

CHS Open House: *epaineîn* and the Poetics of Consent, with David Elmer

Focus Passages

Iliad I 9-25

[1] Anger [*mēnis*], goddess, sing it, of Achilles son of Peleus— 2 disastrous [*oulomenē*] anger that made countless pains [*algea*] for the Achaeans, 3 and many steadfast lives [*psūkhai*] it drove down to Hādēs, 4 heroes’ lives, but their bodies it made prizes for dogs

[5] and for all birds, and the Will of Zeus was reaching its fulfillment [*telos*]— 6 sing starting from the point where the two—I now see it—first had a falling out, engaging in strife [*eris*], 7 I mean, [Agamemnon] the son of Atreus, lord of men, and radiant Achilles. 8 So, which one of the gods was it who impelled the two to fight with each other in strife [*eris*]? 9 It was [Apollo] the son of Leto and of Zeus. For he [= Apollo], infuriated at the king [= Agamemnon],

[10] caused an evil disease to arise throughout the mass of warriors, and the people were getting destroyed because the son of Atreus had dishonored Khrysēs his priest. Now Khrysēs had come to the ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, and had brought with him a great ransom [*apoina*]: moreover he bore in his hand the scepter of Apollo wreathed with a suppliant's wreath

[15] and he besought the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus, who were their chiefs. “Sons of Atreus,” he cried, “and all other Achaeans, may the gods who dwell in Olympus grant you to destroy the city of Priam, and to reach your homes in safety;

[20] but free my daughter, and accept a ransom [*apoina*] for her, in reverence to Apollo, son of Zeus.” Then the rest of the Achaeans with one voice expressed approval [*epeuphēmeîn*] for respecting the priest and taking the ransom that he offered; but this did not please [*handanein*] the heart of Agamemnon, son of Atreus

[25] who spoke fiercely to him and sent him roughly away.

Iliad III 455 through Iliad IV 67

[455] Then Agamemnon, king of men, spoke, saying, “Hear me, Trojans, Dardanians, and allies. The victory has been with Menelaos; therefore give back Helen with all her wealth, and pay such penalty [*timê*] as shall be agreed upon, in testimony among them that shall be born hereafter.”

[461] Thus spoke the son of Atreus, and the Achaeans shouted in approval [*epaineîn*].

Iliad IV

[1] Now the gods were sitting with Zeus in council upon the golden floor while Hebe went round pouring out nectar for them to drink, and as they pledged one another in their cups of gold they looked down upon the town of Troy.

[5] The son of Kronos then began to tease Hera, talking at her so as to provoke her. “Menelaos,” said he, “has two good friends among the goddesses, Hera of Argos, and Athena of Alalkomene, but they only sit still

[10] and look on, while Aphrodite keeps ever by Alexandros’ side to defend him in any danger; indeed she has just rescued him when he made sure that it was all over with him—for the victory really did lie with Menelaos. We must consider what we shall do about all this;

[15] shall we set them fighting anew or make peace between them? If you will agree to this last Menelaos can take back Helen and the city of Priam may remain still inhabited.”

[20] Athena and Hera muttered their discontent as they sat side by side hatching mischief for the Trojans. Athena scowled at her father, for she was in a furious passion with him, and said nothing, but Hera could not contain herself.

[25] “Dread son of Kronos,” said she, “what, pray, is the meaning of all this? Is my trouble [*ponos*], then, to go for nothing, and the sweat that I have sweated, to say nothing of my horses, while getting the people together against Priam and his children? Do as you will, but we other gods shall not all of us approve [*epaineîn*] your counsel.”

[30] Zeus was angry and answered, “My dear, what harm have Priam and his sons done you that you are so hotly bent on destroying the city of Ilium? Will nothing do for you but you must within their walls and

[35] eat Priam raw, with his sons and all the other Trojans to boot? Have it your own way then; for I would not have this matter become a bone of contention between us. I say further, and lay my saying to your heart,

[40] if ever I want to destroy a city belonging to friends of yours, you must not try to stop me; you will have to let me do it, for I am giving in to you sorely against my will. Of all inhabited cities under the sun and stars of heaven,

[45] there was none that I so much respected as Ilium with Priam and his whole people. Equitable feasts were never wanting about my altar, nor the savor of burning fat, which is honor due to ourselves.”

[50] “My own three favorite cities,” answered Hera, “are Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae. Destroy them whenever you may be displeased with them. I shall not defend them and I shall not care.

[55] Even if I did, and tried to stay you, I should take nothing by it, for you are much stronger than I am, but I will not have my own work wasted. I too am a god and of the same race with yourself. I am Kronos’ eldest daughter,

[60] and am honorable not on this ground only, but also because I am your wife, and you are king over the gods. Let it be a case, then, of give-and-take between us, and the rest of the gods will follow our lead. Tell Athena

[65] to go and take part in the fight at once, and let her contrive that the Trojans shall be the first to break their oaths and set upon the Achaeans.”

Iliad XVIII 249–313

Careful Polydamas son of Panthoös was first to speak, a man of judgment,

[250] who alone among them could look both before and after. He was comrade to Hector, and they had been born upon the same night; with all sincerity and goodwill, therefore, he addressed them thus- “Look to it well, my friends; I would urge you

[255] to go back now to your city and not wait here by the ships till morning, for we are far from our walls. So long as this man has anger [*mēnis*] against great Agamemnon, the Achaeans were easier to deal with,

[260] and I would have gladly camped by the ships in the hope of taking them; but now I go in great fear of the fleet son of Peleus; he is so daring that he will never bide here on the plain whereon the Trojans and Achaeans fight with equal valor, but he will try to storm our city and carry off our women.

