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Wounding the Gods. Diomedes' Aristeia in Iliad 5 and Homer's Anthropology

Françoise Létoublon

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ΣΤΟ ΟΜΗΡΙΚΟ ΚΑΙ ΑΡΧΑΪΚΟ ΕΠΟΣ

HUMAN AND NON HUMAN
IN HOMERIC AND ARCHAIC EPIC

CENTRE FOR ODYSSEAN STUDIES

HUMAN AND NON HUMAN
IN HOMERIC AND ARCHAIC EPIC

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Editors
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΠΟΥΛΟΣ
ΜΑΧΗ ΠΑΪΖΙ-ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΠΟΥΛΟΥ

ITHACA 2024

ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑΚΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ

ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΟ ΚΑΙ ΜΗ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΝΟ
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του ΙΔ' Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου για την Οδύσσεια
(διαδικτυακά Οκτώβριος 2021-Μάρτιος 2022)

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PRE FACE

During the last years a big discussion has been taking place concerning the meaning and the content of human sciences, their role in education and their impact in modern societies. Part of this discussion seems to be the utility of the study of classical languages, such as Greek and Latin, and the necessity of this teaching in secondary and university education.

As the Homeric Epics have always had an important place in the hard core of this education we thought that it would be interesting to examine the notion of “human”, both literally and metaphorically, in the Homeric poems themselves. That is how we chose the topic of the last International Conference organized by the *Centre for Odyssean Studies* on «Human and Non-Human in Homeric and Archaic Poetry».

We initially thought that this would be another conference as the ones we have been organizing all these years with the generous support of the Municipality of Ithaca. But no, it was not that simple, Covid-19 was there and the Civil Protection would not allow us to organize a live conference in Ithaca as we have always been doing. So, instead, we made a video conference, one year later, which was extremely successful due to the competence and technical support of Panagiota Taktikou and Georges Charitatos, doctoral students of the University of Patras, talented and efficient researchers, to whom we are extremely grateful. Of course such a conference could not be done in three or four days given the hour difference in the participants’ respective countries and their smaller availability during the day time compared to usual conferences. It took us several months to complete sessions of four or five speeches each time; this, however, gave us the chance to meet several times in an academic year, an unexpected pleasure which was not foreseen in the beginning.



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FRANÇOISE LÉTOUBLON

WOUNDING THE GODS
DIOMEDES' ARISTEIA IN *ILIAD* 5 AND HOMER'S
ANTHROPOLOGY

... οὐ ποτε φῦλον ὁμοῖον ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν
χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπων (*Il.* 5. 441-20)

To Jean-Pierre Vernant, whom I did not dare to call “Jipé”

After the clash in book V of the *Iliad* between Diomedes and Aphrodite, Apollo takes charge of preserving Aeneas on the battlefield and asserts in verses 441-2 an irreducible opposition (*οὐ ποτε*) between gods and men – Claude Calame recalled this passage in the previous chapter.

It seems to me possible to bring together the criteria by which the epic traces in this very book, often underestimated, an insurmountable barrier between men and gods, criteria that an anthropological study could adopt as a starting point, to be completed later by some other points taken from other passages:

- Mortality / immortality
- Walking on land / ubiquity of travel and usual sojourn on Olympus
- Food: meat, bread / nectar and ambrosia
- Drink: wine, milk / nectar and ambrosia¹

Warm thanks to Machi and Menelaos, the faithful editors of the Ithaki conferences, be they actual or online, and to Stephen Rojcewicz who constantly revised my English with a kind accuracy.

1. Actually, neither nectar nor ambrosia are mentioned in *Iliad* 5, but we'll see they are underlying the negative mention of gods' food in verse 341. Besides, it is not easy to know whether *nectar* and *ambrosia* are a food or a drink. A scientific study by ZANNI 2008 concludes to a kind of anointment for both. Let me mention DUMÉZIL 1924, ancient as it is, for his comparative mythological study of the link between the ambrosia and immortality.

These criteria not only situate humans in relation to the gods,² but also in relation to animal species,³ deadly like humans, but which do not have the same constraints of movement and food. In particular, wild animals are cannibal-like monsters (especially the Cyclops Polyphemus)⁴ while humans, exceptionally, make anthropophagic wishes (fulfilled in some myths, never in Homer).⁵ This anthropological view of humans seems to form the basis of what can be called Homeric humanism.

The intention of this research is, after situating the passage in its context, to show that the whole of this Iliadic book may appear as an applied anthropological theory that seems all the more necessary since the great commentary by Kirk completely missed the point.⁶ We'll mainly build on a personal rereading of the *Iliad*, as if in the company of Jean-Pierre Vernant's and his master Louis Gernet's œuvres,⁷ completed by some others like Margo Kitts.⁸ The French anthropological school is also still flourishing since Vernant founded the "Centre Louis Gernet".⁹ And of course, many scholars we'll have to mention investigated Homeric epics in an interesting

2. For a general view of gods in Homer, see KEARNS 2004, and the three volumes published as Kernos Supplements (*Les dieux d'Homère. Polythéisme et poésie en Grèce ancienne*, Gabriella PIRONTI & Corinne BONNET dir., Liège, 2017, Kernos Suppl 31 ; *Les dieux d'Homère. II. Anthropomorphismes*, RENAUD GAGNÉ & MIGUEL HERRERO DE JAUREGUI dir., 2019, Kernos Suppl 33 ; *Les dieux d'Homère. III. Attributs onomastiques*, Corinne BONNET & Gabriella PIRONTI dir., 2021. Kernos Suppl 38)

3. Let us recall that Greek language calls animals with a word ζῴιον, ζῴον derived from the root meaning 'to live', 'life' and includes human beings among them, see CHANTRAINE 2009 s.v. βίος and ζῶω, ζῶ.

4. See BAKKER 2013.

5. *Il.* 22.345-7, Achilles' wish, 24.212-4, Hecuba's wish, and βεβρώθοις addressed by Zeus to Hera in 4.35-6, LÉTOUBLON 2015, 32-35

6. KIRK 1990 is himself the author of the volume entailing book 5 as well as the editor of the whole Commentary.

7. Mainly GERNET 1968; VERNANT 1974; VERNANT 1985; VERNANT 1989; VERNANT 1990; VERNANT-MALAMOUD 1986.

8. KITTS 2017. See also ALMAGOR & SKINNER 2013.

9. Apart from the three volumes of *Les dieux d'Homère* mentioned above, see the following collective work: *Anthropologie de l'Antiquité : anciens objets, nouvelles approches*, Pascal PAYEN & Évelyne SCHEID-TISSINIER (eds), Turnhout, 2012.

way from our point of view without mentioning anthropology specifically.

A general point seems obvious, but still needs to be explicitly recalled: Homeric gods are anthropomorphic¹⁰ and appear so through the whole of the *Iliad*: they have a body though more shining than mortals, as VERNANT 1986 shows, they talk and have feelings, love and hate like men, and even more so.¹¹ However, Greek language defines them negatively through the prefix ἀ-, apart from the human characteristic of death: ἀθάνατοι, ἄμβροτοι are both ancient negative adjectives formed with *n- like Latin *immortalis*.¹²

They have a body, and moreover a vulnerable one as we'll see in more detail below, but this body is normally invisible to mortals. They can be seen only if they want to, as Athena will explain to Diomedes, allowing him not only to see herself, but also other gods such as Aphrodite and Ares, and maybe Apollo, through the means of removal of the mist (ἀχλύς) from his eyes.¹³ This question of visibility vs invisibility comes back to the fore in book 5 with the episode of Hades' helmet of invisibility put on by Athena in order not to be seen by Ares in 845:

αὐτὰρ Ἀθήνη
δῶν Ἄϊδος κενέην, μή μιν ἴδοι ὄβριμος Ἄρης.

*But Athene
put on the helm of Death, that stark Ares might not discern her.*¹⁴

10. See particularly VERNANT 1986 and *Les dieux d'Homère, II Anthropomorphismes*, RENAUD GAGNÉ & MIGUEL HERRERO DE JAUREGUI (), Liège, 2019, Kernos Suppl. 33.

