

INTRODUCTION

1. The narrator and the audience

The only indubitable fact that Homer gives us about himself in the *Il.* is that he lived later than the events he narrates; this is obvious from his occasional references to his heroes as men of an earlier and grander generation (5.303–4, 12.381–3, 12.447–9, 20.286–7; he calls them ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν, 12.23), and from his account of the destruction of the Greek wall by Poseidon, Apollo, and the local rivers after the fall of Troy (12.10–33, cf. 7.445–63). Despite the scholiasts' αἰεὶ φιλέλλην ὁ ποιητής (bT on 10.14–16, and often; see N. J. Richardson, *CQ* 30, 1980, 273–4), he does not speak as a Greek, or refer to the Trojans as enemies.

His intended hearers are similarly undefined, except that these same passages identify them as his contemporaries, and they are clearly already familiar with stories of the siege of Troy and other Greek heroic legends. The poet often assumes that they have such a background and a good deal of emotional effect would have been lost if they had not known, for instance, the fates of Priam, Andromakhe, and Astyanax; when Here concedes the future destruction of Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae the poet may expect a recognition of the fate of the Mycenaean empire (4.51–3, see note *ad loc.*). They must also know something about the main characters, who are not introduced to us unless an important occasion calls for special emphasis (as in the case of Nestor, when he attempts to mediate between Akhilleus and Agamemnon, 1.247–52). The world of the similes is their own world (see ch. 3, iii), from which poet and audience together, united in an emotional bond, look back together upon the heroic past. Though this remoteness in time is not obtrusive, it renders easy the foreshadowing which the poet often uses for emotional effect.

Recent theoretical studies of the means by which an author communicates with his audience have led to new understanding of the refinements of Homer's technique as narrator, and the results are summarized in the next section.¹ A further section examines the ways in which the future is foreshadowed in the *Il.*

¹ The most important work for the *Il.* is de Jong, *Narrators*. This includes an account of ancient approaches to the subject and a full bibliography. A recent work by S. Richardson,

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(i) **Persona and character: the narrator's technique**

Through the Muse, to whom he occasionally utters a direct appeal at especially important moments (see below), the poet knows the histories of long-dead heroes; and it is also presumably from this source, though this is not specified, that he is able to tell us of the thoughts and actions of the gods. His omniscience enables him not only to move from Greek camp to Troy and to Olympus, but also to share with us (for instance) the poignant remarks about the future grief of the now unwitting relatives of a hero who is killed, the information about the deaths of Helen's brothers which comes as a climax to the depiction of her guilt and loneliness (3.243–4), and the divine reaction to a character's prayer (e.g. 2.419 \cong 3.302).

The closeness between narrator and audience is promoted from time to time, in certain standardized ways, when he emerges in his own *persona* and speaks directly to us or to others (his Muse, and his characters) in our hearing. To do this he employs three main techniques.

(1) A direct address to us, his audience. This takes several different forms. The narrator may address us in the second person, as directly as one of the characters addresses a listener: οὐδέ κε φαίης | is used both by the narrator (4.429, 17.366) and by a character (3.392), and so is | φαίης κε (3.220, 15.697; Longinus, 26.1, said the change of person 'seems to involve the hearer, often placing him in the midst of danger', quoting the second passage). So too οὐκ ἄν γνοίης is used both by the narrator (5.85) and by a character (14.58); οὐκ ἄν βρίζοντα ἴδοις Ἀγαμέμνονα (4.223) is similar.

Slightly less direct, but also addressed to the listener, are the third-person 'imaginary spectator' expressions, such as ἔνθα κεν οὐκέτι ἔργον ἀνὴρ ὀνόσαιτο μετελθών (4.539, cf. 4.421, 13.343–4, 16.638–9) and the more specific variant οὐτ' ἄν κεν Ἄρης ὀνόσαιτο μετελθών | οὔτε κ' Ἀθηναίη (13.127–8, rephrased at 17.398–9), which is also used in direct speech (20.358–9).

