Straipsniai

ἦ μάλα θαῦμα κύων ὅδε κεῖτ᾽ ἐνὶ κόπρῳ: THE ANAGNORISIS OF ODYSSEUS AND HIS DOG ARGOS (HOM. *OD.* 17, 290–327)

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Abstract. *In the* Odyssey, *there is a description of Odysseus being recognized by his age-old and decrepit dog Argos, whom he had reared and trained himself before his departure for Troy. This so-called Argos episode (*Od. *17.290–327) is still famous today. It has been continuously treated by generations of scholars from antiquity to our time and served as an inspiration to both the visual arts and literature.*
The present article deals with the function and intended effects of the Argos scene. After a brief synopsis of the position of this scene within the Odyssey *as well as of its content and structure, the author discusses the role of dogs in the* Iliad *and the* Odyssey. *The focus of this article lies on the interpretations of the Argos scene, suggested by scholars so far, and on their review by means of a close reading to check their plausibility.*

Keywords: *Greek epic, Homer,* Odyssey, *anagnorisis, animals in literature, dogs in literature.*

1. Introduction

The recognition scene of Odysseus and his dog Argos is a scene one could hardly forget because it appears quite strange at first sight: very sentimental, apparently with no concrete function, told in detail, yet ending quite abruptly, and not as exciting as the following events of the poem. Nevertheless, the scene is effective and has prompted many scholars to study it and to judge it "as one of the noblest [scenes] in the poem" (Wirshbo 1983, 12; cf. also Scott 1948, 277; Rose 1979, 220; Most 1991, 146; Russo 1992, 34; Köhnken 2003, 385).

The motif of Argos and Odysseus has influenced the visual arts as well as literature already in antiquity (Most 1991, 148–162; Meijer 2009, 96–97; Fögen 2017, 98).

Much has been written about that scene. However, having given a synopsis of the research on this scene, I want to reread it thoroughly and discuss it with a focus on its function and intended effect on the listeners of the *Odyssey*.

At first, I will look at the position of the Argos scene within the *Odyssey* and give a short summary while focusing on the structure of the scene. Afterwards, I will discuss

the role of dogs in Homer's works, comparing the different roles in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, though only those passages where real dogs are either protagonists or the "supporting cast" of the epic or at least protagonists in a narration told within the main narration of the poem. Finally, I will present the interpretations of this scene that have been suggested by the scholars, followed by a close reading to check the plausibility of these interpretations as well as to try to find some new aspects that have not been taken into account yet.

2. The Position of the Argos Scene within the *Odyssey*

The scene is presented in the middle of the seventeenth book of the *Odyssey*. Odysseus is already back on Ithaca since the events of Book 13 (13.187). Athene had told him about the situation in his palace (13.335–338), and together, they had made a plan how to eliminate the suitors (13.372–396). Before Athene herself had gone to Sparta to tell Telemachos to come home, she changed Odysseus' appearance so that nobody might recognize him. Now, Odysseus has been together with Eumaeus, the swineherd, since the events of Book 14 and has learned about the situation at his home in detail. Telemachus has arrived on Ithaca (15.502) and has been together with Eumaeus and Odysseus since the events of Book 16. Athene had changed Odysseus' appearance again so that Telemachus could recognize him as his father (16.167–220). Together, they devise a plan against the suitors (16.225–320). Now, while Telemachus goes on ahead to the palace, Odysseus is transformed into a beggar again (17.1–25). Eumaeus escorts Odysseus on his way to the palace (17.182–260).

When they arrive at the palace, they see the dog lying on a manure heap in front of it (17.291–327). After the short encounter with Argos, they enter the palace (17.328–336).

Although Argos is not the first to recognize Odysseus, he is the first to recognize him without divine help or without being told about his true identity by Odysseus himself; his recognition of Odysseus initiates a series of *anagnorismoi* that are going to happen inside the palace (cf. Marg 1973, 9; Mader 1979, 1207; Most 1991, 146; Russo 1992, 34; Franco 2003, 48; Fögen 2017, 96 n. 16). Furthermore, this scene is the only ἀναγνώρισις in the *Odyssey* where both parties involved recognize each other immediately and simultaneous (Köhnken 2003, 393).

