

Update Page for Class of 3/22/22

Course materials and info page: <https://sacks-richard.com/iliad-at-du-materials>

For our second class (that of 3/22), we'll continue our exploration of the opening books of the Homeric *Iliad*, with the goal of working our way toward and through the narrative's first extended look at Hektōr, which comes in book 6. As per the schedule on the syllabus, please read through book 7 for class on 3/22, and as you go along, give some thought to what you see as the fundamental narrative strategies and emphases of this opening section of the poem. Also, here are some passages you might find it particularly productive/provocative to think about, though I hasten to add that any passage is fair game for our discussion:

- 1) What do you make of **the poem's first Nestorian "digression" at 1.247ff.**? You might want to take a look at page 4 of last week's handout, as well as Green's note to line 268. Also, note that we encounter another of Nestor's "when I was young" digressions in this week's reading at 7.132ff.
- 2) What do you make of **the opening sequence of book 2 (2.1-108) in which Zeus decides to send a dream to Agamemnon, who in turn decides what he will tell the troops?** Note the emphasis within this passage on the history (2.101-108) of Agamemnon's "ancestral scepter, forever imperishable" (2.46).
- 3) What do you make of **the narrative's strategy in having the 2nd half of book 2 consist of an invocation of the Muses (2.484-492) followed by nearly 400 lines cataloguing the Greek and Trojan forces (2.493ff.)?** And if you're inclined to get down in the weeds of this catalog, here are 3 moments you might want to play around with: a) the Nestor entry (2.591-602), the majority of which is taken up by the story of Thamyris; b) the Protesilāos entry (695-710); and c) the Philoktētēs entry (2.716-728).
- 4) What do you make of **the poem's first extended scenes featuring Helen (3.125-244 and 3.383-448)?** In the former we come upon her "weaving a great web" (3.125) from which she is summoned to go to Priam and the elders on the ramparts; in the latter we witness her with Aphrodite and then Paris.
- 5) What do you make of **the scene on Olympos with which book 4 opens (4.1-73) in which Zeus and Hērē argue over the fate of Troy?**
- 6) What do you make of **the way in which Diomēdēs' *aristeia* (i.e., his "big day" or "most excellent moment" – see Green's note to 5.3) plays out in book 5, especially his interactions with Athene?** Note that this Diomēdēs sequence (which is announced already at 5.1-3) continues into book 6, culminating in his encounter with Glaukos (6.119-236).
- 7) What do you make of **the sequence involving Hektōr with his wife and infant child (6.392-502) in the 2nd half of book 6?**
- 8) What do you make of **Hektōr's challenge in book 7 (7.67-91) to the *arist[os]...Pan-akhaiōn* "best men of all the Achaians" (7.72)?** Note Hektōr's vision that he will win *kleos* "fame" (7.91) by defeating the best of the Achaians and then "raise ... a burial mound beside the wide Hellespont" (7.86) for his victim. Note also that in the tradition, the burial mound at the Hellespont is that of Achilles (see *Odyssey* 24.81ff.: "... a grave mound that was both great and perfect, / on a jutting promontory there by the wide Hellespont, / so that it can be seen afar from out on the water / by men now alive and those to be born in the future").