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Speech genres in the Odyssey

Recent conceptualizations of early Greek epic poetry (Foley 2004; Martin 1989 and 2005; Minchin 2007) have shown that the Homeric poems functioned like a matrix-genre that diachronically incorporated many speech and poetic genres in a way that, at least for the “Odyssey” (Bakker 2013), can be considered dialogic according to the Bakhtinian model (Bakhtin 1982). In order to tackle the performance of Menelaos in “Odyssey” 4, 76-289, my starting point is comprised by the understanding of “genre” as the stabilization of communicative patterns and by the differentiation proposed by M. Bakhtin and T. Todorov between primary or everyday and secondary or literary genres (Bakhtin 1986; Todorov 1980), adapted respectively as “epos” and “aoidê” by E. Bakker (2013). I intend to pinpoint some aspects of three genres present in Menealaos performances: lament, ethnographic discourse and flyting.