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**Diomedes Takes Charge: Character and Speech in *Iliad* 4, 7, and 9**

Studies of Diomedes' increasing maturity in the *Iliad* have often focused on his aristeia in Book 5 and his meeting with Glaucus (e.g. Martin 1989, 120-30). Previous work on speech-introductory language for Diomedes in Books 7 and 9 (Kirk 1990, Hainsworth 1993) has noted its focus on Diomedes' self-confidence. However, these analyses do not take into account the difference between Diomedes' subservient behavior in Book 4 and his boldness as a speaker in Books 7 and 9. In addition, they do not contrast this self-confident tone with the consistent focus on the surprise of Diomedes' comrades in speech conclusions for him. This paper will consider the way in which the narrator presents speeches by Diomedes in Books 4, 7, and 9 of the *Iliad*. It will show that formulaic language in speech introductions and speech conclusions for Diomedes is dynamically used to portray a steady increase of initiative and influence for the young hero.

In Book 4, Agamemnon exhorts important Greek heroes to fight hard in the upcoming battle with the Trojans. The last hero he addresses is Diomedes, whom he criticizes for being less illustrious than his father Tydeus (Il. 4.370-400). Diomedes does not answer Agamemnon (401). Later, when the Trojans offer to pay restitution for Helen in Book 7, the other Greeks are silent (7.398-99). Finally Diomedes announces that the Greeks refuse this offer (400-402), greatly surprising his comrades, who nonetheless approve of his speech (403-404).

In Book 9, Diomedes takes the initiative in a more noticeable way. His speeches before and after the embassy to Achilles are set off by longer versions of the language that appears at 7.398-99 and 403-404. Before the embassy is sent, Agamemnon suggests returning to Greece. Diomedes scouts this suggestion and criticizes Agamemnon for making it (32-49). Here Diomedes is no longer subservient to Agamemnon, and he takes the initiative among the Greeks in a more important situation than in Book 7. At the end of the embassy, when Odysseus reports the failure of the attempt to placate Achilles, a passage of four verses (9.693-96) draws out the surprise and chagrin of the Greeks more fully than in either of the previous two scenes. This throws Diomedes' answering speech into particularly high relief, when he again berates Agamemnon and says that the embassy should never have been sent at all.

Speech introductions and conclusions for Diomedes in successive scenes of Greek gatherings in *Iliad* 4, 7, and 9 show an evolution in Diomedes' ability as a speaker and in his stature among the Achaeans. This pattern does not emerge if individual speech introductions or conclusions are considered simply in terms of whether they are

formulaic. In fact, superficially unvarying formulaic language contributes to a dynamic picture of a recognizable individual who changes over time.