Kozak, Lynn. "Killing Time." *Experiencing Hektor: Character in the* . London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017. 69–146. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781474245470.ch-002>>.

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Killing Time

Jason Mittell's *Complex TV* has a chapter on Beginnings, and a chapter on Ends. Nothing on middles. Middles are difficult. How do serial narratives keep audiences engaged, once they have established a world? By the time that Paris finds Hektor at the gates of Troy and the two rush back onto the battlefield (6.502–7.7), an audience would have sat through nearly five hours of performance, with several possible breaks. For Hektor, it marks a new chapter, because the audience returns to the battlefield with several new perspectives on him as a character. Now the audience knows first-hand why Hektor fights and what the stakes are when he fights. These many scenes of alignment with Hektor will have created some sense of allegiance with him as he runs back out onto the field.

When the narrative leaves Troy behind in this beat sequence, it also leaves behind all the characters therein: the audience is left now to wonder about the 'continuing' storylines of Hekabe, of Helen, of Andromache, just as much as it must remember that Achilles still sits apart by his ships or Aias still fights in the field. The narrative has taken enough time to draw these absent characters so that the audience now anticipates their eventual returns to the story; but as the serial narrative continues, it will continue to use its narrator and its other characters to remind the audience of them in their absence.

At the same time, the narrative has also established the world enough so that the audience feels familiar with it, able to recognize patterns that start to emerge. By now, an audience will have seen all of the *Iliad*'s 'type-scenes',¹ and their ability to recognize these patterns (and their disruptions) will be a source of pleasure moving forward. Other serial narratives also engage in these 'callbacks', which can range from a repeated line to an entire scenario that emulates or reflects an earlier one.

In the final season of *Lost*, characters continually find themselves in situations that mirror earlier events in the series, from as far back as the first season. Called "callbacks" by fans, these series-long echoes, often quite faint, reward committed viewers as insiders.²

Five years into *Lost* is hardly the same as five hours into the *Iliad*, but the *Iliad*'s demands of attention are greater as its memory cues are constrained in the words of a single, embodied performer rather than in the intensely visual and aural medium of television.³ Callbacks are different than simple recaps, because they re-cast past information in surprising new ways for the audience who can appreciate their repeated pattern. The *Iliad* has already used callbacks, like in Hektor's repetition of Agamemnon's fall of Troy (6.447–9 = 4.163–5); callbacks of both language and scene will become more prominent as the epic moves forward.

Once the serial has established its world and its characters, it cannot move forward *too* quickly. So the narrative also introduces new physical spaces and new characters, or foregrounds established characters for the first time and expands its world laterally so that the impact of forward-leaning events can be diffused across an even wider network of personal responses and diegetic retellings. Hektor, too, will continue to be refracted through an ever-expanding array of interlocutors.

Maybe next time: 6.503–7.16

Moving away from Andromache, the next beat cuts to Paris. The narrative follows him from his home down through the streets of the city, like a pony prancing in the sunlight (6.506–13), armour glinting like the sun (6.513). This sudden shift could be good place for a performance break, but whether or not the performer would stop here, Paris's eagerness and his clean, golden armour juxtapose starkly with the previous beat's lamentations raised over Hektor, still spattered in battle-filth (cf. 6.268), painting a full-circle of the battle cycle in just a few minutes' time. But it is more specific than that: the fact that it is Hektor's 'funeral' that immediately precedes Paris's battle excitement implicitly links the two, reinforcing Helen's statement, that on Hektor the war-work falls the most, for the sake of her and Paris (6.355f.).

Paris comes upon Hektor, 'who was about to turn away from the place he spoke to his wife' (εὖτ' ἄρ' ἔμελλε/ στρέψουσθ' ἐκ χώρης ὅθι ἦ ὀάριζε γυναικί, 6.515f.). This recaps the last beat, again allowing for the performer to break, but it also paints a poignant picture of Hektor, stood still, staring after Andromache. These Paris-beats frame both sides of Hektor's encounter with Andromache; fitting since he is the cause of their tragedy. In this beat, inverting audience expectation from the last two encounters between them we have seen (cf. 3.38–75;

6.325–41), Paris talks to Hektor first, which keeps the audience more firmly aligned with Paris. Paris makes fun of his brother, jokingly asking if he has come too late, when he knows that he has not, because Hektor still stands here (6.517–19). Hektor responds and says that no one could fault Paris; he can fight just fine, he just holds back. But still, it hurts Hektor when he hears the taunts of the Trojans, who fight because of him (6.523–5). Again, this picture of Paris builds on the brothers' shared past experience that the audience has no other access to (cf. 6.329f.), a past where Paris has been a fine warrior. Hektor ends his speech with a hope, a prayer; 'but let's go – someday we'll make all this right with the immortal gods in heaven, if Zeus ever lets us ...' (ἀλλ' ἵομεν· τὰ δ' ὀπισθεν ἀρεσσόμεθ', αἱ κέ ποθι Ζεὺς/ δῶη ἐπουρανίοισι θεοῖς αἰειγενέτησι, 6.526–8). Hektor still blames Paris, but he sees the good in him, too. And even though we just heard Hektor say that he knew Troy would fall (6.447–9, five minutes ago), here he reassures his brother with a vision of the future where they survive, 'when we kick the Achaians with their nice greaves out of Troy' (ἐκ Τροίης ἐλάσαντας ἔυκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς, 6.529). Is Hektor more comfortable with Andromache, that he tells her the truth? Does he care more about her? Or is he trying to protect Paris's feelings of guilt, or inspire Paris back into battle? Does Hektor change his tone slightly with Paris because they are alone? Does his encounter with Andromache leave him more sentimental? These questions are important, because just as the audience 'knows' Hektor now – they have seen him across many encounters, seen him say what he thinks to a variety of people – they must now accommodate all these encounters in a way that makes sense. Hektor is a surface with many angles: the audience must try to guess the shape of its whole. The messiness of Hektor saying one thing one moment and seemingly something else entirely the next adds a realistic complexity to his character and his relationships that ask an audience to engage with them and to try to understand them.⁴

Hektor and Paris then return to battle much to the joy of their troops, with an extended simile that describes the Trojan troops' joy at their appearance like sailors exulting in a long-awaited for fresh wind (7.4–7). This simile confirms Hektor's statement that his men long for him when he is away from battle (6.362), and gives further justification to his speech to Andromache, that he *must* return to his men (6.440–6).

But in grouping Hektor and Paris together when describing the Trojans' happy response (ἀμφοτέροι μέμασαν, 7.3; τῷ Τρώεσσιν ἐλδομένοισι φανήτην, 7.7), the narrative resets much of what it has established before. The Trojans' relief here directly contradicts, or perhaps, effaces, how they hated Paris when he

disappeared from his single combat with Menelaos (3.454), and no one mentions Paris's prior absence from the battlefield or the broken oaths. This lack of emotional continuity feels like a rupture, but necessarily resets the plot so that it can move forward.⁵

As though justifying his men's joy at his return to battle, Paris and Hektor both have successful kills when they return to battle: Paris kills Menesthios and Hektor kills Eioneus (7.8–12). But then Glaukos appears for the first time since the catalogue (6.119; cf. 2.876) with his kill following Hektor's, and getting four lines for his kill compared to Hektor's two (7.13–16).

Callback: 7.17–91

After this series of kills for the Trojan side, the narrative switches the audience's alignment to Athena, who sees them killing the Argives, and then attaches to her as she heads to Troy (7.17–20). Then the narrative cuts and attaches to Apollo (7.21), who leaves his perch in Pergamum to meet Athena, which creates continuity with where the narrative left him in the 'episode' before last (5.460). Apollo asks Athena if she intends to give the Danaans the victory, significantly recapping that Athena has no pity for the Trojans (7.27; cf. 6.311). But for now, Apollo wants to put aside war and hatred (7.29f.), since, as he assures Athena, the Achaians and Trojans will fight again (7.30), and Troy will someday fall (7.30–2). Athena agrees, and so this proposal creates audience anticipation, not just for the single combat between Hektor and an as-yet-unnamed Achaian, but also for when both sides will fight again, and when Troy will fall. At the same time, this proposal calls back to Paris's proposal for single combat in Book 3 (3.67–75), which also saw a temporary truce during a single combat.

The alignment shifts from the gods when Helenos (unusually) overhears their conversation, and approaches Hektor with the idea.⁶ Here, Helenos repeats Hektor's role as Priam's son and then adds that he is 'the equal of Zeus in cleverness' (Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντε, 7.47). Helenos urges Hektor to call for single combat, relaying the gods' idea (7.49–51 recaps 7.38–40). Helenos also assures Hektor that he has heard from the gods that 'it is not yet your fate to die, or to meet your destiny' (οὐ γάρ πώ τοι μοῖρα θανεῖν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν, 7.52). If it is true, this assurance matters as the narrative has mentioned Hektor's death five times in the last fifteen minutes of performance time (Hektor, 6.366f.; Andromache, 6.407; Hektor, 6.462–5; Hektor, 6.486–8; the narrator of the house mourning, 6.500–2).⁷ But the audience has also heard the gods' dialogue (7.22–43), and they did not mention

Hektor's survival. This ambiguity adds tension to the coming duel, because the audience does not yet know that Hektor will certainly live, particularly since they do not yet know which Achaian he will face.⁸

The set-up for the duel involves a fair bit of revising the past, just as with the Trojan response to Paris's return to the battlefield. As Hektor comes forward, he blames Zeus for not allowing the truce between the Achaians and Trojans to stand (7.69–72 recaps 4.1–147). Hektor's recap does align with the narrator's superior knowledge that Zeus would not let the oaths stand (3.332). But Hektor's recap also significantly omits any Trojan guilt, Pandaros's arrow and even Book 3's duel between Paris and Menelaos. In doing this, Hektor resets the action, and moves forward by swearing a new oath (more of an affirmed promise, since no one ever responds to it or swears with him) where he details out what should be done with his body should he die, and what he will do with the body of his opponent (7.77–91).⁹ Just a few lines after Helenos has assured us that Hektor will not die in this fight, Hektor himself re-introduces the idea of his death, and more, a concern with his corpse, and the roles of the Trojans and the Trojan women in the event of his death (7.79f.). This looks forward to Hektor's eventual death and picks up on his household's lamentations for him in Troy (6.497–502), but the stakes are higher now, because now he is once more on the battlefield, once more entering combat. Hektor finishes his speech with his opponent's death and memorial, and he dedicates more lines to that death (eleven to four), which speaks to his confidence moving forward (7.81–91).¹⁰

Achaians: 7.92–213

In the next beat, the narrative switches to Menelaos, who is the first of a series of Achaians to respond to Hektor's single combat proposal. Menelaos takes up Hektor's challenge, shaming the other Achaians (7.96–102). The narrator first intervenes in Menelaos going ahead with his challenge, with an apostrophe and a contrafactual ('Hektor would have killed you, Menelaos' 7.104f.). So the narrator reinforces his special relationship with Menelaos,¹¹ while also reiterating that Menelaos must and will survive this conflict (cf. 4.169–82; 5.564–70; 5.714–18). At the same time, it reflects on Hektor, and suggests that he was right to emphasise the death of his then-anonymous rival.¹²

Agamemnon's response to Menelaos confirms the narrative's assessment further when he stops Menelaos from fighting, warning him that 'even Achilles ... shudders to meet this man' (καὶ δ' Ἀχιλλεύς τούτῳ γε μάχη ἐνὶ κυδιανείρῃ/

ἔρριγ' ἀντιβολῆσαι, 7.113). Both these evaluations of Hektor are based on past experiences of him as a warrior that the audience does not share, though we have just seen him kill two men. But would Achilles actually be afraid of Hektor? Helenos suggested that all the Trojans feared Achilles (6.99–101). But Achilles certainly respected Hektor enough to use him in his threat against Agamemnon (1.241–3). Here, Agamemnon adds about Hektor that 'even though (Hektor)'s fearless and can't get enough of battle . . . he'll gladly stop if he escapes the hateful fighting and bitter combat' (εἴ περ ἀδείης τ' ἐστὶ καὶ εἰ μόθου ἔστ' ἀκόρητος.../ αἶ κε φύγησι/ δῆϊος ἐκ πολέμοιο καὶ αἰνῆς δηϊότητος, 7.117–19). Where Hektor saw only two outcomes to his proposed single combat, Agamemnon adds here another: that Hektor might quit fighting if it means getting to live. Now, looking forward, there are three possible outcomes for an audience to guess at in a duel that has not yet even set its second contestant (and those guesses would be different according to audience knowledge of tradition).

Nestor stands up next, to heap more shame on the cowardly Achaians, telling them of his single combat victory against Ereuthalion, which, if only he were younger, he would repeat now against Hektor (7.124–60). The old man's 'mythological paradigm' works,¹³ and no less than nine men 'were willing to stand up against Hektor' (7.169): this re-introduces Achaian heroes that have been absent from the narrative for around an hour of performance time. When Nestor suggests that they shake out lots (7.170–4), he builds anticipation for the next beat; he also looks forward to the emotional outcome of the fight when he says that whoever draws the lot to fight will gladden the Achaians, and his own heart, to come off the battlefield again whole (7.172–4). This builds anticipation for the audience that Aias might survive the contest.

Next the Achaians pray for Aias, Diomedes or Agamemnon, in that order, to draw the lot (7.179f.), implicitly suggesting that these three are the best Achaian warriors. This does not quite gel with the narrative so far (Odysseus has had more kills than Aias or Agamemnon),¹⁴ and so implies extra-narrative past performance (or traditional popularity) that the Achaians are judging these three with. Finally, Aias draws the lot, and the audience gets access to his happy response, since he thinks he can beat Hektor (δοκέω νικησέμεν Ἐκτορα δῖον, 7.192). Here he emphasizes his war-knowledge and his upbringing (especially ἰδρεῖη at 7.198; τραφέμεν at 7.199), instantly creating a past for himself that gives depth to his character and builds further audience alignment with him moving into the combat. Then Hektor tells his men to pray to Zeus, and they pray that if Zeus loves Hektor, he should let each man have equal strength and equal honour (εἰ δὲ καὶ Ἐκτορά περ φιλέεις καὶ κήδεαι αὐτοῦ, ἴσῃν ἀμφοτέροισι βίην καὶ

κῦδος ὄπασσον. 7.203–5): this reinforces Agamemnon's idea that there might be a draw in the single combat (7.116–19).

After Hektor's time in Troy, the audience is more invested in him, and so more invested in the outcome of his duel. Through this series of Achaian responses to Hektor's challenge, the narrative exercises a push-pull over how an audience should rate Hektor as a fighter. First there is no Achaian brave enough to take him on (7.91f.); then Menelaos would lose against him (7.94–119); even Achilles would be scared of him (7.113f.); Nestor's too old to try (7.132–60); finally, nine stand up to challenge him (7.161–9), with Aias happy to be the one to take Hektor on (7.187–99). The previous beats also signal a shift from Hektor's proposed mortal combat to the Achaian men praying to Zeus for a draw (7.200–5). This complex dance leaves the audience guessing as to what will happen between Hektor and Aias (more of an unknown quantity in this narrative so far), even while these beats point towards the match's outcome.

Fight/Night: 7.214–312

The next beat sequence shows the actual duel. As Aias approaches in his armour, the narrative uses a quick series of emotional responses to direct the audience's allegiance and deepen existing character roles and relationships. First the Achaians are happy to see Aias walking into the fight (7.214). Then the Trojans are trembling and terrified to see Aias (7.214–5): a marked difference from their relief seeing Hektor and Paris re-enter battle just a couple of scenes ago (7.4–7). Finally the narrative turns to Hektor himself, whose knees shake, whose heart pounds, who would run away if only he had not called for this damn duel (7.216–18): along with this amazing moment of access, the narrative attaches the audience to Hektor as he stands his ground against the oncoming Aias. The narrative fixes Hektor, frozen in fear, in the centre of its frame as Aias approaches him with his shield, 'like a wall' (Αἴας δ' ἐγγύθεν ἦλθε φέρων σάκος ἥϋτε πύργον, 7.219).¹⁵

The two men have an exchange before the fight itself begins. Aias, now established by the narrative as the aggressor, speaks first. He starts by looking forward when he tells Hektor that Hektor *will* know what sort of men the best Danaans are (εἶσθαι, 7.226). But then he adds the caveat of 'even after Achilles' (7.228) and recaps the fact that Achilles is out of the action because of his anger at Agamemnon (7.229f.): this is the first time that Achilles' anger has been recapped since 4.512–4, over two hours ago in terms of performance time, and

more with breaks. Then Aias recaps the previous beat, as he boasts that *here* (implicitly not *there* by the ships with Achilles), ‘there are a lot of us who’ll take you on’ (ἡμεῖς δ’ εἰμὲν τοῖοι οἳ ἂν σέθεν ἀντιάσαιμεν/ καὶ πολέες, 7.230f.), reminding us that there were no fewer than nine men who (eventually) wanted to face Hektor (this also recaps the Greeks outnumbering the Trojans in the catalogue, 2.123–8).

With these recaps out of the way, Hektor’s speech focuses more on his own character, playing off of Aias’s earlier speech at 7.191–9. Hektor’s speech is all confidence and adds contrasting access to what the narrative provided before when Hektor was afraid before the battle (7.216–18). Now, Hektor tells Aias off for trying him out like some ‘boy or woman who doesn’t know the war-work’ (7.235f.). Then he asserts that he *knows* his war-work,¹⁶ knows how to fight, kill, move, use his shield, run in with the horses, dance the metres of the war-god (7.237–41). Of course, Hektor must know all these things: he is a warrior with a fearful reputation who has survived nine years of the Trojan War. But there are disparities here that the audience is left to contend with, and again, this requires a high level of engagement with Hektor’s character. Is Hektor *still* afraid of Aias now (cf. 7.216–18)? Maybe he is not: all of us have experienced a pre-event anxiety that disappears once the event starts, whether it be competing in sports, or taking an exam, or giving a presentation. But if he is still afraid, is he disguising his fear? The performance of this scene could drastically alter our understanding of Hektor’s character: whether the performer has fear in his voice when he says these things, or foolish boastfulness, or steely confidence would completely change the dynamics of the exchange, with each possibility posing its own sets of ambiguities for the audience to tackle as the fight begins. His final statement pushes audience curiosity further, in its awkward declaration of bravery: ‘But I don’t want to hit such a man as you are, watching you in an ambush, but upfront, if I can.’ (ἀλλ’ οὐ γάρ σ’ ἐθέλω βαλέειν τοιοῦτον ἐόντα/ λάθρῃ ὀπιπεύσας, ἀλλ’ ἀμφοδόν, αἶ κε τύχωμι, 7.243f.) Does this imply that in other circumstances, or with a different person, Hektor would sit in ambush to kill his opponent?

The combat beat sequence continues to build suspense as it goes between the warriors from Hektor’s first spear-throw. With each battle beat, it is clear that Aias has the advantage, but between beats, the narrative re-establishes parity between the two men. First Hektor’s spear only goes through six of the eight layers of Aias’s shield (7.245–8); but Aias’s goes right the way through Hektor’s, and through his corselet, and even through his tunic (7.248–53); Hektor ducks and just avoids dark death (ὃ δ’ ἐκλίνθη καὶ ἀλεύατο κῆρα μέλαιναν, 7.254). But then they are *both* like flesh-eating lions (7.256), they are *both* like wild boars (7.257).

Next, Hektor stabs his spear again into Aias's shield, but once again cannot penetrate it (7.257–9); but Aias's spear goes straight through Hektor's shield (cf. 7.251), this time drawing blood from Hektor's neck (7.260–2). Hektor keeps going, throwing a large rock that clashes against Aias's shield (7.264–7); but Aias gets a bigger rock and throws, knocking Hektor flat on his back so that Apollo must set him upright (7.268–72). Each time, Aias has a clear edge over Hektor. But once again, the narrative pulls back from calling advantage Aias, saying 'now they would have kept stabbing with their swords, fighting hand to hand' (καὶ νῦν κε δὴ ξιφέεσσ' αὐτοσχεδὸν οὐτάζοντο, 7.273), suggesting that *both* men would have kept going, without any indication of an advantage between them when the heralds intervene because of the encroaching darkness (7.274–82).

The intervention stops the fight. The heralds assign the same parity that the narrative has here and there been asserting: Zeus loves both men (7.280), fulfilling the Achaians' prayer about Zeus loving Hektor (7.201–5). Better, the heralds play now on the audience's shared experience, imposing a shared evaluation on the fight that they have just witnessed: 'Both men are fighters. We have all seen that now.' (ἄμφω δ' αἰχμητά· τό γε δὴ καὶ ἴδμεν ἅπαντες, 7.281) We have seen Hektor struggling; have the characters seen something else?

Aias lets Hektor decide whether or not to call the fight (7.284–6), with the reminder that it was Hektor who first called for the fight, now about fifteen minutes ago (7.67–91). Hektor agrees to call the fight in a long speech that looks forward to both sides' positive response to seeing their heroes come out of a fight alive, spending slightly more time on his own return (happy Achaians at 7.294f.; happy Trojans and Trojan women at 7.296–8). This picks up on the predicted possibility of a draw from earlier (7.204f.),¹⁷ but it is also a callback to the previous happy return of a warrior in danger that the narrative showed with Aineias (5.514–16). The narrative also unevenly treats Hektor's return against Aias's, spending five lines on Hektor's return, with just one line on Aias's return before and after (7.306–12).¹⁸ This disparity more accurately reflects the danger to both men in the battle itself, where Hektor was in more danger throughout, so his escape is more remarkable. Hektor also had no second; Aias had eight others who would take his place should he have fallen in his combat against Hektor. But more, from the time in Troy with Hektor, the narrative has built more audience allegiance for Hektor than it has for Aias.

Just as the duel in Book 3 had to end with both Menelaos and Paris still alive in order for the narrative to progress, so does this duel.¹⁹ So rather than having an outcome that explicitly advances the plot, the duel focuses intensely on the emotional outcomes for the narrative's characters. As the battle sequences from

Books 4 and 5 begin to demonstrate the threats that face warriors on the battlefield, and begin to introduce the ramifications of a warrior's death for those at home, the sequences in Book 6 showed us an extended example of the emotional stakes of a warrior's death involved for those at home, and for Hektor's death in particular. This latest sequence brings those two concepts back together, showing us both the delight of the Trojan men in seeing their military leaders return to the field, but also the delight of both sides (and, more particularly, the Trojan side) at having their men return safe and sound from mortal combat. While the duel feels as though it has not moved the narrative forward at all, it has done a great deal in terms of furthering our emotional investment in the narrative's characters, and those character arcs – particularly Hektor's – and their ambiguities keep the audience engaged while the plot meanders forward through these middle books.

Wall alignment: 7.313–44

While the single combat resolves, the issue of Apollo saying that the Trojans and the Achaians will fight again remains dangling (7.30), and the 'episode' only looks backwards briefly to the duel before setting the problem that will dominate the next beat sequence. The narrative keeps the audience attached to Aias as he makes his way back to the Achaian camp, and when the Achaians make sacrifices and feast, Agamemnon honours Aias by giving him the best cut of meat, implicitly acknowledging his victory in the duel (7.321f.; cf. 7.312). Then Nestor suggests that they gather and burn their dead (7.326–35) and build ramparts over the burial mound (7.336–43). The first part of Nestor's orders will see the action through to the end of the book; the second suggestion will start a new story arc that will dominate the best part of the next several hours.

