which that peculiar fighting technique was put into use, i. e. gripping the enemy's helmet crest and turning his head backwards.

The combat scene on the gem is as follows. A warrior wearing a helmet and holding a spear in his right hand and a shield in his left is attacked by another one, who is armed only by a sword. The attacker is leaning on the upper rim of the first warrior's shield, thus opening the latter's face and neck. The defending person's helmet is equipped with cheek pieces, fastened under his chin, and with a curved crest. The attacker has gripped that crest, has forced his opponent's head back, so that the latter cannot even see him, and is thrusting the sword into his neck. This movement is similar to the stabbing of a sacrificial animal as depicted on Minoan seals or to the killing of captives on Egyptian reliefs dated to the time of Ramses II. What is unexpected in the scene represented on the sealstone, is the fact that a fully equipped warrior is fighting with a person armed only by a sword. The better equipped warrior, though, has neither a cuirass, nor greaves or any other forearm protection, while the person buried in the tomb where the sealstone was found was not only armed with a sword but also wore a boar's tusk helmet and a set of heavy laminar armour standard for the middle of the second millennium BCE.[4]

The scene depicted on the agate is not trivial and reflects a *sequence of moves* that, as far as I know, has not yet been the object of a special study. It includes:

1. Actions leading to the death either of the attacker's companion or, as the editors of the gem think, of the defending warrior's squire.[5]
2. The attacker, his sword drawn, slides past his enemy's spear and approaches the latter's shield.
3. The attacker leans with all his weight upon his opponent's shield and grabs, with his left hand, the high crest of his helmet.
4. The attacker turns his opponent's head at 180°, using the crest as a lever.
5. The attacker drives his sword into his opponent's neck.

In a narrative, such actions could have been preceded by the following typical scenes: 1) the arming of the warrior before the combat (helmet, shield and spear); 2) meeting the opponent and, possibly, an exchange of speeches. Besides, in an oral story, the general sit-

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[4] Most studies of arms and armour examine the armaments but not the techniques of their use (e. g. Trümpy 1950; Lorimer 1950; Buchholz 1991).

[5] The interpretation is not unambiguous. On the one hand, the similarity of the cloth pattern on the spearman's "kilt" and on that of the fallen warrior suggests that the attacker had already killed one opponent and is now killing a second one (this is the interpretation of Stocker and Davis). On the other hand, one cannot exclude that the attacker is fighting for the body of his fellow, whose outstretched arm might suggest a plea for revenge directed to his companion, both of them being armed with identical swords with characteristic sphere-ended scabbards. In Homer's poems warriors are often fighting in pairs (Achilles and Patroclus, Hector and Deiphobus etc.). Perhaps, similar reasons underlay the fact that swords are often found in pairs at Mycenaean storage rooms (cf. *PY Ta* 716.2). A warrior's fellow is frequently mentioned in the epic, cf.: *Il.* 12. 235; 416; 13. 419 (Antilochus taking care of his friend: ἑταίρου); 17. 102–103 (Menelaus seeks a pair and finds Ajax); 17. 380 (Nestor's two sons). If this is the case, the warrior lying on the ground might have been the spearman's victim. The story of a hero slaying the killer of his companion is attested in the *Iliad*: Achilles kills Hector, the killer of Patroclus.

Fig. 6. Seal of the period LH II–LH III (Athens around 1450–1300 BCE) (Corpus 1964)

uation and the motives of the attacker could have been explained. Most probably, he went into combat without armour, only because he was certain about his righteousness and his good luck,[6] as David was when he faced Goliath.

The scene represented on the agate sealstone depicts an ἀριστεία, a duel, well attested in Homer's poems, which usually takes place on the battlefield. One of the warriors chooses an adversary and fights him outside the warriors' formation. (Inside it, the application of the particular combat technique depicted on the agate would have been simply impossible.) The representation of the combat on the gem probably depended both on the warfare practice of the sixteenth — fifteenth centuries BCE (including the specific form of the helmet's crest) and on the way a certain well-known battle encounter was verbally described.[7] Since the *Iliad* pictures duels that involve arms, tactics and fighting techniques of quite different periods, it might be helpful to search in it for correspondences to the scene depicted on the agate, or rather to each detail of it. Let us start with the armour[8] and examine the equipment of the defending warrior, beginning with the spear, drawn back for a strike.

2. The armour

2.1. *Spear*

As regards Homeric warfare, two kinds of spears are known (van Wees 1994, 131–155): the long spear for close combat (e. g. Hector has an eleven-cubit-long spear, *Il.* 6. 319 and 8. 494, i. e. an almost five-meter-long pike), and the javelin[9], i. e. shorter spears

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[6] Less probable are other motivations, such as "sprang out to fight responding to an alarm, with no time for arming", etc.

[7] Later vestiges of the depicted combat technique can be found on a seal from Athens dated to LH II–LH III (around 1450–1300 BCE), in which the fighters are holding each other by their hair (Fig. 6). The idea of gripping the adversary's head is the same, the head turn is also visible, but both warriors, differently from the agate from Pylos, are armed with swords, and the helmet, if there is one, does not have a crest that would permit a grip.

[8] Cf. Schwartz 2011, III, 932.

[9] H. van Wees (van Wees 1994, n. 59) lists cases when the hero is armed by one long spear (*Il.* 3. 238; 346; 349; 355; 7. 213; 10. 335, 458–459; 13. 296; 15. 482; 20. 163). One might also recall Athena with a spear (*Il.* 5.745–746 = 8.389–390). Achilles can fight with just one spear (*Il.* 16. 140–142; 19. 387–389), but he also

used as a projectile weapon. The agate depicts the former, i. e. a long pike, and the arm holding it is drawn back for a thrust. Still, the opponent has come too close, so that now the spike of the spear (Myc. a_3-*ka-sa-ma*, Gr. αἰχμή), thoroughly delineated on the gem, is not dangerous for him anymore. His position is now clearly advantageous, for the sword is handier for close combat. It is worth mentioning that there are several passages in the *Iliad* where a hero manages to dodge a spear, like Ajax (ἀλλ' ὅ μὲν ἄντα ἰδὼν ἠλεύατο χάλκεον ἔγχος, *Il*. 17. 305)[10] or Idomeneus (*Il*. 13. 404); however, we are assured that in both cases the description cannot reflect the Mycenaean stage of epic tradition.

2.2. Helmet

The helmet depicted on the agate sealstone is equipped with neck guards and with bronze cheek pieces (cf. *Il*. 12.183) fastened with a strap under the chin. On top of the helmet there is a high curved horsehair-brush crest, whose metal holder is clearly seen (Fig. 7). A similar helmet is worn by the warrior depicted on the golden ring from the

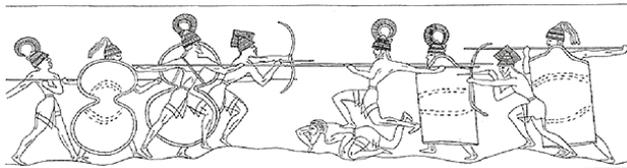*Fig. 7.* Detail: The crested helmet (Stocker, Davis 2017, 593)

Fig. 8. Relief frieze on the Silver Battle Krater from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae (Bakholmer 2007, Pl. LVII. 1)

Shaft Grave III (circle A) (Fig. 3) and by several figures (Fig. 7) on the silver vessel from the Shaft Grave IV in Mycenae (Blakolmer 2007, Pl. LVII. 1). If the crest could be grasped and used as a lever, it had to be made of bronze and attached firmly to the helmet's cap. Helmets of this type are found both in mainland Greece and in Crete. Cretan seals of the MM III period from Hagia Triada (ca. 1600 BCE, Fig. 9) and from Knossos (ca. 1600–1550 BCE, Fig. 10) depict boar's tusk helmets. Their crests are attached to the centre of the helmet's cap. A similar helmet is represented on a Cretan bronze axe of the LM II period

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throws one at Asteropaeus (*Il*. 21. 160–177). Hector, too, can use either just one spear or two (*Il*. 5.495; 6.104; 11.212). Numerous are the cases when a hero holds two spears (*Il*. 12. 464–465; 3. 19–20; 10. 76; 11. 43–44; 12. 298; 13. 241; 14. 139; 21. 163; *Od*. 22. 99; 125).

[10] The Mycenaean reconstruction of this verse encounters insurmountable difficulties, beginning with the first foot: †ali̯a ho men (?) anta uidōn e-eleu-nto (?) khalkehon enkhos.