11. On gods and language, see LÉTOUBLON 1985.

12. VERNANT 1986, 26-7: « S'ils appartiennent au même univers que les hommes, les dieux forment une race différente: ils sont les *athánatoi*, les non-mortels, les *ámbrotoi*, les non-périssables. Désignation paradoxale puisque, pour les opposer aux humains, elle définit négativement – par une absence, une privation – les êtres dont le corps et la vie possèdent une entière positivité, sans manque ni défaut. Paradoxe instructif dans la mesure où il donne à entendre que, pour penser la vie et le corps divin, les Grecs ont dû, comme référence obligée, partir de ce corps défectueux, de cette vie mortelle dont ils faisaient chaque jour eux-mêmes l'expérience. » See also LORAUX 1986, 352-3.

13. See below 5.127-8 with references.

14. See Kirk's note: "[...] It leads into Athene's unparalleled donning of the cap of Ha-

Both of these passages embody in book 5 the general problem of anthropomorphism, visibility and invisibility of the gods, which we cannot address in the limited frame of this paper otherwise than by referring to scholarship.¹⁵

1. The wobbly opposition between men and gods in Apollo's discourse

In *Iliad* 5, from the beginning of the book, Athena's favor goes to Diomedes¹⁶ who brilliantly attacks the Trojans Dares and his sons and many others, until Aeneas and Pandaros attack him, the latter being killed and the former saved by Aphrodite, whereas Sthenelos grabs hold of Aeneas' precious horses. Diomedes then confronts Aphrodite¹⁷ and hurts her arm, letting *ichôr* flow instead of blood (v.340). The goddess lets her son fall, but Apollo gathers him up and hides him into a cloud, while Iris drives her out of the mêlée into the Olympus. In this context we encounter Apollo's violent apostrophe addressed to Diomedes:¹⁸

*φράζω Τυδείδη καὶ χάζω, μηδὲ θεοῖσιν
ἴσ' ἔθελε φρονέειν, ἐπεὶ οὐ ποτε φῦλον ὁμοῖον*

des, yet another of the exotic details for which this book is famous. Unlike others, *ikhor* for example, this has little to do with the special theme of wounding gods, and departs from the usual divine means of invisibility, namely covering with cloud or mist. The cap of invisibility, a widely diffuse folktale concept, is enshrined in the Perseus myth (cf. Apollodorus 2.4.2), which is especially rich in folktale motifs and devices; but this is naturally its earliest testimony in a Greek context, followed by *Aspis* 227. Its description here obviously draws on the popular etymology of Hades as ἄ-φίδης, the unseen one." Also now GAZIS 2018.

15. See mainly VERNANT 1986, LORAU 1986, BETTINI 2017, GAGNÉ & HERRERO de JAUREGUI 2019, PIRONTI 2019,

16. On the relation between Athena and Diomedes, see TURKELTAUB 2007, who insists on the fact that Diomedes perceives the goddess, whereas "a mist veils mortal eyes that prevents them from distinguishing the divine".

17. PIRENNE-DELFORGE 2004.

18. As SCHEIN 1997 aptly remarks the same Apollo will use words very close to theses against Patrocles in *Il.* 16.707-709: *χάζω διογενὲς Πατρόκλεες· οὐ νύ τοι αἴσα*

*σῶ ὑπὸ δουρὶ πόλιν πέρθαι Τρώων ἀγερώχων,
οὐδ' ὑπ' Ἀχιλλῆος, ὅς περ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων.*

ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπων. (Il. 5. 440-442)

*Take care give back, son of Tydeus, and strive no longer
to make yourself like the gods in mind, since never the same is
the breed of gods, who are immortal, and men who walk upon the
earth.*'¹⁹

The god's words underline a total opposition between gods and men, contrasting ἀθανάτων not with ἄνθρωποι, θνητοί or βρότοι as Homeric language usually does,²⁰ but with the phrase χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπων, which refers –rather emphatically– to the mode of locomotion rather than mortality,²¹ as if the narrator wanted to make fun of Apollo using this phrase. This passage has been striking already for the Ancients since Sappho's fr. 31 seems to echo it in ἴσος θεοῖσιν.²²

Kirk's note *ad loc* remarks the uniqueness of the expression, with

19. The translations are taken from the Chicago Homer, (Richard Lattimore for the *Iliad*, James Huddleston for the *Odyssey*), sometimes with minimal modifications.

20. This phrase is unique in Homer, but there are two examples of a semantical equivalent in the *Odyssey*, 18.137 τοῖος γὰρ νόος ἐστὶν ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων, "For such is the mind of men upon the earth", and 22.414 οὐ τινα γὰρ τίεσκον ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων, "for they honoured none of the men upon the earth": if we add the examples of ἔρπω quoted in the next note, walking on earth is for the Homeric a strong characteristic of mankind. See in modern thinking the importance of *standing up* as a criterium for differentiating monkeys from mankind (for instance ARONS 2007). For χαμαί, see CHANTRAINE 2007, *ad loc.*: it is probably an ancient dative or locative of a feminine no longer existing noun *χαμά, fixed in an adverbial form, in a parallel process to Lat. *humī* / *humus*. Greek also uses the directive form χαμᾶζε. See PURVES 2006, 193: "In Homeric language, humans are differentiated from gods as beings who "walk upon the earth" (5.441–42), and, perhaps unsurprisingly, walking is the one activity that gods have a particular difficulty getting quite right. Commentators have often noted the strangeness of Athena and Hera's "shivering-dove" walk across the plain (5.778–79), and, in Book 13, it is the unusual nature of Poseidon's feet and legs as he walks away from men that reveals him to be a god in human form (13.70–72)."

21. Ἐρχομαι seems there to be the equivalent of Hom. ἔρπω, that is used for designating human beings and animals as "walking on earth" vs. birds flying in the air and fishes swimming in the sea, see Il. 17.447 = Od. 18.131 ὄσσα τε γαῖαν ἐπι πνέει τε καὶ ἔρπει, and HDem. 365 δεσπόσσεις πάντων ὅποσα ζῶει τε καὶ ἔρπει, see LÉTOUBLON 1985, 110-114 and 2015, 24-25. Those passages also show the importance of breathing, not attested in book 5.

22. ENGELMAYER 2017.

the quasi hapax *χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων*,²³ “proceeding from sharp deterrence through the rhetorical assonance of *φράζω ... καὶ χάζω*) to broader prohibition (‘don’t think on a par with gods’) justified by an epigrammatic general rule (‘there is no similarity between the races of gods and men’).” But he does not comment on the fact that the criteria are not homogeneous, making the opposition somehow wobbly as well as emphatic.

Starting from these non-homogeneous criteria, using the method of contrary, we obtain a first short anthropological grid:

<i>ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν</i>	[mortal humans]
[gods who move freely everywhere]	<i>χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ’ ἀνθρώπων</i>

[We put the implicit terms between square brackets.]

As suggests the following passage from book 5, the mountain Olympus is the reserved domain of immortal gods,²⁴ although they also may find themselves on earth and meet with mortals there. But the access to Olympus is absolutely denied to human beings, and Aphrodite may seek shelter there:

*360-1 ὄφρ’ ἐς Ὀλυμπον ἴκωμαι ἴν’ ἀθανάτων ἔδος ἐστί.
λίην ἄχθομαι ἔλκος ὃ με βροτὸς οὔτασεν ἀνήρ*

*so I may come to Olympus which is the place of the immortals,
I am in too much pain from the wound of a mortal’s spear-stroke.*

We actually know at least one mortal who went to Olympus in mythology, Ganymedes, but he was raped by Zeus and made immortal, as it seems, and the solemn way the *Iliad* mentions him in the catalog of Aeneas’ ancestors seems to point to an exception.²⁵ He is also present in the mind of the

23. The adverb occurs 20 times in the *Iliad*, but never else with this verb. Remind that it is etymologically close to the root of Lat. *humus, homo, humanus*.

24. See later in the same book *Ὀλύμπια δώματ’ ἔχοντες* (5.383) and *θεοὺς οἱ Ὀλυμπον ἔχοντες* (5.404).

25. *Il.* 20.232-235 *Ἴλιός τ’ Ἀσάρακός τε καὶ ἀντίθεος Γανυμήδης,*

fighters in book 5 through Tros' horses driven by Aeneas and longed for by Diomedes, who explicitly mentions Ganymedes.²⁶

Therefore a straight complementarity appears between the sojourn of the gods on Olympus and the strictly restricted residence on earth for mankind.

