

Update Page for Class of 4/5/22

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

For our fourth and – penultimate – class (that of 4/5), we'll spend a few moments on the back-and-forth of books 14-15 before heading into Achilles' emphatic and permanent return to the narrative which begins in book 16. As per the schedule on the syllabus, please read through book 19; and as usual, here are some passages you might find it productive and provocative to wrestle with, though as always I hasten to add that any passage is fair game for our discussion:

- 1) What do you make of **the two extended 200+-line scenes focusing on the gods in books 14-15: 14.153-353 and 15.4-236?** The former narrates Hērē's seduction of Zeus, which allows the Greeks to regain the upper hand in the fighting; while the latter begins when Zeus wakes up, sees what's happening on the battlefield, and threatens the other gods, including (15.158-217) his threat to Poseidon and Poseidon's defiant response.
- 2) What do you make of **the narrative's first scene with Achilles since book 11, the opening exchange of book 16 (16.1-100)** as the newly-returned Patroklos reports to Achilles on what is befalling the Greeks and asks Achilles' permission to enter the battle in Achilles' armor?
- 3) What do you make of **the gods' reactions to and discussion of the impending death of Zeus' son Sarpedon in the middle of book 16 (16.431-461)?**
- 4) What do you make of **the culminating sequence of book 16 (16.644-867) in which we witness the death of Patroklos, including – as he lays dying – his exchange with Hektōr (16.830-861)?** Note that the sequence begins with Zeus "debating a problem in his mind / uncertain regarding the matter of killing Patroklos" (16.646-647).
- 5) What do you make of **the scene in book 17 (17.125-208) which extends from the moment when "Hektōr had stripped Patroklos of his famed battle gear" (17.125) through Zeus' reaction to Hektōr putting on that armor?**
- 6) What do you make of **the exchange early in book 18 (18.70-137) between Achilles and his mother Thetis?** Note that the scene takes place immediately after Achilles has been told of Patroklos' death, after which Thetis hears his "outcry" far off in the "sea's depths" (18.35-36), spills out "the sum of [her] sorrows" (18.53) to the other Nereids (the sea-nymphs who are daughters of the old sea god Nereus), and comes to Troy with them, all "shedding tears [so that] on each side of them the waves of the sea / broke into surf" (18.66-67).
- 7) What do you make of **the culminating sequence of book 18 (18.478-608), the extended description of the shield Hephaistos makes for Achilles at Thetis' request?** Note in particular the extended description of two cities depicted on the shield (18.490-540).
- 8) What do you make of **the brief Briseis interlude in book 19 (19.282-302)** in which she addresses the dead Patroklos, recalls the sacking of her city including the death of her husband and brothers, and ends saying "I mourn your death without cease" (19.300)?