The Achaian wall then expands the idea of story arcs being closely bound up in a single character, to include a focal point around which other characters can meet.²⁰ This makes sense as the narrative moves into an extended period of battle, where the narrative will necessarily ask us to track multiple characters on either side of the fight. In Jason Mittell's discussion of character in television serial, he says about *The Wire*:

...a scene might attach to one of dozens of characters whom the narrative differentiates and recognises. . . This vast breadth of attachment locates Baltimore itself as an immersive place functioning as the core aligned character, with its various inhabitants providing access to the city's interior subjectivity . . .²¹

While I would not go so far as to say that I think the Achaian wall has its own interiority, it will become a touch-point for a multiplicity of characters over the next several episodes, redefining many of their roles in direct relationship to itself.²² Aias will become the wall's main defender; Sarpedon and Hektor its main attackers; and action will now move back and forth around the wall to catch up with its primary characters.

Troy-time: 7.345–80

The scene switches from the Achaians to Troy, where Antenor addresses the Trojan assembly before Priam's palace (7.345–58). The narrator omits Hektor from the assembly, possibly because it would ruin the emotional impact of his last trip to Troy if now he returns there with another opportunity to hang out with Andromache.²³ Antenor tells the assembly that they should return Helen, since the Trojans fight on as oath-breakers (7.345–53). So Antenor significantly recaps Pandaros's divinely-inspired actions in Book 4 that made the Trojans into oath-breakers (4.124–40), and takes more responsibility than Hektor's call for single combat earlier in this episode had (7.69f.). Paris refuses to hand over Helen, but says that he will give back her possessions (7.362–4). Priam agrees that this shall be their offer, and adds that they will ask for permission to gather and bury their dead (7.366–78), looking forward to the next beats.

Death all round: 7.381–8.51

The narrative switches beats and follows Idaios the herald with his message to the Achaian side (7.381–97), where he is sure to qualify Paris's refusal to return Helen as against the Trojan wishes (7.390, 7.393). After a moment of silence, Diomedes steps forward to respond to the herald (7.399–402). The answer is no. No to taking back the possessions, no to taking back Helen, no to all of it. (7.400f.) 'It's known even to a fool that a verdict of death has fixed itself on the Trojans.' (7.402) This statement follows on Antenor's admission that the Trojans are oath-breakers and Paris's insistence that they remain oath-breakers in the previous beat (7.350–4; 7.357–64): Diomedes winks to the audience in saying that the consequences of both of these facts for the Trojan are already 'known' (γνωτὸν, 7.401). This obviously appeals to the audience, who will all know that Troy falls,

but still, it raises questions as to *how* the narrative will get to that fall, or if it will get to that fall at all.

In the beat sequence, the Trojans gather their bodies and firewood (7.417), and then the Achaians gather their bodies and firewood (7.420).²⁴ The sun starts to come up as the Trojans gather their dead (7.421), trying to recognize each man (7.423f.), weeping tears (7.424f.), but hushed by Priam, they burn the bodies (7.427–9). The Achaians do the same during the dawn,²⁵ building the wall over the burial mound that Nestor suggested (7.433–41; cf. 7.336–43). The beat switches by following the gaze of Poseidon, who sees the Achaians building the wall and complains to Zeus that the Achaians should have sacrificed first (7.446–53). So Zeus tells Poseidon to break the wall after the Achaians leave Troy (7.459–63). This gives a nod to tradition even beyond the fall of Troy.²⁶ Finally, evening falls on the Achaians, done with their work, feasting, and the Trojans in their city doing the same (7.464–77). But Zeus turns the Trojans green with fear, so that their cups spill, and they all must make an offering to Zeus (7.479–82).

For all its trickery in making the oaths sworn in Book 3 and broken in Book 4 disappear from the foreground through the duel in Book 7, the narrative then brings them back and shows their consequences. Antenor knows the Trojans are oath-breakers and ought to give up; Diomedes says it is already too late for the Trojans no matter what they do. Hektor's absence through these exchanges might point to his helplessness to change this; just as the burial of the corpses after shows his helplessness in having changed anything for those who have fallen, and looks forward to the fates of many more Trojans and Achaians yet to come. The sequences in Book 6 increased the stakes for Hektor and allowed him to express his values in the face of those stakes; those in Book 7 allow him to *show* us how his values stand up to stakes that keep increasing. But the narrative, with the mentions of the oath and oath-breaking, the impossibility of Helen's return, and even the building and foreshadowed destruction of the Achaian wall, forces us to take a historical perspective from which we can see that Hektor, for all our care – even, perhaps, for all of Zeus's care – cannot win.

With the dawn, the beat changes scenes to Olympos, where Zeus forbids further divine intervention in the war and threatens the other gods to keep out before he heads off alone to watch the battle from Mount Ida (8.1–52). So the battle starts up again, just as Apollo said that it would (7.29–32), ending the 'problem' of putting fighting aside for a while and suggesting a possible episode break between the books.²⁷ But in setting the rules for the coming combat, and in setting down Zeus on Mount Ida as a spectator, the narrative builds anticipation for the coming battle, and the role that Zeus will play in it.²⁸

Battle: 8.52–197

Now that the narrative has spent time establishing audience allegiance with Hektor in the scene in Troy, and in his single combat with Aias, Hektor takes on a greater role in this battle sequence. The battlefield, with the wall at its centre, becomes the focal point where the story arcs of Hektor, the lead Achaians, and the gods (particularly Zeus) converge, with the narrative rapidly switching audience alignment between them. These rapid alignment switches give the audience diverse opportunities to either change allegiance in accordance with narrative change, or to root for ‘favourite’ characters throughout. Battle shows how characters on either side cope with their allies, their enemies, and with the gods, revealing new character elements with each new interaction or response. This will be increasingly true for Hektor as he takes on a more major role in battle.

The narrative begins to bounce the audience’s allegiance back and forth between the Achaians and the Trojans before battle even begins. First, the narrative shows the Achaians, putting on their armour (8.53f.); then it switches to the Trojans (8.55–7). The narrative’s description of the Trojans provides more information about them, building alignment through both attachment and access, in a way that also recaps crucial information. First, there are fewer Trojans than there are Achaians (8.56 recaps 2.122–32). Next, the narrative gives the audience access as it describes the Trojans’ motivation of fighting under necessity’s yoke, to defend their wives and children (8.57). This builds on earlier scenes, including those in Book 6 that emphasize the need to defend the Trojan women and children from their fates (cf. 6.77–101). This narrative description of Trojan motivation invites allegiance to the Trojans, especially as the narrative here omits access to the Achaians, who are fighting to right the wrong of Helen’s abduction, or because of the broken oaths. The next beat sees the fighting start, but the scene quickly switches alignment to Zeus, who balances his scales of death and the Achaians’ death-day sinks (8.70–7), which looks forward to their failure in the battle.²⁹ These three beats create conflicting allegiances moving into the battle, expertly creating first the Trojans, and then the Achaians as underdogs. (Of course, audience allegiances will depend on cultural attitudes towards underdogs.)

As Zeus launches a thunderbolt to signal this Achaian death-day, the narrative allows access to the Achaians’ fear (8.77) as they flee, while it also names Idomeneus, Agamemnon, the Aiantes and Odysseus (8.78–98), foregrounding their characters after their minor roles through previous sequences.³⁰ Only Nestor remains on the battlefield, his horse struck by one of Paris’s arrows:³¹ in calling Paris ‘Helen’s husband, with her nice hair’ (8.80), the narrative recalls not

just Paris's abduction of Helen, but also his refusal to return her at 7.355, since he is *still* her husband. While Nestor tries to cut his chariot free from the dead horse, Hektor charges towards him (8.88–90).

The narrative uses its contrafactual knowledge to say that Nestor would have died there if Diomedes had not come to save him (8.90f.),³² building audience anticipation for how the 'saving' will unfold. Diomedes asks Odysseus to help him save Nestor, but Odysseus ignores him, making the scene more pathetic (8.91–8). This *pathos*, emphasized by the fact that Diomedes is 'alone' as he reaches Nestor, sets up a surprise when Diomedes encourages Nestor to come with him, in his chariot, to take on Hektor. So the beat looks forward to a confrontation with Hektor. And Diomedes is confident about that confrontation, as he refers to his Trojan horses that he took from Aineias (8.105–11), after beating Aineias in battle (5.319–27). In recapping a key element of his *aristeia* (just under two hours ago in performance time without break), Diomedes suggests that he is about to be excellent once again in this battle, further building audience anticipation for his confrontation with Hektor.

Aligning the audience first with Nestor and Diomedes this way, Hektor implicitly becomes their antagonist in this beat; first when we see him charging across the lines towards the stranded Nestor (8.88–90), then here again as Nestor and Diomedes draw close to him (8.116–19). But the narrative deftly switches sides when Diomedes hits Hektor's charioteer Eniopeus with a spear, and aligns the audience with Hektor, as it gives them access to the grief that closes over Hektor's heart (Ἑκτορα δ' αἰνὸν ἄχος πύκασε φρένας ἡνιόχοιο, 8.124). The narrative keeps the audience attached to Hektor as he leaves Eniopeus lying on the battlefield, and goes in search of another charioteer, quickly enlisting Archeptolemos (8.124–26). Here the narrative employs yet another contrafactual,³³ saying that the fighting would have continued if Zeus had not seen them and sent a lightning bolt flying down right in front of Diomedes (8.131–6): this implies that the intervention is to *save* Hektor as Zeus tries to stop Diomedes.

The thunderbolt provides an opportunity to exploit the melodramatic alignment structure that this beat sequence has set up, as the beat switches to Nestor who then interprets and responds to it. Nestor reads the thunderbolt and tells Diomedes that they should relent, asking if he recognizes that Zeus's courage is no longer with him (8.139f.), as Zeus is now giving glory 'to this man', Hektor (τοῦτῳ, 8.141), elaborating on the previous beat. Diomedes says that he agrees, but he also fears that Hektor will tell the Trojans that Diomedes ran away from him (8.147–9). Diomedes employs a common habit of Hektor's – imagining

what someone else might say in a future scenario³⁴ – in thinking Hektor might openly mock him to the Trojans: whether this is based on Diomedes' past experience of Hektor or on how Hektor fits into the normal expectations of the *Iliad's* storyworld (or both), it speaks to a familiarity with Hektor which adds further depth to his character. Nestor's response does the same. Reassuring Diomedes, Nestor insists that the Trojans would not believe Hektor if he called Diomedes a coward, and nor will their wives, many of whom have lost their husbands to Diomedes on the battlefield (8.153–6). Here, Nestor refers to past actions that might include Diomedes' 'overhaul' *aristeia* of Book 5, with its many kills, and the Trojan wives' grief that was necessarily going to follow (6.237–41), but that also might refer to Diomedes' fighting history at Troy, extending past the bounds of the *Iliad*. So their exchange deepens both Nestor and Diomedes, while they also intensely imagine Hektor in his social contexts,³⁵ further reinforcing *his* social roles and character as well. With these firm re-introductions, Nestor and Diomedes charge into battle.

The next beat switches audience alignment back to the Trojans and Hektor. Hektor calls out to Diomedes, recapping Diomedes' own lineage and role (8.160f.): these strong character re-introductions must certainly allow for the performer to have taken a break between Books 7 and 8, before this battle sequence. But with or without a break, they build increasing audience recognition, alignment, and allegiance with the characters before they start into battle. Hektor says that Diomedes has been honoured most of all before, but then he tells Diomedes that the Achaians will now dishonour him (νῦν δέ σ' ἀτιμήσουσι, 8.163) and calls him 'like a woman' (γυναικὸς ἄρ' ἀντὶ τέτυξο, 8.163) and a 'plaything' (γλήνη, 8.164). In a way, Hektor's insults fulfil Diomedes' fear of Hektor's insults from the last beat (8.147–9), and confirm Diomedes' idea of Hektor's character as a 'boaster'.³⁶ Hektor then tells Diomedes that he will not sack the city with Hektor giving way, and that he will not carry away their women in the ships (8.164–6). Hektor's saying here that he will not allow the Trojan women to be taken away picks up on his earlier imagination, of Andromache working the loom and carrying the water of another man after his death (οὐδὲ γυναικάς/ ἄξεις ἐν νήεσσι, 8.155f.; cf. 6.454–65). Hektor ends his speech with the simple future: 'before then, I'll give you your fortune' (πάρος τοι δαίμονα δώσω, 8.166). This creates further audience anticipation for a fight between the two opposing heroes (cf. 6.73–82), and raises the question (especially for a non-traditional audience) as to whether Hektor can see his boasts through.

But the beat switches alignment back to Diomedes and provides the audience access to him as hesitates three times to keep attacking, with Zeus answering his

thoughts, again, with thunderbolts (8.167–71; cf. 8.133–62).³⁷ Then the beat switches again to Hektor, exhorting his men. Now Hektor interprets the thunderbolts to his men, as he provides access to something he ‘knows’ (γινώσκω, 8.175): that Zeus has nodded and granted him the glory (8.175f.). This raises ambiguity, as the audience must decide if this is part of Zeus’s fulfilling his promise to Thetis (1.523–30), or following up on the verdict of the scales (8.68–77), or if Hektor’s interpretation is right at all. Then Hektor recaps that the Achaians have built the wall (8.177–9 recaps 7.436–41), and he says he will beat the wall, set fire to the Achaian ships, and cut the Achaians down (8.180–3). Here the wall’s story arc emerges, as taking it down becomes the first of the two missions that Hektor (again) lays out for himself, which will create audience anticipation for the next several episodes’ action.

Hektor then talks to his horses; he gives their shared backstory when he reminds the horses that Andromache took good care of them (8.187–90).³⁸ This brings back audience investment in Hektor *as* Andromache’s husband, and might bring to mind their encounter in Book 6. But then Hektor creates anticipation for future beats when he gives himself another mission, additional to (and possibly contrary to) burning the ships (8.180–3):³⁹ to capture Nestor’s shield and Diomedes’ corselet, with the aim of sending the Achaians back out of Troy.⁴⁰ Hektor’s focus on Nestor and Diomedes naturally continues on the primary contest between the three men over the last several beats, while looking forward to a potential outcome of that contest. At the same time, Hektor adds character depth and brings in Andromache (and her father, slain king of a sacked city), adding further weight to his character’s past *and* to the future outcome of his fight with Nestor and Diomedes.

Hera/Zeus: 8.198–252

The beat switches audience alignment to Hera, who responds with anger at Hektor’s boast and tries to convince Poseidon to enter into battle with her to save the dying Achaians (8.198–207). Poseidon turns her down (8.198–211), implicitly giving Zeus’s earlier threats against divine intervention as a reason (8.7–27). The narrative increases the sense of threat to the Achaians as it cuts from the divine exchange back to the Achaians,⁴¹ penned in between the ditch and the ships, and then, zooming in again, to Hektor: ‘He pinned them in like fast Ares would, Priam’s Hektor, since Zeus gave him the glory.’ (εἶλει δὲ θεῶ ἀτάλαντος Ἄρηι/Ἔκτωρ Πριαμίδης, ὅτε οἱ Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκε, 8.215f.) So the narrative confirms

that Zeus grants the glory to Hektor, confirming Nestor's (8.141) and Hektor's (8.175f.) earlier interpretations of Zeus's thunderbolts saying just that.

The narrative goes so far as to say that Hektor might have set the Achaian ships on fire right there and then had not Hera intervened, using the contrafactual to cut back to the goddess, now encouraging Agamemnon (8.217–19).⁴² Through these rapid cuts between characters, the narrative gives the impression of action without showing us much action at all, as it jumps between the arcs of Diomedes, Nestor, Hektor, Hera, Zeus, and now, Agamemnon. So at Hera's bid, Agamemnon exhorts the Achaians who ran away a few minutes ago (8.78f.; 8.97f.). Agamemnon's exhortation from the centre hopes to reach to the far camps of Aias or to those of Achilles (8.223–5) – no mention is made of Achilles' anger, or any special circumstances keeping him out of the fight. But Agamemnon does use the past to characterize Hektor, saying that when they were all at Lemnos, they each could have taken a hundred or two hundred Trojans (cf. Nestor 2.122–32), but now none of them can take on one Hektor, who will soon set fire to the ships (8.229–35; cf. 7.113f.). Both this look backwards to when the Achaians were dominant, and this look forwards to Hektor burning their ships, imply Achilles' absence as a pivot point. This builds further anticipation for the ships being set on fire and recalls Hektor's boast from a previous beat that he would do just that (8.180–3). Agamemnon then prays to Zeus, who takes pity on him, giving the Danaans new strength (8.236–52). The narrative provides an emotional justification for that change, giving the audience access to Zeus in his pity (8.245f.).

Battle: 8.253–334

As the battle continues, patterns emerge that keep the narrative dynamic, but only slowly moving forward; repetitions become rife.⁴³ The Trojans will get the upper hand; the Achaians will get the upper hand; the gods will influence which is which. Some characters will die, but they are not *important* characters.⁴⁴ They are red-shirts, designed to keep the stakes high *around* our primary characters, without the threat of losing anyone too primary this early in the epic. So once again, the narrative aligns the audience with the Achaians as they turn back into battle, encouraged by Zeus's sign (8.251f.). Diomedes leads them, but the narrative creates another mini-catalogue of Achaians that follow him: the Atreidai, the Aiantes, Idomeneus, Meriones, Eurypylos, and Teukros (8.253–67).⁴⁵ Amidst these reintroductions, the narrative follows Teukros in particular, who has hardly

appeared in the narrative so far (cf. 6.31). Teukros shoots his arrows and then retreats back behind the shield of his half-brother Aias (8.267–72), killing a series of men. Agamemnon praises him and says that he will reward the archer should he ever take Troy (8.286–91). But Teukros's response dismisses that prize, as he expresses his frustration at trying to hit Hektor this whole time. He has killed eight men, but he 'can't hit this raging dog' (τοῦτον δ' οὐ δύναμαι βαλεῖν κύνα λυσσητήρα, 8.299).⁴⁶ The narrative aligns the audience with Teukros, and Hektor seems far away. In fact, neither Agamemnon nor Teukros name Hektor. The audience must guess that this 'raging dog' is Hektor, and then must re-integrate this new aspect of Hektor's character into their impression of him.

Only the narrative names Hektor, as Teukros tries again to hit him with his arrow, twice (8.300f. = 8.309f.). The first miss hits Gorgythion, another son of Priam (so even more of a red-shirt stand-in for Hektor),⁴⁷ whose head goes limp to one side like a poppy's head falling over in the rain, when he dies (8.306). These extensive similes for the deaths of red-shirts make them real, make death seem that much closer to the characters that the audience has actually had time to invest in as their vivid visuality make them particularly impactful and memorable for the audience.⁴⁸ The second time Teukros tries to shoot Hektor, he hits Hektor's new charioteer, Archeptolemos (8.312), who, the audience might recall, became Hektor's charioteer after Diomedes killed Eniopeus (8.119–29). Once again the dreadful grief covers Hektor for his charioteer (8.124 = 8.316), but again he does not stop, rushing to find a replacement, this time Kebriones (8.318). Hektor himself jumps down from the chariot, grabs a huge rock and charges at Teukros, striking him so that his arm goes dead, he drops his bow, and his companions must carry him off the battlefield (8.328–34). This whole sequence of events perfectly demonstrates how the narrative holds Hektor in suspense. First, two red-shirts die in proximity to Hektor as Teukros strains to hit Hektor. Hektor strikes back and stops Teukros from shooting any more of his men, but does not kill him. The narrative keeps moving forward, but little changes: both Teukros and Hektor survive.

Overhaul-ish: 8.335–437

Teukros's men carry him out of the action (8.332–4), and the beat switches to Zeus, who once again intervenes and rouses the Trojans' battle-fury (μένος, 8.335): does this count as an overhaul? Is battle-fury excited? Or incited?⁴⁹ The earlier Teukros scene started to hint at an issue of recognizing Hektor, who raged

‘like a mad dog’ (8.299). Now Hektor rages in the vanguard, exulting in his strength (‘Ἐκτωρ δ’ ἐν πρώτοισι κίε σθένει βλεμεαίνων, 8.337),⁵⁰ like a hunting dog snapping at a lion or a wild boar (8.338–42). He chases after the Achaians, ‘always killing the man trailing behind’ (αἰὲν ἀποκτείνων τὸν ὀπίσταντον, 8.342): Hektor’s killing is a continuing, repeated action, and its lack of detailed description sparks the imagination. In response, the Achaians ‘flee, afraid’ (οἱ δὲ φόβοντο, 8.342). They regroup beside the ships, praying to the gods and standing fast there (8.343–7). Then the narrative cuts back to Hektor, who now has the eyes of the Gorgon or mortal-plaguing Ares (8.348f.), as he pins the Achaians against the ships: this, too, suggests an overhaul. While the silent Hektor rages and looks like a Gorgon, the narrative challenges the audience’s character recognition, alignment, and allegiance with his character.

Hera ‘recognizes’ Hektor, calling him by name, reiterating his role as Priam’s son, but her evaluation of him asks for audience engagement:

οἷ κεν δὴ κακὸν οἶτον ἀναπλήσαντες ὄλωνται
 ἀνδρὸς ἑνὸς ρίπῃ, ὃ δὲ μαίνεται οὐκέτ’ ἀνεκτῶς
 ‘Ἐκτωρ Πριαμίδης, καὶ δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ ἔοργε.

‘Must they then accomplish this evil fate and be destroyed,
 At the blow of one man, who rages, and can no longer be endured,
 Hektor the son of Priam, and he has done all these bad things.’

Hera to Athena, 8.354–56

Can the audience recognize the Hektor that Athena describes? ‘Raging’ (8.355), like Teukros’s raging dog? (8.299). Is he the same Hektor as before? The narrative says that Hektor kills, but does not give the names of his victims, does not spend the time on his kills: there is one line of his carnage (8.342). Just a couple of beats earlier, Teukros kills enough men that the narrator must ask who he killed and name them all (8.273–6). But even if the narrative has not shown Hektor’s kills in detail, Hera’s speech diegetically enhances Hektor’s current successes. Her saying that Hektor has done ‘many bad things’ is a callback to Aineias’s attempt to recognize Diomedes during his *aristeia* (5.175). Through Hera, Hektor seems more than he is, for a moment.

As Athena responds to Hera, she recalibrates the narrative’s recognition of Hektor, recapping knowledge about him that most audiences will already know: ‘And even this man will lose his battle-fury and his life, dying at the hands of the Argives in his own land’ (καὶ λίην οὗτός γε μένος θυμόν τ’ ὀλέσειε/ χερσὶν ὑπ’ Ἀργείων φθίμενος ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ, 8.358). Athena reasserts Hektor’s mortality, and looks forward once more to Hektor’s death: he is no Gorgon, he is not Ares

(cf. 8.348f.). He is the man whose wife told him that his battle-fury would kill him when the Achaians cut him down (cf. Andromache, 6.407–10). Athena explains Hektor's current strength with another recap, that Zeus only helps him out of obligation to Thetis (8.370–3 recaps 1.523–30). Athena then looks forward to a battlefield confrontation with Hektor, wondering as she readies to arm herself if Hektor will be happy to see her, or if some Trojan will be made a feast for the birds and the dogs (8.376–80). Her death threat explicitly eschews Hektor himself, aimed instead at 'the Trojans': he cannot die yet. The beat switches again as Zeus sees his daughter arming, and intervenes, reinforcing his earlier rules about non-intervention (8.7–27), and cutting off at the knees any threat Athena might have had for Hektor (8.397–437).

