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THE JUDGEMENTAL NARRATOR: NARRATORIAL *NEPIOS*- COMMENTS FROM HOMER TO NONNUS

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This is a study of the literary modes and transformations of the narratorial *νήπιος*-comment in Greek epic from Homer to Nonnus. It explores the narrative settings, the typology, and the literary effects of this narrative device which both reveals the seams of the narrative levels and directs attention to the fragility of the human characters whose fate or ignorance of the actual situation is revealed by means of a narratorial *νήπιος*-intervention. The focus of the analysis is on the literary interplay and allusive engagement of later with earlier instances of the device as regards the replication or modification of the narrative setting, the constituent elements of the comment and its narrative function.

Keywords: narratorial *νήπιος*-comment; Greek narrative epic; narratorial intervention; diachronic narratology; intertextuality

I. *Introduction*

Νήπιος-comments are brief evaluative statements introduced by or encompassing the appropriate form of the adjective *νήπιος* (“childish”, “fool”, “foolish”) in emphatic position.¹ Although epic characters also employ *νήπιος*-comments when they address or speak of other characters at the intradiegetic level, this commenting device assumes a special force and significance in the mouth of the primary narrator who thus interrupts the flow of the narrative to reveal discordances between the actions or cognitive state of a character or a group of characters and realities which are imminent or have already occurred.² Thus the narrator explicitly or implicitly marks moments of high dramatic significance and forecasts future developments, the knowledge of which sets the present in a different perspective for the narratees. Narratorial *νήπιος*-comments ultimately foreground the superior knowledge and controlling presence of the epic narrator at the extradiegetic level as well as the limited perspective and hence the fragility of the human actors at the intradiegetic level.³

The device did not pass unnoticed by the ancient commentators of Homeric poetry, who refer to it as (προ)αναφώνησις or ἐπιφώνημα.⁴ The terminology suggests, as pointed out by Nünlist, that this narrative strategy was viewed originally as a type of apostrophe (to the narratees) or exclamation.⁵ Suggestions by ancient commentators that the νήπιος-pronouncement would gain greater emphasis, if it were distinguished from the rest of the construction, point in the same direction.⁶

The present article sets out to explore representative moments in the history of the narratorial νήπιος-comment from the inception of the device in the Homeric epics to the poetic production of Nonnus of Panopolis which marks the end of its trajectory in Greek epic poetry, although the literary history of the device extends to as late a work as Anna Comnena's *Alexiad*.⁷ The analysis will deal primarily with νήπιος-comments in narrative epic, in which the function of the device is coherent, that is, the primary narrator resorts to it to comment on the actions or cognitive state of characters at the intradiegetic level, and distinct from its functions in purely didactic epic in which it either takes the form of an apostrophe from the primary narrator to an identifiable narratee or it comments on the mentality of figures who belong at the same level as the primary narrator and the narratees.⁸

The objectives are defined by the complementary perspectives of diachronic narratology and narrative intertextuality. A first objective is to map the transmutations of the νήπιος-comment *qua* narrative strategy in its characteristic instantiations across the Greek epic tradition and to chart its functions and effects across epic narratives. An intersecting aim is to explore the engagement of later instances of the νήπιος-comment with epic predecessors as regards the narrative setting, narrative technique and effects. Interplay at the level of expression will be noted too in so far as it relates or contributes to the aspects explored. The question at the heart of the discussion is whether νήπιος-comments in later poems, especially in Hellenistic and Imperial epic, function simply or predominantly as markers and conveyors of the epic tradition or also as *loci* of active intertextual engagement with epic predecessors in terms of narrative setting, technique and effects. The discussion will hopefully clarify how this distinctive commenting device of the archaic epic narrators is repurposed and "commented on" in later poetry. To this end, while maintaining a steady focus on the transmutations of the νήπιος-comment in narrative epic, I will also dwell briefly on Simonides' elegiac fr. 20 to show how

the νήπιος-comment in it partakes in the complex intergeneric and intertextual dialogue with the epic tradition staged in the poem.

2. *Narratorial νήπιος-comments in early Greek poetry*

2.1 *Νήπιος-comments in the Iliad*

An important group among the Iliadic narrator's νήπιος-comments foreground the tragic aspects in the actions and fate of male warriors who gloriously or vaingloriously, but invariably unwittingly, march towards death or a grave military disaster. The first occasion for a narratorial νήπιος-comment arises when the deceptive Dream sent to Agamemnon by Zeus on the night preceding the first engagement with the Trojans after Achilles' withdrawal departs and leaves the leader of the Achaean army entertaining ambitious but unrealistic hopes.

Il. 2.35–40

... τὸν δ' ἔλιπ' αὐτοῦ

τὰ φρονέοντ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν, ἃ ῥ' οὐ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλε.

φῆ γὰρ ὃ γ' αἰρήσειν Πριάμου πόλιν ἤματι κείνῳ,

νήπιος, οὐδὲ τὰ ἦδη ἃ ῥα Ζεὺς μῆδετο ἔργα·

θήσειν γὰρ ἔτ' ἔμελλεν ἐπ' ἄλγεά τε στοναχάς τε

Τρῳσί τε καὶ Δαναοῖσι διὰ κρατερὰς ὑσμίνας.

So he spoke and went away, and left Agamemnon there/ believing things in his heart that were not to be accomplished./ For he thought that on that very day he would take Priam's city;/ fool, who knew nothing of all the things Zeus planned to accomplish./ Zeus, who yet was minded to visit tears and sufferings/ on Trojans and Danaans alike in the strong encounters.⁹

The νήπιος-comment straddles between and bridges the two parts of the narratorial intervention, the first of which, ll. 36–37, focuses on the imminent disappointment of Agamemnon's grandiose expectations¹⁰ while the second, ll. 39–40, reveals the enormous loss of manpower that will ensue in the more distant, albeit still intradiegetic, future. Zeus, who is responsible for Agamemnon's delusion and who determines both the short-term and the long-term outcome of the action, occupies a central place in the narratorial intervention (l. 38). The tone and intent of the νήπιος-comment vacillate between criticism of Agamemnon's gullibility and pity for the limitations of his cognition and human helplessness in the face of divine will in general.

The helplessness of ignorance is highlighted also by the final νήπιος-comment in the poem, the subject of which is Andromache. The comment marks and endows with dramatic tension the point right before Hector's wife finds out about her husband's death at the hands of Achilles. The narratees have followed the event in all its pitiful and pitiless details (22.21–437a). The focus now moves to the only place where the news of Hector's death have not reached yet, his home.¹¹ At the outset of the scene Andromache, peacefully occupied with fine weaving, calls out to her maids to prepare a bath for her warrior husband who is expected back from the battlefield. Her activities comply with and recall Hector's advice to her at the conclusion of their last meeting (6.490–493), to concentrate on domestic tasks and leave the business of war to men, especially to him.¹²

Il. 22.440–446

ἀλλ' ἢ γ' ἰστὸν ὕφαινε μυχῶ δόμου ὑψηλοῖο
 δίπλακα πορφυρέην, ἐν δὲ θρόνα ποικίλ' ἔπασσε.
 κέκλετο δ' ἀμφιπόλοισιν ἐϋπλοκάμοις κατὰ δῶμα
 ἀμφὶ πυρὶ στήσαι τρίποδα μέγαν, ὄφρα πέλοιτο
 Ἔκτορι θερμὰ λοετρὰ μάχης ἐκνοστήσαντι
 νηπίη, οὐδ' ἐνόησεν ὁ μιν μάλα τῆλε λοετρῶν
 χερσὶν Ἀχιλλῆος δάμασε γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.

... but she was weaving a web in the inner room of the high house,/ a red folding robe, and inworking elaborate figures./ She called out through the house to her lovely-haired handmaidens/ to set a great cauldron over the fire, so that there would be/ hot water for Hektor's bath as he came back out of the fighting;/ poor innocent, nor knew how, far from waters for bathing,/ Pallas Athene had cut him down at the hands of Achilleus.

The domestic setting with the orderly maids, the great cauldron with warm water, and the sure expectation of the husband's return is shattered by the narrator who lays bare Andromache's ignorance of the cruel fact that Hector has been killed μάλα τῆλε λοετρῶν or, in Jasper Griffin's fine rephrasing, "far from the comforts prepared for him by his loving wife".¹³ The comment introduces Andromache's fact-finding with a bang, underlined at the level of expression by means of the alliteration of λ, μ and ν. As in the case of Agamemnon, a god (in this case, Athene) is named as responsible for the non-realization of Andromache's plans for her husband's return, and Andromache's "foolishness" consists in

that she is unaware how utterly her life is changed and how vain her plans are.

The motif of the wife who expects the return of her already dead husband is handled masterfully and evokes pathos and sympathy for the couple who are both victims of war – the very activity which Hector advised his wife not to concern herself with at their last meeting.¹⁴ The cosiness of Andromache's home which, as the narratees know, is no more and her qualification as νηπίη nod at her own words at that last meeting with her husband, 6.411–412 ... οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἄλλη/ ἔσται θαλπωρῆ, ἐπεὶ ἂν σύ γε πότμον ἐπίσπης and 6.429–430 Ἔκτορ, ἀτὰρ σύ μοί ἐσσι πατήρ καὶ πότνια μήτηρ/ ἠδὲ κασίγνητος, σύ δὲ μοι θαλερὸς παρακοίτης. As the cornerstones of Andromache's existence are evoked by means of narrative setting and expression, her ignorance of their loss is all the more touching.

Andromache is the only female character whose connectedness with the situation at hand evinces a νήπιος-comment from the Iliadic narrator.¹⁵ All other targets of this type of comment in the *Iliad* are warriors whose misguided decisions and ignorance of the actual situation or of divine plans are revealed by the narrator who thus marks them as doomed. Even the νήπιος-comment targeting Andromache may be viewed as actually connected with Hector, that is as part of the chain of comments which pave the way to or are generated by the supreme Trojan warrior's trajectory to death.¹⁶

The prime example of a death-bound warrior on the Greek side is Patroclus who pleads with Achilles to let him lead the Myrmidons into the fighting in order to secure respite for the hard-pressed Achaeans (16.21–45). Before passing the word on to Achilles, the primary narrator discloses the self-inflicted disaster that Patroclus' plea will generate by means of a reinforced νήπιος-comment.

Il. 16.46–47

ὡς φάτο λισσόμενος μέγα νήπιος· ἦ γὰρ ἔμελλεν
οἷ αὐτῷ θάνατόν τε κακὸν καὶ κῆρα λιτέσθαι.

So he spoke supplicating, mighty fool! This was/ his own death and evil destruction he was entreating.

The succinct remark is typical of narratorial νήπιος-comments pertaining to Iliadic warriors: the νήπιος-pronouncement is complemented by a prolepsis that discloses Patroclus' imminent death.¹⁷ The unique expressive means, on the other hand, mark this as a special case. The qualification

μέγα νήπιος is reserved only for Patroclus in the *Iliad*. The verse-internal position of the νήπιος-comment is exceptional too.¹⁸ An ominous pun (λισσόμενος – ξμελλεν θανάτον τε κακὸν καὶ κῆρα λιτέσθαι) and alliteration of λ and κ underscore the idea of Patroclus' imminent death as a great ineluctable disaster, and intensify the pathos.

Patroclus receives exceptional treatment among the Iliadic warriors whose doom is prefigured by means of this narrative device as the narrator signals his imminent death by the same means for a second time, at the fateful moment when he charges forward in pursuit of the fleeing enemy.

Il. 16.684–687

Πάτροκλος δ' ἵπποισι καὶ Αὐτομέδοντι κελεύσας
 Τρῶας καὶ Λυκίους μετεκίαθε, καὶ μέγ' ἀάσθη
 νήπιος· εἰ δὲ ἔπος Πηληϊάδαο φύλαξεν,

ἦ τ' ἂν ὑπέκφυγε κῆρα κακὴν μέλανος θανάτοιο.¹⁹

But Patroklos, with a shout to Automedon and his horses,
 went after Trojans and Lykians in a huge blind fury.
 The fool, had he only kept the command of
 Peleus' son/ he might have got clear away from the evil spirit of black death.

The forceful and also reinforced comment (μέγ' ἀάσθη/ νήπιος) is justified through an analeptic counterfactual conditional with a proleptic apodosis. The conditional recalls Achilles' earlier advice (ἔπος) to his friend (16.89–96) which Patroclus contravenes in his forward frenzy, and the apodosis sketches a potential future that will not be. The dramatic tension of the moment is impressed on the form in multiple ways: by means of atypical expressive collocations,²⁰ of κ- and λ-alliteration, of the repetition of -φου- which stresses the idea of “escape” and, above all, by the significant juxtaposition νήπιος–ἔπος which exploits the partial resonance of the words (and/or etymological connection) to highlight the uneven relation between age and comprehension of the actual situation.

More importantly, the narrator's evaluation of Patroclus as νήπιος is echoed in the triumphant speech that Hector holds right after he has delivered Achilles' comrade the fatal blow.

Il. 16.830–834

Πάτροκλ', ἦ ποῦ ἔφησθα πόλιν κεραϊζέμεν ἀμήν,
 Τρωϊάδας δὲ γυναῖκας ἐλεύθερον ἦμαρ ἀπούρας
 ἄξειν ἐν νήεσσι φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν
 νήπιε. ...

Patroklos, you thought perhaps of devastating our city,/ of stripping from the Trojan women the day of their liberty/ and dragging them off in ships to the land of your fathers./ Fool!