Fig. 9. Cretan seal from Hagia Triada, ca. 1600 BCE (Levi, 1925–26, Fig. 33)

Fig. 10. Cretan seal from Knossos, ca. 1600–1550 BCE (Evans, 1930, Fig. 128)

Fig. 11. Image of a helmet / engraved on a Cretan bronze axe (ca. 1500 BCE) (Xenaki-Sakellariou, 1953, p. 46–58)

(ca. 1500, Fig. 11), but its crest is already shifted to the front, as on the agate from Pylos.[11] Especially close parallels to helmet under discussion are provided by the aforementioned seal from Mycenae (Fig. 3) and by the fragment of a rhyton from the Shaft Grave IV, also found in Mycenae (ca. 1550 BCE, LH I B), depicting several people whose helmets have similar crests (Fig. 8).

In Greek epic, particular elements of the helmet can be characteristic of a certain hero. For instance, the adjective κορυθ-αιόλος[12] is exceptionally stable as an epithet of Hector (Ebeling 1875, 863–864). Therefore, it is not unreasonable to hypothesize that the complex structure of the helmet represented on the Pylos agate, as well as the uncommonness of the combat technique depicted on it, permitted the contemporaries to identify depicted warriors as specific characters of the mythological (or historical?) space. Thus, Diomedes is identified in the middle of a combat by his shield and helmet: ἀσπίδι γιγνώσκων αὐλώπιδί τε τρυφαλείῃ, Il. 5. 182 ("knowing <him> by his shield and his crested helmet"). For us, of course, the names of the depicted combatants remain unknown.

The curved crest was supposed to protect one's head from slashing blows. For instance the helmet saves Agamemnon from Pisander's axe: ἤτοι ὃ μὲν κόρυθος φάλον ἤλασεν ἱπποδασείης / ἄκρον ὑπὸ λόφον αὐτόν, Il. 13. 614–615 ("<Pisander> struck <Menelaus> on the ridge of his helmet with crest of horsehair on the topmost part beneath the very plume"). Hitting Pisander with his sword in return, Agamemnon kills him.

2.3. Shield

The editors note that the agate depicts a figure-of-eight shield, but it appears to me rather as a round one, without umbo, with creases necessary for the elbow loop and a handle. A shield of this size would have covered its owner from his chin to his knees, protecting completely the thorax, the shoulders and the arms. That is how Ajax is described when he is covered by his shield of bull's hide 'in respect to (*acc. limitationis*) his broad shoulders': ἀσπίδι ταυρείῃ κεκαλυμμένος εὐρέας ὤμους (Il. 16. 360). A similar shield is held by

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[11] The evolution of helmet forms in the Aegean from the Neolithic period to 1500 BCE is presented on the website managed/administered by Andrea Salimbeti (Salimbeti 2022).

[12] Beekes sees a plumed helmet in this epithet (κορυθ-άϊξ "shaking the helmet" (Il. 22. 132), from ἀΐσσω; -αιόλος "*id*.") (Beekes 2010, 757). He interprets in the same way the adjective τρί-κορυς "with triple plume" (Eur. *Bacch*. 123 [lyr.]), also τρι-κόρυθος "*id*." (Eur. *Or*. 1480); χαλκο-, ἱππο-κορύστης "with bronze/red-haired helmet" (Il. 2. 1).

Agenor when he loudly taunts Achilles, aiming at him with his spear: ἀσπίδα μὲν πρόσθ᾽ ἔσχετο πάντοσ᾽ ἐΐσην, / ἐγχείῃ δ᾽ αὐτοῖο τιτύσκετο, καὶ μέγ᾽ ἀΰτει (*Il.* 21. 581–582). Hector, too, bears an enormous shield, round and covered with bronze[13] (*Il.* 11. 61 Ἕκτωρ δ᾽ ἐν πρώτοισι φέρ᾽ ἀσπίδα παντοσ᾽ ἐΐσην; *Il.* 13.803 ἔχεν ἀσπίδα πάντοσ᾽ ἐΐσην, cf. *Il.* 21.581).[14]

Apart from Hector's, such bull-hide shields are mentioned two more times in the Homeric epic, namely, the onesused by Deiphobos (*Il.* 13. 159; 161) and Ajax (*Il.* 16. 360). Furthermore, Diomedes receives not only a bull-hide helmet from Thrasymedes, the son of Nestor, but perhaps also a bull-hide shield: καὶ σάκος· ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ κυνέην κεφαλῆφιν ἔθηκε / ταυρείην (*Il.* 10. 257–258). In Mycenaean archives, shields, unlike helmets, are never mentioned,[15] but in later Greek texts it is the round shield that is designated by the word ἀσπίς (f.)

Shield, helmet and spear constitute the minimum equipment of a hero. For example, when Nestor is awakened at night and is arming himself (*Il.* 10. 76), he takes "his shield and two spears and gleaming helmet". The belt mentioned afterwards was apparently the one to which his sword was bound: "And by his side lay the flashing belt with which the old man was used to gird himself when he arrayed himself for man-destroying battle and led out his troops" (77–79): ἀσπὶς καὶ δύο δοῦρε φαεινή τε τρυφάλεια. / πὰρ δὲ ζωστὴρ κεῖτο παναίολος, ᾧ ῥ᾽ ὁ γεραιὸς / ζώννυθ᾽, ὅτ᾽ ἐς πόλεμον φθισήνορα θωρήσσοιτο / λαὸν ἄγων.

The same set of equipment is mentioned by Ajax, who lists its elements in a different order (*Il.* 14. 371) when he urges his fellows to set off in full armament, namely with their shields (ἀσπίδες… ἄρισται), helmets and huge spears (τὰ μακρότατ᾽ ἔγχε᾽ ἑλόντες).

2.4. Sword

The hilt of the sword depicted on the Pylos agate (Fig. 12) corresponds to that of a long sword found in the Shaft Grave V in Mycenae (Fig. 13; ca. 1500 BCE, type B according to the classification of Mylonas, cf. Molloy 2008). On the sealstone, the fallen warrior and the attacker are armed with identical swords in identical scabbards, depicted in detail. The rivets, or studs, on the hilts permit the identification with the ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον.[16] It is with this kind of sword that Menelaus attacks Pisander: Ἀτρεΐδης δὲ ἐρύσσαμενος ξίφος ἀργυρόηλον / ἆλτ᾽ ἐπὶ Πεισάνδρῳ (*Il.* 13. 610). Four times "swords with a hilt"

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[13] It has been pointed out that the descriptions of Hector's shield feature incompatible characteristics (Cassola Guida 1974; van Wees 1992, 17–21).

[14] For this verse, the possibility of a reconstruction on the Mycenaean level is not excluded: *hek^het aspida pantose wiswān (cf. Myc. <e-wi-su-zu-ko> and <wi-so-wo-pa-na>, where the first part of the not entirely clear compounds reveals the variation u̯isu̯o-/eu̯isu-). Perhaps the verse *Il.* 16. 360 could be also reconstructed as (proto-)Mycenaean: ἀσπίδι ταυρείῃ κεκαλυμμένος εὐρέας ὤμους < *aspidi taurehi̯āi kekalummenos eureu̯as omhons.

[15] A round shield is attested on several seals and on Egyptian representations of the Sea Peoples, cf. Wreszinski, 1923–1935, Taf. 171; 169. An image of a warrior holding a round shield could have been the basis of the compound ideogram AB 100 + 78 (GORILA V tab.). Sarpedon, *Il.* 12. 401, has another kind of shield, ἀσπὶς ἀμφιβρότη, but Hector and Telamonian Ajax have round shields (cf. *Il.* 7. 265). It is necessary to mention that the phonology of Homeric ἀσπὶς ἀμφιβρότη suggests Mycenaean antiquity.

[16] Hans van Wees (van Wees 1994, n. 62) notes that "silver-studded" (ἀργυρόηλον) swords are a usual weapon of numerous Homer's heroes (cf. 2. 45; 3. 334, 361; 7. 303; 13. 610; 14. 404; 16. 135; 19. 372; 23. 807; *Od.* 8. 406, 416; 10. 261; 11. 97). This way of attaching the hilt to the blade is known in Mycenaean times, and in Cyprus it was in use until seventh c. BCE.

