

THE EFFECTS OF WAR ON GENDER ROLES IN ILIADIC TROY

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Aemiliae meae puellae carissimae
Quae nostra incepta inspiravit
Cuiusque sine auxilio non hoc opus suscepissem

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The nine year siege of Troy that preceded the events of the *Iliad* has occupied the attention of all the Trojan males since its origin. The war has forced the male populace to abandon many of their domestic tasks and concentrate on the defense of the city in a longstanding war for which there is no end in sight. In contrast, the women are expected to carry on with their usual domestic tasks of weaving and taking care of the home. However, Book 6 shows by way of Hector's interactions with three very different female characters, his mother, his sister-in-law, and his wife respectively, that the Trojan women can no longer watch silently from the Scaean Gate as the men battle for the survival of their civilization. These three women feel a sense of duty to help the men in any way they can, and Andromache, Hector's wife even goes as far as to offer her husband tactical military advice. In this thesis I suggest that two separate spheres, the masculine and the feminine, function in the city of Troy. However, war has upset the delicate balance of the two, and only the proper cooperation of these two spheres through the plan of Zeus brings resolution to the final conflict of the poem in Book 24.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I argue that the *Iliad* depicts Troy as a city in which gender roles have been distorted by war. The Greek army forced the male populace to leave the city so as to defend it, creating a kind of vacuum into which the women are drawn as they watch the battle from the walls and try to lend support to the men in any way they can. Indeed, female characters are keenly aware of the consequences of defeat, for it is through female voices that the poem articulates the horrors that await the Trojan women when the men can no longer defend the city.

Approached this way, the war in effect feminizes Troy, for by drawing forth the men, it leaves the city to the women and others such as the aged Priam, who are unable to participate directly in battle. The Scaean Gate has become boundary between two worlds: the masculine world of the battlefield and the now highly feminized world inside the city.¹ The shield of Achilles in Book 18 recreates in miniature the effects of both war and peace on the sexes. Thus, in the city at peace, women are conspicuous in bridal processions and weddings, while in the city at war, women appear on the battlements with the children and elderly men awaiting the outcome of a siege.

The characters of Hector and Priam serve in the poem both to shift perspective between the masculine and feminine spheres that the war has created in Troy, and to dramatize a range of responses to the new order that has emerged. Thus, as I discuss in Chapter 1, Hector fails to adapt to the gendered topography of Troy at war, as can be seen for example in Book 6, when he chooses to ignore advice from female characters, considering himself, incorrectly, as events

¹ In making this observation, I draw on Marilyn Arthur's seminal article, "The Divided World of *Iliad* VI," *Reflections of Women in Antiquity* (New York: Gordon and Breach, 1981) 20, though I hope to show that balancing the needs of both spheres is an important task during the war that must be carried out by the public protector of the city, a role that is first taken on by Hector and later Priam, both of whom function as liaisons between these two worlds.

demonstrate, to be a more knowledgeable architect of public policy. By contrast, as I discuss in Chapter 3, Priam accepts the recommendation of Hecuba to seek an omen before going to ransom Hector's body from Greeks, in an act that both represents the only occurrence of cooperation of the two spheres, and also inaugurates the resolution of the final major conflict of the poem, when the old king wrests what is at least a symbolic victory from the disaster that his son's death represents for Troy.

Women take center stage in the lamentation scenes of Books 22 and 24, which are discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 respectively. In their capacity as mourners, Helen, Hecuba, and Andromache become fully public figures, giving voice to, and helping to channel, the shared grief of the Trojan people over the loss of Hector. It is not coincidental that the *Iliad* ends with public female voices, for their prominence here serves to recall the fact that, while the tragedies that befall the dominant figures of the poem, Hector and Achilles, have been resolved, Troy remains a city under the pressure of impending disaster.

CHAPTER 2 HECTOR RETURNS TO TROY FOR THE FINAL TIME

In Book 6 of the *Iliad*, Hector passes through the Scaean gate. In doing so, he crosses a boundary between a masculine world at war and a domestic, feminine world still at relative peace.¹ He has come to the city for a specific purpose: to organize an offering to Athena through his mother Hecuba that the goddess might keep the raging hero Diomedes from Troy (6.86–101). Nevertheless, his journey through the city exhibits a stark contrast to the world of the battlefield. Troy contains only those who cannot offer any military aid in battle: women, children, and old men. While the female characters in the poem do not directly participate in battle, they do offer other forms of aid to returning soldiers such as setting up hot baths and taking care of exhausted horses.² Masculine characters, in addition to these responsibilities to the state, have a private duty to the household and normally balance their time between these two spheres. However, the invasion of the Greek army has forced the men to abandon their domestic duties and forces the women to take up the duties that have been abandoned by the male characters. As they do so, the Trojan women serve to remind their male defenders that they face not only the ultimate loss of the city but the forced enslavement of their children and themselves.

While the *Iliad* does not offer a depiction of Troy during peacetime that could serve to establish precisely what effects the prolonged siege has had on Trojan society, it does offer glimpses of a world without war through similes, para-narratives, and the like. The timeless world invoked by such passages, though to be sure idealized, is nevertheless elaborated in order

¹ Arthur (1981) 20 defines the Scaean gate as the meeting place of two worlds, the domestic and public. While Arthur suggests that public and private spheres in Homeric poetry are not as strongly defined as those of the Classical period, I will use Arthur's model of the Scaean gate as a starting point to illustrate how Hector and later Priam function as the liaison between the masculine and feminine worlds operating in the poem.

² Kakridis (1971) 68 draws attention to the contribution the female characters make to the Trojan war effort. To these duties may be added the constant tasks of spinning and weaving; cf. Naerebout (1987) 117.

to reinforce the main narrative.³ For this reason, I shall turn to the explicit contrast between the two cities on the shield of Achilles, one at war and the one at peace, in order to supplement the picture of Trojan society in the *Iliad*.

While my arguments are literary, rather than socio-historical, I note in passing that this gendered division of civic space is confirmed by the admittedly limited evidence obtained from the historical period in Greece when the Homeric epics were taking shape.⁴ For while women of the archaic and classical periods may not have been as completely isolated from the public sphere as many scholars have erroneously suggested,⁵ their participation in this generally male-dominated world tends to be in the contexts of religious festivals,⁶ which is indeed the case in the *Iliad*; thus the object of Hector's return to Troy in Book 6, and the roles that Hecuba, Andromache, and Helen will play in the funeral laments that are the subject of chapter 3.