Hera/Zeus: 8.438–84

The scene follows Zeus back to Mount Olympos (8.438–43), where all the gods gather. Zeus recaps the previous beat by saying that Athena and Hera would have been sorry if he had struck their car down (8.447–56 recaps 8.409–24). In response, Hera asks that she be allowed at least to advise the Argives in order to protect them (8.466–8). Zeus refuses and threatens that tomorrow will be even worse for her beloved Achaians (8.470–2). This looks forward to future episodes, as Zeus creates a series of signpost events for Hera (and the audience) to follow:

οὐ γὰρ πρὶν πολέμου ἀποπαύσεται ὄβριμος Ἑκτωρ
 πρὶν ὄρθαι παρὰ ναῦφι ποδώκεα Πηλεΐωνα,
 ἥματι τῷ ὅτ' ἂν οἱ μὲν ἐπὶ πρύμνῃσι μάχωνται
 στείνει ἐν αἰνοτάτῳ περὶ Πατρόκλοιο θανόντος·
 ὥς γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι·

'Strong Hektor won't stop fighting until
 swift-footed Peleus's son gets up, by the ships,
 on that day when they fight around their ships' prows,
 in dire straits over Patroklos's death.
 So that's the prophecy.'

Zeus to Hera, 8.473–7

Zeus's speech gives the strongest direction so far of where the story is going, conflating prophecy and *prolepsis*, or flash-forward.⁵¹ Zeus, too, teases a point of no return in looking forward to these deaths, explicitly for the first time within the *Iliad*. And in marking out 'tomorrow' as an even worse day for the Achaians (8.470–2), along with these prophecies, Zeus raises questions for the audience to

engage with, 'will Patroklos die tomorrow'? This would be quite a place to take a performance break, a proverbial 'mic drop' that resolves the problem of Hera's interference (for now) that has dominated much of the previous beat sequences, and that builds intense anticipation for what will happen next to get us to Patroklos's death.

Die another day: 8.485–9.88

As the next beat leaves the gods, the sun sets, and the narrative gives access both to the Trojan sadness at day's end as well as the Achaians' relief (8.485–8). Hektor calls an assembly, and the description of the place as littered with corpses creates a sharp reminder of the day's carnage (8.489–91). Here the narrative takes time to re-introduce Hektor according to recognizable features after the now-finished 'overhaul': Zeus loves him (8.493; cf. 7.280) and he has his eleven-cubit spear (8.494f. = 6.319f.). Hektor's speech recaps that nightfall has stopped their advance (8.499f. recapping 8.432–7) as he sets the Trojans on 'missions' to make a feast (8.504), and to take up their night watches, some here on the field (8.507–9), the old men and boys on the wall (8.517–19), the women in their homes (8.520–2). Hektor suggests that the women's night fires can guard against a night-time sneak attack in the city (8.522): this might delight the traditional audience, familiar with the story of the Trojan horse.⁵² Then Hektor prays to Zeus that the Trojans can drive out the Achaians (8.526–8). Finally, Hektor reinforces Diomedes as the premier warrior on the battlefield, when he says that in the morning he will take him on and kill him (8.532–8). It has been around a half hour since Diomedes rescued Nestor and thought of attacking Hektor three times back at 8.169–72, with one other reminder of his pre-eminence since (8.254–7). Hektor's emphasis on 'tomorrow' as he imagines taking on Diomedes (8.535, 8.538, 8.341) builds strongly on Zeus's prophecy (8.470) to create audience anticipation for what will happen next.

The next beat shows the Trojans completing the 'missions' that Hektor laid out for them in the previous beat. But as the Trojans make their sacrifices, the gods reject them from their hate for Troy (8.548–52). The narrative identified Hektor through Zeus's love for him just a few minutes earlier (8.493), but now (8.548–52), it shows again how the gods hate Troy (cf. 4.31–6; 6.311). These conflicting emotions between the gods, which wreaked so much havoc in the last battle sequence, create continuing ambiguity as the narrative moves forward. So the audience wants to see, 'what will happen tomorrow?'

The day's end, the recap 'so the Trojans had watches' (ὥς οἱ μὲν Τρῶες φυλακὰς ἔχον, 9.1), and the alignment switch to the Achaians suggest that a performer could take a break between books, but certainly does not have to. This next beat sequence takes place almost entirely among the Achaians, and, despite Hektor's impact on the battle in the previous sequence, the Achaians do not mention him now. Except for Achilles. And the fact that only Achilles mentions Hektor throughout the embassy scene, imagining past and future confrontations with Hektor, begins to prepare the audience for that final confrontation, set up as it has been by Zeus (8.473–7).

Full of sorrow, Agamemnon addresses the Achaian assembly. Here he picks up on the divine ambiguity that so defined the action of the previous 'episode', saying that Zeus has lied when he said that Agamemnon would sack Ilion, but acts like he wanted them all to leave Troy (9.18–25). Diomedes then chastises Agamemnon for wanting to leave, claiming that he and Sthenelos alone would stay and sack the city (9.30–49). Nestor makes peace between them, and recaps the significant fact of the Trojans' guard fires and their proximity to the ships (9.76f. recaps 8.553–65). As the assembly breaks up, the narrative, too, recaps important spatial information, as the Achaian heroes (named as Thrasymedes, Askalaphos, Ialmenos, Meriones, Aphareus, Deïpyros, Lykomedes) set their garrisons 'between the ditch and the wall' (μέσον τάφρου καὶ τείχεος, 9.87; cf. 7.435–41), reiterating the landmarks that will gain further prominence in future battle sequences. A performer might break here, too, as opposed to the book break, as this settles the Achaians in for the night.

Embassy: 9.89–713

The next beat follows Agamemnon and the other leaders to his tent, where he feeds them. Here, Nestor brings up the quarrel that Agamemnon had with Achilles in the first episode (9.106–11 recaps 1.120–305), suggesting that they might try to make amends with him (9.111–3). This sets up the 'mission' for the next beats, and defines the problem of this possible episode. Agamemnon sends an embassy to Achilles, where Odysseus, Aias, and Phoinix head to Achilles' tent with Agamemnon's offer of restitution. The narrative *shows* us Achilles for the first time now since we left him by his ships, almost six hours ago in performance time, more with breaks (1.492; cf. 2.685–8). Odysseus makes the proposal, which Achilles refuses: Odysseus explicitly mentions that Achilles might win great glory in killing Hektor as a reason that he should return (9.300–7), even if he

does not accept Agamemnon's gifts. And even though Achilles has been absent, Achilles recaps Hektor's success in the recent battle. Achilles knows that there has been a threat of fire to the ships (9.347; cf. 8.229) and he knows that the Achaians have built a ditch (9.349f. recaps 7.435–41). Achilles also knows that the Achaian efforts to hold Hektor back have not been entirely successful (9.351f.). Then Achilles recounts his own successes in fighting Hektor – these happened before the narrative of the *Iliad* began, giving depth to the enemies' relationship, and creating further audience anticipation for their future confrontation. When Achilles was fighting, he says, Hektor never came out beyond the Skaian gates and the oak tree (9.354; cf. Agamemnon at 8.229–35) and there was this one time when they came face-to-face and Hektor barely escaped with his life (9.355). So Achilles implies that *he* is the only one who can actually stop Hektor (cf. 1.241–4), but also says that he does not want to fight him now (9.356–63). This short passage confirms, from another perspective, Zeus's prophecy that Hektor will rage until Achilles returns to battle (8.473–6).

Achilles' speech also recaps the rupture between Agamemnon and himself once again before he rejects all of Agamemnon's proffered gifts, asking how material possessions can compare to the value of his life (9.400–18). Finally, he says that the Achaians should count on something other than him to rescue their ships (9.423). Phoinix's response also recaps and anticipates the risk of fire to the ships (9.436; cf. 9.347, 8.229) before he his own long history and the story of Meleagros. But Phoinix, like Odysseus, cannot convince Achilles. Finally Aias speaks, saying that Achilles does not remember the affection of his friends (9.630f.); but this 'memory' cannot compete, Achilles says, with his memory of what happened with Agamemnon (9.646f.).⁵³ Here, the audience might naturally find more allegiance with Achilles, since they share the memory of his quarrel with Agamemnon, more than any memory of relationships that he had with the Achaians before that incident, before the *Iliad* began.

Achilles then says that he will not return to battle until Hektor comes all the way to the ships of the Myrmidons, killing Achaians, setting fire to their ships (9.650–4), again recapping Zeus's prophecy (8.473–6). And Achilles boasts that he will be the one to hold Hektor back, eager as he is for battle (9.654f.), backing up his boast of nearly killing Hektor in the past in his earlier speech (9.354f.). Achilles' speeches, like Zeus's prophecy in the prior book, draw an event roadmap that the audience now anticipates;⁵⁴ this builds further on the *Iliad*'s melodramatic alignment structure in drawing our attention to gaps of knowledge. Achilles might know that he will be the one to stop Hektor, but he makes no mention of Patroklos's death (cf. Zeus at 8.475–7). This gap in the knowledge between Zeus,

the narrator, and the audience increases emotional investment and anticipation of the events to come. Achilles' omission invites the audience to consider where Patroklos's death will fit into that map. In the next scene, Patroklos is present as he orders a bed made up for Phoinix and then heads to sleep himself, in Achilles' tent, with a woman whom Achilles gifted to him (9.658–68). Achilles' ignorance of Patroklos's death is so followed by an emphatic scene of the intimacy between Achilles and Patroklos.

The embassy 'episode' deepens characters through backstory and conversation, and reasserts Achilles as a main character after an absence of many episodes. Achilles' reintroduction also drastically builds anticipation for his eventual return to battle and his final confrontation with Hektor. But it does not move the plot forward in itself.

Spy vs Spy: 10.1–579

With the embassy problem 'resolved' in Achilles' refusal to return, and the beginning of Book 10 recapping key bits of information from Book 8 and 9, a performer could definitely take a break between Books 9 and 10.⁵⁵ With Book 9's mission, the embassy, failing, the battle results from the sequences in Book 8 stand unchanged, and the constant references to the corpses on the ground throughout Book 10 literally set its actions in that battle's aftermath (cf. 8.489–91).⁵⁶ More, it means that the Achaians still feel beat, and so consider leaving Troy altogether (in yet another Agamemnon-sponsored appeal to abandon the war), before setting a different mission to find out whether or not the Trojans will remain camped out on the plain or if they will return to the city now that they are winning (10.204–10). The narrative similarly shows the Trojans wondering if the Achaians will leave, now that they have been 'beaten down beneath (the Trojans') hands', as Hektor says (ἤδη χεῖρεσσιν ὕφ' ἡμετέρῃσι δαμέντες, 10.310). So the thrust of the 'episode' is in these night missions, this spy versus spy.⁵⁷

In the first beats of this sequence, the sleepless Agamemnon gazes out at the many Trojan fires (10.11–3), recapping the narrative's long description of the fires from 8.553–63.⁵⁸ Menelaos cannot sleep, either, and the narrative reminds us again here that he worries over the Argives who came on this expedition for his sake (10.26–8). When the two men meet each other, Menelaos asks Agamemnon if he is putting on his armour in order to set a mission for one of the Achaians to go spy on the Trojans, which plants the seeds for the mission that

Agamemnon will in fact set (10.37–41). Agamemnon's response to Menelaos recaps much of Book 8, including where the narrative left Hektor. First, Agamemnon tells us that 'Zeus's mind changed; now he pays more attention to Hektor's offerings' (ἐπεὶ Διὸς ἐτράπετο φρήν./Ἑκτορέοις ἄρα μᾶλλον ἐπὶ φρένα θῆχ' ἱεροῖσιν, 10.45f.). Then he goes on to describe Hektor himself:

οὐ γάρ πω ἰδόμεν, οὐδ' ἔκλυον αὐδήσαντος
 ἄνδρ' ἓνα τοσσάδε μέρμερ' ἐπ' ἥματι μητίσασθαι,
 ὅσσ' Ἑκτωρ ἔρρεξε Διὶ φίλος νῖας Ἀχαιῶν
 αὐτως, οὔτε θεᾶς υἱὸς φίλος οὔτε θεοῖο.
 ἔργα δ' ἔρεξ' ὅσα φημὶ μελησέμεν Ἀργείοισι
 δηθά τε καὶ δολιχόν. τόσα γὰρ κακὰ μῆσατ' Ἀχαιοῦς.
 'I've never seen, never even heard someone talk about
 one man planning so many atrocities on one day –
 as many as Hektor, "loved by Zeus", has done against the Achaians' sons,
 just like that, even though he's not the son of a goddess, or a god.
 He's done such things . . . I think they'll weigh on the Argives
 for a long, long time. So violent are the things he's planned against the
 Achaians.'

Agamemnon to Menelaos, 10.47–50

Agamemnon's view of Hektor recalls Hera's assessment from the last battle, when she said Hektor 'had done many bad things' (καὶ δὴ κακὰ πολλὰ ἔοργε, 8.356). He paints the battle sequence in Book 8 as the worst in Achaian history and elevates Hektor as the most fearful warrior that the world has ever seen. This compels any audience to weigh Agamemnon's experience of Book 8's battle sequences against their own. There is also a hint of the metapoetic in Agamemnon's notion that Hektor's deeds will weigh on the Achaians for a long time to come, not just this hour or so of performance time since they happened. Agamemnon is, after all, still voicing this pain here in the twenty-first century.

In the next beat, Agamemnon heads to the tent of Nestor, where, after hearing Agamemnon's concerns, Nestor tries to comfort him. Nestor's reassurance also focuses on Hektor, like Agamemnon's speech from the previous scene:⁵⁹

οὐ θιν' Ἑκτορι πάντα νοήματα μητίετα Ζεὺς
 ἐκτελέει, ὅσα πού νυν ἐέλπεται· ἀλλὰ μιν οἴω
 κήδεσι μοχθήσειν καὶ πλείοσιν, εἴ κεν Ἀχιλλεὺς
 ἐκ χόλου ἀργαλέοιο μεταστρέψη φίλον ἦτορ.
 'Come on, the master-planner Zeus won't let Hektor
 do everything he hopes to do . . . But I think

he'll have even worse things to worry about, if Achilles
ever turns his heart away from his savage anger.'

Nestor to Agamemnon, 10.104–7

Nestor's response to Agamemnon recaps the possibility of Achilles' return and his eventual confrontation with Hektor, further building up audience anticipation of those events (cf. 2.694, 8.473–6; 9.650–5). But Nestor also draws attention to Zeus's split allegiances within the narrative, which, in some way, mirror the audience's own: we know that Zeus is helping Hektor now (cf. 8.161, 8.175f.), but we also know (as Nestor suggests), that Zeus will not help Hektor forever (cf. 8.473–6).

In the next beat, Nestor arms and joins Agamemnon and Menelaos, followed by Odysseus and Diomedes and the men make their way to a spot that mirrors the place where Hektor held his assembly, where the ground was clear of corpses (10.199–201 recaps 8.489–91), again recalling the day's battle. Nestor finally states the mission, to find out if the Trojans will go back in the city or stay out on the field (10.208–10 recaps 10.40f.), recapping again that the Trojans 'beat the Achaians' in the day's battle (10.210 recaps 8.344).

The assembly chooses Diomedes and Odysseus for the night scouting mission, and the next scene shows the men arming for their scouting mission, and an exchange with Athena, that includes both a night-time bird-sign and a prayer (10.218–98). The narrative then paints an ominous tone as it sets the scene they make their way through, again, the aftermath of Book 8's battle sequences: 'the black night and the gore, and the corpses, and the armour, and the black blood' (διὰ νύκτα μέλαιναν/ ἄμ φόνον, ἄν νέκυας, διὰ τ' ἔντεα καὶ μέλαν αἶμα, 10.297f.). This line significantly precedes the narrative's reintroduction of Hektor in the next beat, linking the idea of mortal threat to Hektor.

In the next beat the narrative aligns the audience with Hektor, in the middle of his Trojan assembly.⁶⁰ Hektor has also called a midnight counsel, and the audience must assume, based solely on their experience of the previous beat sequence, that the Trojans, too, want to send out a scouting mission when we hear his first line: 'Who'll promise to do this thing for me, for a great reward?' (τίς κέν μοι τόδε ἔργον ὑποσχόμενος τελέσειε/ δώρω ἔπι μεγάλῳ, 10.303f.) Hektor finally explains the mission at the end of his speech (10.307–12). Hektor's mission also responds to the battle in Book 8, as he needs a spy to discover if the Achaians will finally leave or if they will keep fighting now that they have been beaten 'beneath our hands'? (ἤδη χεῖρεσσιν ὑφ' ἡμετέρῃσι δαμέντες, 10.310; cf. 10.210, 8.344).

The narrative takes time to introduce Dolon, a new character (10.314–18), as he comes forward and agrees to Hektor's mission. A new character volunteering for a mission is a red-shirt move: if we have never seen him before and he is going to do something dangerous, he is probably going to die, especially as we already know that the other side is sending Odysseus and Diomedes, two well-established characters. Dolon asks Hektor to swear on his sceptre that he will give Achilles' horses to him should he complete the task (10.319–27). Dolon asks Hektor for something that he does not have, but the connection between Hektor and Achilles' horses is a detail significant to future episodes. Dolon assumes that the Achaians will be gathered at Agamemnon's ship, pondering their retreat (10.326f.): the audience knows that he is wrong, as they were, in fact, outside the ditch, getting a spy mission ready (10.194–202), but earlier in this same evening, the Achaians were pondering their retreat (9.26–8).

Hektor accepts Dolon's proposal and swears to it (10.328–31), but as he cannot actually *swear* to give something that he does not have, the narrative comments on Hektor's assent to the oath: 'So he spoke, and swore a foresworn oath, and urged (Dolon) on' (ὥς φάτο καὶ ῥ' ἐπίορκον ἀπώμοσε, τὸν δ' ὀρόθυνεν, 10.332).⁶¹ It is difficult to say whether or not the narrative tries to affect allegiance here, if this is a judgement on Hektor as an oath-taker, or if it is instead on the impossibility of the oath sworn ever being fulfilled. If it is the former, it plays on Book 3 and Book 7 in Hektor's relationships to oaths, and his status as an oath-breaker, through his association first with Paris and then with Pandaros (cf. 3.106; 7.69–72). If it is the latter, then this narrative comment elicits an audience curiosity as to whether the impossibility of the sworn oath comes from the fact that Hektor does not have the horses to give, or the fact that Dolon will not live to complete his mission. This small narrative intervention opens up a bundle of potential, asking us to look both backwards and forwards in considering our interpretation of the scene, and of Hektor himself. Is this Hektor the same man that the Achaians have made him out to be? The previous beats in the Achaian camp do more in the construction of Hektor than this one scene where Hektor himself appears. Is this the Hektor that we have seen before? Nearly as quickly as he appears, he disappears again. And before Dolon even makes it out of camp, the narrator tells us 'he wasn't going to return from the ships to bring back some story for Hektor' (οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔμελλεν/ ἐλθὼν ἐκ νηῶν ἄψ' Ἑκτορι μῦθον ἀποίσειν. 10.336f.).⁶² Dolon's red-shirt status is sealed.

The narrator keeps the audience attached to Dolon as he leaves camp, but switches almost immediately, mid-line, to Odysseus spotting him (10.339).⁶³ Here, the *Iliad* again exploits its melodramatic alignment structure. Dolon hears

someone coming after him, but, in another tragic moment of his ignorance compared to knowledge that the audience and the narrator have, he thinks Hektor has sent someone out after him (10.356). When Diomedes and Odysseus capture Dolon, just a short time later, they ask him if it was Hektor who sent him out to spy on them (10.388), which both recaps the previous scene and perhaps reinforces Hektor's role as the mastermind that Agamemnon made him out to be (10.49f.). Dolon claims that 'Hektor led my mind aside with many delusions' (πολλῆσιν μ' ἄτησι παρέκ νόον ἤγαγεν Ἐκτωρ, 10.390). Dolon's claim invites the audience to judge Hektor again, playing on the ambiguity over Hektor's oath in the previous scene: did Hektor do something wrong in promising Achilles' horses to Dolon? Did he actually lead Dolon's mind astray? The two Achaians ask Dolon where Hektor is now (10.406–8), and finally get to their mission, asking whether or not the Trojans are debating staying near the ships or returning to the city (10.409–11; cf. 10.208–10). Dolon immediately tells them where Hektor is (10.414–16), but does not answer whether or not the Trojans will return to Troy, instead recapping once again the fires (10.418–22 recaps 8.8.517–22, 8.553–63). Then Diomedes and Odysseus ask about the Trojans' sleeping arrangements, and Dolon tells them, introducing Rhesus, who is a Thracian king and another red-shirt (10.423–45).

Diomedes mercilessly kills Dolon, throwing his supplication, his cooperation and their promises of safety, all down to the ground with Dolon's tumbling, still-speaking head (10.457). The Thracians suffer a similarly brutal fate, slashed through in their sleep by the Achaian pair, twelve in all, predictably including Rhesus, their leader (10.469–97). As Diomedes and Odysseus flee the scene, they reach the space 'where they killed Hektor's scout' (ὅθι σκοπὸν Ἐκτορος ἔκταν, 10.526). This last mention of Hektor omits Dolon's name altogether, as he becomes a mere extension of Hektor. Hektor's many mentions in these beats, between Diomedes, Odysseus, and Dolon, and coming out of the carnage of the Thracian massacre, make him a centre around which death dances. The first part of the episode, with Agamemnon's extreme characterization of Hektor as the most heinous hero alive sets this up. But once again, the narrative shows us little of Hektor himself. He is constantly refracted through the eyes of others.

In the end, both missions fail, in that no one has more knowledge about what will happen next. But the episode has succeeded in giving the Achaians more depth, and in creating Hektor as more of an enemy. Diomedes and Odysseus wash off their battle-filth, take baths, sit down to eat, and make their offerings to Athena (10.572–9). And with the long, anxious night finally over, a new day begins.

All day permanent red: 11.1–162

As dawn breaks after the night of spying missions and slaughtered Thracians, the narrative plunges us back into full-out battle once again. As none of the night's events moved the narrative forward, the narrator does not need to recap any of them here, except that the wall and ditch remain focal points for the action.⁶⁴ The night's embassy to Achilles and the night raids have taken up an hour and a half of performance time, plus a possible break between those episodes. But now we embark on the longest battle in the epic, and it will last, literally, for hours, over many 'episodes'. The day's battle, stretching from this dawn to the night that sets in the middle of Book 18 (over six and a half hours of performance time without breaks), is the 'tomorrow' that Zeus predicted would be an even worse day for the Achaians (8.470–2).

The *Iliad* carefully breaks up this large chunk of battle, to continue to build up to major events. Here is where the *Iliad*'s huge cast of characters helps create continuous dynamism in a plot that has only one major problem resolution in the next several hours: Hektor's breaking through the Achaian ramparts at the end of the battle sequence in Book 12.⁶⁵ With visits to the periphery of battle, like when Meriones has to go and find a new spear in Book 11, or when Patroklos helps the wounded Eurypylos in Books 11 and 15, or visits to the gods, particularly in the extended scene of Hera's seduction of Zeus in Book 14, the narrative keeps audience engagement primarily through character interaction and deepening. In Book 8's battle sequence there was a clear pattern of Achaian success, divine intervention, Trojan success, divine intervention, with the main characters of Diomedes, Nestor, Teukros, and Agamemnon on the Achaian side, and Hektor and his red-shirt charioteers on the Trojan side. But that battle-day lasted just over a half hour of performance time. Even the longer battle that stretches across Books 4, 5, and 6 and 7 only lasts around two hours, and it, too, has extensive breaks with the *theomachia* (the battle between the gods, 5.711–909) and Hektor's visit to Troy (6.237–7.3). With the battle to come being so much more extensive, the narrative must engage more diverse strategies and a much broader range of characters that each have distinct arcs that the narrative follows through the fight.

