

# Dusting off the Classics: Homer's *Iliad*

Richard Sacks – Spring 2022

Handout for session #1 (3/15/22)



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ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

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## *Iliad*, book 1, lines 1-9 (Green translation)

- 1 **Wrath**, goddess, sing of **Achilles** **Peleus'** son's
- 2 calamitous wrath, which hit the **Achaians** with countless ills —
- 3 many the valiant souls it saw off down to Hādēs,
- 4 souls of heroes, their selves left as carrion for dogs
- 5 and all birds of prey, and the plan of **Zeus** was fulfilled —
- 6 from the first moment those two men parted **in fury**,
- 7 **Atreus'** son, king of men, and the **godlike** Achilles.
- 8 Which of the gods was it brought them **into contention**?
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### #1 *mēnin* < *mēnis* (line 1):

"*wrath*" – note the Homeric (& other hexameter tradition) attestations of *mēnis*:

<i>Iliad</i> :	1.1 of Achilles	1.75 of Apollo	5.34 of Zeus
	5.178 of a god	5.444 of Apollo	9.517 of Achilles
	13.624 of Zeus	15.122 of Zeus	16.711 of Apollo
	19.35 of Achilles	19.75 of Achilles	21.523 of the gods

<i>Odyssey</i> :	2.66 of the gods	3.135 of Athena	5.146 of Zeus
	14.283 of Zeus		

*Homeric Hymns*: 2.351 & 411 of Demeter 5.290 of the gods

Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles*: 21 of the gods

### #2 *Pēlēiadeō* (line 1): possessive form of the patronymic "son of Peleus"

**Peleus material < the *Library of the ancient mythographer Apollodorus*** (Frazer translation): "[Peleus] married Thetis, daughter of Nereus, for whose hand Zeus and Poseidon had been rivals; but when Themis prophesied that the son born of Thetis would be mightier than his father, they withdrew.... Zeus [decided he] would marry her to a mortal [specifically Peleus, who was] advised ... to seize her and hold her fast in spite of her shape-shifting, ... and though she turned, now into fire, now into water, and now into a beast, he did not let her go till he saw that she had resumed her former shape. And he married her on Pelion, and there the gods celebrated the marriage with feast and song" (3.13.5). [At the wedding] "*Eris* ['strife,' the root of which appears in line 6 *erisante* & line 8 *eridi*] threw an apple as a prize of beauty to be contended for by Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite; and Zeus commanded Hermes to lead them to

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- 3 pollas d' iphthimous psukhas Aidi proiapsen
- 4 hērōōn, autous de helōria teukhe kunessin
- 5 oiōnoisi te pasi, **Dios** d' eteleieto boulē,
- 6 ex hou dē ta prōta diastētēn **erisante**
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### #2 continued: *Pēlēiadeō* "son of Peleus" (line 1)

Alexander [= Paris] on Ida in order to be judged by him.... Hera said...she would give him the kingdom over all men; and Athena promised victory in war, and Aphrodite the hand of Helen. And he decided in favour of Aphrodite" (E.3.2). When Thetis had got a babe by Peleus, she wished to make it immortal, and unknown to Peleus she used to hide it in the fire by night in order to destroy the mortal element which the child inherited from its father, but by day she anointed him with ambrosia. But Peleus watched her, and, seeing the child writhing on the fire, he cried out; and Thetis, thus prevented from accomplishing her purpose, forsook her infant son and departed to the Nereids. Peleus brought the child to [the centaur] Chiron, who received him and fed him on the inwards of lions and wild swine and the marrows of bears" (3.13.6).

### #3 *Akhilēos* (line 1), *Akhaiois* (line 2), and the *akhos* connection

The Iliadic tradition etymologizes **Achilles' name** as "grief [*akhos*] of/for the people [*lāos*]." The tradition also connects the noun *akhos* to *Akhaiois* "Achaian" (one of many names for the Greeks) – cf. the word play at 16.21-22:

ō **Akhileu** Pēlēos huie mega phertat' **Akhaiōn**  
mē nemesa: toion gar **akhos** bebiēken **Akhaious**.

Ah, **Achilles**, Peleus' son, far mightiest of the **Achaians**,  
do not be angry! Such trouble [= *akhos*] has come upon the **Achaians**.

Note the use of *Akhaiois* in the opening passage 5x (lines 2, 12, 15, 17, 22) before the poem uses another word for the Greeks (*Danaoi* "Danaans" in 42). Other connections (i.e., folk etymologies) of which the *Iliad* is aware include connecting Achilles' name to *laas* 'stone' and *a-cheilē* 'not [with] lips.'