The scene occurs under such conditions that make the encounter highly dangerous if Odysseus would be recognized by anyone who belongs to the palace (cf. Most 1991, 146–147; Russo 1992, 34; Race 1993, 100; Fögen 2017, 96).

As we will see, there can be found various reminiscences, anticipations, references back to and parallels with other scenes and other protagonists of the plot (cf. Most 1991, 148; Rohdich 1980, 33–48; Rose 1979, 218–226; Beck 1991, 163), though only implicitly and therefore only hard to be found.

In interrupting the main plot, the Argos scene acts as a kind of retarding moment by increasing the dramatic tension (Köhnken 2003, 389).

Russo emphasizes the "crucial […] placement" of this scene: "here at the moment that the long-absent king is about to enter his own halls again," a "significant

moment" that "would otherwise go unmarked by any special emphasis" (Russo 1992, 34; cf. Köhnken 2003, 393).

3. Content and Structure

The Argos scene is divided into six parts: (1) the introduction of Argos (17.291–300); (2) the dog's reaction when he recognizes Odysseus (17.301–304; cf. already 17.290–291); (3) Odysseus' reaction to Argos (17.304–310); (4) Eumaeus' description and praise of Argos' former qualities (17.311–323); (5) Eumaeus' departure (17.324–325); and (6) the death of Argos (17.326–327).

When Eumaeus and Odysseus arrive at the entrance of the palace talking to each other (17.260–290), the dog Argos – full of vermin – lies between the dung of the animals in front of the palace (17.296–300). Apparently hearing them talking, he raises his head and pricks up his ears (17.291). When he notices Odysseus, he wags his tail and drops his ears (17.301–302) but is not able to move near him (17.303–304). He has obviously recognized Odysseus as his former master. Besides, the reader is given some additional information: Argos is one of the dogs of Odysseus, bred by himself before his departure to Troy (17.292–293); Odysseus never used Argos himself for hunting (17.293); later, the dog had been used as a hunting dog, but he is neglected now (17.294–296).

Odysseus realizes the reaction of the old dog and obviously suspects him to be one of his own dogs, being moved to tears, which he hides before Eumaeus (17.304–305). To be sure, he praises the form of the dog and asks Eumaeus whether it has been a quick hunting dog or a weak "table-dog" (17.306–310).

Eumaeus answers and praises Argos' former power and abilities as a hunting dog (17.315–317). He assures him that Argos belonged to Odysseus (17.312–314) and tells Odysseus that the dog is now full of evil, because nobody takes care of him since his master is thought to be dead by the people of Ithaca (17.318–321). Eumaeus adds a short discussion on the nature of servants (17.322–323).

Afterwards, Eumaeus enters the palace (17.324–325).

Having just seen his master again, the dog dies (17.326–327).

There is no further reaction of Odysseus and no further mention of Argos throughout the rest of the *Odyssey*.

As the Argos scene as a whole retards the main plot, the background information on Argos given right after his first mention (17.292–299) interrupts the plot of the Argos scene itself as a retarding moment similar to the much longer digression about Odysseus' scar (19.393–466) in the Eurycleia scene (19.361–502) (Rengakos 1999, 311–312; Köhnken 2003, 385 and 389; cf. Race 1993, 99–100).

Köhnken points out that Argos' pricking up his ears (17.291) and waggling his tail and dropping his ears (17.302) are different actions, but only two aspects of the recognition are narratively separated, which means that Argos recognizes Odysseus immediately (Köhnken 2003, 389–390; cf. contrarily Race 1993, 99) when he hears him talking and probably scents him.

4. Dogs in Homer's Poetry: *Iliad* and *Odyssey*

In the early ancient literature, dogs are classified only by their functions as hunting dogs, watchdogs and sheepdogs

(Lilja 1976, 25–29; Loth 1994, 786–787; Hünemörder 1998, 756). There is even evidence for a kind of table dogs who accompanied the aristocrats at the table (Lilja 1976, 16; Loth 1994, 786–787; Scott 1948, 228 referring to *Iliad* 13.173). We also read about wild dogs, straying around and eating rotting carcasses and rubbish (Lilja 1976, 18; Hünemörder 1998, 756–757). Not until the fifth century BC do we find a classification of different dog breeds (Loth 1994, 787; Hünemörder 1998, 756–757).

