

Diplomatic Envoys in the Homeric World (*)

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Diplomacy is as old as the world and will probably perish with it. The people of the Bible, the various peoples in Mesopotamia and the Near Eastern littoral, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans all conducted international relations and diplomacy. It is almost a truism that when two societies coexist sooner or later they are bound to establish rules of contact, whether for trade, war, or peace (1). Among the most primitive races of today we find practices of a like nature. Thus in some of the underdeveloped islands of the Pacific intercourse between group and group, whether in peace or in war, is conducted through the medium of heralds who are considered inviolable. The same is

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(1) R. DE MAULDE-LA-CLAVIÈRE, *La diplomatie au temps de Machiavel* (Paris, 1892) 1-15. For the international relations in the Homeric times see also Th. SORGENFREY, *De vestigiis iuris gentium Homericis* (Leipzig, 1871) *passim*; E. AUDINET, *Les traces du droit international dans l'Illiade et dans l'Odyssée*, in the *Revue générale de droit international public* 21 (1914) 29-63.

true among some of the Australian aborigines⁽²⁾. The theory that the idea of permanent embassies was really introduced after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 A.D., which secured the independence of several European states and promoted diplomatic relationships among them, may be correct but only partially. In truth, in many matters pertaining to the proceedings of ambassadors and to their rights and obligations, the ancient peoples had quite as comprehensive ideas as the modern. Long before Westphalia one frequently hears of permanent or quasi-permanent representatives, not to call them spies, in Mesopotamia at some of the palace courts. Zimrilim, the Assyrian king, had several such correspondents at the Babylonian court, just as Hammurabi had his at Mari as well as other foreign courts where they seemed to have enjoyed the power to negotiate on behalf of their masters⁽³⁾. Their appointment seems to have been for specific missions and was expected to be terminated on the completion of the mission. But many stayed on for a considerable time, especially since their host delayed their departure, and they could not leave the court, as it appears, without the permission of the king-host. The El-Amarna correspondence is full of complaints by kings for the long delays of their ambassadors. These envoys often used their position and their contacts in the court to report freely upon the military and political situation which they observed there. Some of these ambassadors even boasted of their use of privileged inside information derived from their contacts at the highest level of administration, exactly as today's ambassadors do⁽⁴⁾.

Some similar practices might have been true in the Mycenaean world, although no definitive evidence to this effect has survived. Yet the otherwise unexplainable presence of Phoenix in the company of Agamemnon at a time when Phoenix' master re-

(2) G.C. WHEELER, *The Tribe and Tribal Relations in Australia* (London, 1910) *passim*; F. RATZEL, *Völkerkunde* II (Leipzig, 1885) 282.

(3) J.M. MUNN-RANKIN, *Iraq* 18 (1956) 104 ff.; F.M. BÖHL, *Opera Minora* (Groningen-Djakarta, 1956) 354; J.R. KUPPER, *Revue d'Assyriologie et Archéologie orientale* 42 (1942) 40.

(4) CAH 2. 1, pp. 1 and 180.

mained at loggerheads with Agamemnon may have served some further function; one cannot be sure. What is evident from the Near Eastern practices, nevertheless, is that whenever a prince appeared to be immature or inexperienced in the exercise of the duties expected of him by his position, advisers, the like of Phoenix who enjoyed the confidence of the prince's father, were appointed to school the young man in the exercise of his responsibilities⁽⁵⁾. Undoubtedly, these special confidants were dispatched to special diplomatic missions when necessary, and some of these missions could have had a more lasting character than others.

Clearly, diplomatic missions in the Homeric and the Ancient Near Eastern world were entrusted to special envoys with ambassadorial functions. Being men of consequence they are always referred to by name and are frequently given the title of messenger or ambassador. These messengers, charged with important missions, had experience in affairs of state and were fully cognizant of royal policy. Some of them were chosen from among the high officers of the administration. Routine exchanges of messages or gifts between rulers were doubtless entrusted to persons of lesser importance, though as representatives of their king they were men of standing. These men were frequently accompanied by men of junior status who were also employed in the internal administration of the king. The rank of the leading envoys depended on the importance and the delicate nature of the mission. One type of ambassadorial function was frequently assigned to servants of the king who carried the title of herald ($\kappa\eta\rho\upsilon\tilde{\xi}$ - $\kappa\eta\rho\upsilon\chi\epsilon\varsigma$). The role of the herald in the pre-Homeric period is not clear since the Mycenaean documents have be-

(5) Shamsi-Adad, king of Assyria and contemporary of Hammurabi, gave advice to his son, who proved feeble and hesitant in the administration of the territories assigned to him. To shelter the son from major errors, Shamsi-Adad gave him advisers who enjoyed Shamsi-Adad's confidence and were kept abreast of the instructions to the son by the father. The same confidants were also dispatched as envoys to diplomatic missions, CAH. 2. 1, pp. 3-4. For Homer see P. MAZON, *Introduction à l'Illiade* (Paris, 1948) 176-77.

queathed us very meager information in this respect; even the meaning of the name *Keryx* is disputed. The Mycenaean Tablets of Linear B mention — so scholars incline to believe — the terms *ka-ru-ke* and *a-ke-ro*. But it is not certain what these terms denoted. They could mean either herald or *angelos*, both terms frequently employed by Homer. Ventris and Chadwick are certain that both terms refer to heralds⁽⁶⁾. Others feel that existing evidence is insufficient to enable us to come to any certain conclusions⁽⁷⁾. Although theories regarding the interpretations of terms of uncertain provenance may have some value and even some appeal, it might be safer to investigate the Homeric texts themselves for the actual role of heralds and *angeloi*, particularly since there is sufficient information in the epics about the name, function, social status, privileges, and other attributes of such functionaries. By extrapolation from the Eastern and Homeric practices one can speculate with some degree of reliability about the character of Mycenaean diplomacy and the type of agents instrumental in it.

Origins and Traditionality.

As the Mycenaean and Homeric kings claimed divine origins for themselves and the institution they represented, so did the heralds. In Greek history heralds were portrayed as of divine stock, deriving specifically from the holy race of Hermes.

(6) M. VENTRIS and J. CHADWICK, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (Cambridge, 1956) 123; 385; 396.

(7) H.G. BUCHHOLZ, *Erwähnen die Pylostafeln Herolde? Festschrift für Friedrich Matz* (Mayence, 1962) 25-31; M. GÉRARD, *Les mentions religieuses dans les tablettes Mycéniennes* (Diss. Univ. Liège, 1966) see under *Ka-ru-ke*; CAH 2. 2, p. 180; A. MORPURGO, *Mycenaeae Graecitatis Lewilcon* (Rome, 1963) s.v. *ka-ru-ke*: «quid verbum hic proprie significet incertum est». As for *A-ke-ro* see MORPURGO, 10. Also L.R. PALMER sees in the Mycenaean herald a functionary of purely religious nature, *Interpretation of Mycenaean Greek Texts* (Oxford, 1963) 231 and 259; H. HAAK, *Theologische Quartalschrift* 141 (1961) 22; C.J. GADD, *Ideas of Divine Rule in the Ancient East* (Oxford, 1948) 62.

Pollux has recorded the story of Keryx who has the son of Hermes and Pandrosus, the daughter of Cecrops. Allegedly, the lineage of *kerykes* sprang from the union of these two divinities⁽⁸⁾. For this reason the Homeric *kerykes* were customarily addressed as Διὸς ἄγγελοι since Hermes was the son and herald of Zeus and also because the *kerykes* announced Zeus' festivals. As Hermes and Iris served Zeus in the capacity of divine messengers, so the earthly heralds served their kings in similar capacity. Because of their origin and function, heralds in the ancient world enjoyed the privilege of sacrosanctity. This privilege was not as a rule affected by the justice of their particular mission. The fact that Agamemnon's heralds had been charged with the disconcerting task of leading Briseis from Achilles' to Agamemnon's hut did not diminish Achilles' respect for the person and office of the herald. When he noticed them standing, awe-stricken and mute near his hut, he welcomed them and hailed them as Διὸς ἄγγελοι ἠδὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν. Though he admitted that they served a master hateful to him, Achilles prudently underscored the universal indispensability of their function and their divine origin, overlooking the obvious injustice of their mission. For the justice of their mission related to the character and motives of the heralds' lord, not the inherent nature of the heralds' role⁽⁹⁾.

While the purportedly divine origin of the heralds may simply point to the antiquity of the institution for which no chronological origins could be discerned, more concrete traditions make clear that the heralds of several city-states came from certain

(8) Pollux 4. 91; ERBSE *ad Il.* 1. 100. For the divine origins of the human role in the Near East see the role of *therapontes*, NILSSON, *Das Homerische Königtum* (SB Berlin, 1927) 23 ff.; NILSSON, *Homer and Mycenae* (London, 1933) 212-238; H. JEANMAIRE, *Couroi et Couretes* (Lille, 1939) 104; G. GLOTZ, *La Cité grecque* (Paris, 1953) 51; FINLEY, *The World of Odysseus* (New York, 1954) 109-110; G. STEGAKIS, *Historia* 15 (1966) 408-19.

(9) ERBSE *ad Il.* 1. 334 ff: καλῶς δὲ οὐκ Ἀγαμέμνωνος ἔφη, ἀλλ' ἀνδρῶν καὶ Διὸς οἷς δικαίως ὑπηρετοῦσι· τούτῳ δὲ ἀδίκως.

traditional families. Thus in Athens the heralds belonged to the family of Kerykes and Eumolpidae (Diod. 13.69.2; Plut. *Alc.* 33.1 ff.). They were nobly born attendants, and like the medieval squires they acted as heralds and envoys in war and as personal ministers for their superiors⁽¹⁰⁾. With the passage of time some of them eventually became heroes worshipped in certain places as the protectors of the institution they had served so well in their life-time. Herodotus describes how Talthybius had been angered by the Spartan maltreatment of the Persian heralds (Hdt. 7. 137) and how his holy wrath was at the end assuaged by the Spartan offer to make amends to Xerxes for this crime. Talthybius seems to have enjoyed high esteem at Sparta because as the herald of Agamemnon he had a shrine there and his descendants, the Talthybiadae, retained the traditional right to perform heraldic duties for the Spartans. Although Talthybius' wrath had been temporarily soothed by the Spartan offer to make amends to Xerxes, he was not satisfied until this outstanding account had been settled by the infliction of a similar loss upon Sparta. This retributive act occurred in 430/29 B.C. when the Athenians intercepted the Spartan embassy to Persia. The Spartan envoys captured by the Athenians and subsequently put to death were Nicolaus, Aneristus, and Pratodamus, the first two respectively the sons of Bulis and Sperthias (Hdt. 7. 137; Thuc. 2. 67).

That the character of the heraldic institution was traditional becomes evident also from the few but valuable references of Homer. In Book 17 of the *Iliad* Apollo appeared to Aeneas in the form of Periphas, son of Ephytus, who had ostensibly grown old in the service of Anchises⁽¹¹⁾. The office of Periphas' father and Periphas' own eponymity point to the traditionality of the heraldic office. Still another case relating to the traditionality of the heraldic function in Homer is the spying mission of the Trojan Dolon. Although admittedly this case is not as clear-cut

(10) Od. 1. 109; W.B. STANFORD (ed.), *The Odyssey of Homer*, *ad loc.*

(11) Il. 17. 323-24; Eust. *ad loc.*: κήρυξ οὖν καὶ ὁ Ἡπυτος, οὗ τὴν τέχνην ὁ υἱὸς διεδέξατο κατὰ ἔθος ἀρχαῖον τὸ προδηλωθὲν, ὃ παραδίδωσιν Ἡρόδοτος.

as that of Ephytus, nonetheless Homer distinctly states that Dolon's father Eumedes had been a herald, and a good one (Il. 10. 315, κήρυκος θεῖσιω). What Homer did not specify, however, was whether Dolon himself was also a herald or destined to be one. From Homer's explanation it becomes clear that Dolon's father enjoyed considerable respect among the Trojans while Dolon's own moral reputation had been ambivalent. But irrespective of Dolon's moral stature there is solid evidential support from Homer's scholiasts and from Herodotus regarding the traditional character of the heraldic office in Dolon's family (Il. 10. 315; ERBSE *ad loc.*; Eust. *ad* Il. 17. 323; 10. 315; BEKKER *ad* Il. 10. 315; Hdt. 6. 60).

The Herald's Age.

A herald's age is not usually given but Homer did not fail to make it abundantly clear that heralds were generally persons of mature age. Maturity has frequently been a qualification among Greeks for several officials conducting public business throughout Greek history, so that even without the explicit statements of Homer one can easily surmise that the Homeric heralds were also of mature age. In classical times, persons used as envoys were no less than forty (many times fifty years old) though as a rule there was no statutory requirement specifying the envoy's age. Pericles entrusted the delivery of his invitation to the Greek cities for the construction of the destroyed Athenian sanctuaries to men over fifty years of age. The same age is prescribed in an Athenian decree concerning Methone wherein the three envoys to be named had to be at least fifty years old⁽¹²⁾. When the Athenians deliberated about the dispatch of the Sicilian expedition, Nicias, who opposed it, warned them repeatedly about the danger of listening to the advice of young men (Thuc. 6.12.2; 13.1). It seemed indeed natural for the Greeks to appoint men of maturity and experience to serve in respon-

(12) M/L No. 65 l. 17: ἡπὲρ πεντήκοντα ἔτε γέγον[ότας]; SIG 75; IG I³ 61.

sible positions of the state since they identified maturity with experience and responsibility. The position of the herald next to the king was such a position which required both experience and the exercise of responsibility. For this reason, the Homeric heralds are normally portrayed as older persons, older as a rule than the king they served. In some instances being older than the king might not mean much because the majority of the Achaean kings in Troy seems to have been young men. The two older kings, Nestor and Idomeneus, appear to have been the exception rather than the rule. But even in the cases of older kings, their heralds have been described as older than their masters.

When, for example, Odysseus, posing as Idomeneus' brother Aethon, sought to convince Penelope of the veracity of his report by signs descriptive of a few of the officials of Odysseus, he painted the herald in attendance on Odysseus as round-shouldered, dark of skin, curly-haired, and older than his master. Likewise, Idaeus bade Aias and Hector to terminate their duel, addressing them as *παῖδάς τε φίλους τε γέρον αὐτὸς ὄν*, according to the scholiast (Il. 7. 297; Eust. *ad loc.*). The advanced age of Idaeus is further corroborated in the concluding episode of the *Iliad* in which Achilles threatens to defile Hector's corpse. At this point the gods intervened to block this barbarous act. They consequently dispatched Iris to tell Priam that he should go ransom his son's body but that he should not take any other man along, with the single exception of a herald. Priam chose Idaeus because he concentrated the best qualifications for such a mission. For Idaeus had not only wide experience and wisdom but he was also of a very advanced age, a fact which automatically dispelled any suspicion that the character of his mission was martial⁽¹³⁾. The frailty of both king and herald was designed to evoke respect and even pity and thus to avoid provoking Achilles' ire. Since Priam had been decommissioned from the

(13) Il. 24. 270 *γεραῖτερος*. Hecuba justifiably worried about her husband's undertaking, reminding him of his old age and the age of his companion, Il. 24. 368-69.

