THE PLACEMENT OF "BOOK DIVISIONS" IN THE *ODYSSEY*

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RECENT YEARS have witnessed an outburst of interest in the ancient "book divisions" of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey.* Much stimulus came from the near-simultaneous but independent appearance of two major studies of the *Iliad,* one by Oliver Taplin including a vigorous argument that the "books" were an inept imposition upon the composer's work, the other by Keith Stanley, arguing that they were an important feature of a sixth-century redaction that created the epic as we know it.[1] Soon after, S. Douglas Olson followed in Taplin's footsteps with an analysis of the "book divisions" of the *Odyssey* that proclaimed them an offense against the narrative's continuity.[2] An article by Irene J. F. de Jong concluded that the "divisions" were the work of Zenodotus, but that they built upon the composer's own formal means of punctuating his narrative by scenes of sunrise and sunset.[3] Criticism of Stanley's formalist arguments by Mark Edwards[4] indirectly prompted my own cognitive/narratological examination of the "segment markers" in the *Iliad,* which concluded that they were systematically placed at the junctures of low-consequence and high-consequence scenes.[5] I argued further that a systematic placement of this type suggested that the "segment markers" were devised to aid the comprehension of audiences and probably originated with the epic's composer. At the same time, Minna Skafte Jensen also concluded that the "books" of both epics were the work of their composer.[6]

The appearance of Jensen's article, accompanied by responses from a dozen scholars, has now cast the brightest spotlight yet on the "book divisions" of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey.* But it would be premature to suppose that many minds have been changed or opinions relaxed about a matter long

1. O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings* (Oxford, 1992), 285–93; K. Stanley, *The Shield of Homer* (Princeton, 1993), 249–93.

2. S. D. Olson, *Blood and Iron: Stories and Storytelling in the "Odyssey"* (Leiden, 1995), 228–39.

3. I. J. F. de Jong, "Sunsets and Sunrises in Homer and Apollonius of Rhodes: Book-divisions and Beyond," *Dialogos* 3 (1996): 20–35.

4. First in an unpublished lecture. Some of Edwards' points appear in his contribution to the "*Symbolae Osloenses* Debate: Dividing Homer," *SO* 74 (1999): 52–54 and in his forthcoming Martin Lectures.

5. B. Heiden, "The Placement of 'Book Divisions' in the *Iliad*," *JHS* 118 (1998): 68–81.

6. M. S. Jensen, "Dividing Homer: When, Where, and How Were the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* Divided into Songs?" *SO* 74 (1999): 5–35. Jensen's arguments mainly build upon the formalist approach of Stanley, but occasionally also make observations about the narratives as such.

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considered substantially decided and uninteresting. Discussion of the "book divisions" continues to run into stubborn beliefs about external evidence that allegedly proves their lateness and inauthenticity. The fact that the marked segments of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* number twenty-four in each epic, and are labeled by the twenty-four letters of the Ionic alphabet, is taken to show that the segmentation presupposes and thus postdates the adoption of this alphabet as the Greek standard.[7] But, as Stephanie West implied over thirty years ago, the identity of number could well have been a coincidence.[8] There is no apparent reason why Homer or any poet could not have composed an epic in twenty-four segments just because he liked it that way, without an alphabet of twenty-four letters; the segments of Apollonius (4), Herodotus (9), and Plato's *Republic* (10), to mention only a few examples, do not correspond in number to the letters of any available alphabet.[9] Why Homer (or a redactor) might have wanted to arrange his epics in twenty-four segments we may never know (why did Vergil design the *Aeneid* in twelve?), but it need have had nothing to do with his alphabet.[10]

Discussion of the marked segmentation also continues to founder on the ancient references to Homeric passages that disregard the "book divisions," e.g., Herodotus' referring to a passage in *Iliad* 6 as belonging to "Diomedes' *aristeia*." Such a reference means only that Herodotus is appealing to his readers' recollection of the *Iliad* as a story, not sending them back to their copies to locate the passage.[11] Thus it does not imply absence of distinction between Books 5 and 6, only that the distinction was irrelevant to the point Herodotus was making. Segment markers probably did not arise as a system of citation, and nobody should be surprised that they were not used as one. As I have pointed out elsewhere, Ps.-Longinus does not refer to passages in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by book, although the "books" were certainly in existence by his time.

Another objection brought against the authenticity of the "book divisions" is their absence from some early papyri. Leaving aside that one of the earliest papyri of the *Odyssey* does appear to preserve evidence of a line-count beginning at 9.1, indicating knowledge of a "book division" there, and that another papyrus places *Odyssey* 21.1 at the top of a column and also may mark the end of the same book,[12] it is surprising to find scholars according so much weight to omissions in the papyri. As West pointed

7. E.g., R. B. Rutherford, *Homer: "Odyssey" XIX and XX* (Cambridge, 1992), 8.

8. She deems the labeling of the "books" by the letters of the alphabet a "minor innovation" possibly due to Aristarchus, who West believes could not have invented the twenty-four book segmentation of the epics; see S. West, *The Ptolemaic Papyri of Homer*, Papyrologica Coloniensia, vol. 3 (Köln, 1967), 19.

