
In Question 2 you will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate an understanding of the prescribed text
 - present an argument supported by references to the text
-

Marks

Question 2 (10 marks)

Write an essay on ONE of the following topics

- (a) ‘The gods are, in general, part of Homer’s mechanism for preparing future events.’ (K. J. Dover) **10**

Discuss this statement in relation to Book XXIV of Homer’s *Iliad*.

OR

- (b) Few people who have read Homer’s *Iliad* can have failed to notice the frequent use of ‘stock’ epithets. **10**

Discuss Homer’s use of epithets in *Iliad* XXIV.



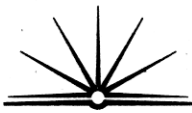
Question 2. a

The gods certainly do form a ^{preparatory} contributory factor and ~~so~~ provide some necessary assistance for the events of the Iliad Bk XII, ~~to be~~ particularly Achilles' *peijris* (curator) sung at the work's beginning to be concluded. Yet although they are a mechanism, their participation, such as Hermes' assistance to Priam leaving the "στρατόν Αχαιῶν" (camp of the Achaeans) is usually merely mechanistic. This may be so since although certain actions often take place by divine prompting there is ~~often~~ almost always in such cases "double motivation" where the human inclination matches the gods' irrespective of Zeus' will. ~~They are~~ The ~~gods~~ "θεοί" are thus of limited aetiological significance. So too ~~is~~ the gods' main function in the Iliad Bk XII of determining actions for mortals* that are proper and in the most ~~and~~ significant feature of the divine in ~~the~~ Bk XII where they, unlike other books where their concord, as in Bk I ~~is~~ ^{provides} ~~is~~ "troubles" for the Achaeans, are finally revealed as the guarantors of justice (*dike*) ~~are~~ among mortals. Thus,



The gods are a part of Homer's mechanism, that is their primary function and in Bk XIV, they are seen at work in a special aspect of it, yet their import as motivators ~~is~~ may be overexaggerated, in the ~~over~~ context of the overwhelmingly human focus of the work.

The gods often prompt action in Bk XIV, thus they bid Achilles receive Priam when Zeus lets Thetis know that "the gods are above all angered by him." Likewise, his commands Priam "to go thither to the ships... and ransom divine Hector." Yet, both these actions arise just as much if not more so from each of the characters' own volition. Thus Achilles is, "νοῦν δὲ καὶ αἴτιον Ἐντοπαί τοι λῴρασι" (minded to ransom Hector to you) "Διοθεῦ δὲ δὲ δὲ" (furthermore a messenger from Zeus has come). The ~~conjunction~~ conjunction δὲ demonstrates the separateness of the two motivators. Similarly Priam, stated his intention to approach Achilles in Bk XIII before his come, so he can treat the gods' promise that they will send a ~~messenger~~ "πρόπτοϊ" with sufficient enough distrust to be surprised at Hermes' appearance. ~~His~~ Priam's journey is even heroic enough to merit a ~~type~~ type of aristeia,

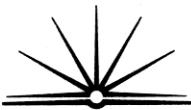


The elaborate series of treasures such as the "four
cavalry" and "very beautiful" chariot" paralleling
the arming scene of warriors like Diomedes, because
Priam is seen by his allies as going "Θανατόνδε"
(to his death) which is used only of Hector and
Priam elsewhere, the epithet "θεοίδης" (godlike) is also
a warrior's name where else used of Priam. Thus, to
effect the god's command is a heroic action. Accordingly,
while the gods are some contributory factors for the
major events of the book, they are of, if anything,
less importance than men.

This is seen most ~~importantly~~ importantly in
Achilles' treatment of Priam it is true that
he warns ~~him~~ "μη κέρι νῦν μ' ἐπαθήσῃ"
(don't hurt me) and claims it is the fear of
"Διὸς Ἰδλίτῳ παρ' ἀπατρίῳ" (breaking
Zeus' orders) that restrains him. Yet, unlike Priam,
Achilles is already relaxing his grief over Patroclus' death
by eating since when Priam enters "τραπέτην
ἀποκτετατήν" (the table was set up) with food, so too is

his prayers, first directed against Agamemnon then
Hector and his family. Achilles is "παύροιστος" (mad)
before, he can recover from it of ~~his own~~ himself
while the ~~indeed, the only~~ twelve days he grants
Priam "to bury divine Hector" were not called for
by the gods, nor was his thoughtful care to ensure
Priam does not see his son's corpse uncared for. Furthermore,
Priam when entreating Achilles "μνησθε πατρός σοῦ" (remember your father) ignores the command of Hermes to
do so ~~as well~~ as well ^{on behalf of} his mother and son. Achilles
responds to Priam purely as a human and his parable
of Nioke and the "ἄσπετος ἄσπετος" (two stone jars), ~~that~~ by
which no man is blessed as well as his statement
they are "ἀνθρώπων" (concerning) indicates feelings of
human compassion and solidarity. Thus, in the
central exchange of the book, the gods while
a mechanism for events are of limited significance.

One aspect in which the gods are prevalent is
in the sheer performance of physical obstacles, such
as how Hermes "drove home the bolt, which threw



A Zeus' decision of justice is carried out. Thus, they are a mechanism for future action but only to a limited degree.

Furthermore, in Bk XIV, "Homer" is partly occupied with having the gods noted in his (oral) audiences' familiarity with Zeus as the "guardian of men's oaths" and other reciprocal relationships, as well as for supplicants, which does have some significance, but not too much.

This means that less attention will be paid to the gods as mechanisms for action. It is only here that "Zeus ἐλεῖται" (Zeus pitied) someone, as self-beholder, as in Bk XIX where Achilles' request for Patroclus' death was denied, Zeus was merciless. The gods are not ^{massively} ~~only~~ concentrated on preparing future action.

Although they may have knowledge of the future, as in Book IX when Zeus informs Prius of Achilles' two choices. The gods do not, ^{mostly} ~~regularly~~ debate ~~about~~ all the actions yet to come, they only ~~do~~ question the existence of whether Hermes should steal Hector's body which is forbidden, to



grant Achilles greater "kudos" (glory). Others concern themselves with questions of propriety.

Although there may be some contradiction in a pre-systematic theology, ~~the~~ Achilles' parable of Niobe the ruined mother, and his other statements do ~~present the~~ ^{affirm that} in the most important aspect "θεοί... ἀνείθεστοί" (the gods are uncaring). Hence, Longinus "Homer has made the gods most human, the human most divine." Ultimately, although Homer may mainly employ the gods for future action, he equally states that they are not excessively ~~+~~

~~The~~ Book XXIV is deliberately made unusual by the poet by ~~the~~ its perfect counterbalance to Book I identified by Whitman, and in the duality of certain phrases like "ποδοῦναι τὸν ἦναι." ~~Thus~~ Thus, the gods play a less significant role in causing events. Their significance in preparing events is thus lowered. ~~Yet~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~gods'~~ main functions in Bk XXIV ^{are} assisting the actions mechanically providing some causation and debating proper relationships and Homeric morality. They are ^{some what} ~~chiefly~~ concerned with preparing events ^{to} ~~to~~ ^{run} ~~to~~ ^{limited} ~~limited~~ ^{degree.}
but only ~~to~~ ~~limited~~

* and relating in that
perspective to men