As dawn breaks, Hate stirs up the Achaians, significantly from Odysseus's ship, the centre of the Achaians' ships-line that stretches from Aias's at one end to Achilles' at another (11.4–14); like the earlier reference to this layout, no mention is made of Achilles' absence from the fighting (cf. 8.223–5). While this recaps the layout of the Achaian camp, the reiteration of the ditch (11.49; cf. 9.87,

7.435–41) and the Trojans on the other side, ‘on the ground rising from the plain’ (11.56; cf. 10.160) contributes to our understanding the space within which the following battle will occur.⁶⁶ Agamemnon is the first Achaian to arm, in an elaborate scene that takes up twenty-seven lines (11.17–44).⁶⁷ The narrative aligns the audience with Agamemnon, giving them plenty of time to spend with him with the length and vividness of this description, which is full of colour and life (cobalt snakes, Gorgon head, etc.). Hera and Athena are also on his side (11.45f.).⁶⁸ As with the last battle, the narrative then moves across the ditch to the Trojan side, marking them as antagonists. Here, a Trojan micro-catalogue marks out which characters will be important in the coming fight:⁶⁹ Hektor, Poulydamas, Aineias, Antenor, Polybos, Agenor, Akamas (11.57–60). This is the first appearance of Poulydamas, who will play a significant role in the next several hours of action. After this catalogue, the narrative returns to Hektor: his shield shines like a star as he moves from the vanguard to the rear flank, back and forth (11.61–6). This focus on Hektor seemingly sets him up as the primary antagonist against Agamemnon’s protagonist in the battle to come.⁷⁰

In the next beat, the narrative zooms out to show the whole field (11.67–73),⁷¹ before following the gaze of Hate (11.73–5) to shift to the gods, all of whom are mad at Zeus for helping the Trojans (11.75–9); this creates continuity for Zeus from his role in Book 8. The narrator aligns with Zeus, through his not caring about the other gods as he settles in to watch the fight (11.79–83). For the whole morning, men die (11.84–91), until the Danaans, Agamemnon first, finally break through (11.91), with Hektor, Agamemnon’s expected antagonist, nowhere to be seen (cf. 11.56–66).

In the next beats, Agamemnon has a killing spree that provides many glimpses of character background stories and recaps of past scenes. First Agamemnon kills Priam’s sons Isos and Antiphos, whom Achilles had before captured and ransomed (11.101–12). This makes a clear contrast between the absent Achilles and Agamemnon, and between the narrative time and the time that came before the *Iliad*. Next he kills Antimachos’s sons Peisandros and Hippolochos, who had taken Paris’s bribe to oppose returning Helen (11.121–5). This also refers to Paris’s initial crime, which precedes the epic, while elaborating on the Trojan assembly that decided against returning Helen (7.345–80). Their supplication reveals their lineage to Agamemnon, who gives further backstory, saying that their father Antimachos had plotted to kill Menelaos (11.138–42). These ‘memories’ give the audience access to Agamemnon, and perhaps justify Agamemnon killing them both (11.143–7): the scene certainly opens Agamemnon up for the audience to consider their allegiance to him.

Mid-line, the beat shifts to show all the Achaians running after the Trojans, before coming back to Agamemnon cutting men down (11.149–54). Then the narrative switches attachment through a simile.⁷² The simile begins in such a way that the narrative still seems to follow Agamemnon, comparing him to a forest fire; but it soon changes, so that the comparison is actually between the brush uprooted by the forest fire and the heads of Trojans (11.155–9). In response to these uprooted heads, the narrative switches to the horses driving now-empty chariots, longing for their missing charioteers, who lie dead to the delight of vultures rather than their wives (11.59–63). This shift creates allegiance with the Trojans as much as with Agamemnon, and once again draws the audience's attention to the real stakes of the battlefield, and the emotional consequences that these deaths hold.

Hektor rising: 11.163–368

In the next beat sequence, Agamemnon continues his rampage, and Zeus must rescue Hektor, dragging him out of the carnage (11.163–5).⁷³ Zeus's rare battlefield intervention here establishes his special relationship with Hektor that in turn invites audience allegiance; at the same time, this move fits with Zeus's earlier prediction of Hektor's glory (cf. 8.470–7). In Hektor's absence, Agamemnon kills a series of Trojan heroes (11.175–82). When Agamemnon nearly reaches the very walls of Troy, Zeus intervenes again (11.181–4), giving Iris a message to take down and repeat to Hektor: he must stay out of the fighting until Agamemnon leaves, but then Zeus will grant him the glory for the rest of the day (11.186–94). The beat juxtaposition between Agamemnon's direct threat to the city in one beat (especially 11.175–82), and Zeus's call to Hektor in the next (11.182–94), again links the fates of Hektor and Troy, characterizing Hektor as Troy's defender, but just as vulnerable as Priam's city. But at the same time, Zeus's message removes Hektor from the battlefield for the next beat sequence, and so defies any expectation of a confrontation between Hektor and Agamemnon that the previous beats created.⁷⁴

Then Iris descends from Ida and repeats this message to Hektor.⁷⁵ Like Helenos before her, Iris calls Hektor 'equal of counsel' to Zeus's (Δὲ μήτιν ἀτάλαντε, 11.200=7.47), here as a possible riff on Agamemnon's characterization of Hektor at 10.48 (μητίσασθαι). This character attribute for Hektor will show itself to be problematic as the narrative continues. Iris tells Hektor to urge the rest of his men on in the fight, but stay out of battle himself until Agamemnon

leaves the field wounded, pointing to an event in a future beat (11.206f.). This might be a narrative callback to Book 6, where Hektor exhorts his men to keep fighting as he goes on his mission to Troy (6.87–115), which denied an anticipated confrontation between an Achaian (there Diomedes) and Hektor.

Iris then says that Zeus will grant Hektor the glory until he reaches the ships, until sundown (11.207–9). So once again the *Iliad* exploits its melodramatic alignment structure. Now Hektor has information that the gods and the narrator and the audience already have: that this day will be bad for the Achaians (8.470–3) and that Hektor will reach the ships (8.475). But Zeus's message only partially relays the future he revealed in Book 8, as the message here says nothing about the death of Patroklos (cf. 8.476), nothing about Achilles' return (cf. 2.694; 8.474; 9.650–5). These gaps in Hektor's knowledge will influence his decisions over the next episodes, and the difference between *our* knowledge and *his* knowledge will create him as a more pathetic character. Hektor obeys Iris and jumps out of his chariot and runs along the ranks, stirring on his men (11.210–3).

The next beat switches audience alignment back to Agamemnon, giving him another few minutes of glory as he kills Iphidamas, only to be wounded by Koön, Iphidamas's brother, before he kills Koön, too (11.216–63). After this death, his wound hurts enough to drive him off the battlefield, making room for Hektor (11.267–79), fulfilling Iris's prediction that Agamemnon would leave the field, wounded (11.206f.). In the next beat, Hektor sees Agamemnon leaving and calls out to his troops, recapping that 'Zeus has granted (him) great glory' (ἐμοὶ δὲ μέγ' εὖχος ἔδωκε, 11.288 recaps 11.206–9, 11.192–5), finally fulfilling the expectation that Hektor will dominate on the battlefield. After stirring up his men, Hektor jumps into battle like a huntsman (the Trojans his hounds, 11.291–5) and like a squall on the wide sea (11.296–8). The narrator asks not just who was the first one that Hektor killed, but also who the last was, implying a longer list to come than what we saw with Agamemnon in the last beats (11.299). But this is a ploy; the narrator does not spend nearly as much time on Hektor's kills as he had on Agamemnon's in the previous scenes (11.91–159; 11.172–80). Instead, they are a virtuosic list for the narrator, as Hektor takes out ten named men in three lines. Again, the narrator compares Hektor to a whirlwind on the sea, striking the heads of men like so many waves (11.305–10).

The next beat emerges through a pivotal contrafactual,⁷⁶ which says that the Achaians might have fallen into their ships, if Odysseus had not cried out to Diomedes (11.310–19).⁷⁷ This contrafactual stands out because Zeus has prophesied that Hektor *will* reach the ships (8.475) and Hektor does now have the glory (11.200–9), so the narrator explicitly tells his audience 'not yet'.⁷⁸ More,

switching alignments away from Hektor once again upsets audience expectations of Hektor enacting his Zeus-given glory.⁷⁹ Seeing Hektor, Odysseus shouts out to Diomedes first, in a callback to the warriors' night-raid pairing in the sequences in Book 10. He tells Diomedes that there will be shame if Hektor takes their ships (11.313–5);⁸⁰ Diomedes answers that he will help him fight, but tells him, 'our pleasure won't last long, since cloud-gatherer Zeus wants to give power to the Trojans, instead of us' (ἀλλὰ μίνυνθα/ ἡμέων ἔσσεται ἡδος, ἐπεὶ νεφεληγερέτα Ζεὺς/ Τρωσὶν δὴ βόλεται δοῦναι κράτος ἢ ἐπερ ἡμῖν, 11.317–19). Diomedes' speech here is a callback to his perceptions of divine intervention in earlier battle scenes (cf. 5.601–6), as well as Nestor's speech to him in the last long battle sequence, when Zeus there, too, was giving the glory to Hektor (8.139–44).

The narrative keeps the audience attached to Diomedes and Odysseus as they rush into battle, with Diomedes instantly killing Thymbraios (11.320), while Odysseus kills Molion (11.322). Then the two charge, 'so the Achaians had a welcome breather after they'd fled from brilliant Hektor' (αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοὶ/ ἀσπασίως φεύγοντες ἀνέπνεον Ἴκτορα δῖον, 11.326f.). This provides another recap of Hektor's dominance, with the audience now aligned with the Achaians. The narrator keeps the audience attached to the pair as Diomedes kills the sons of Merops and Odysseus kills Hyperiochos and Hippodamas (11.328–35).

The scene changes again to Zeus on Mount Ida, who, watching the battle, 'now lays the fight out equally; so they killed each other' (ἐνθά σφιν κατὰ ἴσα μάχην ἐτάνυσσε Κρονίων/ ἐξ Ἰδης καθορῶν· τοὶ δ' ἀλλήλους ἐνάριζον, 11.336f.). The narrative updates us with new information, but Hektor does not get the memo that Zeus, for now, is no longer entirely honouring the glory that he promised at 11.200–9. This small piece of information serves as an explanation for Odysseus's and Diomedes' success, but it also creates another gap between what we know and what Hektor knows, and that gap builds anticipation for how Hektor's ignorance will affect him. Cutting back to the battle, Diomedes kills Agastrophos (11.338–42).

The beat switches again as Hektor sees this kill from across the battlefield, and charges Diomedes and Odysseus (11.343f.). The narrative instantly switches audience alignment back to Diomedes and Odysseus, giving access to Diomedes as he shivers, seeing Hektor, and calls on Odysseus that they should stand their ground, as 'this pain – mighty Hektor – whirls towards us' (νῶϊν δὲ τόδε πῆμα κυλινδεταὶ ὄβριμος Ἴκτωρ, 11.347). Then Diomedes throws his spear, and hits Hektor's helmet, which we learn was given to him by Apollo (11.349–53). Now the narrative attaches the audience to Hektor as he runs into the crowd of his people, takes a knee, and almost loses consciousness (11.354–6), as 'black night

covered his two eyes' (ἀμφὶ δὲ ὅσσε κελαινὴ νύξ ἐκάλυψε, 11.356). This formula ambiguously implies death or near-death, driving home that this was a close one.⁸¹ While Diomedes goes to retrieve his spear, Hektor recovers and manages to get back on his chariot and manoeuvre it out of the fray again (11.356–60): this rapid alignment switch between both men keeps the audience's interest piqued in both.⁸² Here, again, the narrator says that Hektor 'dodged dark death' (ἀλεύατο κῆρα μέλαιναν, 11.360). Hektor's near death shows the direct results of Zeus's intervention from the previous beat (11.336f.). Diomedes shouts out after Hektor and reinforces this: 'now you escaped death again' (ἐξ αὖ νῦν ἔφυγες θάνατον, 11.362), which also calls back to Zeus saving Hektor against Agamemnon (11.163–5). Then Diomedes claims that Apollo saved Hektor and that next time they fight, he will win (11.361–7). Diomedes' accusation does not reflect what happened: Apollo did not save Hektor, but the spear did bounce off of a helmet that we have now learned came from Apollo (11.353). This slight discrepancy asks if Diomedes too quickly dismisses Hektor, or if Hektor has too much of a reputation of being rescued by Apollo. Whatever the audience decides in determining their allegiance, Diomedes has cut short the glory that Zeus just promised Hektor ten minutes ago (11.200–9) and finally set into action just a few minutes ago (11.284f.), disappointing the audience's expectation that this would be Hektor's time to shine.⁸³

Injuries: 11.369–488

But it was also Diomedes who said that his and Odysseus's pleasure would be short-lived (11.315f.). As Diomedes starts stripping the body of Agastrophos (11.369 recaps his kill at 11.338), the narrative switches attachment to Paris, following his gaze that watches Diomedes. He shoots Diomedes in the foot, immediately wishing aloud that he had hit a more vital part of the Achaian hero (11.369–83). Diomedes responds to Paris with a series of insults that reinforce Hektor's own from many hours ago (11.385–90; cf. 3.39–57). But Diomedes leaves the battlefield just the same (11.399f.), so that Odysseus ponders taking on the Trojans by himself. He claims to be alone 'since Kronos's son forced the others Danaans to flee' (τοὺς δ' ἄλλους Δαναοὺς ἐφόβησε Κρονίων, 11.406); this recaps Hektor's chasing the Achaians three scenes ago, from 11.291–311 while opening up possibilities for what will happen next.

The Trojans descend on Odysseus before he can decide (11.411), but he kills Deïopites, Thoön, Ennomos, Chersidamas, Charops in quick order (11.420–7),

and finally Sokos, who wounds Odysseus. Athena stops the wound from being mortal (11.437f.), but the audience's attachment switches briefly to the Trojans who surge against him when they see that he is injured (11.459f.), before cutting back to Odysseus crying to his companions (11.461). Menelaos and Aias come to his aid and Menelaos leads Odysseus off the battlefield (11.463–88). This series of beats began with Agamemnon leaving the field, injured (11.264–74), then Hektor leaving the battlefield, injured (11.354–6), then Diomedes leaving the field, injured (11.396–400), and finally, here, Odysseus leaves (11.463–88). This narrative pattern keeps the audience more closely aligned with the Achaians so far, on this, Hektor's 'glory day'. But in placing Hektor's injury in with these others, it demands less judgement for it, in terms of audience allegiance: this battle results in injuries for many, and many of these heroes, unlike Hektor, will not come back into the fray.

Hektor returns: 11.489–594

With Menelaos leading Odysseus to safety (11.463–88), the beat switches to Aias, and he, too, kills a number of men: Dorkylos (Priam's illegitimate son), Pandokos, Lysandros, Pyrasos, Pylartes (11.489–96). But using its melodramatic alignment structure, the narrative tells us that Hektor had not heard about these deaths, because he is fighting on the left flank (11.497–9),⁸⁴ near Nestor and Idomeneus (11.501), wasting phalanxes of young men (νέων δ' ἀλάπαζε φάλαγγας, 11.503). When the narrative last left Hektor, he was running away, having barely recovered from Diomedes' spear to his helmet (11.359f.). That was just over ten minutes ago, and by finding Hektor somewhere else on the battlefield now, the narrative creates the illusion of a continuous Hektor who ran away only to resume fighting while our gaze has been on these Achaians. Even with Hektor's hard fighting, the narrative says that the Achaians only falter because of Paris's striking the healer Machaon (11.504–7):⁸⁵ Idomeneus asks Nestor to get Machaon off the battlefield in response (11.510–15), in yet another injury-based exit.

The scene shifts again, following the gaze of the Trojan Kebriones, Hektor's charioteer, who spots Aias across the battlefield and tells Hektor that they should head towards the middle flank (11.521–42). This remarkable technique almost immediately reunites the two nuclei of action that the narrator had divided just a few minutes before when it cut to Hektor on the left flank (11.497–502), suggesting a confrontation between Aias and Hektor. Kebriones purposefully recognizes Aias when he talks to Hektor (εὖ δέ μιν ἔγνων, 11.526), marking him

out because of the huge shield that he wears across his shoulder (11.527). The two men turn their chariot towards them, with a particularly vivid depiction of the chariot cutting through the field of fallen men (11.531–6) before cutting back to Hektor himself. As in his last attack, here the narrator shies away from giving us details of Hektor's kills, giving us instead a summary of carnage (11.537–41).⁸⁶ In contrast, the narrator tells us specifically that Hektor 'avoided fighting Telamonian Aias' (Αἴαντος δ' ἄλέεινε μάχην Τελαμωνιάδαο, 11.542), going on to explain that Zeus feels shame for Hektor, 'for fighting a better man' (ἀμείνωνι φῶτι μάχοιτο, 11.543). This line is contentious, and without it,⁸⁷ the beat raises questions about Hektor's apparent intentions, which the narrative gives us access to through the verb, 'to avoid' (ἀλεεῖνω); calling back to Iris's order for Hektor to 'hold back' from the battle with Agamemnon (11.200–9). Whether or not the line is there, the audience must fill in the gaps of *why* Hektor avoids Aias: the line's presence is simply a more explicit reminder that Hektor almost lost to Aias in their single combat (7.214–312). Zeus's action also shows his interest in Hektor again here, reinforcing the 'special relationship' between the two that we have seen before (cf. 11.163f.; 11.182–209).

The next beat switches audience alignment to Aias, where Zeus's intervention strikes fear into him (11.543). The narrative describes Aias first as a fenced-in lion, then as a stubborn ass who finally withdraws, and then provides further access to Aias as he remembers his courage and surges ahead and continues to fight the Trojan onslaught (11.544–73). Audience alignment then follows the gaze of Eurypylos, who sees the struggling Aias and comes in to help (11.575–8), immediately killing Apisaon (11.579). But the narrative switches the audience's alignment again with Paris's gaze, as he sees Eurypylos and intervenes in his stripping Apisaon's armour, hitting him in the thigh with an arrow so that he retreats and exhorts the Achaians to protect Aias (11.585–90). The Achaians follow the wounded Eurypylos and take their stand with Aias (11.591–4).

Mission, Achilles: 11.595–848

The narrator cuts away from the battlefield to Nestor's chariot, carrying Nestor and Machaon back to the Achaian camp (11.595–7 continues from 11.516–20). This scene break would give a performer a chance to take a break if they needed to, as the change of location and characters in the next scenes will provide ample recaps of the last battle sequences.⁸⁸ From Nestor's chariot, the narrative switches audience alignment again to Achilles, appearing for the first time in about ninety

minutes (since 9.665), who sees the chariot approaching the Achaian camp (11.599). Achilles suggests to Patroklos that now might be the time the Achaians finally beg him to come back to battle (11.607–69 recaps 1.239–41). Then he asks Patroklos to go to Nestor and see if it is, indeed, Machaon whom the old man has brought off the field, injured (11.607–14 recaps 11.595–7). Achilles elaborates that ‘Machaon’ is injured (11.613–15 recaps 11.505–20), and that he is Asklepios’s son as he sets this mission for Patroklos. Patroklos sets out immediately, and the audience can now expect to catch up with him soon.

The next beat switches back to the chariot, as Nestor and Machaon arrive and settle into Nestor’s tent, drinking wine served by Hekamede (11.618–42). Patroklos appears in their doorway (11.643), fulfilling our expectation that he would appear (11.616f.). The men try to get Patroklos to sit down, but he refuses, as he says, because he recognizes Machaon (ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς/ γινώσκω, ὁρῶ δὲ Μαχάονα ποιμένα λαῶν, 12.650f.), fulfilling Achilles’ mission set in the last beat (11.607–14). Patroklos ends by intimating that Achilles will get angry with him if he should dawdle (11.652f.).

This mention of Achilles prompts Nestor to ask why Achilles would care about one wounded Achaian when he knows nothing about what has been happening on the field (11.656–9). Here, the narrative again exploits its melodramatic alignment structure, where gaps between characters’ knowledge allow for different character reactions to the same events. Nestor recaps the Achaians wounded in the previous ‘episode’: Diomedes, shot by an arrow (11.659 recaps 11.369–78); Odysseus, hit by a pike (11.660 recaps 11.435–8); Agamemnon by a spear (11.660 recaps 11.251–3); Eurypylos by an arrow (11.661 recaps 11.585–90); Machaon too (11.662 recaps 11.506f.). As Nestor recounts these injuries to Patroklos, he re-frames them as the result of Achilles’ continuing anger with Agamemnon. He pathetically asks if Achilles will delay his return to battle until after their ships have burnt (cf. Agamemnon 8.229–35), until ‘we are all killed, one after another’ (αὐτοὶ τε κτεινώμεθ’ ἐπισχερώ, 11.667). Then Nestor launches into a long story, about his past victory against Thryoessa with his Pyliaans, which has only one moral: that great fighting garners great glory, but great glory should be shared (11.760f.).⁸⁹ Nestor’s lesson for Achilles is that his current trajectory will see him alone in his valour, and perhaps one day weeping when he has lost his men (11.762). Here Nestor foreshadows Achilles’ future grief, and creates more ominous tension as he goes into the backstory of his recruiting Patroklos and Achilles into the war effort. Nestor’s recount of Patroklos’s father, Menoitios’s advice to Patroklos before the war becomes particularly significant, as Menoitios tells his son that he is older, but weaker

than Achilles, so must be a counsellor to Achilles (11.785–8).⁹⁰ Nestor uses this advice to set the mission for Patroklos to try to persuade Achilles to return, and if not, to enter the battle himself in Achilles' armour (11.795–800). So Nestor replaces Achilles' mission for Patroklos with this new mission.⁹¹ Nestor's whole speech significantly sets up the possibility not just for Achilles' weeping someday for having lost his friends, but also for the weaker Patroklos's entry into battle.⁹² These possibilities take on a very different shade when any audience knows that Zeus has already prophesied Patroklos's death (8.473–6).

The narrative provides access to Patroklos as Nestor's speech stirs his heart and he runs back to Achilles (11.804); the narrative keeps the audience attached to him as he goes. On his way, near Odysseus's ship (in a callback to Hektor's crying from Odysseus's ship at 11.5), the wounded Eurypylos meets him (11.809–12 recaps his wound from 11.579–94). Seeing Eurypylos, the narrator provides the audience access to Patroklos's pity, as he asks whether or not the Achaians can hold Hektor off now (11.820). Eurypylos' response recaps again that many of them have been forced to retreat from battle with wounds (11.824–6), including the healer Machaon (11.833f.), which justifies his asking Patroklos to help with his wound (11.827–31). This recap challenges the audience's own experience of the battle, where, while many Achaians *have* been wounded, Aias still holds the line (11.564–74). Patroklos's response recaps the previous beat by saying that he is on a mission from Nestor to Achilles (11.838f.), but that he will help Eurypylos, which he does (11.841–8). So both Achilles' and Nestor's 'missions' for Patroklos are left dangling as the narrative returns to the battlefield, though these beats have accomplished new character depths, particularly for Nestor and Patroklos.