Trojan war fighting because of age, Idaeus, being older, must have been considerably old. Despite his advanced age, however, Idaeus remained active throughout the Trojan war, a fact which helps confirm the life-long tenure of office enjoyed by the Homeric heralds. The soundness of this hypothesis seems to be further supported by Homer's description of Epytides, the herald who had reached a very old age in the service of Aeneas' father⁽¹⁴⁾. Clearly, inability to serve in the capacity of herald rather than advanced age was the criterion for retirement from the office.

Herald-Therapon.

On closer look the name « herald » seems to have been rather common in the Homeric lexicon as it was used to designate a wide variety of officials. There seem to have been heralds who fell under the category of public officials while others were strictly attached to the *oikos*. The latter were apparently the more personal type of attendants, as Patroclus was to Achilles, and as such they were generally treated by their lords as *ἑταῖροι καὶ φίλοι*. Because their personal relationship and because they were near the seat of power they were considered friends of the kings as well as public officials. Yet there was still a host of other servants who did enjoy the same degree of high status and closeness to the king; these were commissioned for lesser jobs although they carried the title of herald. But unlike the former, these lesser officials remained mostly anonymous⁽¹⁵⁾. When, for example, Athena flew to Ithaca to talk to Telemachus (Od. 1. 109-12), she found the wooers in front of the palace doors playing dice while heralds and servants mixed wine and water for them in bowls. Still other heralds were in the process of setting the

(14) Il. 17. 324-25: κήρυκ' Ἴηπυτίδη, ὃς οἱ παρὰ πατρὶ γέροντι κηρύσσων γήρασκε.

(15) STANFORD *ad Od.* 1. 109 and Eust. *ad Od.* 1. 109: ὅτι ἐνδοξώτεροι θεραπόντων οἱ κήρυκες. Βασιλικοὶ μὲν γὰρ ἄνδρες καὶ θεῖον γένος οἱ κήρυκες. οἱ δὲ θεράποντες, ἀπλῶς ὑπηρεταὶ εἰσὶ φίλοι.

tables for the dinner or performing sundry other chores. As Athena and Telemachus sat down to eat, a herald came to fill their cups with wine (Od. 1. 143). Obviously, heralds of this type, described mostly anonymously in the epics, were not much higher than ordinary pages (Od. 1. 146). Sometimes, even the important heralds discussed earlier could serve the double role of page and public official, although it is not clear that this was a frequent occurrence. If one accepts the distinction made by a few of the scholiasts he will be led to infer that important heralds did not frequently serve this dual capacity. Perhaps in the absence of any other servant, the herald might serve as a page, but it is not very likely that the opposite was also true. At any rate, that both types of heralds most probably were free men ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Beyond the heralds attached to the person and the *oikos* of the king, there were still other heralds usually bearing the epithet « public ». The designation « public » presents a difficulty in the heroic age, unless one accepts it as a development of later years when the Mycenaean district-states had been replaced by the city-states. That the Homeric epics may occasionally anticipate this development is not to be denied ⁽¹⁷⁾. In Book 20 (276) of the *Odyssey* there is a reference to heralds leading through the city the holy hecatombs of the gods. These heralds have been described as οἱ τῶν Ἱθακησίων οἱ δημόσιοι ⁽¹⁸⁾. Unfortu-

(16) Eust. *ad Od.* 1. 146: χρῆ δὲ μὴ δούλους νοεῖν τοὺς Ὀμηρικοὺς οἰνοχόους. δούλος γὰρ φασὶν οὐδεὶς ἦν ἐν τοῖς τοιοῦτοις διακονῶν.

(17) Stephen SCULLY, *Ramus* 10 (1981) 1-34; F. GSCHNITZER, *Chiron* 1 (1971) 1-17 where he argues that two levels of organization can be traced in Homer: an earlier in which tribal organization predominates, and a later in which the city is dominant. See also George VLACHOS, *Les sociétés politiques homériques*, transl. into Greek by M. and D. APOSTOLOPOULOU (Athens, 1981) 65-66; 231; n. 99; M. AUSTIN and P. VIDAL-NAQUET, *Les économies et sociétés en Grèce ancienne* (Paris, 1972) 53-56; FINLEY, *The World of Odysseus*, 79-80; 110-11; 124-25; MASON HAMMOND, *The City in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1952) 38; H.T. WADE-GERY, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge, 1952) 38; A. SNODGRASS, *JHS* 54 (1974) 114-25.

(18) DINDORF and STANFORD *ad loc.*

nately, this assignment of the heralds to the deme of Ithaca cannot be considered certain because the same term was used in another occasion in which the exegesis leaves little doubt that the service was public but that the heralds belonged to the royal *oikos*. In Od. 19. 135 Penelope apologized for her marked display of inattentiveness to strangers, beggars, and heralds since the time the suitors descended upon her household. The heralds adverted to in this instance were described as carriers of public messages (οἱ δημουσγοὶ ἕσσιν, 135). Yet Penelope most probably had in mind not only the city heralds but the royal heralds as well, inasmuch as kings were the heads of state and their personal messages constituted ipso facto public business.

Variety of Duties.

The variety of duties the heralds had to discharge was immense. In some instances one herald sufficed to fulfill the assigned task; in other, two or more heralds were required. As a consequence of the agreement which was designed to resolve the conflict between Trojans and Achaeans, Agamemnon's herald Talthybius was dispatched to the ships to bring the appropriate lambs for sacrifice (Il. 4. 119). But Hector sent two heralds to notify Priam of the treaty just agreed upon and to bring him to the camp in order to take the oaths on behalf of the Trojans (Il. 3. 116). On another occasion Agamemnon's two heralds were sent to Achilles' quarters to accompany Briseis to Agamemnon's hut. When Hector's proposal for still another duel (this time between himself and one of the Achaeans) found acceptance among the Achaeans, the latter resorted to sortition to decide who would be Hector's opponent. The lot having been cast, the herald carried it around to the troops so that everybody would see the outcome. Subsequently, heralds (one from each side) were appointed to serve in the role of referees with the authority to make independent decisions in accordance with the commonly recognized rules of the duel. Both sides expected them to use their prudence and wise judgement whenever the

occasion required. Acting on the basis of this authority, the heralds intervened to stop the fight, because the oncoming darkness made further fighting unwise and hazardous. The heralds' suggestion for the termination of the fighting was ostensibly subject to the mutual consent of the combatants, a limitation which indicates that their role as referees was more advisory than determinative but the ultimate compliance of the duelists with the herald's judgement exemplifies the importance ascribed to heralds in the Homeric times (Il. 7. 274) ⁽¹⁹⁾.

At a time when no public media existed to inform the public of the decisions of their rulers, heralds acting as town-criers served this purpose. In this regard, the king would dispatch a herald to summon the other kings or the warriors to a meeting (Il. 2. 50). But the herald's duties were not simply limited to the summoning of the meeting; he also carried the additional obligation to whip the assembly into order before the speaker(s) could address it. Since the task was laborious and time-consuming, several heralds were customarily dispatched to perform this work ⁽²⁰⁾. Moreover, heralds brought the sacrificial victims

(19) The suggestion for the termination of the fight came from the Trojan herald Idaeus. Talthybius remained at first ambivalent, unwilling to initiate the end of the fighting because at the time Idaeus intervened Aias had the advantage. On the other hand, Talthybius hesitated to urge Aias on, being afraid of the final outcome; for though Aias enjoyed the advantage in the fight at that point, it was by no means certain that the victory belonged to him. The coming darkness made the victory more a matter of chance and less a question of bravery or skill, Eust. *ad loc.*

(20) Il. 2. 96 states that nine heralds were used, and, according to the scholion, the nine could hardly control the assembled crowd: εἰ τοσοῦτοι κήρυκες μόλις ἔπειθον αὐτοὺς σχέσθαι μὲν τῆς βοῆς ἀκούσαι δὲ τῶν βασιλέων. Another version asserts that the poet used the number nine because of its perfect square root and the number of Muses, Eust. *ad loc.* See ERBSE *ad Il.* 2. 96-97. Before Odysseus went to restrain the crowd which had been excited by Thersites' vilifications of Agamemnon, he put on his cloak, which was brought to him by his herald (Il. 2. 183-84). As Odysseus was upbraiding Thersites for his insolence, Athena stood on his side in the likeness of a herald, bidding the people to keep silent that they might hear Odysseus (Il. 2. 280). For the Achaean assemblies see F. MORDAU, REG 6 (1893) 216. Important though the role of the herald might have

and other items for the sacrifice (Il. 3. 245); mixed the wine and water for the libations, or poured the water on the hands of the kings for the purificatory ritual that preceded the sacrifice⁽²¹⁾. Heralds also pronounced the agreements and the prayers which accompanied these agreements loudly enough so that everybody would hear them and nobody would remain ignorant of the stipulations or the curses that attended the breach of the agreement⁽²²⁾. When a proclamation of war was made, it was the herald who went around arousing the warriors for the battlefield (Il. 2. 437; 446).

Heralds were also frequently dispatched on fact-finding missions. Thus Patroclus went on behalf of Achilles to Nestor to find out who among the Achaeans had been wounded in the battle that had taken place earlier. Patroclus himself might not have been a professional herald, but the role assigned to him in this instance was generally reserved for the heralds. Inasmuch as Patroclus stood closer to the king than anybody else, it was natural that he would undertake this assignment. The closeness of Patroclus to Achilles also points to the fact that heralds, like Patroclus, enjoyed the confidentiality and trust of their masters.

In the course of the Trojan campaign the talkative Nestor narrated some of his youth's escapades, telling how once in the company of his father and other Pylians he campaigned against the Epeians who had formerly raided the Pylian territory and

been in the summoning of the assemblies, there have been at least two occasions in the Iliad in which the assembly was summoned without the use of herald. The first is in Book 1. 54 where Achilles himself called the assembly and the troops responded overwhelmingly to his call without waiting for the traditional summon of the herald. The event is noted by the scholiast who appropriately remarked that calling the assembly by herald was ἔθως ἀρχαίων (BEKKER *ad Il.* 19. 40). The second occurrence is in Il. 19. 12.

(21) Μίτρογον Il. 3. 270 is not tantamount to κερύοντο. No water was used at this point but Trojan and Achaean wine were mixed in a bowl, LEAF and BAYFIELD *ad loc.*; ERBSE *ad loc.*; Vergil, *Aen.* 12. 161. The cutting and distribution of the hair symbolized the participation in the sacrifice and the danger of destruction in case the agreement were violated, Il. 3. 273; Eust. *ad Il.* 3. 274-75; LEAF *ad Il.* 3. 273.

(22) Il. 3. 275 ff.; and Eust. *ad loc.*

stolen many of the Pylian cattle. Nestor and the Pylians embarked on a counter-plundering enterprise, and when they had returned home with their loot, they sent out heralds to announce to the Pylian victims of the Epeian plunder that they should come forward to recoup their losses from the spoils Nestor and his companions had brought back (Il. 11. 685). In still another case, as Menestheus was being pressed in battle by the Lycians, he sent his herald Thoötes to solicit the assistance of the two Aiantes (Il. 12. 331).

Among the items depicted on the Hephaestus-made shield of Achilles was a people's assembly wherein heralds were represented as keeping the people in order or lending their staffs to the elders of the assembly who had been serving as judges. It becomes clear from this scene that the elders could not pronounce their judgment unless they received first the staff from the heralds⁽²³⁾. This view is further supported by a similar scene in the funeral games in honor of Patroclus. Archilochus had clearly committed some infraction during the games in his zeal to win a prize. Consequently, as the prizes were being distributed, Menelaus rose and denounced Archilochus' perfidy. As soon as Menelaus rose to speak a herald came and put a scepter in his hand and then asked the other Achaeans to keep silence (Il. 23. 567-69). Likewise, when Telemachus got up to speak before the Ithacan assembly, the herald Peisenor placed a staff in his hands (Od. 2. 38).

Although it was not necessarily the king himself who always engaged in the slaughter of the sacrificial animals, in Book 3 of the *Iliad* Agamemnon personally performs this task. Elsewhere, we are informed, heralds slaughtered the ox of the sacrifice⁽²⁴⁾. But following the reconciliation between Agamemnon and Achil-

(23) A proclamation of silence by a herald opens the scene before the Areopagus in Aesch. *Eum.* 566; see also Hesiod, *Works and Days* 222. ERBSE says that οἱ δημηγοροῦντες καὶ οἱ δικάζοντες σκῆπτρα ἐλάμβανον; *ad Il.* 18. 505. Whether the scepters of the kings were different is not clear.

(24) Il. 18. 559-69; MONRO *ad loc.*

les, the former ordered his herald Talthybius to fetch a boar for a sacrifice to Zeus and Helios (Il. 19. 196), although it was Agamemnon in this particular instance, not Talthybius, who slaughtered the boar. Talthybius, on the other hand, threw the body of the accursed animal into the sea. From this evidence, it appears that on very important occasions the herald assisted in the sacrifice but the person who performed it was the king himself.

Heralds also served in the role of modern-day military messengers carrying the sad news of a beloved's death. Homer says that Hector's wife continued her normal household chores unaware of her husband's death because no herald had come to give her the sad news (Il. 22. 437 ff.). At other times, the herald would represent his master in ceremonial capacities not essential enough to require the presence of the king. Thus as Odysseus was leaving Alcinous' palace, the latter ordered his herald to lead Odysseus to the swift ship waiting at the shore (Od. 13. 64-65). Occasionally, a herald would be compelled by the circumstances to play a double role, his personal loyalty to the master's *oikos* notwithstanding. In this connection, Homer pointed out that Medon, Odysseus' herald, served the wooers in the dual capacity of herald and singer. He must have performed his duties well (in the eyes of the wooers at least) for they undoubtedly liked him and invited him to all their festivities. But Medon never forgot that he was primarily Odysseus' servant. To escape the onus of the collaborator and to demonstrate his loyalty to the family of his master, Medon used his position and his connections with the wooers to inform upon their activities. Accordingly, he passed on to Penelope vital information relating to the suitors' schemes against Telemachus (Od. 16. 412; 447). At the end, Medon turned out to be one of the few notably loyal members of Odysseus' personal household, and his loyalty was rewarded. He escaped the massacre of the wooers and their sympathizers on the testimony of Telemachus that he had been an unwilling collaborator, free of any crimes⁽²⁵⁾. By sparing him, Odysseus had also hoped to have him serve as a living example

(25) Eust. *ad Od.* 4. 677 : πάνυ γὰρ εὔνοος ὁ ἀνὴρ τῷ τοῦ Ὀδυσσεύος οἴκῳ.

that crime does not pay whereas doing good does (Od. 22. 373-74).