Occasionally a rhetorical question may be addressed to the audience. De Jong, *Narrators* 47–8, considers this to be the case with the 'inexpressibility *topos*', τῶν δ' ἄλλων τίς κεν ἦσι φρεσὶν οὐνόματ' εἴποι; (17.260, see note *ad loc.*), though this might, like some other instances (see below), be addressed to the Muses.

The Homeric Narrator (Nashville 1990), which the author has kindly allowed me to see in MS, includes the *Odyssey*. A review of these, and of another recent work, J. Peradotto's *Man in the Middle Voice: Name and Narrative in the Odyssey* (Princeton 1990), by S. Schein will appear in *Poetics Today* 12 (1991; I thank him for showing me his MS). There are shorter accounts by S. P. Scully, *Arethusa* 19 (1986) 135–53 and by Edwards, *HPI* 29–41. J. Griffin has studied the poet's sympathy with his characters (*CQ* 26, 1976, 161–85) and the differences in vocabulary between the narrator and the characters (*JHS* 106, 1986, 36–50). An earlier but still useful view, with many perceptive remarks, can be found in S. E. Bassett's *The Poetry of Homer* (Berkeley 1938) chapters 4 and 5. See also vol. II, ch. 3.

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(2) A direct address to the Muse. Several times the narrator utters a request or a question to the Muse, usually referring to himself in the first person. The result is a special claim upon the audience's attention, a special emphasis upon an important passage (1.1–8, the proem; 2.484–93, the Catalogue of Ships; 2.761–2, the list of the best men and horses; 11.218–20, the *aristeia* of Agamemnon; 14.508–10, the major Greek rally while Zeus is otherwise engaged; 16.112–13, the firing of the ships). There is also an oblique reference to the Muse in the narrator's despair at not being himself divine: ἀργαλέον δέ με ταῦτα θεὸν ὡς πάντ' ἀγορεύσαι (12.176).

The trope ἔνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ' ὕστατον ἐξενάριξεν (etc.; 5.703–4, 11.299–300, 16.692–3, with a shorter version at 8.273), as de Jong has pointed out (*Narrators* 49–50), is also a veiled form of such an appeal to the Muse; to whom else could it be directed? Other rhetorical questions may also be best thought of as addressed to the Muse, though a question to the audience is also possible. Certainly the audience is addressed in a particularly effective example during the flight of Hektor: πῶς δέ κεν Ἔκτωρ κῆρας ὑπεξέφυγεν θανάτοιο, | εἰ μή οἱ πύματόν τε καὶ ὕστατον ἦντιετ' Ἀπόλλων | ...; (22.202–4).

(3) A direct address to a character (*apostrophe*). Twice the poet addresses Patroklos with great sympathy: ἔθ' ἄρα τοι, Πάτροκλε, φάνη βίοτιο τελευτή (16.787), and ἔνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ' ὕστατον ἐξενάριξας, | Πατρόκλεις, ὅτε δὴ σε θεοὶ θανάτόνδε κάλεσσαν; (16.692–3), where the doomed hero is addressed instead of the Muse (see note *ad loc.*). There are six other examples of this personal address to Patroklos, some almost as poignant as these, and there are similar instances in the cases of Menelaos (7×; see 7.104n., 17.679–80n.), Apollo (15.365, 20.152), Akhilleus (20.2), and Hektor's cousin Melanippos (15.582). For detailed discussion see the notes to the above passages, Edwards, *HPI* 37–41, and now N. Yamagata, *BICS* 36 (1989) 91–103 (with whose conclusions I am afraid I cannot agree).

