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The Wits of Glaucus

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The encounter between Diomedes and Glaucus in *Iliad* 6 continues to generate as much discussion as any episode in Homer. One function of the episode is entirely straightforward: it occupies the time between Hector's departure from the battlefield and his arrival in Troy.[1] But almost every other aspect of the passage has caused difficulty, from antiquity to the present. It begins conventionally enough: the two heroes approach each other, eager to fight, and Diomedes demands his opponent's identity, warning him that those whose sons meet him in battle are unlucky. But then Diomedes, who has wounded two divinities in the preceding book, shows a sudden anxiety about his human limits, asking whether Glaucus, a stranger to him, is a god, since he does not wish to fight with a god:

> οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγε θεοῖσιν ἐπουρανίοισι μαχοίμην.
> οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ Δρύαντος υἱός, κρατερὸς Λυκόοργος,
> δὴν ἦν, ὅς ῥα θεοῖσιν ἐπουρανίοισιν ἔριζεν·
> ὅς ποτε μαινομένοιο Διωνύσοιο τιθήνας
> σεῦε κατ' ἠγάθεον Νυσήϊον· αἱ δ' ἅμα πᾶσαι
> θύσθλα χαμαὶ κατέχευαν, ὑπ' ἀνδροφόνοιο Λυκούργου
> θεινόμεναι βουπλῆγι· Διώνυσος δὲ φοβηθεὶς
> δύσεθ' ἁλὸς κατὰ κῦμα, Θέτις δ' ὑπεδέξατο κόλπῳ
> δειδιότα· κρατερὸς γὰρ ἔχε τρόμος ἀνδρὸς ὁμοκλῇ.
> τῷ μὲν ἔπειτ' ὀδύσαντο θεοὶ ῥεῖα ζώοντες,
> καί μιν τυφλὸν ἔθηκε Κρόνου πάϊς· οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔτι δὴν
> ἦν, ἐπεὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀπήχθετο πᾶσι θεοῖσιν·
> οὐδ' ἂν ἐγὼ μακάρεσσι θεοῖς ἐθέλοιμι μάχεσθαι. (129–41)

Glaucus' response is even odder. After saying that the brevity of human life makes genealogy unimportant, he delivers a long speech which is mostly about the life of his grandfather, Bellerophon. Thereupon Diomedes responds that they are ancestral guest–friends and proposes an exchange of armor. With the exchange, the episode seems to degenerate into a low mimetic mode, as the emphasis falls on Glaucus' folly in making such a bad deal:[2]

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[1] On this compositional technique, see W. Schadewaldt, *Iliasstudien* (Leipzig 1943, rpt. Darmstadt 1966) 77.

[2] "Gold for bronze" became proverbial for an unequal trade. The exegetical commentator (Sch. bT) insists that Diomedes acted "simply" (ἁπλοϊκῶς), out of impulse, rather than from greed; Aristotle argues that Diomedes is not unjust (*NE* 1136b 9–14). The scholia offer a variety

ἔνθ' αὖτε Γλαύκῳ Κρονίδης φρένας ἐξέλετο Ζεύς,
ὃς πρὸς Τυδεΐδην Διομήδεα τεύχε' ἄμειβε
χρύσεα χαλκείων, ἑκατόμβοι' ἐννεαβοίων. (234–36)

Finally, even apart from these confusions of motivations and tone, it is hard to understand what the incident is doing in this particular place in the poem.[3]

In this article, I shall concentrate on the exchange of armor. Interpretations have tended, as interpretations do, to try to mitigate the strangeness of the incident, and to make it agree with the usual rules of Homeric narrative.[4] The apparently comic tone of the exchange is strange enough, but the exchange also violates the norms for psychological interference by gods. Although the Homeric gods are a topic of intense debate, it is widely agreed that the gods only intervene with human decision–making in ways that are either closely in accord with the character and inclinations of the mortal (as when Athena inspires Odysseus to halt the run for the ships at 2.166ff. because Odysseus is the kind of hero who could be expected to act as she inspires him to do), or which still allow the mortal to make a choice (as when she tempts Pandarus).[5] Furthermore (and far less problematically), the gods' reasons for intervening in human affairs, psychologically or physically, are usually transparent. They help their favorites or protect their children, and when they act out of character, we are told why (as with Poseidon's rescue of Aeneas). Hence readers look for a way to make the exchange of armor fit the rules, so

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of explanations for Glaucus: that Zeus did not remove his wits, but "exulted" them; that he acted out of φιλοτιμία inspired by the story of Bellerophon; that the poet meant to criticize him for wearing excessively conspicuous armor; that the inequality is meant to please the pro–Greek audience.