Still another very important function of the herald was to accompany scouts or ambassadors in their mission. When Odysseus sent two of his comrades into the land of the Lotus-eaters to explore the area and the type of people who lived in it, the scouts were accompanied by heralds (Od. 10. 101). Clearly, the purpose of the escorting heralds was to bestow sacrosanctity on the mission, thereby providing protection to the delegates in an unknown land. Likewise, by accompanying their master on embassies, heralds added to the official character of the master's business⁽²⁶⁾.

The numerous heraldic functions thus far discussed pertained mostly to the public character of the herald's office, for, as it has been stressed above, the palace was not simply the king's residence; it was also an administrative center with rooms for officials, schools for training scribes (in Mycenaean times), rooms for archival repositories, magazines, workshops, etc. Some of the heraldic functions may not quite seem of public nature, but during a period when the distinction between public and private life was not so sharply drawn, it would not be easy to distinguish between public and private duties. The herald and *therapon* (servant) in the royal house shared a double role and served the master in a capacity which could not easily be distinguished from the public capacity⁽²⁷⁾. Several such *therapontes* were very important men who stood so close to power that they cannot be considered run-of-the-mill servants except in the sense that they performed tasks which were not too far removed from the servant's duties. Otherwise, their proximity to the king and the trust they enjoyed put them in a special category. Patroclus had been assigned to Achilles to serve him as *therapon*; yet Patroclus became Achilles' most beloved friend and could not be

(26) LEAF and BAYFIELD, *ad Il.* 9. 170: ἵνα δηλωθῆ ὅτι δημοσία ἢ πρεσβεία. Ταλθύβιος δὲ οὐ πέμπεται ὡς Ἀγαμέμνωνος ὦν.

(27) Il. 2. 437; 3. 116-19; 246-47; 273-74; 4. 192-208; 18. 505; 19. 250-67; G. BUSOLT, *Griech. Staatskunde*, I, 328.

considered as just another ordinary servant. When Idaeus accompanied his master to Achilles' quarters, he was primarily filling the role of *therapon* rather than that of herald. He went along not so much to symbolize Priam's sacred mission as his ambassador but to help him along in his personal journey of mercy. An embassy would not have accomplished much because there was nothing that Achilles would be willing to negotiate in return for Hector's corpse. In contrast, a mercy trip or a mission of desperation in which the old man now engaged as a suppliant would have much better chance of success. Such then being Priam's objective, he needed neither young bodyguards, nor heralds to protect him from the adversary but simply an assistant to help him along, and this function was to be best fulfilled by his old herald and servant (28).

The interchangeability between herald and *therapon* becomes more prominent in the *Odyssey*, perhaps, as BUSOLT has remarked, because the depression of the status of the king in the *Odyssey* automatically entailed a corresponding diminution in the status of the king's officials (29). Thus when Athena flew to Ithaca to talk to Telemachus, heralds and *therapontes* interchangeably featured during her presence there (Od. 1. 109-12; 1. 143; 146). The herald Pontonous fetched the minstrel Demodocus to entertain the guests with his lyre and set him in a silver chair which he leaned against a pillar (Od. 8. 47; 65; 256-61). When Odysseus in Alcinoüs' palace requested a special song, he sent a portion of meat to the minstrel through the herald along with the request for the song (Od. 8. 471 ff.). Elsewhere in the *Odyssey* heralds lead their master's guests to their bedchambers (Od. 4. 303) or even serve other servants who had come on official business to the palace (Od. 17. 334). Similar duties were also performed by maids, as is evident from Telemachus' visit to Sparta (Od. 4. 52-53).

(28) II. 24. 149-50; 470. See also BEKKER'S *scholion ad II. 24. 149*; GSCHNITZER, *Griech. Sozialgesch.*, 34.

(29) BUSOLT, *Griech. Staatskunde*, I, 328.

In sum, it should be repeated that heraldry was viewed as a more prestigious duty than that of the *therapon* ⁽³⁰⁾. Secondly, by the time of the *Odyssey* the role of herald and *therapon* had become more and more interchangeable. Thirdly, a distinction began to be made between private and public heralds ⁽³¹⁾. This taxonomic distinction points to the passing of the heroic age and the slow but steady rise of the city-state as the new political unit in the Greek world ⁽³²⁾.

Gods and Herald.

The roles and attributes possessed by the Homeric heralds have been frequently ascribed by the Greeks to certain of the gods. Consequently, the study of divine heralds can help us understand the earthly tasks of the Homeric heralds, provided we bear in mind that there are understandable differences between the two. Unlike the aged human heralds, the divine messengers were to be found among the younger gods. These messenger-gods serve only the older gods (such as Zeus and Hera) and not just all gods. The other gods usually went on their own missions. Although the most frequent messengers of the divine society were Iris and Hermes, other gods would also occasionally serve in that capacity for their elders. In the *Iliad* the « appointed » messenger of Zeus was Iris; only in the last book does Hermes act as Zeus' messenger. The introduction of Hermes in the latter part of the *Iliad* is of interest inasmuch as it is associated with a distinct term (*diactor*) used to describe his function, a term which most probably stemmed from Hermes' traditional role as the conductor of the souls to the nether world ⁽³³⁾. Furthermore, whereas Hermes had other tasks besides

(30) Eust. *ad Od.* 1. 110 ff.: κήρυκες δ' αὐτοῖσι καὶ ὄτρηροι θεράποντες οἱ μὲν οἶνον ἔσμιγον ἐνὶ κρητῆρσι καὶ ὕδωρ. οἱ δὲ, σφόδργοισι πολυτρήτοισι τραπέζας νίζον προτίθεντο, ἰδὲ κρέα πολλὰ δατεύντο.

(31) STANFORD *ad Od.* 19. 385: ὅς τὰ δῆμια ἐργάζεται.

(32) DINDORF *scholion ad Od.* 20. 276; STANFORD *ad loc.*

(33) *Od.* 24. 1; STANFORD and Eust. *ad loc.*

those of the messenger of Zeus, Iris' role seems to have been strictly confined to that of divine messenger. In that capacity, she would sometimes act on her own initiative (αὐτεπάγγελτος) in fulfilling Zeus' expressed will⁽³⁴⁾. In the *Iliad* Thetis would also act as messenger, but only in matters affecting her son.

While the duties executed by the divine intermediaries were similar to those of the royal heralds, the term used to describe the divine heralds is not always the same. In most of the cases the term *angelos* is employed. Thus Iris was dispatched by Zeus to Troy (ἄγγελος ἦλθε) to warn the Trojans of an impending Greek onslaught (Il. 2. 786). Again, Iris went as messenger (ἄγγελος) to Helen to tell her to come see the duel between her two husbands (Il. 3. 121). Appropriately, in some cases messengers are dispatched whose properties fit well the occasion they serve. Sleep, for example, was sent by Zeus to Agamemnon (Διὸς δέ τοι ἄγγελός εἰμι Il. 2. 63) to implant in Agamemnon's mind a deceitful dream. As in the case of the two heralds dispatched to fetch Briseis from Achilles' hut, Sleep could not be blamed for the misleading dream, for the principal culprit in this instance was Zeus; Sleep was only the unwilling instrument of a superior force. Similarly, Rumor acting on behalf of Zeus went to the Greek camp to urge the Achaeans fight the Trojans (Il. 2. 93-94; Od. 1. 282 ff.).

Divine messengers were not employed to communicate messages only to humans; they were also used to impart reports to other gods as well, particularly when the father of gods and men did not deign to speak directly to the addressee or wished to avoid likely altercations which might lead to unpleasant consequences. In those instances the use of an intermediary provided the distance and time needed by the addressee for deliberation and second thoughts which helped avoid acrimonious encounters. In this context, Iris was commissioned by Zeus to carry a message to his brother Poseidon, having received the explicit instruction to tell Poseidon the truth (Il. 15. 158,

(34) Il. 11. 715; Erbse *ad loc.*: οὐ πεμφθείσα ὑπὸ τινος, ἀλλ' ἄφ' ἑαυτῆς.

μηδὲ ψευδάγγελος εἶναι). Iris would customarily deliver the message and depart, but in this case, inasmuch as Poseidon resented the overweening nature of his older brother's command, Iris prudently delayed her departure. Poseidon intimated to Iris that he found Zeus' order unacceptable (Il. 15. 185), and implied that he would disregard it. From a simple errand-girl Iris now assumed the role of intermediary, reminding Poseidon that prudence dictated that he should comply⁽³⁵⁾. Iris further underscored to Poseidon that the dreadful Erinyes always followed and aided Zeus⁽³⁶⁾. At the end, thanks to Iris' advice and cajolery, Poseidon changed his mind and even commended her for her good sense⁽³⁷⁾. His apparent indignation notwithstanding, Poseidon cautiously yielded to Iris' wise suggestion, but for the purpose of face-saving he explained to her that he reserved the right to act contrary to Zeus' will if the latter chose not to allow the Greeks to capture Troy at the end.

This episode demonstrates that on important missions involving discussions with another head of state much had necessarily to be left to the discretion and initiative of the envoy. The addressee might have had strong objections to some of the points the ambassador carried, and it was up to the tactfulness of the ambassador to refuse to give way on the points of dispute and try to succeed in making the opposite party reduce his demands. No doubt, when an impasse was reached in discussions at some level, as in the talks between Achilles and the members of the visiting Achaean embassy, the ambassadors had to refer the

(35) Il. 15. 203: στρεπτοὶ μὲν τε φρένες ἐσθλῶν. Iris had actually softened Poseidon by her explanation that she was conveying a message not an order. In addition, she flattered Poseidon by addressing him as γαίηοξε κυανοχάϊτα, Il. 15. 201-203. This tactfulness on the part of Iris drew the compliment of Pindar, *Pythh.* 4. 277: «Lay to thy heart this also of the words of Homer, and bear it out; for he says that a good messenger brings great honor into every matter». This is the only instance where Pindar quotes from Homer by name. See also Aesch. *Choe.* 773.

(36) The Erinyes were the upholders of the moral order, especially with reference to the sanctity of the family, see Od. 2. 135; 11. 280; Il. 19. 259

(37) Il. 15. 207: ὄτ' ἄγγελος αἴσιμα εἰδῆ.

matter back to their superior — or colleagues, as in this matter — for a policy decision.

Besides her services to Zeus, Iris also served Hera with equal fidelity, the occasional conflict of interest in the messages notwithstanding. As an impartial messenger, Iris could be trusted by both sides to perform her task dutifully, discreetly, efficiently, and faithfully (Il. 11. 181-201). As a matter of fact, in one instance Iris did not merely deliver Hera's secret message to Achilles but she even loitered for a while in the camp because Achilles had questions to ask her and explanations to give her about his abstinence from the war. Iris, of course, knew all about Achilles' problems and the loss of his armor, but advised him, nonetheless, to go show himself to the Trojans at the trench in the hope that his presence alone might inspire them with fear and consequently persuade them to desist from the pernicious conflict. Here, as in the case of Poseidon, Iris did not simply limit herself to the role of messenger but served as a prudent counselor as well. Her sound and perspicacious advice in both instances proved most profitable to the recipients; particularly in the case of Poseidon, it spared him from possible unpleasant consequences.

Fulfilling again Zeus' command, Iris rushed to Thetis, this time to inform her that her son should accept ransom for Hector's body and that persistence in his present course would provoke the wrath of men as well as gods (Il. 24. 77). Iris delivered the message and subsequently led Thetis to Olympus, exactly as human heralds did whenever they dealt with subordinates of their master. But immediately after her return to Olympus, Iris departed on another errand again in relation to Hector's body (Il. 24. 159). This time Iris' message contained an admonition to Priam not to fear, for Zeus intended to send him Hermes, who would act as Priam's guide and guardian (Il. 24. 149-50).

Hermes was indeed dispatched to guide Priam's steps to Achilles' quarters, but the details of his mission were entrusted to Hermes. Initially then Hermes had to devise a plan in order to

boost Priam's courage and win his confidence. Accordingly, Hermes proceeded to occupy Priam's thoughts until both reached the Myrmidon camp. Pretending all along to be a young Myrmidon, Achilles' own servant, and an ardent admirer of Hector's prowess and valor, Hermes let Priam know that Hector's body had been free of defilement and decomposition as it had been preserved by the gods themselves. Priam felt so grateful for the good news that he offered his young companion a goblet, which the latter refused, alleging that, since the gift was destined for his purported master, taking it would mean that he would deprive his master of one of his gifts (Il. 24. 433). When finally the company reached Achilles' hut safely, Hermes revealed his identity (Il. 24. 460) and suggested that Priam should clasp Achilles' knees in the traditional fashion to entreat him for Hector's body. But Hermes' task had not been completed with Priam's safe arrival at Achilles' place; he continued to keep a watchful eye upon Priam until the latter was safely back to Troy. Fittingly, Hermes reappeared to Priam and admonished him not to sleep in Achilles' tent but once he had gotten the body to depart immediately (Il. 24. 683 ff.).

Thus far the discussion has been focused on the role of heralds and *angeloi* (and secondarily *diactores*) without any reference to the possible distinctions between the terms herald and *angelos*. Actually, there is no unanimity among modern scholars about the roles of heralds and *angeloi*. WÉRY, for example, believes that there is a distinction to be made between the role of the two⁽³⁸⁾. According to her, the herald was nothing but a simple mouthpiece, an errand boy. He was expected to transmit efficaciously the messages entrusted to him and do no more. On the other hand, the *angelos* was presumed to deliver and persuade. In this sense, the *angelos* was more like the modern-day ambassador, while the herald, even when present on an embassy, remained chiefly silent in the background. To put it in another way: the herald's role was primarily passive while that of *angelos* was mainly active. The passivity of herald's role stem-

(38) Louise-Marie WÉRY, RIDA 14 (1967) 180-81.

med primarily from the fact that heralds possessed no *archè*, inasmuch as they had no power to judge, deliberate, or command. The herald's task was merely limited to strictly circumscribed assignments. In this assessment of the functions of the herald and *angelos*, WÉRY makes no mention of the gods in either capacity. This omission may be due to two factors : to the use of *angelos* in association with the divine, a fact which placed the gods in the category of ambassadors, or to an assumption on her part that it may be erroneous to extract conclusions from Homer's use of the gods even in human affairs as unrelated to reality. Yet this last assumption might not be correct since the role of the deities in Homer, seems, to this writer, to be nothing but an extrapolation of the human role into the divine sphere. Therefore, their agents could penetrate where human beings could not reach, and they could accomplish what humans could not.