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### #4 *Dios* (lines 5 & 9, a form of Zeus' name) and the epithet *dios* (line 7)

Note that in Greek, the form of Zeus' name in the possessive (i.e., genitive) case is virtually identical and homophonous to the epithet *dios* in its nominative form (i.e., when modifying the syntactic subject). Though the epithet *dios* and the name *Zeus* do come from the same root in Indo-European (the "parent" language of Greek and many other languages), *dios* does not always – or even primarily – mean "godlike" in Homer (Green translates it that way in only 2 of its 93 Iliadic instances, and only 2 of the 55 uses with Achilles; most often he translates it as "noble"). More importantly, its meaning is partly governed by the way epithets function in Homer

In future sessions, perhaps we'll get into the use of epithets in Homer which is an enormously complicated and contentious subject. For now, I'll just note that in general (as Milman Parry expressed it in his ground-breaking research of almost a century ago, research that remains far and away the most important work on Homeric epithets): "the poet uses the same epithet every time he uses a formula of a given length." So, for example, there are basically 3 options for where in a given dactylic hexameter line the poet can place the final caesura (pause), resulting in 3 different metrical shapes for the final unit of a line. And it turns out that when the poet needs to say (as an example) "Achilles" in the nominative/subject form at the end of a line, he pretty much uses only one phrase for each of the 3 slots regardless of the narrative context:

<i>dios Akhilleus</i> (godlike/noble A.)	34x	- - - - -
<i>podas ōkhus Akhilleus</i> (swift of foot A.)	31x	- - - - -
<i>podarkēs dios Ahkilleus</i> (strong-footed <i>dios</i> A.)	21x	- - - - -



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### #5 Beginning with "Atreus' son" (line 7) angering a child of Leto & Zeus

"But when they had put to sea from Argos and arrived for the second time at Aulis, the fleet was windbound, and Calchas said that they could not sail unless the fairest of Agamemnon's daughters were presented as a sacrifice to Artemis; for the goddess was angry with Agamemnon, both because, on shooting a deer, he had said, 'Artemis herself could not [*do it better*],' and because Atreus had not sacrificed to her the golden lamb. On receipt of this oracle, Agamemnon sent Ulysses and Talchibius to Clytaemnestra and asked for Iphigenia, alleging a promise of his to give her to Achilles to wife in reward for his military service. So Clytaemnestra sent her, and Agamemnon set her beside the altar..." (*Lib.E.3.21-22*). Note that Atreus – whose name appears in the *Iliad* 4x (lines 7, 12, 16 & 17) before it is paired with "Agamemnon" (line 22) was also renown for revenging himself on his brother Thyestes (who had slept with Atreus' wife) by killing Thyestes' children and serving them to him at a feast of supposed reconciliation. Thyestes is then avenged when his later child Aegisthus kills Atreus and ultimately (with the help of Clytaemnestra) Agamemnon too.

### Note on the spelling of Greek names in English:

The question of what spelling "system" to use for Greek names in English is both complex and annoying (I usually go with the "system" of whatever translation I'm using, in this case Green's). The issue essentially has to do with whether one is trying to transliterate the Greek (and if so how fully including when it comes to long vowels) vs. using Latinized forms. Some frequent examples: the Greek masc. ending *-os* ~ Latin *-us*, the Gk. diphthong *-ai-* ~ Lat. *-ae-*, Gk. *-k-* ~ Lat. *-c-*, and many many more (cf. Achilles' grandfather **Aiakos** ~ **Aeacus**). And forget about things like Odysseus ~ Ulysses, Aias ~ Ajax, etc.