Wall alignment: 12.1–39

The performer can take a break after Book 11, as Book 12 starts with a summary of Patroklos' helping Eurypylos (12.1f.), before it switches back to the battle around the Achaian battlements (12.3–9). The narrator recaps that the wall was built against the gods' wishes and will not last long (12.6–9 recaps the exchange between Poseidon and Zeus back at 7.445–63). Most television programmes introduce new episodes in a 'previously on ...' montage of clips from past episodes: even though these recaps remind the viewer of *past* information, they can serve as spoilers in directing the viewer towards past scenes that point towards what will happen in the coming episode.⁹³ The narrative reminds us of

the wall's history here to show that it will play an important role in the scenes to follow,⁹⁴ running parallel with the story arcs of Hektor and Achilles:

ὄφρα μὲν Ἑκτωρ ζῶς ἔην καὶ μῆνι Ἀχιλλεύς
καὶ Πριάμοιο ἄνακτος ἀπόρρητος πόλις ἔπλεν,
τόφρα δὲ καὶ μέγα τείχος Ἀχαιῶν ἔμπεδον ἦεν.
So long as Hektor was alive, and Achilles raged,
and Priam's city was still un-sacked,
that's how long the Achaians' great wall stood strong.

12.10–12

Around the wall, the narrator links Hektor's death, the end of Achilles' rage, and the fall of Troy.⁹⁵ No one has mentioned Hektor's death since Athena at 8.358f., around three hours ago; now the narrator explicitly places his audience in the time where Hektor still lives.⁹⁶ There is a whole long future that exists in this past, extending far beyond the death of Hektor, and the best Trojans, and many good Achaians, and the fall of Troy, until that day when Apollo and Poseidon destroy the wall (12.12–35).⁹⁷ The scene changes through the contrast, between that future-past day of the wall's destruction and *now* (τότε δ', 12.35) when the battle still rages around the wall, the Achaians pinned by Zeus against their ships, terrified of Hektor (12.35–9). Then the narrative changes audience alignment to Hektor.

Hektor, whirlwind: 12.40–83

The narrative describes Hektor fighting like a whirlwind *as he had before* (αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ὡς τὸ πρόσθεν ἐμάρνατο ἴσος ἀέλλῃ, 12.40) creating continuity with where Hektor was before the long interlude in Nestor's tent or the possible performance break (or both) where he did, indeed, fight like a whirlwind (11.296–8; 11.305–8, around forty-five minutes ago without break time). The narrative follows up with an extended simile that describes him as a wild boar or a lion,⁹⁸ surrounded by a hunter and a pack of dogs, who turns in 'the strength of his fury' (σθένει βλεμεάνων, 12.42): this formula has only been used of Hektor (cf. 8.337; 9.237), so this simile emphatically draws the audience back into Hektor's character. More, this lion is one 'whose own courage kills him' (12.41–6; ἀγνηορίῃ δέ μιν ἔκτα, 12.46). The animal within the simile dies while Hektor lives, so that the simile subtly picks up on the previous beat's tension between the time when Hektor is alive, and when he will die (12.10). Calling back further, the image of

the lion whose courage kills him hits remarkably close to Andromache's warning to Hektor, that his battle-fury will kill him (φθίσει σε τὸ σὸν μένος, 6.407), doubling down to build further audience anticipation for Hektor's future death.⁹⁹ After this simile, Hektor tries to get his troops to cross the Achaian ditch, which sets up the 'problem' for this episode (12.49–59).

Poulydamas has only appeared once before, in the last episode's Trojan catalogue for this battle (11.57–60) and there is little introduction of him with respect to his role or his relationship to Hektor here. His long speech, then, serves as his introduction, as he advises Hektor to continue the attack on foot, since the ditch is too difficult for the horses (12.60–79).¹⁰⁰ Poulydamas's speech contains a weird hypothetical within it that works independently of whether or not the Trojans attack on foot. He says that if Zeus is on their side, then great (12.67–9), and he hopes that the Achaians die here far from Argos (12.69f.); but if the Achaians gain the advantage back, then, he says (with no mention of horses) that none of the Trojans will make it back to the city (12.73f.). Poulydamas's speech leaves this possibility open regardless of their current strategy, and that possibility builds audience investment in considering the outcome of this 'mission'.

The narrative then aligns the audience with Hektor, giving us access to his liking Poulydamas's plan (12.80) as he jumps down from his chariot. The other Trojans jump from their chariots too, when they see him, implicitly reinforcing his place as their leader: his action, not Poulydamas's plan, sets them into motion (12.82f.). They leave their horses by the ditch and get into battle formations, with the new mission of crossing the ditch and attacking the Achaian battlements.

Mission crew: 12.84–109

The scene that follows gives a new catalogue of the Trojans rushing into battle, reintroducing main characters whom we have not seen for a while and introducing new characters, all of whom will play roles in the coming Trojan attack on the wall (replacing the catalogue at 11.57–60).¹⁰¹

Hektor and Poulydamas lead the first group, and of course we have just seen both of them, but the narrative gives the added information that they command the best men, the most men, the men who really want to destroy the wall (μέμασαν δὲ μάλιστα/ τεῖχος ῥηξάμενοι, 12.89f.). Kebriones, Hektor's last charioteer (12.91 creates continuity from 11.521–42), goes with them. Paris leads the next group (last seen wounding Machaon at 11.505–7), with newcomer Alkathöös and Agenor (Antenor's son last seen at 11.59). Then Helenos, who has

been absent since he advised Hektor to call a single combat all the way back at 7.44. With him, newcomer Deiphobos, another of Priam's sons, and Asios, the leader of Arisbe, in his first appearance since the first catalogue at 2.837f. Then Aineias (briefly glimpsed at 11.58 and 6.75–7, but not active since Book 5), with two more of Antenor's sons, Archelochos, whom we have also not seen since the first Trojan catalogue (12.100 = 2.823), and Akamas, who has made brief appearances at 6.18 and 11.88. Sarpedon (last seen at 5.692) and Glaukos (last seen at 7.13) lead the last group, with another newcomer, Asteropaios. That comes to fifteen characters, of which three are completely new, and two have not been seen since the catalogue, which was over seven hours ago. Even many of the main characters reintroduced here, including Aineias, Sarpedon, and Glaukos, have been all but missing for between three and a half and five hours. But the narrative needs them for this mission, and needs these characters with so many of the primary Achaian characters out with wounds, to expand its narrative laterally. Now this battle sequence reshapes the *Iliad's* melodramatic alignment structure with this new constellation of characters poised, as they are, around the Achaian wall.

Wall fight!: 12.110–94

The scene changes through the narrator's judgement of Asios who does not follow Poulydamas's commands and who will consequently die at Idomeneus's hands, signposting a future event that will not actually happen for some time (12.110–16; the death itself comes at 13.386–93).¹⁰² As Asios charges his horses towards the gates, the audience's alignment switches to the Lapithai, who guard the gate (12.127). Just as with the Trojan crew, the Achaians that the narrative sets against them have not appeared in a while: Polypoites since 6.29, Leonteus since the catalogue (2.745).

Through the following scenes, these now-established characters from both sides act around the wall. The first fight between the Lapithai and Asios's men ends in Asios breaking through the gate (12.145–50), only to be bombarded with missiles and stones (12.151–61). Asios prays to Zeus for help (12.161–72), but the narrator says that Zeus does not listen because he wants to give glory to Hektor (12.173f.) and this audience access to Zeus should remind them that Zeus granted the glory to Hektor in the previous battle sequence (11.186–209).

Taking advantage of the melodramatic alignment structure now based around the Achaian wall, the narrator zooms out and says, weakly, that 'others fought

fight around other gates' (ἄλλοι δ' ἄμφ' ἄλλησι μάχην ἐμάχοντο πύλησιν, 12.175), before saying how difficult it is for *him* to recount all the fights along the wall (12.176–7).¹⁰³ This gives the impression of a vast battle that we only catch glimpses of going on all around, adding depth to our experience of the characters that we are aligned with (we can compare this strategy to that used in *Game of Thrones*' 'Hardhome' battle sequence, as we saw in the Introduction). The narrative gives the audience access, too, saying that the Argives keep fighting since they must defend their ships (12.1178f.), while the gods who support them feel dejected watching them on their back feet (12.179f.).

The scene switches back to the Lapithai, and the narrator identifies Polypoites as Perithoös's son before he kills Damasos and Pylon and Ormenos (12.182–7), and Leonteus as Ares' son before he kills Hippomachos, Antiphates, Menon, Orestes, and Iamenos (12.188–94). The narrator has never before mentioned Hippomachos, Antiphates, or Menon: they are anonymous and expendable. Menon and Orestes, though, we might remember as Asios's men from 12.139. All of these lost stand in contrast to Polypoites and Leonteus, whom the narrator has now spent two full beats with, with repeated introductions through their lineage: the narrative expects us now to at least recognize them. We leave them stripping the armour from their kills (12.195).

Hektor/Wall: 12.195–289

The narrative uses a 'meanwhile' device to switch beats from the Lapithai back to Poulydamas and Hektor with their troops (reintroducing them, 12.197f. = 12.89f.), still standing at the edge of the ditch trying to figure out how to cross (ὄφρ' ... τόφρ', 12.195f.). The narrator left them less than ten minutes of performance time ago at full charge towards the Danaans (12.106f.), but now they stand on the edge of the ditch, still (ἔτι) pondering how to cross it (12.198f.).¹⁰⁴

While they stand, a bird-sign: an eagle carries a snake that bites back and forces the eagle to drop it and fly off (12.200–7). The narrator provides the audience access to the Trojans as they shiver in fear at the sight,¹⁰⁵ which sets up the bad news that Poulydamas immediately gives Hektor: the Trojans will break through the Achaian wall, but they will not all make it back to Troy alive (12.223–7). With this prophecy, Poulydamas gives legitimacy to the potential scenario that he already suggested at 12.71–4, where the Trojans will have a hard time making it back to Troy alive once the Achaians turn them back from the ships. But unlike some of the previous predictions/prophecies from past episodes that

mention danger for the Trojans near the ships (Zeus at 8.473–6; Achilles at 9.651–5), Poulydamas addresses this *to* Hektor, giving *him* that information to act on as he urges him not to attack the Achaian ships (12.216).

So Hektor has, it *seems*, a choice, and knowledge to act on. But dramatic tension arises as Hektor tries to fit this new knowledge in with what *he* already knows. Hektor angrily suggests that Poulydamas has asked him ‘to forget thundering Zeus’s advice’ (12.235f.). Hektor claims he will take Zeus’s will over any bird-sign. This argument engages shared memory: the audience was ‘there’, after all, when Zeus (through Iris) made his battlefield glory promise to Hektor (11.200–9). But the audience still knows things that Hektor does not: that Achilles will check Hektor at the ships (Zeus at 8.473–6; Achilles at 9.651–5); that Hektor will die (Athena at 8.358f.). These contradictions create ambiguity around Hektor that affects how people judge his decision to fight on despite the bird-sign. But that ambiguity also forces strong character engagement: allegiance for or against.¹⁰⁶

The rest of Hektor’s speech raises similar issues of ambiguity and judgement. Here he famously says that the best bird-sign is to defend your country (12.242). Then he imagines that ‘even if’ (εἰ περ γάρ τ’, 12.244) all the other men died by the Argive ships, Poulydamas would be fine because he is such a coward (12.244–7). This image confirms the previous beat’s possibility of heavy Trojan losses by the ships (12.72–4), and, in an ‘Easter egg’ (a detail that only certain fans would latch onto), points towards Poulydamas’s survival, at least in the *Iliad*.¹⁰⁷ Hektor also provides the audience access to his values, as he places bravery and willingness to fight *above* survival, and he reinforces this value with a death threat for any man who runs away.¹⁰⁸ The narrative then shows him leading on the Trojans without any comment, leaving the audience to make their own judgements on Hektor.

The beat switches audience alignment to Zeus, who follows above the Trojans with a windstorm (12.252–4) that beguiles the Achaians while giving the Trojans, and Hektor, the glory (12.254f.). This beat strongly confirms Hektor’s reasoning in the last, giving further information for audience allegiance to him. Here, Zeus does still give him the glory that he granted back at 11.200–9, and indeed, the Trojans are ‘convinced by these signs’ (τεράεσσι πεποιθότες, 12.256), pushing aside the previous beat’s bird-sign. The Trojans work on tearing down the wall (12.257–62), reinforcing the sequence’s mission, but the Achaians do not give way (12.262–4).

As the Trojans try to tear down the wall, the narrative switches audience alignment back to the Aiantes, who exhort the Achaians to hold their ground and even to think ahead to taking the city (12.265–76). Once the narrative has

given the audience access to this Achaian perspective on the Trojan attack on their wall, it once again zooms out to show the *mêlée* as a whole, carefully keeping the audience perched between sides around the wall. In a callback to the first beats of the wall fight, the narrative compares the stones thrown by both sides to Zeus's snowstorms (12.278–89; cf. 12.156f.). So the whole wall thundered (12.289).

Wall fight!: 12.290–431

The narrator switches beats with a contrafactual,¹⁰⁹ saying that Hektor and the Trojans would not have broken in the gates if it had not been for Zeus driving Sarpedon, his son, against the Argives (12.290–3).¹¹⁰ The phrasing reveals that the Trojans *will* break down the gates, building audience anticipation for that event. At the same time, the narrative now aligns the audience with Sarpedon as a protagonist of the next beat, reintroducing his relationship to Zeus (about fifteen minutes after the narrative named him, Glaukos, and Asteropaios as the leaders of the last Trojan battalion, 12.101–4). The narrative attaches the audience to Sarpedon throughout this beat, first describing him in detail as he prepares to attack the wall (12.298–308), then providing the audience access to his character and Glaukos's in their famous exchange about their roles and motivations in fighting. Their exchange insists that they must fight because of their roles as leaders, and because they must die anyway, they might as well die for glory (12.310–28). With this access, the narrative invites audience allegiance with both Lykian lords before they rush into battle (12.330).

The scene switches audience alignment as the Lykian lords charge, following the gaze of Menestheus and giving the audience access to him as he shivers when he sees them coming (12.331f.). The narrative creates alignment through reintroduction, access, and attachment to Menestheus. The narrative reintroduces Menestheus here as the son of Peteos: this is his first appearance since 4.327 (around six and a half hours ago without breaks). He looks everywhere along the wall for help, until he finally sees the Aiantes on the wall (12.335). Here, the narrative constructs the illusion of continuity in its disparate character story arcs as it left the Aiantes exhorting their troops at 12.269–76, a few minutes ago, before Menestheus now finds them still on the wall. Menestheus sends a runner to them on a mini-mission, asking that at least Telamonian Aias and Teukros come to help him against the Lykian lords (12.342–50). The narrative keeps our alignment with the runner into the next beat, as he runs *along the wall* to find

them (παρὰ τεῖχος, 12.352). So the wall continues to play as the spatial convergence point for these multiple storylines. The runner Thoötes conveys (and recaps) Menestheus's message (12.354–63 recaps 12.343–50), and Telamonian Aias agrees to help him (12.364–9), creating audience anticipation for his confrontation with Sarpedon and Glaukos and his return to this point on the wall, as he leaves Oïlean Aias and Lykomedes.

Now the narrative keeps the audience attached to Telamonian Aias, along with Teukros, while he reiterates their relationship as half-brothers and adds Pandion to their mission to help Menestheus (12.370–2).¹¹¹ They make their way back across the battlefield 'inside the wall' (τείχεος ἐντὸς ἰόντες, 12.374) back to Menestheus (12.373), completing the mini-mission set two beats earlier (12.342–50). Here, Aias kills Epikles, a red-shirt that the narrative introduces only to show his death, introducing him as 'Sarpedon's companion' (12.379). His death so raises the stakes for Sarpedon himself, and creates further audience anticipation for Aias confronting Sarpedon. Teukros then strikes Glaukos, bringing our main Lykians back into the action after the mini-mission to retrieve Aias and Teukros (Glaukos was last seen at 12.329). Teukros hits Glaukos with an arrow as he runs on the wall (ἐπεσσύμενον βάλε τεῖχος ὑψηλοῖο, 12.388), forcing him to secretly retreat from shame (12.387–90). So the narrative almost instantaneously switches audience alignment from Teukros to Glaukos, and then on to Sarpedon, giving the audience access to his sadness when he sees his companion leave the field. But Sarpedon keeps fighting (12.392f.), and he kills Alkmaon (in a one-time appearance, 12.394f.), before wrenching down part of the wall with his hands (12.397–9), fulfilling some of the 'mission' set at 12.61–80 for the Trojans to cross the ditch and attack the Achaian wall.

The narrative switches audience alignment to Aias and Teukros, who then both try to hit Sarpedon, but Zeus protects him from harm, so that he is simply driven back slightly (12.400–7). Sarpedon exhorts the other Lykians (12.408–12), and the wall fight continues, between Sarpedon and his Lykians and the Danaans on the other side (12.414–31).

Hektor/Wall: 12.432–71

The narrative emphasizes the deadlock between the sides along the wall through a simile, comparing them to the evenly balanced wool of a widow with her scales, trying to make a living for her children (12.432–5). It is perhaps no accident that this is the image that brings Hektor back into the action, tying him to widowhood

as Andromache herself had (cf. 6.408f.). So the battle stays in balance until Zeus lets Hektor have the greater glory to be the first to break through the wall (12.437; cf. 11.300, 12.174, 12.255).¹¹² Hektor turns to his Trojans and urges them to break the wall (12.439–41), before charging and throwing a massive stone against the doors (12.445–57): the narrative goes to great lengths in describing both the rock and the doors before the break occurs. The gates give way and Hektor attacks, his face like fast night; his armour all ablaze; his two spears in hand; his eyes flashing like fire (12.463–6). No one could have stood up to him, except for the gods (12.465f.). The narrative pays a huge amount of attention to visual details throughout this passage, making it particularly memorable:¹¹³ this is especially true of its depiction of Hektor. I have no idea what fast night looks like, but Hektor sounds terrifying here.¹¹⁴ And the narrative gives access to the audience to confirm this, as the Achaians are (appropriately) terrified, scattering towards their ships in Hektor's wake, as the Trojan side pours over the wall or through the gates (12.469–71).¹¹⁵ For Hektor, this feels like a character overhaul, but the narrative will not reveal the details of individual character responses to this 'Hektor' until the next beat.

Hektor's breaking through the Achaian gates resolves the problem posed at the beginning of the beat sequence, suggesting a point at which the performer might take a break, and pointing to the possibility of most of Book 12 standing as an episode. The glory that Zeus promised Hektor in the previous 'episode' (11.200–9) finally comes to fruition through this action. The vivid description of Hektor as he succeeds leaves the action in a memorable cliffhanger,¹¹⁶ with Poulydamas's warnings and the bird-sign left dangling for what will happen to the Trojans after they have broken through the Achaian battlements. This will be dealt with in the next episodes, while the plot points from Zeus's prophecy (8.473–7), including Patroklos's death and Achilles' return and confrontation with Hektor, still lurk in the more distant future.

Zeus/Poseidon: 13.1–129

Book 13 uses a summary to switch scenes,¹¹⁷ again pointing to a possible performance break between the books as the narrator attaches the audience to Zeus, first driving Hektor and the Trojans against the ships, and then leaving to look over northern lands (13.1–6). Even with Zeus, the narrative exploits its melodramatic alignment structure, as Zeus now does not pay attention to the Trojans because he does not think that any of the gods would intervene (13.7–9).

But Poseidon *is* paying attention (13.10), which creates a gap in what the two gods will know through the next episode(s). The narrative aligns the audience with Poseidon, attaching to him as he watches the Trojans beating the Achaians, giving access as he gets angry at Zeus about it: the narrative keeps the audience aligned with Poseidon as he heads down to his house in the ocean and gears up and grabs his chariot and rides to the beach at Troy (13.11–31),¹¹⁸ even showing him parking his horses (13.32–8). All this attention establishes Poseidon as a primary character in this ‘episode’, and shows again how the narrative foregrounds less significant characters in its middle episodes to laterally expand its drama while keeping the plot where it needs to be.¹¹⁹

The narrative briefly switches audience alignment to Hektor and the Trojans, all together like ‘fire’ or a ‘stormcloud’ (φλογί; θυέλλη, 13.39), as they hope to seize the ships of the Achaians and kill all their best men around them (13.41f.). But then the audience aligns again with Poseidon, as he disguises himself as Kalchas to exhort the Aiantes. Poseidon’s speech recaps the end of the last episode, saying that the Trojans have ‘come over the wall’ (μέγα τεῖχος ὑπερκατέβησαν, 13.50 recaps 12.462–71). Then ‘Kalchas’ tells them that the Achaians will be able to hold all the Trojans, except for Hektor. To explain, Kalchas/Poseidon describes Hektor as overhauled; he is a ‘madman, like fire’ (ὁ λυσσώδης φλογὶ εἴκελος, 13.53). This repeats the narrative description of the Trojans like ‘fire’ (13.39; cf. 12.466), and the reference to Hektor as mad recalls Teukros’s seeing Hektor as a ‘raging dog’ in yesterday’s battle (8.299). Then Poseidon says that Hektor claims to be the mighty son of Zeus (ὃς Διὸς εὖχετ’ ἐρισθενέος πάϊς εἶναι, 13.54), which recalls Hektor’s close connection with Zeus in these last books, but with also confuses Hektor’s identity and plays into his character overhaul. Hektor himself has made no such claim, as far as the audience knows: do they believe this disguised Poseidon? Or is this just rhetoric to stir the spirits of the troops? Or, perhaps, Hektor has boasted to be the son of Zeus, somewhere in the in-betweens, when the narrator was not with him. Again, this ambiguity asks the audience to engage in Hektor’s character. Finally, Poseidon tells the Aiantes that they can drive Hektor back from the fast-running ships, even if the Olympian (Zeus) himself rouses him (εἰ καὶ μιν Ὀλύμπιος αὐτὸς ἐγείρει, 13.57f.). Poseidon’s ‘if’ here adds some troublesome ambiguity to Zeus’s support for Hektor. The audience knows that Zeus supports Hektor, from his promise back at 11.186–209; but they also now know that Zeus has left Troy (13.1–9). This leaves the possible extent of his support now up in the air, and builds tension with the audience. When Poseidon finishes speaking, he imbues both Aiantes with strong battle-fury, hitting them with his staff (13.59f.).¹²⁰

Poseidon leaves them, and Oïlean Aias recognizes that a god has just spoken to them (13.65–75). Telamonian Aias agrees, and claims that he can feel his strength rising, presumably from this divine encounter (13.77–9). He reasserts Hektor’s identity as Priam’s son and wants to take on Hektor (adding a refutation to Poseidon’s claim that Hektor was the ‘son of Zeus’, Διὸς . . . πάϊς, at 13.54), even though he is insatiably eager to fight (μενοινῶ δὲ καὶ οἶος/Ἔκτορι Πριαμίδῃ ἄμorton μεμαῶτι μάχεσθαι, 13.79f.). This humanizes Hektor once more and returns him from his ‘overhaul’ to the realm of the recognizable.