[3]In antiquity it was sometimes moved elsewhere (Sch. A, μετατιθέασί τινες ἄλλοσε ταύτην τὴν σύστασιν), and in the words of the most recent commentary, "the whole episode is inorganic" (G. S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*. Vol II. Books 5–8. [Cambridge 1990] 171 [on 119–236]). Scholars have suggested that the bloodless end of the encounter and Glaucus' emphasis on the family and the brevity of human life are good preparations for the atmosphere of the rest of the book; but these are similarities only of mood. See K. F. Ameis and C. Hentze, *Anhang zu Homers Ilias. Schulausgabe*. Heft 2: Erlaüterungen zu Gesand IV–VI (Leipzig 1882) 133–34 for a summary of older (and still helpful) discussions of the issue.

[4]For various views of the exchange of armor, see W. M. Calder, "Gold for Bronze: *Iliad* 6.232–36," *Studies Presented to Sterling Dow* (Durham, NC 1978) 31–35.

[5]The debates concern not the concurrence of both divine and human motives, such issues as the free will and responsibility of Homeric characters, and the extent to which the gods approach being a (mere) convention. The basic formulation of "double motivation" is that of A. Lesky, *Göttliche und menschliche Motivation im homerischen Epos* (Heidelberg 1961); for a recent discussion, see A. Schmitt, *Selbständigkeit und Abhängigkeit menschlichen Handelns bei Homer* (Stuttgart 1990) 36–46.

that Zeus' intervention seems less intrusive. Calder, for instance, has argued that the story goes back to Myceanean norms, under which Diomedes' acceptance of a greater gift would implicitly acknowledge Glaucus' superiority. Zeus' removal of Glaucus' wits is the device of a poet who is trying to make some sense out of a traditional story he and his audience no longer understand.[6] But even such a speculation about an earlier meaning of the story does not remove the problem; we still have to ask how Zeus' intervention could have made sense of the story for the poet and his audience.

If we compare other passages in which gods remove people's φρένες, or other people think the gods have done so, a typical pattern emerges. Elsewhere only characters within the poem suggest that Zeus has removed someone's wits. This is Achilles' explanation of Agamemnon's folly in taking Briseis (9.377), as well as Agamemnon's own (19.137). Similar expressions are used by Hector of Polydamas (12.234) and by Hector of the Trojans (15.724–25). Such expressions do not imply that there was no human basis for the words and actions involved—Achilles thinks stealing Briseis is quite typical of Agamemnon—but the speakers see such behaviors as so stupid that only divine intervention could really explain how the person could not avoid them. Such human attributions of divine intervention are unreliable, of course: Hector is the one whose wits are gone. Only once does the poet directly say that a god has removed someone's φρένες, when Athena at 18.311 makes the Trojans take Hector's mad advice to continue to camp on the plain. Here the general rules apply perfectly. The Trojans want to believe that victory is near, so that Athena's intervention is in accord with their own inclination, and Athena, of course, is helping the Achaeans. While human characters, who cannot know what gods are planning, can speak of a god's removing someone's wits without considering why a god would do this, the omniscient poet does not.[7] In all these cases, the god's interference, real or imagined, explains how anyone could act so stupidly, but the folly of the human agents is also motivated apart from the gods' agency.

An ideal interpretation along conventional lines would therefore explain both why Zeus chooses to interfere with Glaucus' mind and what in Glaucus makes him susceptible. When the poet says that Zeus removed Glaucus' wits, this must mean that Glaucus' action is almost inconceivably stupid; it is something that Glaucus would not do in a rational state of mind, any more than Agamemnon would have taken Briseis if he had really calculated the

[6]So Calder (above, note 4) 34–35.