Hector's νήπιος-judgement appears to confirm the narrator's proleptic comments from the endpoint, when Patroclus has been defeated and is about to meet his death. The temporal perspective is correspondingly inverted: Hector's derision and indictment of Patroclus are voiced against an analeptic foil, that is, Patroclus' presumed aspirations to capture Troy and enslave its population. In the content of this highly subjective and essentially deluded analepsis Patroclus' νηπιέη, which led him to his death, intersects with and gives way to Hector's νηπιέη. From now on Hector will be the protagonist in the tragic "play of illusion and reality"²¹ which is staged on the occasion of the deaths of these central characters. Hector goes even as far as to reconstruct a farewell scene between Achilles and Patroclus according to which the former ordered his friend not to return to the camp before he had killed Hector (16.838–841). The analeptic reconstruction of reality by Hector connects directly with the νήπιος-thread, since it is clearly at odds with the narratorial νήπιος-comment in 16.686–687 and with Achilles' instructions to Patroclus (16.87–96) recalled by the narrator in the former passage.²² Through his unwitting contradiction of the content of the narratorial νήπιος-judgement Hector himself joins the ranks of the νήπιοι.

A similarly analeptic perspective justifies Achilles' νήπιος-judgement of Hector at the moment when the slayer of Patroclus is in his turn about to die.

Il. 22.331–333

Ἕκτορ ἀτάρ που ἔφης Πατροκλῆ' ἐξεναρίζων
σῶς ἔσσεσθ', ἐμὲ δ' οὐδὲν ὀπίζεις νόσφιν ἔόντα
νήπιε· ...

Hektor, surely you thought as you killed Patroklos you would be/ safe, and since I was far away you thought nothing of me,/ fool ...

Achilles' speech forms part of what has been described as "one of the most elaborate and telling architectural correspondences in the whole poem",²³ that is, that the death scene of Hector and the speeches held on this occasion mirror and comment on the corresponding speeches of slayer and victim at Patroclus' death. Thus, Achilles' indictment of Hector as

νήπιος echoes Hector's judgement of Patroclus and is complemented also by an analeptic reconstruction of Hector's thoughts and presumptions at the moment of Patroclus' killing.²⁴ Achilles' νήπιος-judgement ends the play of illusion and reality. The guess that Hector did not reckon with Achilles when he killed Patroclus is not far from reality, as Hector's misguided representation of the situation in 16.837–841 rested on the false assumption that Achilles sent Patroclus after Hector to keep himself on the safe side. On the other hand, Achilles' emphasis on spatial relations and on the conceptual pair "absence"–"forgetfulness" (ἐμὲ δ' οὐδὲν ὀπίζω νόσφιν ἔοντα) indirectly calls to mind Patroclus who also forgot the sensible advice of his absent friend, and thus also underpins the narratorial νήπιος-comment at the expense of Patroclus.

Narratorial νήπιος-comments about key-characters and events of the Iliadic plot do not stand, I suggest, only independent and isolated. Some of the narratorial νήπιος-comments also engage in interplay and form dynamic clusters ("nepic clusters") with νήπιος-judgements in character speech.

Two more passages belong to the nepic cluster centring on Patroclus: Achilles' comparison at the beginning of Book 16 of his tearful comrade to a young girl (κούρη νηπίη) who, in order to induce her mother to pick her up, clings to her and gazes up at her intensely with tears in the eyes.

Il. 16.7–10

τίπτε δεδάκρυσαι, Πατρόκλεες, ἤϊτε κούρη
νηπίη, ἢ θ' ἅμα μητρὶ θεοῦσ' ἀνελέσθαι ἀνώγει
εἰανοῦ ἀπτομένη, καὶ τ' ἐσσυμένην κατερύκει,
δακρῦόεσσα δέ μιν ποτιδέρκεται, ὄφρ' ἀνέληται;

Why then/ are you crying like some poor little girl, Patroklos,/ who runs after her mother and begs to be picked up and carried,/ and clings to her dress, and holds her back when she tries to hurry,/ and gazes tearfully into her face, until she is picked up?

In hindsight, the comparison of Patroclus to a κούρη νηπίη in this vivid simile strikes a premonitory note. Apart from drawing attention to Patroclus' speechlessness (< νῆ + ἔπος) amidst his tears, it also obliquely introduces the theme of his νηπιέη ("childishness"), that is, his dependency on Achilles as if on a parent.²⁵ The critical moments when Patroclus breaks his tearful silence and (later) his dependency on Achilles by

neglecting his comrade's warnings – both marked by narratorial νήπιος-comments (16.46–47 and 686–687) – seal his fate.

The second passage which belongs to the cluster comes from Patroclus' final appearance in the *Iliad* (23.84–90) when his ghost recalls the time that he shared with Achilles as a young boy at Phthia where he had sought refuge because he had killed another boy while playing “a child only, without intent” (νήπιος οὐκ ἐθέλων, 23.88a). Patroclus only excuses himself by appealing to his young age at the time of the event and presenting the killing of his playmate as involuntary or accidental. Yet, narratees who recall the chain of earlier νήπιος-comments about Patroclus may surmise that early in life Patroclus showed the same propensity towards impulsive actions that eventually led to his death.

The conclusion of the above discussion is that the νήπιος-interventions of the Iliadic narrator operate in tandem with corresponding character statements which confirm, reject or nuance the evaluations of the primary narrator. Vice versa, the narrator's expression of judgement may redress the balance, as in 18.295 where the νήπιος-reproach is hurled by Hector against Polydamas who has advised the Trojans to withdraw into the city: νήπιε, μηκέτι ταῦτα νοήματα φαῖν' ἐνὶ δήμῳ (“fool, no longer show these thoughts to our people”).²⁶ When the army approves Hector's proposal, the narrator lets his omniscience weigh in favour of Polydamas and blames the deluded decision-making of the Trojans on divine agency.

Il. 18.310–314

ὡς Ἑκτωρ ἀγόρευ', ἐπὶ δὲ Τρῶες κελάδησαν
νήπιου· ἐκ γάρ σφρων φρένας εἶλετο Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.

Ἑκτορι μὲν γὰρ ἐπήνησαν κακὰ μητιόωντι,
Πουλυδάμαντι δ' ἄρ' οὐ τις, ὃς ἐσθλὴν φράζετο βουλήν.

So spoke Hektor, and the Trojans thundered to hear him; fools, since Pallas Athene had taken away the wits from them./ They gave their applause to Hector in his counsel of evil,/ but none to Polydamas, who had spoken good sense before them.

The direct criticism of the Trojans by the narrator reflects indirectly on Hector and marks him out once again as Patroclus' successor in νηπιέη and as death-bound at the critical moment when the Trojan warrior rejects the proposal of seeking shelter behind the walls.²⁷

Interplay of νήπιος-comments in narrator-text and character-speech occurs also in the episode of Achilles' duel with Aeneas in *Iliad* 20. In the conclusion of his speech Achilles advises Aeneas rather patronisingly to retreat and hide in the Trojan ranks in order to avoid a confrontation which he would regret too late.

Il. 20.197–198

... μηδ' ἀντίος ἴσασ' ἐμεῖο,

πρὶν τι κακὸν παθέειν· ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω.²⁸

... not stand to face me before you/ take some harm. Once a thing has been done, the fool sees it.

Aeneas rejects the advice outright. He warns Achilles in his turn not to attempt to frighten him with words as though he were one who cannot speak (νηπύτιον ὥς), as he also wields both taunts and false statements rather precisely.²⁹

Il. 20.200–202

Πηλεΐδη, μὴ δὴ μ' ἐπέεσσί γε νηπύτιον ὥς

ἔλπεο δειδίξεσθαι, ἐπεὶ σάφα οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς

ἡμὲν κερτομίας ἢ δ' αἴσυλα μυθήσασθαι.

Son of Peleus, never hope by words to frighten me/ as if I were a baby. I myself understand well enough/ how to speak in vituperation and how to make insults.

The verbal duel between Achilles and Aeneas about who is νήπιος/νηπύτιος receives an interesting twist once their real duel finally begins. When the first blow has been struck by Aeneas who throws his spear at Achilles, Achilles moves the shield forged for him by Hephaestus away from his body out of fear that the enemy combatant's spear might penetrate it easily (20.262–263). This is a groundless fear, as the narrator's νήπιος-comment points out.

Il. 20.264–266

νήπιος, οὐδ' ἐνόησε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμὸν,

ὥς οὐ ῥῆϊδι' ἐστὶ θεῶν ἐρικυδέα δῶρα

ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι δαμήμεναι οὐδ' ὑποείκειν.

Fool, and the heart and spirit in him could not understand/ how the glorious gifts of the gods are not easily broken/ by mortal men, how such gifts will not give way before them.

The passage may be considered as an ironic resumption by the narrator of the earlier discussion between the two combatants about who deserves the characterization as νήπιος/νηπύτιος. The irony is entirely at the expense of Achilles, whose comment sparked off the verbal duel in the first place. The narratorial comment implies that of the two Achilles is νήπιος, since he is unable to assess correctly the strength of the divine gift that protects him. In the frame of the episode as a whole Achilles' underestimation of an artefact with divine provenance serves as a foil for his underestimation of Aeneas, the son of a goddess, whom the gods protect and spare. Achilles acknowledges this fact far too late when Aeneias has been snatched away, in 20.347–348 ἦ ῥα καὶ Αἰνείας φίλος ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσιν/ ἦεν. ἀτὰρ μιν ἔφην μὰψ αὐτῶς εὐχετάσθαι (“Aineias was then one beloved of the immortal/ gods. I thought what he said was ineffectual boasting”). He thus confirms retrospectively the apophthegm that he himself uttered at the outset of the duel: 20.198 ... ῥεχθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνων. Far from being a “Verlegenheitslösung”, as Lohmann thought,³⁰ the apophthegm sparks a competition about comprehension and discursive ability between the two combatants which, on a par with the duel itself, will not be resolved in Achilles' favour.

2.2 Νήπιος-comments in the *Odyssey*

The prevalent function of narratorial νήπιος-interventions in the *Odyssey* is to convey explicit ethical criticism, as has been noted already.³¹ The labelling of Odysseus' companions as νήπιοι in the proem inscribes in the core of the poem the message that transgression of the ethical norms of society (encompassed in the term ἀτασθαλίησιν), in this case, the rules of appropriate behaviour in a space sacred to the god Helios, has dire consequences.

Od. 1.7–9

αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὄλοντο,

νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἥελίοιο

ἦσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.

For by their own recklessness they perished,/ childish fools, who devoured the
cattle of the Sun, Hyperion,/ who then deprived them of their homecoming
day.³²

This message is thematically central to the main storyline of the *Odyssey*, the restoration of Odysseus in his social roles as husband and king in

Ithaca. The fact that this storyline is related by the primary narrator may account for an essential difference in the handling of the νήπιος-comment by the primary narrator and by Odysseus as narrator of his own *nostos* in the *Apologue*: the former indicates only groups of νήπιοι – Odysseus’ crew and the Suitors – whereas the latter labels both individuals and groups as νήπιοι.

The principle of clustering of νήπιος-comments and judgements is operative in this poem as well. The primary narrator’s characterization of the comrades as νήπιοι is confirmed by Odysseus who criticises his comrades in identical, albeit stronger, terms for their refusal to heed his advice and depart immediately from the plundered land of the Ciconians – the first stop and disaster in their return journey.

Od. 9.43–44

ἔνθ’ ἦ τοι μὲν ἐγὼ διερῶ ποδὶ φευγέμεν ἡμέας
ἠνώγεα, τοὶ δὲ μέγα νήπιοι οὐκ ἐπίθοντο.

Then indeed I ordered that with nimble feet we flee, but, greatly foolish, they did not obey.

Taken together, albeit in inverted order in relation to their occurrence in the poem, the two comments that target the comrades signpost the beginning and the end of the common part of the *nostos* for Odysseus and his crew (9.43–44 Cicones and 1.7–9 Thinacia) with explicit reminders of the errors of judgement and behaviour that cost the crew their lives. Primary and internal narrator complement each other. Odysseus supports from an intradiegetic perspective and even reinforces the evaluation of his comrades launched by the primary narrator.³³ The forcefulness of Odysseus’ comment (μέγα νήπιοι) derives from his intradiegetic perspective which entails greater emotional involvement with the events narrated and endows his account with a surplus of knowledge from hindsight.³⁴

The second and final νήπιος-comment of the Odyssean narrator occurs at the dramatic highpoint when the punishment of the Suitors’ offence against Odysseus’ household starts being unleashed. Using language normally found in character-speech³⁵ the narrator reports the confusion, individual and collective, of the Suitors following the killing of Antinous, which they cannot but view as accidental, and discloses their delusion and the imminent death of each and every one of them in no uncertain terms.

Od. 22.31–33

ἴσκεν ἕκαστος ἀνὴρ, ἐπεὶ ἧ φάσαν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα
 ἄνδρα κατακτείνει· τὸ δὲ νήπιοι οὐκ ἐνόησαν,
 ὡς δὴ σφιν καὶ πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ' ἐφήπτο.

Each man was at a loss, since they surely didn't think he'd killed/ the man on purpose, and the fools didn't realize it,/ how, at last, the moment of destruction hung over them, one and all.