Fig. 12. Pylos Combat Agate (detail). The sword is a B-type according to the classification of Mylonas (Stocker, Davis 2017, 591)

Fig. 13. Sword from Shaft Grave V at Mycenae

(ξίφος or φάσγανον κωπῆεν) are mentioned, κωπήεντι being always at the end of the verse. Such sword is used by Ajax the Lesser against Cleobulus: λῦσε μένος πλήξας ξίφει αὐχένα κωπήεντι (*Il*. 16. 332).[17]

3. Duel depictions in Greek epic

In Greek epic, the practice of battle depiction implies detailed representation of single duels, and some of such representations may be based on narratives preserving, to a certain extent, authentic elements of early combat habits. Recently it was argued that Homer's formulaic descriptions should be regarded as relatively late (Haug 2002; Bachvarova 2016). However, in my opinion, both later and earlier narratives could have been used in the *Iliad* in reference to the Trojan war. The earlier ones could have included descriptions of scenes similar to those represented in hardstone carvings of mid-second millennium BCE.

An early narrative that preserved details pertaining to an anterior tradition of combat description could, therefore, have been included in the *Iliad*'s text. Such ancient fragments are, of course, less frequent in the narrative about the Trojan campaign than the traces of later Aeolic or Ionic phases, but the epic's surviving early layers retained precise descriptions of dueling techniques and of duels' general development. Such vestiges of ancient combat habits lived on in the epic, even though the duel was a kind of fight no longer possible at the time when the phalanx started to dominate the battle,[18] and a heroic deed of a

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[17] This verse cannot be early, judging both by the metrics and by the phonetic development *kṷsiphesto ξίφει (instead of expected *ψίφει). Descriptions of the hit performed by a sword driven into the neck of an opponent are not infrequent (ὃ δ' ὑπ' οὔατος αὐχένα θεῖνε / Πηνέλεως, πᾶν δ' εἴσω ἔδυ ξίφος *Il*. 16. 337–342; χεῖρας ἀπὸ ξίφεϊ τμήξας ἀπό τ' αὐχένα κόψας *Il*. 11. 146; ὁ δὲ φασγάνῳ αὐχένα θείνας *Il*. 20.481; ξίφος αὐχένα μέσσον ἔλασσεν *Il*. 14. 497; ὃ δ' αὐχένα μέσσον ἔλασσε φάσγανῳ *Il*. 10. 455). A hit performed by a spear aiming between helmet and shield is depicted by (Pseudo-) Hesiod: μεσσεγὺς κόρυθος τε καὶ ἀσπίδος ἔγχεϊ αὐχένα … γυμνωθέντα … ὑπένερθε γενείου ἤλασ(ε): Hes. *Scut*. 418). The descriptions of such blows in Hellenistic poetry (cf. Quint. Smyrn. 5. 483) are conspicuously less detailed than those in Homeric poems. Early Greek epic (Führer, 1978, Lief. 9, 1686–1687) represents a different kind of poetics, involving the reference to the degree of the attacker's skill and the accuracy with which he delivers his blow. This difference reflects a change in the listeners' tastes and views, followed by the poet. Without any doubt, the accuracy of description was originally meant to please those who had practiced or observed such blows themselves.

[18] For a thorough analysis, see Kurt Raaflaub's study (Raaflaub 2008). As E. D. Frolov noted, "As bronze weapons were gradually replaced by more progressive and cheaper iron ones, the role of the armed militia of commoners increased" (Frolov 2004, 51).

fallen warrior would not be described in any more detail than ἐν προμάχοισι "among those fighting in the first row", as opposed to the rich detail of fighting scenes in Homer's epic.[19]

Nowadays, a certain parallel to the thoroughness of Homer's duel descriptions can be found in football fans' stories about particular match episodes, which remain precise many years after the game. Those narratives include such indispensable details as the place where the ball was kicked (e. g. at the middle of the pitch, in the penalty area or by the goal), whether the goal was scored by the player's head, by his right or left foot and by which side of it, which zone of the goal was hit by the ball etc. Such information is in most cases accurate, can be transmitted for decades and, stylistically, forms a stable narrative that involves a certain set of terms and other lexical means typical for that kind of stories. The same narrative, if transmitted upon a painter's canvas, inevitably loses its connection to the precise match, concentrating the spectator's attention on the player's moves.[20] It is needless to stress that the role of the players' names is crucial in that kind of historically precise narrative.

In a similar way, the poetics of early Greek epic implied detailed description of the duel, indicating, among other things, with what weapon, at what moment of the battle and in what part of the body the hero of the story hit his enemy. The outfit of the warriors was an equally important element of description. Now, if we understand the combat scene discovered on the gem from Pylos as a narrative, we may argue that the description of a similar duel could have existed in poetic form.

4. A rudimentary motif in Greek epic.
Inconsistencies of *Il*. 3. 369–376

The combat technique in question is represented in the description of the duel between Menelaus and Paris (*Il*. 3. 369–376). In this scene, the heroes' initial moves correspond precisely to the image depicted on the Pylos agate, but the outcome of the duel is completely different: Paris was taken away by Aphrodite, vanished and left but his helmet in Menelaus' hand:

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[19] That is from this point of view that Yuri Lotman's school considers the duels. The "striking difference between the peripherical everyman's fight and the ritual high society duel becomes the object of study" (Gordin 2002, 9 [= Я. А. Гордин *Дуэли и дуэлянты*]; cf. Vostrikov 1998, 5 [= А. В. Востриков. *Книга о русской дуэли*.]). The precision of those early step-by-step duel representations builds an even more evident contrast with the duel descriptions in European literature of the Modern time, which thoroughly pictured both the circumstances preceding the fight and its result, but paid much less attention to the combat itself (as in Alexander Pushkin's *Stone Guest*: Don Juan's and Don Carlos' duel is described by a short "they fight", and then "there's no blood coming out from a three-cornered wound", Pushkin 2000, 77).

[20] A good example of such narrative is provided by Vladimir Nabokov's *Gift*, chapter 3: "They talked about Romanov and about his pictures. <…> You know his 'Footballer'? <…> The pale, sweaty, tensely distorted face of a player depicted from top to toe preparing at full speed to shoot with terrible force at the goal. Tousled red hair, a burst of mud on his temple, the taut muscles of his bare neck. A wrinkled, soaking wet, violet singlet, clinging in spots to his body, comes down low over his spattered shorts, and is crossed with the wonderful diagonal of a mighty crease. He is in the act of hooking the ball sideways; one raised hand with wide-splayed fingers is a participant in the general tension and surge. But most important, of course, are the legs: A glistening white thigh, an enormous scarred knee, boots swollen with dark mud, thick and shapeless, but nevertheless marked by an extraordinarily precise and powerful grace. The stocking has slipped down one vigorously twisted calf, one foot is buried in rich mud, the other is about to kick — and how! — the hideous, tar-black ball — and all this against a dark gray background saturated with rain and snow. Looking at this picture one could *already* hear the whiz of the leather missile, *already* see the goalkeeper's desperate dive" (Nabokov 1991, 181–182).

ἦ, καὶ ἐπαΐξας κόρυθος λάβεν ἱπποδασείης,
370 εἷλκε δ’ ἐπιστρέψας μετ’ ἐϋκνήμιδας Ἀχαιούς·
ἄγχε δέ μιν πολύκεστος ἱμὰς ἁπαλὴν ὑπὸ δειρήν,
ὅς οἱ ὑπ’ ἀνθερεῶνος ὀχεὺς τέτατο τρυφαλείης.
καί νύ κεν εἴρυσσέν τε καὶ ἄσπετον ἤρατο κῦδος,
εἰ μὴ ἄρ’ ὀξὺ νόησε Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη,
375 ἥ οἱ ῥῆξεν ἱμάντα βοὸς ἶφι κταμένοιο·
κεινὴ δὲ τρυφάλεια ἅμ’ ἕσπετο χειρὶ παχείῃ.

"He spoke, and flashing forward laid hold of the horse-haired helmet and spun him about, and dragged him away toward the strong-greaved Achaians, for the broidered strap under the softness of his throat strangled Paris, fastened under his chin to hold on the horned helmet. Now he would have dragged him away and won glory forever had not Aphrodite daughter of Zeus watched sharply. She broke the chinstrap, made from the hide of a slaughtered bullock, and the helmet came away empty in the heavy hand of Atreides (Transl. by Richmond Lattimore)."

The beginning of the described scene is more than serious and is quite traditional: Menelaus grasped (λάβεν) Paris' helmet by its crest and turned the helmet back (ἐπιστρέψας) together with Paris' head, just like it is depicted on the agate from Pylos. Paris cannot defend himself because the strap fastening his helmet's cheek pieces strangles him (ἄγχε δέ μιν πολύκεστος ἱμὰς ἁπαλὴν ὑπὸ δειρήν, *Il.* 3. 371).

