

Dolos and *Mētis* in the Doloneia: An Odyssean *Aristeia*

At the beginning of *Iliad* 10 in the celebrated Townley manuscript, a scholion reads, “They say the song was composed separately by Homer and that it was not a part of the *Iliad*, but that it was inserted into the poem by Peisistratus” (Text of Erbse 1971). A similar belief—that the Doloneia was inserted into the *Iliad* by a *different* poet—dominates modern scholarship (West 2011). Scholars have pointed to many absurdities in the text to support this view, contending that the Doloneia could be “removed from the *Iliad* without leaving a trace” (West 2011). Some have even argued that “the events narrated bear no relation to the plan of the poem” (West 2011) and that the book cannot be “serious poetry” (Henry 1905). One of the main pieces of evidence for these views is the puzzling figure of Dolon—a foolish, perhaps laughable, character whose behavior bears a striking incongruity with his name. Dolon, whose name is clearly a pun on the word *dolos* (Duffy 2020), best translated as “trickery,” “treachery,” or “guile,” never once employs *dolos*. “What,” then, “is the use of having Dolon in *Iliad* 10?” (Davidson 1979).

I propose to illustrate that, regardless of its authenticity, there is an explanation for the content and position of the Doloneia. In their critiques of *Iliad* 10, some scholars have overstated the uselessness of the book and its reliance on humor and have overlooked one of its main points—its portrayal of *dolos*. I will argue that the Doloneia serves as a discourse on the nature of *dolos* and presents a sort of Odyssean *aristeia* following Odysseus’ encounter with Achilles in *Iliad* 9. I will first examine the narrator’s peculiar description of Dolon in lines 314 – 317, proposing that Homer’s mentions of Dolon’s ugliness and his five sisters illustrate two aspects of the nature of *dolos*: it is both despicable and inherently feminine. Next, through a comparison of

Dolon's actions with those of Odysseus and an analysis of Antilochus' chariot race in *Iliad* 23, I will illustrate that Dolon himself is the archetype of pure *dolos*—one that lacks *mētis*. Finally, drawing on Nagy's theory of Achilles harboring disdain for Odysseus in the embassy scene in *Iliad* 9 (Nagy 1999), I will argue that the Doloneia not only warns against using *dolos* without *mētis* but also serves as a type of Odyssean *aristeia* in which Odysseus can overcome the embarrassment he faced at the hands of Achilles in *Iliad* 9.

Works Cited

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