2. Mortals vs Immortals in formulas

In order to better understand the originality of verse 441 and its context, it seems necessary to study the “system” of Homeric formulas alluding to the opposition between gods and men and its ‘economy’, to use Parry’s words and concepts.²⁷ The table shows how Homeric language opposes *θεοί* vs. *ἄνθρωποι*, *θνητοί* and *βροτοί* vs. *ἀθάνατοι*, with formulas more subtle than we presumed. It might appear astonishing that no scholar attempted to address this question, neither Parry²⁸ nor his followers, if my inquiry in Google and Google Scholar is reliable.

1. Θεοί / ἄνθρωποι

- Il.* 1.339 *πρός τε θεῶν μακάρων πρόσ τε θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων*
 1.548 *οὔτε θεῶν πρότερος τὸν εἴσεται οὔτ' ἀνθρώπων·*
 1.669 *ἐκ Διός, ὃς τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισιν ἀνάσσει,*

*ὃς δὴ κάλλιστος γένετο θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων·
 τὸν καὶ ἀνηρείψαντο θεοὶ Διὶ οἴνοχοεῦειν
 κάλλεος εἴνεκα οἷο Ἴν' ἀθανάτοισι μετεῖη.*

Ilos and Assarakos and godlike Ganymedes
 who was the loveliest born of the race of mortals, and therefore
 the gods caught him away to themselves, to be Zeus' wine-pourer.

On Ganymedes, see STROLONGA 2018.

26. *Il.* 5.257-267, see particularly 264-7:

*τῆς γάρ τοι γενεῆς ἧς Τρωῖ περ εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς δῶχ' υἱὸς ποινήν Γανυμήδεος, οὔνεκ'
 ἄριστοι
 ἵππων ὄσσοι ἔασιν ὑπ' ἠῶ τ' ἠέλιόν τε,*

27. PARRY [1928], 1971.

28. PARRY [1928], 1971 paid much attention to the names of gods and heroes, but apparently with no care for their general denomination. See however Garcia 2013, 161-173 on *ἀθάνατος* καὶ *ἀγήρω*.

- 4.320 ἄλλ' οὐ πως ἅμα πάντα θεοὶ δόσαν ἀνθρώποισιν·
 8.27 τόσσον ἐγὼ περὶ τ' εἰμι θεῶν περὶ τ' εἶμι ἀνθρώπων
 14.233 Ἔπνε ἄναξ πάντων τε θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων,
 18.107 ὡς ἔρις ἔκ τε θεῶν ἔκ τ' ἀνθρώπων ἀπόλοιτο
 18.404 ἦδεεν οὔτε θεῶν οὔτε θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,
 20.233 234 ὃς δὴ κάλλιστος γένετο θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων·
 τὸν καὶ ἀνηρείψαντο θεοὶ Διὶ οἴνοχοεῦειν
 24.534 535 ὡς μὲν καὶ Πηλεΐῃ θεοὶ δόσαν ἀγλαὰ δῶρα
 ἐκ γενετῆς· πάντας γὰρ ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους ἐκέκαστο

2. Θνητοὶ / ἀθάνατοι

- 10.306 χαλεπὸν δέ τ' ὀρύσσειν / ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι· θεοὶ δέ τε πάντα δύνανται.
 10. 404 405 [οἱ δ' ἄλεγρινοι] ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι δαμήμεναι ἢ δ' ὀχέεσθαι
 ἄλλω γ' ἢ Ἀχιλλῆϊ, τὸν ἀθανάτη τέκε μήτηρ.
 10.440 441 τὰ μὲν οὐ τι καταθνητοῖσιν ἔοικεν / ἀνδρεσσιν φορέειν, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτοισι
 θεοῖσιν.
 12.242 ὃς πᾶσι θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀνάσσει.
 14.199 δαμνᾷ ἀθανάτους ἢ δὲ θνητοὺς ἀνθρώπους.
 16.154 ὃς καὶ θνητὸς ἐὼν ἔπεθ' ἵπποις ἀθανάτοισι.
 17.77 78 ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι / τὸν ἀθανάτη τέκε μήτηρ.
 17.440. δόμεν Πηλεΐῃ ἄνακτι θνητῷ, ὑμεῖς δ' ἐστὸν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε;
 18.86 87 αἴθ' ὄφελος σὺ μὲν αὐθι μετ' ἀθανάτης Ἀλῆισι
 ναίειν, Πηλεὺς δὲ θνητὴν ἀγαγέσθαι ἄκοιτιν.
 1.64 οἰκία δὲ θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι φανείη

3. Βροτοὶ / ἀθάνατοι

- 5.360-361 ὄφρ' ἐς Ὀλυμπον ἴκομαι ἴν' ἀθανάτων ἔδος ἐστί.
 λίην ἄχθομαι ἔλκος ὃ με βροτὸς οὔτασεν ἀνὴρ
 7.446-447 ἦ ῥά τίς ἐστι βροτῶν ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν
 ὃς τις ἔτ' ἀθανάτοισι νόον καὶ μῆτιν ἐνίψει;
 11.2 = 19.2 ὄρνυθ', ἴν' ἀθανάτοισι φόως φέροι ἢ δὲ βροτοῖσι·
 18.85-86 ἤματι τῷ ὅτε σε βροτοῦ ἀνέρος ἔμβalon εὐνή.
 αἴθ' ὄφελος σὺ μὲν αὐθι μετ' ἀθανάτης Ἀλῆισι
 19.22 οἷ' ἐπεικέες / ἔργ' ἔμεν ἀθανάτων, μὴ δὲ βροτὸν ἄνδρα τελέσσαι.
 21.380 οὐ γὰρ ἔοικεν / ἀθάνατον θεὸν ὧδε βροτῶν ἔνεκα στυφελίζειν.
 24.464 νεμεσητὸν δὲ κεν εἶη / ἀθάνατον θεὸν ὧδε βροτοὺς ἀγαπαζέμεν ἄντην·

As this table shows, Homeric Greek uses three different ways for opposing gods to men in formulas, the main characteristic being 'mortality' vs. 'immortality'. Of course, other words in Homeric language may mean 'im-

mortal', as *ἄφθιτος*, but they do not enter the Homeric schema of opposition between gods and mankind.

Whence may be drawn those key Greek words of oppositions, at least in theory:

ἄνθρωποι [ἄνδρες] / θεοί
θνητοί / ἀθάνατοι
βροτοί / ἄμβροτοι

In the third term, *ἄμβροτοι* does not ever occur as referring to itself as the contrary of *βροτοί* as we might be waiting for, but it is replaced in this function by *ἀθάνατοι*, which leads us to look at the seven Homeric uses of the adjective *ἄμβροτος*:

- Il.* 5.339: *ῥέε δ' ἄμβροτον αἷμα θεοῖο / ἰχώρ.* (“and blood immortal flowed from the goddess”)
Il. 5. 870: *δειξεν δ' ἄμβροτον αἷμα καταρρέον ἐξ ὠτειλῆς,* (“and showed him the immortal blood dripping from the spear cut”)
Il. 16.380-381 and 867: *τάφρον ὑπέρθορον ὠκέες ἵπποι / ἄμβροτοι,*

Straight across the ditch overleapt those swift and immortal / horses

- Il.* 20.358: *οὐδέ κ' Ἄρης, ὅς περ θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐδέ κ' Ἀθήνη* (“Not Ares, who is a god immortal, not even Athene”)
Il. 22.9 *διώκεις / αὐτὸς θνητὸς ἐὼν θεὸν ἄμβροτον;* (“why do you] pursue me / being mortal, while I am an immortal god? ”)
Il. 24.460 *ὦ γέρον ἦτοι ἐγὼ θεὸς ἄμβροτος εἰλήλουθα / Ἑρμείας.* (“Aged sir, I who came to you am a god immortal, Hermes”).

The adjective *ἄμβροτος* qualifies a material object of the divine world, either a singular god as in the three latest examples, or in the plural, it may qualify immortal horses. But it never replaces *ἀθάνατοι* or *θεοί*, and we cannot invoke any reason for this dissymmetry. Since there are *θεὸς ἄμβροτος*, *θεὸν ἄμβροτον* and *ἵπποι ἄμβροτοι*, why not * [*θεοί*] *ἄμβροτοι*?

The table also shows some interesting idiomatic phrases:

in the nominative, θεοὶ has a strong agentive role,²⁹ see θεοὶ δόσαν + dative (*Il.* 4.320, 24.534), θεοὶ δέ τε πάντα δύνανται (10.306), τὸν καὶ ἀνηρείμαντο θεοὶ Διὶ οἰνοχοεύειν (20.234).