The description of this fight raised many questions already among the ancient commentators. In the beginning of book 3 (*Il.* 3. 17) Paris advanced without armour. The scene of his taking on the armour is motivated by the fact that, having accepted the challenge, he had to borrow the armour from his brother Lycaon (Kirk 1985, 315). The silver-studded swords mentioned in that scene appear to be a Mycenaean reminiscence.

Anachronisms, including armaments pertaining to different periods, are common in the epic.[21] It has long been noted that Paris does not use his sword for defence. Kirk explains that "minor apparent inconsequence" by the fact that "Paris is obviously so discomposed by the near-miss and his strenuous efforts to avoid injury, as well as now by Menelaus' sword breaking into smithereens about his head, that he has no opportunity to draw his own sword before Menelaus grabs him by the helmet and half-throttles him with its strap at 369–372" (Kirk 1985, 318 ad v. 362–364). It is noteworthy that Kirk, citing Lorimer, mentions the role of the helmet's crest in the combat: "Menelaus leapt forward and grasped the 'horse-bushy' helmet, perhaps indeed by the thick horse-hair plume itself.[22] Then he began to drag him back, or was in process of doing so, toward the Achaeans, whirling him about, ἐπιστρέψας" (Kirk 1985, 319 ad v. 369–370). Thanks to the image on the Pylos agate, we can understand how exactly Paris grasped the plume and how that combat technique worked (*Il.* 3. 369–376). It also becomes clearer now how a traditional description of the technically obsolete form of combat was worked into the *Iliad*.

A comparison of Homer's description of Menelaus' and Paris' combat with the scene depicted on the agate highlights certain elements that puzzled ancient scholiasts (see below, n. 25). They perplexedly noted that, as mentioned above, in the beginning of book 3,

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[21] "[T]he conflation of elements and conventional poetical description from different periods" (Kirk 1985, 315 ad v. 335).
[22] Cf. Lorimer 1950, 238f. and Fig. 12 on p. 157.

Paris was but lightly armed, whereas Menelaus was fully equipped and bore a shield. A later scene in which Paris is putting on his brother's armour equalizes the chances of the combatants. Though, if Paris had had nothing but his sword, we would have witnessed a traditional story, as it is depicted on the Pylos agate, of a fully-armoured fighter vanquished by one bearing just a sword. In the combination of two narrative layers, Homer's poem brought about a technically absurd combat depiction: the technique of gripping the opponent's helmet could be employed against a fully armoured enemy by an armour- and shield-free warrior, as it is depicted on the agate; but that technique was impossible to apply when the attacker was fully armoured, too, and had to reach his opponent's helmet stretching his arm over as many as two shields.

There are further inconsistencies in the duel, as described in the *Iliad*. Both Paris and Menelaus are armed with spears, which are therefore expected to be put into action. However, they pass from spear fighting to sword combat, and in another unexpected turn Menelaus' bronze (!) sword crashes into pieces upon hitting Paris' helmet — something that occurs in none of Homer's other innumerable combat descriptions. Besides, all scholiasts are puzzled by the fact that Paris, after having lost his spear and facing an already swordless opponent, does not use his sword. At that moment Menelaus grasps Paris' helmet. The reader does not know, which hand Menelaus used to do so, but apparently it was the one that had held the now fallen sword. Since Menelaus does not have his sword anymore, his specific move depicted on the Pylos agate loses its sense: even though he succeeds in grabbing his opponent's helmet crest, without a sword he is unable to kill him. Still, the employment of this technique fits in well with Homer's image of Paris, which is flavoured with special humour.[23]

All scholiasts express their perplexity about why Menelaus did not make use of Paris' sword.[24] The answer is evident: Menelaus wants to take Paris alive, and the helmet-gripping is used by Menelaus just for dragging Paris towards the Greek troops.

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[23] The verses in question are not compatible with the typical epic descriptions of tearing off a helmet, discussed in B. Fenik's book (Fenik 1968, 139), since in our case a special combat technique is involved, rather than mere getting possession of the defeated opponent's helmet ("The fallen helmet that is picked up is perhaps related to Γ 376." — Fenik 1968, 144).

[24] E. g. ἕλκε δ᾽ ἐπιστρέψας· διὰ τοῦ ῥήματος παρέτεινεν αὐτοῦ τὴν αἰσχύνην. οὐ φονεύει δὲ αὐτὸν τῷ αὐτοῦ ξίφει, ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ καιροῦ ἢ ὑπὸ τῆς ʾΑφροδίτης σφαλλόμενος, ἢ τοῖς ὅπλοις ἀπογνούς, ἢ καὶ ὅτι ἴσον ἦν θανάτου τὸ ὑπεκστῆναι τοῦ μετρητοῦ, ἢ ζῶντα αὐτὸν ἑλεῖν βουλόμενος, ὅπερ ἦν μεῖζον· οὕτω γὰρ ἂν ἀξίως ἐτιμωρήσατο αὐτὸν †ἢ συντόμως ἀνελῶν ("ἕλκε δ᾽ ἐπιστρέψας: According to the verb (i. e. according to the verb's meaning), he 'prolonged his shame', for he does not kill him with the latter's sword — either because he missed the chance, or because he was confused by Aphrodite, or because he did not trust his arms, or because withdrawing him from the measured area was equal to death, or because he wanted to take him alive, which was an even bigger punishment. Indeed, thus he would have deservingly avenged himself upon him than (?) by killing him immediately" — b(BCE3E4)T). The *Scholia vetera* are wondering: Διατί ὁ Μενέλαος, συγκλασθέντος αὐτῷ τοῦ ξίφους, οὐκ ἐπεσπάσατο τὸ τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου; Ῥητέον οὖν, ὅτι ἢ ἔκφρων ἐγένετο τῷ κινδύνῳ, τὸν λογισμὸν ἐκκλαπείς, ἢ πάντως οὐκ ἠθέλησεν, αὔξων τὸ κατόρθωμα. Ἢ δι᾽ οἰκονομίαν ὁ Ποιητὴς ἐσεσώκει δι᾽ Ἀφροδίτης τὸν Πάριν. Ἐλέλυτο γὰρ τὰ τῆς ὑποθέσεως τῷ ἐκείνου θανάτῳ ("Why didn't Menelaos, after his sword broke apart, snatch Alexander's one? Now, it should be said that either he went out of his mind because of danger and his reasoning power was stolen from him, or evidently because he did not want to and multiplied the virtuous deeds. Or else, it was due to the principles of planning that the Poet had made Aphrodite save Paris. Indeed, he had already decided upon the circumstances of his death").

Fig. 14. An ox sacrifice (Cretan seal) (Evans, 1925)

The scholiasts understood πολύκεστος ἱμάς "well-stitched, i. e. richly embroidered, strap" as connected with Aphrodite,[25] which appears to be correct. As for ἁπαλὴ δείρη "soft throat", it supposedly referred to Paris' effeminacy.[26] Modern commentators consider "soft throat" a formulaic word pair without any reference to the precise type of helmet, even though a hint to Paris' delicacy persists. At the same time, several verses below, this πολύκεστος ἱμάς is then unexpectedly described as a strap made of the hide of a slaughtered ox: all scholia note that such a strap was paticularly tough.[27] Besides, the mention of that material could have hinted to a comparison with an animal sacrifice, a comparison appropriate to an alternative, lethal version of Menelaus' combat with Paris, a version similar to what we see on the Pylos agate: The gem shows that the strap did not permit the defending warrior to budge his head, so that he was slaughtered as a sacrificed animal (cf. the image of an ox on a sealstone from Thisbe, Fig. 14).

Thus, the ox-hide strap mentioned in *Il.* 3. 375 could have belonged to the original story about this combat, one without Aphrodite's interference. Scholiasts stress that Menelaus remains standing there with an empty helmet in his hand. Could not it be possible that in an original version of the story the victor held a helmet containing his enemy's cut-off head, like David who, after defeating Goliath, cut off his head with the latter's own sword?[28]

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[25] The scholiasts are straightforward: θέραψ γάρ ἐστι τοῦ κεστοῦ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης ("for he is devoted to the service of Aphrodite's embroidered girdle"). Aristonicus stressed the strap's diversity of colour and compared it, too, with Aphrodite's girdle: πολύκεστος· ὅτι πολύκεστος ὁ πυλοκέντητος. ἐκ δὲ τούτου ὁ ποικίλος δηλοῦται διὰ τὰς ῥαφάς. καὶ ὁ τῆς Ἀφροδίτης κεστὸς ἀπὸ τούτου· "τῇ νῦν τοῦτον ἱμάντα / ποικίλον" (Ξ 219–220).