WÉRY is aware of the exceptions to the errand-boy role of heralds in several occasions but does not seem to be bothered by them⁽³⁹⁾. She specifically mentions the case of Idaeus (Il. 7. 388-97) who had been entrusted by Priam with the delivery of a message but who commented over and beyond the communication entrusted to him by his superior. WÉRY does not consider this as contradicting her argument regarding the limitations of the herald's role. That, despite the scholiast's suggestion about Idaeus' ambassadorial claims⁽⁴⁰⁾. Moreover, WÉRY does not mention at all the duel between Hector and Aias and the author-

(39) WÉRY, RIDA 14 (1967) 190.

(40) Eust. *ad Il.* 7. 389-90 : ὅτι παραπρεσβεύειν δοκεῖ ὁ Ἰδαῖος ἐν οἷς Ἀλεξάνδρου εἰπόντος κτήματ' ὅσο' ἀγόμεν ἔξ Ἄργεος ἡμέτερον δῶ πάντ' ἐθέλω δόμεναι καὶ ἔτ' οἴκοθεν ἄλλ' ἐπιθεῖναι, αὐτὸς λέγει ὅτι κτήματα πάντα ἐθέλει δῶσειν Ἀλέξανδρος, ὅσα ἐνὶ νηυσὶ ἠγάγετο Τροίηνδε. ἐκεῖνος γὰρ οὐ μόνον ἐξ Ἄργους, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀπὸ Σιδῶνος, ὡς προεῖρηται, τυχὸν δὲ καὶ ἄλλοθεν, ἠγάγετό τινα εἰς τὴν Ἴλιον. ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἐν οἷς λέγει ὁ αὐτὸς κήρυξ, ὅτι Ἐλένην οὐ φησὶ δῶσειν, ἢ μὴν Τρώες γε κέλονται ψεύδεται. TENEKIDES, *Droit International*, 522; SORGENFREY, *De Vestigiis*, 44; AUDINET, *Les traces du droit*, 21 (1914) 57; Ch. OSTERMANN, *De praeconibus Graecorum* (Marburg, 1845) 44 has, according to WÉRY, taken a different view because he has simply misunderstood the role of the herald whom he viewed as qualified to negotiate.

ity possessed by the heralds to act as referees or to use their discretion in the course of the fight (Il. 7. 276 ff.). In fact, the authority bestowed upon the heralds and the initiative exercised by them signified the possession of more expanded power than WÉRY is willing to concede to them. The case against WÉRY becomes even stronger if the comments of the scholiast are taken into consideration for they make clear that the oncoming darkness was not the single consideration for the intervention of the heralds (41).

In contrast, the duties of *angeloi* could not be definitely considered as only ambassadorial, as WÉRY would want them, inasmuch as the term was applicable even in those activities where no distinct ambassadorial authority is implied. When, for instance, Patroclus went to Nestor's hut on behalf of Achilles on a fact-finding mission, he described himself as the envoy of Achilles (Il. 11. 625, ἄγγελος εἰμί). His mission was purely informational; no negotiations were intended and none are said to have taken place. Likewise, in Book 12 (73) of the *Iliad* the Trojan Polydamas inveighed against the Trojan strategy, for there was the danger that the Trojans would be cut down and none would survive to bring the bad tidings to the city (οὐδ' ἄγγελον ἀπνέεσθαι). The reference here is to a mere heraldic duty and nothing more. The same is true about Andromache, who remained ignorant of her husband's death because no true messenger (*angelos*) had come to inform her that her husband had remained outside the gates (Il. 22. 433-39). This type of news could easily be transported by a herald or even anybody else since there was nothing complex about it. Contrariwise, when Priam sent the herald Idaeus to the Achaean camp to announce Alexander's new proposals as well as Priam's suggestion for a truce, there was present the possibility of some negotiatory role; yet no special *angelos* but an ordinary herald was dispatched for the occasion. In the same manner, Eumaeus, no

(41) Eust. and ERBSE *ad Il.* 7. 276 ff. where the motivation of the heralds is described. Even the order of the initiative may be subject to certain traditional practices.

herald or professional messenger himself, was entrusted with the task of notifying Telemachus' mother of Telemachus' return to Ithaca (Od. 16. 150). It thus becomes evident that no special qualities or qualifications were required of the *angeloi*, except perhaps a degree of reliability; otherwise, almost anybody, man or woman, could easily serve in the capacity of *angeloi* (Od. 16. 152). In this context, Iris repeatedly transmitted simple messages where no negotiations were necessary. Indeed, Iris' own name derived from the Greek verb *eirō* which meant « to say » or « to tell ». The masculine form of the name, Irus, is construed as « messenger » and was attached as nickname to individuals who engaged in the act of carrying messages⁽⁴²⁾. Lastly, the Greeks considered the heralds as messengers of Zeus and men. In this sense then, while special envoys — particularly those with powers to negotiate — could be described as *angeloi*, not all *angeloi* were ambassadors and not all of the missions of heralds were so simple as to differentiate them definitively from those of the *angeloi*. The term *angelos* was broad enough to include many categories of agents, including the heralds. It is interesting that along with the human and divine agents birds also served in the capacity of *angeloi* (Od. 15. 526). Thus Hecuba, wary of her husband's mission to Achilles, asked him to pour libations and pray to Zeus for the bird of omen, that favorite prophetic bird, the strongest thing on wings, to fly on Priam's right. If Zeus refused to grant this omen, she would advise him to forego his mercy mission on behalf of his son's corpse. Yielding to his wife's importunations, Priam prayed to Zeus for the ἄγγελον φίλτατον οἰωνῶν (Il. 24. 310), and Zeus obliged him by sending the eagle as a token of his approval. The eagle's role is here similar to that of a simple messenger⁽⁴³⁾.

(42) Irus seems to have been a cognate of Iris as the exegesis to Od. 18. 7 alludes. The beggar at Odysseus' palace was nicknamed Irus, though his true name had been Arnaeus, because he complemented his living by running errands, Eust. *ad Od.* 18. 7.

(43) BEKKER *ad Il.* 24. 292.

Qualities and Qualification.

Heralds seemed to have possessed — or rather were perceived to have possessed — certain indispensable qualities and qualifications, some of them intellectual others physical. Even the very names of some of the heralds were closely connected with properties usually identified with the profession⁽⁴⁴⁾. Among the physical qualities possessed by the heralds was their ability to project their voice. A strong voice, in the absence of loud-speakers, seemed to have been necessary for the profession. In fact, the kings themselves were credited with a strong voice by Homer (Il. 3, 82 and Eust. *ad Il.* 3. 82). One of the adjectives used by Homer for Idaeus is *kalētor*, while another is *astyboōtes* because of his obligation to call aloud and summon the people to assembly⁽⁴⁵⁾. Another Trojan herald carried the name Periphas, which also referred to the loudness of his voice⁽⁴⁶⁾. This Periphas was the son of another famous herald whose name was Epytus, from the verb *epyein*, meaning to cry out loudly. This Epytus had served Aeneas' father until a very old age. When unable to carry out his duties any longer, he seems to have bequeathed his job to his son, whom Epytus himself had appropriately trained⁽⁴⁷⁾.

(44) W. PAPE and G. BENSELER, *Wörterbuch der Griech. Eigennamen* (Graz, 1911) 1035; H. FRISK, *Etym. Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1960-63) 641.

(45) Il. 24. 701 and BEKKER *ad Il.* 24. 577: τὸν Ἰδαῖον καλήτορα εἶπεν ἀπὸ τοῦ βοᾶν καὶ συγκαλεῖν τὸν ὄχλον.

(46) Eust. *ad Il.* 17. 322: διὰ τὸ περισσῶς φωνεῖν.

(47) Eust. *ad Il.* 17. 323. The Greek Ἠπυτίδης is evidently a name formed from the profession, and Ἠπύτα, means loud (Il. 7. 384). Similarly, Ἀρμονίδης or Τεκτονίδης for carpenter (Od. 8. 114; Il. 5. 60). BEKKER *ad Il.* 17. 323 says that from Ἠπύτας the derivative should have been Ἠπυτάδης instead of Ἠπυτίδης. The traditional character of the profession is betokened by Talthybius' status in Sparta. There he became the ancestor of the Spartan heralds and was honored as a hero. Temples were erected in his honor in Sparta and Aegion (Paus. 3. 12. 7; 7. 24. 1). The descendants of Talthybius in Sparta supposedly sprang from Agamemnon's herald and became most famous (Hdt. 7. 134. 1; 6. 60. 1).

But heralds were not simply identified by or praised for their lungs; they were equally commended for the excellent quality of their voice. Repeated references to heralds are accompanied by the adjective « sweet-voiced » (Il. 1. 250; 2. 446; 9. 110). If the above evidence is to be taken seriously, the conclusion seems inevitable that the heralds were chosen on the basis of certain criteria, two of which were loudness and the quality of their voice. Yet in the light of the information discussed earlier, according to which the profession stayed traditionally within certain families, it would be difficult to believe that all heralds were endowed by nature with a strong and sweet voice. Rather it is to be inferred that heralds underwent some sort of training, and that part of that training involved the exercise of their voice in some type of traditional tone or enunciation which came to be identified with sweetness. On the other hand, the question of the volume or intensity of their voice should not be too difficult to comprehend, if, as it is almost certain, the training entailed projecting the voice in a certain fashion after considerable practice.

Along with their physical virtues, heralds were deemed to possess certain intellectual qualities, among which prudence and caution were paramount (Od. 4. 697; Il. 7. 278). *Idaeus*' very name means a person wise in counsel⁽⁴⁸⁾. These practical intellectual virtues together with the herald's responsibilities and his position near the center of power added to the aura of sublimity that surrounded him. Indeed, by profession and origin heralds were considered as part of the noble class (Il. 3. 268), something that was not always true of simple messengers, as we have seen.

In the Near East messengers, heralds, or ambassadors were usually conversant with the language of the country to which they were accredited; if they were not, they would be accompanied by an interpreter⁽⁴⁹⁾. Envoys carried the message they

(48) Il. 7. 278; Od. 4. 696; ERBSE *ad* Il. 7. 278: κήρυξ Ἰδαίος, πεπνυμένα μήδεα εἰδώς: ἡτυμολόγηται ὁ Ἰδαίος· δεῖ δὲ συνετὸν εἶναι τὸν κήρυκα.

(49) KNUDTZON, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*, 155.

were supposed to deliver together with their credentials and letters of introduction in some sort of dispatch-bag slung around their neck for safekeeping, as modern postmen or diplomatic carriers do⁽⁵⁰⁾. Similar conditions might have obtained in the Mycenaean world when messengers had to travel long distances. Unfortunately, this cannot be clearly determined from the *Iliad*, where the prevailing circumstances were different because the geographical proximity of the two rival camps allowed both rivals the convenience of quick oral communication. Only in very rare occasions were intermediaries used. Achilles' wrath and his refusal to participate in the war provided such an occasion. Once Achilles withdrew from the hostilities, Agamemnon had no contact with him except through intermediaries. Heralds or kings served as such. Whereas it was natural for Homer to name the kings who served in that capacity, calling by name the heralds who ministered to the kings attests to the importance of the herald's office and person. Thus, though heralds possessed no authority, they still remained important enough to escape anonymity⁽⁵¹⁾.

The Herald's Symbols.

While serving in an official capacity heralds carried the paraphernalia of their office. The most essential symbol of the herald's function was his staff, a common feature of primitive diplomacy derived from the staff of Hermes (*κηρύκειον*). The description given by the scholiast to Thucydides of the herald's staff as being a polished stick with a snake entwined at each end (Thuc. 1. 53. 1) harmonizes with the mythical story representing Hermes with two snakes, after he struck a rock with his staff. Scepters were also used by the Homeric kings as emblems of their power and office. Whether the royal scepter

(50) K. SETHE and W. HELCK, *Urkunden der 18. Dynastie*, Heft 22 (Leipzig, 1906) 1314.

(51) J. OEHLER, *RE* 15. 1 (1921) 349-57, s.v. *keryx*; for ἄγγελος, ἀγγελίη B. SNELL, *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos* (Göttingen, 1979-82) *ad loc.*

was radically different, similar, or even identical with the heraldic staff is not clear from the testimony of Homer. What is certain is that when a king spoke in an official capacity he held a scepter which was handed to him by the herald. The same was also true with regard to people serving as judges. One of the pictures on Achilles' shield (Il. 18. 503 ff.) depicts heralds lending their staffs to the elders who served as judges in the assembly⁽⁵²⁾. Likewise, when Menelaus rose to speak to the Achaeans against Archilochus, the herald put in his hand the scepter and asked the other Achaeans to keep silent⁽⁵³⁾. The herald Peisenor did the same with Telemachus, inasmuch as it was not considered proper for the kings or other speakers to address the assembly without a staff⁽⁵⁴⁾. The heralds then acted in the capacity of the speaker of the House in a sense, thereby controlling the order of the speakers. True to this heraldic tradition when Teiresias came up from Hades in his spirit to talk to Odysseus, he appropriately carried with him his staff⁽⁵⁵⁾. Significantly, the staff as an insigne of heralds was not unique to ancient times. Even today the natives of some primitive islands in the Pacific preserve an old, worm-eaten staff, which the speakers hold in the assembly as a sign of their right to address it⁽⁵⁶⁾.

(52) ERBSE, *ad Il.* 18. 505: ὅτι οἱ δημηγοροῦντες καὶ οἱ δικάζοντες σκῆπτρα ἐλάμβανον. Regarding the insignia of heralds and ambassadors there is evidence that in the classical times travelling envoys were equipped with special credentials: τὸν ἀποδημοῦντα δεῖ σύμβολον ἔχειν ἐπὶ τῷ συγχωρηθῆναι παρελθεῖν. Similarly, elsewhere is said that σφραγίδα ἢ ζύμβολον δεῖ ἔχειν τὸν ξένον ἐπὶ τῷ ..., *schol. ad Arist. Birds* 1213-14.

(53) Il. 23. 567-69; BEKKER *ad loc.*

(54) Eust. *ad Od.* 2. 37: οὐ γὰρ ἦν θέμις ἄλλως δημηγορεῖν τοὺς βασιλεῖς. ὡς οὐδὲ κήρυκι θεμιτὸν ἄνευ κηρυκείου προῖέναι.

(55) Teiresias belonged to an earlier Theban cycle. Homer mentions him this single time in connection with this incident.