The highly stylized usage of this direct address with the name of the swineherd Eumaios (Εὔμαιε σὺ βῶτα |, 15× *Od.* in speech-introductions; in address by another character, only *Od.* 15.381) suggests the technique may have arisen when the vocative of a name was metrically more convenient than the nominative. But the instances with the highly sympathetic character Patroklos, which appear with increasing frequency and emphasis as his death approaches, and to a lesser extent with the likeable Menelaos, make it clear that the technique has been extended to characters whose names present no metrical problem in order to bring them vividly face to face with the narrator, and hence with the audience too.

The narrator's closeness to us is also enhanced when he tells us, as if

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privately, the thoughts of a character, or sees something through the character's eyes, for a moment uniting character, narrator, and listener. The explicit instances need little comment: the narrator tells us the intent of a speaker before he begins to speak (e.g. 1.24–5), the indecision in a character's mind (e.g. 1.188–92), the purpose of a character's action (e.g. 19.39), the reasons for his emotional state (e.g. 17.603–4), the thoughts of both suppliant and supplicated in a scene without direct speech (20.463–8). In the case of Zeus, the thoughts often foreshadow what is to come (e.g. 15.610–14).

The implicit presentation of a character's viewpoint is less obvious, and de Jong's demonstration of it (*Narrators* 118–22) deepens our appreciation of the poet's skill. Often without conscious realization, the audience is brought into a closer sympathy with the character, and hence into closer emotional involvement with the tale. After the inconclusive duel between Aias and Hektor, the Greeks lead off their champion *κεκαρηότα νίκη* (7.312), and we note, with an understanding smile, that in Aias' opinion he was victor in the encounter. Akhilleus takes twelve Trojans captive *ποιήν Πατρόκλοιο* (21.28), and for a moment we see into his vengeful mind. The description of Akhilleus' hands as Priam kisses them, *δεινὰς ἀνδροφόνους, αἶ οἱ πολέας κτάνον νῆας* (24.479), is moving enough, but becomes especially so if we reflect that it presents Priam's own thoughts at the time as well as the narrator's and ours. It has often been suggested that the struggles of Trojans and Greeks which Helen is depicting in her weaving, *οὐς ἔθεν εἰνεκ' ἔπασσον* (3.128), show us the guilt and remorse she is feeling (de Jong notes a close parallel at 10.27–8; see also 18.237–8n.). Judgemental words and superlatives, though rare in the narrative, sometimes appear there when they represent the thoughts of a character (see 19.310–13n., 20.408–10n., and de Jong, *JHS* 108, 1988, 188–9). Occasionally a simile expresses a character's viewpoint (see ch. 3, ii).

A special technique is the presentation of the view of a group of characters by means of the *ὃδε δέ τις εἴπεσκεν* convention, in which the remarks of a group of characters are paraphrased by the narrator as a single direct speech; there is an elaborate double example at 17.414–23 (see note *ad loc.*). The technique, which occurs 14 × *Il.* (see de Jong, *Eranos* 85, 1987, 69–84), is perhaps a development of the narrator's explanation of characters' feelings in his own voice, which is seen a little earlier at 17.395–7 and more elaborately at 15.699–702 (see 17.285–7n.). A special form of this appears in the especially innovative language of Akhilleus, who once uses a single unnamed character to represent the emotions of many (see 18.122–5n.). The convention is also developed into the famous thoughts about Helen uttered by the old men on the wall of Troy (3.146–60).