[7]W. Kullmann, *Das Wirken der Götter in der Ilias* (Berlin 1956) 77–78 cites the passages but does not comment on the difference between direct and indirect speech.

consequences. Glaucus cannot be acting in his own best interests. He is, indeed, very stupid to agree to a trade in which he loses so badly; Telemachus' request to Menelaus for a gift other than horses in *Odyssey* 4.600–608 shows that the rules of gift–exchange do not exclude common sense. One interpretation has argued that Glaucus is terrified of Diomedes, who has been invincible during his *aristeia* and that his rambling speech reflects his frame of mind: he emphasizes human weakness because he is so conscious of his own. On this reading, the removal of Glaucus' φρένες is not really necessary. He accepts the unequal exchange without demur as the price for his life (or, even after Diomedes' announcement of their friendship, he is too confused to bargain).[8] Yet Glaucus does not appear to be terrified. On the contrary, both heroes are said to advance in mutual challenge: ἐς μέσον ἀμφοτέρων συνίτην μεμαῶτε μάχεσθαι (120), and Glaucus' speech, with its proud and sarcastic claim that "many men" know his genealogy, seems to match Diomedes' confidence. Nowhere else does Glaucus seem to be inclined to stupidity either, and his genealogy, if it establishes any family characteristics, should make him a clever dealer: the earliest ancestor he mentions is Sisyphus, ὃ κέρδιστος γένετ' ἀνδρῶν (153). We can mitigate the strangeness of Glaucus' actions only by reading back from the exchange to impose motives on Glaucus which the text does not support. But we cannot simply lay special emphasis on the interference of Zeus, since the more Zeus' role is emphasized, the more disturbing is the absence of any visible reason for Zeus to make a fool of Glaucus in this way.[9] Instead of making up conditions which would make easy sense of the behavior of Glaucus, I would suggest that this strangeness is the point of the episode: Zeus here acts, without clear motive, on the mind of a character who has, exceptionally and perhaps uniquely, no previous inclination at all to act as Zeus causes him to act. The speeches of the two heroes offer different views of the gods and the extent to which mortals can rely on their help, and the exchange of armor, as an example of divine intervention, caps their verbal exchange.

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[8]J. D. Craig, "ΧΡΥΣΕΙΑ ΧΑΛΚΕΙΩΝ," *CR* n.s. 17 (1967) 243–45. A modified version of the same interpretation appears in P. Walcot, "ΧΡΥΣΕΙΑ ΧΑΛΚΕΙΩΝ: A Further Comment," *CR* n.s.191 (1969) 12–13. W. Donlan, "The Unequal Exchange between Glaucus and Diomedes in the Light of the Homeric Gift–Economy," *Phoenix* 43 (1989)1–15 grounds a similar reading in parallel gift–exchanges, arguing that while Glaucus, as the lesser warrior, would be expected to give a greater gift, he is so confused and intimidated by Diomedes that the ratio in value becomes outrageous.

[9]See D. Traill, "Gold Armor for Bronze and Homer's Use of Compensatory TIMH," *CP* 84 (1989) 301–5, suggesting that Zeus is providing "compensatory" honor for Diomedes, since Diomedes does not get to kill a major hero during his *aristeia*. I agree (see below); but Zeus' motive for favoring Diomedes is itself obscure.

Julia Gaisser has shown how the speeches offer different views of the nature of human life and of the gods, views which depend on the speakers' *ethos*.[10] The story of Lycurgus, as Diomedes tells it, shows a man who attacks a divinity for no reason and is punished by the gods as a result. He implies that it is relatively easy for mortals to keep the gods' good–will; Diomedes, as befits a warrior having so magnificent an *aristeia*, is confident and optimistic. His pious aversion to fighting with gods also makes sense in the context; he fights Ares and Aphrodite only with Athena's explicit encouragment.[11] When he almost goes too far, trying to attack Aeneas, though he knows Aeneas to be under Apollo's protection (5.433), Apollo reminds him of his inferiority to the gods:

> φράζεο, Τυδεΐδη, καὶ χάζεο, μηδὲ θεοῖσιν
> ἶσ' ἔθελε φρονέειν, ἐπεὶ οὔ ποτε φῦλον ὁμοῖον
> ἀθανάτων τε θεῶν χαμαὶ ἐρχομένων τ' ἀνθρώπων. (440-42)

Diomedes takes the warning and retreats, and when he sees Ares and Enyo with Hector, he urges retreat: μηδὲ θεοῖς μενεαινέμεν ἶφι μάχεσθαι (5.596–606). Diomedes is therefore not out of character in being nervous about attacking gods other than those against whom he has been given specific permission to fight; he has been solemnly warned against going too far. Furthermore, since earlier in the day he had the exceptional ability to recognize gods (which seems to have vanished, for there is no sign of it later),[12] he may be especially aware that they may be present in disguise. Diomedes apparently believes that by following the wisdom contained in his story, he can continue to be successful.