Here I will explore how these three female characters in Book 6 offer advice to Hector. Through their interactions with him, the poem constructs Hector as a kind of liaison between the masculine and feminine worlds of Troy, a role that, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters, he shares with his father Priam. Hector himself thinks of nothing more than his role as defender of the city in his encounters with the three women. He has returned for a very specific purpose, which affects the safety of the city at large. That purpose remains foremost in his mind, for he rebuffs all suggestions made by his mother, his sister-in-law, and his wife, not only those that

³ For the relationship between para-narratives and similes and the main plot in Homeric poetry see Alden (2000) 13–16 and 48–73, Taplin (1980) 11–12, and Andersen (1976) 5–18.

⁴ Dating of the Homeric epics is a contentious issue. However most modern scholars conclude that the epics took shape between the ninth and sixth centuries; for an overview of the issue and its implications for Homeric society see Raaflaub (1998) 169–171.

⁵ A point made forcefully by Cohen (1989) 3.

⁶ Humphreys (1996) 2.

may keep him any longer than necessary from his duty on the battlefield, but also those that deal directly with the danger that faces Troy.

The speeches made by the three women and the responses of Hector illustrate how male and female characters in Troy approach the crisis of invasion from distinct perspectives. Hector, the man, must keep his mind on the city and the situation at large. The Trojans know that he is their only hope against destruction (6.402–403), and Hector's knowledge of his own importance to the survival of the city has taken a psychological, physical, and mental toll on him during this long siege. In contrast, Hecuba and Andromache speak from the domestic perspective.

It is in this context that the Shield of Achilles is instructive, for it presents scenes of both war and peace in gendered terms. Inside the peaceful town, there are weddings and feasts, and it is noteworthy that women appear in a bridal procession, a religious ceremony; they do not participate directly in the procession but watch from their doorways (18.495–496). So also in a later scene on the Shield, unconnected with either city, female characters are shown preparing a sacrificial meal for the community (559–560) and participating in what appears to be a harvest festival (567–568). In contrast to the festival scene, the illustration of the court includes no women. The city at peace then contains feminine and masculine spheres with their separate divisions of labor. So long as peace lasts, the two spheres will operate relatively separately never forced to fully coordinate the efforts of both. War will necessitate the complete cooperation of the public and private spheres. The illustration of the city at war shows the effects of warfare on the feminine sphere as it draws women into conflict with their men, who now have separate duties outside the city.

The city at war mirrors the city of Troy in the main narrative in that both men and women have abandoned their usual pursuits because of the war. All the able-bodied men are expected to

help defend the walls. The women, children, and old men stand on the wall for protection and hope all turns out well (18.514–515). They cannot offer much aid to the men battling below. Nevertheless, these people standing on the wall serve as a reminder of what is at stake during any war: the future of a society.⁷ Those same people must try to defend the city against invaders if the wall should be breached at any time. War has completely upset the balance of the two spheres and jeopardized the future of the city.

Hector confronts this public/private dichotomy and the destabilizing effects the war has on the city as he enters Troy. When Hector first comes through the gate, he is met by a group of Trojan women requesting news about their brothers, husbands, and children. Hector encourages the women to pray to the gods. His apparent callousness is presumably due to the fact that he is on official business in the city and does not have the time to inform individual families of their losses, but his calm response, nevertheless, illustrates the contrast between the sexes in a war-torn city. The women, who have remained inside the city, must ask men who are coming and going in and out of the city about the fates of their loved ones. Hector, however, has many responsibilities and must stay on track.

After passing this group of mourning women, Hector comes to house of Priam, which is described as beautifully constructed with smooth stone walkways, περικαλλέ' ξεστῆς αἰθούσησι τετυγμένον (6.242–243). This large beautiful home contrasts with the slaughter that is taking place just behind the gate on the battlefield. The scene is on the surface suggestive of peace times and the prospect of life without war. Priam and his sons built this beautiful palace many years ago when they were prosperous, and the Greeks were far off tending their own fields. Now life has been turned upside down by war; thus the sight of the mourning women alters the scene.

⁷ Kakridis (1971) 69.

While the Greeks have captured and pillaged many cities of Priam's allies, Troy itself has survived behind its wall.

Hector first encounters his own family when his mother Hecuba runs out to meet him. She brings with her Laodice, the most beautiful of all of her daughters, θυγατρῶν εἶδος ἀρίστην (6.252). Once again, the beauty of the city as reflected in Hector's sister Laodice contrasts sharply the scenes of gore that take place just a few feet away beyond the Scaean gate.

The meeting between Hector and his mother Hecuba offers a further illustration of the differing perspectives of the sexes.

σὲ δ' ἐνθάδε θυμὸς ἀνῆκεν
ἐλθόντ' ἐξ ἄκρης πόλιος Διὶ χεῖρας ἀνασχεῖν.
ἀλλὰ μὲν ὄφρα κέ τοι μελιηδέα οἶνον ἐνείκω,
ὡς σπέισης Διὶ πατρὶ καὶ ἄλλοις ἀθανάτοισι.
6.256–259

And your spirit has bid you to come here to lift your hands to Zeus from the top of the city. But let me bring you honey-sweet wine so you might pour a libation to father Zeus and the other deathless ones.

Hecuba assumes that Hector has returned to the city to propitiate Zeus though he has come to organize a committee of women to make an offering to Athena. In her conversation with Hector, she beseeches him to make an offering of wine to Zeus and then to drink a bit himself to strengthen his spirit for battle. Hecuba thinks that her advice is sound and beneficial. Yet Hector's response makes it clear that her suggestions do not benefit the common good since he cannot pour a libation to Zeus with χερσὶ δ' ἀνίπτουσιν (6.266). Hector, the embodiment of the city, claims better to understand how to propitiate Zeus, the protector of the community, than does Hecuba.