The narrator sometimes expresses his opinion of a character's actions,

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inviting us to join him in viewing the scene and suggesting what our emotional reaction should be.² Several techniques are employed. A very obvious one is the stylized comment | νήπιος, ὅς..., used in varying tones. Unlike σχέτλιος, which is used almost exclusively from one character to another (29 ×; the exception is *Od.* 21.28, which may represent Penelope's thoughts), νήπιος (-ῆ) occurs mainly in the narrator's voice, but always in the third person, i.e. the comment is addressed to the audience, not the character (so J. Griffin, *JHS* 106, 1986, 40). It may convey deep compassion, as in the case of Andromakhe, preparing a bath for Hektor in ignorance of his death (22.445); criticism, for Patroklos' pursuit of the Trojans after his victory over Sarpedon (16.686); sympathy, for the hapless Tros as he vainly supplicates Akhilleus (20.466); futility in the face of destiny, as in the case of the over-eager Asios (12.113); amused scorn, as when Akhilleus does not realize Aineias' weapon cannot pierce his shield (20.264; see de Jong, *Narrators* 86–7). For Patroklos, the form is once expanded to allow even greater explicitness: ὡς φάτο λισσόμενος μέγα νήπιος· ἦ γὰρ ἔμελλεν | οἱ αὐτῷ θάνατόν τε κακὸν καὶ κῆρα λιτέσθαι (16.46–7; cf. *Od.* 9.44, Hesiod, *Erga* 131). Similar in sense is the comment on Pandaros' yielding to Athene, τῷ δὲ φρένας ἄφρονι πείθην (4.104).

Probably the best-known instance of expression of the narrator's opinion is the comment on Glaukos' foolishness in exchanging golden armour for bronze (6.234–6). There are many difficulties in the passage (see note *ad loc.*, and most recently W. Donlan in *Phoenix* 43 (1989) 1–15), but it cannot be other than an unusually overt remark by the narrator, very possibly displaying humour at the expense either of Glaukos or of the heroic tradition of exchange of armour. A less direct, but nevertheless obvious, viewpoint appears when Hektor's head is dragged in the dust, πάρος χαρίεν· τότε δὲ Ζεὺς δυσμενέεσσι | δῶκεν ἀεικίσσασθαι ἔη ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ (22.403–4); there was a similar reproach to Zeus when he allowed Akhilleus' helmet to be thrown down into the dust (16.796–800). As one of the techniques used to prolong the description of Hektor's flight before Akhilleus, the narrator compares the two heroes (22.158–61), a direct expression of opinion much more personal than a simple use of superlatives (which are avoided in the narrative; see J. Griffin, *JHS* 106, 1986, 49–50).

In the case of judgemental words, often there can be no doubt that we have the narrator's opinion. μῆνιν... | οὐλομένην (1.1–2), though not necessarily a criticism of Akhilleus, expresses the narrator's regret at the results of his anger (see de Jong, *Narrators* 143–4), especially since elsewhere

² The views of the 'implied' narrator need not be those of the poet himself, though in the case of the unknown Homer there is little point in trying to distinguish them. More important, they are not necessarily the same as those expressed by the characters, though this is occasionally overlooked by critics; see Edwards, *HPI* 319–20, and R. Renehan, *CP* 82 (1987) 107–8.

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the word occurs only in direct speech (3 × *Il.*, 10 × *Od.*). After a debate, the Trojans “Ἐκτορι μὲν γὰρ ἐπήνησαν κακὰ μητιόωντι, | Πουλυδάμαντι δ’ ἄρ’ οὐ τις, ὃς ἐσθλήν φράζετο βουλήν (18.312–13). But sometimes it is not clear whether judgemental words represent the opinion of the narrator or that of a character. De Jong, *Narrators* 136–46, suggests that they should be taken as the opinion of a character where possible, since such words occur most often in direct speech. This should always be borne in mind as a possibility, though often the total number of occurrences of a particular word is so small that the judgement must be subjective.³ Important instances of ambiguity are the ἀεικέα...ἔργα which Akhilleus perpetrates on Hektor’s corpse (22.395 = 23.24), and the κακὰ...ἔργα of his killing the Trojan captives at Patroklos’ pyre (23.176); both of these are likely to represent, as de Jong points out (*Narrators* 138), the viewpoint of Akhilleus and the Trojans respectively, rather than that of the narrator (see also 22.395n., 23.176n.). The reference to Thetis’ ἐξάσιον ἄρην ‘disproportionate demand’ for the Greeks’ defeat (15.598), sometimes taken to be the poet’s criticism (see note *ad loc.*), may similarly be the view of Zeus, since the passage relates what is in his mind (so de Jong, *Narrators* 139).