Θνητός is frequently used with a concessive value : see

16.154 ὃς καὶ θνητὸς ἐὼν ἔπεθ' ἵπποις ἀθανάτοισι. (“He, mortal as he was, ran besides the immortal horses”)

17.77-78 ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι / τὸν ἀθανάτη τέκε μήτηρ. (“they are difficult horses] *for mortal man* [to manage, or even to ride behind them”)

For all except Achilles, who was born of an immortal mother.

17.444. δόμεν Πηλεΐ ἄνακτι / θνητῷ, ὑμεῖς δ' ἐστὸν ἀγήρω τ' ἀθανάτω τε; (“Poor wretches,] why then did we ever give you to the lord Peleus, / a mortal man, and you yourselves are immortal and ageless”)³⁰

18.86 87 αἴθ' ὄφελος σὺ μὲν αὔθι μετ' ἀθανάτης ἀλήσι ναίειν, Πηλεὺς δὲ θνητὴν ἀγαγέσθαι ἄκοιτιν. (“I wish you had gone on living then with the other goddesses / of the sea, and that Peleus had married some mortal woman”).

Thus the whole corpus points to the inferiority of mankind as a general undisputable truth, though not asserted through a mythical narrative like Hesiod does by telling the Prometheus myth both in the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*.³¹

This criterion is applied to horses as well as gods:

16,154 καὶ θνητὸς ἐὼν ἔπεθ' ἵπποις ἀθανάτοισι (“He, mortal as he was, ran beside the immortal horses”).

Cp. in our corpus 5.777 τοῖσιν δ' ἀμβροσίην Σιμόεις ἀνέτειλε νέμεσθαι. and Simoeis grew as grass ambrosia as grass for them to graze on.

29. On agency in Greek, see LURAGHI 2014.

30. See GARCIA 2013, 162.

31. STODDARD 2004, 98.

Immortal horses receive their special food, with the name *ἀμβροσίην* formed on the same root as **n-mrto-* > *ἄμβροτο-*.³²

Whence we draw those key Greek words of oppositions:

θνητοί / ἀθάνατοι
βροτοί / ἄμβροτοι
ἄνθρωποι [ἄνδρες] / θεοί

Let us note that Homer seems not only to reverse the habitual order but to combine each word of the left column with each one of the right, which leads to a large choice making the versification easier. One of the terms may be implicit, as if immortality goes without saying when gods are opposed to men,³³ as well as mortality for men when they are opposed to gods.³⁴

The total irreducibility of men and gods claimed by Apollo in book 5 makes of course all the more brilliant the obstinacy of Diomedes in fighting against the gods who favor Troy: Aphrodite, Apollo and Ares.³⁵ Whence Diomedes appears as a 'second Achilles'.³⁶

Hence the link with the following point: both gods and men are vulnerable, but the wounds may be lethal for men alone.

32. The use of *νέμεσθαι* with *ἀμβροσίην* suggests that the horses eat *ambrosia*, whereas *nectar* is rather *poured from a crater* in formulas (*Il.* 1.598, 4.3), since this verb meaning at the origin 'part' has a lot of uses in pastoralism, see CHANTRAINE 2009 s.v.: "Dans cette famille qui a fourni des emplois très divers, il faut partir pour *νέμω* du sens de 'faire une attribution régulière de'; il en résulte des emplois très généraux: 'habiter, nourrir, manger, dévorer, diriger', etc., avec également des tours particuliers aussi différents que 'faire paître, reconnaître comme vrai', etc."

33. *βρότοισι θεῶν* 9.150

οὔτε βροτοῖσιν οὔτε θεοῖς 15.95-6

34. *ἄνδρες Βατίειαν κικλήσκουσιν ἀθάνατοι δε τε σῆμα ...* 2.813-4

Μερόπεσσι βρότοισιν 2.285

ἀθανάτοισι ... ἠδὲ βρότοισι

πρὸς τε θεῶν μακάρων πρὸς τε θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων 1.339

18,404 *οὔτε θεῶν οὔτε θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων*

35. On Diomedes' *aristeia*, see BERNARDETE 1968, SCHEIN 1997, PRATT 2009, DOVA 2020.

36. PRATT 2009, 143.

2. Diomedes' aristeia: The gods may be wounded, but not all of them

2.1. Aphrodite

Book 5 shows twice in the narrative that wounds may be inflicted on gods, as in the main exploits in Diomedes' aristeia:³⁷ His protector deity Athena listens to his prayer, reveals to him that he will be able to distinguish the gods from men,³⁸ and gives him the advice to attack among the gods only Aphrodite,³⁹ and later Ares.⁴⁰ After the first advice, the aristeia begins with a series of victories over Trojan fighters, from 5.144 to 325. He kills Pandaros (293-6) and wounds Aeneas (305-310), whom his mother Aphrodite rescues.⁴¹ Diomedes pursues her, knowing her to be without war-craft (5.331 *γινώσκων ὅτ' ἀναλκίς ἔην θεός*). She is called Kypriis in verse 330, exceptionally for the *Iliad*.⁴² The relevant passage narrating the attack and wounding is 5.334-342:

37. On the vulnerability of gods, see ANDERSEN 1981, VERNANT 1986, NEAL 2006 a and b, TURKELTAUB 2007, HOLMES 2007, MC COY 2013, GARCIA 2013, STAMATOPOULOU 2017. LORAUX 1986, 344 quotes Clemens of Alexandria's address to this passage in his *Protrepticus*: "Vos dieux amoureux et passionnés sont de toute manière soumis à la condition humaine. 'C'est qu'ils ont bien une chair mortelle.'"

38. ἀχλὺν δ' αὖ τοι ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν ἔλον ἢ πρὶν ἐπήεν,
ὄφρ' εὖ γινώσκῃς ἡμὲν θεὸν ἠδὲ καὶ ἄνδρα. (Il. 5.127-8)

(I have taken the mist from your eyes, that before now
was there, so that you may well recognize the god and the mortal).

On ἀχλύς, see apart CHANTRAINE *ad loc.* VERNANT 1986, 38-9, BETTINI 2017, 38-41.

39. ... ἀτὰρ εἴ κε Διὸς θυγάτηρ Ἀφροδίτη
ἔλθῃσ' ἐς πόλεμον, τὴν γ' οὐτάμεν ὀξεῖ χαλκῷ. (Il. 5.131-2)

(...but only if Aphrodite, Zeus' daughter,
Comes to the fighting, her at least you may stab with the sharp bronze).

Diomedes repeats this advice to Athena when he is afraid because he sees Ares being "lord of the fighting" (5.724 *μάχην ἀνὰ κοιρανέοντα*), which appears a strong narrative thread in the book.

40. Il. 5.827-831.

41. MARKS 2010.

42. PIRENNE-DELFORGE 1994, 311-2 suggests that it might be ironic from the poet, see also PIRONTI 2005. CASSIO 2012 remarks the originality of this book 5 quoting LORIMER 1950, and lists p. 418 among 8 points that are specific of this book the followings:

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ἐκίχανε πολὺν καθ' ὄμιλον ὀπάζων,
 ἔνθ' ἐπορεζάμενος μεγαθύμου Τυδέος υἱὸς
 ἄκρην οὐτάσε χεῖρα μετάλμενος ὄζεϊ δουρὶ
 ἀβληχρῆν· εἴθαρ δὲ δόρυ χροδὸς ἀντετόρησεν
 ἀμβροσίου διὰ πέπλου, ὃν οἱ Χάριτες κάμον αὐταί,
 πρυμνὸν ὕπερ θέναρος· ῥέε δ' ἀμβροτον αἷμα θεοῖο
 ἰχώρ, οἷός περ τε ῥέει μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν·
 οὐ γὰρ σῖτον ἔδουσ', οὐ πίνουσ' αἶθοπα οἶνον,
 τοῦνεκ' ἀναίμονές εἰσι καὶ ἀθάνατοι καλέονται.