The poem thus in a sense suggests two solutions, a public/masculine one and a private/feminine one, to the immediate problem that has induced Hector to return to the city, namely the onslaught of Diomedes that begins in Book 6. Hector and the men of the city hope that a sacrifice to Athena will stop Diomedes and save the city. Hecuba, by contrast, thinks an offering to Zeus would change the situation. Given Athena's implacable hostility towards the Trojans and Zeus' active management of the battle throughout the poem (4.1–74 and 20.1–30), Hecuba's solutions would seem more likely to achieve success.

Conversely, Hector causes the masculine world of the battlefield to intrude on the feminine sphere when he seeks a female cult remedy for Diomedes' assault. Since Diomedes' attacks are leveled against the city, he ought to appeal to the city's protector Apollo or Zeus. Instead, Hecuba and Hector seem to confuse their roles in the city. Hector, of course, prevails and sends Hecuba off to propitiate Athena, a religious duty that would be performed by the Trojan women even under normal conditions. Thus, Hector reorients Hecuba towards her public duty to the city. Nevertheless, his decision to ignore the advice of Hecuba, a member of the feminine sphere, illustrates the conflict between the two gendered worlds of Troy. Indeed, given Athena's implacable hostility towards Troy, and Zeus' active management of the war throughout the poem (4.1–72 and 8.1–40), Hecuba's solution would seem more likely to achieve success

Hecuba offers more questionable advice when she tells Hector to refresh himself with some wine. She asserts that wine can augment a tired man's strength, ἀνδρὶ δὲ κεκμηῶτι μένος μέγα οἶνος ἀέξει (6.261). Hector finds her suggestion ludicrous, μή μοι οἶνον ἄειρε μελίφρονα πότνια μήτηρ, μή μ' ἀπογυιώσης μένεος, ἀλκῆς τε λάθωμαι (6.264–265). Wine can only overpower a man's limbs and subdue his prowess in warfare. Men who inhabit the public sphere are expected to observe temperance especially during wartime. Thus, for instance, Achilles uses

the adjective οἰνοβαρές (1.225), “heavy with wine,” as insult to question the judgment of Agamemnon. Nevertheless, Hecuba, seemingly limited by her experiences in the domestic sphere, does not understand the effect of wine on warriors. Yet she wants to help her suffering son as she too worries about the war’s outcome.

While Hecuba represents the female sphere during her encounter with Hector, Helen portrays herself as more masculine, concerned with her own glory in the brief conversation she has with the hero in Paris’ bedroom. In her first appearance, the elderly men on the wall discuss her beauty as she walks past them (3.153–160). In Book 3 Hector uses taunts to persuade his brother Paris to remember his honor and fight Menelaus in a duel. Picking up on this theme, Helen in Book 6 speaks to Paris more as a fellow soldier than a wife. In his discussion with Paris, Hector encourages him to return to the battlefield, and this is precisely what Helen tells him to do (337–338). Indeed, she proceeds to tell Hector that Paris’ mind is unstable, even as she reminds him that she and Paris are in fact responsible for the disaster facing Troy (352–358).

This scene contrasts with the one that follows with Andromache, for Helen seems content to send Paris out to protect everyone but her. She reproaches him just as Hector did both here and in Book 3. Her behavior seems more appropriate to the conduct of competitive males in combat (39–45) as she resembles a man berating Paris the way she does in front of Hector. She publicly wishes that she had a better and braver husband than Paris. Men obtain honor through their victory but women on account of their modesty and fertility. Helen is admittedly a difficult character to analyze. She is represented in three different ways throughout the poem: the repentant woman, the good wife taken against her will, and mere property subject to changes of hand as Menelaus and Paris contend for her.⁸ Nevertheless, she certainly does not behave in

⁸ Kakridis (1971) 25–31.

accordance with the actions of the other two women in Book 6, who articulate the concerns of the abandoned domestic sphere, when she encourages Paris to rejoin the war. A significant parallel appears in the embassy scene in Book 9, where Phoenix describes how Meleager's wife encourages her husband to return to the battle when their city is besieged by the Kouretes (9.573–599). However, she speaks to him only after so many other embassies by his father, mother, and his friends have failed. In her speech she reminds Meleager of all the troubles that befall a captured city: the destruction of the city, the slaughter of the male populace, and the enslavement of the women and children.⁹ Her rhetoric resembles that of Andromache who in her three laments in Books 6, 22, and 24 reminds the audience and Hector of the consequences of abandoning the domestic sphere.

Next Hector speaks to his wife. While Andromache, like Hecuba, speaks from her experiences in the private sphere, she does not have the same relationship to Hector as Hecuba since he is the actual protector of their son. Hector views himself as protector of the city at large. He is, at the same time, the protector of the family unit in the private sphere. Andromache, in keeping with her feminine perspective, sees his duties to the family as first and primary. Despite the fact that Hector is still alive, Andromache's speech anticipates his death, in that it echoes the three part structure of a typical Homeric lament, which includes a direct address, a narrative of past or future events, and another direct address accompanied by a lamentation.¹⁰ In their conversation she appeals to the tragedies that have befallen her. Achilles has killed her father and brothers, and her mother perished soon afterwards. Hector and Astyanax are her only living family members. Her final appeal speaks directly of her ultimate fear: life without Hector:

⁹ The image of destruction in the Meleager story thus offers another example in which other cities are used to mirror the action in the main narrative; cf. Hainsworth (1993) ad 524–605.

¹⁰ Dué (2002) 68.

ἀλλ' ἄγε νῦν ἐλέαιρε καὶ αὐτοῦ μίμν' ἐπὶ πύργῳ,
μὴ παῖδ' ὀρφανικὸν θήης χήρην τε γυναῖκα.
6.431–432

But come now take pity and remain here on the wall, lest you make your son an orphan and me a widow.

Despite her efforts, her advice falls deafly on Hector's ears. He refuses her, saying that he would let down the Trojan men and women if he should flee from the battle and tend to his own private family:

ἀλλὰ μάλ' αἰνῶς αἰδέομαι Τρῶας καὶ Τρωάδας
ἐλκεσιπέπλους, αἳ κε κακὸς ὧς νόσφιν ἀλυσκάζω πολέμοιο
6.441–443

But I would be ashamed before the Trojan men and women with their long trailing robes if like a coward I should shrink from the battle.