[26] Ἁπαλήν εἶπεν ὡς ἐπὶ γυναικὸς οὐκ εἰωθυίας κόρυθα φέρειν ("He said 'tender' as of a woman, who is not used to wearing a helmet"); Ἁπαλήν· Τρυφεράν. Αἰνίττεται δὲ διὰ τῆς λέξεως τὸ ἀσθενὲς τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου ("Ἁπαλήν 'delicate'. By this word he hints at Alexander's weakness").

[27] In his edition of Nikolai Gnedich's Russian translation of the *Iliad*, Aleksandr Zaytsev noticed: "The skin of a slaughtered animal was considered tougher than that of an animal which died from a disease" (Zaytsev 1990, 450). That was based on the interpretation of the scholium to the words ἶφι κταμένοιο: Ἶφι κταμένοιο. Ἰσχυρῶς καὶ μετὰ βίας ἀναιρεθέντος. τουτέστι, σφαγέντος. τὰ γὰρ τῶν θνησιμαίων ζώων δέρματα ἀσθενῆ ἐστιν, ὡς ἂν προδιαφθαρέντα ὑπὸ τῆς νόσου ("Killed by force. Destroyed strongly and by force, i. e. slaughtered. Indeed, the skins of animals that died on their own account are weak, as also those prematurely killed by a disease").

[28] The scholiast understood "empty helmet" as separated from Alexander's head (Κεινή· Κενή. Ἰακῶς· Δίχα τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου κεφαλῆς).

Yet another unexpected feature of this duel is Aphrodite's direct involvement.[29] She tears[30] the strap binding the neck guards under Paris' chin and takes him away under Menelaus' eyes.[31]

Finally, scholiasts commented vastly upon one final inconsistency in the scene: in a completely unexplained way, Menelaus got hold of a spear[32] and tried to chase Aphrodite and Paris, comparable to Diomedes chasing Aphrodite in the fifth book.

The scholia also comment upon the formulaic expression which introduces Aphrodite's interference. They interpret εἰ μὴ ἄρ' as εἰ μὴ δή. The replacement of the particle ἄρα by the clearly affirmative δή is convincing. Ὀξὺ νόησε, a part of a formula, is interpreted as Ὀξέως καὶ ταχέως ἐθεάσατο ('unless she had not keenly and quickly seen').

5. Linguistic features of *Il.* 3. 369–376

Let us now focus upon the linguistic features of those verses that correspond exactly to the sequence of moves depicted on the Pylos agate.

In verse 369 (ἤ, καὶ ἐπαΐξας κόρυθος λάβεν ἱπποδασείης), the reading ἤ is suggested by the best codices, as well as by third-century CE papyri (*P. Bibl. Brit.* inv. 126 and 136), while just one papyrus, of the second century BCE (*P. Hib.* 19), reads φῆ instead. In verse 370 (εἷλκε δ᾽ ἐπιστρέψας μετ᾽ ἐϋκνήμιδας Ἀχαιούς), Martin West preferred the later contracted form εἷλκε, with an augment, as attested in the abovementioned *P. Hib.* 19 and *P. Bibl. Brit.* inv. 126, whereas all the best codices and one papyrus (the aforesaid *P. Bibl. Brit.* inv. 136) provide the non-augmented form ἕλκε (West 1998–2000, I, 108). For a linguistic reconstruction it is more helpful to use this latter traditional reading. The reading ἐπει[provided by *P. Hib.* 19 instead of ἐπιστρέψας might be also worth noticing, for, perhaps, it could have reflected better the sequence of events.

It is absolutely clear that none of Homer's dueling scenes can be entirely reconstructed as Mycenaean, much less early Mycenaean. Menelaus applies the peculiar combat technique in question only when his spear gets stuck in Paris' shield and his sword is broken in pieces. Furthermore, he probably grasps the crest of Paris' helmet with his right hand, and not with his left, which, too, renders the situation different from the one depicted on the Pylos seal. This divergence between Homer's text and the combat scene depicted on the agate should not perhaps be overemphasized: on the other hand, it may be a case, where Homer, in a minor detail, deviates from the traditional narrative.

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[29] Εἰ μὴ ἄρ᾽ ὀξὺ νόησε· οὐ βοηθεῖ Ἀθηνᾶ Μενελάῳ, ὅπως ἡ Ἴλιος πορθηθῇ σῳζομένου Ἀλεξάνδρου b(BCE3E4)T ("Athena did not help Menelaos, so that Ilion should be destroyed due to Alexander's escape").

[30] Ῥῆξεν ἱμάντα· οὐ λῦσεν· τάχους γὰρ ἦν χρεία b(BCE3E4) ("She tore the strap: She has not untied it, for she had to hurry"). Scholia T: οὐ σῴζεται δὲ σὺν τῇ κόρυθι, ὅπως τὸ κάλλιστον τῶν λαφύρων παρὰ τοῖς πολεμίοις καταλειφθῇ ("He was not saved together with his helmet, so the most beautiful of the trophies remained in the enemies' hands").

[31] The scholia interpret it like this: ἐξήρπαξεν· ἀφανῆ ἐποίησε ("Stole: Rendered invisible").

[32] "Aristarchus (Arn/A) rightly noted a difficulty over this (second) spear" (Kirk, 1985, p. 320 ad v. 379–380). Here are these difficulties, in the scholium to "ἐπόρουσε κατακτάμεναι μενεαίνων / ἔγχεϊ χαλκείῳ": Ariston. ἔγχεϊ: ζητεῖται ποίῳ ἔγχει· ὃ γὰρ εἶχεν, ἐξηκόντισεν· διὸ ἡ διπλῆ. λεκτέον οὖν ὅτι ἐπόρουσεν, ἐφ᾽ ὃ ἐξηκόντισεν ἔγχος ἐνεχόμενον τῇ ἀσπίδι καὶ τῷ θώρακι τοῦ Ἀλεξάνδρου, ἵνα τοῦτο ἐκσπάσας ἀνέλοι αὐτόν. οὕτως οὖν ληπτέον τὸ ἑξῆς, 'ἐπόρουσε' (ἔγχεϊ: It is unclear, with what spear? He had already darted the one he had, hence a *diple* <on the margin>. So, it must mean that he sprang <at Alexander> and then moved the spear that was stuck in Alexander's shield and cuirass, so as to pull it out and kill him. That is how the following, ἐπόρουσε, should be understood").

Despite these differences, it seems sure that in *Il.* 3. 369–376 a *rudiment* of an ancient text emerges — a reminiscence of an obsolete combat technique which consisted in grasping the opponent's helmet crest and turning back his head. In this text fragment, single word combinations can be dated to a very early period, while the whole sequence of moves can be compared to the image on the Pylos agate: Menelaus κόρυθος λάβεν ἱπποδασείης ("seized him by the helmet with thick crest of horsehair" *Il.* 3. 369). It is also worth noticing that, at the end of combat, Menelaus is holding Paris' τρυφάλεια (*Il.* 3. 378). The epithet τρυφάλεια defines the form of many heroes' helmets.[33] Both Diomedes (ἀσπίδι γιγνώσκων αὐλώπιδί τε τρυφαλείῃ *Il.* 5. 182) and Achilles (*Il.* 19. 380) are recognized by their shields and by such helmets. In the Odyssey, we find direct evidence that such helmet form was considered archaic: The shield and the τρυφάλεια *scil.* κόρυς that Melanthius fetches from the storeroom used to be worn by Laertes in his youth (κουρίζων φορέεσκε, *Od.* 22. 183–185).

A full terminological description of such a helmet should have probably included the following: κόρυς τρυφαλείη αὐλῶπις ἱπποδασείη. The Pylos sealstone and the aforementioned sealstones from Mycenae depict helmets exactly corresponding to this description, which therefore, given the archaeological evidence for the date of the sealstones, corresponds to the fashion of the sixteenth-fifteenth centuries BCE. By the time of the battle of Kadesh (ca. 1300 BCE), such helmets had become obsolete and are not represented on Ramses II's reliefs (cf. Wreszinski 1923–1935).

The adjective ἱπποδασείη belongs to the *-ēs stems,[34] is a bahuvrihi compound (Risch, 1974, 185) and is preserved only in combination with κόρυς. Undoubtedly, at the Ionic phase of the epic tradition, the word was already perceived as an archaism. For the (early)Mycenaean time, we can reconstruct *koruthos (s)lagᵘe(t) ikᵘkᵘo-dah-ehi̯ās with the later remodelling for δασύς (< *dn̥s-) and dating the irregular *spiritus asper* in ἵππος, as H. Mühlestein did, to ca. sixth c. BCE.