Glaucus modifies Diomedes' depiction of the relationship between mortals and gods. First, his famous comparison of human generations to leaves—οἵη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοίη δὲ καὶ ἀνδρῶν—strengthens Diomedes' insistence on the gap between gods and mortals. His narrative about Bellerophon does more than establish his own prestige. It is a paradigm exactly along the lines of the story Diomedes has already told, dividing the career of Bellerophon into two parts. In the first he enjoyed divine favor: the gods gave him his beauty and

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[10]J. H. Gaisser, "Adaptation of Traditional Material in the Glaucus–Diomedes Episode," *TAPA* 100 (1969) 165–76. See also I. J. F. de Jong, *Narrators and Focalizers: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad* (Amsterdam 1987) 162-68.

[11]At 5.131–32 he is explicitly told by Athena to fight with Aphrodite if she enters battle, and he does so at 335–51. He attacks Ares only after a direct order from Athena (825–34) and with her beside him; Athena, in turn, has permission from Zeus to attack Ares (765–66), and Zeus rejects Ares' complaint against Athena and Diomedes (889–98).

[12]Sch. bT ad 123 suggest that the mist which conceals gods from mortals came back over Diomedes after he wounded Ares.

"lovely manliness" (156), and he killed the Chimaera θεῶν τεράεσσι πιθήσας (183). Later, however, he became hateful to the gods:

> ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ καὶ κεῖνος ἀπήχθετο πᾶσι θεοῖσιν,
> ἦτοι ὁ κὰπ πεδίον τὸ Ἀλήϊον οἶος ἀλᾶτο,
> ὃν θυμὸν κατέδων, πάτον ἀνθρώπων ἀλεείνων· (200–2)

The καί is best interpreted as an echo of Diomedes' speech, a direct comparison of Bellerophon with Lycurgus, who similarly ἀθανάτοισιν ἀπήχθετο πᾶσι θεοῖσιν.[13] But the point lies in the contrast between the two. Diomedes sees the favor of the gods as under human control. Glaucus emphasizes the role of the gods in human life. They gave Bellerophon κάλλος τε καὶ ἠνορέην ἐρατεινὴν (156), Zeus gave the scepter to Proetus (159), and the gods provided Bellerophon with a πομπή to Lycia (171). No reason is given for divine favor, and Glaucus also suppresses any cause for divine anger against Bellerophon later in his life. His story passes directly from Bellerophon's triumphant establishment in Lycia, achieved with divine favor, to the gods' coming to hate him. Glaucus is thus defined as a "pessimist." He sees mainly the uncertainty and mutability of human life and the arbitrariness of the gods.[14]

Gaisser shows how the speech emphasizes unexplained divine interference throughout by suppressing explanatory detail. No reason is given, for example, for Artemis' anger at Laodamia.[15] Rather, Glaucus seems to be offering an

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[13]So K. F. Ameis and C. Hentze, *Homers Ilias für den Schulgebrauch Erklärt* Band 1. Heft 2 (Leipzig 1908) *ad* 200 (though the *Anhang* [above, note 3] 138–39 endorses an athetesis of 200–2); P. Von der Mühll, *Kritisches Hypomnema zur Ilias* (Basel 1952) 117; M. Edwards, *Homer: Poet of the Iliad* (Baltimore 1987) 205; and other critics who speculate that the two exempla are taken together from an earlier catalogue–poem. So T. B. L. Webster, *From Mycenae to Homer: a Study in Early Greek Literature and Art* (London 1958). W. Leaf, *The Iliad* (London 1900–2, rept. Amsterdam 1971) *ad loc.* calls this interpretation "far–fetched." But for the precision of Homeric replies, see D. Lohmann, *Die Komposition der Reden in der Ilias* (Berlin 1970) 55, 95ff (though he himself, 91 n. 149, does not see correspondence here, and would athetize 200–2).