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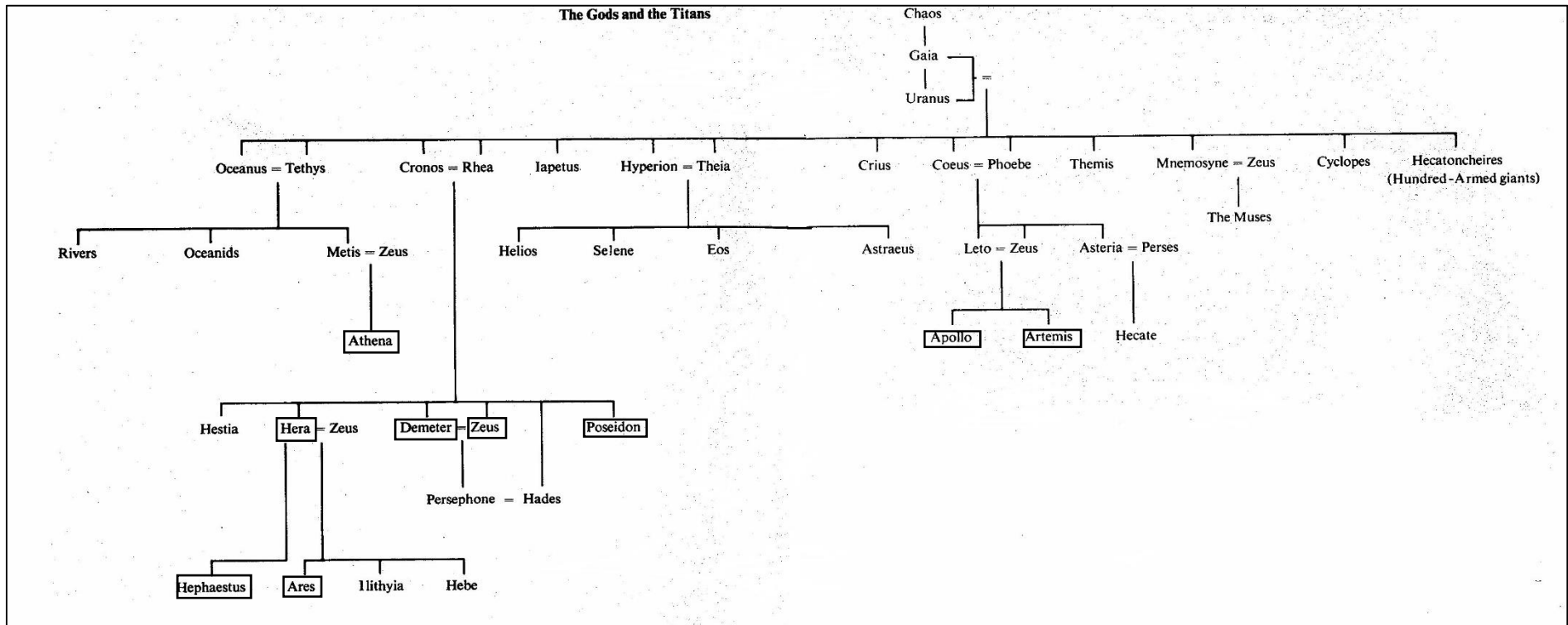
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## Genealogical Overview of the Greek Gods (including the "Olympian 12")

(genealogical chart from *Who's Who in Classical Mythology*, Grant and Hazel, Oxford 1993)



There are variant traditions as to which gods belong in the list of the 12 Olympians; I have enclosed in boxes the 9 names in the chart of those included in the most generally agreed upon list; the remaining 3 are:

Aphrodite is one of the Olympian 12; her "parentage" has variants w/ links to Uranus' dethroning/castration or via Zeus & Dione (feminine name < Zeus-root).

Hermes is one of the Olympian 12 (but Hades is not); he is son of Zeus & Maia (both of her parents, Atlas & Pleione, were children of the Titan Iapetus and an Oceanid).

Dionysus is generally considered one of the 12 (when Hestia is not); he is son of Zeus & the mortal Semele, granddaughter of Ares + Aphrodite.

Note that there are also 12 Titans (the longest horizontal line in the chart); the Cyclopes and the Hecatoncheires ("100-handed-ones") are not considered Titans.

There are also variant creation traditions in Greek. Apollodorus, for example, simply begins with Ouranos "heaven" and Gaia "earth." Other versions have Chaos as the first "being" (out of which various figures then spring, including Gaia). An early attested creation narrative in Hesiod's *Theogony* has 4 original "beings" as follows:

### Hesiod, *Theogony*, lines 116-122 (Lattimore translation)

First of all there came **Chaos**, and after him came **Gaia** ["Earth"] of the broad breast, to be the unshakable foundation of all the immortals who keep the crests of snowy Olympus, and **Tartaros** the foggy in the pit of the wide-wayed earth, and **Eros**, who is love, handsomest among all the immortals, who breaks the limbs' strength, who in all gods, in all human beings overpowers the intelligence in the breast, and all their shrewd planning.



**Il.1.262-265: from Nestor's story about those he joined in battle against the Centaurs at Peirithoos' wedding**

ou gar pō toious idon aneras oude idōmai,	Il.1.262	Such men have I not seen since, nor shall see again
hoion Peirithoon te Druanta te <b>poimena laōn</b>	Il.1.263	as Peiri-thoös, or Dryas, shepherd of his people,
<b>Kainea t' Exadion</b> te kai <b>antitheon Poluphēmon</b>	Il.1.264	or Kaineus or Ex-a-dios, or godlike Polyphēmos,
Thēsea t' Aigeidēn, epieikelon athanatoisin:	Il.1.265	or Thēseus, Aigeus's son, an equal of the immortals...