In his poems, Homer mentions about 40 different kinds of animals (Mannsperger 2001, 320). However, because of the nature of the epic, the horse is the animal that is described most frequently and in most detail (Mannsperger 2001, 320). Dogs are found much lesser and also with different frequency in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; based on this, scholars like Clerke and Carpenter have viewed it as a piece of evidence for the hypothesis that both epics have been written by different poets (Carpenter 1946, 181; Clerke 1892, 58–83; cf. Scott 1948, 226–227).

However, Scott argues that

> the *Iliad* is set in a background little adapted to show the better side of dogs, as it is in a camp or near a camp in the territory of the enemy, and the dogs would probably be enemies' dogs driven from their natural homes and forced by semi-starvation to the work as scavengers. These conditions are just reversed in the *Odyssey*, where no enemy has a camp and where dogs have their usual food (Scott 1948, 227).

He also stresses how surprisingly "rare the dog is in the *Odyssey*," where "Odysseus in all his wanderings never saw a dog until he got back to Ithaca" and Telemachus at "the homes of Nestor and Menelaus saw none, yet there must have been dogs in Pylos and Sparta" (Scott 1948, 227 with further examples).

In the Homeric epic, we find about 90 passages dealing with dogs (Hünemörder 1998, 756), but in most of them, the dog or the word "dog" is only used as a metaphor, simile or as an insult (cf. Rahn 1967, 101–102; Lilja 1976, 21–25; Faust 1970, 10–21). The number of passages dealing with real dogs is much lesser. Despite the mentioning of dogs that eat the dead enemies (cf. Scott 1948, 227; Lilja 1976, 18; Hünemörder 1998, 756–757; Mannsperger 2001, 321), we have, for example, the table dogs of Achilles (*Il.* 13.173), of which two are sacrificed later on the pyre of Patroclus (cf. Scott 1948, 228; Lilja 1976, 15–16; Faust 1970, 16), the hunting dogs within the Meleager narration of Phoenix (*Il.* 9.545), the dogs accompanying Telemachus when he goes to the Agora of Ithaca (*Od.* 2.11) and in the palace (*Od.* 17.62 and 20.145), the watchdogs of Eumaeus that he needs as a swineherd (*Od.* 14, 21–37; 16, 4–9 and 162; 17, 200) and the hunting dogs of the sons of Autolycus (*Od.* 19.429–444) (cf. Faust 1979, 10–21). All of them serve only as staffage of the scenes so as to present the scenes more realistically (cf. Rahn 1968, 49 = Rahn 1953, 457).

In discussing the function of dogs in the *Iliad*, Lilja considers "that the Greeks had taken their dogs with them into the campaign for guarding purposes" (Lilja 1976, 15 with reference to Clerke 1892, 63) or "possibly, for hunting purposes" (Lilja 1976, 16), and with respect to Achilles' dogs, she assumes "that dogs could in Homer's times be regarded as mere status symbols" (Lilja 1976, 15; cf. also Mainoldi 1984, 114; Schneider 2000, 28; and Fö-

gen 2017, 96 n. 19) and maybe even kept "for the very purpose of being sacrificed" (Lilja 1976, 16).

While, as Lilja notices, "[t]hose similes in the *Iliad* that deal with sheep dogs and hunting dogs as illustrating the behaviour of the combatants praise the dog's fidelity and bravery […], [i]n the *Odyssey*, instead of being used for the purposes of simile, sheep dogs and hunting dogs are represented in scenes from real life" (Lilja 1976, 25–26).

The fact that other Greeks, especially Greek leaders like Achilles, had taken dogs with them to Troy for different purposes raises the question of why had Odysseus not taken Argos with him. Did he take other dogs with him that are not mentioned – neither in the *Iliad* nor in the *Odyssey* – and leave Argos at home because he was still too young? Or did he not take any dog with him at all?