In accordance with the usual reticence of the narrator about espousing an opinion, the narrative makes virtually no use of aphorisms, though they are common on the lips of characters. There is a short and simple example at 21.264, θεοὶ δέ τε φέρτεροι ἀνδρῶν, but the only major instance is the three-verse reflection on the overwhelming power of Zeus which is uttered by the narrator and repeated by Hektor (16.688–90 = 17.176–8, see notes *ad loc.*). In the narrative context the passage becomes essentially an expansion of the preceding νῆπιος-comment, which may account for its presence.

Virgil’s narrative style is often characterized as subjective, and by contrast the very different style of Homer is likely to be called objective. The vagueness of both terms makes generalization unwise without a detailed comparison.⁴ But though opinions, emotions, and moral judgements in the *Il.* are usually expressed by the words and actions of the characters, and though Homer tells us virtually nothing of his own circumstances, the narrator of the poem often emerges to stand by our side and in person draw our attention in a particular direction, to criticize an action, to reveal a character’s thoughts and motives, to foreshadow the future (see the next section), and to illustrate the heroic events he describes by comparison with those within our common range of experience (see ch. 3). Furthermore, the values of the narrator are not identical with those of the characters. The general world-view which seems to be presented will of

³ See also J. Griffin, *JHS* 106 (1986) 36–50; de Jong, *JHS* 108 (1988) 188–9; and G. S. Kirk, Introduction to vol. II, ch. 3.

⁴ Cf. especially B. Otis, *Virgil* (Oxford 1964) 41–96.

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course be differently perceived by different readers; I have given my own ideas on this elsewhere (Edwards, *HPI* 317–23).

(ii) **Foreshadowing**

The omniscient poet can tell us anything he wishes about the outcome of his plot and the future fate of his characters. There is no random chance in Homer, but a human or divine cause (often both) determines every situation and event. But Homer the story-teller sets limits, and his large-scale foreshadowing is confined to a few major characters and themes, and appears with its greatest force as the action approaches its climax.⁵ The effect is to unite narrator and audience in the sympathy of a shared knowledge which is denied to the characters, to allow the outcome of a character's action or decision to be foreseen immediately it takes place, and often to involve the listener's emotions through the irony of his knowing something which the characters do not.⁶

Achilleus is unique as the only character who knows in advance that his death is imminent; and the pathetic effect of this is intensified not only by his superiority on the human scale but by the constant juxtaposition of his mortality with the immortality of his mother Thetis. All humankind are mortal; and the sadness of this is superbly focused in Akhilleus, greater than ordinary men and with a goddess for mother, yet doomed not only to die young but to do so with advance knowledge and by his own choice.

The theme is introduced gradually. Akhilleus speaks of himself to Thetis as μινυθᾶδιόν περ ἕοντα (1.352), but so are all humanity compared with her; and her own complaint, ὠκύμορος καὶ οἰζυρὸς περὶ πάντων | ἔπλεο (1.417–18), might also mean no more than this. But when she supplicates Zeus on his behalf there is more precision: ὠκυμορώτατος ἄλλων | ἔπλετ' (1.505–6). Then at the time of Akhilleus' fateful choice, his account of his alternative destinies confirms that if he continues to fight at Troy he will die there (9.412–13); and after the death of Patroklos the rapid approach of his death, by his own choice, is constantly on his lips and those of Thetis (see 18.95–6n.).

The manner of his death also becomes more and more explicit: his horse tells him he will be killed by 'a god and a man' (19.417); as he struggles with the river he declares he knows the god is to be Apollo (21.277–8); and

⁵ There is a collection of examples in G. E. Duckworth, *Foreshadowing and Suspense in the Epics of Homer, Apollonius, and Vergil* (New York 1966). Edwards, *HPI* 32–3, gives a brief account. Duckworth also collected the often perceptive remarks of the scholiasts on προαναφώνησις and πρόληψις, *AJP* 52 (1931) 320–38. A modern critical approach is provided by de Jong, *Narrators* 81–90. Plutarch, *Vit. Hom.* 115, gives only a very sketchy account of divine πρόνοια.