He cannot think of his own household when the city at large is threatened by such a danger. Yet this danger is precisely the cause for Andromache's concerns. She views Hector's decision to leave the home and battle in front of the gates as inappropriate to the existing crisis since her center of life, the private home, faces an imminent threat from the Greeks as soon as they breach the walls of the city. She thinks Hector is neglecting his duty as protector of the family so that he might preserve the fate of others. Similarly, in Book 9 Phoenix uses the story of Meleager as a negative example of hero behavior because Meleager waited until the city was besieged before he rejoined the war (9.559–605). He asks Achilles to avoid making the same mistake since the people would not love him the same thereafter. Hector himself seems to admit that his service to the city is in vain saying,

ἔσσειται ἡμαρ ὅτ' ἄν ποτ' ὀλώλη Ἴλιος ἱρή
καὶ Πριάμος καὶ λαὸς ἐϋμμελίῳ Πριάμοιο.
6.448–449

There will be a day when holy Ilios will be destroyed and Priam and the people of good ashen speared Priam.

Nevertheless, he cannot imagine the shame he would feel to sit out the battle and watch the war unfold from the tower above. He further explains that he must not only fight but win glory for himself and his father. Andromache will not persuade him, for if she had, the narrative would have ended in Book 6.

Andromache offers Hector military advice, informing him that the wall is weak near the Scaean gate (6.433–439). Andromache's advice here is meant to be seen as exceptional as is suggested by the fact that no other female characters take such a keen interest in battle tactics and military minutia. Indeed, earlier commentators questioned the authenticity of the passage on precisely these grounds, since Andromache is setting herself against the generalship of Hector.¹¹

Following their conversation Hector attempts to hug his son Astyanax, but the horse-hair plume on his helmet frightens the infant, (6.448–449). The reaction of the baby draws attention to the dichotomy which the poem reinforces between war and peace, and masculine and feminine. Hector is truly out of place in the city. A fully armored warrior belongs on the battlefield with his men as he himself mentions several times during his speeches in Book 6. The child cannot help but be frightened by this hulking and terrifying creature before him. Astyanax belongs in the city with his mother Andromache, but Hector does not. It is as if the cry of the child is a signal that Hector has made the correct decision in staying with his troops. Hector is Hector “of the shining helmet” not Hector “with babe in arms.” His very nature will not allow him to spend any more time in the city than he must.

¹¹ Kirk (1990) ad 6.433–439.

While Hecuba, Andromache, and Helen all approach Hector in Book 6, only Hector's wife and mother truly speak from the private and domestic sphere. Hecuba and Andromache, forced by the war to interact with the public sphere, behave as one might expect, variously offering Hector advice or beseeching him to remain at home with his family. Helen, however, is much more problematic. Not only does she have no regard or concern for the domestic sphere, she even encourages Paris to return to the public sphere and leave her. She uses language appropriate to male combatants and taunts Paris so as to persuade him. In this way Helen represents at best an inverted female character who lies somewhere outside the cultural norm.

CHAPTER 3 HECTOR DIES AND PRIAM RESPONDS

At the beginning of Book 22, the Greeks have pinned the Trojans against their own wall near the Scaean Gate. Many of the Trojan heroes have fled behind the gates of the city to avoid Achilles. However, Hector chooses to remain outside and face him. Priam, Hecuba, and other Trojans seated atop the wall are watching the scene. Priam then addresses Hector:

Ἐκτορ μὴ μοι μίμνε φίλον τέκος ἀνέρα τοῦτον
οἴος ἀνευθ' ἄλλων, ἵνα μὴ τάχα πότμον ἐπίσπης
Πηλεΐωνι δαμείς, ἐπεὶ ἦ πολὺ φέρτερός ἐστι
σχέτλιος: αἶθε θεοῖσι φίλος τοσσόνδε γένοιτο
ὅσσον ἐμοί: τάχα κέν ἐ κύνες καὶ γῦπες ἔδοιεν
κείμενον: ἦ κέ μοι αἰνὸν ἀπὸ πρᾶπιδων ἄχος ἔλθοι:
ὅς μ' υἱῶν πολλῶν τε καὶ ἐσθλῶν εὖνιν ἔθηκε
κτείνων καὶ περνὰς νήσων ἔπι τηλεδαπάων.
22.38–45

Hector, my dear child, do not await this man alone without anyone else, lest you quickly come upon your destiny, having been conquered by the son of Peleus, since he is stronger by much, the pitiless man: would that he were as dear to the gods as he is to me. Quickly the dogs and birds would eat him as he was lying on the ground: and dreadful pain would go out of my heart. Achilles has made me bereft of many good sons, killing them and selling them to far off islands.

In this speech Priam reminds Hector that Achilles is stronger and beseeches him to return to the city. So long as Hector lives, Priam remains a frustrated and feeble old man on the wall. Prior to Book 24 he leaves the city only once to preside over what he believes to be the end of the conflict (3.302–310). As discussed in Chapter 1, Hector alone guards the city and wards off its destruction. Priam, however, decides to call him back behind the walls. Both private and public concerns demand that Hector live on and defend Troy since unlike other heroes the death of Hector affects the safety of Troy.¹ Priam's previous experiences with Achilles through the

¹ Haubold (2000) 92.

countless deaths of his other sons make him wary of Achilles. He does not want to lose his favorite son to the same killing machine, and he tries to articulate this to Hector in this pathetic plea by mentioning that Achilles has already killed a number of his children. As the speech progresses, Priam's language becomes more desperate as he realizes that his words are not having the intended effect on Hector. His frustration and inertness reach their climax right before Hector's death.

ἀλλ' εἰσέρχαιο τεῖχος ἐμὸν τέκος, ὄφρα σαώσης
Τρῶας καὶ Τρῳάς, μὴ δὲ μέγα κῦδος ὀρέξης
Πηλεΐδῃ, αὐτὸς δὲ φίλης αἰῶνος ἀμερθῆς.
πρὸς δ' ἐμὲ τὸν δύστηνον ἔτι φρονέοντ' ἐλέησον
δύσμορον, ὃν ῥα πατὴρ Κρονίδης ἐπὶ γήραος οὐδῶ
αἴσιη ἐν ἀργαλέῃ φθίσει κακὰ πόλλ' ἐπιδόντα
υἱάς τ' ὄλλυμένους ἐλκηθείσας τε θύγατρας,
καὶ θαλάμους κεραϊζομένους, καὶ νήπια τέκνα
βαλλόμενα προτὶ γαίῃ ἐν αἰνῇ δηϊοτῆτι,
ἐλκομένας τε νουὺς ὀλοῆς ὑπὸ χερσὶν Ἀχαιῶν.
22.56–65

But come inside the wall, my son, so that you might save the Trojan men and women, lest you hand great glory to the son of Peleus, and you yourself be deprived of your life. Take pity on me, the wretched one at the threshold of old age, who can still reason, whom the father, son of Cronus, consumes in grievous fate as he looks on his sons being destroyed and his daughters torn asunder, and his bed chambers destroyed, young children thrown to the ground in dreadful battle, and daughters-in-law being dragged by the destructive hands of Greeks.