The participle ἐπαΐξας, foregoing that word combination, renders well the idea of raising the arm before grasping the helmet's crest. This verb's etymology is unknown, but it is evident that in Mycenaean Greek the preverb ἐπι- could not be expressed as ἐπ-. The beginning of a verse containing an Aorist participle ἐπαΐξας can be only reconstructed as *epi āhīksan(t)s, whereas the use of ἦ < *ag-t < *H₂eg-t ("he said") as the verse's first word is justified already for the earliest time by the custom of a verbal skirmish preceding a duel — or of an appeal to a deity for help, as in the case in question.

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[33] The Greek tradition preserved the understanding of the unusual helmet construction which is depicted on the Pylos agate. Namely, the *Scholia vetera in Il.* comment upon *Il.* 5.183 as follows: αὐλώπιδί τε τρυφαλείῃ· εἶδος περικεφαλείας λόφον εἰς ὀξὺ ἀνατεταμένον ἐχούσης ("αὐλώπιδί τε τρυφαλείῃ· a kind of helmet having a crest (plume) extending upwards"). A more general understanding can be seen in the *Scholia in Aeschyl.*, *Th.*, 114–115, where the form δοχμολόφων is discussed: κινήσει συμβαίνει πλαγιάζεσθαι τοὺς λόφους. ἄλλοι δὲ ʽδοχμολόφωνʼ φασὶ διότι οἱ πολεμοῦντες κόρυθας ἐν τῇ κεφαλῇ ἐπεφέροντο τρεῖς λόφους ἐχούσας νεύοντας τῇδε κἀκεῖσε. αἱ δὲ κόρυθες ἐλέγοντο καὶ τρυφάλειαι ("During movement, the crests sometimes turn aside. Others consider that <the word> ʽδοχμολόφωνʼ <is used> because the warriors wore helmets which had three plumes that swung from side to side. The helmets were also called τρυφάλεια").

[34] The old reconstruction of the form *ἱπποδασύς m., as it is present in Iosif Dvoretsky's dictionary should be rejected (Dvoretsky 1958, I, 829 [Дворецкий И. Х. *Древнегреческо-русский словарь.* Т. 1–2. Москва, Гос. изд-во иностранных и национальных словарей, 1958]). For a detailed discussion of whether it is best to reconstruct masculine stems in -ύς or in -ής see (Meissner 2006, 172–3), who suggests that it was the frequency of *-ēs stems in proper names that might have influenced the replacement of adjective stems in *-us with stems in *-ēs, especially in the feminine.

The editors traditionally put a comma after ἦ, separating "he said" from the following description of Menelaus' move. When we reconstruct the verse's beginning, we can imagine *ag-t epi āhīksants[35] (on the length of ā, see Beekes 2010, 44), but so as to save the hexameter, we have to think of an asyndetic sentence "he said, having approached and lifted <his arm>…". This interpretation is different from the traditionally accepted "he said and, having attacked (i. e. having approached and lifted <his arm>), grasped him by his helmet". When reconstructing a text dating back to the second millennium BCE, one has to forget the late καί and remember that, in Mycenaean Greek, a verb standing in the beginning of a sentence was always preceded by the particle /hō(s)/ or /i̯ō(s)/. One can accept as relatively secure an interpretation with the first long syllable of the verse skipped:

(*ag-t / hōs) *epi āhīksan(t)s koruthos (s)lagu̯e(t) iku̯ku̯o-dasehi̯ās.

The second half of this hexameter may testify to the fact that the verse was composed at the period when word-final stops still existed, whose traces in Homer's epic were pointed out by Martín S. Ruipérez and José Vara (Ruipérez, Vara 1972, 192–196).

In the verse *Il.* 3.370 ἕλκε δ' ἐπιστρέψας μετ' ἐυκνήμιδας Ἀχαιούς, the first part allows an equally early reconstruction: *helke(t) epi-strepʰsan(t)s. The second part, also quite ancient, *ehu-knāmid-as Akhaii̯ons, must have been artificially added subsequently, as far as can be judged by the use of μετ' instead of μετά: *met[36] ehu-knāmid-as Akhaii̯ons.

The verses 371–372 ἄγχε δέ μιν πολύκεστος ἱμὰς ἁπαλὴν ὑπὸ δειρήν, / ὅς οἱ ὑπ' ἀνθερεῶνος ὀχεὺς τέτατο τρυφαλείης contain traits that hamper a Mycenaean reconstruction, both by their content and by formal criteria. Firstly, the presence of such a clarifying remark, constituted by these verses, is justified in the *Iliad*'s text[37] by the subsequent intervention of Aphrodite.[38] Yet, in the original, purely heroic version of the tale, no 'richly embroidered strap' would have been appropriate. Secondly, certain linguistic features (in bold below) make an early dating of the verses 371–372 impossible, e.g. *polukensto**s** **h**iman(t)s would have been incompatible with metrics, since in Mycenaean verse an aspiration was still metrically significant (***h**imants, from the root *seh$_2$(i) 'to bind, to connect' with a zero-grade ablaut).

The first part of the verse 371, ἄγχε δέ μιν (ἄγχω < *H$_2$mgʼʰ-),[39] reminds of such Mycenaean phrases as e-ke-de-mi /ekʰei de min/ "and he/she/it has him/her/it…" in the text *PY Na* 926, cf. da-mo-de-mi pa-si /dāmos de min pʰasi/ in *Ep* 704.5 "and the people says that she…". Still, if we reconstruct the word-final stop in the verbal ending, as we have done above, both the metre (*ankʰet de min) and the meaning of the verse will be violated, for the adversative δέ is undoubtedly indispensable here. West accepts here a reading not

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[35] As the reviewer noted, "this reconstruction seems potentially problematic in view of smooth breathing in Attic".

[36] Still, in compounds, such a form is attested already in Mycenaean texts, cf. the name me-to-qe-u / Metōkʷeus/ (Aura Jorro 1985–1993, s. v.).

[37] We might attract the reader's attention to two details, specially intended for lowering the dramatic tone of the *aristeia*: The embroidery on the helmet's strap and direct intervention of Aphrodite, who interrupts the truly heroic battle by tearing the strap and moving Paris in Helena's bedroom.

[38] On divine intervention in the *Iliad*, see Dietrich 1994, 66 and Lesky 1961.

[39] Reconstruction based on the exact match between Greek and Latin present stems (ἄγχω ~ angō "squeeze, strangle"), from a root meaning "narrow". A form with a nasal infix is attested in Hitt. ḫamank-/ ḫame/ink-. Cf. Skt. aṃhu- "narrow", Go. *aggwus*, Arm. *anju-k,* OCS. жзъ-къ qzъ-kъ (Beekes 2010, 18).

directly represented in manuscripts, ἦγχε δέ μιν.[40] This ἦγχε might be interpreted not only as an augmented imperfect form, but also as an extinct perfect form with reduplication: *H₂e-H₂mg'ʰ-. The ending *-e is regular for the perfect, while the meaning 'has squeezed and is holding tight, thus throttling him' fits in well with the context. Still, the perfect tense of the verb ἄγχω is not attested in Greek of the first millennium BCE, so the reading ἦγχε, accepted by West on the basis of ηγκε, a form found in *P. Hib.*, remains questionable.

An embroidered helmet-strap (ὀχεύς) cannot be ancient, in contrast to the ἱμάντα βοὸς ἶφι κταμένοιο (*Il.* 3.375), in which without difficulty an older *gʷoṷos ṷīphi ktamenohi̯o can be seen, with metrically preserved traces of a digamma. Such a leather ἱμάς is opposed by its simplicity to the richly embroidered πολύκεστος ἱμάς. The latter fits in well with the subsequent appearance of Aphrodite, but its practical qualities in combat, apparently, are inferior to those of a simple ox-hide strap. As pointed out in the commentaries, the words βοὸς ἶφι κταμένοιο were supposed to stress the strap's durability.[41] Embroidery would have only reduced its robustness. The verse part ἱμάντα βοὸς ἶφι κταμένοιο could have pertained to the original (traditional) story, because it explains well the effect of the specific helmet-gripping combat technique applied.

So, several word combinations in the verses 369–371 and 375 can date back to the original, early description of the duel:

369   *(ag-t) epi āhīksan(t)s koruthos (s)lagʷe(t) ikʷkʷo-das-ehi̯ās.
370   *helke(t) epi-strepʰsan(t)s…
371   *ankʰ-? de min…
375   …*gʷoṷos ṷīphi ktamenohi̯o.