*Now as, following her through the thick crowd, he caught her,
 lunging in his charge far forward the son of high-hearted
 Tydeus made a thrust against the soft hand with the bronze spear,
 and the spear tore the skin driven clean on through the immortal
 robe that the very Graces had woven for her carefully,
 over the palm's base; and blood immortal flowed from the goddess,
 ichor, that which runs in the veins of the blessed divinities;
 since these eat no food, nor do they drink of the shining
 wine, and therefore they have no blood and are called immortal.*

Her hand is delicate (ἀβληχρῆν, emphasized through the rhythm) and may be wounded, so that blood flows, but the poet immediately corrects with the striking formula ἀμβροτον αἷμα that we'll find again for Ares. It looks like an oxymoron, and draws a correction in the text: it is not blood, but ἰχώρ, and the hapax name is followed by its very definition: “which flows for blessed gods”, and a somehow pleonastic explanation: “they have no blood (ἀναίμονές εἰσι) and are called immortal (ἀθάνατοι καλέονται).⁴³ In

- 1) A mortal, Diomedes, wounds a goddess, Aphrodite;
- 2) ἰχώρ, the special blood of the gods is mentioned twice (340 and 416);
- 3) Aphrodite is called Κύπρις;
- 4) Dione appears as Aphrodite's mother;

43. LEAF judges 240-2 « a very poor interpolation », but KIRK devotes a note to them that is more theological or anthropological. On *ikhôr* and the strange expression of 5.339-342, see JOUANNA-DEMONT 1981, VERNANT 1986, 27, LORAUX 1986, 350-351, GARCIA 2013,

between, as if the poet could not refrain from doing an anthropological presentation, verse 341 remarks the essential difference in food and drink in a very rhetorical manner (with a chiasm: *(οὐ) σῖτον ἔδουσ' / (οὐ) πίνουσ' αἶθοπα οἶνον*).⁴⁴

2.2. Apollo

Aphrodite is for Diomedes an almost easy prey with her “soft hand” (*ἄκρην ... χεῖρα*). After her flight supported by Iris and Ares’ horses, Diomedes pursues Aeneas, although conscious that Aphrodite’s son is now under Apollo’s protection. Then comes the real difficulty and eventual failure for the Achaean hero, at his fourth try at assault:

5.434-439 ἄλλ' ὄ γ' ἄρ' οὐδὲ θεὸν μέγαν ἄζετο, ἴετο δ' αἰεὶ
 Αἰνεΐαν κτεῖναι καὶ ἀπὸ κλυτὰ τεύχεα δῦσαι.
 τρὶς μὲν ἔπειτ' ἐπόρουσε κατακτάμεναι μενεαίωνων,
 τρὶς δέ οἱ ἐστυφέλιξε φαινήν ἀσπίδ' Ἀπόλλων·
 ἄλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι ἴσος,
 δεινὰ δ' ὁμοκλήσας προσέφη ἑκάεργος Ἀπόλλων·

*he did not shrink even from the great god, but forever forward
 drove, to kill Aeneas and strip his glorious armour.
 Three time, furious to cut him down, he drove forward,
 And three times Apollo battered aside the bright shield,
 But as a fourth time, like more than man, he charged, Apollo
 Who strikes from afar cried out to him in the voice of terror.*

This quadruple attempt,⁴⁵ more or less in the middle of the book, may have a tragic resonance, as a failure. but for me it makes Diomedes’ *aristeia*

177-8. I regret I could not see L.S. di CAMPOBIANCO, “ἰχώρ: the ‘blood’ of the Homeric gods. Notes on Eustathius’ Commentary to *Iliad* V, v.339-340”, *Rivista storica dell’antichità* 2020.

44. Vernant and his team actually studied the Greek anthropology of eating (DETENNE-VERNANT 1979) but centered on meat and sacrifice. For me, *Il.* 5.341 reveals the very deep implicit thought that mankind entirely depends on bread and wine.

45. FORTE 2021, 63 has an interesting discussion on this type of repetition: let me quote

still greater, since he goes to the furthest end of human condition.⁴⁶ Diomedes' repetitive gesture, already in book 5, expresses and *embodies* "indeterminacy and stasis" or "indefiniteness and resolution", as says Alexander Forte without quoting this very passage. Kirk's commentary however duly remarks that this type of formulaic repetition occurs three other times in the *Iliad*: in the Patrocleia twice, and in Achilles' aristeia once.⁴⁷ If Diomedes' aristeia is only the first step in the Iliadic chain that links together Diomedes, Patrocles and Achilles, we may understand Diomedes' failure facing Apollo as an anticipation of Patrocles' failure facing Hector and behind him the same Apollo, whereas Achilles' impulse against Hector – al-

his conclusion in some detail: "[...] the structuring device of triple and quadruple repetition would have been a poetic mnemo-technique, but it also would have served as a marker for an audience, queuing expectations that the poet could validate and frustrate. The triple repetition of Achilles' chase of Hector around the walls, for example, could have created a tension or expectation, wherein an audience simultaneously aware of Hector's inevitable death, and of the triple repetition as a marker of indeterminacy and stasis, would have anticipated a dramatic resolution, eventually effected through the divine interventions of Zeus and Athena. The audience might therefore have been aware of the deferral and postponement of lamentation's end over the last two books, but the manifestation of this delay in the *Iliad* serves as a glimpse into a technic of poetic memory, in which a repeated action occurs three times, then a fourth, after which the repetition is resolved. The Homeric poems employ these triple and quadruple repetitions to express complex notions of indefiniteness and resolution, yet these complexities are understandable as developments of cognitive and phenomenological processes that are intrinsic to embodied, and fundamentally repetitive, human experience."

46. Pace PRATT 2009, 155: "Diomedes' encounters with Ares and Aphrodite, however, are more comic than cosmic.", and 156: "In contrast to Achilles, Diomedes, the fatherless son, the sonless hero, is entirely without significant attachments that allow him the *Iliad*'s fundamental tragic insight." See LORAUX quoted below in my conclusion.

47. τρίς μὲν ἐπ' ἀγκῶνος βῆ τείχεος ὑψηλοῖο
Πάτροκλος, τρίς δ' αὐτὸν ἀπεστυφέλιξεν Ἀπόλλων

[...]

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι Ἴσος,

16.784-786 τρίς μὲν ἔπειτ' ἐπόρουσε θεῶν ἀτάλαντος Ἄρηϊ

[...] ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι Ἴσος, (Patrocleia: 16.702-706)

Achilles against Hector:

τρὶς μὲν ἔπειτ' ἐπόρουσε ποδάρκης δῖος Ἀχιλλεὺς

ἔγχεϊ χαλκείῳ, τρίς δ' ἡέρα τύψε βαθεῖαν.

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὸ τέταρτον ἐπέσσυτο δαίμονι Ἴσος,

(20.445-447)

though himself protected by the same god— will be victorious.⁴⁸

Anyway, this is the context in which Apollo's violent rebuke intervenes. Diomedes obeys the god's order, as shows the echo between the imperative χάζεο he utters in verse 440 and the first action verb of which Diomedes is the subject in 443:

Τυδεΐδης δ' ἀνεχάζετο τῆθ' ὀπίσσω

and Tydeus' son gave backward, only a little.

This retreat in the face of Apollo does not constitute a defeat, I mean, but it rather stresses the limits of human condition, be it a hero, and we shall take this in account in our conclusion.

2.3. Ares' 'Near Death Experience'

Apollo then launches Ares⁴⁹ to attack Diomedes as revenge for Aphrodite's injury, and Ares' outburst, almost from 563 to 595, is awful, provoking even Diomedes' fear,⁵⁰ seen through a beautiful contemplative simile at 597-600.⁵¹ Which leads to a second retreat of the hero (*ἀνεχάζετο*, 5.600), with an increasing dramatic suspense until this point, to my mind. The

48. I shall develop elsewhere this idea of linking the *Iliad* as a whole composition.

49. On Ares see LORAUX 1986, who aptly insists on the frequency of the adjective κρατερός.

50. *Τὸν δὲ ἰδὼν ῥίγησε βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης.*

Diomedes of the great war cry shivered as he saw him,

On *ῥίγησε* as a symptom of fear, see ZABOROWSKI 2002, 182-6. The verb is linked to the name *ῥίγος* 'cold', cf. Lat. *frigus*.