Here Priam's argument represents not only the request of a father but the appeal of the king of Troy. His speech even suggests that Hector's destruction will precipitate Priam's own death.²

Priam's image of himself being run through with a sword (Il. 6.66–76) foreshadows his demise at the hands of Neoptolemus when the son of Achilles slaughters him during the final moments

² Redfield (1994) 157.

of Troy (Ilias Parva fr. 16 Allen). His appeal to Hector is particularly graphic as his final words describe his lifeless body being torn apart by his own dogs (22.66–76).

As scholars have long recognized,³ Priam’s plea here in Iliad 22 builds on themes similar to those of the roughly contemporary martial poet Tyrtaeus, who illustrates a similarly awful death for elderly men who are forced to fight in battle in contrast to the glorious deaths of the young (Tyrtaeus fr. 10 21–30 West). Both Priam’s description of his death and the representation of the deaths of the elderly in Tyrtaeus indicate that when defense of a city is going well, the elderly and the others who can offer little aid do not have to fight. From this perspective, Priam’s statement to Hector seems curious here because, though Troy will fall without Hector and Priam will die, the old king, nevertheless, uses this image as a means to appeal to Hector.⁴

Warfare, I argued in Chapter 1, inverts established roles of not only gender but age, and the feeble Priam is one example of its effect on Troy. Priam, an old man, will be forced to fight on the battlefield when the wall is breached. Therefore, he uses a gender and age specific appeal to persuade Hector, in like manner as Hecuba will later in her speech. Again, this inversion of gender recalls the Shield of Achilles, where women and children also participate in the defense of the city.

When his father’s speech has no effect on Hector, “οὐδ’ Ἑκτορι θυμὸν ἔπειθε,” (22.78), his mother tries to persuade him with her own plea:

Ἑκτορ τέκνον ἐμὸν τάδε τ’ αἶδεο καί μ’ ἐλέησον
αὐτήν, εἴ ποτέ τοι λαθικηδέα μαζὸν ἐπέσχον:
τῶν μνησαί φίλε τέκνον ἄμυνε δὲ δῆϊον ἄνδρα
τείχεος ἐντὸς ἐών, μὴ δὲ πρόμος ἴστασο τούτῳ
σχέτλιος: εἴ περ γάρ σε κατακτάνη, οὐ σ’ ἔτ’ ἔγωγε
κλαύσομαι ἐν λεχέεσσι φίλον θάλος, ὃν τέκον αὐτή,

³ Richardson (1993) ad 22.66-76.

⁴ Richardson (1993) ad 22.66-76.

οὐδ' ἄλοχος πολύδωρος: ἄνευθε δέ σε μέγα νῶϊν
Ἀργείων παρὰ νηυσὶ κύνες ταχέες κατέδονται.
22.82–89

Hector, my child, respect these things and take pity on me myself, if ever I offered my care-banishing breast to you, dear child, remember these things and avoid that warlike man by coming inside the walls, and do not stand against him, pitiless man: for if he slays you, I myself will not be able to weep for you, son, on the pyre, the son born from me, nor will your richly dowered wife: but far off from us, near the ships of the Argives, swift dogs will devour you.

Much like Priam's first appeal, Hecuba is inspired by parental affection. Also like Priam's, her appeal is gender-specific: she asks him to recall all of the love and affection she brought him as a child, reminiscing about breast-feeding the young hero, εἴ ποτέ τοι λαθικηδέα μαζὸν ἐπέσχον. Rhetorically, this image equates with Priam's depiction of himself as a weak, old man struck down by an enemy soldier and consumed by his own dogs, though hers is a more positive and life-giving image. She attempts to incite feelings of guilt in Hector that would drive him back behind the walls. In her own feminine way, Hecuba's proposition further exacerbates Hector's predicament, for he now must balance the feelings of both parents against his heroic pride.

The second part of Hecuba's speech describes the kind of funeral Hector can expect to receive should Achilles slay him, thus reinforcing Priam's warning about Achilles' superior strength. And indeed, as discussed in the next chapter, Andromache and Hecuba will deliver two of the three laments over the dead Hector, in keeping with the traditional role of ancient Greek kinswomen who performed the ritual lament or goos for the dead hero.⁵ Thus, here too Hecuba's rhetoric echoes Priam's, but from a different perspective: while he fears for the very safety of the Trojans, her concern is with the psychological, or ritual, wellbeing of her people, in that it is through the kind of funeral rites that she describes that the community can come to terms with

⁵ Alexiou (1974) 12. Achilles substitutes for a suitable kinswoman in the funeral goos performed for Patroclus 23.6ff.

the death of its greatest hero. Hecuba knows that denying both the people and Hector's relatives their funeral rites will result in grave consequences since as a woman she understands the importance of ritual lamentation and proper burial. At the same time, she is also appealing to his desire for glory, inasmuch as a hero's funeral served, in epic as in ancient Greek society, to communicate his achievements to posterity.⁶ The public funeral for Hector is the most conspicuous way the community can illustrate its gratitude for his service to the city. This motif will recur later in Book 22 when Andromache discusses the fine clothes that the women of Troy had prepared as a burial shroud for the hero (24.510–514).

The third and final point in her speech involves Achilles' plans for Hector after his death. Hecuba incorrectly foreshadows the aftermath of Hector's death when she proclaims that he will die far from the city and be devoured by dogs. Though the possibility of such a fate is raised in the proem (1.4–5), and a number of characters speak of it, no body suffers such treatment in the Iliad. Nevertheless, to any Trojan or Greek hero, such a death is terrifying since no proper funeral rites can be accorded to the body. If the body were not burned on a pyre, the gods would not accept it into Hades, and the soul would sit in a sort of limbo until the appropriate rites had been performed (Ody. 11.51–83).