[14]This tendency of Glaucus' speech extends into details Gaisser does not discuss. The story of Bellerophon's daughter Laodamia, though it is told only very briefly, follows the same outline as Bellerophon's: first she is said to have lain with Zeus and borne Sarpedon, surely the highest glory for which a heroine could hope (198–99); only a few lines later, Glaucus says that Artemis killed her, and Ares kills her brother (203–5):

> Ἴσανδρον δέ οἱ υἱὸν Ἄρης ἄτος πολέμοιο
> μαρνάμενον Σολύμοισι κατέκτανε κυδαλίμοισι·
> τὴν δὲ χολωσαμένη χρυσήνιος Ἄρτεμις ἔκτα.

[15]Since Glaucus did not need to refer to these stories at all, his reticence about them cannot be explained by a desire to avoid telling tales which would reflect badly on his family, as does, for instance, Kirk (see above, note 3) on 200–2: Bellerophon's fate was too famous a part of the

exemplum to replace the one offered by Diomedes. Diomedes implies that his own success is certain as long as he avoids fighting with gods, and he uses an exemplary θεομάχος as the example of one who became hateful to the gods. Glaucus responds with a full narrative of one who was favored by the gods and therefore successful despite human intrigues against him, but who, for no reason we are told, became hateful to them and ended in misery. This reading points in the right direction, but it does not fully explain why these opposing views of the world should be expressed here: enemy heroes do not trade philosophies of life on the battlefield. Gaisser takes Glaucus' view as the poet's, but we must still ask why it is expressed here and in this way. Further, a satisfactory interpretation would offer some reason for this particular exchange of paradigms to lead to the peculiar exchange of armor.

Recently Richard Martin has interpreted the episode as a "flyting" contest, a battle of insults.[16] Diomedes' Lycurgus–exemplum is a direct threat to treat Glaucus as Lycurgus did Dionysus, and Glaucus' response, stressing his most famous ancestor, tries to fight back. But Diomedes, by inventing a guest–friendship (in Martin's view a fiction) and so manipulating Glaucus into the exchange of armor, wins the verbal battle.[17] The details of this interpretation are not convincing; it is not easy to see how Diomedes could intend Lycurgus as a positive example for himself. Even more troubling is the assumption that Diomedes' claim of guest–friendship is a lie.[18] While the exchange of armor might be a crafty, self–serving response to the discovery of such a relationship, guest–friendship is sacred, and it is hard to imagine a sympathetic character lying about it without good reason. It would also be peculiar for Diomedes, if he lacked a reason not to fight Glaucus, to avoid fighting and perhaps winning his armor the conventional way, without ever having to give up his own.[19]

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story to be ignored altogether, and is therefore placed with the fates of his innocent children in order to suppress his guilt as far as possible.

[16]R. Martin, *The Language of Heroes* (Ithaca, NY 1989) 286–89. W. Parks, *Verbal Dueling in Heroic Narrative: the Homeric and Old English Traditions* (Princeton 1990) 77–79 compares the transition from flyting to guest–friendship here to Beowulf's meeting with the Danish coastguard.

[17]Martin's view is probably a revival of an ancient one; see M. Maftei, *Antike Diskussionen über die Episode von Glaukos und Diomedes im VI. Buch der* Ilias, Beiträge zur klassichen Philologie 74 (Meisenheim 1976) 52.

[18]While this friendship may well be an invention without a basis in the tradition, surely an audience could hardly know that all such inventions are to be taken as fictions; that stories are regularly tailored to their audiences does not mean that they are not accepted, for the moment, as true. See M. M. Willcock, "Mythological Paradeigma in the Iliad," *CQ* 14 (1964) 141–54.

[19]It is true that the tradition associates Diomedes with μῆτις as well as βία, but the *Iliad*, apart from Book 10, ignores or suppresses this side of the tradition, and represents Diomedes

Nevertheless, Martin's reminder that these battlefield speeches seek to intimidate opponents is very helpful: Glaucus and Diomedes must somehow be trying to frighten each other when they express different view of the gods.