51. *ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ ἀπάλαμνος ἰὼν πολέος πεδίοιο
στήη ἐπ' ὠκυρόφω ποταμῷ ἄλλα δὲ προρέοντι
ἀφρῶ μορμύροντα ἰδὼν, ἀνά τ' ἔδραμ' ὀπίσσω,
ὡς τότε Τυδεΐδης ἀνεχάζετο,*

*And like a man in his helplessness who, crossing a great plain,
Stands at the edge of a fast-running river that dashes seaward,
and watches it thundering into white water, and leaps a pace backward,
so now Tydeus' son gave back, ...*

SCOTT 2009, ch.4 notes : "Similes organize Diomedes' aristeia in *Iliad* 5."

narrative leaves then Diomedes for some other fights, less interesting for our point of view, though they put on stage important characters such as Sarpedon and Tlepolemos. The focus comes back to Hector, still accompanied by Ares (699-703), with an *androktasia* (705-710), which determines Athena and Hera to find a way to stop Ares, with Zeus' permission. Diomedes comes again to the center at 781, in the middle of his warriors, compared to raw-meat eating lions.⁵² Hera encourages the Argive fighters with her Stentor-like voice,⁵³ while Athena 'rushes' (*ἐπόρουσε*)⁵⁴ to Diomedes, whom she finds healing the painful wound made earlier by Pandaros. The goddess exhorts him to fight recalling with some length (800-813) his father Tydeus' exploits,⁵⁵ even though it might appear tactless since Diomedes, having very few memories of his father may be called "fatherless".⁵⁶ Diomedes politely answers that he well recognized her (815), but also remembers that he cannot attack gods other than Aphrodite, with a word to for word quotation of her former advice (819-821). His response ends with recognizing Ares as the master on the battlefield :

52. The comparison begins as a short one, but is developed in a second verse:

εἰλόμενοι λείουσιν εἰκότες ὁμοφάγοισιν
ἢ σοσι κάπροισιν, τῶν τε σθένος οὐκ ἀλαπαδνόν, (782-3)
in the likeness of lions who rend their meat raw
or wild pigs, boars, in whom the strength diminishes never.

See LÉTOUBLON 2016.

53. The allusion to Stentor's voice is among the peculiarities of book 5, see above the reference to CASSIO 2012.

54. KIRK *ad loc.* remarks the "untraditional application" of this verb.

55. With an astonishing diminutive tone, she begins and ends with restrictions against Diomedes:

ἦ ὀλίγον οἷ παῖδα εἰκότα γείνατο Τυδέυς. (800)
Tydeus got him a son who is little enough like him [...]
οὐ σύ γ' ἔπειτα (812-3)
Τυδέος ἔκγονός ἐσσι δαΐφρονος Οἰνεΐδαο.

If so,

You are not issue then of the son of wise Oineus, Tydeus."

56. PRATT 2009.

γιγνώσκω γὰρ Ἄρηα μάχην ἀνὰ κοιρανέοντα. (824)

Since I see that this who is lord of the fighting is Ares.

Athena then reaffirms her protection to Diomedes and clearly orders him to attack Ares (829-34), whom she indirectly insults as:

τοῦτον μαινόμενον, τυκτὸν κακόν, ἀλλοπρόσαλλον (831)

*that thing of fury, evil-wrought, that double-faced liar*⁵⁷

and accuses to have switched sides.⁵⁸

The goddess takes Sthenelos' place on the chariot and drives it towards Ares who is stripping Periphas whom he has killed (842-3). Qualified successively with three diverse negative epithets, *μυιφόνος* 'blood-stained' (844), *ὄβριμος* (845) and *βροτολογὸς* 'man-slaughtering' (846), Ares leaves then his prey and faces Diomedes, without seeing Athena who put on the helm of Hades (845).⁵⁹

The fight itself is quickly told, from 850 to 858:

οἱ δ' ὅτε δὴ σχεδὸν ἦσαν ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισιν ἰόντες,
πρόσθεν Ἄρης ὠρέξαθ' ὑπὲρ ζυγὸν ἠνία θ' ἵππων
ἔγχει χαλκείῳ μεμαῶς ἀπὸ θυμὸν ἐλέσθαι·

57. KIRK comments: "Now he is to go straight for Ares, whom she abuses in an elegant and highly subordinated sentence." See LORAUX 1986, 347-8: "Arès se trouve toujours des deux côtés, quel que soit le camp où vont ses préférences personnelles. Une telle attitude lui vaut d'être désigné comme *alloprósallōs* –celui qui va d'un camp à l'autre– et, s'ils n'étaient pas animés contre le dieu d'une totale partialité, Athéna et Zeus, [...] devraient reconnaître qu'il s'agit là moins d'un jugement que d'une définition exacte : l'énoncé même de la loi de la guerre, qu'Arès incarne. Aussi, lorsque s'affrontent les guerriers, ces serviteurs d'Arès, c'est à chaque fois le dieu qu'ils opposent à lui-même."

58. In a kind of mythological allusion that Mabel LANG calls "reverberation", see below. It might be justified by the direct insult he receives from Apollo, though theoretically on the same Trojan side, in 5.455

Ἄρες Ἄρες βροτολογὲ μυιφόνε τειχεσπλήτα

"Ares, Ares, manslaughtering, blood-stained, stormer of walls".

59. Once again an allusion specific of this book, met nowhere else in Homer, see Kirk's note among others.

καὶ τό γε χειρὶ λαβοῦσα θεὰ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη
 ὤσεν ὑπέκ δίφροιο ἐτώσιον αἰχθῆναι.
 δεύτερος αὐτὸ ὠρμάτο βοήν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης
 ἔγχει χαλκείῳ· ἐπέρεισε δὲ Πάλλας Ἀθήνη
 νεΐατον ἐς κενεῶνα ὅθι ζωννύσκετο μίτρη·
 τῇ ῥά μιν οὔτα τυχῶν, διὰ δὲ χροῖα καλὸν ἔδαμνεν,

*Now as they in their advance had come close together,
 Ares lunged first over the yoke and the reins of his horses
 with the bronze spear, furious to take the life from him.
 But the goddess grey-eyed Athene in her hand catching
 The spear pushed it away from the car, so he missed and stabbed vainly.
 After him Diomedes of the great war cry drove forward
 With the bronze spear; and Pallas Athene, leaning in on it,
 Drove it into the depth of the belly where the war belt girt him.
 Picking this place he stabbed and driving it deep in the fair flesh,*

Having wounded Ares, Diomedes “wrenched the spear out again”, and Ares shrieked (ἔβραχε), “a verb implying a loud, harsh sound as of the axle creaking at 838”.⁶⁰

τῇ ῥά μιν οὔτα τυχῶν, διὰ δὲ χροῖα καλὸν ἔδαμνεν,
 πᾶρ δὲ Διὶ Κρονίῳνι καθέζετο θυμὸν ἀχεύων, [...]
 δεῖξεν δ' ἄμβροτον αἷμα καταρρέον ἐξ ὠτειλῆς, (5.858)

*Picking this place she stabbed and driving it deep in the fair flesh
 wrenched the spear out again. Then Ares the brazen bellowed [...] and showed him the immortal blood dripping from the spear cut.*

In both cases, gods' wounds are painful as said 1) for Aphrodite in v.354 ἀχθομένην ὀδύνησι, “[her skin] wounded and suffering”, and 361 λίην ἄχθομαι ἔλκος ὃ με βροτὸς οὔτασεν ἀνήρ (“I am in too much pain from the wound of a mortal's spear-stroke,”).

60. KIRK *ad loc.*

2) for Ares v. 871 *ὄλοφρυρόμενος* “in sorrow”, and 873 *ρίγιστα θεοὶ τεπλήότες εἰμέν* “we who are gods have to endure the most horrible hurts”.

They complain like humans, or rather like human children: (Aphrodite near her mother Dione,⁶¹ v.376-380; Ares beside Zeus, 872-887).⁶²

But they don’t die: 402 = 901 *οὐ μὲν γάρ τι καταθνητός γ’ ἐτέτυκτο* (“since he was not made to be one of the mortals”).⁶³

To justify my subtitle alluding to modern so-called NDE, we see later that Ares ‘almost died’ in a splendid counterfactual,⁶⁴ –actually in another

61. Dione’s character appears only in this passage in Homer, see Kirk *ad loc.*: “This character is « unique in the heroic epos. [...] Homer evidently wished to gloss over the savage old tale of her birth in the sea from Ouranos’ genitals (cf. Hesiod, *Theog.* 188 ff.)” Aphrodite as daughter of Zeus and Dione appears in sharp contrast with Hesiod’s version of her birth from Ouranos’ genitals. This contrast is perhaps reflected by Plato’s distinction between Aphrodite Ourania and Aphrodite Pandemos in *Symposium* 180d-e, see BALLESTEROS 2021. Aphrodite’s process to her mother in Olympus appears a unique parallel to a passage of *Gilgamesh* that led Burkert and others to think of an influence of the latter on Homeric epic (BURKERT 1975, BALLESTEROS 2021 among others). Apart from this parallel, the linguistic proximity between the names *Zeus* and *Dione* warrants the Indo-European origin of the divine couple.