9. The point holds whether or not the segmentation of Herodotus and that of the *Republic* were done by editors.

10. It is also possible that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were written down (by their composer, a scribe, or whomever) in the twenty-four letter Ionic alphabet long before it became the standard; see G. P. Goold, "Homer and the Alphabet," *TAPhA* 91 (1960): 272–91; R. Janko, *The "Iliad": A Commentary*, vol. 4: *Books 13–16* (Cambridge, 1992), 34–37; and H. Erbse, "Zur Orthographie Homers," *Glotta* 72 (1994): 82–97. This hypothesis has the merit of explaining the otherwise puzzling hegemony of the Ionic alphabet over many locally established competitors.

11. Essentially the same point in Heiden, "'Book Divisions'" (n. 5 above), 80–81; for further discussion see also idem, "Narrative Discontinuity and Segment Marking at *Iliad* 3/4, 7/8, and 10/11, and *Odyssey* 4/5, 17/18, and 23/24," *C&M* 51 (2000).

12. Both discussed by West, *Ptolemaic Papyri* (n. 8 above), 22.

out more than thirty years ago, Ptolemaic papyri sometimes run two entirely separate works together without sign of division;[13] but nobody would cite this practice as evidence that the two works were considered one. There is no reason to reject West's conclusion about the relevance of the papyri: "the evidence of the earliest papyri does not conflict with the view that the familiar system of division was already in use."[14]

The *communis opinio* still holds that the "book divisions" of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were the invention of an Alexandrian critic. There are two important reasons to doubt this. (1) The immediate universal acceptance of a single scheme of marked segmentation across both epics.[15] The Alexandrian critics disagreed about much, but apparently not about how the epics of Homer were divided into books—forty-six marker placements, each subject to separate determination, yet no trace of dissent about even one of them. This is strange, because the scheme of division is far from mechanical. Putting Homer into "books" was not like gathering all the Pindaric poems written on similar occasions. A single scheme could not have gained universal acceptance without opposition unless it had strong manuscript authority to begin with. (2) As I have shown elsewhere, the segment markers in the *Iliad* systematically respond to an unobtrusive aspect of narrative structure that ancient critics are unlikely ever to have noticed, especially in the hypothetical unmarked texts from which they are alleged to have worked. Zenodotus in particular cannot have invented the system found in the *Iliad,* since he athetized the "Shield of Achilles" at the end of Book 18, which is as good an example of a "low consequence" scene preceding a segment marker as one could find. Yet the "divisions" must have been in place soon after Zenodotus, for they were known to Apollonius, who manifestly echoes them.[16] As difficult as it would be to imagine that Zenodotus' segmentation could have been accepted without remark by all his successors in Alexandria (as well as their counterparts in Pergamum), it seems even less plausible that the innovation of a lesser critic could have achieved such acceptance. If the "divisions" were not inserted by Zenodotus and not inserted by Aristophanes of Byzantium or Aristarchus (who were later than Apollonius), then there is no Alexandrian critic who could have inserted them.

Stephanie West has suggested that since the "books" were called ῥαψωδίαι they may have originated in the performances of rhapsodes.[17] Only here does a sensible inference from the external evidence bring the provenance of the "book divisions" into some degree of focus. But not very clear focus, as the performance history of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* begins with their composer and then travels with many rhapsodes through many centuries.

13. Ibid., 21.

14. Ibid., 20.

15. D. P. Fowler, "First Thoughts on Closure," *MD* 22 (1989): 88. Cf. also West, *Ptolemaic Papyri,* 19–20, arguing that if the system had come from Zenodotus, Aristarchus would not have accepted it. In contrast to the unanimity concerning the segmentation of Homer, note the ancient testimony that Thucydides appeared in editions of nine and thirteen books as well as the now-standard eight; see B. Hemmerdinger, "La Division en livres de l'oeuvre de Thucydide," *REG* 61 (1948): 104–17.

16. De Jong, "Sunsets and Sunrises (n. 3 above)," 30, extending observations made by M. Campbell, "Apollonian and Homeric Book Division," *Mnemosyne* 36 (1983): 154–56.

17. In A. Heubeck, S. West, and J. B. Hainsworth, *A Commentary on Homer's "Odyssey,"* vol. 1, *Introduction and Books i–viii* (Oxford, 1988), 40.