(56) LEAF and BAYFIELD *ad Il.* 23. 567-69.

Orality of Messages.

As a rule Homeric messages were committed to memory and only in one instance is there in Homer a reference to a written communication (Il. 6. 168-69); in all other cases messages seem to have been transmitted orally. This orality is evidenced by the expressions Homer used to describe the transaction between the two parties. Thus Idaeus announced the Trojan willingness to return Helen and her property with the words εἰπέμεν ... μῦθον (Il. 7. 373) and with εἰπεῖν ... μῦθον (Il. 7. 386). By the same token, the answer of the Argives to the Trojan proposals for the resolution of the conflict and a truce concerning the dead was also delivered orally. "Then to Idaeus spoke (προσέφη) lord Agamemnon : Idaeus you hear (αὐτὸς ἀκούεις) the words (μῦθον) of the Argives and how they answer you" (Il. 7. 405-06). As soon as Idaeus returned to the Trojan camp carrying the Achaean answer, he stood in the midst of the Trojan assembly and delivered his message orally (ἀγγελίην ἀπέειπε, Il. 7. 417). The proximity of the rival camps and the simplicity of the messages facilitated the oral exchanges, although there is the distinct possibility that this orality may mirror a transitional period during which literacy was either very limited or non-existent. For while heralds have been depicted as prudent persons, this wisdom cannot be interpreted to imply literacy, although in the transitional era of the Dark Ages it cannot be totally excluded either. Since thus far there is no sufficient evidence to answer the question, it shall remain moot. What is certain is that in the Mycenaean times heralds and ambassadors had to travel much longer distances, and the possibility should remain open whether messages were committed to writing as it was in the contemporaneous Near East. From the moment one learns of the existence of writing and the rise of bureaucratic administration among the Mycenaean states, one is forced to admit the possibility of the existence of written Mycenaean law or messages, even if its traces have been lost. Some scholars believe that *themistes* were Mycenaean ordinances and commands, and that

registering taxes was a Minoan and Mycenaean custom⁽⁵⁷⁾. The existence of this custom leads us to hypothesize that treaties might also have been registered for the benefit of the king and his successors. Whether such treaties were displayed in public sacred places like their oriental counterparts and/or kept in the royal archives will remain a matter of conjecture⁽⁵⁸⁾. At any rate, this general belief in the recording of taxes, ordinances, and treaties strengthens the supposition that diplomatic correspondence was also committed to writing, despite the absence of evidence to attest the practice.

Heraldic Willingness.

There were times when heralds and messengers did not perform their duties wholeheartedly. Their unwillingness to execute the assigned task could have been due to the dangerous nature of their assignment, to the putative injustice of the task, or simply to the laborious and unpleasant nature of the work itself. When after the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles the former decided to take Briseis from the latter, Agamemnon dispatched his two heralds to fetch the girl to him. The heralds executed the task with heavy heart. Their reticence was undoubtedly due to their fear of Achilles' irascibility and perhaps to a lurking feeling regarding the injustice of the cause they served. In a similar occasion, dispatched by Zeus to Poseidon to bid him refrain from making war, Iris fulfilled the assignment with a somewhat unwilling heart, owing to the unpleasant nature of the message. Iris' reservations proved justified as Poseidon became angry with his older brother and threatened to disregard

(57) T.B.L. WEBSTER, *Classica and Medievalia* 17 (1956) 147 ff. The orality of messages is also to be found in the first books of the Old Testament *Gen.* 32. 4; *Num.* 20. 14-21; 21. 21; *Deut.* 26. 36.

(58) H. HAAG, *Theol. Quartalschrift* 141 (1961) 17 suggests that the scribes of the Mycenaean kings must have been important functionaries and that the head of the Mycenaean chancellery must have enjoyed the confidence and closeness of the king. It is even possible, according to HAAG, that he served as an envoy when negotiations were conducted.

his command. It took all of Iris' persuasive talents to convince Poseidon that it would be better for him to comply⁽⁵⁹⁾. In still another instance, Hermes went to Calypso to bid her let Odysseus continue his voyage. Because he disliked the assignment, he sought to distance himself from the contents of the message as he explained to Calypso that he was only a messenger, and an unwilling messenger at that (Il. 15. 59; 113).

In truth, envoys were constantly subject to danger, whether from nature or the hands of men. Frequent references in the Near Eastern documents corroborate this assertion. Since messengers frequently carried valuable gifts and important diplomatic documents, knowledge of which might be valuable to unfriendly powers, their journey was beset by lurking perils. Ancient sources mention that a messenger and thirteen of his companions travelling from Mari to Elahu were murdered by brigands, who made off with the pack animals⁽⁶⁰⁾. Escort troops were often provided to protect messengers from possible violence. A ruler to whom the envoy was accredited similarly provided escort troops for the envoy on his return trip. This was a matter of international courtesy, and failure to do so might be considered as a calculated affront⁽⁶¹⁾. But even the best of protection for the envoys could not always save them from danger if the countries through which they had to go or the host-country were bent upon harming them. Herodotus, for example, tells a story of Persian heralds dispatched to Sparta to demand earth and water as tokens of Sparta's submission to Persian sovereignty. Unjustifiably, the proud but cautious Spartans threw the heralds into a well, where, they assured them, they would find

(59) Il. 15. 159 ff.; ERBSE *ad loc.* For something similar see Od. 5. 99-112.

(60) A.R.M.T. II, 123; MUNN-RANKIN, *Iraq* 18 (1958) 105-06.

(61) A.R.M.T. II, 73; MUNN-RANKIN, *Iraq* 18 (1958) 106. It could be that the traditional inviolability of the Homeric and post-Homeric heralds had its origins in written clauses incorporated into the treaties of the Ancient Near East. In the treaty between Muwatallis and Sunassura, for example, the protection of the envoys is guaranteed by a clause in their treaty, WEIDNER, *Polit. Dok.*, 103.

the two elements they had demanded. Herodotus added that the Spartans later felt guilty for this unwarranted infraction and volunteered to make amends by sending two of their members to Xerxes to be killed in recompense for the brutal treatment of the Persian heralds (Hdt. 7. 137; Thuc. 2. 67).

This sensitivity of the Spartans to the treatment of the Persian heralds implies a deeper belief in the sanctity of an established principle, namely the inviolability enjoyed by heralds and ambassadors in the ancient world. In the absence of international safeguards for heralds and ambassadors religious sanctions and beliefs provided some measure of protection for the ancient agents of interstate diplomacy. But as in modern times diplomatic immunity depends on the respect for these international conventions shown by the signatory countries, so in antiquity the unwritten conventions worked as long as the communities which believed in them were willing to respect them. Violations of the rule were infrequent, but they happened nonetheless, though their occurrence did not necessarily nullify the fundamentality of the principle. In Homeric times, the presence of the heralds accompanying ambassadors bestowed inviolability on the person of the ambassador. Yet the scene in front of Achilles' hut illustrates both the sacrosanctity of the Homeric heralds and the potential dangers to them. For though carrying the symbols of their mission, the heralds approached the quarters with trepidation inasmuch as the cause they served lacked the weight of justice behind it, and Achilles, notorious for his temperamental outbursts, could have unleashed his anger upon these innocent instruments of interpersonal communications. In the same way, the embassy of Menelaus and Odysseus to Troy just prior to the commencement of hostilities exemplified best the limitations of ambassadorial inviolability (Il. 11. 130 ff.). There seems to have been a degree of difference in the enjoyment of inviolability by heralds and ambassadors in the sense that heralds enjoyed inviolability *sui generis* whereas ambassadors did so by virtue of their accompaniment by a herald. This difference must be apparently attributed to the fact that heralds, even when serving as ambassadors, were persons

who possessed no authority, did not participate in the decision-making processes, and could not be held responsible for the task they were executing. In contrast, the ambassadors were persons of authority who did participate in the decision-making process. For that reason they could be considered liable for inimical decisions aimed against their rival to whom they were temporarily accredited as envoys. This may explain why the Trojan Antimachus advised the Trojans to slay Menelaus when the latter went to plead for the return of Helen and her property. Yet Antimachus' anger, however reasonable, did not detract from the impiety of his proposal, which unquestionably constituted a violation of the established international diplomatic precepts, for Menelaus and Odysseus had gone to Troy on a peace-errand and were undoubtedly accompanied by a herald⁽⁶²⁾. Fortunately, better counsel prevailed at the end, and the envoys escaped death. But when later on the warriors Peisander and Hippolochus, both sons of Antimachus, fell into Agamemnon's hands, the latter refused to spare them on account of their father's sacrilegious suggestion (Il. 11. 130-40). The use of a principle to justify the slaying of the two brothers constituted a bitter irony, for Agamemnon himself had been guilty of violation of the ambassadorial sacrosanctity when he had threatened the priest of Apollo who had come, scepter and holy bands in hand, asking for his daughter's release. Agamemnon's avowed harsh treatment of the priest and his threats against the priest's life shocked the Greeks so deeply that they eventually interpreted the plague which decimated them as the divine punishment for their leader's mistreatment of Apollo's priest. While on the one hand the reaction of the horrified Greeks exemplifies the powerful influence of the traditions upon them, the harsh treatment of the priest, on the other, demonstrates the fragility of the herald's

(62) *ERBSE ad Il. 11. 140-41*: ἀγγελίην ἐλθόντα αἰθι κατακτεῖναι: μετ' ὀνόματος εἰρηνικοῦ ἤκοντα παρὰ τὸν τῶν ἀνθρώπων νόμον φονεῦειν ἐπεχείρησαν. The word ἀγγελίη here is equivalent to embassy. The term carries a double interpretation, «message» or «embassy». See also Il. 15. 174; 683 ff. where it denotes message and Il. 4. 384 where it means embassy. Also *LEAF ad Il. 4. 384* and *ERBSE and Eust. ad Il. 11. 140*.

inviolability and the ease with which heralds could become subject to the whims of the circumstances or the temper and temperament of human beings. Despite the hazards of the heraldic profession, the aristocratic ethos and the belief in divine immanence and theodicy helped preserve the principle of diplomatic immunity as effective instrument of ancient diplomacy⁽⁶³⁾. By ostensibly taking offense at the Greeks for his priest's mistreatment, Apollo was acting exactly as a king would have acted had his agent been offended or had the hospitality and respect due to his representative been refused. In light of this deeply ingrained attitude among the ancients, it would have been extremely reprehensible — if not downright barbarous — had Achilles failed to treat Priam and his herald as he did (II. 24. 577-78). But once more the fear and apprehension displayed by both Priam and Idaeus about their impending reception by Achilles illustrate the frailty of the established traditions and the fragility of ancient inviolability.

Although the general respect shown to heralds and ambassadors was fairly universal throughout the civilized world, the same did not hold true for non-civilized nations. Thus, the presence of heralds accompanying Odysseus' envoys to the Lotus-eaters and the Lestrygons did not deter either people or group from mishandling both envoys and heralds (Od. 9. 89-90; 10. 100-103). This brutal treatment did not shock Homer much, but it did afford him the opportunity to point out the wide gulf that separated the civilized form and uncivilized world, and to show that such conduct was not surprising for non-civilized societies. Inasmuch as both people were unconscious of the existence of such principles, moral indictment on the part of Homer would have been nonsensical.

Remuneration.

As public officials heralds must have received some sort of remuneration in the Mycenaean and Homeric times, most prob-

(63) NILSSON, *Greek Folk Religion* (New York, 1965) 3-41; 102; 120.

ably in the form of land. Likewise, they must have been provided with supplies and other necessities for their travel, particularly when the journey was long. Once they reached their destination, they were expected to receive the proverbial hospitality even in cases in which the message they carried failed to please the host. Homer explained that even though Menelaus and Odysseus had failed to convince their hosts to return Helen and her possessions to the Greeks, at the end the right of guestship incumbent upon the host was not refused⁽⁶⁴⁾. That this enjoyment of guestship and hospitality would be analogous to the position and status of the envoys cannot be denied. If one is to judge from the circumstances surrounding the embassy to Achilles, the envoys received lavish entertainment, drinking from the best cups the host could provide and eating an abundant supply of meat (Il. 9. 200 ff.). It stands to reason, that when envoys departed for their return journey, they were well supplied with provisions analogous to the length of their trip⁽⁶⁵⁾.

(64) AMEIS and HENTZE *ad Il.* 3. 207. In the Near East royal messengers enjoyed certain privileges and accommodations, MUNN-RANKIN, *Iraq* 18 (1958) 40-41. Yet they do not seem to have been quartered in the main palace, for there are references to their going to the palace for an audience. Elamite messengers in Babylon were said to have resided « in the home of their hosts », A.R.M.T. II, 73. If the custom was to house the heralds outside of the main palace it might explain the reason for which Menelaus and Odysseus, sent as ambassadors to Troy before the commencements of hostilities, were quartered at Antenor's place and not at Priam's palace.

(65) In the classical times presents to the ambassadors could be construed as bribes and ambassadors were forbidden to receive gifts. The law is cited by Demosthenes *Peri Parapr.* 7 though it is not clear who the authors of the law had been. Xenophon and Plutarch related that Timagoras, an Athenian ambassador to Artaxerxes, was condemned to death and executed for having received presents, *Hell.* 7. 1. 33-38; Plut. *Pelop.* 306; see also Hyper. *For Euacnippus* 30; Dem. *Peri Parapr.* 116; 315; Aisch. *Ctesiph.* 79. Otherwise, the ambassadors were provided with moneys for the purchase of supplies so that they will not have to depend upon others.

Heralds as Advisers.

Because of their proximity to the king, the importance of their position, and their purported wisdom, heralds must have occasionally served in the role of royal advisors. This role does not come through very clearly in the epics, but there is nonetheless a rare but illuminating allusion in the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus in the form of beggar described the physical and intellectual qualities of his own herald, he added that owing to the herald's like-mindedness to his master the former occupied a position second to none among the comrades of Odysseus⁽⁶⁶⁾. Consequently, it could be said with a fair degree of accuracy that part of the honor bestowed upon Eurybates by his master was the privilege of being consulted in public or private matters. For what else could like-mindedness mean here except that both found themselves compatible on issues of common interest ?

The Position of Herald when Speaking.

In Book 2 of the *Odyssey* it is stated that Telemachus addressed the Ithacan assembly by standing in the middle of it so that he could be heard by all. This stance appears to have been customary for all speakers, with the sole exception of Agamemnon at the time he was suffering from a wound. This being an exceptional occasion, Agamemnon felt compelled to apologize for his non-conformity to the established practice⁽⁶⁷⁾. Clearly, for practical considerations, tradition dictated that the speakers should

(66) Kings, especially young kings, were frequently assigned advisers by their fathers. Phoenix, though not a herald, had been given to Achilles by Peleus as adviser. When he therefore took the word after Odysseus (Il. 9. 453-605), he purportedly did so for the benefit of Achilles, not the Greeks. If his advice coincided with the wishes of the rest of the Greeks, that was of secondary importance. The position of Achilles resembled that of Shamsi-Adad's son, CAH 3. 1, pp. 3-4. The conflict of interest inherent in the position of Phoenix might have prevented the Greeks from appointing him as a full ambassador.