Diomedes is confident that the gods are with him, and though he stresses that he will not fight with a god, he frames this statement with boastful warnings:

> δυστήνων δέ τε παῖδες ἐμῷ μένει ἀντιόωσιν. (127)
> ἆσσον ἴθ', ὥς κεν θᾶσσον ὀλέθρου πείραθ' ἵκηαι. (143)

In other words, whether or not he is really worried that his opponent might be a god (and this anxiety could well be a rhetorical strategy), he implies that no mortal has a chance against him. In proclaiming the absolute gap in power between gods and mortals, he defines his own place as certainly below the gods', but inferior to no mortal, and he takes it for granted that the gods will not interfere with his excellence. Glaucus counters not only by claiming an ancestry which should make him the equal of any hero, but by hinting that the favor of the gods is not predictable. Since they can overturn anything mortals attempt, they can cause even the most powerful warriors to be defeated. Diomedes' self–confidence is therefore inappropriate.

Bellerophon defeated the Chimaera θεῶν τεράεσσι πιθήσας. This formula might imply that Bellerophon is a paradigm for Diomedes, for in rebuking him at 4.398 Agamemnon used this phrase of Tydeus, who, after killing all but one of the fifty Thebans who ambushed him, allowed Maeon to go home alive, obeying the portents of the gods. Agamemnon also stresses the help Athena gave Tydeus (390). Tydeus' excellence, which Diomedes should emulate, depended on the divine favor which he received and properly used. Sthenelus uses a similar expression in his reply as he claims that he and Diomedes are better than their fathers. The Epigoni, he claims, took Thebes:

> πειθόμενοι τεράεσσι θεῶν καὶ Ζηνὸς ἀρωγῇ·
> κεῖνοι δὲ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο (4.408–9)

Thus he denies the need for the example; the sons of the Seven know better than their fathers how to obey divine portents. Diomedes is the object of the example in Agamemnon's speech and its subject in Sthenelus' speech. He is thus closely associated with the theme of obeying portents, for both he and his father attained their success by following the signs of the gods. Bellerophon,

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instead as a paradigmatically forthright warrior. Cf. Kirk (above, note 3) on 124–27, 128–43, and 144–51.

like Tydeus, first met with success through divine favor and his own wise use of the help the gods sent him. Yet Bellerophon later met with disaster, and Tydeus, Diomedes' constant model, also perished along with the Seven. Sthenelus' reply to Agamemnon, like Diomedes' exemplum, is essentially an optimistic one. The defeat of the Seven lay in their own folly, and could therefore be avoided; it is not the unpredictable decision of arbitrary deity. Had Tydeus continued to exercise the wisdom of Agamemnon's story, he would not have perished in the attack on Thebes. Glaucus' speech thus implicitly recalls an example more complex than either Bellerophon or Lycurgus. Lycurgus, after all, is a θεομάχος pure and simple; Bellerophon is apparently a victim of a change of divine favor. Tydeus, who is most often a positive example of the hero who succeeded with divine help, fell into recklessness and was lost. His story, taken as a whole, may exemplify the tendency of the hero to become overconfident. While his story is optimistic in attributing the failure of the Seven to avoidable error, it leave open the question of how difficult it may be for a hero accustomed to divine protection to recognize his limits, and Glaucus' echo of Sthenelus once again implicitly raises this issue.

Diomedes' confidence is rather peculiar even in his own terms. His exemplum, though not inexplicable, is still somewhat strange for someone who has just been fighting with gods, and it places Diomedes in an ambiguous light. After all, at 5.381–415 Dione consoles Aphrodite with a list of gods who have suffered at human hands and the comment that Diomedes does not realize that οὐ δηναιὸς ὃς ἀθανάτοισι μάχηται; she, at least, includes Diomedes among this group. Sthenelus' comparison of the Epigoni with their fathers, set beside the constant use of Tydeus as a model for Diomedes—by Agamemnon, by Diomedes himself, and by Athena—may imply that Diomedes' immunity from the folly that overcame the Seven may not last forever. Diomedes' near-attack on Apollo foreshadows the similar attacks of Patroclus (16.700–711) and Achilles (20.441–54), who both will die at Apollo's hands (Patroclus, 16.787–806; Achilles, 22.359–60).[20] These three heroes, and these alone receive the epithet δαίμονι ἶσος (5.438, 459, 884; 16.705, 786; 20.447), which seems thereby linked to theomachy.[21] The story of Lycurgus is ambiguous as a pointer to the future: while Diomedes seems certain that he has not exceeded mortal boundaries and is safe from divine anger, this confidence is not necessarily shared by other characters or by the poem's audience.