Further analysis must rely upon the internal evidence. Taplin and Olson on the one hand, and Stanley, Jensen, and I on the other, have alike applied the principle of explaining Homer from Homer, but reached diametrically opposed conclusions. Taplin and Olson proclaim that the markers are inauthentic because they introduce unwanted "divisions" into Homer's fluid narrative. But this argument rests upon an easily exposed fallacy. The "books" of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are not independent entities: there is no evidence that they originated or served as anything other than constituent parts of the complete epics that comprise them. Thus the notion of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as "divided" into "books" must be discarded as an illusion. There are no unhomeric divisions, since there are no divisions at all. The object of investigation is the inherited system of articulating the epics as wholes.[18]

As indicated in my opening paragraph, the analyses by Stanley, Jensen, and myself have followed two approaches to the conclusion that the marked segmentation derives from the epics' creator. Stanley's analysis reveals a certain consistency within the phrases that begin or end "books" of the *Iliad,* and may be called formalist. My own rather different method examines the relational quality of scenes in the narrative and may be called cognitive. The articles of de Jong and Jensen combine elements of both approaches but are weighted more heavily toward formalism.[19] The following discussion of the placement of segment markers in the *Odyssey* aims to provide an analysis of their relationship to the narrative, complementary to my approach to the segmentation of the *Iliad.* The results are somewhat different, but they accord with other differences that distinguish the narrative designs of the two epics.

The marked segmentation of the *Odyssey* does not strictly follow the Iliadic principle of marking junctures of very low-consequence and very high-consequence scenes. This was to be expected, for the *Odyssey* has a different narrative structure from that of the *Iliad,* and it presents only a handful of scenes that in terms of consequentiality could be compared to the high-consequence scenes of the *Iliad.* In the *Iliad* the narrative progresses through a process of diversion, in which events approach a foreseen goal only to be redirected by a highly consequential intervention.[20] The plot of the *Odyssey,* by contrast, throws very few true surprises at either its audience or its characters. One figure, Athena, establishes the homecoming of Odysseus as the epic's program from the beginning, and she oversees almost every stage of its accomplishment. A narrative like this could hardly present many high-consequence scenes like those of the *Iliad.*

For this reason the segment markers of the *Odyssey* do not appear to be as necessary to comprehension of the narrative as those of the *Iliad.* Conceivably they might have been needed to serve some aspect of comprehension other than that of following the continuity of the narrative; indeed, since the low-consequence scenes that precede segment markers in the *Iliad*

18. De Jong, "Sunsets and Sunrises," 21.
19. But note de Jong's discussion of "internal punctuators"; de Jong, "Sunsets and Sunrises," 23–26.
20. Heiden, "'Book Divisions,'" 75–76.

are often thematically rich, the segment markers in the *Iliad* do assist comprehension both of the plot and of the general themes it implies. But the segment markers in the *Odyssey* do not seem necessary to thematic comprehension either. Passages of exceptional thematic significance, such as Odysseus' speech to Amphinomus (18.124–50), usually come in the middle of "books," that is, not near the segment markers. In some cases they are marked verbally, for they appear in speeches of instruction that explicitly cue the addressee, and hence the audience as well, to pay close attention (σὺ δὲ σύνθεο, 18.129). Or they may be suspensefully placed just before the narrative reaches an important, already foreseen goal, as in the case of the description of the palace of Alcinous (7.84–132), which occurs just as Odysseus is about to follow Athena's instructions for approaching the king and queen of the Phaeacians; at this moment an audience's attention is likely to be high already.[21] The question of how the composer of the *Odyssey* cues attentiveness to such passages deserves careful study, but the point to be made here is only that the cuing is not usually done by the paratextual segment markers.

As a result, it is possible to say of the segment markers in the *Odyssey,* as one could not of those in the *Iliad,* that they might have been omitted without seriously endangering the comprehension of audiences. But it would be going too far to conclude that the segment markers in the *Odyssey* are irrelevant to comprehension altogether. While in general the composition of the *Odyssey* is such that its narrative and thematic emphases are marked verbally and thus could be appreciated without paratextual cues at all, the placement of the "book divisions" does ease comprehension by marking relatively important junctures in the progress of the plot. The principle is similar to that used in the *Iliad,* but adapted to the differently structured narrative of the *Odyssey.* Whereas the story of the *Iliad* is articulated as a series of diversions, the *Odyssey* is articulated as a series of what might be called "stages" in the established routes along which the characters proceed to their goal.[22] The scenes preceded by segment markers are those that begin a stage. The scenes followed by segment markers (usually) anticipate a stage, which is not necessarily the stage that actually follows (e.g., at the end of Book 4, the suitors waiting in ambush for Telemachus' return). The feature of regular anticipation argues strongly against speculation that the "books" were supposed to be "a series of apparently self-contained units, which could almost by definition be legitimately read in isolation from one another."[23] On the contrary, the placement of the "divisions" to follow anticipations creates segments that demand continuation of the performance (or reading).[24]

21. Note the narrator's verbal cue, πολλὰ δέ οἱ [sc. Ὀδυσσῆι] κῆρ/ὄρμαιν' ἰσταμένῳ, πρὶν χάλκεον οὐδὸν ἱκέσθαι ("his heart was busy in thought, and he paused before the bronze threshold," 7.82–83).