While neither Hecuba nor Priam is able to persuade Hector (22.92), their speeches cause Hector to reflect on the consequences of his decision to face Achilles.

ὦ μοι ἐγών, εἰ μὲν κε πύλας καὶ τείχεα δύω,
Πουλυδάμας μοι πρῶτος ἐλεγχείην ἀναθήσει,
ὅς μ' ἐκέλευε Τρωσὶ ποτὶ πτόλιν ἠγήσασθαι
νύχθ' ὕπο τήνδ' ὀλοήν ὅτε τ' ὤρετο δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.
ἀλλ' ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην· ἦ τ' ἂν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν.
νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ ὤλεσα λαὸν ἀτασθαλίησιν ἐμῆσιν,
αἰδέομαι Τρῶας καὶ Τρωάδας ἐλκεσιπέπλους,

⁶ Nagy (1999) 94–117.

μή ποτέ τις εἴπησι κακώτερος ἄλλος ἐμεῖο:
Ἐκτῶρ ἦφι βίηφι πιθήσας ὤλεσε λαόν.
ὣς ἐρέουσιν: ἐμοὶ δὲ τότε ἄν πολὺ κέρδιον εἶη
ἄντην ἢ Ἀχιλῆα κατακτείναντα νέεσθαι,
ἦέ κεν αὐτῶ ὀλέσθαι εὐκλειῶς πρὸ πόλης.
22.99–110

Woe to me, if I enter the gates and the walls. Polydamas will be the first to lay a reproach on me, he who was bidding me to lead the Trojans to the city during this destructive night when divine Achilles was arising. But I did not obey: it would have been much better. Now since I destroyed the army with my recklessness, I am ashamed before the Trojan men and women of the long flowing robes, lest another weaker man ever say of me, “Hector having been persuaded by his strength destroyed the army.” Thusly would they speak. It would be better for me by far to go to Achilles and slay him face-to-face or to be gloriously killed by him in front of the city.

Hector’s speech resolves naturally into three parts: his analysis of the situation, an imagined public verdict against him, and his response to the first two.⁷ It suggests that his only concern before the duel is his honor. His reference to Polydamas alludes to an earlier scene, in which his brother had urged Hector to move the army within the walls (18.254–283). Hector goes on to extrapolate that the probable criticism from peers such as Polydamas will give way to that of lesser warriors, κακώτερος. Hector says nothing of the fate of Troy or the grief his death might bring to his parents, who have just addressed him from the battlements. He uses this speech to rationalize his decision to face Achilles. After hearing Priam’s and Hecuba’s concerns for the private sphere, he reminds himself that he does not live in that world.

Hector’s fear that he will be accused of bringing destruction on the army (Ἐκτῶρ ἦφι βίηφι πιθήσας ὤλεσε λαόν) suggests that he believes that he has somehow already brought great harm to his men. Yet the real battle for Troy is about to occur. Thus articulated, Hector’s pride is more precious to him than the safety of his city, the love of his parents, and even life itself. His

⁷ Haubold (2000) 93.

last words speak clearly, ἄντην ἢ Ἀχιλῆα κατακτείναντα νέεσθαι, ἢέ κεν αὐτῷ ὀλέσθαι ἐϋκλειῶς πρὸ πόλῆος. Either he kills Achilles and gains honor or bestows it on Achilles in death. Like Priam's appeal to pity earlier, this sentiment expressed here, that immortality is gained through battle, resonates with the poetry of Tyrtaeus (Tyrtaeus fr. 12.31–32 West). While epic poetry always gives glory to its heroes, Tyrtaean poetry takes a step that epic does not and goes so far as to declare that the hero is rendered immortal through his death in battle. Thus, Tyrtaeus and the Iliad create a similar contradiction: it is on the one hand a hero's greatest reward to die in battle: on the other hand, the deaths of warriors have the potential to leave their dependents susceptible to the predations of hostile forces. As the Iliad settles this contradiction, Hector becomes an immortal hero through this encounter with Achilles, and fear of reproach is the motivating force that causes the hero to choose immortality over the love of his parents and safety of his city.

The poem requires of Hector what it requires of no other hero: that he set aside his pride to save an entire city. In contrast, the Greeks ask Achilles to overcome his pride so that they may win the war in a more timely fashion. The physical, psychological, and mental burden of Hector's duty has taken its toll on him for many days now as he has tried to balance the needs of not just the masculine sphere at war but also those of the women in the city. War, as discussed earlier, confounds gender roles and forces both sexes to participate in areas in which they are not experienced or accustomed. Women, in contrast to their behavior in times of peace, offer battle advice and public strategy while Hector must function as the liaison to the women of the city, a duty that comes with his position as public leader of Troy. Nevertheless, as Book 6 indicated, Hector has little time for this obligation and seems inexperienced at dealing with this aspect of his duty. He represents an overly masculine character as his decision to choose immortality or

the love of his parents and the safety of Troy will soon reveal. He is above all else a warrior.

After Hector's death, Priam, the second liaison to Troy, will prove a more effective arbitrator of these two spheres since age has neutralized any remnants of the excessive pride that may have existed in him as a young man.

In the end Hector decides that he would rather fight Achilles than return to Troy and endure the reproaches of Polydamas and lesser warriors. Hector's decision here reinforces themes that run throughout the poem. For instance, in Book 3 Hector uses strong language to rebuke his brother Paris before his duel with Menelaus:

Δύσπαρι εἶδος ἄριστε γυναιμανὲς ἠπεροπευτὰ
αἰθ' ὄφελος ἄγονός τ' ἔμεναι ἄγαμός τ' ἀπολέσθαι:
καί κε τὸ βουλοίμην, καὶ κεν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν
ἢ οὕτω λώβην τ' ἔμεναι καὶ ὑπόψιον ἄλλων.
ἦ που καγχαλώωσι κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοὶ
φάντες ἀριστιῆα πρόμον ἔμμεναι, οὐνεκα καλὸν
εἶδος ἔπ', ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστι βίη φρεσὶν οὐδέ τις ἀλκή.
3.39–45

Ill-starred Paris, beautiful, woman-crazy, cheater, if only you were never born or died unmarried: I would have it so, and it would be better by much than to be a conspicuous shame to us. Truly the long haired Achaeans now laugh when they say you are the foremost man, since you are good looking, but there is no force or strength in your heart.