(67) Od. 2. 36; Eust. *ad loc.*; Il. 19. 76-77.

address the audience from some actual or figurative podium somewhere in the middle of the assembly. In the Trojan war heralds and other envoys carrying messages usually delivered them standing in the middle of the assembled troops. Thus Hector, in a mission on behalf of his brother Alexander, advanced toward the Achaean camp, and, while holding his spear by the middle horizontally and gesturing to the Achaeans, he indicated his wish to speak to them. Thereupon, the Achaeans agreed to stop the fighting, and Hector, taking a position between the two armies so that he could be heard well by both, proceeded to communicate his message⁽⁶⁸⁾. Similarly, when Idaeus came to the Achaean camp to impart Alexander's new peace proposals and Priam's suggestion for a truce, he took up a position in the middle of the Achaeans and proceeded to deliver the information with which he had been entrusted (Il. 7. 384). Idaeus then tarried in the Achaean camp so long as it was necessary for him to receive the answer from the Greeks. As soon as he had their reply, he returned to the Trojans, stood in the middle of them, and delivered the Achaean response⁽⁶⁹⁾.

A messenger charged with a more private directive delivered it either while standing in the middle of a reception hall in the presence of the addressee and his narrow circle, or after he had discreetly approached the addressee (Il. 18. 169). The particular manner in which reports and instructions were delivered seems to have been related to the personality and mannerisms of the deliverer. In this respect, Homer described how Odysseus delivered his message to the Trojans; he stood, he says, as he spoke and, looking down with his eyes fixed on the ground, he would hold his staff stiffly, moving it neither backward nor forward (Il. 3. 205 ff.).

(68) Il. 3. 77 ff.; Eust. *ad loc.* explained that in transmitting the message Hector made clear that it was not his own proposal but Alexander's.

(69) Il. 3. 417; BEKKER *ad loc.*

Ambassadors and Heralds.

Thus far the discussion has been centered on the analysis of the role of heralds, *angeloi*, and ambassadors, without a serious effort to amplify on the role of ambassadors and the probable differences — if any — between ambassadors and heralds. True, it has already been established that heralds were high functionaries but not holders of *archè*. Furthermore, they served primarily as messengers but sometimes went beyond that function. This occasional overstepping could have been due to their privileged position which made them privy to the inner thoughts of their immediate superior and the council of elders. On the other hand, *angeloi* could play a double role. Indeed, the word *angelos* itself conveys a dual meaning, namely, that of messenger or ambassador. Although it seems that Homeric ambassadors had no full power to negotiate since concessions were made only by the king or the council of kings whose agents the heralds and ambassadors were and whose ideas and proposals they advocated, Homeric envoys were nonetheless far from being just a superior kind of messenger; for they themselves were kings and thus members of the council on behalf of which they acted⁽⁷⁰⁾. While diplomacy, as it existed in the times described by the epics, was not the exclusive privilege of the professional diplomat, it was not a matter for the absolute amateur either.

(70) In this respect Homeric ambassadors did not differ from later envoys of the Greek city-states, with the only exception of the latter's election by the assembly whereas the former were coopted by colleagues. In the later Greek states envoys were themselves persons who took part in public life and debates on policy and not mere functionaries. In Sparta they did undoubtedly confer with the ephors, while at Athens envoys would not only listen to and take part in the debates but they would also seek the opinion of the council and the Prytaneis, P. BRIANT, *REA* 70 (1968) 7-31. Another difference was the age of the envoys. In the classical times the minimum age of envoys was generally no less than forty years old, despite the absence of statutory requirements about it (*Plut. Per.* 17. 1; *I.G.* 1² 57; *M/L* No. 65). It was considered prudent by the Greeks to trust their public business to men of maturity and experience, and both Plato and Aristotle urged the Greeks to confer public responsibilities upon men of maturity. This rule of thumb, though commended by many leaders,

Homeric embassies ostensibly consisted of two envoys, accompanied by their heralds. Other persons could have been attached to the embassy for various reasons, but these were not viewed as equal in rank with envoys⁽⁷¹⁾. Although Homeric embassies were frequently headed by two ambassadors, cases in which a single envoy led an embassy are not entirely absent from Homer. The presence of such single-head embassies may be of historical importance and should be discussed here. Menelaus and Odysseus were the two ambassadors dispatched to Troy prior to the commencement of hostilities, but in Book 4 (384) of the *Iliad* Agamemnon reminded Diomedes that the latter's father had been on an embassy (ἀγγελίην) to Thebes, sometime before the Trojan war⁽⁷²⁾. The same story is luckily repeated in

was not rigidly adhered to (Thuc. 5. 61. 2; A. ANDREWES, HCT 5. 43. 2). This rule could not be applied in the Homeric times where the choice had to be made from among kings, most of them seemingly young. Nevertheless, the Homeric council repeatedly chose men of ability and experience as it becomes clear from the repeated embassies of Odysseus.

There does not seem to be any difference in the use of the terms πρέσβυς and ἄγγελος in the Old Testament of the Septuagint, *Gen.* 32. 1; *Num.* 20. 14-21; 21. 21; 22. 5; *Deut.* 2. 26-36; 3. 1-6; *Judg.* 7. 24; 9. 31; 11. 12; 13; 14; 17; 19; I *Sam* 113.

(71) *Il.* 9. 168-70; ERBSE *ad loc.* In the classical and Roman times ambassadors were accompanied by suites (ἀκόλουθοι). Thucydides, for example, described certain negotiations in which heralds, plenipotentiaries, and their suites expected to enjoy safe conduct (Thuc. 4. 118. 6). Cicero referred to these suites as « *adseculae* », in *Verrem* 2. 1. 25.

(72) At what point the Greeks sent envoys to Priam demanding the return of Helen and her possessions is not clear. Some maintain that this happened after the expedition had landed in the Troad; others that it occurred before the ships assembled at Aulis. The more prevalent version seems to be that the Greeks dispatched the embassy from Tenedos, and that the embassy consisted of Menelaus, Odysseus, and Palamedes, though the latter is not mentioned by Homer, Cryptia in Procles *Chrestomatheia* 1; Tzetzes *Antehomerica* 154 ff.; scoliast *ad Il.* 3. 206; Dictys Cretensis 14; Apollod. *Epitome* 3. 28. 29; *Il.* 3. 205 ff., where Odysseus and Menelaus are the two emissaries mentioned; Eust. *ad loc.*; BEKKER *ad loc.*; Hdt. 1. 3. 2; How and WELLS *ad loc.* This embassy brings to mind a similar last minute attempt by Archidamus, king of Sparta, Thuc. 2. 12. Perhaps (there is little doubt in this writer's mind) this precedent had its roots in antiquity. Parallels are always dangerous, but certain

Book 5 (804 ff.) of the *Iliad*. In both instances Tydeus is the only person mentioned in connection with the embassy. Whether this should be taken to mean that he was indeed the only envoy or that he was simply singled out for the sake of the story, it is not clear. But it would be odd for Homer not to have mentioned the second prominent member of the embassy, for if a second member went along he must have been of equal rank to Tydeus. Be that as it may, Homer also adverted to an embassy (ἐξέσθην) of Odysseus, who as a young man went to Messenia. In a fashion not uncommon in Mycenaean and Homeric times, some Messenians had put into Ithaca with their ships, and while there they took it upon themselves to engage in the proverbial Homeric razzias. The loot seems to have been plentiful because they subsequently sailed home taking with them three-hundred sheep along with their shepherds. Wanting to retrieve both sheep and shepherds through peaceful means, Laertes and his council dispatched young Odysseus at the head of an embassy to Messenia. No doubt, the embassy included a herald or two, two prominent Ithacans, servants and acolytes, and perhaps advisers to the young prince. Yet it is highly doubtful that any one of them was equal in rank to Odysseus, for Homer would have mentioned

practices in the ancient world were more enduring than some of us like to believe. After all, war, frequent though it was, still remained a serious matter, and no one wanted to appear the aggressor. Those who felt that right was on their side sought to exhaust every peaceful means available before they engaged in hostilities, and the Achaeans seem to have been no exception to this rule. Propaganda then as now had an important place in people's life. The scholion to the above verse on the *Iliad* explains that Menelaus went to Troy because he was directly involved as one of the trio responsible for the war (Alexander - Helen - Menelaus) and there might have been a vague hope that the Trojans, shamed by his presence, might have decided to deliver Helen and her possessions (εἴ πως αἰδεσθῶσι τὸν παθόντα). Instead, Menelaus was almost put to death. This fascinating twist of the affair resembles the Biblical parable of the householder who sent his son to receive the fruits of the vine from his tenants in the hope that the latter would respect the son (they had maltreated those sent prior to the son for the collection of the fruits) and treat him better than they had treated the former emissaries, *Matt.* 21. 37: ἐντραπήσουνται τὸν υἱόν μου. It turned out to be an unfortunate idea.

it. A few of the other members of the embassy, prominent though they might have been, must have occupied the position of associates, not colleagues⁽⁷³⁾. In still another instance, Homer pointed out that Priam had also gone on an embassy to Thrace. Homer did not give a clue about the time but this event definitely took place sometime before the Trojan war. Inasmuch as kings themselves did not go on embassies except as agents of others (if we are to judge from the case of Odysseus above and the incident between Agamemnon and Achilles) it appears very likely that Priam, like Odysseus, was not the reigning king and that he went to Thrace as the representative of the ruling king, most probably his predecessor. All three incidents discussed here point to the use of single leadership embassies, so that the generally held argument by many scholars that Homeric and perhaps pre-Homeric embassies consisted of two leaders is not airtight. Unquestionably, the special circumstances of the Trojan campaign made the dispatch of two envoys easy and practical. But in normal times, when the Achaean kings lived apart in their own districts, they quite naturally sought bi-lateral solutions to interstate problems through the instrumentality of embassies whose single leader was a member of the royal family or the royal staff. Such embassies must have been considered excellent educational experience in the field of interstate negotiations for the apparent heir to the throne. This is a mode of diplomacy which must have developed in the territorial states of the Mycenaean times. There must have been exceptions designed to fit special occasions, but about these detailed matters we are not, unfortunately, well-informed. What happened, for example, when a vassal king had problems he wanted to negotiate with his lord? Did he send a son or relative or some other functionary, or did he visit the lord personally? Did he go personally only on weighty matters while he delegated less important problems to princes or lesser subordinates? More fundamentally, did vassals in the Mycenaean world have the right to send and receive ambassadors without

(73) Od. 21. 21. Homer underscores the youth of Odysseus by the $\pi\alpha\iota\delta\upsilon\omicron\varsigma \acute{\epsilon}\omega\nu$. Most probably Priam was of a similar age when he went to Thrace on an embassy, Il. 24. 235.

the express permission of their lord? These are some of the questions we cannot answer with certainty. The few insights we might have about this matters come from two areas : the contemporaneous Near Eastern world and later Greek practices. Presumably some of the practices in the Hittite treaties did not differ much from the practices of the Mycenaeans. One thing is evident, however, from the information in the epics : embassies whose objective was to transmit information or to execute a decision of the king and his council did not always require the presence of two ambassadors. When the decision was forced by Apollo on the Achaeans to return Chryseis to her father, Agamemnon put Odysseus alone in charge of the embassy designed to bring the girl home. The return of Chryseis may initially be seen as Agamemnon's personal business, and in this context Odysseus would be a goodwill ambassador expediting Agamemnon's personal affair. But such a view may be flawed, for the girl might have belonged to Agamemnon but from the moment the quarrel affected all Argives, her destiny became public business. Why is then Agamemnon here the sole arbiter of the ambassadorial delegation and why is there only a single envoy dispatched instead of the usual two envoys ? The question could admit of several answers : (1) the matter was too simple, involving merely the delivery of the girl ; (2) Agamemnon assumed the initiative because the girl was his and he was at the same time the commander-in-chief ; (3) Agamemnon's initiative had its possible roots in practices which went back in time when the kings decided the make-up of the delegation and one person was commissioned to head it. This last alternative, if correct, could be of considerable importance for our knowledge of the Mycenaean diplomatic practices. At any rate, it harmonizes with contemporaneous diplomatic practices in the Near East.

There is in Homer still another instance in which a delegation was composed of one single ambassador, superior in rank, acting on behalf of another, inferior to him ; this is the case of Hector, who agreed to carry his brother's peace proposals to the Achaeans and who exercised his power of negotiations within

the framework of the spirit of that proposal. The rather informal and personal character of the peace effort reflects upon the type of embassy which pursued it. The initiative for the negotiations arose from the private altercation of the two brothers; it was not the upshot of a public discussion. Eventually, the peace-undertaking led to bilateral negotiations and an agreement by both sides; yet the presence of only one single envoy suggests that negotiatory initiatives could be officially carried out by a single envoy. Consequently, even though two ambassadors were frequently dispatched during the Trojan campaign on official embassies, single ambassadors could also be used, particularly since the practice seems to have had well-established roots. The unique circumstances of the Trojan war may account for the practice of the two ambassadors. For although the position of Agamemnon as supreme commander was commonly acknowledged by all, he was no absolute ruler but a *primus inter pares* unable to disregard the opinion of colleagues. Decision-making was clearly the collective responsibility of the group of kings, and the availability of so many competent warrior and adviser kings facilitated the dispatch of two ambassadors. Whether the motives behind the use of two envoys originated in the desire to curb one another's authority, to supplement each other, to add weight to the embassy, or simply to safeguard the integrity of the negotiations against the possible inadequacies of a single representative, these are questions that cannot easily be answered. One thing clearly emerges from the reading of Homer: the choice of ambassadors was intended to suit best the occasion. In this vein, Menelaus and Odysseus had been chosen as ambassadors to Troy; the first because he was Helen's husband and his presence might have shamed the Trojans to returning Helen; the second because the proverbial versatility of his mind made him the best advocate of the Achaean cause ⁽⁷⁴⁾.

That the careful choice of envoys was designed to achieve maximal results and was a very ancient practice antedating the Homeric era becomes obvious from the Hittite correspondence.

(74) Il. 3. 205-06; Eust. and ERBSE *ad loc.*; Hdt. 1. 3. 2.