22. Even the *apologoi* feature little diversion, since after Odysseus and his companions reach Aiaia every further stage of the wanderings is foretold by Circe.

23. Olson, *Blood and Iron* (n. 2 above), 238.

24. On choral interludes in Greek tragedies that interrupt the action at suspenseful points, and the anticipation of continued fighting at the conclusion of the *Iliad,* see B. Heiden, "The Three Movements of the *Iliad*," *GRBS* 37 (1996): 10–13. E. W. Handley ("The Conventions of the Comic Stage and their Exploitation by Menander," in *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique,* vol. 16 [Vandoevres-Genève, 1970], 11–12) notes Menander's practice of introducing a new development near the end of an act.

What I have called a "stage" in the *Odyssey* is a rather loosely defined entity,[25] and some stages might be difficult to recognize at all without the segment markers to call attention to them. Stages may be identified by location, time, characters, activities performed, or some combination of these features. They are not coextensive with marked segments, although the beginning of a marked segment is always the beginning of a stage. A stage may extend beyond a single marked segment (Odysseus' sojourn with the Phaeacians is a single stage that comprises several subordinate stages) or be interrupted in the midst of one: the narrator of the *Odyssey* frequently cross-cuts from one locale or group of characters to another,[26] and thus a marked segment predominantly devoted to a particular character or activity will sometimes include a scene occurring somewhere else and featuring different characters performing a different activity.[27]

Table 1 (page 253 below) displays all the scenes that follow segment markers in the *Odyssey*.

Readers familiar with the *Odyssey* will have no difficulty recognizing that most of these scenes begin identifiable stages in Odysseus' return to his homeland and status. The first nine, as well as the scenes following the markers at 14.1, 15.1, 21.1, 22.1, and 23.1, are such obvious beginnings that explanation would be superfluous. Ten others require some comment.

10.1: Odysseus arriving at the island of Aeolus and receiving the bag of winds. This initiates the wanderings caused by the curse of Polyphemus. It marks them as a distinct stage by bringing Odysseus and his men to within sight of home before they are blown off course again, and by Aeolus' refusal to help when Odysseus returns to him, explicitly on the grounds that Odysseus is hated by the gods (10.74).

11.1: The departure from Aeaea initiates the visit to the Underworld. Why is the segment marker placed before a departure, rather than before an arrival, which would be more usual?[28] The Underworld differs from other places where Odysseus stops in that he is not, and cannot be, offered hospitality there. Thus Odysseus never truly arrives at Hades, but only at an in-between point from which he can discourse with the dead. The special character of this stage as one that lacks arrival may be cued by its unusual beginning in a departure.

12.1: The arrival back at Aeaea initiates a sequence of obstacles marked as a distinct stage by Circe's preview and counsel. These challenges are the

25. Cf. Circe's vague expression μέτρα κελεύθου at *Od.* 10.539 (but see Heubeck in Heubeck et al., "*Odyssey*" [n. 17 above], vol. 2, ad loc.).

26. Cf. S. Richardson, *The Homeric Narrator* (Nashville, 1990), 118, and Olson, *Blood and Iron*, 110.

27. Book 4, predominantly devoted to the sojourn of Telemachus at Sparta, changes scene to the suitors' learning of Telemachus' departure and setting an ambush for his return (4.625–847); Book 15, predominantly concerned with Telemachus' departure from Sparta, changes scene to Eumaeus' steading (15.300–495) and then to Telemachus' arrival at Ithaca (15.495–551).

28. The tendency of "books" in the *Odyssey* (and *Iliad*) to begin or end with certain regular motifs, such as arrival or sunrise, has been cited, most recently by Jensen, "Dividing Homer" (n. 6 above), as evidence that the "divisions" are formally consistent—to a degree—and thus belong to the original composition. But the numerous exceptions—"books" beginning with departures (*Od.* 11) or characters going to bed (*Od.* 12), or ending with arrivals (*Od.* 15) or at sunrise (*Od.* 23)—not to mention the awakenings and bedtimes in the middle of "books"—frustrate every attempt to discover purely formal criteria that confirm the authenticity of the "book divisions." In addition to Jensen, see also de Jong, "Sunrises and Sunsets," and G. P. Goold, "The Nature of Homeric Composition," *ICS* 2 (1977): 26–30.