5. Interpretation

5.1 Effect of the Scene

The Argos scene has been famous and held in high esteem from antiquity until now (Scott 1948, 227; Rahn 1967, 100; Rose 1979, 220; Wirshbo 1983, 12; Most 1991, 145–146 and, for the adoption of this scene in antiquity, 148–162). Scott calls it "one of the great triumphs of literature […] created by a […] genius" (Scott 1948, 227). Rose judges the scene to be "a justly famous narrative" and "a gem, with its swiftly evocative character-drawing, its aborted recognition scene, and its carefully prepared but tersely realised two-line climax in death – altogether a model of restrained pathos" (Rose 1979, 220). Most suggests the pathos, the sentimentality and the artistic mastery of its composition, as well as the way it is integrated into the plot, to be the main reasons of the success and effect of this scene (Most 1991, 146; cf. Calder 2017, 66).

5.2 State of Research

While normally dogs are only mentioned to present a scene more realistically (cf. Rahn 1968, 49 = Rahn 1953, 457), for example, because a herdsman is expected to have dogs to protect his herd, or an aristocrat is expected to have hunting dogs, the Argos scene is quite different: (1) it is not unexpected to find an old – maybe straying – dog in the dung heap before the palace; however, it is strikingly unexpected to have treated this dog in detail over more than thirty lines; (2) this dog, apparently, is not only a piece of scenery, but has a more concrete function for the narration.

Different aspects of interpretation have been suggested for this scene, particularly with regard to its dramatic function and perspective (cf. Köhnken 2003, 385).

Because this dog is obviously different in his function and importance than other dogs mentioned in the *Odyssey*, scholars have compared it not only with those other dogs (cf. Most 1991, 147) but also with other people who recognize Odysseus – or those who do not recognize him at all (cf. Rose 1979, 218).

Rose sees Argos as "a relevant contrast": "his condition is a clear indictment of those servants who have fallen in with the 'general anarchy' of the dysfunctional palace. Formerly an active hunting dog, Argos could no longer fill even the more modest role of a watching dog" (Rose 1979, 218), while those servants do not

want to fill the role of a loyal servant anymore because there is no proper master.

The old decrepit Argos is explicitly contrasted to the apparently happier past (his own as well as Odysseus' past) throughout the scene in a similar way that Eumaeus has contrasted his actual situation to his past before (15.371–376) (cf. Rose 1979, 220; Wirshbo 1983, 14; Most 1991, 147).

Argos is also another symbol for Ithaca's – or at least its palace's – suffering from being without its king. As Penelope, Telemachos and the other humans, Argos also "suffers as a result ultimately of Odysseus' absence" as we can read in line 296: ἀποιχομένοιο ἄνακτος ("while / because his master is absent") (Rose 1979, 220).

Rose summarizes the contrasts suggested by the Argos scene with a focus on the poet's "understandable tendency to juxtapose loyal and disloyal slaves throughout Books 17–20, since fidelity of all sorts constitutes a major theme of the poem" and the "very placement of the incident within the structure of Book 17" as an illustration of Argos' loyalty (Rose 1979, 221).

Furthermore, Argos seems to be a kind of mirror of Odysseus with regard to his former ταχυτῆτα καὶ ἀλκήν ("rapidity and strength," 17.315), his intelligence and acuity (cf. 17.317) as well as his endurance (Rose 1979, 222–223; Fögen 2017, 95).

While some scholars have seen the contrast between Argos and other humans recognizing or not recognizing Odysseus as a contrast of nature and culture, Rohdich clarifies that Argos and his behavior – especially his loyalty – are not pure nature but nature formed by training, nature formed by his master, which made him dependent on it (cf. Rohdich 1980, 33–48).

The aspect of this scene, which has been stressed most in the interpretation, is the loyalty of Argos based on a close relation between Argos and Odysseus in former times (Wernicke 1895, 796; Rahn 1968, 50 = Rahn 1953,458; Schwartz 1975, 177; Lilja 1976, 31–33; Rose 1979, 221; Rohdich 1980, 35; Hölscher 1989, 193; Most 1991, 150–153; Race 1993, 99–100; Dumont 2001, 95; Calder 2017, 66; cf. Köhnken 2003, 386–391).