The agreement between the image on the Pylos agate and the description of the helmet-gripping combat technique preserved in the Greek epic tradition is, in fact, limited to these word combinations. For neighbouring verses, no similarly deep reconstruction is possible, apart from the formulaic ἀπαλὴν ὑπὸ δειρήν at the end of v. 371 and the aforementioned ὀχεὺς τέτατο τρυφαλείης at the end of v. 372. Verses *Il.* 3. 369–370, on the contrary, contain traces of an earlier epic narrative, which, in the *Iliad*'s text, can be therefore regarded as a *rudimentary motif*.

Indeed, the specific combat technique described in these verses was undoubtedly most effective when used on an opponent who wore a helmet of a special form, widespread in the sixteenth-fifteenth c. BCE. Furthermore, these verses describe the move performed by the attacker and the forced turning of his opponent's head: these details correspond precisely to the crucial elements of the scene depicted on the sixteenth — fifteenth centuries BCE agate from Pylos. Besides, the original, early text could have already mentioned strangling (parallel to Homer's ἄγχε δέ μιν, v. 371) by a leather strap (*gṷoṷos ṷīphi ktamenohi̯o, v. 375) that fastened the cheek-pieces at the fighter's throat (ἀπαλὴν ὑπὸ δειρήν, v. 371).

The narrative that follows *Il.* 3. 369–376, passing from Paris back to Menelaus, does not allow linguistic reconstruction on Mycenaean level and should be definitely dated to the Aeolic or even Ionic stage of the epic text. It is also noteworthy that the subject changes

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[40] Manuscripts provide following two variant readings: ηγκε (*P. Hib.*) and ἄγχε (*P. Bibl. Brit.* inv. 126; *P. Oxy.* 542 (third c.); all codices and all scholia).

[41] Cf. n. 27 above.

in v. 373 (καί νύ κεν εἴρυσσέν τε καὶ ἄσπετον ἤρατο κῦδος),[42] and it is especially significant for the late dating of this verse that it mixes up the usage of κλέος and κῦδος, two words that became virtual synonyms at the Ionic stage of the epic tradition.[43]

6. Aphrodite's intervention and the rudimentary motif

Let us now turn to the formulaic clause εἰ μὴ ἄρ᾽ ὀξὺ νόησε (*Il.* 3. 374).[44] It is used when a certain action is performed in a traditional way, probably known to the audience, but does not end with the result that is expected and/or that corresponds to the logic of the narrative. This rejection of an expected result might mean that antecedent epic texts did include the respective traditional development, not anymore extant. The formula εἰ μὴ ἄρ᾽ ὀξὺ νόησε probably emerged as late as at the Ionic phase of the epic's development and marked, exactly, a dramatic change in the action, replacing the result expected by the audience with a new, sudden one. Thus, the traditional and/or logically natural sequence of events was changed. For each occurrence of εἰ μὴ ἄρ᾽ ὀξὺ νόησε, one can argue that the changed story might have been present at an earlier stage of the Greek epic tradition. Still, the prior existence of the story can be deemed more or less sure only if there is some direct or indirect early evidence of it.

In the *Iliad*, the clause εἰ μὴ ἄρ᾽ ὀξὺ νόησε introduces the following six cases: Aeneas would perish twice, had he not been miraculously rescued first by Aphrodite (*Il.* 5. 312), then by Poseidon (*Il.* 20. 291); Nestor's death prevented by Diomedes (*Il.* 8. 91); Nestor and Diomedes would have attained full victory and the Trojans would have been blocked in the city, had it not been for Zeus (*Il.* 8. 212); Odysseus would have slain all the Lycians, had it not been for Hector (*Il.* 5. 680); Menelaus would have glorified himself beyond measure, had Aphrodite not taken Paris away (*Il.* 3. 374).

Out of these six cases, the latter story, the one we have discussed in this article, attracts special attention. Firstly, because it is described in the most detailed way. Secondly, because it includes certain linguistic features that, as has been shown above, may be regarded as exceptionally ancient and originally connected with an old epic narrative. Thirdly, because its similarity to the image on the Pylos agate allows us to date its existence to the sixteenth — fifteenth centuries BCE, i. e., as mentioned above, the hypothesis about a changed story's prior existence is supported by indirect early evidence. In other words, the case of Menelaus' failed victory over Paris fits the definition of the *rudimentary motif*[45].

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[42] Κῦδος ἄσπετον "indescribable glory" is attested only twice (*Il.* 3.373 = 18.165), and the epithet ἄσπετος usually accompanies physical objects, such as ὕλη, ὕδωρ, ῥόος, αἰθήρ, ὄμβρος etc.

[43] In the context in question, the scholia interpret this word exactly in this mixed-up meaning: κῦδος· δόξαν. É. Benveniste defined κῦδος as a kind of talisman, a *charisma* granted by gods for the time of a specific battle, in contrast with κλέος "glory", which can be won once and for all. It should have been κλέος that was gained after a deed such as the one described in *Il.* 3.373. An action defined with the word κῦδος could have preceded the deed, stressing an impulse of courage and the confidence in the victory over the opponent, but "this term (*scil.* κῦδος) had ceased to be understood even in ancient times, so that it was assimilated to κλέος 'glory' or νίκη 'victory'" (Benveniste 2016, 359).

[44] Kirk notes that this phrase, occurring six times in the *Iliad*, is absent from the *Odyssey* and that "the motif and its dramatic form of expression are formular: X would have done Y… unless Z had sharply observed it" (Kirk 1985, 319, ad v. 373–375).

[45] Cf.: "[T]he subsequent adapter cannot make himself altogether independent of the manner of treatment of his predecessor; even if he deviates from him, he pays heed to it in some way or another. Of course

When Tadeusz Zieliński introduced the term *rudimentary motif*, he stressed that it was formally undistinguishable from *dramatic fiction*. Here is his reasoning:

"Needless to say, this method (i. e. reconstruction of a lost earlier text by means of detecting rudimentary motifs in an extant text — *N. K.*) should be applied with caution. Not everything that we encounter in a given tragedy as a proposal, assumption or invention,[46] in short as a kind of fiction, can be considered a rudimentary motif. Here, we are facing the crucial difference between the rudimentary motif and *dramatic fiction*. In Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, the Danaids threaten Pelasgus by saying that they will hang themselves from the statues of his gods if he rejects their entreaty. Yet, since their plea is answered, the threat remains but a threat. In Aeschylus' *Choephori* and Sophocles' *Electra*, Clytemnestra receives news about the death of her son, whereas actually he turns out to be alive. Needless to say, these facts do not imply that the precursory texts of Aeschylus and Sophocles, i. e. the cyclic *Danais* and Stesichorus' *Orestes*, indeed depicted Danaids' hanging and Orestes' death before his vengeance. In these cases, rather than with rudimentary motifs, we are dealing with nothing else than dramatic fiction, necessary for the following development of the tragedy's plot, whereas typical sign of a rudimentary motif is its complete uselessness for the further development of the tragedy's plot" (Zieliński 1912, 14–15).[47]

Just in the same way, whenever the clause εἰ μὴ ἄρ᾽ ὀξὺ νόησε occurs in the *Iliad*, its use should not necessarily mean that earlier epic tales had indeed described facts that in Homer's text fail to happen. Specifically, the use of this phrase does not imply that the *Iliad*'s precursors described either Nestor's (*Il.* 8. 91) or Aeneas' (*Il.* 5. 312 and *Il.* 20.291) death by Troy, or the Trojans' definitive blockade (*Il.* 8. 132), or else Odysseus' slaughter of all the Lycians (*Il.* 5. 680). Similarly, there is no good reason to think that in the earlier mythological tradition Menelaus killed Paris in a duel (*Il.* 3. 374): The epic's audience knew that no alternative fate was possible for these two heroes.

Nevertheless, the comparison of inconsistencies in *Il.* 3. 369–376 with the image on the Pylos Combat Agate, dated to the sixteenth — fifteenth centuries, and with the results of a linguistic reconstruction, allows us to argue that an early layer of the epic tradition, perhaps originating precisely in the sixteenth or fifteenth centuriy, included a narrative[48] about a specific duel, whose details corresponded to those depicted on the Pylos agate and

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the manner of his own treatment does not allow him to do it plainly, remarking f[or] i[nstance] in a footnote wherein and why he forsakes his predecessor's ways; he does it underhand by picking up in a friendly or in a malevolent manner the motive of his predecessor. In both cases the predecessor's motive is to be found in the successor's representation, but no more as an efficacious, only as a *rudimentary* one. Therefore I have called my theory *The theory of rudimentary motives*" (Zieliński 1931, 428; Zieliński uses the spelling *motive*, but nowadays the spelling *motif* is considered more common for this meaning of the word).