62. Ares complains more about Athena than about Diomedes. Anyhow he does not please Zeus who rejects him as unbearable.

63. I found no comment on this verb that seems to assimilate gods to fabricated objects.

64. For KIRK a ‘theological absurdity’, but see LOUDEN 1993. It concerns the mythological exemplum in Dione’s discourse rather than our passage: for Ares the actual fight against Diomedes recalls Otos and Ephialtes’ still more dangerous attack in the mythological past: these Aloadaï were gigantic twin sons, born from Iphimedeia to Poseidon, who threatened to pile Mt Ossa on Olympos and Pelion on Ossa, see KIRK *ad loc.* “The tale as it appears here may be too bizarre to be a plausible Homeric invention as Willcock suggests *ad loc.*; yet other versions did not survive, judging at least by the lack of other hard information in the mythographical tradition.” See LANG 1983 (not quoted by Kirk) and her interesting theory of reverberation. LORAUX 1986, 352-3 notes that this line repeats 5.311 which concerns Aeneas: “Il y a d’abord, dans la harangue de Dionè, à propos du dieu enfermé dans la jarre, la répétition d’une formule déjà employée au sujet d’un mortel: “et il eût bel et bien péri sur place » ne se dit d’Arès qu’après s’être dit d’Énée, quelque soixante-dix vers auparavant ; or, pour être né d’une déesse, Énée n’en appartient pas moins à une lignée humaine, et seule l’intervention de sa mère Aphrodite l’a sauvé d’un trépas certain : la superposition parle de soi. De même, lorsque Arès guérit de la blessure que lui a infligée la lance de Diomède, le texte répétera à son sujet la formule que, dans son récit, Dioné avait appliquée à Hadès. [...] La première répétition assimilait Arès à un mortel, la seconde l’associe à l’immortel souver-

episode of the same book, told among Dione's exempla, v.388

καί νύ κεν ἔνθ' ἀπόλοιτο Ἄρης ἄτος πολέμοιο, ("and now might Ares, insatiable of fighting, have perished"),⁶⁵ which leads us to analyze more closely the series of those exempla and their paradigmatic role.⁶⁶

3. Dione's exempla of gods wounded by men

Fleeing from the battlefield to Olympus on Ares' chariot with the aid of Iris, Aphrodite goes straight to her mother Dione,⁶⁷ in a "moving scene, which is also gently humorous, where the wounded goddess falls into her mother's lap (like a child as bT remark)."⁶⁸ Dione's question also addresses a child (φίλον τέκος), with the same tone and words Zeus uses with Artemis in comparable conditions.⁶⁹ Aphrodite's reply (376-380) "combines indignation, pathos and cunning."⁷⁰ Dione's long (382-404) consolation speech is a purple passage of rhetoric, beginning with the idiomatic perfect imperative *τέτλαθι*⁷¹ reduplicated by the quasi synonym *ἀνάσχεο*, and echoed by four instances of the aorist *τλη-*, first person plural *τλήμεν* in 383, third person singular *τλή* in 385 for Ares, 392 for Hera, 395 for Hades (noted in bold letters):

ain des morts : le recours à la répétition est décidément tout sauf une procédure gratuite, puisqu'il contribue à enraciner le dieu dans son statut paradoxal. Mais le même résultat est aussi bien obtenu par la pratique inverse, celle de l'*hapax* : lorsque Arès s' imagine rétrospectivement *amenēnós* sous les coups de Diomède, comment entendre ce mot que l'*Iliade* n'emploie aucune autre fois ?"

65. ANDERSEN 1981, PURVES 2006, BECK 2018. LORAUX 1986, 342 nicely calls the passage « une enclave d'irréel dans l'économie iliadique de la mort. »

66. See the seminal article by WILLCOCK 1964.

67. Etymologically the feminine of **dyeus*, Dione is probably a very archaic deity, see above n. 61.

68. KIRK *ad* 370-2.

69. *Il.* 21.509, see KIRK *ad* 373-4.

70. KIRK *ad loc.*

71. See *Il.* 1.556 (Achilles to his mother: *τέτλαθι μητηρ ἐμή, καὶ ἀνάσχεο κηδομένη περ* is strictly identical with 5.382); *Od.* 20.18 (Odysseus to his own heart: *τέτλαθι δῆ, κραδίη, καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ' ἔτλης*).

πολλοὶ γὰρ δὴ **τλημεν** Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες
 ἐξ ἀνδρῶν χαλέπ' ἄλγε' ἐπ' ἀλλήλοισι τιθέντες.
τλημὲν Ἄρης ὅτε μιν Ἰστος κρατερὸς τ' Ἐφιάλτης
 παῖδες Ἀλωῆος, δῆσαν κρατερῶ ἐνὶ δεσμῶ·
 χαλκῆω δ' ἐν κεράμω δέδετο τρισκαίδεκα μῆνας·
 καὶ νῦ κεν ἐνθ' ἀπόλοιτο Ἄρης ἄτος πολέμοιο,
 εἰ μὴ μητρυιὴ περικαλλῆς Ἡερίβοια
 Ἑρμῆα ἐξήγγειλεν· ὃ δ' ἐξέκλεψεν Ἄρηα
 ἦδη τειρόμενον, χαλεπὸς δέ ἐ δεσμὸς ἐδάμνα.
 τληῖ δ' Ἥρη, ὅτε μιν κρατερὸς πάϊς Ἀμφιτρώονος
 δεξιτερόν κατα μαζῶν οἴστῳ τριγλώχινι
 βεβλήκει· τότε καὶ μιν ἀνήκεστον λάβεν ἄλγος.
 τληῖ δ' Αἴδης ἐν τοῖσι πελώριος ὠκὺν οἴστον,
 εὔτε μιν αὐτὸς ἀνήρ υἱὸς Διὸς αἰγιόχοιο
 ἐν Πύλῳ ἐν νεκύεσσι βαλὼν ὀδύνησιν ἔδωκεν·
 αὐτὰρ ὃ βῆ πρὸς δῶμα Διὸς καὶ μακρὸν Ὀλυμπον
 κῆρ ἀχέων ὀδύνησι πεπαρμένους· αὐτὰρ οἴστος
 ὦμω ἐνὶ στιβαρῶ ἠλόηλατο, κῆδε δὲ θυμόν.
 τῷ δ' ἐπὶ Παιήων ὀδυνήφατα φάρμακα πάσσω
 ἠκέσατ'· οὐ μὲν γάρ τι καταθηητός γε τέτυκτο.
 σχέτλιος ὀβριμοεργὸς ὃς οὐκ ὄθεται αἴσυλα ῥέζων,
 ὃς τόξοισιν ἔκηδε θεοῦσ' οἱ Ὀλυμπον ἔχουσι. (II. 5.383-404)

*For many of us who have our homes on Olympus endure things
 from men, when ourselves we inflict hard pain on each other.
 Ares had to endure it when strong Ephialtes and Otos,
sons of Aloeus, chained him in bonds that were too strong for him,
 and three months and ten he lay chained in the brazen cauldron;
 and now might Ares, insatiable of fighting, have perished,
 had not Eëriboia, their stepmother, the surpassingly lovely,
 brought word to Hermes, who stole Ares away out of it
 as he was growing faint and the hard bondage was breaking him.
 Hera had to endure it when the strong son of Amphitryon*

*struck her beside the right breast with a tri-barbed arrow,
 so that the pain he gave her could not be quieted. Hades
 the gigantic had to endure with the rest the flying arrow
 struck him among the dead men at Pylos, and gave him to agony;
 but he went up to the house of Zeus and to tall Olympus
heavy at heart, stabbed through and through with pain, for the arrow
 was driven into his heavy shoulder, and his spirit was suffering.
 But Païëon, scattering medicines that still pain,
 healed him, since he was not made to be one of the mortals.
 Brute, heavy-handed, who thought nothing of the bad he was doing,
 who with his archery hurt the gods that dwell on Olympus!*

The rhetoric assonance $\tau\lambda\eta\mu\epsilon\nu, \tau\lambda\eta \mu\grave{\epsilon}\nu \dots \tau\lambda\eta \delta'$... strongly emphasizes first the collective implication of gods in suffering because of men, and then the three individual exempla of Ares, Hera and Hades.⁷² It seems astonishing that Kirk does not give any parallel for the catalogue of wounded gods taken as paradigmatic exempla, and does not quote any scholarship but himself, whereas we know at least two studies of this striking passage integrating it into parallels that both precede 1990, moreover both in English, WILLCOCK 1964 and LANG 1983. It seems impossible to proceed in our analysis of Homeric anthropology without them, without excluding some other publications of course.⁷³ The main feature is that a mythological event of the past may value in a present situation as a pattern for an action, as does Achilles' narrating Niobe's disaster –the killing of her children by Apollo and Artemis as a revenge for their mother Leto– as an argument for leading Priam to eat in *Iliad* 24, which seems absurd since in

72. This use of rhetoric must be stressed as a recurring feature of mythological exempla in Homer: they aim to persuade and therefore they sometimes 'invent' *ad hoc* details, as WILLCOCK 1964 and 1977 shows. See also DEMOEN 1997.