Either in addition or instead of Argos' loyalty, the aspect of the analogy of the dog Argos, his master Odysseus and his master's household has been emphasized by scholars (Beck 1991, 158–163; Köhnken 2002, 387–393; Fögen 2017, 97; cf. Mader 1979a, 1207): Argos – formerly strong and swift, now decrepit, old, weak, full of vermin, cared for by no one anymore – can be interpreted, first and foremost, as an allegory for Odysseus himself: formerly a strong hero and highly respected king, now apparently a beggar, foreign and unwelcome in his own house; second, Argos stands as an allegory for the whole household of Odysseus, too, which is now in a bad state because of the suitors (Beck 1991, 162–163; Köhnken 2003, 393; Fögen 2017, 95).

A third aspect, highlighted in the interpretation of this scene, is the pathos effected by the description of Argos' miserable and pitiful situation – further solidified even more by death as well as Odysseus' need to hide his emotions and tears (Schwartz 1975, 177; Rose 1979, 220; Most 1991, 146; Russo 1992, 36; Calder 2017, 66; Fögen 2017, 95–96).

Another issue, discussed by Rahn and Lilja, is the humanization of Argos in the way he is characterized (Rahn 1968, 48–53 = Rahn 1953, 456–461; Lilja 1976, 31–32 with reference to Geddes 1878, 224–225).

Furthermore, Schwartz carves out "several points of intentional humour in the setting and circumstances of the episode" in "contrapuntal harmony" to the scene's pathos (Schwartz 1975, 178–183); for example, the dog's incredibly high age and his degrading position ἐν πολλῇ κόπρῳ (17.297; cf. 17.306).

It is noticeable that Argos is carefully characterized by the description of his behavior, condition and skills – in the past as well as in the present time; then again, we are provided with no information about his appearance, such as breed, color, height, apart from "a very general classification of the animal as a hunting dog" (Fögen 2017, 97; cf. Lilja 1976, 31–33).

The age of Argos has been discussed by scholars both antique and modern: while Aelian questioned the credibility of Homer's description (Aelian, *De nat. anim.* 4, 40), Aristotle accepts it as possible (Aristotle, *Hist. anim.* VI 20 574b30-575a2); however, "usually [Argos' age has] been regarded as an instance of poetic licence" (Lilja 1976, 30–31, cf. Fögen 2017, 95–96 n. 15).

As we have seen above, one of the dramatic functions of the Argos scene is to mark the "significant moment" of Odysseus' return to his palace (Russo 1992, 34; cf. Köhnken 2003, 393). Another function is to give a forecast on the situation inside the palace by Eumaeus' allusions (cf. Köhnken 2003, 393; Fögen 2017, 98).

While it could be highly dangerous if Odysseus would be recognized by anyone who belongs to the palace (cf. Most 1991, 146–147; Russo 1992, 34; Race 1993, 100; Fögen 2017, 96), Argos' recognition of his master remains innocuous (Köhnken 2003, 393). Since Odysseus is supposed to be dead, nobody would suspect the dog's attention to be a sign of recognizing his master. For an observer, it could seem to be just the last stir of a dying dog. On the other hand, even if Odysseus' tears would be noticed by anyone, one could take it for a sign of a beggar's compassion for such a regrettable creature.

5.3 Re-Reading of the Passage

Let us read the scene again, now focusing on the aspects of the supposed close relationship between master and dog, of loyalty and of the neglect of the dog by the servants.

In doing so, we should be very careful not to invent or add anything that is not in the text to support a particular interpretation; for example, there is no reference that Argos was Odysseus' *Lieblings-Jagdhund* ("favorite hunting dog"), as Rahn claims (Rahn 1967, 100; cf. Lilja 1976, 33), and it is plausible yet speculative to suppose that Argos "dies of a heart attack" after having recognized his master (Lilja 1976, 30). Neither is there any evidence that Argos would have been waiting for his master in order to be able to die, as Schmitz assumes (Schmitz 1994, 9–10; cf. Köhnken 2003, 388).