Mission crew: 13.83–129

The next beat resumes the audience’s alignment with Poseidon as he goes from man to man along the ranks (13.83–93). This ‘mini-catalogue’ recalls for the audience which Achaians are still on the field after the wounded withdrawals of Book 11. As with the Trojan ‘mission crew’ assembled before their charge on the Achaian wall in the last ‘episode’ (12.88–104), many of the Achaians here have not been seen for many hours of performance time, and are reintroduced now to play parts in the battle to come. These include Teukros (last seen at 12.400), Leïtos (last seen at 6.35), Peneleos (last seen in the catalogue at 2.494), Deïpyros (last seen at 9.83), Thoas (last seen at 7.168), Meriones (last seen at 10.270), and Antilochos (not seen since 6.32). Poseidon’s exhortation to the Achaians that follows also includes important recaps, both to a past that exists before the *Iliad*’s narrative time began, as well as to previous events within the epic. Poseidon contrasts the current situation of the Trojans fighting near the ships with a past when the Trojans were always like frightened deer to the Achaians and did not want to face the Achaians’ battle-fury and their hands (13.101–6; cf. 9.353f.). Then Poseidon explains the difference between these times as the fault of Agamemnon and his quarrel with Achilles (13.111–3), recapping the events of Book 1 while judging that Agamemnon in particular is to blame. Poseidon ends his rousing speech with a warning to the men. I include all these lines here, because they use the recap of the last battle sequence around the wall to build audience expectation for what is to come:

ὦ πέπονες τάχα δὴ τι κακὸν ποιήσετε μείζον
τῇδε μεθιμοσύνη· ἄλλ’ ἐν φρεσὶ θέσθε ἕκαστος
αἰδῶ καὶ νέμεσιν· δὴ γὰρ μέγα νεῖκος ὄρωρεν.
Ἔκτωρ δὴ παρὰ νηυσὶ βοήν ἀγαθὸς πολέμίζει
καρτερὸς, ἔρρηξεν δὲ πύλας καὶ μακρὸν ὄχῃα.

‘Friends, soon you’re going to make something worse happen
with your carelessness. Each of you, think about
shame and retribution. Cause a big fight has begun.
Now Hektor, with his good war-cry, makes war by our ships,
and he’s strong – he broke through the gates and their big lock.’

Poseidon, 13.120–4

Following Poseidon’s exhortation, the Achaians stand against the Trojans and brilliant Hektor (Τρῶάς τε καὶ Ἑκτορά δι’ ὄν ἔμμενον, 13.129) in a dense line.¹²¹

Hektor again: 13.130–205

After all this time spent aligned with Poseidon and the Achaians, the narrative finally switches the audience’s alignment to the Trojans and Hektor, attaching to them as they attack. The narrator describes Hektor through a long simile of a rock wrenched from a cliff-face, violently rolling forward until it comes to a stop, just as he himself does when he comes up against the Achaian vanguard (13.136–46):¹²² quite a different image from Hektor *as* a whirlwind, as the force acting, rather than acted upon (cf. 12.40; 11.296–8; 11.305–8). There, Hektor rallies the troops, shouting that he will break through the Achaian line, if the best of the gods, Hera’s thundering husband, actually drives him on (εἰ ἐτέον με/ ὥρσε θεῶν ὠριστος, ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἥρης 13.155). Hektor’s conditional ‘if’ picks up on the contextual shift that has happened since Hektor last spoke of Zeus’s support (Zeus is not watching now), and reflects the ‘if’ of Poseidon’s exhortation at 13.57. When Hektor responded to Poulydamas before storming the Achaian battlements, he was so sure of Zeus’s support that he was willing to ignore bird-signs (12.231–50). Now, even if Hektor is only being rhetorical, his language suggests the possibility that Zeus may not be supporting him, which would resonate with the audience that knows that Zeus is no longer paying attention to the fight, and so cannot intervene on Hektor’s behalf (13.1–9). Responding to Hektor’s exhortation, Deiphobos strides out to fight, and Meriones takes a shot at him, piercing his shield but missing him (13.156–62). Both men retreat: Deiphobos out of fear, Meriones to get a new spear (13.156–68). Meriones’ mission sets up a dangling storyline that builds audience anticipation to see him again in the next few beats.

Then Teukros kills Imbrios, whom the narrative introduces with a long backstory so that the audience might feel a little for him, when Teukros stabs him through the head with his spear (13.170–82). The information that the narrative provides about Imbrios, especially that he was married to one of

Priam's daughters and was honoured as one of Priam's own children, necessarily relates him to Hektor, emotionally anchoring him to someone the audience is already invested in. More, the narrative juxtaposes his death and Hektor's intervention in the next beat: this juxtaposition replaces the often-used trope of following an emotional response back to a death's witness. So rather than see Hektor react to Imbrios's death and attack Teukros, the narrative just puts those two things back-to-back, leaving a gap where we can project our own understanding of their connection.

Hektor tries to hit Teukros with his spear, but misses and hits Amphimachos instead, who appears here for the first time since the catalogue only to die (13.183–7; cf. 2.870f.). As Hektor tries to strip his armour, Aias attacks, driving his spear against Hektor's shield so he drives him back, and the Achaians are able to rescue both corpses (13.185–94). Stichios and Menestheus take Amphimachos's body back to the Achaians (13.195f.), while the Aiantes strip Imbrios's corpse (13.197–202). Oïlean Aias, furious over Amphimachos's death, hacks off Imbrios's head and throws it like a ball until it lands in the dust at Hektor's feet (13.202–5). The action stands out in its being the only time a hero in the *Iliad* ever throws a dismembered body part at another hero, and in the vividness of its short descriptive simile of the decapitated head 'spinning like a ball' (σφαίρηδὸν ἐλιζάμενος, 13.204).¹²³ Whether the narrative wants to keep a distance from Hektor to draw him as more of an enemy for the moment, or to allow the audience pity for him, either way, the narrative does not allow the audience access to Hektor's response to this head landing at his feet. In fact, beyond omitting Hektor's response, the narrator leaves Hektor full-stop for the next half hour of performance time. Removing Hektor, even in his role as the primary antagonist, for several scenes in this 'episode' allows the narrative to prolong audience anticipation for seeing him in direct confrontation and to foreground other characters, giving the audience new choices of whom to emotionally invest in through the battle beats to come.

Idomeneus/Meriones: 13.206–333

The next beat emphasizes audience distance from Hektor when it switches alignment to give us access, instead, to Poseidon, who, like Oïlean Aias, also grieves angrily over the dead Amphimachos (13.206–9; cf. 13.202f.). Turning the audience away from Hektor and the Aiantes, the narrative now takes a break from battle. In a series of beats that focus on dialogue exchanges, the narrative

reasserts character values in the storyworld in order to build emotional investment and ethical perspective on the battle to follow.

These dialogue beats include exchanges at the edge of battle between Poseidon (disguised as Thoas) and Idomeneus (13.210–39), and between Idomeneus and his companion Meriones (13.246–329). First Poseidon (as Thoas) runs into Idomeneus (13.210–30), the Cretan lord who did appear once in the previous episode (12.117) but will now take on a more major role in the coming beats. Idomeneus's speech here focuses on not hanging back from the fight, even if Zeus supports the other side (13.224–30). After Idomeneus has armed himself in his shelter (13.239–44), he runs into Meriones as he makes his way back to battle. Again, the narrative masterfully suggests continuity in character story arcs, picking up the dangling storyline of Meriones leaving the battlefield at 13.164–8 to get a new spear from the camp. This, too, is the *Iliad*'s melodramatic alignment structure in action, as the audience knows why Meriones left the battle when Idomeneus asks him (13.249–53), and so gets pleasure when they hear Meriones recap his spear breaking in his clash with Deiphobos (13.255–8 recaps 13.159–62). But in this short speech, Meriones also asks Idomeneus if he can get one of Idomeneus's spears, since his own tent is far away, which the audience would not have necessarily anticipated; this surprise, too, gives pleasure. Their exchange continues with a focus on Meriones' bravery, which Idomeneus's response places within a broader discussion of courage. Brave men do not go pale with fear (13.279–86). Meriones, as a brave man, will die with a spear in his front, because he will not run away (13.288–91). Finally, Idomeneus tells Meriones to take a spear from his tent (13.294), and the two men move to return to battle. Through this long exchange, the narrative builds not just alignment with these two characters, but allegiance, as the audience knows their values, how they think of themselves and how they think about fighting before they return to it. These character allegiances then re-ground the audience in the storyworld's values as the narrative moves back into battle.

The narrative uses their return to map out the battlefield, which has changed since fighting now takes place near the Achaian ships instead of around the wall as in the previous episodes. Meriones asks Idomeneus if they should enter at the right, left, or centre of battle, and Idomeneus recaps in his response that Teukros and the Aiantes fight in the centre, and they can hold Hektor (13.306–27; cf. 13.50, 13.101). Idomeneus describes Hektor in ways similar to Poseidon did, saying that he is 'strong' (κατερός, 13.316; cf. 13.124), and to Aias, repeating that Hektor is 'really eager to fight' (μάλα περ μεμαῶτι μάχεσθαι, 13.317; cf. 13.80). But Idomeneus claims that unless Zeus himself sets fire to the ships, Hektor will not succeed: this seems to acknowledge Zeus's support of Hektor (cf. 13.52–4), at the

same time that it plays on audience knowledge that Zeus's support for Hektor will only go so far (cf. 11.186–209). Here, Idomeneus is sure that Aias can take Hektor, supporting Aias's earlier confidence (cf. 13.79f.), going so far as to say that Aias could stand his ground against any mortal, even Achilles (13.321–4). This recalls Achilles' absence from the fighting, and re-establishes Aias's status as 'best' in that absence, as well as recalling Aias's superiority over Hektor from previous beats (cf. 7.244–322; 11.538–43). With Idomeneus's reasoning, Meriones and Idomeneus decide to re-enter the fray on the left flank (13.326–9). The beat switches alignment to show the men on the left flank swarming Idomeneus and his henchmen as they return to battle (13.330–3; cf. 7.1–7), reinforcing the audience's own allegiance with the Cretan lords. Now Idomeneus is also 'like a flame' (φλογὶ εἴκελον, 13.330, cf. Hektor 13.53), as he becomes central to this next beat sequence.

Zeus/Poseidon: 13.334–60

The narrative 'zooms out' from the left flank to show the audience the chaos of battle all around these main characters (13.334–44),¹²⁴ and then to explain that battle through the competing wills of 'two sons of Kronos': Zeus and Poseidon. The narrative recaps Zeus's complicated motivations as wanting victory for the Trojans and for Hektor and glorifying fast-footed Achilles, but not wanting to completely destroy the Achaians, but only to honour Thetis and her son (13.347–50 recaps 1.517–27). Then the narrative recaps Poseidon's coming out of the water, his bitterness against Zeus, his pity for the Argives (13.351–3 recaps 13.15f.), and his going around all the time in disguise (13.355–7; cf. 13.45, 13.216). The narrative provides new information about why Poseidon disguises himself, explaining it as a response to the fact that Zeus is elder and knows more than Poseidon (13.354f.). The narrative only implies Zeus's ignorance of the current state of battle through its twice-describing Poseidon's actions as 'in secret' (λάθρη, 13.352, 13.358). This short narrative beat explains the present battle within the longer story arcs of the gods: it only lasts about a minute before the narrator returns to Idomeneus.

Idomeneus/Meriones: 13.361–580

The narrator describes Idomeneus as 'half-grey' (μεσαιπόλιος, 13.361) as he calls on the Danaans, charges against the Trojans, and kills Othryoneus (13.363). At

his death, the narrative gives the audience Othryoneus's backstory, that he had promised Priam to fight well in exchange for one of his daughters (13.363–9). Idomeneus knows this story too, because he sarcastically mocks Othryoneus as he drags his corpse off the battlefield, saying that he will marry him off to one of Agamemnon's daughters in Argos (13.374–82). With Idomeneus dragging Othryoneus's corpse, Asios reappears after fifty minutes of performance time (last seen at 12.172). Asios tries to strike Idomeneus, but Idomeneus drives his spear right through his head while Antilochos kills Asios's charioteer (13.384–99). The narrative gives very little information about Asios here, and makes no comment that his death was predicted as a comment on his decision to refuse Poulydamas's orders and abandon his chariot way back at 12.113–5. But those who have been paying attention would get certain pleasure from the resolution of this dangling storyline from a previous 'episode'.

As the battle continues, the narrative constantly switches the audience's alignment between sides, following the direction of gazes and emotional responses to battlefield deaths. First Deïphobos grieves when he sees Asios fall and rushes at Idomeneus (13.402–9), but overshoots, hitting Hypsenor instead (13.410–2), which he accepts as a consolation prize in his vaunt over the body (13.413–16). Then the Achaians grieve at Deïphobos's vaunt, especially Antilochos, who protects Hypsenor's corpse as Mekisteus and Alastor rescue the body (13.417–23). When the narrative switches alignment back to Idomeneus, it pushes Alkathoo's into his path, with a long reintroduction as Anchises' son-in-law and Hippodameia's wife, after he was only first introduced in the Trojan 'mission crew', at 12.93. Here Poseidon puts the whammy on the man so that he cannot move and Idomeneus stabs him with a spear through the heart (13.434–44). Idomeneus vaunts over the corpse, and Deïphobos responds by thinking to go and fetch Aineias to help him (13.455–9). Deïphobos finds Aineias on the edge of the battle, standing in anger against Priam (13.459f.).¹²⁵ Aineias, too, has not appeared since the Trojan mission crew against the wall was assembled (12.99): the previous beat prepares for his return, in its careful placement of Alkathoo's into Aineias's family structure, and it is this connection that Deïphobos uses to convince the man, angry over Hypsenor's death (13.468), to help him.

Aineias charges Idomeneus, and Idomeneus calls on his companions to help him against his charge: Askalaphos, Aphareus, Deïpyros (all last seen at 9.82f.), with Meriones and Antilochos (13.469–79). As Idomeneus calls out to them, he picks up on why the narrator introduced him as going grey when he returned to the fray (13.361), as now Idomeneus claims that Aineias is beating him because he is a younger man (13.481–6). As all these Achaians assemble, the narrative

switches audience alignment back to Aineias, who himself calls several of his companions to help, including Deïphobos, Paris, and Agenor (13.490). This creates continuity with the battle sequence in Book 12, as an attentive audience would remember that the fallen Alkathoös commanded a battalion along with Paris and Agenor, back at 12.93, the last time either of them were seen. Now they rush in to help Aineias fight over Alkathoös's corpse (13.491–8). Of all the men fighting, the narrative tells us, Aineias and Idomeneus are the best (13.499f.). Aineias throws his spear, misses and hits the ground; Idomeneus throws and hits Oinomaos, eviscerating him (13.502–8). Missiles drive Idomeneus out of the battle before he can strip the body, with Deïphobos trying again for him, with another miss as he kills Askalaphos (13.510–20). The narrative takes a moment away from the battle to exploit its melodramatic alignment structure, as Ares remains unaware when his son Askalaphos falls (13.521–5). Then the narrative switches audience alignment back to Deïphobos, who strips Askalaphos's helmet, but Meriones quickly intervenes and stabs Deïphobos in the arm before ducking back into the crowd (13.526–32). So the narrative reintroduces Polites as Deïphobos's brother, in his first appearance since the catalogue at 2.791, as he rushes in to rescue Deïphobos and carry him off the battlefield (13.533–9).

Now the narrative switches audience alignment back to Aineias, who strikes Aphareus (13.541). Then there is a true cut to Antilochos,¹²⁶ who kills Thoön and tries to strip his armour (13.545–50); the Trojans attack Antilochos and Poseidon must protect him (13.551–5). Asios's son Adamas recognizes that Poseidon protects Antilochos and goes to retreat, but Meriones hits him in the guts with his thrown spear (13.560–75). The narrative cuts again, appropriately to Helenos (not seen since the Trojan mission crew with Deïphobos and Asios at 12.94) who kills Deïpyros (13.576–80). Throughout this latest fight scene, the narrative switches audience alignment so fast it is hard to maintain any *one* alignment, or to only hold one allegiance. But in this flurry of cuts and alignment switches, the narrative deftly continues to build audience allegiance to certain characters, through the emotional impacts of their deaths within carefully constructed social networks.¹²⁷ The narrative especially rewards attentive audience members who remember the connections between characters, both in terms of their relationships to one another and through their positions on the battlefield. Even the time spent investing in building an allegiance with Idomeneus and Meriones becomes undermined in the speed of this battle; but the values established in that earlier scene between the two are what the audience can use to judge the actions of all these many characters in the heat of battle.

Menelaos: 13.581–673

Idomeneus and Meriones have both faded out of the action again, and suddenly in the fray, in response to the death of Deïpyros, Menelaos appears for the first time since he helped Odysseus off the battlefield back at 11.487 (around a hundred and ten minutes ago in performance time, without breaks). But the narrative brought Paris back into the *mêlée* at 13.491–8, and with the Aiantes and Teukros presumably still in the centre flank (cf. 13.306–27), and the rest of the principal Achaians wounded, it seems appropriate that Menelaos reappears now. Menelaos manages to wound Helenos in the hand, sending him back into the crowd (13.581–97). Then Peisandros (who also has not appeared since 11.143) comes against Menelaos, and quickly dies (13.601–19).

During this beat, the narrator addresses Menelaos directly in an apostrophe, continuing his special alignment with him (σοὶ Μενέλαε, 13.603).¹²⁸ This matters as Menelaos vaunts over the corpse, because his speech fosters allegiance, and this allegiance, in turn, will bring the audience to question their relationship to Hektor. In his long vaunt, Menelaos recaps the Trojan theft of Helen as a crime against guest-friendship (13.626f.), specifically invoking Zeus *Xenios*, the god who protects guest-friendship, as the one who will completely sack their city one day (13.625). This is the first reminder for a long time that the Trojans are in the wrong, and the fact that it comes from Menelaos, the man wronged, means something, especially when the narrator has taken the pains to single him out by addressing him directly. Menelaos also characterizes the Trojans beyond breaking the rules of guest-friendship. He calls them arrogant and insatiable when it comes to war (13.61), full of insolence and shamefulness (13.622), violent (13.633). Their battle-fury is reckless (13.634) and he repeats that they can never get enough of war (13.635). Finally, he lists all the lovely things men can find satisfaction in: sleeping and sex and sweet song and blameless dance (13.636f.) – but the Trojans only want war. This long speech, much like the earlier exchange between Idomeneus and Meriones (13.248–94), details Menelaos's values and creates allegiance with Menelaos that might question or call into conflict any of the audience's standing allegiances with the Trojans. These values can also be applied to Hektor in particular. Other characters in this episode have focused on Hektor's eagerness to fight (Aias at 13.80; Idomeneus at 13.317): where is the line between being eager to fight, and never being able to get enough of fighting? Andromache has said that Hektor's battle-fury will kill him (6.407) – is it reckless? Were Poseidon's views of Hektor as a raging mad man correct (13.53)? Were Teukros's (8.299)?

As Menelaos finishes his speech and turns again to stripping the body, Harpalion comes at him, only to die when hit by Meriones' arrow (13.643–55). The narrative introduces Harpalion as the son of the Paphlagonian king Pylaimenes (who died at 5.576).¹²⁹ But now, Menelaos kills Harpalion, and his father reappears to carry the corpse off the battlefield, without a death-price (13.643–59). Now Paris appears in sorrow for the fallen Harpalion, because, significantly, Harpalion was Paris's *guest-friend* (ξείνος, 13.662). Here, just less than three minutes after Menelaos's damning vaunt about the Trojan violation against Zeus *Xenios*, Paris's guest-friendship governs his emotional response: these successive beats necessarily engage audience allegiance. Does this redeem Paris? Is there a conscious effort on the part of the narrator to reform the view of Paris, in contrast to what Menelaos has just said? Is this hypocrisy? The narrative-built allegiance with Menelaos forces an allegiance with Paris, whatever the audience thinks about him. In his grief-rage, Paris kills Euchenor (13.660–72). This description of Paris's success in battle, followed by the vivid summary that 'they fought like fiery fire' (ὥς οἱ μὲν μάρναντο δέμας πυρὸς αἰθομένοιοι, 13.673), finally leads the narrative back to Hektor.

Hektor/Panic: 13.674–837

After close to thirty-five minutes spent with Idomeneus and Meriones and the ensuing fight around them on the left flank, the narrative returns to Hektor. Even though the previous beat ends with Paris making a kill, the narrator switches audience alignment to Hektor, telling us that he does not know his men are dying on the left flank.¹³⁰ This transition tricks us slightly, reframing the recent scenes emphatically to increase the *pathos* that Hektor will have to respond to. This again engages the melodramatic alignment structure where Hektor will learn what other characters (and the audience) already know. The juxtaposition between Paris's success and Hektor's ignorance of the state of the rest of his troops also finds a clear repetition a couple of scenes later, when Hektor finds Paris on the battlefield.

The narrative finds Hektor still holding the line where he first broke through the gates, recapping the main action of the battle sequence in Book 12 (13.679f. recaps 12.462–71).¹³¹ The narrative elaborates that the point in the wall where Hektor broke through was the lowest point (does this tarnish Hektor's success slightly?), and nearest the ships of Aias and Protesilaos (13.682–5). In re-establishing this space, the narrative also provides a mini-catalogue that lists the

peoples fighting in it:¹³² the Boiotians, the Ionians, the Lokrians, the Phthians, and the Epeians all try to hold back Hektor, who is once again like a flame (φλογὶ εἵκελον, 13.688; cf. 13.53), but they cannot. The Athenians are also there, with Menestheus, Pheidias, Stichios, and Bias, and the Epeian leaders were Meges, Amphion, and Drakos, while the Phthians were led by Medon and Podarkes (13.689–93). These men are those who fight with the Aiantes against Hektor, with the Lokrians as bowmen and slingers in the rearguard (13.685–722). Against all these men, the Trojans forget their lust for war (13.721f.); a contrast with Menelaos's assertion that the Trojans were insatiable when it came to war at 13.635.

The narrative keeps the audience's alignment with the Trojans with a contrafactual that the Trojans would have run from the Achaian ships and shelters back to Troy, if Poulydamas had not spoken to Hektor, starting a new beat (13.723–5).¹³³ Poulydamas reintroduces himself, Hektor, and their relationship in his speech (he was last seen over seventy minutes ago, at 12.250). Poulydamas's speech raises several ambiguities around Hektor's character that will compel the audience to again re-think its allegiance with his character.

First Poulydamas says that Hektor is 'impossible' and will not listen (13.726); this recalls and judges Hektor's refusal to recognize Poulydamas's bird-sign interpretation from the previous episode, though there Hektor escaped comment (12.230–50). Then Poulydamas suggests that Hektor 'wants to be better in counsel than others' (καὶ βουλῇ ἐθέλεις περιῖδμεναι ἄλλων, 13.728), problematizing Hektor's epithet of 'equal in counsel to Zeus's' (Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντε, 11.200 = 7.47). This forms part of Poulydamas's accusation that Hektor does not understand how the gods give certain gifts to certain people (13.729–34), akin to Paris's admonition to Hektor not to mock the gods' gifts (3.63–6). Then Poulydamas appraises the direness of the present situation (13.735–9) and advises Hektor to pull back to a rally point (13.740–4). From there, Poulydamas again puts forward two possibilities: the gods will let them fall on the Achaian ships or let them escape from the ships unharmed (13.742–4; cf. 12.67–74). The narrative allows audience access to Poulydamas when he explains that his advice comes out of his fear of an Achaian reprisal against yesterday's Trojan successes (13.744f.): this recalls the Trojan advance from 'yesterday's' battle scenes in Book 8, but comes into conflict with audience knowledge. Zeus, after all, said that *this* day was to be the worst for the Achaeans (8.470–3), and promised Hektor the glory today (11.200–9). So an audience member would be challenged to remember what happened 'yesterday' and whether or not Poulydamas is right in claiming what he does here. Poulydamas then explains his look towards the past with the ominous thought of Achilles' future return: 'since a man who can't get enough of war stays

back by the ships, and I don't think he'll stay out of the fight much longer' (ἐπεὶ παρὰ νηυσὶν ἀνὴρ ἄτος πολέμοιο/ μῖμνει, ὃν οὐκέτι πάγχυ μάχης σχήσεσθαι ὄϊω. 13.746f.). This builds on earlier predictions of Achilles' return, like the narrator's at 2.694 and Zeus's prophecy at 8.473–7, and once again stokes audience anticipation for Achilles to come back into action (and all that that entails).