The narratorial intervention highlights ironically the gap between the Suitors' assumption that the beggar must have killed Antinous involuntarily and the fact that they all stand right on the verge of premeditated killing. π-alliteration (φάσαν – νήπιοι – σφιν – πᾶσιν – πείρατ' ἐφήπτο) reverberates the dramatic tension of the moment and connects cognitive error and collective end. The narrator stops short of explicitly indicating the Suitors,³⁶ but the narratorial attitude is implied in that his statement partly chimes with Odysseus' subsequent speech (22.35–41) which explicitly charges the Suitors with violation of ethical/societal norms (22.36–40).³⁷ In the same vein, as argued by Egbert Bakker, the partial overlap of 22.32–33 with Odysseus' earlier νήπιος-comment at the expense of Polyphemos (9.442–443, cited below on p. 72) contrasts the trapped and helpless Suitors with resourceful Odysseus at his finest hour when he managed to escape the trap of Polyphemos' cave and aligns them with the transgressive and easily-fooled ogre.³⁸ Bakker discusses the evocation of Odysseus' comment by the narratorial comment as an example of “interformularity”, the capacity of low-frequency formulas to evoke specific contexts and thus function as oral equivalents of literary quotation.³⁹

The interplay is actually more complex as the narratorial comment at the expense of the Suitors also forms part of a “nepic cluster” with comparable comments in character-speech. The assessment of the Suitors as νήπιοι is repeated and confirmed from an intradiegetic perspective in the brief supplication of the herald Medon. Medon emerges from his hiding spot and pleads Telemachus to intervene with Odysseus so that he may be spared, despite Odysseus' rightful anger against the Suitors who Medon served.

Od. 22.369–370

... οἳ οἱ ἔκειρον
 κτήματ' ἐνὶ μεγάροις, σὲ δὲ νήπιοι οὐδὲν ἔτιον.

... who ravaged his possessions/ in his palace, and, the fools, valued you as nothing.

While this comment serves to dissociate the herald from the Suitors, the very first contribution to this “nepic cluster” comes from the lips of the Suitor Antinous in a speech right at the outset of the bow contest (21.85–95) – the event which sets in motion the punishment of the suitors. Antinous first scolds Eumaeus for the tears which the faithful servant sheds at the sight of his master’s bow.

Od. 21.85–86

νήπιοι ἀγροιώται, ἐφημέρια φρονέοντες,

ἃ δειλώ, τί νυ δάκρυ κατείβητον ...

Foolish rustics, who think only of today!/ Ah, you two wretches, why do you shed tears ...

The leader of the Suitors concludes his speech by recollecting how Odysseus once strung the bow and pays a “generous” tribute to the hero who he considers dead and out of the way.

Od. 21.93–5

οὐ γάρ τις μέτα τοῖος ἀνὴρ ἐν τοῖσδεσι πᾶσιν,

οἷος Ὀδυσσεὺς ἔσκεν· ἐγὼ δέ μιν αὐτὸς ὄπωπα,

καὶ γὰρ μνήμων εἰμί, πάϊς δ’ ἔτι νήπιος ἦα.

For no one, among all the ones here, is such a man/ as Odysseus was. I saw him myself,/ and I remember it well, but I was a boy, still a child.

Antinous draws a picture of himself as a mature individual whose memory stretches back to the time when he was “still a child” (ἔτι νήπιος) in contrast to the “rustics” who are νήπιοι even at a mature age and whose reactions are accordingly governed by “thoughts of the day”. The narratorial indictment of the suitors as νήπιοι who cannot discern what is in store for them, pronounced over the dead body of Antinous, throws retrospectively a starkly ironic light on the archsuitor’s self-presentation, reminding the narratees that he, along with all the other suitors, is ἔτι νήπιος indeed. The last episode belonging to the “nepic cluster” which centres on the suitors is 24.469–471 when their relatives gather under the leadership of Antinous’ father Eupheithes in order to attack Odysseus’ party “in their foolishness” (νηπιέησι), as the narrator remarks. Predictably, the leader of the foolish relatives falls dead under Laertes’ attack, as his ἔτι νήπιος son had fallen from Odysseus’ arrow.

The majority of the νήπιος-comments in the *Odyssey* – and in particular all νήπιος-judgements that target individuals – are embedded in character-speech. The νήπιος-comments made by Odysseus as an internal narrator in the *Apologue* are organized also in clusters in line with the νήπιος-comments of the primary narrator.⁴⁰ Odysseus employs the adjective to deride and criticise the lack of intelligence shown by Polyphemus when he controlled the backs of the sheep exiting his cave but not their bellies under which he and his comrades were tied.⁴¹

Od. 9.442–443

... τὸ δὲ νήπιος οὐκ ἐνόησεν,
ὥς οἱ ὑπ' εἰροπόκων ὄϊων στέρνοισι δέδεντο.
... but the fool didn't notice it,/ how they were tied beneath the breasts of his
woolly-fleeced sheep.

The passage turns the tables on the blind Polyphemus' hope or fear, inferred by Odysseus and reported in the service of his self-aggrandisement, that Odysseus would be a “fool” and would be caught as he attempted to escape from the cave on foot among the exiting sheep.⁴²

Od. 9.417–419

αὐτὸς δ' εἰνὶ θύρῃσι καθέζετο χεῖρε πετάσσας,
εἷ τινά που μετ' ὄεσσι λάβοι στείχοντα θύραζε·
οὔτω γάρ πού μ' ἤλπετ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ νήπιον εἶναι.
He himself sat down in the doorway, and spread out his arms/ in hope he'd
catch someone walking out the door with his sheep,/ for in his mind he
hoped I was so foolish.

Thus Odysseus scores another victory against the Cyclops in the game of intelligence and correct assessment of the situation. This, in turn, settles the score for Polyphemus' display of utter lack of comprehension and respect at his first contact with Odysseus when he rejected the visitor's supplication, called the suppliant a νήπιος, and declared his indifference for divine authority.

Od. 9.273–274

νήπιός εἰς, ὧ ξεῖν', ἢ τηλόθεν εἰλήλουθας,⁴³
ὅς με θεοὺς κέλειαι ἢ δειδίμεν ἢ ἀλέασθαι
Stranger, you're a fool, or come from far away,/ to bid me to either avoid or fear
the gods ...

As in the *Iliad*, the character who first resorts to the “fool”-word proves to be νήπιος in the end, and the narratorial intervention (here Odysseus’ intervention in his function as internal narrator) mercilessly discloses the character’s error, be it moral or cognitive.

While the characterization of Polyphemus as νήπιος by Odysseus transposes the commenting technique of the Odyssean narrator to the intradiegetic level within the same poem, Nestor’s νήπιος-comment concerning Agamemnon in *Od.* 3.145–147 may echo the νήπιος-comment of the Iliadic narrator targeting the Achaean leader in *Il.* 2.35–40. The narrative contexts against which the comments are uttered present some noteworthy similarities: in the *Odyssey* the Greek army is about to leave the Trojan shore after the capture of the city and the two brothers disagree. Menelaus opts for speedy departure, whereas Agamemnon is eager to offer sacrifices before setting sail in the hope of appeasing Athena – a foolish and vain plan, according to Nestor, who recounts the episode to Telemachus.

Od. 3.145–147

ὡς τὸν Ἀθηναίης δεινὸν χόλον ἐξακέσαιτο,
νήπιος, οὐδὲ τὸ ἤδη, ὃ οὐ πείσεσθαι ἔμελλεν.
οὐ γάρ τ’ αἶψα θεῶν τρέπεται νόος αἰὲν ἐόντων.

... to appease the dread anger of Athena./ The fool, he didn’t know he wasn’t going to persuade her,/ for the mind of the gods who are forever is not turned suddenly.

The situation which generates the Iliadic narrator’s comment is Agamemnon’s last-ditch attempt to capture Troy after Achilles’ withdrawal at the tenth year of the war. In the frame of this episode the possibility of the army’s departure from Troy is raised, even if deceptively (*Il.* 2.110–154). In both episodes Agamemnon is in conflict with another prominent Achaean (Achilles in *Il.* 2; Menelaus in *Od.* 3) and fails in his assessment of divine attitude (Zeus in *Il.* 2; Zeus and Athene in *Od.* 3).⁴⁴ The two passages even show some noteworthy verbal similarities: *Od.* 3.146a νήπιος, οὐδὲ τὸ ἤδη ≈ *Il.* 2.38 νήπιος, οὐδὲ τὰ ἤδη; *Od.* 3.146b ὃ οὐ πείσεσθαι ἔμελλεν ≈ *Il.* 2.36 ἃ ρ’ οὐ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλε. Even if the verbal overlap is not as comprehensive as that of *Od.* 3.146 with *Il.* 20.466,⁴⁵ the narrative points of contact, especially the person of the protagonist, suggest that in addition to phraseology traditionally connected with the motif of rejected supplication the Iliadic context is operative in shaping Nestor’s characterization of Agamemnon as νήπιος in *Od.* 3. This reading then

assumes an interplay of νήπιος-comments between poems and narrators at different levels, that is, that an Odyssean character-narrator echoes a νήπιος-comment of the Iliadic primary narrator.

2.3 Νήπιος-comments in the Homeric Hymns

The corpus of the *Homeric Hymns* includes two νήπιος-comments, both in character speech, *Hom. Hymn Aphr.* 223–224 (uttered by Aphrodite with reference to Eos) and *Hom. Hymn Ap.* 532–533 (addressed by Apollo to the Cretan sailors). Of these, the first falls within the realm of the present study as it is put in the mouth of the hymn's protagonist, Aphrodite, in her role as intradiegetic heterodiegetic narrator. In her farewell speech to her mortal lover, Anchises, Aphrodite narrates the cautionary tale of Eos' attempt to immortalize her human lover Tithonus (*Hom. Hymn Aphr.* 218–238), in order to explain why she chooses not to transport Anchises with her to the realm of the immortals. Of the two *paradeigmas* in Aphrodite's speech this one reflects closely her situation in the main storyline.⁴⁶ Eos – a female with considerably greater freedom of action than the other female νηπίη of the epic tradition, Andromache – reaches up to Zeus asking him to grant Tithonus eternal life, and succeeds in her mission. Nonetheless, she is judged as νηπίη by Aphrodite *qua* narrator because she lacked the foresight to request also eternal youth for him.

Hom. Hymn Aphr. 223–224

νηπίη, οὐδ' ἐνόησε μετὰ φρεσὶ πότνια Ἥως
ἤβην αἰτῆσαι ξῦσαί τ' ἄπο γῆρας ὀλοῖόν.

Foolish lady Dawn, she did not think/ to ask for youth for him and the stripping away of baneful old age.⁴⁷

This failure cost Eos eternal grief when Tithonus grew old, as Aphrodite reveals forthwith.⁴⁸ The narrative setting which involves a female intradiegetic narrator that targets a female character with a νήπιος-comment is unique in the literary trajectory of the device. Furthermore, in a noteworthy reversal of the pattern of causation encountered in the Homeric epics according to which the suffering forecast in the pronouncement is reserved for the human νήπιοι, while gods are its remote initiators, Eos is a divine νηπίη who suffers herself as a result of her deficient assessment of the situation. An even more dramatic development of this pattern will be encountered in Book 4 of Apollonius' *Argonautica*.

2.4 *Concluding remarks*

The narratological significance of the νήπιος-comment in early epic is evidenced by its use to announce or mark highly dramatic moments or crucial aspects of the plot (Patroclus' death and the news of Hector's death in the *Iliad*; the loss of Odysseus' comrades and the slaughter of the suitors in the *Odyssey*, the mythological example that resembles most Aphrodite's own situation in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*). However, the νήπιος-comment has different predominant functions, "tragic" in the *Iliad* and the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* and "ethical-critical" in the *Odyssey* (where in the *Odyssey* the two functions are combined, for example in 22.31–33, criticism overwrites pity).

In terms of content and expression, the following types of the νήπιος-comment can be identified: (i) A tragic-proleptic variant, in which the νήπιος-pronouncement is followed by a clause with μέλλω as the main verbal element. It is employed primarily to announce or signpost warrior deaths and foregrounds the privileged knowledge that the narrator possesses of the characters' fate, and ultimately the dependence of the intradiegetic on the extradiegetic level. The subjective and emotional tone of the narrative voice – the comments convey either pity and sympathy or ironic mercilessness – is underlined by strong expressive means, such as alliteration; (ii) A cognitive variant, which places the emphasis on a character's misguided assessment of the situation. At the level of expression, the νήπιος-pronouncement is supplemented by a clause with a cognitive verbal element (οἶδα, νοέω, or related expressions). The variant draws attention not primarily to forthcoming developments or past realities, although this is often an important and present dimension, but to a character's deficient powers of assessment and passive ignorance in the face of predetermination or another character's superior intelligence; (iii) A critical variant, in which the νήπιος-comment straightforwardly disapproves of a character's action. The focus is on the evaluation of the action from a pragmatic or ethical viewpoint, while the temporal perspective is very much latent. It should, however, be stressed that many of the Homeric νήπιος-comments represent fusions with elements from two or all variants, as exemplified by the comment at the expense of Agamemnon (*Il.* 2.37–39), the cognitive make-up of which is combined with unambiguous criticism and a proleptic statement with tragic undertones.

Last but not least, narratorial νήπιος-comments in the Homeric epics often form clusters with νήπιος-judgements in character speech. These cast sidelight on, complement and adjust the narrator's evaluative interventions. The opposite can also be the case, that is that a narratorial νήπιος-comment redresses the balance and takes sides when a character has used a νήπιος-judgement in relation to another character or himself. In this regard νήπιος-comments play a balancing act in the dynamics between the extradiegetic and the intradiegetic level.

3. *The afterlife of the νήπιος-comment*

3.1 *An elegiac νήπιος-comment*

The survey of the *Nachleben* of the νήπιος-comment will begin from a poetic instantiation of the comment which, although it does not come from an epic poem, engages allusively with and acknowledges the epic tradition of this narrative device, Simonides' IE² fr. 20.5–11a. In this passage, which most probably belongs to a sympotic elegiac composition, the enunciating voice employs the cognitive variant of the device to censure the carefree attitude of men who, while they are young and healthy, do not consider that they will grow old, their health will decline and they will die. Youth and life are short, and those young men who are unaware of their brevity and transitoriness are "fools".⁴⁹

Simonides IE² fr. 20.5–11a

θνητῶν δ', ὄφρα τις ἄνθος ἔχει πολυήρατον ἥβης,
 κοῦφον ἔχων θυμὸν πόλλ' ἀτέλεστα νοεῖ
 οὔτε γὰρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχει γηρασέμεν οὐδὲ θανεῖσθαι,
 οὐδ', ὑγιῆς ὅταν ᾗ, φροντίδ' ἔχει καμάτου.
 νήπιοι, οἷς ταύτηι κέϊται νόος, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν
 ὡς χρόνος ἔσθ' ἥβης καὶ βιότοι' ὀλίγος
 θνητοῖς.