We are told by the narrator that Argos is Ὀδυσσῆος ταλασίφρονος ("a dog of Odysseus," 17.292), suggesting maybe that Odysseus had or could have had some more dogs. We also learn that Odysseus had raised the dog by himself (17.292–293:

ὅν ῥά ποτ᾽ αὐτὸς | θρέψε μέν), but could not use him for hunting purposes before his departure to Troy (17.293: οὐδ᾽ ἀπόνητο, "but did not use/enjoy it"). Instead, he had been used later for hunting by others (17.294–295).

What is contrasted in this description are not the conditions of when Odysseus was still there prior to the events of the story and the conditions of him being there now, but the state of when Argos was young and his current state, namely when he is at least twenty years old.

The name Ἄργος, which is mentioned three times (17.292, 17.300 and 17.326) is a descriptive name meaning "the swift footed"; ἀργός is an *epitheton* that is commonly applied to dogs by Homer, especially to hunting dogs or watchdogs (Liddel-Scott s. v. ἀργός (A), 236; Mader 1979, 1206; Mader 1979 a, 1207; Lilja 1976, 15 and 26–27; Russo 1992, 34–35). This name is perfectly suited to the description of Argos' former swiftness (17.315–317).

Actually, Argos is "one of the first examples of animals in ancient literature that are given names" (Fögen 2017, 93), and even "the only dog to have his name published in the *Odyssey*" (Calder 2017, 66 with reference to Seymour 1908, 358; cf. Rohdich 1980, 34).

Apparently, Argos recognizes Odysseus as his former master who treated him well – either by his voice (cf. 17.290–291) or by his scent (cf. Lilja 1976, 30–31; Rohdich 1980, 45–46). He tries to show his recognition but is not able to come near to Odysseus (17.303–304). Odysseus sees an old dog that perhaps could have been one of his former dogs because it lives in or near the palace and is so decrepit and old that it could be more than twenty years old.

Argos is said to be ἀπόθεστος – either "unwelcome" or "neglected" (17.296), "missed by nobody," at least not by the suitors and the servants while Odysseus is thought to be far away or dead (Kubusch 1980, 64–65; cf. Leumann 1950, 64–65; Russo 1992, 35).

However, he has apparently not been neglected directly after Odysseus' departure, but only after he became too old to be used for hunting – and probably even only because the people of Ithaca thought Odysseus was dead, and this had become common opinion only a few years earlier, as can be understood from the fact that the servants, as stated by Eumaeus, did not feel obliged to Odysseus and his belongings any more (17.318–319; cf. 17.320–323).

As Argos seemingly recognizes his master, Odysseus apparently only suspects Argos to be one of his own dogs, even though it is not explicitly said that he recognizes him but only that he tries to hide his tears (17.304–305). Odysseus' asking about the former qualities of the dog sounds unusual. It is probably an excuse for Odysseus to hear how the young dog he had probably raised himself, had developed, or it is – as Russo assumes – a kind of channelling of his feelings (Russo 1992, 36). And for the poet, it is an opportunity to show the similarities between Argos and Odysseus (17.311–318) as well as to discuss the problems at the palace and their reasons (17.319–323).

Eumaeus' answer confirms Odysseus' assumptions: the dog belonged to Odysseus (17.312–314). He also illustrates the description made before by the narrator (17.292–295): when Argos was young, he was swift, strong, admirable and caught every animal that he would track

(17.315–317). Now, he is harassed by evil and neglected by the servants and maids (17.318–319).

To be honest, there is no certain reference in the passage that Argos really recognizes the beggar as his master Odysseus. It is only implied by the description of Argos' attentiveness to the stranger approaching the palace. However, he possibly just takes pleasure in seeing someone new. Neither is it said that Argos dies due to the delight of having seen his master again after twenty years. The reason is exhaustion due to his excitement. Anyway, despite some uncertainty and the subtlety of the allusions, we can be rather sure that Homer wants us to understand that Argos and Odysseus did recognize each other.

With regard to the aspect of Argos' loyalty, we should be far more cautious, as Köhnken has pointed out first (Köhnken 2003, 386–388). There is really not a single certain proof for this assumption. Only due to the other parallels between Argos, Odysseus and his household (see above), we are tempted to conclude from Eumaeus' complaints about the servants' disloyalty that Argos – in contrast – is loyal. However, that does not match the dog-master-household analogy. In fact, the analogy is that Argos suffers from the servants' disloyalty as much as the household and Odysseus suffer from it.