TABLE 1. SCENES FOLLOWING SEGMENT MARKERS IN THE *ODYSSEY*

"Book Division" before	Followed by
1.1	(Proem) Athena's dialogue with Zeus
2.1	Telemachus awakening and summoning the assembly
3.1	Telemachus' arrival at Pylos
4.1	Telemachus' arrival at Lacedaemon
5.1	Athena's dialogue with Zeus
6.1	Athena prompting Nausicaa to wash her family's clothes
7.1	Nausicaa and Odysseus entering the Phaeacian city
8.1	Alcinous taking Odysseus to the assembly to meet the Phaeacian leaders
9.1	Odysseus beginning the story of his wanderings
10.1	Odysseus and the companions arriving at the island of Aeolus and receiving the bag of winds
11.1	Departure from Aeaea
12.1	Arrival back at Aeaea
13.1	Alcinous promising Odysseus homecoming and arranging gifts
14.1	Odysseus' arrival at the steading of Eumaeus
15.1	Athena arriving at Lacedaemon and prompting Telemachus to return to Ithaca
16.1	Odysseus and Eumaeus noticing the arrival of Telemachus
17.1	Telemachus going to the Ithacan city
18.1	The beggar Irus arriving at the palace of Odysseus
19.1	Odysseus pondering how to murder the suitors
20.1	Odysseus pondering whether to kill the servant women
21.1	Athena prompting Penelope to set the contest of the bow
22.1	Odysseus stripping off his rags and shooting an arrow at Antinous
23.1	Eurycleia telling Penelope that Odysseus has killed the suitors
24.1	Hermes bringing the souls of the suitors to the Underworld

last in which Odysseus is accompanied by his companions, and their cooperation is a fundamental issue in each episode.

13.1: Alcinous' promise of homecoming and gifts initiates the preparation for Odysseus' return to Ithaca. This also includes his meeting with Athena, which prepares for his eventual return to his position as husband and king.

16.1: Odysseus and Eumaeus noticing the arrival of Telemachus initiates the reunification of Odysseus and his son. Why not have the marker before the scene of Telemachus' arrival, which concludes Book 15? Apparently because the defining feature of this stage is not that Telemachus is in Ithaca, where he has been before, but that he is reunited with his father there.

17.1: Telemachus announcing his departure for the city initiates the events that will take place at the palace. Why begin with a departure instead of an arrival? Probably because the stage initiated concerns both Telemachus and Odysseus, but their arrivals occur at different times. Beginning with the arrival of Telemachus, which occurs first, would have misdefined

the stage. But Telemachus' parting speech, which immediately follows the segment marker, includes both father and son.

18.1: Arrival of the beggar Irus initiates the suitors' late-day ("happy hour") entertainment.

19.1: Odysseus pondering how to murder the suitors initiates preparations for the ambush: Odysseus and Telemachus remove the weapons, and after interviewing the beggar (Odysseus incognito), Penelope decides to hold the contest of the bow the next day.

20.1: Odysseus pondering whether to kill the servant women. This initiates a period of waiting before the archery contest. Its definition is essentially negative, a frustrating delay between the plan and the execution. But in the *Odyssey,* where the importance of patience is often stressed, the passage of time during inconsequential events is itself meaningful.

24.1: Hermes bringing the souls of the suitors to the Underworld initiates a sequence of divinely sponsored reunions/reconciliations, in which Odysseus is reunited with Laertes and then Odysseus and the Ithacans make peace. The second Underworld scene of the *Odyssey* shows that even the impious suitors receive divine care, and that the gods have facilitated reconciliation even between Agamemnon and Achilles.[29]

The scenes preceding the segment markers usually anticipate another stage, often but not always that which begins after the segment marker. With one exception (Alcinous' query of Odysseus at the end of Book 8) they do not actually cause the stage they anticipate, and in fact they usually cause very little. Table 2 (p. 255 below) displays the scenes that precede segment markers.

Virtually all of these scenes clearly and sometimes explicitly anticipate a further development in the story. Clear but implicit anticipations include some of the departures, which always imply arrival somewhere else, and some of the "going to sleep" scenes, since going to sleep implies awakening the next day.[30] The singing and dancing of the suitors preceding the marker at 17.606 anticipates the "happy hour" entertainments that follow; Eurycleia's report to the women of the palace before the marker at 22.501 anticipates her report to Penelope (ordered by Odysseus at 22.481–82). And so forth. This feature mitigates the effect of formal signs of closure at the end of a segment.[31]

The segment markers in the *Odyssey* therefore usually follow low-consequence scenes that arouse anticipation of what is to come. Unlike the

29. Cf. S. V. Tracy, *The Story of the "Odyssey"* (Princeton, 1990), 143.

30. The more subtle cases include the end of *Odyssey* 5, where the simile of the seed of fire (5.490)—an ember that will later kindle flame—implies a forward trajectory; and the end of *Odyssey* 14, where, as he lends Odysseus his cloak, Eumaeus states that the beggar will have to give it back in the morning (ἠῶθεν, 14.512), but he can expect to get one from Telemachus when he arrives (14.515–17). The faintest anticipations would include the end of *Odyssey* 16, where the going-to-bed is preceded by Eumaeus' report about the suitors' return from ambush (perhaps suggesting the agenda Odysseus has set for the next morning, 16.270–73); and the end of *Odyssey* 18, where the suitors' departure for their homes to sleep is preceded by Amphinomus' injunction to "leave the stranger to Telemachus" (18.420–21). Immediately after the suitors go, Telemachus and Odysseus remove the arms from the hall.