As long as a mortal has the lovely bloom of youth, with a light spirit he plans many deeds that will go unfulfilled. For he does not expect to grow old or die; nor when healthy does he think about illness. Fools are they whose thoughts are thus! Nor do they know that the time of youth and life is short for mortals.⁵⁰

The verses are part of a longer composition transmitted through a second century CE papyrus, *P. Oxy.* LIX 3965, fr. 26. They were also included in Stobaeus' *Florilegium* (in. 4.34.28 Hense), hence they are also transmitted

by the medieval copies of this anthology. In the papyrus version, the passage cited was preceded by at least two couplets while another four couplets followed after fr. 20.12, all in a very fragmentary state. The similarity of the subject matter suggests that also Simonides *IE*² fr. 19, preceding fr. 20.5–12 without intervening text in codex S of Stobaeus (but missing in the other two important manuscripts that transmit that part of the work),⁵¹ belonged to an earlier part of the same sympotic elegy.⁵²

A distinctive aspect of the poem is the intensive intertextual engagement with Homeric poetry: *IE*² fr. 19.1–2 ἐν δὲ τὸ κάλλιστον Χίος ἔειπεν ἀνήρ/οῖη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν (“The man from Chios said one thing best./ ‘As is the generation of leaves so is that of men’”) quotes *Il.* 6.146 and sactions its contents as the most beautiful pronouncement of “the man from Chios”. In the fragmentary verses that follow fr. 20.5–12, Homer is mentioned again, this time by name, [*IE*² fr. 20.13–14] φράζεο δὲ παλα[ιοτέρου λόγον ἀνδρός:]| [ἧ λήθην] γλώσσης ἔκφυγ’ Ὀμηρ[ος] (“consider [the account of the man of] old. Homer escaped [(men’s) forgetting his words]”). Against this background, it might be legitimate hermeneutically to consider the νήπιος-comment in fr. 20.9–11a not simply as a gnomic-didactic pronouncement appropriate to sympotic poetry but also as yet another link in the unfolding intertextual dialogue and a nod to the Homeric (or more broadly epic) affiliation of the device. The allusive engagement of the Simonidean comment with Homeric νήπιος-contexts may even be traced at the level of expression as fr. 20.6 κοῦφον ἔχων θυμὸν πόλλ’ ἀτέλεστα νοεῖ overlaps partly with the narratorial statement about Agamemnon in *Il.* 2.36 τὰ φρονέοντ’ ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἅ ρ’ οὐ τελέεσθαι ἔμελλε.

Predictably, given the generic transposition and re-contextualization of the device, those who bear the brunt of judgement are not (or perhaps not only) male warriors but contemporary young men. By contrast, the mindset of male warriors of the past is approved through the earlier endorsement of the Iliadic line which is pronounced by a male warrior, Glaucus. Thus, the comment activates comparison not only between young men and mature men at present, but also between the contemplative warriors of the past and a naïve contemporary youth, the wisdom and sobriety of the heroic past and a carefree present.

Equally relevant is the Hesiodic flair of the formulation νήπιοι ... οὐδὲ ἴσασι/ὡς χρόνος ἔσθ’ ἤβης καὶ βίότοι’ ὀλίγος which recalls the condemnation of the “bribe-taking *basileis*” in Hes. *Op.* 40–41 νήπιοι, οὐδὲ ἴσασι

ὄσω πλέον ἤμισυ παντὸς/ οὐδ' ὅσον ἐν μαλάχῃ τε καὶ ἀσφοδέλω μέγ' ὄνειρα
 (“Fools! They know not how much more the half is than the whole, nor
 what great advantage there is in mallow and asphodel”).⁵³ The cognitive
 formula νήπιοι οὐδὲ ἴσασιν may derive from lore mined by both didactic
 epic and sympotic elegy, but the emphasis on the value of something
 reduced in measure in the Simonidean passage indicates a closer connec-
 tion to the specific Hesiodic passage, although the topic in the two pas-
 sages is not the same. The mixed, Homeric and Hesiodic, frame within
 which the Simonidean reception of the νήπιος-comment takes place is
 unique and resurfaces later in the reception history of the νήπιος-
 comment, in Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca*.

3.2 Νήπιος-comments in Apollonius Rhodius’ *Argonautica*

The otherwise profusely judgemental and prominent narrator in Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* makes remarkably restrained use of νήπιος-comments. What is more, he never targets a central character or comments on a major event in the plot by means of a νήπιος-comment. The reduced role of the device may be proportionate to the prominence in the poem of another concept to express heroic helplessness, that is, ἀμηχανία.⁵⁴ As other narrative techniques of Homeric origins,⁵⁵ the νήπιος-comment is unevenly distributed in the *Argon.*, figuring only in Books 2 and 4. In this regard, Apollonius follows Homer who also distributes the νήπιος-comments unevenly.

In Book 2 the device is employed twice in the frame of a single episode, that of the Argonauts’ stopover at the land of the Bebrycians. King Amycus challenges the newcomers to a boxing match, as he does with every visitor to his territory. As Pollux, who accepts the challenge on behalf of the Argonauts, and the Bebrycian king prepare to enter their contest, the latter’s attendants, Aretus and Ornetus, tie their master’s thongs for the last time unsuspecting that they are tying an unlucky knot.⁵⁶

Argon. 2.65–66

τῷ δ' αὐτ' Ἄρητός τε καὶ Ὀρνυτος, οὐδέ τι ἤδειν
 νήπιοι ὕστατα κείνα κακῇ δῆσαντες ἐπ' αἴση.

On the king’s behalf came Aretus and Ornetus, but little did they know, the fools, that they had tied those thongs for the last time on this ill-fated occasion.⁵⁷

This is an Iliadic-style νήπιος-comment with a tragic tenor, which is embedded in an Odyssean-style episode.⁵⁸ Among numerous Iliadic reminiscences incorporated in the episode, one strikes a strongly premonitory and intertextual note: the name Aretus nods to one of a pair of Iliadic attendants whose death is foretold also by means of a νήπιος-comment (*Il.* 17.494–498).⁵⁹ By laying bare the gap in knowledge of the future between the omniscient narrator and the Bebrycian king’s attendants in what follows and foretelling the inauspicious outcome for Amycus’ party, the narrator triggers Homeric-style suspense through partial activation of knowledge about the future.⁶⁰ Amycus’ killing by Pollux (2.92–97) and Aretus’ death in the ensuing battle (2.114–117) complete the picture for the narratees.⁶¹ The intertextual dialogue with Homer comprises narrative elements (a pair of warrior-attendants, one of who shares a name with his Homeric counterpart) and the effect of emotional intensity imparted through alliteration (of κ in κείνα κακῆ). The Homeric narrators tend to employ the “tragic” variant of the comment to foretell the death of warriors. By contrast, Apollonius employs the “cognitive” variant, probably in the service of the “wider pattern of ignorance and misunderstanding” which permeates the poem⁶² and also for the accumulated effect which it offers in conjunction with the immediately ensuing νήπιος-comment.

This targets the defeated Bebrycian warriors as they are returning to the city with news of the king’s death and draws attention to yet another disaster that is unfolding. While the victorious Argonauts are plundering the sheepfolds, the enemy people of Mariandyni are availing themselves of Amycus’ absence to sack the Bebrycian countryside.

Argon. 2.137–140

νήπιοι, οὐδ’ ἐνόησαν ὃ δὴ σφισιν ἐγγύθεν ἄλλο
 πῆμ’ αἰδηλον ἔην. πέρθοντο γὰρ ἡμὲν ἄλωαί
 ἦδ’ οἶαι τῆμος δῆψ ὑπὸ δουρὶ Λύκοιο
 καὶ Μαριανδυνῶν ἀνδρῶν, ἀπεόντος ἄνακτος.

... the fools, for they did not realize that another unforeseen disaster was near at hand for them. For at that time their vineyards and villages were pillaged by the hostile spear of Lycus and the Mariandynians, while their king was gone.

The cognitive variant of the narrative device is employed for the second time to convey the sense of utter helplessness and complete disaster (imprinted formally by means of π-alliteration: νήπιοι – πῆμ’ – πέρθοντο

– ἀπεόντος). In this episode, clustering consists in mere accumulation of narratorial νήπιος-comments and excessive exploitation of the element of the targets' ignorance.⁶³ Although they are male warriors, the returning Bebrycians are presented in terms reminiscent of the Iliadic Andromache who prepares a bath for Hector, ignorant of his demise and unable to affect his fate (*Il.* 22.445–446).⁶⁴ Apollonius emphasizes the connection by modelling the beginning of 2.137 on *Il.* 22.445 and by replicating the Homeric emphasis on the spatial aspect of the disaster in the second part of the line (2.137 ὁ δὴ σφισιν ἐγγύθεν // *Il.* 22.445 ὁ μιν μάλα τῆλε). On the other hand, the absence of divine involvement in the situation which gives rise to the narratorial νήπιος-comment in Apollonius' poem is distinctive and chimes with the reduced prominence of the gods in the *Argonautica*.⁶⁵

Also idiosyncratic is Apollonius' focus in the first νήπιος-comment on secondary actors, the attendants, rather than on the main combatant, king Amycus, who would deserve the characterization of νήπιος on account of both his ignorance of the imminent defeat and the transgressive *thesmos* to which he subjected his visitors. The criticism directed at Amycus shines through the expression ἀπεόντος ἄνακτος in the second passage, which highlights the catastrophic consequences of his decision to leave his power-center. In this respect, the νήπιος-comments contribute to the “exceptional degree of narratorial evaluation of Amycus' behaviour”.⁶⁶

The Homeric epics make restrained use of the technique of directing attention to the side of the real νήπιος. In *Il.* 17.494ff. the attendants are the only νήπιοι of the episode. Later on, when the Trojan council approves of Hector's advice at the expense of Polydamas' far wiser proposal, the decision-makers are labelled νήπιοι (*Il.* 18.310–311). The judgement reflects indirectly on Hector whose role as advisor is mentioned immediately after (*Il.* 18.312–313). In *Od.* 22 the suitors who react with astonishment to Antinous' killing are also called νήπιοι. The context and cluster dynamics project the judgement onto their dead ring-leader. The latter scene is evoked through the formulation ὕστατα κείνα κακῆ δῆσαντες ἐν αἴσῃ (2.66)⁶⁷ which “rewrites” the Odyssean episode with Aretus and Ornytus in the role of the suitors at the threshold of death (*Od.* 22.33 ὡς δὴ σφιν καὶ πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ' ἐφῆπτο).⁶⁸

The νήπιος-comment in Book 4 of the *Argonautica* is distinctive in terms of narrative setting and effects compared with both the Homeric

tradition and the νήπιος-comments in Book 2. In 4.856–864 Thetis conveys Hera’s advice to the Argonauts to sail off on the following day and promises that the Nereids will help the ship through the Wandering Rocks (*Planctae*). Invisible to the other Argonauts, she imparts the information to Peleus, the husband who she had abandoned some time ago. Before leaving the scene for the sea where she dwells, Thetis forbids Peleus to point her out to his comrades later when the Nereids will appear to help the Argonauts, “lest you anger me even more than before when you inconsiderably angered me” (4.864–865 νόω δ’ ἔχε, μή με χολώσης/ πλεῖον ἔτ’ ἢ τὸ πάροιθεν ἀπηλεγέως ἐχόλωσας). An analepsis (4.867–879) which is put in the mouth of the primary narrator and perhaps incorporates Peleus’ reminiscences at the sight of his wife,⁶⁹ reveals how Peleus angered Thetis by disturbing her ritual of immortalization of the infant Achilles (4.868 χωσαμένη Ἀχιλῆος ἀγαυοῦ νηπιάχοντος “because of noble Achilles, then a baby”).

Argon. 4.873–879

αὐτὰρ ὃ γ’ ἐξ εὐνῆς ἀναπάλμενος εἰσενόησεν
 παῖδα φίλον σπαίροντα διὰ φλογός· ἦκε δ’ αὐτήν
 σμερδαλέην ἐσιδών, μέγα νήπιος· ἦ δ’ αἴουσα,
 τὸν μὲν ἄρ’ ἀρπάγδην χαμάδις βάλε κεκληγῶτα,
 αὐτὴ δὲ, πνοιῇ ἰκέλη δέμας, ἦῤ’ ὄνειρος,
 βῆ ῥ’ ἔμην ἐκ μεγάρου θοῶς καὶ ἐσήλατο πόντον
 χωσαμένη· μετὰ δ’ οὔ τι παλίσστος ἴκετ’ ὀπίσω.

But Peleus leapt from his bed and saw/ his dear son convulsing in the flames
 and let out a horrible yell/ at the sight – the great fool! When she heard it,
 she grabbed the baby and threw him screaming to the ground,/ and she
 herself, like a breeze in form, like a dream,/ went swiftly forth from the
 palace and leapt into the sea/ in anger and thereafter never came back again.