If by the assignation Ahhiyawa some Achaeans were denoted (the author is fully aware of the complexities of the problem), then Homeric usages have demonstrably their counterpart much earlier in the Mycenaean world. In the famous Tawagalawa Letter, a Hittite king of the second half of the fourteenth century B.C. complained to the king of Ahhiyawa that a certain Piyamaradu, a Hittite vassal, but evidently later under the protection of Ahhiyawa, had been raiding Hittite territories. The Hittite king maintained that he went into Millawanda to seize this Piyamaradu, but that Piyamaradu escaped upon the king's approach. The king accordingly asked that Piyamaradu should either be sent into the land of Hatti or be settled in the land of Ahhiyawa. It is pointed out that the envoy who brought the message to the Ahhiyawan king was a prominent individual well-known to the king of Ahhiyawa. The reference to the high-born messenger implied some sort of previous friendly contacts between the royal houses of Hatti and Ahhiyawa, during which the envoy had served in the same capacity or was familiar to the king of Ahhiyawa from former contacts⁽⁷⁵⁾. Unquestionably, the dispatch of a known ambassador was intended to make the negotiations smoother and to maximize the effects of the negotiations.

The embassy which perhaps best exemplifies the ambassadorial practices of the Homeric era is the mission to Achilles. This em-

(75) J.T. HOOKER, *Mycenaean Greece* (London and Boston, 1977) 124. The Egyptian Mane seems to have been a permanent envoy used by Amenophis III and IV in their diplomatic contacts with the Mitanni king Tusratta. Julia was Tusratta's envoy. Both are mentioned repeatedly in the El-Amarna correspondence pp. 145; 147; 223; 229; 237; 239; etc. Hamassi, Amenophis' IV envoy to Tusratta in pp. 233 and 247 might have been Mane's colleague serving instead of him, either because of illness, old age, or some other reason. Whether good records of these ambassador's conversations with their hosts were kept is not certain, but it is possible that many important details were not always kept and that the only repository for information were the envoys who served in such confidential capacity. Tusratta, for example, has pointed out to Amenophis that several of the secret exchanges between himself and Amenophis' father were known only to their two ambassadors involved in these dealings, KNUDZON, *Die El-Amarna Tafeln*, 235.

bassy comprises several interesting features worth analyzing in some detail since these features seem to reflect the procedural protocol of the times. The embassy had its origins in the desperation to which the Greeks had been driven following Hector's spectacular successes. As a result, the Greek leaders held a council in which they passed the motion to send an embassy to Achilles to plead for his return to the war. The council further approved of Nestor's suggestion for the choice of ambassadors. These were to be Odysseus and Aias and perhaps Phoenix, the first owing to his intellectual agility, the second because of his superb soldiery, second only to that of Achilles. The reputation of both was universally so high as to confer supplementary credit to the arguments they were to present. In this mission, both were accompanied by their heralds, who presumably added an aura of formality to the embassy. By the common consent of the council-members Phoenix was also added to the delegation. Somehow by some peculiar coincidence, Phoenix happened to be in the Greek camp at the time the suggestion about the embassy was discussed, and since he was a close associate of Achilles the other Greeks sought to take advantage of his presence by attaching him to the delegation. Phoenix was no holder of *archè*; he simply stood in a special relationship to Achilles as his tutor and advisor. His presence on the embassy presents difficulties, but most scholars agree that Phoenix could not be considered a colleague of the two royal ambassadors but merely an associate. Phoenix' ability to present clear and persuasive, though somewhat loquacious arguments, was obviously well known to the Greeks who eagerly availed themselves of his presence in their midst to make him the advocate of Achaean reconciliation.

We are not previously told what factor(s) accounted for Phoenix' fortuitous presence among the other Greeks. In essence, Phoenix appears at this point like a bolt out of the blue. Nothing is heard of his name before nor did Homer explain how Phoenix had come to be among the elders in the quarters of Agamemnon. As a retainer of Achilles his place would seem to be rather with the Myrmidons than among the other Achaeans. He is barely

mentioned in Il. 9. 168 and once in Il. 9. 223. It is only later on in Book 9 that we learn his relation to Achilles. In the immediate part of the narrative he is merely ignored until his turn to speak comes. The envoys are always spoken of as the twain, and Achilles greets the two in Il. 9. 197⁽⁷⁶⁾. A logical explana-

(76) Il. 9. 168 ff.; MONRO, ERBSE, LEAF-BAYFIELD, AMEIS-HENTZE *ad loc.*; BEKKER states that Phoenix went along οὐχ ὡς πρεσβευτῆς· δύο γὰρ ἕθος πρεσβεύειν; see also Il. 11. 139-40; Od. 9. 90. While Homer refers to the «twain» and most scholars accept the two as the official emissaries of the Achaeans to Achilles, PAGE, with some justification based upon the difficulties contained in the Homeric text, asserts that Phoenix was an ambassador and that the scholars' insistence on two ambassadors is a misconception foisted upon many scholiasts and modern scholars by Aristarchus (PAGE, *History and the Homeric Epics*, 229). PAGE presents three points for which the argument of the dual embassy, he claims, is not correct, of which the third is perhaps the most important. This is that the use of the verb ἡγησάσθω, Il. 9. 168, could not mean that Phoenix went ahead in advance of the others, but only that he was their leader. He examines the use of ἡγεῖσθαι in Homer only to find nothing convincing him that ἡγεῖσθαι does not indicate the person who takes the lead, unless the context plainly dictates otherwise. But in 9. 168 the context dictates nothing different, and one must suppose that Phoenix is intended to be (as indeed, according to PAGE, he is) the principal person in this company of ambassadors. The notion that Odysseus, Aias, and the heralds needed to be shown the way to Achilles' tent after ten years is in itself absurd and inconsistent with the phraseology. Nor is there any difference to be drawn by the tense ἡγησάσθω - ἡγεῖτο. Therefore he rejects the views of W. SCHADEWARDT, *Iliasstudien* (Leipzig, 1938) 138; F. FOCKE, *Hermes* 82 (1954) 257-87; P. MAZON, *Introduction à l'Illiade* 176 as injudicious (PAGE, *Hist. of the Hom. Epics*, 299-300; 325). Following these comments, PAGE goes on to expound his pet theory regarding the multiple authorship of the epics. His view is that the part of Phoenix is superimposed upon an already existing embassy to Achilles. Furthermore, since the remainder of the Iliad reveals no awareness that the embassy to Achilles ever occurred (the only explicit reference to the embassy in the Iliad is in Il. 9. 448-49, a part of a long passage athetized by Aristarchus), the embassy never really occurred (PAGE, *Hist. of the Hom. Epics*, 304). PAGE could have also used the rather strange reply of the ambassadors to the council of elders upon their return from the embassy to reinforce his suggestion about the oddity of the Homeric text at this point but he does not. His well woven argument about the role of Phoenix does not really block the objections regarding Odysseus' leadership and his priority in the delivery of the embassy's message. Consequently, the dispute about the

tion for Phoenix's presence in the Achaean council might be that he had gone there to watch the battle, or even better to serve as an official envoy to get some information on behalf of Achilles as did Patroclus later on (Il. 11. 602 ff.). What becomes clear from his speech to Achilles is that he recognized the injustice done to Achilles (Il. 9. 523), but that he favored a reconciliation once Agamemnon had admitted his error and was willing to correct it by extending a friendly hand loaded with heavy gifts. Phoenix had heard Nestor's criticism of Agamemnon's folly in the council of elders and had witnessed Agamemnon's sincere repentance, his willingness to make up with Achilles, and his readiness to compensate him with lavish gifts and a marriage proposal (Il. 9. 114-172). It seems that Phoenix had definitely considered the apologies offered and the gifts of Agamemnon as adequate compensation for the injustice done to his ward and that he was willing to lead (ἡγησάσθω) the embassy in some sort of unofficial capacity. Once the embassy left for its mission, Phoenix is depicted as stepping back from his leadership role. Yet in the beginning of the negotiations (Il. 9. 223 ff.) Phoenix is cast in the foreground once again, as if to show that he was the head of the embassy and that Odysseus was not authorized to speak at the moment he did⁽⁷⁷⁾. But the confusion might be simply due to Aias, that archetype of the Homeric hero, who, motivated perhaps by respect for Phoenix' age, nodded to him to start the discussion, thereby overlooking the fact that Odysseus and Aias were the principal members of the ambassadorial commission and that Odysseus was certainly its chairman.

The procedural aspects associated with this embassy are equally significant as they allude to the ambassadorial practices of the heroic times. From this standpoint, it is worth our while to follow the procedural format associated with the unfolding of the embassy. Prior to the departure of the embassy, all its parti-

exact role of Phoenix in the embassy to Achilles will remain alive. See also M. Noë, *Phoinix, Iliad, und Homer: Untersuchungen zum neunten Gesang der Iliad* (Leipzig, 1940) 1-124; Kirk, *The Songs of Homer*, 218.

(77) Eust. ad Il. 9. 233 ff.

cipants went through the ritual of washing their hands. Following this purificatory ceremony, a brief silence was observed tantamount to a moment of prayer to the gods for the successful completion of the mission. An integral part of this prayer was the pouring of drops into cups for the purpose of libations. Upon the conclusion of this ritual the delegates departed. As soon as the ambassadors reached their destination, they were welcomed by Achilles himself, who ushered them into his hut. Thereupon, Achilles commanded Patroclus and a few other Myrmidons to prepare a rich meal of meat, before which they all offered libations to the gods. The Lucullian meal that followed the libations, provided the opportunity for Odysseus to broach the subject of the embassy, and thus the negotiations began⁽⁷⁸⁾. It should be mentioned at this point that the ushering in of the delegation by Achilles himself might be more pertinent to the circumstances of this particular embassy rather than conformity to a general rule. Under different conditions the functionaries in charge of receiving envoys must have been the ones who had the responsibility to introduce the ambassadors to the place where the king held the audience. In contrast, the meal that preceded the discussions must have been a common practice even prior to Homeric times, dictated by the rules of hospitality as well as by practical considerations, i.e., the fact most envoys travelled considerable distances and were presumed to be tired, hungry, and thirsty.

At the conclusion of the dinner, the ambassadors exchanged amenities. Odysseus (like St. Paul, who cleverly used the famous statue dedicated to the unknown God to introduce his Christian gospel to the Athenians) complimented Achilles for the excellent dinner, reminding him at the same time that the Achaeans did not suffer from the need of food supplies but that other weighty matters pressed heavily on their minds. Odysseus went on to

(78) Homer's explanation of the signal for the beginning of the discussion is a roundabout way, unless Aias wished to give Phoenix the priority, irrespective of his position in the delegation, because of his advanced age. Unquestionably, there is something unclear in the narrative at this point.

speak of the successes of the Trojans and the danger to the Greeks thereby, and the Greek concern about the safety of the ships. Attendant upon these introductory remarks (a long introduction would have been unnecessary since Achilles was acutely aware of the military situation of the Greeks) Odysseus plunged into the main objective of the mission, exhorting his host to forget his grudge and help save the Achaeans from utter destruction. For if Achilles were to disregard Odysseus' appeal, it would reflect adversely upon Achilles' own reputation. Then Odysseus cleverly reverted to the purpose of Achilles' coming to Troy and Peleus' very own admonition to him to be gentle of heart, particularly in his relations to the other Achaeans (II. 9. 255). The opportunity at hand was ostensibly Achilles' best chance to implement his father's prudent exhortation. But Odysseus did not forget to couple his reminder of Peleus' advice with the enumeration of the remarkable gifts Agamemnon was willing to bestow upon Achilles together with the marvellous proposal for the dynastic marriage with one of Agamemnon's daughters.

Odysseus' skillfully woven speech encapsulated the instructions which the ambassadors had received from the council and demonstrated the oratorical dexterity for which the speaker was renowned. Odysseus deftly and truthfully presented the position of the Greeks and their desperate need for help. Moreover, he artfully pointed out how the disadvantageous military situation of the Greeks could turn to Achilles' advantage. For in addition to the valuable gifts, Achilles would receive more honor from the Greeks as their savior, although the Greeks already honored him as equal to a god. He would also have the chance to increase further his already immense martial reputation by killing Hector who had recently been boasting that he had no rival among the Greeks. At any rate, Achilles should take pity on the Greeks while there was still time even if he nursed a deep hatred for Agamemnon; for if he failed to respond opportunely to the need of the Greeks he might live to regret it. Prudent persons, Odysseus went on, put aside their spites and act when there is still time for action. This last

aphoristic statement clearly presages the events which were to follow with the death of Patroclus.

Achilles responded with a longer speech. His friendship with the ambassadors encouraged him all the more to be blunt and straightforward, though he did not like double talk anyway. He emphatically stated that he would not change his mind either about the king or the war. He even attributed ingratitude to the Greeks, for, despite his incessant fighting on their behalf, they made no distinction between good and bad warriors, or between those who stayed behind (meaning Agamemnon) and those who fought in the war. This statement is in opposition to Odysseus' earlier assertion that the Greeks adored Achilles and considered him almost equal to a god. Obviously, Achilles had a different perception of the Greek feelings towards him vis-à-vis Agamemnon, feelings which added to his bitterness over his quarrel with the latter. Achilles further explained that he had no need of Agamemnon's gifts, the possession of which he attributed to his own martial efforts since Agamemnon remained mostly by the ships. To have received gifts from Agamemnon would be tantamount to getting back some of the booty he himself had captured (τὰ ἐμὰ ἐκ τῶν ἐμῶν). Nor did he need any Atreid woman for a wife for the honor of whom he had been fighting all along⁽⁷⁹⁾. With this argument Achilles seemed to have closed the door to any reconciliation.

There was no counter to Achilles' angry speech by Odysseus. Instead, Phoenix took his turn in speaking, either following protocol or, more probably, an *ad hoc* agreement. He painted the pre-history of his relations with Achilles which in some way established Phoenix' credentials and right to speak. He also

(79) By the first, Achilles implied that he would be getting something from the booty he had himself formerly captured. The second was used later by Sophocles (*Aias* 1311 and JEBB, *Soph. ad loc.*) making Teucer say that Aias fought for Agamemnon and Menelaus. As Eust. suggested *ad Il.* 9. 336, Sophocles was thinking of the incident in which Achilles spoke bitterly of Briseis as consort of Agamemnon asking: « Are the Atreidae the only mortal men who love their consorts ? » See also STANFORD, *Sophocles' Aias* (Bristol Press, 1963) *ad* 1311.

urged Achilles to restrain his anger, for even the gods bend their hearts to Man's vows and supplications, libations and sacrifice. He reminded Achilles that the Prayers (*Litae*) were Zeus' daughters in charge of repentance for sins which caused man to fall into woes. These Prayers also healed the hurt of woes, and reverence for them carried with it blessing for the repentant while defiance usually ended up in sorrow (another indirect reference of Achilles' future grief over Patroclus). Consequently, inasmuch as Agamemnon had repented for his error and was offering gifts of recompense through the best of the Achaeans now before Achilles, the latter ought to reconsider and not reject the reconciliation gesture⁽⁸⁰⁾. He ought to follow past examples of famous heroes who, though justifiably angered, were finally won over by gifts and pleas. Apropos, Phoenix mentioned the moral of the story of Meleager and the Aetolians, thereby emphasizing the dictum that those who ignored the past were bound to repeat its errors.