31. On these signs, see J. Van Sickle, "Dawn and Dusk as Motifs of Opening and Closure in Heroic and Bucolic Epos (Homer, Apollonius, Theocritus, Virgil)," in *Atti del Convegno Mondiale Scientifico di Studi su Virgilio,* vol. 1 (Milan, 1984), 127–31, and de Jong, "Sunrises and Sunsets," 22–29.

TABLE 2. SCENES PRECEDING SEGMENT MARKERS IN THE *ODYSSEY*

"Book Division" after	Preceded by
1.443	Telemachus going to bed, thinking about the journey advised by Mentor/Athena
2.433	Telemachus boarding ship and departing on his journey
3.497	Telemachus and Peisistratus mounting their chariots and departing Pherae
4.847	The suitors waiting in ambush for Telemachus
5.493	Odysseus on Scheria burying himself in leaves and going to sleep
6.331	Odysseus praying to Athena for help before he enters the Phaeacian city
7.347	Alcinous promising conveyance to Odysseus on the morrow, and all going to sleep
8.586	Alcinous asking Odysseus to identify himself
9.566	Odysseus and his companions departing from the island across the bay from the Cyclopes
10.574	Circe completing the preparation for the journey to the Underworld
11.640	Odysseus and his companions setting sail away from the Underworld
12.453	Odysseus stating that he has already told the story of his sojourn with Calypso
13.441	Athena disguising Odysseus and going off to summon Telemachus
14.533	Eumaeus going out to sleep with Odysseus' pigs
15.557	Telemachus arriving at the dwelling of Eumaeus
16.481	Telemachus, Odysseus, and Eumaeus going to bed
17.606	Eumaeus concluding his dinner and leaving the palace, where the suitors are singing and dancing
18.428	The suitors going home to bed
19.604	Penelope announcing that she will set the contest of the bow, sending the stranger/Odysseus to bed, and then going to sleep herself
20.393	The suitors making fun of the prophecy of Theoclymenus; narrator foreshadows their imminent destruction
21.434	Odysseus and Telemachus arming themselves
22.501	The women servants learning of the slaughter of the suitors and greeting Odysseus
23.372	Odysseus and Telemachus arming and leaving the city
24.548	Odysseus and the Ithacans making pledges for peace in the future

similarly positioned scenes in the *Iliad,* they rarely present any special degree of thematic richness.

In terms of their content, the marked segments of the *Odyssey* display widely varying degrees of coherence among the events narrated. Several are highly systematic. Book 2 narrates Telemachus' implementation of Athena's advice to call an assembly and travel for news of his father. Book 5 narrates the steps in Odysseus' departure from Ogygia and his eventual safe landing

at Scheria.[32] Some highly systematic segments are slightly loosened by brief, quasi-paratactic appendices, prefaces, or insertions: thus Book 3 predominantly narrates Telemachus' sojourn at the palace of Nestor at Pylos, but at the end it includes a brief second stop at Pherae.[33] Much looser are Book 4 (see n. 27 above; a degree of coherence is furnished by the fact that all the incidents explicitly concern Telemachus' voyage), and Book 15 (see n. 27 above). A number of segments present a somewhat paratactic sequence of scenes that share common elements of setting, characters, time, or types of occurrences: Books 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 could all be described in this way, and one might almost imagine them running on continuously but for the stage-setting events that provide articulation (Telemachus and Odysseus reunited, departure to the town, "happy hour" amusement, preparation for the slaughter, waiting it out). The same is true of Books 9, 10, and 12, which are articulated by their relationship to the curse of Polyphemus (distinguishing the trials of Book 9 from those that follow) and the instructions of Circe (distinguishing the trials of Book 12 from those that precede).[34] The events of Book 24 seem to be thematically related; each involves a divinely aided reunion or reconciliation.[35]

Given the loose definition of "stage" appropriate to the plot of the *Odyssey,* it is probably impossible to demonstrate rigorously that every single conceivable juncture of anticipation/stage setting is marked by a "book division." But one may doubt whether a compelling case could be made for replacing any of the traditionally marked junctures with others not traditionally marked. Adding new markers would be even more problematic, since it would produce some exceptionally short segments, or, looked at another way, markers placed exceptionally close together.