The starkly formulated judgement (μέγα νήπιος) conveys either the narrator’s perspective on Peleus’ reaction to the spectacle of his infant son over the fire or, if the narrator reports the character’s recollection of the events preceding Thetis’ flight from home, Peleus’ self-critique, or even a fusion of the two perspectives.⁷⁰ The μέγα νήπιος Peleus is an unexpected adult counterpart to his infant son (Ἀχιλῆος ... νηπιάχοντος). However, the radius of the comment may be longer. As it straddles between Peleus’ cry of horror at the frightening sight (ἦκε δ’ αὐτήν/ σμερδαλέην ἐσιδών) and its aural perception by Thetis (ἦ δ’ αἴουσα), the judgemental

statement may even inoculate Thetis' response to Peleus' cry, effecting a switch of focalization from visual to aural (something like "mighty foolish man', [she thought,] when she heard").⁷¹ The ambiguously placed comment thus creates a metaleptic grey area in which the bounds between the minds that articulate the judgement, hence also the narrative levels, are blurred, thus reinforcing further the expression of immense frustration of the immortal mother who will have a mortal son because of Peleus' interruption of the ritual. As the setting for the νήπιος-comment has been refashioned, so have the relations between the actors involved: human ignorance of the divine plans does not only harm the human beings involved (Peleus, Achilles) but also – perhaps even more – the divinity herself who will have to experience the sorrow that the death of her son will bring upon her. This represents a new twist to the quintessential νήπιος-comment in earlier epic tradition which either foregrounds human helplessness in the face of the divine plans (Homeric epics) or, when representing a divine νήπιος, shows her suffering as a consequence of her own error of judgement (*Hom. Hymn Aphr.*).

The sparse νήπιος-comments of the Apollonian narrator prove complex, idiosyncratic and innovative, despite their recognizable Homeric ingredients.⁷² The comments in Book 2 merge tragic intent and cognitive format but the overall effect verges on the pathetic and parodic as the device is overused and is applied to secondary characters who are not particularly worthy of sympathy. The comment in Book 4 has critical intent. However, criticism is levelled not for an ethical/societal transgression, as in the *Odyssey*, but for an overreaction. From a narratological point of view the ambiguous position of the comment may contribute to metaleptic blurring of narrative levels and expansion of focalization. Finally, in a noteworthy development gods are either absent from the situations which give rise to narratorial νήπιος-comments or are themselves affected by them as much as the human actors involved.

3.3 νήπιος-comments in *Triphiodorus*, *Quintus Smyrnaeus* and *Oppian*

The narrating voice in Triphiodorus' *The Sack of Troy* steps forward to offer a νήπιος-comment on a single occasion, in the part of the poem which offers collective snapshots of the slaughter in Troy (573ff.). One of these snapshots takes the form of a mini τις-narrative, the protagonist

of which is an anonymous Trojan who emerges from the shadows where he is hiding and calls out to a man who he considers (or mistakes) as a guest-friend,⁷³ only for his assumption to prove false.

Triphiodorus 577–580

καί τις ὑπὸ σκιάωντι δόμῳ κεκρυμμένος ἀνήρ,
 ξεῖνος ἐὼν ἐκάλεσσαν δίομενος φίλον εἶναι·
 νήπιος, οὐ μὲν ἔμελλεν ἐνηεῖ φωτὶ μιγῆναι,
 ξείνια δ' ἐχθρὰ κόμισσεν ...

Another man hidden in the shadows in his house/ called out to someone who [he thought] had given him hospitality and whom he believed a friend./ Foolish man! He was not bound to encounter a friendly person/ but got enmity as guest gifts.⁷⁴

The νήπιος-comment is embedded in an iterative passage which describes the manner of death of an indefinite number of Trojans, perhaps a single person, perhaps more. This is an innovation in relation to the Homeric and Apollonian tradition in which νήπιος-comments target identifiable individuals or groups. Triphiodorus' representative νήπιος stands for the deluded Trojans who believed that the bond (or offer) of guest-friendship could be stronger than the law of war. He is also death-bound and stands in the tradition of the Homeric warriors who unwittingly activate fate. The oxymoron ξείνια δ' ἐχθρὰ κόμισσεν encapsulates their tragic and pitiable fate. The tragic effect results from the gap between the character's expectations or assumptions, which are reasonable according to social norms, and the cruel ethics of war that demolish ethical norms.⁷⁵ Thus, the νήπιος-comment blends the Iliadic ("tragic") and the Odyssean ("critical") function of the device.

The workings of narrative intertextuality in this passage are even more complex. The motif which forms the narrative backbone of the τις-narrative, that is "warrior mistakes foes for friends and suffers as a result", is Homeric and figures in *Il.* 10.354–359 with an identifiable Trojan, Dolon, as protagonist. He hears the sound of approaching men and hopes that they might be Trojans but they turn out to be his ambushers, Diomedes and Odysseus.⁷⁶ Aside from anonymizing the motif, Triphiodorus crucially modifies the Homeric intertext by presenting the victim, not the ambusher, as emerging from a hiding spot. The passage belongs to a minor cluster (with *Il.* 582–586 and 588b–589) in which Triphiodorus models the collective fate of Trojan males on the night of the sack on the

dramatic deaths of minor Homeric heroes (Dolon, Elpenor and Epicles),⁷⁷ thus translating motifs associated with the deaths of minor Homeric characters to modes of collective death. The same goes for the enemy side: the anonymous Achaean who answers the greeting (or the invitation) of the anonymous Trojan with hostility is launched into the scene in terms that recall the description of Achilles and his hostile response to the supplication of Tros, son of Alastor (*Il.* 20.467 οὐ γάρ τι γλυκύθυμος ἀνὴρ ἦν οὐδ' ἀγανόφρων “since this was a man with no sweetness in his heart, and not kindly”). The rejected gesture of Triphiodorus’ representative Trojan translates the death of an individual Iliadic Trojan, whose name conveniently reflects Trojan identity, into a narrative of collective death and covertly “introduces” into the scene of the sack of Troy Achilles who never participated in it.

The narrative voice in Quintus Smyrnaeus’ *Posthomerica* employs νήπιος-comments in two warriors’ “obituaries”, 10.89–96 (Galenus, killed by Neoptolemus)⁷⁸ and 13.168–177 (Coroebus, killed by Diomedes). As explained by Duckworth, these depart significantly from Homeric practice in that they are not genuinely proleptic, that is, they do not foretell a warrior’s death but comment on it at the moment of its occurrence.⁷⁹ To be more precise, the sequences which substantiate the characterization of the fallen warrior as νήπιος (10.89–93 and 13.174–176) are analeptic and give the narratees insight into the now disappointed expectations of the fallen men heightening, as a result, the emotional response to their demise. To achieve this, Quintus combines the νήπιος-comment with motifs from Homeric “obituaries” – the motif of “gifts promised but never received” and the motif of “unfulfilled marriage” respectively – used in the *Iliad* without connection to the νήπιος-comment.⁸⁰ Quintus re-activates the Homeric tradition by letting his primary narrator employ the νήπιος-comment in connection with warriors’ deaths. At the same time he alters the narrative character, collocation and context of the comment. Quintus’ νήπιος-warriors receive this characterization not in view of their future fate or present ignorance but in view of the tension between their present fate (death) and their grandiose past expectations.

Narratorial νήπιος-comments also mark the fatal moment of entrapment for certain species of fish in Oppian’s didactic epic *Halieutica*, more specifically of the gluttonous sea-bream (*Halieutica* 3.369–370), the cautious and at the same time audacious melanurus (*Halieutica*

3.457–458), the strong but not so smart swordfish (*Halieutica* 3.567ff.) and the timid pelamyds (*Halieutica* 4.570ff.) The νήπιος-comments along with other evaluative expressions uttered by the narrative voice sustain the *leitmotif* of humanization of the marine subjects of the poem and convey sympathy or disapproval for the traits which cause their death.⁸¹ Additionally, the specific narrative context invites comparison of the trapped fish with doomed Homeric characters, especially in passages which nod to identifiable Homeric νήπιοι. A case-in-point is *Halieutica* 3.358–364 in which the description of the conduct of the black seabream and certain modes of expression (3.362 νέους ... χαλίφρονας) invite comparison between this gluttonous marine creature and the Odyssean suitors.⁸² In narrative terms, however, Oppian's "foolish" fish are more often akin to Quintus' "foolish" warriors whose death is marked by means of a νήπιος-comment at the moment of its occurrence, as the only death foretold is that of the melanurus.

To return to the *Posthomerica*: More interesting from the point of view of narrative intertextuality is that Quintus seeks to replicate the "nepic clusters" detectable in the Homeric epics, that is, the Homeric interplay of νήπιος-comments between the extradiegetic and the intradiegetic level. Clustering of νήπιος-judgements occurs early on in the *Posthomerica* and is operative in some of the key episodes of the poem. The very first narratorial νήπιος-comment belongs to a cluster: it pertains to Penthesileia and calls to question her promise to Priam that she would subdue Achilles and set the Achaean fleet on fire (1.93–95). The narrator remarks that the Amazon's delusion had its root in her lacking acquaintance with Achilles and his martial superiority.⁸³

Quint. Smyrn. 1.96–97

νηπίη, οὐδέ τι ἤδη εὐμμελίην Ἀχιλῆα,
ὅσον ὑπέρτατος ἦεν ἐνὶ φθισήνορι χάρμη.

Ah fool! But little knew she him, the lord of ashen spears,/ how far Achilles'
might in warrior-wasting strife overpassed her own.⁸⁴

The evaluative expression echoes closely the very first Iliadic νήπιος-comment directed at Agamemnon (*Il.* 2.38 νήπιος, οὐδὲ τὰ ἤδη ...).⁸⁵ At the level of content, the parallelism is sustained by the certainty, entertained equally by Agamemnon and Penthesileia, that the enemy will be subdued (*Il.* 2.37 φῆ γὰρ ὁ γ' αἰρήσειν Πριάμου πόλιν ἤματι κείνῳ ≈ Quint. Smyrn. 1.93–95 ἢ δ' ἄρ' ὑπέσχετο ἔργον ὃ οὐποτε θνητὸς

ἐώλπει,/ δηώσειν Ἀχιλῆα καὶ εὐρέα λαὸν ὀλέσειν/ Ἀργείων, πυρσὸν δὲ νεῶν καθύπερθε βαλέσθαι “And she such deeds she promised as no man had hoped for,/ even to lay Achilles low, to smite the wide host/ of the Argive men, and cast the brands red-flaming on the ships.”). The perspective is reversed as this time the promise comes from the Trojan side and targets the Achaeans. While the Iliadic narrator reveals that Agamemnon’s plan will not be fulfilled, in Penthesileia’s case the focus falls on the past, her lack of experience of Achilles’ prowess in battle. The judgement of the narrator of the *Posthomerica* finds immediate support and confirmation from an intradiegetic perspective in Andromache’s internal monologue (1.98–114).⁸⁶ Hector’s wife, who has bitter personal experience of Achilles’ military ability (in another poem), rephrases the narrator’s νηπίη into a double exclamation of compassion (1.100 ἄ δειλή “ah hapless” and 1.103 λευγαλή “wretched you”). Her monologue develops the narrator’s judgemental introduction into a full-blown judgmental speech in which she points out Penthesileia’s exaggerated ambitions (1.100 μέγα φρονέουσ’ “with arrogant heart”, 1.103 τί μέμνηας ἀνὰ φρένας; “What madness thrills your soul?”) and warns her on Hector’s example (105–114)⁸⁷ that death is drawing near (1.103b–104 ἦ νύ τοι ἄγχι/ ἔστηκεν θανάτοιο τέλος καὶ Δαίμονος Αἴσα “Fate and the end of death stand hard by thee!”). The intertextual dialogue at a narrative level consists in a Homeric-style interplay of judgements between the extradiegetic and the intradiegetic level, while the first and last Iliadic νήπιοι, Agamemnon and Andromache, contribute to Penthesileia’s evaluation as νήπιος.

The nepic cluster of Penthesileia contains further elements which nod to the first Iliadic νήπιος. After the banquet the Amazon goes to sleep and dreams of her father exhorting her to put up a brave fight against Achilles on the following day (1.123–137, esp. 1.130–131 καὶ μιν ἐποτρύνεσκε ποδάρκεος ἄντ’ Ἀχιλῆος/ θαρσαλέως μάρνασθαι ἐναντίον ... “kindling her fearlessly front to front to meet in fight fleetfoot Achilles.”). Penthesileia misinterprets the dream, which is deceptive and has been sent by Athena, as a prediction that she would “perform a mighty deed within the day” and rejoices. The narrator, whose intervention has been prepared by the qualification of the dream as “deceitful” (1.125 δολόεις) and “baleful” (1.129 λυγρός), undercuts her instantly.

Quint. Smyrn. 1.132–137

γήθεεν ἐν φρεσὶ πάνπαν· οἴσσατο γὰρ μέγα ἔργον

ἐκτελέειν αὐτῆμαρ ἀνὰ μόθον ὀκρυόεντα,
 νηπίη· ἢ ῥ' ἐπίθησεν ὀιζυρῶ περ' Ὀνειρῶ
 ἔσπερίῳ, ὃς φῦλα πολυτλήτων ἀνθρώπων
 θέλγει γ' ἐν λεχέεσσιν, ἄδην ἐπικέρτομα βάζων,
 ὅς μιν ἄρ' ἐξαπάφησεν ἐποτρύνων πονέεσθαι.

... and all her heart exulted, for she weened that she should achieve a mighty deed/ on that dawning day in battle's deadly toil./ Ah, fool, who trusted for her sorrow a dream/ out of the sunless land, such as beguiles full oft the travail-burdened tribes of men,/ whispering mocking lies in sleeping ears,/ and to the battle's travail lured her then!