[265] Do then as I say, and let us retreat. For this is what will happen. The darkness of night will for a time stay the swift-footed son of Peleus, but if he find us here in the morning when he sallies forth in full armor, we shall have knowledge of him in good earnest.

[270] Glad indeed will he be who can escape and get back to Ilion, and many a Trojan will become meat for dogs and vultures may I never live to hear it. If we do as I say, little though we may like it, we shall have strength in counsel during the night,

[275] and the great gates with the doors that close them will protect the city. At dawn we can arm and take our stand on the walls; he will then rue it if he sallies from the ships to fight us.”

[280] He will go back when he has given his horses their fill of being driven in every which direction under our walls, and will be in no mind to try and force his way into the city. Neither will he ever ransack it, dogs shall devour him before he do so.” Hector of the shining helmet looked fiercely at him and answered,

[285] “Polydamas, your words are not to my liking in that you bid us go back and be pent within the city. Have you not had enough of being cooped up behind walls? In the

old-days the city of Priam was famous the whole world over for its wealth of gold and bronze,

[290] but our treasures are wasted out of our houses, and much goods have been sold away to Phrygia and fair Maeonia, for the hand of Zeus has been laid heavily upon us. Now, therefore, that the son of scheming Kronos has granted me to win glory here and to hem the Achaeans in at their ships, prate no more in this foolish way among the population [*dēmos*].

[295] No Trojan will obey, for I will not allow it. Do all of you as I now say; – take your suppers in your companies throughout the army, and keep your watches and be wakeful every man of you.

[300] If any Trojan is uneasy about his possessions, let him gather them and give them out among the people. Better let these, rather than the Achaeans, have them. At daybreak we will arm and fight about the ships;

[305] granted that radiant Achilles has again come forward to defend them, let it be as he will, but it shall go hard with him. I shall not shun him, but will fight him, to fall or conquer. The god of war deals out like measure to all, and the slayer may yet be slain.”

[310] Thus spoke Hector; and the Trojans, fools that they were, shouted in approval, for Pallas Athena had robbed them of their understanding. They expressed approval [*epaineîn*] for Hector with his evil counsel, but the wise words of Polydamas no man would heed.

***Iliad* XXIII 532–542**

Last of them all came the son of Admetos, dragging his chariot and driving his horses on in front. When radiant swift-footed Achilles saw him he was sorry,

[535] and stood up among the Argives saying, “The best man is coming in last. Let us give him a prize for it is reasonable. He shall have the second, but the first must go to the son of Tydeus.” Thus did he speak

[540] and the others all of them were expressing approval [*epaineîn*] for his proposal. And now he would have given him [Eumēlos] the horse, for the Achaeans had expressed approval [*epaineîn*], had not great-hearted Nestor's son Antilokhos stood up and claimed his rights from the son of Peleus.

Iliad XXIV 723–776

Foremost among them all Andromache of the white arms led their wailing as she clasped the head of mighty manslaughtering Hector in her embrace.

[725] “Husband,” she cried, “you have died young, and leave me in your house a widow; he of whom we are the ill-starred parents is still a mere child, and I fear he may not reach manhood. Ere he can do so our city will be razed and overthrown, for you who watched over it are no more—you who were its savior,

[730] the guardian of our wives and children. Our women will be carried away captives to the ships, and I among them; while you, my child, who will be with me will be put to some unseemly tasks, working for a cruel master.

[735] Or, may be, some Achaean will hurl you (O miserable death) from our walls, to avenge some brother, son, or father whom Hector slew; many of them have indeed bitten the dust at his hands, for your father's hand in battle was no light one.

[740] Therefore do the people mourn him. You have left, O Hector, sorrow unutterable to your parents, and my own grief [*penthos*] is greatest of all, for you did not stretch forth your arms and embrace me as you lay dying, nor say to me any words that might have lived with me

[745] in my tears night and day for evermore.” Thus did she speak, lamenting, and the women groaned in response [*epistenakhein*]. Hecuba in her turn took up the strains of woe. “Hector,” she cried, “dearest to me of all my children. So long as you were alive the gods loved you well,

[750] and even in death they have not been utterly unmindful of you; for when swift-footed Achilles took any other of my sons, he would sell him beyond the seas, to Samos,

Imbros, or rugged Lemnos; and when he had taken away with his sword your life-breath [*psūkhē*] as well,

[755] many a time did he drag you round the tomb [*sēma*] of his comrade—though this could not give him life—yet here you lie all fresh as dew, and comely as one whom Apollo has slain with his painless shafts.”

[760] Thus did she speak, lamenting, and she stirred up relentless wailing. Then Helen for a third time took up the strain of lamentation. “Hector,” said she, “dearest of all my brothers-in-law—for I am wife to Alexandros who brought me here to Troy—would that I had died before he did so—

[765] twenty years are come and gone since I left my home and came from over the sea, but I have never heard one word of insult or unkindness from you. When another would chide with me, as it might be one of your brothers or sisters or of your brothers’ wives,

[770] or my mother-in-law—for Priam was as kind to me as though he were my own father—you would rebuke and check them with words of gentleness and goodwill. Therefore my tears flow both for you and for my unhappy self, for there is no one else in Troy

[775] who is kind to me, but all shrink and shudder as they go by me.” Thus did she speak, lamenting, and the boundless [*apeirōn*] people [*dēmos*] groaned in response [*epistenein*].