Of the alternative placements for "divisions" that have been proposed, perhaps the most popular is 13.92/13.93, which would replace the one transmitted at 12.453/13.1.[36] The point suggested is that at which the Phaeacian ship bearing the sleeping Odysseus pulls into the harbor at Ithaca. Thus it can undoubtedly be regarded as the beginning of a stage and comparable in this respect to the locations of transmitted segment markers. The preceding

32. Among the highly systematic marked segments see also Book 6 (how Nausicaa escorted Odysseus to the Phaeacian city), Book 7 (how Odysseus was accepted in the palace by Alcinous and Arete), Book 11 (Odysseus' meetings with the dead at the edge of the Underworld), Book 21 (contest of the bow), Book 22 (killing of the suitors and unfaithful servants and cleanup). Book 14 focuses entirely on Odysseus' meeting with Eumaeus, but since their dialogue is resumed in the middle of Book 15, Book 14 does not present as clear an example of narrative system as the others mentioned.

33. With these perhaps include Book 1 (Athena's prompting of Telemachus, preceded by the proem and the dialogue of Athena and Zeus), Book 13 (preparation for Odysseus' return; Poseidon's petrification of the convoy ship is indirectly relevant), perhaps Book 19 (interview of Odysseus and Penelope, preceded by Odysseus' and Telemachus' removal of the weapons from the hall; both of these events prepare for Odysseus' ambush, but the relevance of the interview to this element of the plot only becomes apparent at the very end), and Book 23 (the reunion of Odysseus and Penelope; Odysseus' preparation to see Laertes added).

34. Book 8, in which Odysseus meets the Phaeacians in a variety of public venues, could also be included in this category; see the comments of Hainsworth in Heubeck et al., "*Odyssey,*" 343.

35. Cf. Tracy, *Story of the "Odyssey"* (n. 29 above), 143.

36. W. B. Stanford, *The "Odyssey" of Homer*^{2}, vol. 2 (London, 1958), p. xi, n.1 and Olson, *Blood and Iron,* 233. The *Odyssey* is said to be divided into two parts at this juncture by Taplin, *Homeric Soundings* (n. 1 above), 19 and 27 and Rutherford, "*Odyssey*" (n. 7 above), 8. Taplin's idea seems to be that the *Odyssey* was designed for performance on two days, the first day's performance ending at 13.92 and the next day's picking up at 13.93.

passage (13.90–92) has also recommended itself as the end of a hypothetical book (or larger performance segment) because it alludes to the proem of the whole epic and brings to an end the stage of Odysseus' trials at sea.[37] But it is precisely this strong sense of closure, which looks backward on the past (ὃς **πρὶν** μὲν μάλα πολλὰ πάθ' ἄλγεα . . . δὴ τότε γ' ἀτρέμας εὗδε, **λελασμένος ὅσσ' ἐπεπόνθει**, "[Odysseus] who **before** had suffered many pains . . . but then he slept peacefully, **forgetful of all he had undergone**") without any hint of anticipation, that distinguishes 13.90–92 from passages that precede the actual segment markers.

If we imagine a segment marker at 13.92/13.93 and begin reading, we soon realize another reason why a marker was never placed here. No personal agent is mentioned for twenty lines, and then it is the pronoun οἱ (13.113), referring to the Phaeacian crew, who were last mentioned at 13.83. The subject of the first main verb is the ship (13.95), whose arrival is followed by a long description of the locale. One may look at any actual marked segment of either the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* to see how anomalous the passage beginning at 13.93 would be at the head of a segment. The beginning of *Odyssey* 5 furnishes adequate illustration (emphasis supplied):

Ἠὼς δ' ἐκ λεχέων παρ' ἀγαυοῦ Τιθωνοῖο
ὄρνυθ'. ἵν' ἀθανάτοισι φόως φέροι ἠδὲ βροτοῖσιν.
οἱ δὲ θεοὶ θῶκόνδε καθίζανον, ἐν δ' ἄρα τοῖσι
Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, οὗ τε κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον.
τοῖσι δ' Ἀθηναίη λέγε κήδεα πόλλ' Ὀδυσῆος
μνησαμένη· **μέλε γάρ οἱ ἐὼν ἐν δώμασι νύμφης**·

Now Dawn rose from her bed, where she lay by haughty Tithonos,
carrying light to the immortal gods and to mortals,
and the gods came and took their places in session, and among them
Zeus who thunders on high, and it is his power that is greatest,
and Athene spoke to them of the many cares of Odysseus,
remembering. **Though he was in the nymph's house, she still thought of him** . . .
[Lattimore trans.]

It would be useful also to compare the passage beginning at 13.1, since if the suggestion of Stanford and Olson were taken it would lose its position following a segment marker:

Ὣς ἔφαθ' · **οἱ** δ' ἄρα **πάντες ἀκὴν ἐγένοντο** σιωπῇ,
κηληθμῷ δ' ἔσχοντο κατὰ μέγαρα σκιόεντα.
τὸν δ' αὖτ' Ἀλκίνοος ἀπαμείβετο φώνησέν τε·
"ὦ Ὀδυσεῦ, ἐπεὶ ἵκευ ἐμὸν ποτὶ χαλκοβατὲς δῶ
ὑψιρεφές, **τώ σ' οὔ τι παλιμπλαγχθέντα γ' οἴω**
ἄψ ἀπονοστήσειν . . .