Various aspects of the narrative setting and the expression echo Agamemnon's dream (*Il.* 2.6ff.).⁸⁸ It too is sent by a god (Zeus) and is qualified in overtly negative terms (*Il.* 2.6c οὔλον ὄνειρον) before its consequences materialize. The dream apparition is an older person familiar to the dreamer, a father-figure (Nestor, *Il.* 2.20–21 ≈ Penthesileia's father, Quint. Smyrn. 1.129). Like Agamemnon, Penthesileia expects swift fulfilment of the promise which the dream holds: 1.132–133 (αὐτῆμαρ echoes ἤματι κείνῳ in *Il.* 2.37). However, the turn of phrase used to expose Penthesileia's great expectations does not replicate the one employed in Agamemnon's case, as the collocation νηπίη οὐδέ τι ἤδη has already been used in 1.96. The formulation employed in 1.134 (νηπίη ἢ ῥ' ἐπίθησεν ...) resonates the expression employed by Odysseus with reference to his companions in *Od.* 9.44 (... τοὶ δὲ μέγα νήπιοι οὐκ ἐπίθοντο). The formulation pitches the obedient and gullible Penthesileia against Odysseus' disobedient and mistrusting crew. But the result is in both cases equally disastrous, as the νήπιος-comments signal.

Great expectations are not nourished by Penthesileia only but also by the Trojans collectively, as the speech made by an anonymous Trojan (1.353–372) at the sight of her prowess in the battlefield indicates. This mouthpiece of Trojan *communis opinio* views Penthesileia as a goddess who will lead the Trojans to rout the Achaeans. The narrator unveils the collective delusion both by introducing the speech in terms of vain hopes (1.357 μαψιδίησιν ἐπ' ἔλπωρῆσιν) and by offering a proleptic νήπιος-comment right after its completion.

Quint. Smyrn. 1.373–375

ὥς ἄρ' ἔφη Τρώων τις ἐνὶ φρεσὶ πάγχυ γεγηθώς,

νήπιος· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐφράσσατ' ἐπεσσύμενον βαρὺ πῆμα
οἷ αὐτῷ καὶ Τρωσὶ καὶ αὐτῇ Πενθεσιλείῃ.

In overweening exultation so vaunted a Trojan./ Fool! He had no vision of ruin
onward rushing/ upon himself and Troy, and Penthesileia herself.

The cognitive variant of the comment with tragic intent is operative in this passage. The narrative setting resembles closely that of *Od.* 22 where the collective speech of the suitors (*Od.* 22.27–30) is followed by a narratorial νήπιος-comment announcing their imminent end. Line 1.374, in particular, plays with alliteration of labials, recalling the sound effects in *Od.* 22.33 (ὡς δὴ σφιν καὶ πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ' ἐφῆπτο), although the conceptual core of the formulation (Quint. Smyrn. 1.374 disaster “rushing against” one *vs.* *Od.* 22.33 the “tying of the rope-ends” of disaster) exploits a different metaphor.

Another “nepic cluster” develops in connection with Paris’ death in Book 10 of the *Posthomerica*. When Paris’ former wife, Oenone, rejects his plea for help to heal his fatal wound, the narrator remarks that this decision would bring about her own death soon.⁸⁹

Quint. Smyrn. 10.328–330
ὡς φαμένη γοώοντα φίλων ἀπέπεμπε μελάθρων,
νηπίη· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐφράσσαθ' ἐὸν μόρον. ἧ γὰρ ἔμελλον
κείνου ἀποφθιμένοιο καὶ αὐτῇ κῆρες ἔπεσθαι
ἐσσυμένως· ὡς γάρ οἱ ἐπέκλωσεν Διὸς αἴσα.

So from her doors she drove that groaning man/ ah fool! not knowing her own
doom, whose destiny was/ straightway after him to tread the path of death./ So
Fate had spun her destiny-thread.

The setting evokes the scene of Patroclus pleading Achilles in *Il.* 16, while certain verbal elements (ἧ γὰρ ἔμελλον ≈ *Il.* 16.46b ἧ γὰρ ἔμελλεν, and above all καὶ αὐτῇ Κῆρες ἔπεσθαι ≈ *Il.* 2.47b καὶ κῆρα λιτέσθαι) may even indicate a direct link with the νήπιος-comment in *Il.* 16.46–47. As the plea of the faithful friend resonates in the plea of the unfaithful husband, the similarities and differences in the relations of the pairs cannot go unnoticed. Paris leaves the scene crying, that is, as Patroclus entered the scene in *Il.* 16.2–4. Patroclus advances a successful plea and Paris an unsuccessful one, yet both pleas have the same outcome – the suppliant’s death. Finally, Oenone’s fate replicates Achilles’ death in two respects: first, her fate his sealed by her rejection of Paris’ plea, as Achilles’

fate is sealed by his endorsement of Patroclus' plea. Second, her immolation on Paris' burial pyre means that her bones are mixed posthumously with the remains of her unfaithful husband, as Achilles' bones are mixed with the remains of his faithful friend according to both Homeric epics (*Il.* 23.91–92 and *Od.* 24.76–77).

Whereas faithful and unfaithful meet the same end, “nepic cluster” dynamics restore the balance of judgement as regards the pair Oenone–Paris. When Oenone immolates herself on the burial pyre for Paris, the attending nymphs criticize Paris for arrogant (ἀτάσθαλος) and foolish (νήπιος) behaviour in view of his atrocious treatment of an honourable wife whose love for him exceeded even her love of life.⁹⁰

Quint. Smyrn. 10.471–476

ἀτρεκέως Πάρις ἦεν ἀτάσθαλος, ὅς μάλα κεδνήν
 κάλλιπε κουριδίην καὶ ἀνήγαγεν μάργον ἄκοιτιν
 οἱ αὐτῷ καὶ Τρωσὶ καὶ ἄστει λοίγιον ἄλγος,
 νήπιος· οὐδ' ἀλόχοιο περίφρονος ἄζετο θυμὸν
 τειρομένης, ἣ πέρ μιν ὑπὲρ φάος ἡλείοιο
 καίπερ ἀπεχθαίροντα καὶ οὐ φιλέοντα τίεσκεν.

Verily evil-hearted Paris was, who left a real true/ wife, and took for bride a
 wanton,/ to himself and Troy a curse./ Ah fool, who recked not of the
 broken heart of a most virtuous wife,/ who more than life loved him/ who
 turned from her and loved her not!

Quintus here exploits the Homeric clustering technique by letting an intradiegetic character (the Nymphs) echo the narrator's νήπιος-comment. But his re-deployment of the clustering pattern comes with contrastive variation: the narrator's judgement is overturned and “corrected” at the intradiegetic level. To the Nymphs' mind, Paris was the truly νήπιος of the pair. The other evaluative adjective employed by the Nymphs, ἀτάσθαλος, serves to connect Paris with the infamous νήπιοι and ἀτάσθαλοι of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus' comrades and the Suitors.

The final narratorial νήπιος-comment in the *Posthomerica* enhances ironically the effect of the predictions that prepare for the imminent end for Troy. The narrative frame replicates Homeric τις-speeches, as the comment is embedded in the speech of an inebriated Trojan reveller who mocks the Achaeans for vain efforts to capture Troy.⁹¹

Quint. Smyrn. 13.15–20

ἦ ῥ' ἄλιον Δαναοὶ στρατὸν ἐνθάδε πουλὸν ἄγειραν,
 σχέτλιοι, οὐδ' ἐτέλεσαν ὅσα φρεσὶ μηχανόωντο,
 ἀλλ' αὐτῶς ἀπόρουσαν ἀπ' ἄστεος ἡμετέροιο
 νηπιάρχους παίδεσσιν εἰοκότες ἢ ἐ γυναιξίν.
 ὡς ἄρ' ἔφη Τρώων τις ἐεργόμενος φρένα οἴνω,
 νήπιος· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἐφράσσατ' ἐπὶ προθύροισιν Ὀλεθρον.

For naught the Danaans mustered that great host hither!/
 Fools, they have wrought not their intent,/
 but with hopes unaccomplished from our town/
 like silly boys or women have they fled. So cried a Trojan wit-befogged with
 wine,/
 fool, nor discerned destruction at the doors.

Ironic erosion of Trojan confidence is effected already prior to the narratorial intervention as the content of the speech and specific formulations echo the imaginary speech of a boasting Trojan over Menelaus' tomb, put in Agamemnon's mouth in *Il.* 4.176–182.⁹² The narrator's νήπιος-pronouncement pointedly picks up the comparison of the Achaeans with infants by the anonymous reveller (νηπιάρχους παίδεσσιν) and thus leaves no doubt as to who is foolish and misguided. The Trojan boast and its narratorial evaluation are recalled multiple times in the ensuing account of the sufferings of the Trojan women and children during the sack of the city: Astyanax is flanked down the wall, “a wordless babe that nothing knew of war” (Quint. Smyrn. 13.257 νήπιον, οὐ πῶ δῆριν ἐπιστάμενον πολέμοιο); the Trojan women are being led away wailing together with their children (Quint. Smyrn. 14.31–32 αἱ δ' ἀδινὸν γοῶσαι ἀνίαχον ἄλλοθεν ἄλλαι/ νηπιάρχους ἅμα παισὶ κινυ<ρό>μεναι μάλα λυγρῶς) – a highly ironic formulation in light of 13.18; Hecuba's wailing as Polyxena is dragged to the tomb of Achilles is likened to the whimpering of a bitch with breasts full of milk whose puppies have been thrown to birds of prey (Quint. Smyrn. 14.284–285 τῆς ἄπο νήπια τέκνα πάρος φάος εἰσοράσθαι/ νόσφι βάλωσιν ἀνακτες ἔλωρ ἔμεν οἰωνοῖσιν); finally, a passage that resonates with Triphiodorus describes how, as the Achaean ships sail off with the material and human booty on board, the Trojan women, children in their arms, lament for Troy “but those innocents [sc. the children] not yet bewailed/ their day of bondage, nor their country's ruin;/ all their thoughts were set on comfort of the breast,/
 for the babe's heart hath none affinity with sorrow” (Quint. Smyrn. 14.387–389 ... τὰ δ' οὐ πῶ δούλιον ἦμαρ/

ἔστενον, οὐδὲ πάτρης ἐπὶ πήμασιν, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ μαζῶ/ θυμὸν ἔχον· κηδέων γὰρ ἀπόπροθι νήπιον ἦτορ).⁹³

3.4 *The last of the epic* νήπιος

The last νήπιος-comments in the Greek epic tradition figure in the poetry of Nonnus of Panopolis who employs the cognitive variant of the device with critical intent once in the *Dionysiaca* and once in the *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John*. Nonnus thus joins Triphiodorus in elevating the device into a singularity, perhaps because in his poetry too it constitutes above all a signal of generic adherence and a means of demonstrating that his narrator(s) master the generic tools of the trade.

In Book 2 of the *Dionysiaca*, at the peak of the theogonic battle between Zeus and Typhon (2.22–635) the narrator labels Typhon as “foolish” – that is, indirectly as the destined loser of the fight – when the monster makes an unsuccessful attempt to quench his opponent’s powerful weapon, the thunderbolt, with water collected from streams.⁹⁴ The narrator buttresses his judgement by calling attention to Typhon’s failure to consider that thunder (fire) and rain (water) have their common source in the clouds, that is, to Typhon’s inability to make the right deductions about the properties of the natural element that he wields as weapon.

Nonnus, *Dion.* 2.448–450

σβέσσαι γὰρ μενέαινε Γίγας θρασὺς αἰθέριον πῦρ,
νήπιος· οὐδ' ἐνόησε πυραυγέες ὅττι κεραυνοὶ
καὶ στεροπαὶ γεγάσιν ἀπ' ὀμβροτόκων νεφελάων.

Yes – to quench the ethereal fire was the bold Giant’s plan,/ poor fool! He knew not that the fire-flaming thunderbolts/ and lightnings are the offspring of the clouds from which the rain-showers come!⁹⁵

The deficient intellectual capacity of the monster, expressed by means of the cognitive variant of the νήπιος-comment (νήπιος· οὐδ' ἐνόησε ...), echoes ironically his impetuosity (μενέαινε). The use of the cognitive variant of the comment in conjunction with the narrative setting (battle) evoke the narratorial comment at the expense of Achilles in *Il.* 20.260–265.⁹⁶ The interplay of the scenes is underpinned by the similarity of the situation that prompts the νήπιος-comment: the failure of a combatant to evaluate correctly the power of the weapon which he wields. On the other hand, the Nonnian battle is a theogonic one and its protagonist is

not a Homeric hero in self-defence but a Hesiodic monster attacking, whose fluid weapon does not have divine origins and fails in its mission. Additionally, the Nonnian comment is retrospective in relation to the event that it explains (the failure of the attack against Zeus' thunderbolt) whereas in the Homeric episode it is proleptic and foretells that Aeneas' spear will not penetrate Achilles' shield. In this regard, the Nonnian comment conforms to the handling of the νήπιος-comment in later epic where it co-occurs with and marks a combatant's death or defeat rather than announcing it.