Phoenix's argument proved fairly effective, for although outwardly still angry (Achilles warned Phoenix not to take Agamemnon's side from fear that he would run the risk of alienating Achilles), inwardly he had been deeply touched by Phoenix' admonitions. This becomes evident from Achilles' short reply, where he described Agamemnon as «hero», thereby avoiding the harsh adjective used earlier about Agamemnon⁽⁸¹⁾. The double salvo by Odysseus and Phoenix had unquestionably begun to produce its effects. Appropriately, Achilles did not unequivocally repeat his earlier statement to Odysseus that he would depart for home the next day. He now intimated that he may stay or go home, an ambivalent statement of a mind clearly in

(80) Phoenix spoke of the ambassadors as φίλτατοι Ἀργείων, which may denote that he did not count himself as ambassador. Likewise, Phoenix spoke of the ambassadors as ἄνδρας ... ἀρίστους, II. 9. 520, that is, the one among the Achaeans the best in council and the other best in soldiery. The statement may or may not indicate that Phoenix himself was not an ambassador and that he did not include himself in the commendation.

(81) II. 9. 372-73. But now (9. 613 and Eust. *ad loc.*) Achilles describes Agamemnon as hero: Ἀτρεΐδῃ ἥρωϊ φέρων χάριν.

a state of confusion and conflict. Thus, even though Phoenix's argumentation might not have been as compact and skillful as that of Odysseus, his tutorial style, his spontaneity, his rationality, his clever use of historical examples, touched Achilles perhaps more than Odysseus' speech.

The last to speak was Aias. In a laconic, strongly impulsive and somewhat angry speech, which still had a touch of light-spiritedness, Aias forcefully attacked Achilles' stubbornness and callousness, thereby putting Achilles on the defensive. In response to Aias' speech Achilles now promised not to enter the war before Hector assaulted the ships of the Myrmidons. Gone were the threats about his leaving Troy. The question now was not if Achilles would re-enter the battle but when. In a martial fashion Aias had severely criticized Achilles' irreconcilable stance, asserting that even a principle, if carried to extremes, could become negative and counter-productive. This was the meaning of Aias' remark that even the murderer was allowed to stay in his community after the payment of a heavy recompense (II. 9. 636), whereas Achilles held on to a baneful grudge against friends, despite the eagerness of the culprit to apologize. Finally, Aias' exhortation to moderation (Ἰλαον ἔνθεο θυμόν) hit a very sensitive chord in Achilles' heart, who now acknowledged apologetically that the envoys were indeed dearest to him (φίλατοι).

Achilles' answer to Aias was even shorter than Aias' speech. Achilles had no argument against Aias, who, he admitted, had spoken in accordance with Achilles' mind. What prevented him from going along with Aias' views was only his pride. In a way, Aias' brief speech effectively accomplished a great part of the mission's task: to persuade Achilles to stay. Naturally, the groundwork had already been prepared by the long and calculated speeches of the former two speakers with the result that both had sufficiently softened the angry man before the delivery of Aias' brief but heavy verbal bombardment. Phoenix' highly sentimental address had so shaken Achilles that the latter was unable to refute rationally Phoenix's argument, retorting with barely couched threats (II. 9. 615).

As soon as Achilles finished his short reply to Aias, envoys and host took up a cup and poured libations, following which the delegates departed under the leadership of Odysseus. They marched directly to the hut of Agamemnon where the Greek leaders anxiously waited for Achilles' reply. Upon arrival, all the kings seated around Agamemnon stood up to welcome the delegates, holding cups of gold (Il. 9. 670 ff.). As the commander-in-chief, Agamemnon was the first to question the ambassadors, addressing himself to Odysseus as the chairman of the delegation. For reasons not entirely clear Odysseus had either failed to notice the change in Achilles' statements, or he and the others deliberately chose to deliver Achilles' original answer to Odysseus, namely that Achilles was to leave the next day. The first version, however, would be contrary to the much-touted sagacity of Odysseus, while for the second no explanation is hinted at in the Homeric text. Be that as it may, a paralyzing silence followed Odysseus' answer, broken only by Diomedes' counsel that they should all forget Achilles and his erratic behavior, and, after indulging in a « therapeutic » meal, they should go to rest for the night before they resumed the fighting in the morning. The other members of the council concurred, but before they took their leave for the night, they all offered libations to the gods.

If one were to judge from the embassy to Achilles, the procedure involved in the Homeric embassies could be summarized as follows:

1. The sending of an embassy was a royal prerogative exercised by the king or the king and the royal council.
2. The motion for the dispatch of an embassy was first entertained in the council.
3. A second motion dealt with the choice of ambassadors and their acolytes.
4. Once the delegates had been chosen, the king or the council designated the leader of the delegation. If a member of the council suggested the chairman of the delegation, the ap-

proval of the king was required, but this procedure was frequently a foregone conclusion.

5. The position of the chairman implied that he would be the first to present the instructions of the dispatching body. The manner in which the argument was to be presented remained the envoy's privilege.
6. Prior to the delegates' departure, a short purification ceremony took place accompanied by prayers and libations for the success of the mission.
7. Upon arrival at their destination a reception was given in honor of the envoys during which libations were offered to the gods. Following the libations and prayers, guests and host sat down to a meal.
8. As soon as all finished eating, the leader of the delegation explained the purpose of the embassy⁽⁸²⁾. An answer was given by the opposite side, and if the answer were unsatisfactory the second envoy spoke. The final word came from the host.
9. With the negotiations concluded, all parties offered libations to the gods, and then the embassy departed for home.

While such seems to have been the format of the Homeric diplomatic negotiations, exceptions were not unusual as the presence of Phoenix in the delegation suggests. The schema of the delegates' speeches and the corresponding replies by Achilles is as follows:

1. Od. *Iliad* 9. 225-306 total lines 82
2. Ach. *Iliad* 9. 308-429 total lines 122

(82) Prior to the Trojan expedition Nestor and Odysseus had gone to Phthia to solicit Peleus' alliance for the Trojan war. Achilles met them upon their arrival; invited them into the house; and entertained them to a lavish dinner. Following the dinner, Nestor explained the purpose of their mission (Il. 11. 767). Here again the two ambassadors involved were offered the customary Homeric hospitality before they discussed the purpose of their trip.

3. Ph. *Iliad* 9. 434-605 total lines 172
4. Ach. *Iliad* 9. 607-619 total lines 13
5. Ai. *Iliad* 9. 624-642 total lines 19
6. Ach. *Iliad* 9. 644-655 total lines 12

From the above summary of speeches it becomes evident that the speech of Phoenix is the longest. The length of his speech was due to Phoenix' refusal to limit himself to strictly political and military considerations, choosing to dwell on private and personal matters in that story-telling fashion, customary among older people whose purpose was pedagogical as well as entertaining. The section represented by Phoenix could not have been a usual part of an embassy, but then Phoenix was not the council's official representative and consequently he was under no compulsion to follow the ordinary format. The stories of his personal misfortune aimed at soothing the spirit of the angry man inasmuch as paradigms from personal experiences were obviously perceived as the best method for teaching the young. No doubt, Phoenix' presence in the Greek camp was a lucky coincidence and suggests that, like us, the ancients utilized all the « lucky breaks » they had to achieve their goals⁽⁸³⁾. The schema of the speeches similarly suggests that the second official member of the embassy could not have been that important in the presentation of the embassy's directives, and that his role was principally to furnish a psychological boost. Further, if one is to judge from the appointment of Aias to the embassy, the second member was not expected to amplify upon the speech of the chairman as much as to affect the negotiations by other means. If this interpretation is correct, it tends to strengthen the hypothesis that the two-envoy format is a development of

(83) The Greeks in the classical times took similar advantage of persons who had special relations to important leaders in other city-states in order to achieve similar purposes. Thus Agesilaus was sent to Mantinea in order to influence the negotiations in favor of Sparta, while Endius, Philocharidas and Leon went to Athens, all of them because of their special connections with the Athenians (Thuc. 5. 44. 23). Cimon was likewise sent to Sparta on account of his personal relations to Sparta (Thuc. 1. 102. 2).

the later Mycenaean times or of the Dark Ages. In the earlier times embassies were led by a single individual.

The heralds who accompanied the embassy served to give it an official character, but judging from this embassy, they remained mostly silent, although they did serve as witnesses of the transactions. This is confirmed by the very fact that Odysseus called upon them to corroborate his report of the negotiations. It could be that a king would send his herald along not simply to insure the inviolability of his envoy but also to have him play the role of a confidential observer. This could not have happened in the embassy to Achilles, not only because there was no need for it but also because the presence of Agamemnon's herald(s) might have incited Achilles' passion, which would be certain to wreck the negotiations before they began⁽⁸⁴⁾. There is still another use for the presence of the herald on an embassy. In light of the herald's proximity to his king and his knowledge of his master's mind, a herald could frequently be consulted on complex matters, particularly when negotiations became protracted. No such intimation can be gleaned from the above embassy but Odysseus' own comment regarding the like-mindedness between himself and his herald Eurybates testifies to the essentiality of the herald's function (Od. 19. 244). The presence of a trusty herald was very important for yet another reason. It seems that in the ancient times the possibility of willful or innocent distortion, lying, or fabrication was ever present, and the presence of more than one member on an embassy provided additional security against such practices. Although no such cases have been reported in Homer, there is some hint of this concern in the *Iliad*, Book 15 (158) where Zeus commanded Iris not to be ψευδάγγελος. The passage suggests that misrepresentation and fabrication by ambassadors were not unknown in ancient diplomacy. The provisions made later on in Greek history about punishment for ambassadors or heralds to friendly or hostile countries found guilty of distortions and fabrications

(84) ERBSE *ad Il.* 9. 170.

demonstrate that the ancient Greeks were not above such practices (Plat. *Laws* 21. 941 A; *Ath.* 1. 169 B⁽⁸⁵⁾).

It should also be added that, along with the delivery of messages or the negotiation of agreements, envoys and heralds have also been charged with the task of spying upon the host country. Thus when Menelaus and Odysseus had been sent to Troy, Odysseus had been entrusted with the additional responsibility to spy upon the Trojans (Il. 3. 205; Hdt. 1. 3. 2). Likewise, when Idaeus went as envoy to the Greek camp, Agamemnon deliberately let Diomedes answer Idaeus on behalf of all the Greeks so that Idaeus would learn the prevailing mood among the Greek troops and report it to his superiors (Il. 7. 406-407).

In the heyday of the Athenian democracy, the dispatch of embassies was within the purview of the Athenian assembly. Foreign embassies to Athens showed themselves before the council of Five Hundred at first and subsequently appear before the assembly. In Homeric times ambassadors seem to have been dispatched by the kings and their councils with the tacit or open approval and support of the assembly. During the Trojan war, the council consisted of all the allied kings who participated in the expedition, but the composition of the council of elders who surrounded Laertes and determined the dispatch of embassies consisted of the local lords, who might have carried the title of king like the Phaeacian elders surrounding Alcinous. This strong consultative role of the council in the Homeric epics may reflect the democratization of political life in the Dark Ages, following the collapse of the Mycenaean kingdoms, the

(85) WEIDNER, *Politik. Dok.*, 109 where Sunassura is enjoined to trust the emissary's words if they agree with the written instructions he carried. If not, Sunassura should not rely on the emissary's words, L. LANDSBERGER, *ZDMG* 69 (1918) 516; Br. MEISSNER, *OLZ* (1917) col. 306. In the correspondence between the Hittites and the Abhiyawas, one of the Hittite kings complained that exchange of harsh words between him and the Abhiyawan king was due to their messengers. He therefore suggested that they put an end to the ugly affair by cutting the heads and mutilating the bodies of the ambassadors responsible for the misunderstanding (PAGE, *Hist. of the Hom. Epics*, 12).

weakening of the central institution of kingship and the rise of nobility. In the Mycenaean age, when the central authority apparently resided in the hands of the king, the final decision regarding the dispatch of embassies must have resided with the Anax.

During the Trojan expedition envoys customarily explained the purpose of their mission before the council of kings, presided over by the anax, or they appeared before the assembly and the kings. When the duo of Menelaus and Odysseus visited Troy, they explained their mission before the assembled Trojans (Il. 3, 209), while Hector spoke to all Greeks on behalf of his brother (Il. 3. 85). On the other hand, Odysseus and Aias had received their commission from the council of kings (their decision seems to have had the approval of the assembly) and so they delivered Achilles' response to the waiting council. Although the role of the people (warriors) appeared to have been ignored, no deliberate snubbing was intended inasmuch as the reconciliatory mission of the two kings enjoyed the support of all the Achaeans. In contrast, Achilles' reply to the ambassadors was given by him alone, though it was bound to affect the fate of the Myrmidons under him. In this instance, Achilles' beloved Myrmidons were completely ignored. However nothing indicates that they might have differed from their master's verdict.

To sum up. In the absence of permanent embassies, diplomacy in the Homeric times was conducted by quasi-professional diplomats trained by experience. For direction these "diplomats" depended on their superiors, the Homeric kings, who often acted as the spokesmen of a collegiate group of peers or sometimes entrusted the *primus inter pares* with the execution of their collective will. Frequently, this collegiate mandate coincided with the popular will of the assembly or warriors before which most of the discussions took place. Envoys were rarely bold in the exercise of their own initiative, but where the distances were considerable and the absence of quick communications made consultations difficult, envoys must not have failed to exercise their own judgment within the perimeters of their original

directives. Homeric heralds were often used for matters of lesser importance, but the Homeric kings themselves served as envoys when serious interstate or interpersonal occasions demanded it. Considerable care was taken in such cases in the selection of the envoys with a view both to their effectiveness on the purpose of their destination and the interest of the persons or group dispatching them. Though the modern concept of stipulated conventions of diplomatic immunity did not obtain in the ancient world, the idea of diplomatic inviolability buttressed by religious sanctions was definitely and effectively present. Besides the religious fiat prohibiting the molestation of envoys, practical considerations necessitated the protection of diplomats. Little was to be gained by unnecessary provocation or failure to observe the traditional respect and hospitality reserved for envoys, particularly since it was difficult in the ancient world to separate the secular from the religious character of the envoy.