**Perseus Encyclopedia (from Tufts' Perseus site)**

<b>Peirithoos</b> Pirithous, Peirithoos, son of Zeus	Paus. 5.10.8
son of Ixion, hunts the Calydonian boar:	Apollod. 1.8.2
hunts Calydonian boar:	Paus. 8.45.7
father of Polypoetes:	Apollod. 3.10.7, Apollod. E.3.13
friend of Theseus:	Paus. 10.29.9
his covenant with Theseus:	Paus. 1.18.4
goes with Theseus to Lacedaemon and helps him to carry off Helen:	Paus. 1.18.4, Paus. 3.18.15, Apollod. 2.3.2
goes with Theseus to Thesprotis:	Paus. 1.17.4, Paus. 1.18.4, Paus. 2.22.6
woos Persephone:	Apollod. 2.5.12
tries to win Persephone to wife, but is detained with Theseus in Hades:	Apollod. 2.3.2
seen in Hades by Herakles, who fails to rescue him:	Apollod. 2.5.12, Apollod. 2.5.12
his marriage with Hippodamia:	Apollod. 2.3.1
his wedding:	Paus. 5.10.8
<b>aided by Theseus in his war with the centaurs:</b>	Apollod. E.1.16, <b>Apollod. E.1.20</b>
his shrine:	Paus. 1.30.4
painted with Theseus by Panaenus at Olympia:	Paus. 5.11.5
and by Polygnotus at Delphi:	Paus. 10.29.9
sculptured in gable of temple of Zeus at Olympia:	Paus. 5.10.8,
and in gable of temple of Athena Alea at Tegea:	Paus. 8.45.7
<b>Kaineus</b> Caeneus, Kaineus, a Corinthian, father of Eetion:	Hdt. 5.92
<b>Kaineus (2) an invulnerable man, formerly a woman:</b>	<b>Apollod. E.1.21</b>
<b>buried by the centaurs under pinetrees:</b>	<b>Apollod. E.1.21</b>
<b>Kaineus (3) brother of Ischys</b>	Apollod. 3.10.3
<b>Kaineus (4) Caeneus</b>	Paus. 10.29.10
succours Pirithous:	Paus. 5.10.8
<b>Kaineus (5) Caeneus, son of Coronus, in the Argo:</b>	Apollod. 1.9.17

**LSJ (dictionary of ancient Greek)**

<b>kainos, ê, on,</b> adj.	1. new, fresh; 2. newly-made; 3. adv. - <u>nôs</u> newly, afresh; ...
<b>poluphēmon</b> noun sg masc acc < <u>polu-phēmos</u> "of many songs"	1. abounding in songs and legends; 2. many-voiced, wordy; 3. much spoken of, famous; ...

**The exploits of Peirithoos and Theseus as narrated in Apollodorus' Library, E.1.20-24**

<sup>20</sup>Ixion fell in love with Hera and attempted to force her; and when Hera reported it, Zeus, wishing to know if the thing were so, made a cloud in the likeness of Hera and laid it beside him; and when Ixion boasted that he had enjoyed the favours of Hera, Zeus bound him to a wheel, on which he is whirled by winds through the air....And the cloud, impregnated by Ixion, gave birth to Centaurus. <sup>21</sup>And Theseus allied himself with Pirithous, when he engaged in war against the centaurs. For when Pirithous wooed Hippodamia, he feasted the centaurs because they were her kinsmen. But being unaccustomed to wine, they made themselves drunk by swilling it greedily, and when the bride was brought in, they attempted to violate her. But Pirithous, fully armed, with Theseus, joined battle with them, and Theseus killed many of them. <sup>22</sup>Caeneus was formerly a woman [cp. *Lib.*3.13.8 where Thetis disguises Achilles in women's clothing], but after that Poseidon had intercourse with her, she asked to become an invulnerable man; wherefore in the battle with the centaurs he thought scorn of wounds and killed many of the centaurs; but the rest of them surrounded him and by striking him with fir trees buried him in the earth. <sup>23</sup>Having made a compact with Pirithous that they would marry daughters of Zeus, Theseus, with the help of Pirithous, carried off Helen from Sparta for himself, when she was twelve years old, and in the endeavor to win Persephone as a bride for Pirithous he went down to Hades.... <sup>24</sup>But when Theseus arrived with Pirithous in Hades, he was beguiled; for, on the pretence that they were about to partake of good cheer, Hades bade them first be seated on the Chair of Forgetfulness, to which they grew and were held fast by coils of serpents. Pirithous, therefore, remained bound for ever, but Hercules brought Theseus and sent him to Athens.