The *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John* belongs to a distinct subgroup of Greek epic production, Christian biblical epic.⁹⁷ Their subject-matter and religious-ideological universe set this group of poems apart from the rest of the epic tradition. However, the earlier epic production remains the stable poetological reference point for Christian epic too, narrative techniques included. The single narratorial νήπιος-comment in the *Paraphrase* is employed in the account of Jesus' transfer to the jurisdiction of Pontius Pilate (NT Jo 18:28) and targets a collective entity, the Jewish mob who stand far from Pilate's residence so as not to pollute their feet, as they wish to partake in the feast of the Passover in bodily purity.⁹⁸ The νήπιος-pronouncement is combined with the participle of ἀγνώσω – a favourite verb of Nonnus⁹⁹ that is new in the expressive register of the νήπιος-comment – to introduce a narratorial statement that ironizes the Jews who do not realize that their keeping distance from the prefect's residence actually protects the seat of Justice from the pollution that their murderous intent represents.¹⁰⁰

Nonnus, *Paraphrase* 18.135–139

οὐδὲ μὲν ἔνδον ἔβαινε πολυφλοίσβοιο μελάθρου
 ποσσὶ φυλασσομένοισι, ὅπως μὴ γυῖα μίηνι,
 πάσχα φαγεῖν ἐθέλων καθαρῶ χροῖ. τηλόθι δ' ἔστη
 νήπιος, ἀγνώσων, ὅτι τηλίκον εἰς φόνον ἔρωπον
 ἀγνὸν ἀλεξικάκων ἐφυλάσσετο δῶμα θεμίστων.

nor did they enter the busy halls/ protecting their feet, so that may not pollute
 their limbs/ as they wished to partake in the paschal feast with unpolluted
 body. They stood away./ Fools, who did not realise that, since they crept to
 such a murder, the pure seat of Justice was protected, keeping off evil.¹⁰¹

The formulation δῶμα θεμίστων with reference to Pilate's residence evokes the image of Hesiodic Zeus by combining elements occurring in Hes. *Op.*

8–9 (Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, ὃς ὑπέρτατα δώματα ναίει./ κλυθι ἰδὼν αἰῶν τε, δίκη δ' ἴθυνε θέμιστας). These imply identification of Pilate with the supreme dispenser of justice in the Hesiodic *kosmos* and reinforce the condemnation of the Jews who are cast as pagans preparing to offer a bloody sacrifice.¹⁰²

The narratorial νήπιος-comment in Nonnus appears rather different in character and intent compared to the beginnings of the device in the Homeric epics. Its focus is firmly on the present. Even when it offers hints about the development of the action (as is the case in the *Dionysiaca*), the device achieves this solely by dint of its traditional proleptic signification. The primary narrator employs it not to express sympathy or ironic pity but to criticize and subvert. Far from being helpless victims of pre-determination the Nonnian νήπιοι are vile characters who the narrator undermines by laying bare their bluntly misguided assessment of the situation. Their nature may offer an additional perspective to the scarcity of the comment in the poetry of Nonnus who has a marked predilection for certain semantic families, especially the family of ἄφρων-ἄφροσύνη, to express distaste for or condemnation of his characters.¹⁰³

4. Conclusion

Within a methodological frame defined by diachronic narratology this article has explored the forms, settings, function and effects of the narratorial νήπιος-comment from the Homeric epics to the epic production of Nonnus and from Greek heroic epic to Christian Biblical epic. At a first level, the instances of the νήπιος-comment in post-Homeric poetry constitute an act of narrative homage paid by later poets and their narrators to their literary forefather. This is reflected among others in the relative stability of the types of epic characters targeted by means of the device: warriors doomed to fail or die, predominantly male (Agamemnon to Typhon) – or female with male sides, to wit Quintus' Penthesileia – and suffering wives (Andromache, Eos, Oenone). Triphiodorus' and Quintus' anonymous representative νήπιοι, Oppian's humanized fish and Nonnus' Jews are new additions to the target group.

The variants of the comment identified in the Homeric epics – the “tragic-proleptic”, the “cognitive”, and the “critical”, or confluations of these – provide the stable expressive frame for the νήπιος-comment in later epics as well, although their proportional relation is more uneven

in Hellenistic and Imperial epic. Later epic narrators have a clear predilection for “cognitive”-type νήπιος-interventions. In another noteworthy development the proleptic dimension of the νήπιος-comment loses ground in favour of comments that focus on the present and the situation at hand. Correspondingly, starting from Apollonius, the role of the divine in the situation that generates the νήπιος-intervention subsides and in certain contexts a divine character even suffers as a result of human “foolishness”.

The analysis of the relevant passages and scenes has hopefully shown that later instantiations of the νήπιος-comment gain additional dimensions through the refracting prism of the Iliadic and/or Odyssean νήπιος-comments evoked. To this end, elements of the narrative situation, specific formulations and expressive modes, to wit expressive sound-play to convey emotional intensity, operate in tandem. The question whether the identification of literary interplay is a matter of conscious allusive engagement or a result of our keen eye for close and comparative literary reading is still open and ultimately a matter of subjective opinion. A peculiar line of literary response which may qualify as narrative intertextuality connects the Homeric νήπιος-comments with those of Quintus’, as the poet of the *Posthomerica* is the only among the later epic poets who replicates the Homeric technique of creating chains and interactions between narratorial νήπιος-comments and νήπιος-judgements at intradiegetic level (“nepic clusters”). “Nepic clusters” open the possibility that a narratorial νήπιος-comment is challenged, in whole or partially, at the intradiegetic level or, conversely, that the narrator’s comment contributes perspectives to interactions and concerns of the characters at the intradiegetic level. These possibilities render the νήπιος-comment a versatile evaluative device which showcases not only the controlling presence and judgemental aspect of the narrator but also the mutually interactive relation of the diegetic levels in Greek epic.

Notes

1. For the grammar of νήπιος-comments see Edwards (1966, 141). For the meanings and the etymology of the adjective, which is still very much debated, see Lacroix (1937), Edmunds (1990, 7–9), Führer (1993) and Beekes and van Beek (2010, II 1016–1017 *s.v.*).

2. In the analysis I will employ the term “νήπιος-comment” when discussing occurrences of the device in narrator-text. For instances of the comment in character speech I will use “νήπιος-judgement” as alternative to “νήπιος-comment” given the greater degree of subjectivity in character speech.
3. The dedicated study of νήπιος in the Homeric epics is by Edmunds (1990), who mines semantic evidence to interpret νήπιος as the opposite of ἤπιος (“connecting”, “connected”). For Edmunds νήπιος designates someone who is “disconnected” (from life, reality, society etc.). Other discussions of the word in Homer are: Kraut (1863, 22–24); Duckworth (1933, 77–79); Bremer (1969, 101–104); de Jong (1987a, 86–87); Richardson (1990, 161–162); Bakker (1997, 35–36); di Benedetto (1994, 24–35); de Jong (2001, 16); Grethlein (2006, 205–223); Kelly (2007, 205–208).
4. See indicatively *Schol. in Hom. Il.* 12.113 Erbse νήπιος, οὐδ’ ἄρ’ ἔμελλε: σημαντικωτάτῳ ὀνόματι χρῆται τῷ “νήπιος” ἐν ταῖς ἀναφωνήσεσιν bT; *Schol. in Hom. Il.* 16.46b Erbse μέγα νήπιος: ὡς ἀνεπνόητος τῶν μελλόντων. αἱ δὲ προαναφωνήσεις αὐτὰ τὸν ἀκροατὴν ἐπαίρουσιν bT ἤδη προσδοκῶντα τὸ δεινόν b; *Schol. in Hom. Il.* 22.445 Erbse ... διὸ καὶ ἐπεφώνησεν ὁ ποιητὴς συμπαθῶς τὸ “νηπίη, οὐδ’ ἐνόησεν”, ὡσπερ ἐλεῶν τὴν ἄγνοιαν αὐτῆς A bT; *Schol. in Hom. Od.* 1.8; *Eust. Comm. in Hom. Il.* 2.38 (I 260, 11–12 Van der Valk), 2.112 (I 289, 23–24 Van der Valk) ὡσπερ δὲ τὸ νήπιος παρὰ τῷ ποιητῇ λέξις ἐστὶν ἐπιφωνητικὴ ἐπὶ τοῖς μὴ κατὰ βαθεῖαν σύνεσιν γινόμενοις ... , 15.286 (III 732, 1–4 Van der Valk); *Eust. Comm. in Hom. Od.* 1.8 etc. For objections to the term ἐπιφώνημα see *Demetr. Eloc.* 111 Chiron τὸ δὲ: “νήπιος, οὐδ’ ἄρ’ ἔμελλε κακὰς ὑπὸ κῆρας ἀλύξειν” οὐδ’ αὐτὸ ἐπιφώνημα ἂν εἴη· οὐ γὰρ ἐπιλέγεται οὐδὲ ἐπικοσμεῖ, οὐδ’ ὄλωσ ἐπιφώνηματι ἕοικεν, ἀλλὰ προσφωνήματι ἢ ἐπικερτομήματι.
5. Nünlist (2009, 44–45).
6. For example *Schol. in Il.* 16.46b Erbse <ὡς φάτο λισσόμενος μέγα νήπιος;> ἡ μὲν συνήθεια ἀνεπιτηδεύτως συνάπτει ἄχρι τοῦ “μέγα νήπιος”. τάχα δ’ ἂν μείζων γένοιτο ἢ ἔμφασις, εἰ καθ’ ἑαυτὸ λέγοιτο τὸ “μέγα νήπιος” A.
7. The *corpus* of narratorial νήπιος-comments in narrative epics includes: *Hom. Il.* 2.38, 2.873, 12.113, 12.127, 16.46, 16.246 (νηπίαχοι in a simile), 16.686, 17.236, 17.497, 18.311, 20.264, 20.411 (νηπιέησι), 20.466, 22.445; *Od.* 1.8, 22.32, 24.469 (νηπιέησι); *Hom. Hymn Aphr.* 223; *Hes. Cat.* fr. 33a.28 M-W; *Apoll. Rhod. Argon.* 2.66, 2.167, 4.875; Orpian *Halieutica* 3.370, 3.457, 3.568, 4.572, 4.631 (νήπια); *Quint. Smyrn.* 1.96, 1.134, 1.374, 10.94, 10.329, 13.20, 13.174; *Triphiodorus* 579; *Nonn. Dion.* 2.449, *Paraphrase of the Gospel of John* 18.138. Anna Comnena employs a νήπιος-comment twice, in *Alexiad* 1.11.6 πείθεται ὁ Μασκαβέλης νήπιος ἀγνοήσας τὸν δόλον ... and 15.6.9 πείθεται τοῖς τοῦ Πουχέα λόγοις ὁ Σαῖσᾶν νήπιος The juxtaposition νήπιος ἀγνοήσας in the former passage may be viewed as yet another token of Anna’s literary homage to Homer, on which see Buckler (1929, 197–199) and Dyck (1986).
8. Address in vocative from the primary narrator to an identifiable narratee (Perses): *Hes. Op.* 286, 397, 633. See Clay (1993) arguing that the variations in the address to Perses throughout the poem mark stages in his “education”. Comments on the mentality of figures at the same level as the primary narrator and the narratees:

- Hes. *Op.* 40 (bribe-accepting rulers) and 456 (farmer who thinks that a wagon can be repaired easily). Oppian's *Halieutica* will be discussed in this article *qua* narrative epic as the νήπιος-comments in this poem belong to passages that represent the action of fishermen and fish during fishing. For a discussion of the comments as part of the poem's didactic project see Kneebone (2008). Instances like Ps.Apollinaris *Metaphrasis Psalmorum* LXVIII 24–25 and 42–43 Ludwich νήπιος, οὐδ' ἐνόησε βροτὸς γεράεσσι μεμηλῶς/τετραπόδεσσιν ἔικτο, φυὴν δ' ἀσπάζετο τοίην, belong to the didactic tradition.
9. The text of the *Iliad* is from van Thiel's edition (1996). The English translation is from Lattimore (1951) with some modifications.
 10. As pointed out already by ancient scholarship (*Schol. in Hom. Il.* 2. 38a Erbse νήπιος ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων, ὅτι τὸ “νῦν” ἐπὶ μιᾶς ἡμέρας ἐνόμισεν bT), Agamemnon reads too much in νῦν ... κεν ἔλοι(ς) (*Il.* 2.12 = 2.29). See also Brügger, Stoevesandt, and Visser (2003, 21 comm. on l. 37).
 11. De Jong (2012, 173 comm. on ll. 437–446) has described this aptly as “the longest and most moving of a series of ‘not-yet’ scenes”.
 12. See Segal (1971, 40) who observes that the detail highlights Andromache's obedience and Lohmann (1988, 63–64) who describes the effect of evoking of the couple's last meeting in Book 6 in terms of “mitleidige Ironie”.
 13. Griffin (1980, 109–110) discusses the formulation as a variation of the motif “far away”. For a perceptive analysis of the scene see also Grethlein (2007, 26–32). Grethlein notes the expressions which hint at a connection of the bath prepared for Hector with the ritual of washing a dead warrior's corpse, and of Patroclus' corpse in *Il.* 18.343–353 in particular, and explores how the chain of references to bathing in the last part of the *Iliad* connects the deaths of Patroclus, Hector and Achilles.
 14. The emotional effect of the scene is pointed out in *Schol. A bT in Hom. Il.* 22.442–445, see fn. 5.
 15. Segal (1971, 42).
 16. See the discussion by Grethlein (2006, 215–216), who includes the scene in a network of comments by Zeus and the primary narrator that lead up to Hector's death.
 17. Iliadic warriors whose death is foretold by means of a νήπιος-comment are Nastes, leader of the Carian contingent (2.871–875), Asius, son of Yrtacus, and his comrades (12.110–127), the Trojans fighting over the corpse of Patroclus (17.234–236), Chromius and Aretus (17.495–498), Polydorus, son of Priam (20.407–412) and Tros, son of Alastor (20.463–468).
 18. Di Benedetto (1994, 30) who also remarks on the vividness and directness which the colloquial particle ἦ imparts on the narratorial intervention.
 19. Achilles uses similar expressive means in the monologue which voices his fear that Patroclus is dead, *Il.* 18.12–14 ἦ μάλα δὴ τέθνηκε Μενoitίου ἄλκιμος υἱὸς/σχέτλιος ἦ τ' ἐκέλευον ἀπωσάμενον δήιον πῦρ/ νήας ἔπ' ἄψ ἰέναι μηδ' Ἔκτορι ἴφι μάχεσθαι.
 20. That is, μέγ' ἀάσθη/ νήπιος and νήπιος· εἰ ... , pointed out by di Benedetto (1994, 30).