73. See WILLCOCK'S definition (1964, 42): 'a myth introduced for exhortation or consolation' and ANDERSEN'S one: 'the paradigmatic use of myth entails the application of mythical precedent to illustrate, understand or affect a situation; in the last case the paradigm may be used for exhortation or dissuasion.' Both quoted by MARAVELA 2014, 15.

the myth Niobe wept so much that she eventually endured petrification, as the Ovidian version shows.

In order not to take too much space, I will go straight to the mythological paradigm that I deem the closest to Dione's one, though not in Homer proper but in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, where Aphrodite herself mentions the three goddesses whom she could never turn to love (Athena, Artemis and Hestia), echoed by the story of the goddess who fell in love with a man –like she did herself with Anchises– and suffered because of his aging (like Eos with Tithonos) or death.⁷⁴ Those exempla aim to show that the female is always inferior to the male in a patriarchal world, even though she is a god, as Maravela concludes in her study of the 'tongue-tied' goddess:

When examined in the light of the poetics and 'rhetorics' of the Homeric paradeigmata, Aphrodite's mythological examples offer glimpses into the cognition of the humiliated and tongue-tied goddess in the wake of her affair with the mortal Anchises.⁷⁵

Those mythological paradigms generally appear to be used as arguments in the rhetoric of discourse. More particularly in the case of Dione's exempla of gods enduring injuries, Mabel Lang demonstrates in a thorough study of Homeric mythological paradigmatic exempla as cases of 'reverberation', that they are linked throughout the *Iliad* as a "complex whole"⁷⁶ by allusions to more ancient stories than the *Iliad* and by the great themes of *Binding vs. Loosing and Hurling from Heaven*.⁷⁷ Among Dione's exempla, "the comparatively unmotivated wounding of Aphrodite and

74. On those exempla, see FAULKNER 2008. MARAVELA 2014, 25 offers an interesting feminist interpretation of Aphrodite's paradigmatic exempla: "When examined in the light of the poetics and 'rhetoric' of the Homeric *paradeigmata*, Aphrodite's mythological examples offer glimpses into the cognition of the humiliated and tongue-tied goddess in the wake of her affair with the mortal Anchises."

75. MARAVELA 2014, 27.

76. LANG 1983, 162.

77. LANG 1983, 157-164. The link to our study is that, as she says, binding is a form of death.

Ares, copying the understandable hostility to the gods on the part of Hercules and Otus and Ephialtes",⁷⁸ takes part in the process of reverberation of ancient mythological tales in the whole narrative:

That is, whether an *Iliad* theme attracted old tales as *exempla* or an old tale inspired an *Iliad* episode for which the old tale was used as support, each would be liable over time to infiltration of details from the other. For if like attracts like in epic narrative, as the use of both similes and mythological *paradeigmata* suggests, it is probable that in a situation of ongoing, non-static composition this kind of attraction, [...] would be a force acting mutually between stories.⁷⁹

The importance of this passage is thus much more than anecdotic. This reverberation contributes not only to the general value of *Iliad* 5 for the anthropological difference between gods and mankind, but to the unity of the *Iliad* as a whole epic poem as I shall develop elsewhere.

Coming back to the details of the passage, we note the strangeness of the character of Ares, the first mythological exemplum taken by Dione and the second god enduring a wound by Diomedes in the narrative. As shows Loraux, this often neglected god is interesting for his ambiguities: even though considered as the god of war,⁸⁰ warrior himself, he is attacked and wounded by a mortal and eventually defeated by his sister goddess Athena. He is immortal, but he almost dies in several occasions. Let us note the new formulation of gods' immortality in line 402 of Dione's discourse about Hades οὐ μὲν γάρ τι καταθνήτός γε τέτυκτο, negative as it is.⁸¹

Thus, after reading the whole book 5 of the *Iliad*, we may complete our grid:

78. LANG 1983, 163.

79. LANG 1983, 163-4.

80. See LORAUX 1986, 347-8 quoted above (n. 57).

81. The line is repeated about Ares in line 901, see LORAUX 1986, 343 quoted above.

<i>ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν</i>	[mortal humans]
Vulnerability and suffering <i>ἀχθομένην ὀδύνησι</i> without dying <i>ἄμβροτον αἶμα called ἰχώρ</i>	[vulnerability and suffering] [may lead to death] [αἶμα → death]
[gods move freely everywhere] <i>πετέσθην</i> <i>μεσσηγυῖς γαίης τε καὶ οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόε-</i> <i>ντος.</i> abode on Olympus	Move on earth : <i>χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπων</i> <i>χαμαὶ</i> [exclusion from Olympus except for Ganymedes]
<i>ἀχλύς</i> <i>Ἄϊδος κενέην, μή μιν ἴδοι ὄβριμος Ἄρης</i> gift of invisibility	[Visible body, unable to escape except by being made a ghost like Aeneas, thanks of Apollo] Gods invisible for man, except if they dissipate the mist from their eyes
Food and drink <i>οὐ γὰρ σῖτον ἔδουσ', οὐ πίνουσ' αἶθοπα</i> <i>οἶνον,</i> [nectar] and ambrosia: <i>ἄμβροσι-</i> mentioned for Aphrodite's <i>per-</i> <i>los</i> and for the food of immortal horses]	[bread and wine] <i>[σῖτον ἔδουσ', πίνουσ' αἶθοπα οἶνον]</i>

Other books of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* may contribute to a more detailed image, but it seems that book 5 already gives a good portrayal of the opposition between gods and mankind, deserving Loraux's judgment: "l'un des plus beaux exemples d'une pensée de la limite à l'œuvre dans un texte".⁸²

An important missing anthropological criterion appears elsewhere in Homer, I am thinking of language, that is emphasized with *καλέονται* in 5.342. But all the same, book 5 provides Diomedes' *aristeia* as an excellent sample of Homeric anthropology.

82. LORAUX 1986, 353.

As a whole, Diomedes' *aristeia* told in book 5 of the *Iliad*, showing three fights of a mortal against gods, proves that the gods are vulnerable, but remain "living" as immortals. The mortal who tries to damage them may hurt them as far they do not belong to the best of Olympus, but not more: Paeon will care for their wounds and pains. Besides, only some gods can become men's targets, gods who do not belong to the first rank of Olympic gods. Limiting ourselves to the gods who take part in the Trojan War, we find vulnerability in Aphrodite and Ares, on the Trojan side only, as Athena says in the warnings addressed to her *protégé* and again when she appears to be manipulating Diomedes against Ares.

The whole set of Athene's advice to Diomedes seems to prove that the gods use humans as weapons against their own divine antagonists, as if war on earth were a substitute for the prohibited war in Olympus.

If we take now the whole set of the "conversation" between gods and Diomedes, we see that those discourses form an arch over Book 5:

Athena's first advice: don't attack any god but Aphrodite
 Diomedes wounds Aphrodite
 Apollo's advice: don't shoot any god because of the ontological difference between gods and men
 Athena's first advice recalled by Diomedes
 Athena's second advice: don't strike any god but Ares
 Diomedes strikes and wounds Ares

Could this kind of composition be a feature of Oral poetic device, as an aid to memorizing the stages of the book? Elizabeth Minchin will show "the importance of story structure" for "involving one's listeners", which is available for memory, linking together the *aidos* and the audience.⁸³

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83. MINCHIN 2001, 213. More properly for Diomedes' *aristeia* in book 5, see RICHARDSON 1998, 46.

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