⁶ I cannot deal in detail here with the common hypothetical condition in the narrator's voice, 'Then *X* would have happened, had not *Y*...', which of course involves a kind of foreknowledge. See 17.319–25n. and 20.288–91n.

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the dying Hektor names the man as Paris (22.359–60). The reiterated theme, especially when spoken by the hero himself, is always moving; the most effective passage of all, and perhaps the most original, is that where he addresses the young Lukaon (21.99–113, see note *ad loc.* and 18.117–19n.). Other scenes which are designed to reinforce the theme are his meeting with the ghost of Patroklos, with its assurance that Akhilleus too will die at Troy (23.65–107), and his dedication of his hair to his dead friend, declaring that he will not return to fulfil his vow to the river of his homeland (23.144–51).

Akhilleus' doom is foreshadowed almost exclusively in his own words and those of others. Only on one occasion does the poet make use of an alternative means, and even then this is not by a direct narrative statement. Instead, he presents the visual tableau of Akhilleus lying prostrate in the dust like a corpse, his grieving mother taking his head in her hands, the two of them surrounded by the lamenting sea-nymphs (18.26ff., see 18.22–31n.). The scene is that of Akhilleus' own funeral rites, as described at *Od.* 24.43–94. In a similarly allusive way, the divinely made armour worn by Patroklos, Hektor, and Akhilleus himself also foreshadows his death, as we realize that its power will not protect him any more than it has the others (see introduction to book 18). Akhilleus' death does not take place in the *Il.*, but throughout the poem, with increasing intensity, we share his knowledge that it is imminent, and we admire his resolution in facing it.

In contrast to this, the death of the entirely human and realistic Hektor is not known to him, being foreshadowed almost exclusively by the words of the gods and by the poet himself. The only exception to this is the dying Patroklos' prediction that he will die at the hands of Akhilleus (16.851–4), and this Hektor totally ignores. Hektor can be pessimistic, as he is with Andromakhe (6.447–65), and in his final minutes he realizes at last that there is no hope for him (22.296–303). But usually, in very human fashion, he either knows that he is ignorant of the future (6.367–8, 6.487–9), or else displays a brave man's optimism about his chances of success (6.476–81, 6.526–9, 18.305–9, 22.129–30, 22.256–9, 22.279–88). Much of the attractiveness of Hektor's character arises from this very human veering of his hopes and fears, which is portrayed especially in his farewell scene with his wife and in its less tense, more cheerful sequel as he greets Paris and returns to battle by his side.

Human characters often fear or hope for Hektor's death, but without definite foreknowledge of it. Zeus, however, foresees it clearly, and twice his reflections bring it before our eyes (15.68, 17.201–8). Thetis too twice mentions it to Akhilleus (18.95–6, 132–3). Besides this, the poet's voice prepares us in many ways. Andromakhe's first words to him declare that his courage will destroy him (φθίσει σε τὸ σὸν μένος, 6.407), and the idea is

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repeated for the predator to which he is compared in a simile (ἀγνηορίη δέ μιν ἕκτα, 12.46). The unconscious irony in her tale of Akhilleus' respect for her father's corpse after he killed him (6.416–20) is followed by the mourning in Hektor's house after his departure (6.500–2). Zeus's prediction of Hektor's glory and consequent death (15.59–68) is repeated when the narrator describes the scene of his triumph (15.596–614), and again before his victory over Patroklos (16.799–800). The final death sentence is expanded to considerable length, first by Zeus's hesitation and Athene's insistence (22.167–87), then by the tableau of the deadly scales (22.208–13). Hektor realizes his death is imminent only a few minutes before it occurs, but we ourselves have anticipated it long ago, and our sympathy for him is the keener because of his unawareness. Partly through these different types of foreshadowing, the poet has contrived that our emotional involvement with Akhilleus and with Hektor is of an entirely different kind.