21. Janko (1992, 417 comm. on 16.830–863). See also the insightful analysis of Lohmann (1970, 115–117), who identifies “thematische Umkehrung”, “Spiel von These und Antithese” and “Döppelbodigkeit” that impart a tragic dimension on the scene.
22. Scodel (1999, 63–64) discusses the passage as analepsis which conveys “deception” or “false inferences” and groups it with other inaccurate analepses put in the mouth of characters who are emotionally charged.
23. Taplin (1992, 240–247 and 179–185) (the expression cited is on p. 243).
24. Lohmann (1970, 159–161).
25. The similes that develop the “parent–child” motif and illuminate the bond of care between Achilles and Patroclus have been discussed in Moulton (1977, 99–106) and Mills (2000). According to the former scholar Achilles is the only caregiver, while for the latter the focus changes to Achilles as the sole caregiver only after Patroclus’ death. See also Schein (1984, 107) and Minchin (2007, 184–185) who interprets Achilles’ response in the first part of the scene as governed by the affective.
26. Hector’s indignation is conveyed through v-alliteration.
27. Fenik (1968, 211–212) emphasizes the similarities between Patroclus and Hector.
28. *Il.* 20.196–8 (= *Il.* 17.30–32) were rejected by ancient and modern scholarship on the grounds that the sentiment is appropriate to Menelaus in Book 17 and inappropriate to the raging Achilles in Book 20. However, as Edwards remarks (1991, 313 comm. on 17.195–198), warnings to an adversary to retreat are conventional and the sentiment is appropriate to “the leasurly and amiable tone of this whole episode”.
29. On the structure of Ajax’ speech see Lohmann (1970, 91–93).
30. Lohmann (1970, 92).
31. De Jong (2001, 16).
32. The text of the *Odyssey* is from van Thiel (1991) and the translation is James Huddleston’s (2006) available through Kahane and Mueller (eds.) *The Chicago Homer*.
33. The only reinforced νήπιος-comment in the *Iliad* (16.46–47) is uttered by the primary narrator, see p. 62–63 above.
34. On the characteristics of Odysseus as internal narrator see de Jong (2001, 223–226).
35. De Jong (2001, 528 comm. on ll. 26–43).
36. De Jong (2001, 529 comm. on ll. 35–41).
37. Odysseus nearly replicates the narrator’s wording announcing the suitor’s death (22.41 νῦν ὑμῖν καὶ πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ’ ἐφήπται ≈ 22.33 ὡς δὴ σφιν καὶ πᾶσιν ὀλέθρου πείρατ’ ἐφήπτο). Both make assumptions about the suitors’ state of mind (22.31–32 ἐπεὶ ἦ φάσαν οὐκ ἐθέλοντα/ ἄνδρα κατακτεῖναι // 22.35–36 ὦ κύνες, οὐ μ’ ἔτ’ ἐφάσκεθ’ ὑπότροπον οἴκαδ’ ἰκέσθαι/ δῆμου ἄπο Τρώων) and express judgement, only that Odysseus’ judgemental word (ὦ κύνες) is naturally harsher than the narrator’s (νήπιοι).
38. Bakker (2013, 71–72).
39. On interformularity in general see Bakker (2013, 157–169).
40. Comparison of the Odyssean main narrator and Odysseus as a narrator in Suerbaum (1968), with an important note of nuance concerning Odysseus’ subjective style in de Jong (1992).

41. De Jong (1992, 4). On the resonance of the comment with *Od.* 22.32–33 see p. 70 and Bakker (2013, 71–72).
42. On the subjective nature of the passage see de Jong (1992, 3–4).
43. On the function of the line in the present context, compared to *Od.* 13.237 where it also occurs, see Besslich (1966, 33–36). He remarks crucially that the Polyphemus’ declaration that Odysseus must have come “from far away” when Odysseus has reported where he comes from (9.259) shows that the content of Odysseus’ speech is incomprehensible to the Cyclops.
44. On the significance of this episode for the Odyssean plot, which explains Athena’s disappearance as Odysseus’ helper between Troy and the council of the gods in *Od.* 1, see Clay (1983, 47–49).
45. *Od.* 3.146 = *Il.* 20.466 (the Iliadic narrator points out that the hope of the suppliant Tros that he might convince Achilles to spare his life is deluded). The passages share the theme of rejected supplication (Tros’ by Achilles and Agamemnon’s by Athene).
46. Maravela (2014).
47. Text and translation are from West (2003).
48. On the effect of the prolepsis see Olson (2012, 246 comm. on ll. 223–224): “their [sc. the verses’] presence allows the audience to grasp the tragedy in advance and thus watch it unfold with an understanding and at least partially sympathetic eye”.
49. That the addressees and audience of this poem are mature men and its subject matter the attitude of young men has been rightly stressed by Rawles (2018, 120–123).
50. The translations are from Sider (2001, 24–25).
51. S: the eleventh century codex Vindob. Gr. LXVII (olim Sambuci).
52. The most recent discussion of the problems relating to the transmission of Simonides fr. 19 and 20 is Rawles (2018, 106–113), which develops Sider (2001).
53. The correspondence is noted in Rawles (2018, 117). The translation is by Evelyn-White (1914).
54. For an overview of the scholarly discussion on the nature of heroism in the *Argonautica* see Glei (2001, 6–12).
55. Hunter (1993, 101ff.).
56. Knight (1995, 288) reads the reminders of the characters’ ignorance of what is in store for them as part and parcel of “a wider pattern of ignorance and misunderstanding in the *Argonautica*”.
57. The text is from Fränkel (1961) and the translation is by Race (2009).
58. The connection with Homer is made in Duckworth (1933, 11–12). On reminiscences of the boxing match in *Il.* 23.1–97 see Knight (1995, 62–66). The general narrative frame, of travelers at sea arriving to an unknown land to be faced with danger, is Odyssean. Amycus, who is descended from Poseidon, and his unlawful *thesmos* evoke the Odyssean Cyclops, see Knight (1995, 131–133).
59. Knight (1995, 64 n. 28).
60. This is unusual in the first two books of *Argonautica*, see Duckworth (1933, 40–41). For an early narratological analysis of the passage see Fusillo (1985, 106–107), who maintains that the prolepsis reduces suspense (“elimina ogni eventuale tensione nel lettore, straniando l’azione e focalizzando l’interesse sul modo in cui il Dioscuoro

- ottiene la vittoria ...”) and views its function as “elemento tecnico-formale, atto a evidenziare la lettura apolliniana dell’ episodio”. See also the brief analysis in Grillo (1988, 37–38).
61. Nothing is said explicitly about Ornytus’ fate. Fränkel (1968, 161 comm. on l. 102A), thinks that a verse that recounted how Ornytus was killed by Castor fell out after l. 102. Cuypers (1997, 101 and 139–140) suggested that Ornytus’ death, though not recounted, is implied in his homonymy with one of Odysseus’ comrades snatched by Skylla according to *Schol. in Od.* 12.257 (II 538, 15–16 Dindorff). At best Ornytus would be among the defeated warriors who returned to the city to bring tidings of the king’s death.
 62. Identified by Knight, see fn. 57.
 63. Fränkel (1968, 163–164 comm. on ll. 136–140) speaks of “objektiv ironische Situation” of Homeric origins, seasoned with “eine pikante Pointierung”: the bearers of bad news will be surprised by further bad news.
 64. The passage is offered as one of two closest parallels in Rocchina (2007, 116 comm. on ll. 137–138). Knight (1995, 69 and 73) argues for a closer relationship of 2.137–138 with *Od.* 22.32–33 and thus a hidden parallelism between the lawless Bebrycians and the lawless Suitors. She acknowledges without further examination the echo of *Il.* 22.445–446 which is, in my view, closer in terms of expression.
 65. Fränkel (1968, 163 comm. on ll. 136–140) points to 2.796–798 and finds in these verses the proof of divine involvement in Pollux’ victory. However, the speaker in that passage merely says that Pollux’ victory did not take place in contravention of divine will, that is that the gods approved and did nothing to prevent Pollux’ victory. For the reduced role of the divine and divine motivation of human action in the *Argonautica* see Hunter (1993, 78–79).
 66. Cuypers (1997, 33 comm. on ll. 1–29).
 67. Cuypers (1997, 101) points out that the formulation echoes Odysseus’ description of his companions in the mouth of Skylla (*Od.* 12.249–250 ἐμὲ δὲ φθέγγοντο καλεῦντες/ ἔξονομακλήδην, τότε γ’ ὕστατον ...).
 68. The verse attempts to produce sound effects through alliteration as *Od.* 22.33. More importantly, the theme of the Apollonian νήπιος-comment with the “last tying of the thongs” is inspired by Homeric expression, perhaps even by this specific Odyssean passage.
 69. Hunter (2015, 202 comm. on ll. 869–879).
 70. The position of the comment in the third foot follows Homeric models (*Il.* 16.46 and *Od.* 9.44). The changing perspective (Peleus – Thetis) parallels *Od.* 9.44 (Odysseus – comrades) but instead of the actively disobedient comrades we get a passive, horror-stricken father. This matches the main intertext of the episode, *Hom. Hymn Dem.* 239–291 (Peleus // Metaneira vs. Thetis // Demeter).
 71. On forms of metalepsis in Greek literature see de Jong (2009) and (2013). This example would fit under the label “blending of narrative voices”, see de Jong (2009, 99–106), although its character is somewhat different from the instances analysed by de Jong in which the voice of the primary narrator and the voice of a character-narrator blend into each other.

72. Hunter (1993, 107–108) observes concerning the evaluative comments in the *Argonautica*: “... variation can produce a complex effect which signals the controlling voice of the poet” and “the poet draws on our knowledge of standard epic contexts for this complex effect, thus advertising his epic’s literariness”.
73. For the interpretative difficulties posed by ξείνος and ξείνια in this passage see Dubielzig (1996, 243–244).
74. The Greek text is by Gerlaud (1982) and the translation is mine.
75. A closely connected passage is ll. 604–606, “and many infants (πολλὰ δὲ νήπια τέκνα ...) were snatched from the breasts of their mothers having suckled for a short time and, understanding not, paid for the wrongs of their fathers (καὶ οὐ νοέοντα τοκήων/ ἀμπλακίας ἀπέτινον).” It combines a tragic tenor (those slaughtered are not in a position to grasp what is going on) underpinned by (pseudo)etymological play (νήπια – οὐ νοέοντα), and ethical criticism (those killed had no part in the war). The narrative motif (“infant snatched from the breast of the mother”) is transferred from Astyanax’ fate (Bernabé PEG, *Ilias Parva* fr. 21, 3–4).
76. Miguélez-Cavero (2013, 427 comm. on ll. 577–580a).
77. See Miguélez-Cavero (2013, 39) for a list of passages.
78. Tsomis (2018, 95–96).
79. Duckworth (1936, 62–63). Schmitz (2007, 67–68) focuses on effect (“Q. employs it with the same effect as the Homeric narrator ...”) and does not remark on the difference in technique.
80. Gifts promised (or expected) but not received: *Il.* 10.303–305 (Dolon) and 11.121ff. (Peisander and Hippolochus). Unfulfilled *gamos*-motif: *Il.* 13.363–369 (Orthyoneus, the fiancé of Cassandra, the Iliadic predecessor of Coroebus). In Vergil’s *Aen.* 2.341–345 Coroebus is a young relative of Priam, madly in love with Cassandra.
81. Rebuffat (2001, 131–133).
82. Bartley (2003, 229 comm. on l. 362). Kneebone (2008, 45–46) reads in the passage a comparison of the greedy fish with wayward and doomed adolescents without specific allusion.
83. Duckworth (1936, 62).
84. The text by Pompella (2002) and the translation is from Way (1913) with some modernization.
85. See Bär (2009, 318 comm. on l. 96).
86. On Quintus’ exaggerated use of foreshadowing ahead of Penthesileia’s death, see Duckworth (1936, 72–73).
87. Following Schmitz’ distinction of the anachronies in the *Posthomerica* as “narratological” and “intertextual” (Schmitz 2007, 66) we may view Andromache’s reminiscences as intertextual analepsis connecting with *Il.* 22.
88. The verbal parallels are listed in Bär (2009, 392 comm. on ll. 132–135).
89. See also the analysis of the passage in Tsomis (2018, 186–187).
90. See the discussion in Tsomis (2018, 252–254).
91. On τις-speeches in the Homeric epics see de Jong (1987b), Schneider (1996) and de Jong (2001, 62–63).
92. Schneider (1996, 164–166).

93. Kneebone (2008, 46) remarks on the recurrent comparison of the hunted fish with infants and children in Oppian's *Halieutica*.
94. The comment is discussed in Schmiel (1992, 375); Lightfoot (2014, 40 n. 4); Bezan-takos (2015, 354 comm. on l. 449); Geisz (2018, 93).
95. The text is from Keydell (1959) and the translation from Rouse (1940) slightly adapted.
96. See the analysis on pp. 67–68.
97. For an overview see Agosti (2001).
98. In John's words: καὶ αὐτοὶ οὐκ εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὸ πραιτώριον ἵνα μὴ μιανθῶσιν ἀλλὰ φάγωσιν τὸ πάσχα.
99. 23 out of the 40 instances in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* come from Nonnus' poems.
100. On the interpretation of the passage see Livrea (1989, 177–178).
101. The text is from Livrea (1989) and the translation is mine.
102. On the derogatory connection of the Jews with bloody sacrifice also elsewhere in the *Paraphrase* and its background see Caprara (1999).
103. See for example Spanoudakis (2016, 614–616) concerning the *Paraphrase*.

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