Even if we assume that Argos recognizes his master and maybe dies because of his delight seeing Odysseus again, this does not lead to the conclusion that Argos had waited to see his master again before he can die, as Schmitz asserts (Schmitz 1994, 9–10). The phrase αὐτίκ' ἰδόντ' Ὀδυσῆα ἐεικοστῷ ἐνιαυτῷ means "as soon as he had seen Odysseus in the twentieth year," or "because he had seen Odysseus in the twentieth year." The participle ἰδόντ' may be understood either as temporal or as causal. However, it does not suggest that Argos has been waiting twenty years for Odysseus to see him again before he can die. We must be very careful not to overinterpret the passage.

With regard to the dogs taken to Troy by other Greeks as status symbols and for practical purposes (see above), the question of why Odysseus left Argos back on Ithaca when he departed to Troy remains. Two answers seem probable: either Odysseus took no dog with him; that could mean that he did not attach great importance to having a dog as a status symbol or for practical purposes. Then, we may consider that his relationship to dogs in general and to Argos in particular would not have been very close; perhaps Odysseus took another, already full-grown and completely trained dog to Troy. This would suggest that Argos was only one of his dogs and not the one he had the closest bonds to.

In any case, despite the long tradition of interpretation, it does not seem to be sufficiently proven that Argos is a symbol of loyalty. Admittedly, the Argos scene as a whole – with the description of the neglected dog and Eumaeus' narration of the situation in the palace – is a demonstration of the disloyalty of the servants and of its consequences for the household and Ithaca.

6. Conclusion

The Argos scene is the second *anagnorisis* of Odysseus within the *Odyssey* and the first one achieved without divine help or without Odysseus revealing himself.

Although there is a high risk that Odysseus could be recognized too early by servants or suitors, the *anagnorisis* between Odysseus and his dog remains innocuous. By interrupting the main plot of Odysseus' coming home to his palace, the scene increases the dramatic tension.

While normally dogs are only staffage in the Homeric epic, Argos – the only dog in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* called by his proper name – plays a decisive role and has a dramatic effect while not doing too much himself. The dog and his miserable situation can be seen as an analogy to Odysseus as well as to the situation of the palace and the people inside. His joy about Odysseus' return is in contrast to the feelings of the servants and the suitors toward Odysseus and toward the beggar he seems to be.

Effecting pathos and deep compassion, the scene acts as marking the beginning of the dramatically important return of Odysseus to his palace after twenty years.

A closer look at the scene has shown that the interpretation of Argos as a symbol of loyalty exaggerates his role, especially if it is claimed that Argos had been waiting for his master. In fact, he seems to recognize Odysseus and to rejoice in his master's return – which is anyway fantastic and moving considering the dog's age of about twenty years.

The question of why Odysseus did not take Argos with him to Troy remains open, as other Greek heroes of the *Iliad* had brought their dogs with them.

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ἦ μάλα θαῦμα κύων ὅδε κεῖτ᾽ ἐνὶ κόπρῳ:
ODISĖJO IR JO ŠUNS ARGO *ANAGNORISIS* (HOM. *OD.* 17, 290–327)

Magnus Frisch

S a n t r a u k a

Odisėjoje aprašoma, kaip Odisėją atpažįsta susenęs ir apleistas šuo Argas, kurį Odisėjas pats augino ir auklėjo prieš išvykdamas į Trojį. Vadinamasis Argo epizodas (*Od.* 17, 290–327), nuo senovės iki šių dienų ne kartą tyrinėtas mokslininkų, įkvėpęs daugelį poetų, rašytojų, dailininkų, reikšmingas ir šiandien.

Straipsnyje aptariama vadinamosios Argo scenos paskirtis ir numatytas poveikis. Glaustai aptarus šios scenos reikšmę, taip pat apžvelgus jos turinį ir struktūrą, įvertinta šuns svarba *Iliadoje* ir *Odisėjoje*. Straipsnio dėmesio centre – tyrėjų pasiūlytos Argo scenos interpretacijos ir šių interpretacijų įtikimumo verifikavimas atidžiu teksto skaitymu.

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