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[20]For the similarity between Diomedes and Achilles, see O. Andersen, *Die Diomedesgestalt in der Ilias*, Symbolae Osloenses Supp. 25 (Oslo 1978) 97–98.

[21]On the epithet, see G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry* (Baltimore 1979) 143–44.

Diomedes thus seems in some danger under either paradigm: from divine anger, under his own, or from divine caprice, in Glaucus'. Diomedes' self-confidence is justified for the present, however, since (despite his battles with Ares and Aphrodite) Zeus and Athena, the gods who matter most, continue to support him, as the conclusion of the episode makes clear. If Dione's speech created an expectation that Diomedes would be punished by the gods for his theomachy, Zeus has already frustrated that expectation once, when he answered Ares' complaint about Diomedes and Athena (5.872–887) by rebuking Ares (889–98). The exchange of armor is thus an appropriate climax to the contest of speeches, for the theme of that contest, the unpredictability of the gods, is enacted in the trade. The episode concludes by affirming the continuing support of Zeus for Diomedes, despite his apparent excess in attacking Ares and Aphrodite. Ironically, Glaucus seems to be right in emphasizing the unpredictable and apparently arbitrary nature of divine favor, for Diomedes' actions are never punished in the poem. Indeed, he profits from his meeting with Glaucus.[22] But Glaucus' emphasis on the mutability of divine favor is misplaced in this instance, since he emphasized it in order to warn Diomedes, who, however, continues to be helped by Athena and Zeus. The hints which have pointed to divine anger against Diomedes all turn out to have been misdirections.[23] Both Diomedes and Glaucus apply paradigms which do not quite fit, since each speaks of a hero who ἀπήχθετο πᾶσι θεοῖσιν. In a situation of conflict among the gods, it may be more important to have the favor of a single powerful divinity than to be pious towards all.[24]

This theme of divine unpredictability links the episode to its wider context, too. The scene, after all, takes place as Hector, on the advice of the seer Helenus, goes to Troy to tell the women to offer a great peplus to Athena and to pray to her to restrain Diomedes (ὡς κεν Τυδέος υἱὸν ἀπόσχῃ Ἰλίου ἱρῆς, 96), promising her a sacrifice of twelve cows if she pities them. According to the narrator, Helenus' idea saved the Trojans from being routed:

> ἔνθα κεν αὖτε Τρῶες ἀρηϊφίλων ὑπ' Ἀχαιῶν
> Ἴλιον εἰσανέβησαν ἀναλκείῃσι δαμέντες, (73–74)

Theano, the priestess of Athena, and the Trojan women do as they are told, and Theano, placing the peplus on the statue's knees, prays:

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[22]So Andersen (above, note 20) 106.

[23]On misdirection in the *Iliad*, see J. V. Morrison, *Homeric Misdirection: False Predictions in the Iliad* (Diss. Mich. 1988).

[24]There is of course a later story that Aphrodite took vengeance on Diomedes: Verg. *A.* 11.269–78, Ov. *Met.* 14. 477–78.

πότνι' Ἀθηναίη, ῥυσίπτολι, δῖα θεάων,
ἆξον δὴ ἔγχος Διομήδεος, ἠδὲ καὶ αὐτὸν
πρηνέα δὸς πεσέειν Σκαιῶν προπάροιθε πυλάων,
ὄφρα τοι αὐτίκα νῦν δυοκαίδεκα βοῦς ἐνὶ νηῷ
ἥνις ἠκέστας ἱερεύσομεν, αἴ κ' ἐλεήσῃς
ἄστυ τε καὶ Τρώων ἀλόχους καὶ νήπια τέκνα. (305–10)