So **he spoke**, and **all of them stayed stricken to silence,**
held in thrall by the story all through the shadowy chambers.

37. S. V. Tracy ("The Structures of the *Odyssey*," in *A New Companion to Homer*, ed. I. Morris and B. Powell [Leiden, 1997, 369]) sees the allusion to the proem at 13.90–92 as relevant to the placement of the marker before 13.1, but does not explain why it should not support the alternative placement, as others have suggested.

> **Then Alkinoos answered him** in turn and said to him:
> "Odysseus, now that you have come to my house, bronze-founded
> with the high roof, **I think you will not lose your homecoming,**
> **nor be driven back from it again** . . .
> [Lattimore trans.]

In the sites actually chosen for segment markers, Homeric narrative always quickly identifies significant characters actively moving the story into a new stage. The vague, inert narration following 13.93, of course quite effective as poetry but atypical of passages following markers in Homer, argues strongly against the proposed alternative location.[38] The transmitted marker also makes a contribution to comprehension that the proposed substitute does not, since while anyone could see that Odysseus' arrival on Ithaca begins a stage even without a segment marker as a cue, the coherence as a stage of preparation of the Phaeacians' conveyance and Athena's advice might be illegible were they not enclosed by segment markers. The existing placement is in essence a *lectio difficilior* whose authenticity is supported precisely by the fact that it is unlikely to have occurred to a critic, or even been accepted unless found in a trusted source, but on close examination proves stylistically more plausible than a superficially obvious improvement.

Like those of the *Iliad,* the segment markers of the *Odyssey* convey useful information about the organization of the narrative. It is not absolutely essential information; even without it an audience could probably follow the story. Moreover, an audience could probably recognize most of the stages of Odysseus' return even without the segment markers to cue them. Thus, the segment markers of the *Odyssey* are in a sense redundant. But this does not mean that they could not have been scripted by the composer. For one thing, the *Odyssey* is so full of redundancy—how many times does the return of Odysseus have to be predicted?—that redundancy may almost be considered a feature of its style. The composer of the *Odyssey* was not one to shrink from emphasizing his points, and this is what the segment markers do.

It has also been shown that a few of the segment markers (e.g., those preceding 13.1, 16.1 and 17.1) mark stages of the story more accurately or subtly than the formal cues of departures and/or arrivals. While the information provided by these markers could not be considered indispensable to basic comprehension of the story, it does display an astute respect for the epic's precise narrative structure more readily attributed to its composer than anyone else. Moreover, the idea that the *Odyssey* might once have existed without segment markers is intrinsically implausible, because per-

38. De Jong ("Sunsets and Sunrises," 27) also criticizes the proposed alternative placement because it puts the Phaeacians' voyage with Odysseus and Poseidon's dramatic punishment in different books. A. Thornton (*People and Themes in Homer's "Odyssey"* [London, 1970], 123) had previously objected that the third-person narration in 13.1–92 would make an awkward addition to the first-person narration of Odysseus between 9.1 and 12.453. Fowler, "Closure" (n. 15 above), 94–95 observes that Vergil placed the proem of the second "half" of the *Aeneid* 37 lines past the beginning of Book 7, intentionally exploiting dissonance between "externally marked articulation and . . . closural features." This seems to be an imitation of the Homeric effect in *Odyssey* 13.

formances had to include some intermissions,[39] and if these intermissions did not coincide with the stages of the story, then they might well have engendered confusion. Since a perfectly continuous recitation was not an option,[40] the composer had every incentive to build in intermissions that would emphasize, or at least not detract from, the narrative relationships he had created in his script. It appears that he achieved this in the segment markers of the *Odyssey*.[41]

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39. Cf. J. Van Sickle, "The Book-Roll and Some Conventions of the Poetic Book," *Arethusa* 13 (1980): 10, who suggests that in his own performances the composer used pauses to masterful effect (citing Odysseus' teasing halt in the midst of the *Nekyia* as evidence he knew this technique) but did not inscribe them in his text, leaving it open to varying articulations.

40. Recitation of several segments without pause is also unlikely. But sequences of marked segments, marked off from other sequences by special intermissions (such as a pause in performance until the next day) are conceivable; see Stanley, *Shield* (n. 1 above), 261–66, and Heiden, "Three Movements" (n. 24 above), 5–22, which includes discussion of similar proposals for performances of the *Iliad*. For the idea that the *Odyssey* might fall into six groups of four books each, not necessarily with regard to performance, see Thornton, *People and Themes,* 121–24; W. G. Thalmann, *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic* (Baltimore, 1984), 52–53; and Tracy, "Structures" (n. 37 above), 365–68.

41. Thanks to Professor Malcolm Willcock for helpful suggestions that improved this article.