The deaths of a few other significant characters are also foreshadowed by the poet, in a variety of ways. Patroklos is memorably doomed as he answers Akhilleus' summons, which will give Nestor his opportunity to propose his plan: ἔκμολεν ἴσος Ἄρηϊ, κακοῦ δ' ἄρα οἱ πέλεν ἀρχή (11.604). In Zeus's major pronouncement of the future, it is revealed that he will die by the hand of Hektor (15.65–7). The poet's foreboding voice is heard again, in a νήπιος-comment (16.46–7), as Patroklos supplicates Akhilleus, and his doom is confirmed as he departs for the battle by Zeus's refusal to grant Akhilleus' prayer for his safe return (16.250–2). As usual, as his death approaches more forebodings appear, and for Patroklos alone these take the form of poignant apostrophes: the uniquely fashioned ἔνθα τίνα πρῶτον, τίνα δ' ὕστατον ἐξεάρισας, | Πατρόκλεις, ὅτε δὴ σε θεοὶ θάνατόνδε κάλεσσαν; (16.692–3, see note *ad loc.*), and the final warmth of ἔνθ' ἄρα τοι, Πάτροκλε, φάνη βιώτοιο τελευτή (16.787). Patroklos himself never knows of his coming fate. Neither does Sarpedon, despite his famous discourse on honour and death (12.310–28), though its approach is dramatized for us by the indecisiveness of his father Zeus (16.431–61), and has been anticipated by the earlier hint when he was wounded by Pteleomos (πατήρ δ' ἔτι λοιγὸν ἄμυνεν, 5.662) and by the fear he expresses of lying unburied (5.684–8).

Besides these individual deaths, two main general events are foreshadowed in the poem. Διὸς δ' ἐτελείετο βουλή (1.5) announces, in the vaguest terms, Zeus's plan for the defeat of the Greeks while Akhilleus is absent, which is majestically ratified by him at 1.524–30 and repeated more explicitly at 15.49–77 and 16.644–55. On the other hand, the eventual fall of Troy, after the poem ends, has been predicted by portents; Odysseus repeats Kalkhas' prophecy at Aulis that the city would fall in the tenth year (2.323–9), and Nestor reminds the Greeks of a favourable sign from Zeus (2.350–3). Both sides know that the gods are angry with the Trojans, as

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appears in the predictions of Agamemnon (4.163–8), Hektor (6.447–9), and Diomedes (7.401–2). Two similes even more vividly confirm this (21.522–5, 22.410–11), and at the end of the poem the scene of the sacking to come is described in detail by Andromakhe (24.725–39).

The granting or rejection of prayers, the obituaries after a man's death, and the prediction in the Catalogue of Ships of Akhilleus' eventual return (τάχα δ' ἀνστήσεσθαι ἔμελλεν, 2.694), exemplify other uses of the poet's foreknowledge. In addition, the small-scale anticipations of important actions (see ch. 2, iii) and the foreshadowing in similes (see ch. 3, ii) also prepare the listener's mind to react as the poet intends. Priam's appeal to Akhilleus' love for his old father, in their climactic scene, has been led up to by a long sequence of father–son relationships – Zeus's loss of his son Sarpedon, Akhilleus' mention of the possible deaths of his old father and his son in his lament for Patroklos (19.321–37), his killing of Priam's sons Lukaon and Polydoros, and Hektor's dying prediction of Akhilleus' death at the hands of Priam's son Paris. Priam's first words, μνησαί πατρός σοῖο, are the culmination of this theme, which is finally universalized by the myth of Niobe's suffering at the loss of her children and her eventual control over it. Both this kind of anticipation and the more explicit foreshadowing prepare the listener's frame of mind for the emotional effect the poet wishes to produce.