Here too fear of reproach is a driving force behind heroic behavior. Even Paris, the effeminate foil to Hector, responds to his brother's reproaches and agrees to fight the much stronger Menelaus.

Hector steels his own resolve by imagining himself feminized, a condition totally out of place on the battlefield, the world of men.

μή μιν ἐγὼ μὲν ἴκωμαι ἰών, ὃ δέ μ' οὐκ ἐλεήσει
οὐδέ τί μ' αἰδέσεται, κτενέει δέ με γυμνὸν ἐόντα
αὐτῶς ὡς τε γυναιῖκα, ἐπεὶ κ' ἀπὸ τεύχεα δύω.
22.123–125

Let me not approach him, he would neither pity me nor respect me, but kill me unarmed like a woman since I put aside my arms.

Hector ultimately decides not to offer Achilles a settlement because the Achaean warrior might just as easily slaughter the unarmed Hector “like a woman” (22.124–125). Such a fate recalls the one that befell Priam’s son Lucaon earlier in the poem when he approached Achilles unarmed (21.34–135).⁸ Thus, Hector’s fear in dealing with Achilles foreshadows the mutilation of his body by Greek soldiers after his death. The scene of desecration contains less than subtle sexual imagery as the Greek soldiers reduce the mighty Hector to a woman stabbing him over and over with their spears (22.374–375). Ultimately, the pride of Hector and his previous knowledge of Achilles prevent him from making such an offer to the Greek hero.

At the moment Hector dies, a profound change takes place inside the city. The sight of Hector’s body now subject to defilement by Achilles rouses the old king to reexamine his own public duty. Priam’s speech foreshadows the actual course of events in Book 24 when against the desires of his family, Priam, like Hector, goes out to meet Achilles. The frustrated and feeble king Priam, tired of watching the action from the battlements with his weaker sons, the women and old men of the city, is about to return to his position as public symbol of authority. For again, only Hector can protect Troy from the Greeks.⁹

Once Hector dies, it becomes Priam’s responsibility as king to temper the community’s grief and to make sure that they do not neglect the duties of the war that will resume after Hector’s funeral. Likewise, he must organize the activities surrounding the funeral itself, a job

⁸ Richardson (1993) ad 22.123–125. Also see Wilson (2002) 14.

⁹ Hector’s role in this capacity is suggested for example in the etymology the poem assigns to his son Astyanax (6.402–403).

that he presumably would have performed in honor of Troy's greatest hero even if Hector were not his son. His first speech following Hector's death reflects this transition:

σχέσθε φίλοι, καί μ' οἷον ἐάσατε κηδόμενοί περ
ἐξελθόντα πόληος ἰκέσθ' ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν.
λίσσωμ' ἀνέρα τοῦτον ἀτάσθαλον ὄβριμοεργόν,
ἦν πως ἡλικίην αἰδέσσεται ἠδ' ἐλεήσῃ
γῆρας: καὶ δέ νυ τῶ γε πατὴρ τοιόσδε τέτυκται
Πηλεύς, ὅς μιν ἔτικτε καὶ ἔτρεφε πῆμα γενέσθαι
Τρωσί: μάλιστα δ' ἐμοὶ περὶ πάντων ἄλγε' ἔθηκε.
τόσσους γάρ μοι παῖδας ἀπέκτανε τηλεθάοντας:
τῶν πάντων οὐ τόσσον ὀδύρομαι ἀχνύμενός περ
ὡς ἐνός, οὗ μ' ἄχος ὅξυ κατοίσεται Ἄϊδος εἴσω,
Ἔκτορος: ὡς ὄφελεν θανέειν ἐν χερσὶν ἐμῆσι:
τῶ κε κορυσσάμεθα κλαίοντέ τε μυρομένω τε
μήτηρ θ', ἣ μιν ἔτικτε δυσάμμορος, ἠδ' ἐγὼ αὐτός.
22.416–428

Restrain yourselves, friends, and even though you are grieving, allow me to go alone from the city to the ships of the Greeks. I will beseech this arrogant man, doer of violent deeds, if he will have respect for this time of life and will take pity on my age: now at least Peleus his father has come upon this age, he who bore and nourished him to be a bane to the Trojans. But beyond all others has he brought grief to me, for he killed so many of my flourishing sons: I do not grieve so much for all of them, though I am mourning, as I do for one on whose account sharp pain will carry me down into Hades—Hector: He ought to have died in my arms: then the two of us would have satisfied ourselves weeping and shedding tears, the mother who bore him ill-fated as he was, and I myself.

The death of Hector brings Priam back to the public sphere, the world of men. His first thought is to go ransom his son whose death has so angered and pained the old man that he wants to go alone to the ships to retrieve Hector's body. At the moment Priam is overtaken by grief, but it is this pain that will force him from behind the walls and bring resolution to the conflict through the plan of Zeus in Book 24.

Priam suggests that he will appeal to Achilles on the basis of his age and gender just as he did in his speech to Hector earlier (22.66–76). While Hecuba used her gender, Priam will employ

both age and gender as a means to supplicate Achilles since the man has a father about the same age as Priam. War, as discussed in Chapter 1, forces women, children, and elderly men – individuals who do not belong in the public sphere – to interact with the men of that arena. Therefore, both Priam and Hecuba use the only means at their disposal in this regard: their age and gender.

Hecuba next bemoans the death of her son, whom she describes as the source of her reputation and honor in Troy:

τέκνον ἐγὼ δειλή: τί νυ βείομαι αἰνὰ παθοῦσα
σεῦ ἀποτεθνηῶτος; ὅ μοι νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμαρ
εὐχολὴ κατὰ ἄστῃ πελέσκεο, πᾶσί τ' ὄνειαρ
Τρωσί τε καὶ Τρωῆσι κατὰ πτόλιν, οἷ σε θεὸν ὧς
δειδέχατ': ἦ γὰρ καὶ σφι μάλα μέγα κῦδος ἔησθα
ζωὸς ἐών: νῦν αὖ θάνατος καὶ μοῖρα κιχάνει.
22.431–436

Child, I am wretched: how will I live now suffering dreadfully with you dead; you were my right to boast day and night throughout the city, a benefit to all the Trojan men and women in the city, who treated you as a god: for truly you brought great glory to them while you were alive. Now death and the fates come upon you.