[46] For "proposal, assumption or invention", Zieliński's original Russian text reads "предложение, предположение или вымысел". These are special terms he introduced for designating different types of rudimentary motif. In the development of his theory as it is presented in Latin and English, respectively, in Zieliński 1925 and 1931, he clarified the classification by distinguishing between the following: *forsaken purpose* (*irritum consilium*), *veiled controversy* (*dissimulata invectiva*), *declined proposal* (*repudiata propositio*) and *vain rumour* (*vana fama*).

[47] Zieliński 1912 (= Зелинский Ф. Ф. Рудиментарные мотивы в греческой трагедии).

[48] As well as an authentic verbal expression, cf. Benveniste (2016, 350): "[O]ur understanding of the Homeric vocabulary is still in its infancy. We have received from antiquity a system of interpretation to which we continue to cling and which is enshrined in our lexica and translations. While great efforts have been made to restore a reliable text and to define the dialectal characteristics of the epic language, our interpretations are those of an epoch in which aesthetic conventions took precedence over exactitude. The more

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were partly preserved — as a rudimentary motif, not any longer crucial for the action's development — in Homer's description of Menelaus' and Paris' combat. In the latter, these details were used just for increasing the dramatic effect, though, and were not anymore distinguishable from *dramatic fiction*.

When the *Iliad* was created as a literary whole, extremely old motifs (probably as early as of the sixteenth century) were played with and employed according to the characters' psychology, so that the dramatic scene of a betrayed husband's vengeance upon his offender was suddenly interrupted by Aphrodite's appearance, an artistic device resembling the *deus ex machina* of the Greek tragedy.

7. Conclusions

7.1. *Pylos Combat Agate and Il. 3. 369–376*

The epic sometimes preserves early details and places them into a context of later stories (the opposite happens, too, when later details are added to a story originating from earlier times). Apparently, in case of *Il.* 3. 369–376, details of sixteenth-century armament were transferred to the period of the Trojan war (ca. thirteenth century). This anachronistic combination must have been created in the early archaic period when no more helmets with crests fit for grasping were worn, when foot warriors were fighting in formations and when chariots were used only for races.

As we have seen, not only did the study of Pylos Combat Agate help clearing certain nuances in the understanding of the verses *Il.* 3. 369–376 and in the comprehensive interpretation of the respective scene, or combination of scenes, but it also allowed the possibility of a Mycenaean linguistic reconstruction in these verses, which proved to be partially practicable. Besides, the archeologically established date of the sealstone permitted to attribute the respectively reconstructed verses to the epic of the sixteenth — fifteenth centuries BCE.

This example demonstrates that Homer's poems could have preserved a reliably dated detail in its authentic verbal form for several centuries, in our case, the grabbing of the crest on the opponent's helmet.

A story about such a feat could have become part of the epic under two conditions: If the audience knew what the duel (ἀριστεία) was, even though it had become obsolete, and if the singer mastered the skill of depicting one. I would go so far as to view Homer's usages as direct evidence of the existence of a separate genre which consisted in detailed depiction of a duel and which could be conventionally named "singing of an *aristeia*".

7.2. *The date of the rudimentary motif in Il. 3. 369–376*

The stages of the Greek epic tradition's development were defined mainly on the basis of linguistic data. The schemes proposed by Cornelis J. Ruijgh and Martin L. West (Ruijgh 1985, 143–190; West 1988, 151–172) coincide in their most important features. Certainly, both schemes have their opponents, e. g. Dag Haug (Haug 2002; see also Bachvarova 2016)

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one studies the Homeric texts, the more clearly we see the gap between the real nature of its concepts and the picture of them given in traditional scholarship".

positively rejects the earlier stages, dating many formulaic phrases and the epic hexameter itself as late as to the Ionic phase.

I consider it reasonable to reconstruct, after C. J. Ruijgh (Ruijgh 2000, 214), the following main phases of the formation of Ancient Greek epic, as they are reflected in the linguistic characteristics of the Homeric text:

1. Proto-Indo-European phase, posited in 1852 by Adalbert Kuhn, who compared Ancient Indian and Greek texts and reconstructed several Indo-European poetic formulaic word-combinations.
2. Proto-Mycenaean layer, localized by Ruijgh on Peloponnesos in 1600–1450 BCE, detected thanks to preserved metrical anomalies, as well as calculations showing that, e. g., many more hiatuses are found after the form ἄλλο in contrast to those after the plural ἄλλα, which might mean that such passages should be dated to the time when Greek still allowed the preservation of etymological stops at the end of a word (cf. Lat. *aliud*).
3. Mycenaean layer, 1450–1200 BCE (Peloponnesus, Boeotia, Thessaly), posited on the basis of the forms preserved in the epic that can be directly compared to those represented in Linear-B texts.
4. Aeolic layer, singled out already by ancient grammarians and studied in the 1860s by August Fick, who rewrote Homer's poems in the Aeolic dialect and the Homeric Hymns in several dialects including the Cypriot. C. Ruijgh distinguishes between Aeolic continental phase (Boeotia and Thessalia, 1200–1000 BCE) and Asia Minor Aeolic phase (Aeolis and Lesbos, 1000–800 BCE). D. G. Miller (Miller 1982) argued against the existence of the Aeolic phase, but a whole number of cogent examples demonstrate the reality of the Aeolic stage in the formation of the Greek epic.
5. Ionic phase (from year 800 BCE onwards, Asia Minor), which is represented in the Homeric poems clearer than all other phases.

To sum up, the proposed interpretation of the verses *Il.* 3. 369–376 reconstructs an element of the Greek epic tradition which, dated to the sixteenth or the first half of the fifteenth c. BCE on the basis of archaeological evidence, belongs to the Proto-Mycenaean phase of the Greek epic.

The *Iliad*'s integrity as a poetic text was noticed already in the Antiquity,[49] and it is by no means my intention to question it. At the same time, the above analysis of Menelaus' and Paris' duel has shown how a description of a scene in Greek epic may contain manifestations of chronologically different layers of its formation.

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[49] Cf. Lucilius' assessment: *Epistula item quaevis non magna* poema *est; / illa* poesis *opus totum, ut tota* Ilias *una est, / una* θέσις *sunt* Annales *Enni atque* ἔπος *unum, / et maius multo est quam quod dixi ante* poema ("Again any epistle (in verse) which is not long is a 'poem,' but the 'poesy' above mentioned is a whole work just as the whole *Iliad* and the *Annals* of Ennius each make one theme and one epic; and it is a much bigger thing than that (namely, a 'poem') which I mentioned before", Lucil. 9.344–347, transl. by E. H. Warmington: Warmington 1938).

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Рудиментарный мотив в греческом эпосе («Пилосский боевой агат» и Илиада III, 369 сл.)

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В 2015 году Дж. Дэвис и Ш. Стоккер, раскапывая т. н. «могилу воина с грифоном» в Пилосе, обнаружили агатовую печать с изумительным по тщательности изображением батальной сцены. Изображен герой, вооруженный одним только мечом, который перегибается через щит и хватает противника за навершие шлема, чтобы, пользуясь им как рычагом, сделать соперника совершенно беспомощным. В статье рассматривается данное изображение как отражение эпизода из раннего героического эпического повествования. Делается попытка показать, что описание боя Менелая и Париса в *Il.* 3. 369–376 представляет собой авторское изменение традиционного повествования, сохранившегося в тексте Илиады только как рудиментарный мотив в соответствии с определением Ф. Ф. Зелинского. Предлагается по-новому комментировать сам эпизод

Iliad 3. 369–376, в котором описание включает шлем необычной конструкции, модный в 16–15 вв. Именно такой шлем позволял воину при сопутствующей удаче повернуть голову противника так, как это изображено на Пилосском боевом агате. Характерно, что гомеровское описание результата битвы вводится с помощью «Если бы не», отрицающего то, что в предшествующей традиции должно было составлять основу повествования. В качестве результата предлагается реконструкция нескольких фрагментов героического эпоса раннего микенского времени с привязкой, как это уже предполагал Ройх, к Пелопоннесу 17–15 вв.

Ключевые слова: Греческая эпическая традиция, Hom. *Il.* 3.369–376, рудиментарный мотив, Пилосский боевой агат.