Hektor is convinced. He jumps off his chariot and tells Poulydamas to hang back and call the troops to the rallying point, while he goes to meet the attack and order the men back (13.750–3). Hektor's enthusiasm to meet the attack here reinforces his earlier claim to Andromache that he has learned to always fight in the frontlines (6.445), even when the audience has seen that to not always be the case in today's battle (Zeus's intervention from 11.162–285; 11.359f.). Once he finishes his speech, Hektor runs 'like a snowy mountain' as he orders each man to make his way back to Poulydamas's rally point (13.754–7). The startling image of Hektor moving back into the battle as a snowy mountain picks up on earlier narrative comparisons of Hektor to whirlwinds and squalls (cf. 11.296–8; 11.305–10; 12.40). The idea of a moving mountain under its snowstorm feels much like a giant wave in a storm descending – both suggest mass and movement, rushing sound and blinding chaos – and in stormy seas, a high wave with its white-cap looks a lot like a snowy mountain bearing down on you.¹³⁴

Hektor's mission to rally the vanguard allows him to discover that many of the men he seeks are no longer fighting. Once again the *Iliad's* melodramatic alignment structure creates opportunities for recap through diegetic retellings and character deepening through character responses to those retellings. Hektor cannot find Deiphobos, Helenos, Adamas, and Asios (13.758–61), and the narrative emphasizes the gap between his knowledge and audience experience as it reminds us that many of those men are dead by the Achaian ships while others have retreated with wounds to Troy (13.762–4).

Hektor finds Paris (13.766), whom the narrative left behind on the left flank after he killed Euchenor (13.660–72), just over ten minutes ago in the performance. Now Hektor finds Paris encouraging his troops to keep up the fight (13.766), creating continuity on either side of its cut to the centre flank in its portrait of Paris fighting hard. But Hektor rebukes Paris just the same, just as he had in Book 3 after fleeing Menelaos (13.768f. = 3.38f.). The rest of his reproach is more contextually appropriate, as Hektor asks his brother where all the Trojans have gone, listing them in the same order as the narrative had described in the previous beat (13.771–3, cf. 13.758–61): Deiphobos (wounded at 13.528–39), Helenos (wounded at 15.582–97), Adamas (killed, 13.560–9), Asios (killed, 13.384–93), with the addition of Othryoneus (13.772; he was killed

at 13.363–82). The mention of these men engages audience memory and challenges the audience as to whether *they* remember what has happened to the Trojans in this past battle sequence. Hektor ends on a note of sheer panic: ‘now all high Ilion will end, from its top down – now your sheer destruction’ (νῦν ὅλετο πᾶσα κατ’ ἄκρης/Ἴλιος αἰπεινή· νῦν τοι σῶς αἰπὺς ὄλεθρος. 13.772–5). This plays on Hektor’s prior prediction of Troy’s fall at 6.447–65, and links his and Paris’s fate with that destruction.

Paris calmly defends his actions against Hektor’s rebuke (13.775–7): he jokes that his mother did not raise him to be altogether cowardly (13.777) and catches Hektor up on the fact that he has been fighting bravely all this time (νωλεμέως, 13.780). Paris then recaps what has happened to the men Hektor asked for: they are all dead, all but Deïphobos and Helenos, who have escaped with wounds (13.780–3). Finally, Paris tells Hektor to lead, and he and the remaining men will follow. So Hektor’s mission from the previous beat (13.758–64) finds its resolution as the survivors on the left flank join those others who have gathered at the rally point (13.788f.).

The narrative keeps the audience attached to the brothers as they return to the Trojans (13.789). The narrative mentions Kebriones and Poulydamas first, as they are the most recognizable, before a slew of ‘new’ Trojans to fill in now that so many Trojan heroes have been wounded or killed (13.790–4).¹³⁵ Hektor leads them, the narrative reiterates, comparing him to Ares, describing the shield he carries and the helmet he wears (13.802–5). He charges everywhere, testing the Achaian lines, but never breaking through (13.806f.).

The narrative switches alignment to Aias, who steps forward to challenge Hektor. Aias tells Hektor that only Zeus beats the Achaians, and that Troy will fall long before the Trojans ever take the Achaian ships – soon the Trojans will be praying to Zeus as they run for their lives (13.810–20). The audience knows that Zeus will turn the Trojans back once Achilles rejoins the fight (8.470–6); Achilles himself has claimed that he will meet Hektor near his own ship, once Hektor has brought fire to their camp (9.650–5). In case the audience does not remember these instances, or has no knowledge of tradition, the narrator gives a new sign that Aias’s threats might come to pass, following his speech with a bird-sign that seems to confirm his predictions, as it makes the Achaians brave (13.821–3).

Then the narrative switches audience alignment to Hektor, who responds to Aias’s flying speech. In Hektor’s response, he expresses the strange wish/threat, that if only it were as likely for him to be called a son of Zeus and Hera as it were that today will bring evil to all the Argives (13.825–8).¹³⁶ This echoes Poseidon’s claim at the beginning of this ‘episode’, when he said that ‘Hektor claims to be a

son of Zeus's' (13.53f.).¹³⁷ The audience might guess that Hektor's surety comes from his faith in Zeus's promise (11.200–9). He goes on to say that Aias will die, and that the birds and dogs will feast on his fat and flesh (13.829–3); any traditional audience will know that this will not happen. The sides are now seemingly evenly matched, crying out as they come together once more in battle (13.832–7). Despite Hektor's victory at the wall (12.453–71), these last battle sequences in Book 13 have quite literally held him in place; fixed at the point where he broke through the Achaian battlements for much of the narrative, and discovering his men wounded or dead when he leaves that point. Still, the other characters have heaped interpretation on his character throughout the episode, calling him a mad man, thinking Aias can take him, thinking he is always eager for war but that he will be held. Hektor himself speaks little, in his counter-orders to Poulydamas as he goes to rally the left flank and in his wrongly-placed rebuke for Paris where he sees the fall of all of Troy. The audience is once again left to try to fit all these small, ill-fitting pieces together.

Achaians assemble (injury edition): 14.1–152

The scene switches when Nestor, drinking in the Achaian camp, hears the outcry from the clashing armies (14.1). As Book 13 would take just over an hour to perform, and since there are recaps throughout Book 14 of the previous 'episode', a performer could easily take a break in his performance here before the action cuts to Nestor. The beat sequences in Book 13 deepened many characters, including the Aiantes, Idomeneus, Meriones, Deïphobos, Helenos, and Hektor and Paris, but the plot has hardly advanced at all: the 'episode' begins and ends with Hektor just inside the Achaian wall and Aias checking him there. Tradition dictates that Aias cannot die in battle;¹³⁸ the needs of the story dictate that Hektor cannot die *yet*, so within this scenario, the narrator must sustain the stalemate, while keeping the audience engaged. Just as in the last episode, the narrative achieves this in part by moving from character to character, from location to location on the battlefield. Now the narrative expands this geography to include the Achaian camp (full of injured major characters) and the divine spheres. These scenes, away from the main battle, allow for diegetic retellings of the previous 'episode's' battlefield actions, while adding further depth to these characters and continuing to build anticipation for future events.

These techniques start with our move off of the battlefield back to the tent of Nestor, which the narrative left at least an hour and forty minutes ago (11.802).

The beat gives character continuity to Nestor's storyline, as it recaps that last scene in the tent, both in the narrative detail of finding Nestor still drinking wine (14.1), and in his speech. Here, Nestor reintroduces Machaon and Hekamede by name, and mentions again the wine, re-drawing the scene the narrator left behind (14.3–8 recaps 11.617–803). As Nestor leaves his tent, he sees the Achaians running, chased by the Trojans, and he sees that the Achaian wall has failed, recapping the end of battle sequence around the wall rather than the most recent sequence (14.13–15 recaps 12.462–71 *not* 13.833–7). This raises an issue of continuity and timing:¹³⁹ is this scene with Nestor concurrent with the end of Book 12? Or do the Trojans take the advantage *while* the narrator has shifted alignment to Nestor? Either way, while the last battle sequence ended on an apparent stalemate, seeing the Achaians on their back feet gives reason for Nestor to either return to battle or to seek out the other Achaians in the camp now (14.20–6).

The narrative attaches to Nestor as he decides to go after Agamemnon and here the narrative reintroduces the wounded Achaians (14.27–9), all absent since Book 11: Diomedes (11.396–400), Odysseus (11.463–88), and Agamemnon (11.264–74). Agamemnon asks Nestor why he has left the battle, before he says that he fears Hektor's threats coming true (14.44). Agamemnon specifically claims that Hektor made threats to the assembled Trojans against him (μοι, 14.44–7). This challenges audience memory. Did Agamemnon hear Hektor's great shout to the Trojans that he would jump the Achaian wall and set fire to the ships (8.173–83)? Has Hektor ever made a threat against Agamemnon specifically, the way that Agamemnon has made threats specifically against Hektor (2.412–18)? Is everything that Hektor has threatened coming to pass, as Agamemnon says (14.48)? Agamemnon finally worries the Achaians will no longer fight for him, if they are angered like Achilles, once again making reference to the events of Book 1 (14.49–51).

Nestor's response recaps that the wall has failed, and says once again that the fight has turned against the Achaians (14.52–63 recaps 14.13–15; cf. 12.462–71). Agamemnon attributes the Trojans' current success to Zeus and suggests once more that they should leave Troy (14.74–81; cf. 2.139–41, 9.26–8). Again, we see the *Iliad's* melodramatic alignment structure in play, as Agamemnon's knowledge is only partially true. Zeus does support Hektor (11.186–209); but only insofar as keeping his promise to Thetis (13.347–50). Odysseus and Diomedes speak out against this plan, and the narrator cleverly uses this dialogue of long speeches to re-orient its audience to these characters after over two hours of performance without them: Diomedes left the battlefield at 11.400; Odysseus at 11.488.

Diomedes suggests that they return to battle even wounded as they are, and the men agree (14.110–34). Poseidon, too, re-emerges here as an Achaian ally. The narrative reintroduces Poseidon as ‘not having a blind-watch,’ a callback to the beginning of Book 13, and a reminder to the audience that Zeus, in contrast, is *not* watching now (οὐδ’ ἀλαοσκοπιὴν εἶχε, 14.135; cf. 13.10). Poseidon also again disguises himself as an old man (cf. 13.355–7, 13.45, 13.216). He tells Agamemnon that Achilles must be happy with how things are going, but curses him (14.139–42) before reassuring Agamemnon that he will see the Trojans running away over the plain (14.144–6), creating audience expectation for a future Trojan rout.¹⁴⁰ Poseidon follows this speech with a huge battle-cry that throws strength into every Achaian’s heart to keep fighting (14.147–52). So the scene ends with one problem posed and resolved: the Achaians are on their back feet, and now the injured Achaian leaders will return to the fight as their reinforcements.

Hera: 14.153–360

The narrative switches audience alignment to Hera in the next beat, giving the audience access to her happiness when she sees Poseidon on the battlefield (14.153–6). This points back to Poseidon’s involvement through these last battle sequences as well as to Zeus’s earlier proclamation banning the gods’ interventions in the war (8.1–27). She then looks to Zeus, sitting on the peaks of Mount Ida (cf. 13.1–9), whom she thinks ‘hateful’ (στυγερός, 14.158). Along with these emotional responses, the narrator also provides access to her plot to keep Zeus unaware of Poseidon’s interventions in the war: she will seduce Zeus, so that he will sleep (14.159–360). This access creates audience anticipation for the next beat sequence, which follows Hera as she executes this plot to keep Zeus’s assistance to the Trojans in check a while longer.

The beats that make up the seduction sequence echo beats from previous episodes: Hera ‘arms’ herself to prepare to seduce Zeus (14.166–223; cf. 11.17–44);¹⁴¹ an oath is taken between Hera and Sleep (14.270–9; cf. 3.375–94); Zeus even manages a catalogue, of his old lovers (14.317–27; cf. 2.487–760). All of these scenes are callbacks that can give the audience pleasure, as they recognize them in new contexts, remembering their standard narrative uses within the context of the *Iliad* while delighting in the narrator’s change of direction here.¹⁴² Serial television often engages in this strategy, relying on recontextualizing schema in its ‘callbacks’ to the delight of long-term audience members;¹⁴³ these can also be ‘ironic echoes’ or ‘internal homages.’¹⁴⁴ *Breaking Bad* (AMC, 2008–

13) particularly engaged in this strategy, in part to emphasize the extraordinary shift in Walter White's character over the course of the series.¹⁴⁵

While Hera's mission includes these kinds of callbacks, her sub-plot also moves the main plot forward, as Zeus's falling asleep means that Poseidon is freer to help the Achaians even more. The sequence ends by following Sleep back to the battlefield to urge Poseidon on in his aiding the Achaians (14.352–60), bringing back Poseidon's central role in the battle sequences of Book 13.¹⁴⁶ And as Poseidon exhorts the Achaians, he brings our attention once more to Hektor.

Hektor/Aias: 14.361–439

There has been about a half hour of performance time (and a likely break) since Hektor was last seen in action (13.834), and over twenty minutes since last anyone mentioned him (Agamemnon, back at 14.44). These long absences of Hektor's fit into the *Iliad's* serial narrative strategy of keeping audience investments diffuse across many characters while building up to the main events that the epic has pointed to: Patroklos's death, Achilles' return to battle, and Hektor's death. So the narrative always holds Hektor at arm's length away from us, then brings him close for just moments, and then pushes him back away, until his death-day comes. Otherwise, this would not be an epic, it would be a tragedy. The *Iliad* is no tragedy.¹⁴⁷

After this absence, Poseidon's exhortation reintroduces Hektor with his name and his role as Priam's son (14.364f.). He repeats Hektor's goal to take the ships while Achilles remains off the battlefield (14.365–7; cf. 8.173–83). But Poseidon says the Achaians can manage without Achilles and that he does not think Hektor will be able to stand up against them for long, even though he is very eager (14.368–75). Idomeneus said something similar about Hektor in the last episode, confident enough to leave the Aiantes to fight Hektor (13.315–27; μάλα περ μεμᾶῶτα at 14.375 = 13.317). Poseidon's speech sets up the possibility of Hektor's failure against the Achaians in the next battle sequence.

As the audience's alignment switches to the Achaians, the narrator reiterates that the wounded Diomedes, Odysseus, and Agamemnon are now marshalling their men; this re-naming encourages investment in the Achaian heroes as they move into battle (14.379f.). The narrative then switches sides so that the audience aligns with Hektor ordering the Trojans (14.388); then the narrative zooms out to show both Poseidon and Hektor as 'helpers' to their sides (ἀρήγων, 14.391).

This sets up a strange parallel considering that Poseidon is a god, Hektor just a mortal.¹⁴⁸ So the fight seems set, between Diomedes, Odysseus, Agamemnon, and Poseidon on one side, and Hektor on the other.

Suddenly, the narrative reintroduces Aias into the fray (last seen at 13.824, around a half hour ago without breaks), starting a new line with his name as the indirect object as Hektor makes his spear-cast against him (14.402–5). While the past several scenes have been carefully building up to a new battle sequence, and a showdown between the returning Achaians or Poseidon and Hektor, this picks up instead on the dangling end of Book 13, and provides the combat between Aias and Hektor here that their speech exchange suggested last ‘episode’ (13.810–32).

The narrative follows Hektor’s thrown spear as it strikes at Aias’s chest but does not pierce the skin, protected as it is by two broad straps (14.402–6). Hektor, discouraged, goes to run back to his companions to avoid death (14.406–8), but Aias strikes him with a stone (14.409–20). The narrative describes the stone as one of those ‘holders of the ships’ (ἔχματα νηῶν, 14.410), a reminder of how close this fighting is to the Achaian ships, but also a telling note about the size of the stone. The blow downs Hektor, like an oak struck by Zeus’s lightning (14.414–17),¹⁴⁹ perhaps an oblique reference to Zeus’s now-lacking support. But the narrator lists a mini-catalogue of the Trojans who rush to his aid (Aineias, Poulydamas, Agenor, Sarpedon, and Glaukos, 14.424–6), many of whom we have not seen since a previous ‘episode’. The narrator introduced *only* Hektor of all the Trojans before the fight; now it foregrounds these other fighters in anticipation of this injury keeping Hektor off the field.

The men all protect Hektor on the battlefield – not just those named, but every one of his men (14.427). This extraordinary response in Hektor’s vulnerable moment builds further allegiance to Hektor, because these men have such care for him. Hektor’s men work to get him off the field, bundling him into a chariot and taking him to rest beside the river Xanthos. There, Hektor’s eyes clear for a moment, but he vomits up a blood clot, and the darkness mists once more over his eyes,¹⁵⁰ his strength still spent (14.433–9). This emphasis on the seriousness of the wound not only builds up *pathos* for Hektor, but it also gives the narrator sufficient justification to remove Hektor from the battlefield for a substantial amount of time, prolonging our anticipation for his eventual confrontations with Patroklos and Achilles (predicted at 8.470–5). The Achaians see Hektor’s withdrawal and rally (14.440f.).¹⁵¹ So the argument of Hektor’s success or failure implicit in Poseidon’s earlier speech resolves (14.374f.), as Hektor *cannot* hold the line.

Battle: 14.440–507

The Argives regain their lust for battle and the battle sequence begins, where the narrative rapidly switches audience alignment between sides, following a perception/emotion response to a death or a vaunt over a death that prompts a retaliatory strike that often misses its original target.¹⁵² Oïlean Aias kills Satnios (14.443–8), and Poulydamas kills Prothoënor and vaunts (14.449–57); the Argives are sad at his vaunting (14.458), especially Telamonian Aias, who aims at Poulydamas but hits Archelochos (14.459–69); Aias vaunts (14.469–74; the Trojans feel sorrow at his vaunting (14.475), Akamas stabs Promachos (14.476f.), vaunts; the Argives grieve over his vaunting (14.486), Peneleos charges Akamas but kills Ilioneus and vaunts (14.489–500).¹⁵³ Finally, the narrative zooms out to show all men trying to escape death (ἔκαστος ὅπη φύγοι αἰπὺν ὄλεθρον, 14.507). This scene, with its flurry of back and forth between the Achaians and the Trojans – five deaths in less than five minutes – serves Hektor well as an emphasis on the vacuum that his absence creates on the battlefield.

When Zeus wakes: 14.508–15.86

When the narrative pauses to ask the Muses to tell him whom the Achaians killed with Poseidon's help (14.508–10), this signals a shift in the pattern: no more back and forth, no more 'every man wanted to escape'. Now the narrator strongly aligns the audience with the Achaian side. And now the deaths come even faster: Telamonian Aias kills Hyrtios (14.511f.); Antilochos kills Phalkes and Mermeros (14.513); Meriones, Morys and Hippotion (14.513); Teukros, Periphetes and Prothoön (14.515); Menelaos, Hyperenor (14.516–19). And Oïlean Aias killed the most (πλείστους δ' Αἴας εἶλεν Ὀϊλῆος, 14.520), since he was fast going after the men that Zeus terrified (14.520–2). That comes to eight named deaths in eleven lines, under one minute of performance time. The whole battle sequence is terribly familiar in its components, but the narrative condenses it this time round, to avoid too much repetition.¹⁵⁴ The last great battle sequence from Book 13 took close to twenty-five minutes of performance time (13.330–673); this one takes just six.

This kill list ends with the narrator aligning the audience with Oïlean Aias, who kills the most men, 'since there was no one like him, with his feet, to chase after/ running men, when Zeus urged them to flight' (οὐ γάρ οἱ τις ὁμοῖος ἐπισπένσθαι ποσὶν ἦεν/ ἀνδρῶν τρεσσάντων, ὅτε τε Ζεὺς ἐν φόβον ὄρσῃ, 14.521f.). This mention of Zeus invites audience engagement, asking if they

remember that Zeus was sleeping last time we saw him (14.359, just over ten minutes ago), all part of Hera's plan. The mention does, also, though, anticipate his waking from his slumber, and his future involvement in the battle:¹⁵⁵ he will, in fact, wake up in the very next beat.¹⁵⁶

The transition from Book 14 to Book 15 presents some ambiguity as to whether or not it would allow for a performance break, as the action is continuous and the narrative does not mention the fleeing Trojans by name on either side of any possible break.¹⁵⁷ It is more likely that a break could come just before the last list of Achaian kills, with the invocation of the Muses (14.508): this would assert Achaian dominance in the wake of Zeus's non-intervention, and would so present the problem developed in the last beat sequence for Zeus's waking up to respond to. Likewise, Zeus's waking up and his subsequent intervention provide ample opportunities for recapping the events of the previous 'episode'. Zeus's returned attention to the Trojan conflict will also finally push the plot forward after the narrative has maintained a wonderfully character-rich 'stalemate' for close to two hours of performance time.

So now the Trojans make it back over the Achaian ditch (unnamed, so in continuous action, fleeing from Oïlean Aias at 14.521f.), but 'many' were beaten down at the hands of the Danaans (15.1–4); this fulfils Poulydamas's implied warning from before the Trojan attack on the wall and his bird-sign interpretation (12.70–4; 12.216–27). As they pull up their chariots on the other side of the ditch, terrified, Zeus wakes up. The narrator aligns the audience with Zeus as his perceptions recap the end of the last 'episode': he *sees* the Achaians driving forward with Poseidon, sees the Trojans running away (ἴδε, 15.6–8). And then, he *sees* Hektor lying on the plain, surrounded by his companions (Ἑκτορα δ' ἐν πεδίῳ ἴδε κείμενον, ἀμφὶ δ' ἑταῖροι/ εἵαθ', 15.9f.; cf. 14.424–39). The fact that Hektor's companions remain around him as he lies injured adds to Zeus's pity response, which the narrative provides access to (τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ἐλέησε, 15.12). Again, Hektor is refracted through the characters around him and their care for him demands that the audience question their own allegiance to the fallen man (cf. 14.424–32).

The narrator then gives the audience access to Zeus's pity for Hektor, which is matched by his anger for Hera: he recaps her deception that allowed Hektor to suffer this way (15.14f. and 15.31–3 recaps 14.161–353) before violently threatening her and reminding her of past punishments (15.16–30). If Zeus's pity invites an audience to question their own feelings for Hektor, so does this anger: it constructs Hektor as someone who should be not just protected, but avenged. Hera swears that she has not been helping Poseidon against Hektor and the Trojans (15.36–46). Hera's oath asks audience members to try to remember

what really happened in the previous ‘episode’: while Sleep does tell Poseidon about their plot (14.353–60), and Poseidon does help the Achaians all the more for it (14.361f.), there is no direct evidence that Hera ordered Sleep to urge Poseidon on.¹⁵⁸ So Hera swears true and even offers to tell Poseidon to get in line (15.45f.). This offer wins Zeus over (15.49–2).

Zeus’s response to Hera once again maps out future narrative events,¹⁵⁹ this time with much more detail than in Book 8, now over five hours ago in performance time (8.473–6). If Hera has told the truth, Zeus says, then she should go and order Iris to tell Poseidon to stop his help for the Achaians (15.49–62) and tell Apollo to help Hektor with his injury (15.59–62). This mission builds audience anticipation for events in the next beats. But Zeus also uses this speech to elaborate on his earlier prophecy as he lays out events still to come in the epic: Hektor, with Apollo’s help, will drive the Trojans up to the ships of Achilles (15.59–64), then Patroklos will kill many (15.66), including Sarpedon (15.67),¹⁶⁰ until Hektor kills Patroklos (15.65), and then, angry over Patroklos, Achilles will kill Hektor (15.68).¹⁶¹ Then the battle will always head away from the ships until Troy itself falls (15.69–71). With this foretold, Zeus ends his speech reiterating that he will keep all the gods away from helping the Achaians, until he fulfils his promise to Thetis (15.73–5 recaps 1.518–30). This beat predicting Hektor’s death, following immediately the beat where Zeus sees and pities the wounded Hektor, compounds any audience allegiance for the Trojan hero.