Athena, however, as we are immediately told, refuses the prayer (311). This is not surprising, given the pro–Achaean attitude Athena has already shown in the poem and the way Theano phrases the prayer, asking not just for an end to Diomedes' *aristeia*, but to his life.[25] Yet Athena is the city–goddess of Troy, and her hatred for the Trojans is left curiously unmotivated in the poem, since there is only one mention of the Judgment of Paris in the *Iliad* (and that one somewhat doubtful), even though the enmity of Hera and Athena makes no sense without it.[26] Her lack of pity for the wives and children of the Trojans is therefore a striking instance of the apparent arbitrariness of the gods implied in Glaucus' narrative and exemplified in Zeus' removal of Glaucus' mind: they select their favorites and help them for their own reasons, which human beings often find mysterious. Athena's favor, at any rate, is not won by conventional piety, and Zeus is unmoved by Diomedes' attacks on Aphrodite and Ares. The favor of Athena and Zeus towards Diomedes is the chief theme of *Iliad* Bk. 5 and the first part of Bk. 6, and it is exemplified both by Glaucus' encounter with Diomedes and by the frame in which that encounter is set. Once Zeus' extreme favor toward Diomedes is taken for granted, the unequal exchange can be understood as "compensatory τιμή." Because Diomedes, despite his great *aristeia*, is prevented from killing two major opponents (Aeneas and Glaucus), Zeus compensates him with Aeneas' horses and Glaucus' armor.

Yet Glaucus is also right in a less ironic sense. While Athena does not accept the prayer of the Trojan women, she does effectively respond to the prayer Helenus originally suggested, for after Hector and Paris re–enter battle at the opening of Book 7, she descends from Olympus and joins Apollo in replacing further battle with a single combat. Diomedes' *aristeia* is thus over, and so is the immediate threat to Troy. The narrator is perhaps not deceiving the audience when he claims that Helenus' inspiration saved the Trojans; Athena, despite her refusal of the prayer in the form in which it is delivered,

[25]On the change in the prayer, see J. V. Morrison, "The Function and Context of Homeric Prayers: A Narrative Perspective," *Hermes* 119 (1991) 145-57.

[26]See K. Reinhardt, *Das Parisurteil* (Frankfurt 1938).

and her lack of pity for the wives and children of the Trojans, ends battle for the day and with it Diomedes' time of glory.

Diomedes attempts to resume his *aristeia* on the following day. When Agamemnon, Idomeneus, and both Greater and Lesser Ajax have already fled, he first rescues Nestor, whose horse has been hit by an arrow, and then attacks Hector and kills his charioteer. Once again, the Trojans are nearly routed:

> Ἔνθα κε λοιγὸς ἔην καὶ ἀμήχανα ἔργα γένοντο,
> καί νύ κε σήκασθεν κατὰ Ἴλιον ἠΰτε ἄρνες,
> εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὀξὺ νόησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε· (8.130–32)

Zeus is forced to use the thunderbolt to drive Diomedes back, and even then Nestor must convince him that Hector's boasts will not impress the Trojans, since he has killed so many. After he turns to flight, he is insulted by Hector (161–66) and ponders three times whether to flee or remain; each time Zeus warns him with thunder (167–71). Now that he has begun to fulfill his plan to honor Achilles, Zeus no longer helps Diomedes, but Diomedes is very slow to realize that his winning streak is over and that Zeus is no longer on his side, or perhaps that his success depended at all on divine help. He would have done well to listen more carefully to Glaucus, whose message on the variability of divine favor is here vindicated. In its immediate context, it warns Diomedes, whose success depends on Zeus' failure to begin implementing his plans, plans of which Diomedes knows nothing. It further comments on Athena's failure to answer the prayer of the Trojan women, whose piety has no effect. Yet that prayer is partially answered, and the workings of Zeus' plan turn against Diomedes and favor Hector, until he too is destroyed in another turn of Zeus' plan. Each time divine favor and disfavor is placed within a wider frame, the judgments of the moment are shown to be incomplete. While Diomedes is successful now, Zeus' plan favors Hector on the next day. But Zeus' favor towards Hector is only a device within his plan to favor Hector's enemy, Achilles, and will eventually lead to Hector's destruction. At the same time, Achilles, apparently the favorite of Zeus, loses Patroclus through Zeus' plan, and is fated to be killed by Apollo. Even Achilles, who has special access to the divine through his mother, does not know and cannot control Zeus' decisions. In the *Iliad*, divine favor does not last forever for any hero. From the point of view of a mortal, unprovided with an omniscient poet's retrospective knowledge of divine will, Glaucus' warning that human life is variable and luck unreliable is eminently appropriate, and his own loss in the exchange of armor is a mild and almost funny proof of an important and usually tragic truth.