Other gods: 15.87–149

The audience remains attached to Hera as she return to Olympos with her mission to find Apollo and Iris. Here again, the epic’s melodramatic alignment structure comes into play, in the gap between what she knows, what the audience knows, and what the other gods know. After she complains to Themis about Zeus sending evils against all the gods (15.104–9), Hera announces the death of Ares’ son Askalaphos (15.110–2). This terrifically manipulative move by Hera recaps Deïphobos killing Askalaphos (13.516–20), where the narrator had emphasized Ares’ ignorance of his son’s death (13.521–5). That was almost seventy minutes ago of performance time (without breaks). Ares naturally wants to return to the battlefield to avenge his son (15.115–18), and nearly does, but Athena prevents him (15.119–42). Athena reassures him with the terrible truth: some other man, better than Askalaphos, has died since his death, or will soon die (15.139f.). ‘It’s hard to save the race of men, and their offspring’ (ἀργαλέον δὲ/ πάντων

ἀνθρώπων ῥῦσθαι γενεὴν τε τόκον τε. 15.140f.). So Ares' action goes nowhere, but the beat importantly shows the investment of the gods in individual heroes on the battlefield, building on earlier beats that showed Zeus's strong feelings for the wounded Hektor (15.12f.), and his foretelling the death of his own son Sarpedon (15.67). It also shows the limits of that investment, playing on the previous scene's truth that as much as Zeus might feel for his son, or for Hektor, he will still watch them die to fulfil his promise to another god (15.49–77). After this exchange, Hera completes the mission that Zeus set for her, pulling Iris and Apollo aside to send them to find Zeus on Mount Ida, resolving one 'mission' while putting another in motion (15.143–9).

Apollo/Hektor: 15.150–270

The narrative aligns the audience with Iris and Apollo as they go to Mount Ida to find Zeus, but each then gets their own beat sequence in which Zeus gives them their orders and they carry them out: Zeus is happy to see them because they obeyed his wife, recapping two scenes prior (15.155f.). First, Zeus sends Iris to stop Poseidon from helping the Achaians, which he reluctantly agrees to do on the condition that Troy still fall (15.157–217). After this, Zeus orders Apollo to support Hektor against the Achaians.¹⁶² This recaps and further elaborates what we have seen in the previous scenes, as Zeus tells Apollo to take care of Hektor and give him battle-fury, at least until the Achaians run away to their ships (15.231–3). Then Zeus will decide what to do next, and give new orders (15.234f.). This looks forward to a resurgent Hektor, but leaves some ambiguity as to how long his resurgence will last: when will the Trojans finally reach the ships? Zeus does not tell Apollo that Hektor will die. Does Apollo know?

The narrative keeps the audience attached to Apollo as he goes down to Hektor. The narrative has kept audience alignment with the gods through these last several beats: Hektor has only been spoken of as a pawn in their plans. But now the narrative attaches the audience to Hektor once again (15.239–42). The scene paints a perfect picture of continuity since the narrator left the wounded Hektor: now he sits, 'no longer' lying down (οὐδ' ἔτι, 15.240; cf. 14.436–9). While the audience has been elsewhere, Hektor has begun to recover. Apollo asks him why he sits apart from the others (15.243–5), providing Hektor with opportunity to recap his injury from Book 14 in his own terms. Like Achilles' recap to Thetis in Book 1, Hektor's recap here might contain a bit of metapoetic humour, as he recognizes Apollo as a god, and asks him 'don't you know?' (οὐκ αἶεις, 15.248).

The god *should* know; the audience certainly does. Then Hektor recaps Aias hitting him with the stone by the ships (15.248–50 recapping 14.409–20). But the narrator gives the audience access to Hektor here, too, as he tells Apollo that he thought that today he was joining the halls of the dead (15.251f.). That Hektor himself thought that he would die confirms the narrative's description of the gravity of his injuries (14.411–39), and in coming into line with what a seemingly reliable narrator has said, Hektor shows himself a realist. But at the same time, the narrative uses that terrible gap between what Hektor knows and what the audience knows: everyone has heard Zeus predict Hektor's death (15.68), so to see Hektor, so relieved to have come so close to death and to have escaped, creates a dreadful irony.¹⁶³ That irony only continues as Apollo reveals himself to Hektor as 'such a helper sent from Zeus on Mount Ida to stand by and defend' Hektor (τοῖόν τοι ἄοσητήρα Κρονίων/ ἔξ' Ἰδης προέηκε παρεστάμεναι καὶ ἄμυνεῖν, 15.254f., 15.254–7 recaps 15.221–35);¹⁶⁴ Apollo cannot, and will not, protect Hektor forever. But for now, Apollo looks to the next beat, and tells Hektor to drive the horses against the Achaian ships and that he will smooth the way (15.258–61). So Hektor returns to battle, full of great battle-fury from Apollo, prancing like a stallion the same way that Paris did making his way back to battle through the streets of Troy (15.263–8 = 6.506–11).

Battle again: 15.271–389

Just as with Hektor, the narrative creates the illusion of continuity for the Achaian troops, as 'up until then they were always' in a crowd stabbing the Trojans (15.277f.), but when they see Hektor, they become terrified (15.279f.). As the battle begins, the narrative uses the techniques now expected in a battle sequence, and any recognition of these patterns on the audience's part can provide some pleasure. The narrative identifies and attaches the audience to multiple active characters within the battle as it rapidly switches audience alignment between the two sides.

Audience alignment starts with Thoas, who recaps Hektor's injury again (15.286–9 recapping 14.409–39): much like Hektor himself, Thoas says that he thought Aias had killed Hektor (15.286–9; cf. 15.251f.). Thoas recognizes that the gods have restored Hektor but, like others before him, feels sure that the Achaians can rally and keep Hektor off the ships (15.295–9; cf. Idomeneus at 13.315–20, Aias at 14.374–7). Again the narrative uses the gap between Thoas's knowledge and audience knowledge to stoke interest, as Zeus has said that Hektor will reach

the ships (8.473–6, 15.231–3). This ambiguity keeps the audience engaged around the issue of what exactly will happen when Hektor arrives at the ships.

The narrator lists another mini-catalogue to signal to the audience which main Achaian characters will feature in this battle sequence: Aias, Idomeneus, Teukros, Meriones, Meges (15.301–3). These are the men who will face Hektor and the Trojans (15.304). The narrative then switches audience alignment to Hektor and Apollo with the aegis (15.306–11), before switching back to the Achaians (15.312), and then the battle begins (15.313–19). Only Apollo, staring into the eyes of the Achaians, jolts the narrative out of balance, swinging it in the Trojans' favour (15.320–7). The narrative gives a catalogue of Trojan kills; starting with Hektor first, who kills Stichios and Arkesilaos; then Aineias kills Medon and Iasos; then Poulydamas, Mekisteus; Polites, Echios; Agenor, Klonios; Paris comes last, killing Deïchos as he runs away (15.331–42). These deaths come faster than ever: eight deaths in less than a minute. The narrator knows that by now, his audience recognizes these patterns, and he is careful not to weary them.

As the Trojans strip bodies, the Achaians run across the ditch (15.343–5). In a callback to an earlier battle sequence, Hektor tells the Trojans to leave the bodies be as they run for the ships (15.347; cf. Nestor at 6.67–71), and then he threatens death for any man who flees, and that he will leave that man's body to the dogs (15.348–51, cf. Agamemnon at 2.391–3). A traditional audience, or an audience that would at least be familiar with the treatment that Hektor's own corpse will receive from Achilles, will sense this narrative irony around Hektor and the treatment of corpses.¹⁶⁵

Hektor's exhortation works, and the next beat keeps the audience attached to the Trojans as they successfully overrun the Achaian battlements again with the help of Apollo (15.352–66).¹⁶⁶ The narrator especially aligns the audience with Apollo, saying his name twice in this short passage (15.355, 15.360), before addressing him directly (15.365), bringing us closer to Apollo.¹⁶⁷ The next beat sees the audience's alignment switch to the Achaians and Nestor, who prays to Zeus to save the Achaians from the Trojan advance (15.370–6), and Zeus thunders, 'hearing Nestor's prayer' (15.378). The Trojans hear it too, and both sides fight all the harder for it (15.379–89).

Patroklos: 15.390–405

In this chaos, the narrator cuts back to Patroklos, who has been treating Eurypylos in his tent while the Trojans have been overrunning the Achaians

(15.390–4). This recaps where the narrator last left Patroklos, back at 11.847, about two and a half hours ago, and creates a strong sense of Patroklos's character continuity for the audience. The space that Patroklos is in, the fact that he is with Eurypylos, and that he is still applying medicines to the other man's wounds all provide memory cues for the audience. But when Patroklos realizes that the Trojans are near the ships, he tells Eurypylos he must leave him behind to find Achilles and persuade him to return to the fight (15.399–404), reasserting and resuming his previously side-tracked mission that Nestor sent him on before he encountered Eurypylos (11.791–3; 15.403f.=11.792f.). That mission gains new meaning so soon after Zeus's prediction of Patroklos's death (15.65), especially if the audience remembers that Nestor also suggested Patroklos himself enter battle (11.795–802). Now, wheels are in motion to start hitting those signposts of future events that have been laid out in previous episodes.

Hektor/Aias: 15.406–591

With Patroklos running back to Achilles, the narrator switches scenes back to the battlefield, where he once again begins to rapidly change audience alignment between sides and characters. The narrator tells us again that other groups are fighting elsewhere, giving the impression of a vast battle that he can only show us one small part of (15.414 = 12.175). The first characters that the narrative zooms in on are Hektor and Aias, still in stalemate: Aias cannot drive Hektor off his ship, with Apollo helping him, but Hektor cannot take the ship either (15.414–9). Aias strikes Hektor with his spear (15.419–21). The narrative switches audience alignment to Hektor, who sees Hektor fall, and the narrator says that Hektor and Hektor are cousins: this builds audience anticipation for Hektor to respond and builds greater emotional impact for that response (15.422–4). Hektor rallies his men to stand their ground and to protect Hektor's fallen body (15.425–8).

As Hektor finishes his speech, the scene switches audience alignment again, following his spear-cast at Aias, which misses, but strikes Lykophron instead. The narrative gives the audience access to Aias as he shudders at the sight of Lykophron falling, and turns to Teukros. Aias's speech explains his grief response – Lykophron was his companion – and recaps Hektor's killing him, while implicitly urging Teukros to try to strike Hektor (15.437–41 recaps 15.433f.). So the structure of this scene is quite similar to the last in that a man falls, a relation

sees and responds by exhorting another.¹⁶⁸ But they are done quite differently, with Hektor's response both more private (he does not reveal his relationship to Kaletor) and public (he exhorts all of the men) than Aias's response.

The next beat sequence shows the impact and irony of Zeus's helping Hektor now that he is back in the action. First the narrative shows Teukros hitting the Trojan Kleitos, Poulydamas's companion, and Poulydamas must then save his horses (15.445–52). Then Teukros tries for Hektor with his bow. In a contrafactual, the narrator says that *without* Zeus's 'guarding Hektor', Teukros would have hit him and ended the fighting by the Achaian ships (15.459–62); then the narrative shows Zeus breaking the bow (15.463–5); finally, Teukros himself blames a god for the bow's breaking, when he complains to Aias (15.466–70). Aias confirms that a god has broken Teukros's bow, and tells him to get his spear and shield and keep fighting (15.471–7). So Teukros goes to get a spear (15.478–83).

Hektor sees Teukros's bow and arrow fail (15.484f.) and draws attention to Zeus's help against Teukros, and support for the Trojans in his exhortation to his men (15.486–93). This strong emphasis on Zeus's intervention creates irony in the gap between the audience's knowledge and Hektor's, as the audience knows that Zeus's help will end in Hektor's death (15.63–8). This makes the rest of Hektor's speech especially painful as he talks of battle death to his men:¹⁶⁹

ἀλλὰ μάχεσθ' ἐπὶ νηυσὶν ἀολλέες, ὃς δέ κεν ὑμέων
βλήμενος ἢ τυπεὶς θάνατον καὶ πότμον ἐπίσπῃ
τεθνάτω· οὐ οἱ ἀεικὲς ἀμυνομένῳ περὶ πάτρης
τεθνάμεν· ἀλλ' ἄλοχός τε σόῃ καὶ παῖδες ὀπίσσω,
καὶ οἶκος καὶ κλῆρος ἀκήρατος, εἴ κεν Ἀχαιοὶ
οἴχωνται σὺν νηυσὶ φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν.

'So let's fight together round the ships and any one of us who
finds death and destiny through some throw or strike,
let him die because it's fitting for one defending his fatherland
to die. But after, your wife and your children
and your house and your land will stay untouched, if the
Achaians leave with their ships for their fatherland.'

Hektor to Trojans, 15.494–9

In justifying the deaths of his own men in Troy's defence, Hektor unwittingly justifies his own impending death. More, the audience knows that none of these men's deaths will save their wives, or their children, or their city. Troy will burn to the ground. Hektor himself predicted the fall of Troy, and the capture of their

wives (6.446–65): this makes his speech all the more painful to hear now. Hektor's rhetoric here is the highest that we have seen, painting a struggle that goes beyond any of their individual lives on the battlefield, as anyone's death might mean that their families, their community can continue. Hektor's speech raises the stakes and plays with irony in ways that creates more audience anticipation as the battle continues. The narrative reinforces these higher stakes when it switches the audience's alignment to show Aias's exhortation to the Achaians.¹⁷⁰ Aias is more direct: he tells his men that they must choose to either live or die because if their ships fall to Hektor no one will escape alive (15.502–13). In both men's exhortations, just as in Zeus's plan, just as in the narrative as a whole now, death looms in the foreground.

The action in the next scene reinforces the stakes on both sides as it flips back and forth between them. Hektor and Aias are respectively first of their sides to get their men (15.515–7). Poulydamas kills Otos, Meges' companion (15.518f.); in response, Meges kills Kroismos (15.520–3), and Dolops and Menelaos kill Meges (15.524–43). Hektor responds by shaming Melanippos for letting the Achaians strip Dolops's body (15.545–58). Here Hektor changes the choice that he put before the Trojans just a few minutes earlier, from 'die and save your city' to: 'either we'll kill them or they'll sack Troy from the top down and kill its citizens' (πρίν γ' ἢ κατακτάμεν ἢ κατ' ἄκρης/ἴλιον αἰπεινὴν ἐλέειν κτάσθαι τε πολίτας, 15.557f.).¹⁷¹ This echoes Hektor's panic in the battle sequence in Book 13, where he told Paris that all of Troy will be destroyed from the top down (κατ' ἄκρης/ἴλιον αἰπεινὴν 13.772f. = 15.557f.); but the context here shows Hektor's determination, and the narrative confirms that 'he led them' (15.560). Hektor's 'kill or be killed' also picks up on Aias's own exhortation just a few minutes earlier (15.502–13).

So now once again the narrative switches the audience's alignment to Aias, who shames his men and urges them to cooperate in battle so that more of them might live (15.561–4): a constructive suggestion that looks back to Hektor's first speech (the many before the one). As the Achaians pull together, Zeus sends the Trojans against them again (15.567). But seeming to heed Aias's advice, Menelaos urges Antilochos to rush forward to attack the Trojans (15.568–71); Antilochos runs and kills Melanippos, rushing against him to strip his armour. Here the narrator addresses Melanippos's corpse (ἐπὶ σοὶ Μελάνιππε, 15.582) as Antilochos charges the body to strip it (15.582–4).¹⁷² The narrator tells Melanippos that Hektor has not forgotten him, and Hektor rushes in, sending Antilochos flying back to his companions (15.585–91). This is a marvellous manoeuvre of attachment, as the narrator very closely aligns the audience with

the fallen Melanippos through this sequence, to construct the feeling of Hektor saving the day that much more strongly.

Overhaul: 15.592–746

As the Trojans and Hektor race after the fleeing Achaians, fulfilling Zeus's plan (15.92f.), the narrative switches audience alignment to Zeus, who keeps rousing great battle-fury in the Trojans, while bewildering the Achaians and stealing their glory (15.594f.). The narrative provides the audience access to Zeus that recaps his intentions: he wants to honour Hektor until he sets a ship on fire, so Zeus can fulfil his promise to Thetis, but then he will drive the Trojans back and give the Achaians the glory (15.596–602 recaps 15.59–77; cf. 1.523–7). So Zeus drives on Hektor, who changes under Zeus's influence. The audience has seen Hektor very eager to fight on his own (15.604; cf. 13.317, 14.375). But now, with Zeus driving him, Hektor rages, his mouth starts to foam, his eyes flash and his helmet thunders with his raging (15.605–9). The narrative overhauls Hektor with these intense external, visual markers.¹⁷³ As Hektor becomes something different before our eyes, the narrator says that Zeus honours Hektor alone because he will soon die (*μυνυθᾶδιος*, 15.612),¹⁷⁴ emphasizing the special relationship between Zeus and Hektor that prior beat sequences set up (cf. 11.163f., 11.185–94, 15.4–12). At the same time, the narrator shows the audience the terrible irony of Hektor's last successes. The narrator here elaborates on prior knowledge that Hektor will die at the Achaians' hands (8.358f.), specifically Achilles' (15.68), and now adds Athena as Hektor's killer, too (15.613f.).

Through the next beat sequence, the narrative continues the back-and-forth between Hektor and Aias: even in his fullest glory, Hektor cannot completely beat back the great Achaian defender. And just as the narrator has raised the stakes through these two characters' speeches – both men adamantly exhorting their men that the war's outcome depends on this day's fighting – the narrative uses densely layered techniques to heighten the tension. Here, as Hektor rushes against the Achaian ships, the narrator describes him with a rapid series of extended similes. First, the Achaians are like towering cliffs holding up against the raging seas and wind (15.617–21); then Hektor is lit all round with fire (15.623); he is like a squall blowing against a ship at sea (15.623–8; cf. 11.296–8, 11.305–10, 12.40); finally, he is like a ravenous lion among a herd of oxen (15.630–6, cf. 15.592). But after all this, Hektor kills only one man: Periphetes, who trips and falls before him because Hektor gets the greater glory

(15.645–52).¹⁷⁵ The Achaians cannot help Periphetes because they are terrified of Hektor (αὐτοὶ γὰρ μάλα δέιδισαν Ἑκτορα δῖον, 15.652).

The narrative keeps the audience aligned with the Argives as they retreat back to their shelters. Here, Nestor supplicates each man, with a poignant appeal for men to remember their families and their property (15.661–6); this is a callback to Hektor's own appeal to his men, whose city is under siege (15.496–9). But Nestor's speech has its own irony as his men's families and property are not under siege, but absent (οὐ παρεόντων, 15.665). Seemingly in response to Nestor's appeal, Athena pushes the darkness from the men's eyes, and they point out Hektor, with his great war-cry (15.671f.; cf. 13.123) and his companions, re-establishing recognition for his character.

After this recognition, the narrative aligns the audience with Aias as he strides forward with a huge pike, significantly twice as long as Hektor's already twice-described long spear (15.678; cf. 6.319, 8.494). So Aias rallies the Achaians to the ships' defence, while Hektor keeps attacking like an eagle into a flock of birds (15.690–2), pushed always by Zeus's large hand (15.694f.). Zeus's direct intervention here once again reinforces his close connection with Hektor through this last battle sequence, supporting him though he is soon to die (15.612; cf. 11.163–5, 15.59–68).

The narrator makes a rare aside as it zooms out from the action, using a second person verb, 'you would think/say' (φαίης, 15.697),¹⁷⁶ when describing the tirelessness of the men facing off against each other in battle, inviting the audience to think of themselves *as* narrators in imagining these men, for a brief moment (15.697f.). Then the narrator gives the audience access into the motivations of both sides, recapping information from past scenes and building anticipation: the Achaians think they cannot escape from this terror, but must die (15.699f.); the Trojans hope to set fire to the ships and to kill the Achaian heroes (15.701f.). These stacked techniques for creating vividness and connection to the audience through apostrophe and access to the mind-states of those characters on the battlefield perfectly sets up the climax of the battle sequence, as in the very next line, Hektor grabs hold of the prow of a sea-faring ship (15.704). The ship is not just any ship, but that of Protesilaos, the cleverly named first Achaian to die on the shore of Troy (2.695–709), bringing a whole traditional history into this important moment.¹⁷⁷

As the scene unfolds, the narrator uses temporal adverbs ('not yet') to force us to think of the stalemate that has held the centre of the battle for so long, primarily around Aias and Hektor, but hosting a whole slew of secondary characters;¹⁷⁸ it has been around two and a half hours of performance time

(without breaks) since Hektor first broke through the gates of the Achaian ramparts back at 12.465f. Throughout this battle sequence, the narrative has consistently succeeded in raising the stakes for both sides, focusing the concerns of each side through Hektor and Aias, respectively. And while it has been several hours since Zeus first granted Hektor the glory (in the scenes between 11.186–290, close to four hours ago), the narrative has masterfully suspended Zeus's fulfilment of that promise.

Stuck in the middle with you

In these middle books, many things happen, but few things change. Through these middle books, and long battle sequences, the *Iliad's* melodramatic alignment structure allows the narrative to stretch in almost every direction but forwards. From one point of view, nothing at all has happened in these last seven or more hours of performance time. They started with a draw between Hektor and Aias; they end the same way. They start with the Trojans fighting nearer the ships than ever before; they end the same way. A wall is built, and breached. Achilles remains, as ever, apart. But the world and all its characters have become so much the richer for this time spent in it, and with them.

Hektor remains through these books much more at the forefront of battle than he was before his trip to Troy, but he still weaves in and out of the narrative: there is true narrative strategy in building investment in him before unleashing him on the battlefield. Once Hektor is on the field, the narrative provides many new perspectives on the Trojan hero, from companions (like Poulydamas), enemies (like Aias or Idomeneus) and from the gods themselves (like Poseidon). Yet at the intersection of all these perspectives, Hektor remains elusive: the narrator constantly plays with his recognition, alignment, and allegiance that the epic's early books worked so hard to construct. The narrator overhauls Hektor many times, portrays him as a mad man (13.53), a rabid dog (8.299), Gorgon-eyed (8.348f.), a slatherer (15.605–9), a night-faced force like fire (12.463–6). But through these sequences the audience also sees shows his vulnerabilities and his concerns: he is injured so badly that he nearly dies (14.409–39), and on different occasions the audience can see how much his men and his people care for him, and what his men and city, in turn, mean to him.

This 'middle' also provides its audience with a map towards Hektor's death. Of course the traditional audience will have already known that Hektor dies, and a practised audience might have guessed it from his time in Troy in Book 6. But

through these middle books, from Zeus's first prophecy that Achilles will check Hektor when he reaches the ships (8.470–83) to the narrator's note that Hektor's death-day fast approaches (15.612), now there can be no doubt that Hektor will die. And while that fact does not change *Hektor*, for those who know that Hektor will die, whether it be the narrator, Zeus, or the audience, it changes *us*, in how we think of Hektor. Everything now that he says or does will be judged, at least in part, against the knowledge that he will soon die. It becomes, for better or worse, a part of him.