Hecuba unlike Priam mentions Hector's contributions to the other Trojans. They treated him like a god since he brought them glory through his own actions, she claims, and now that he is gone, Troy itself has lost some of its prestige just like Hecuba his mother. In her earlier speech, Hecuba expressed concern that Hector would not be properly mourned by his family should he die away from the city (22.82–89), and she now presents a more public display of grief for the loss of her son, who was a benefit to the city at large. Her blurring the line between public and private in this way perhaps reflects the fact that she has lost one of her means of access to public expression. For once she has paid her respects to son at his funeral, her public role will be reduced to that of Priam's wife. Indeed, the terseness of her speech in comparison to Priam's,

and to Andromache's that follows, can in part be explained in terms of uncertainty about her role in the wake of Hector's death.

Andromache, summoned by the lamentations of Priam and Hecuba, arrives at the wall in time to see Achilles' chariot dragging her husband into the Achaean camp and to cry out in response:

αὐτὰρ ἐμὲ στυγερῶ ἐνὶ πένθει λείπεις
χῆρην ἐν μεγάροισι: πάϊς δ' ἔτι νήπιος αὐτῶς,
ὄν τέκομεν σύ τ' ἐγὼ τε δυσάμμοροι: οὔτε σὺ τούτῳ
ἔσσειαι Ἑκτορ ὄνειαρ ἐπεὶ θάνες, οὔτε σοὶ οὔτος.
ἦν περ γὰρ πόλεμόν γε φύγη πολύδακρυν Ἀχαιῶν,
αἰεὶ τοι τούτῳ γε πόνος καὶ κήδε' ὀπίσσω
ἔσσοντ': ἄλλοι γὰρ οἱ ἀπουρίσσουσιν ἀρούρας.
ἦμαρ δ' ὄρφανικὸν παναφήλικα παῖδα τίθησι:
πάντα δ' ὑπεμνήμυκε, δεδάκρυνται δὲ παρειαί,
δευόμενος δέ τ' ἄνεισι πάϊς ἐς πατρός ἐταίρους,
ἄλλον μὲν χλαίνης ἐρύων, ἄλλον δὲ χιτῶνος:
τῶν δ' ἐλεησάντων κοτύλην τις τυτθὸν ἐπέσχε:
χεῖλα μὲν τ' ἐδίην', ὑπερώην δ' οὐκ ἐδίηνε.
τὸν δὲ καὶ ἀμφιθαλῆς ἐκ δαιτύος ἐστυφέλιξε
χερσὶν πεπλήγων καὶ ὄνειδείοισιν ἐνίσσων:
ἔρρ' οὔτως: οὐ σός γε πατὴρ μεταδαίνυται ἡμῖν.
22.483–498

But you are leaving me in hated grief a widow in the palace: our child is an infant, whom we bore you and I both ill-fated people: nor will you be a benefit to this one since you are dead, nor will he be one for you. If he escapes the tearful war, there will always be pain and troubles for him ever afterward. For the others will take his land. The day of orphanhood separates a child from his friends. His head always hangs low, and his cheeks shed tears, the child in need goes to his father's friends, pulling on one by the tunic, and another by the coat. And one having pity offers a small cup. And the man wets the boy's lips, but not his palate. But someone with both parents will drive him from the feast, striking him with their hands and reproaching him with words saying: Get out; your father is not dining with us.

Andromache here gives voice to the fact that many of the fears she expressed in her last appearance in the narrative, the conversation with Hector in Book 6, have come to pass. He has

died and left her a widow and her son fatherless. However, she now suggests that Astyanax could survive the war whereas in her speech in Book 6 she had foreshadowed Astyanax's inevitable death at the conclusion of the war. Like Hecuba, she is reassessing her status in the wake of Hector's death, though she, with an infant son to protect, expresses more optimism than her mother-in-law. At the same time, however, her anguish is apparent, as in her recurrence to the defiled corpse theme (22.509). Hector did not listen to her advice in Book 6, and everything she said has come to pass.

Andromache's speech also resembles Hecuba's in its combination of public and private themes, for she turns from contemplation of her son to a description of the kind of funeral the Trojans would perform for her husband if they had possession of the body:

ἀτάρ τοι εἶματ' ἐνὶ μεγάροισι κέονται
λεπτὰ τε καὶ χαρίεντα τετυγμένα χερσὶ γυναικῶν.
ἀλλ' ἦτοι τάδε πάντα καταφλέξω πυρὶ κηλέω
οὐδὲν σοί γ' ὄφελος, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἐγκείσεται αὐτοῖς,
ἀλλὰ πρὸς Τρώων καὶ Τρωϊάδων κλέος εἶναι.
22.510–514

But your clothes lie in the palace, fine and pleasing clothes, made by the hands of the women. But I will burn all these in a raging fire, in no way a benefit to you, since you do not lie in them, but to be the glory of Trojan men and women.

Burial lamentation is a private duty and familial obligation that is the province of women; but the burial of a hero is at the same time a public ritual. The burial of Hector will naturally be an event proportionate to his importance to the city. As things stand in Book 22, however, Hector will be denied the privileges of his finely spun garments and his funeral pyre because of Achilles' wrath. Andromache feels helpless, as does Hecuba, for they are both being denied the opportunity to show their gratitude and love to Hector and to serve as a conduit for the grief of the Trojan people. Until proper mourning takes place, there will be no resolution to the conflict. When that

resolution does occur, Hecuba will assert her place in the decision-making process that leads to the return of Hector's body, and she, along with the other two leading ladies of Troy, Helen and Andromache, will be given the last word on Hector and the story itself.

CHAPTER 4
ZEUS BRINGS RESOLUTION THROUGH THE COORDINATED EFFORTS OF THE
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

In Book 24 Zeus sends word to Priam that he must go to the Achaean ships to ransom Hector's body. Priam himself had suggested this course of action in Book 22 during his lament from the wall, yet he feels the need to present the situation to his wife Hecuba.

δαιμονίη Διόθεν μοι Ὀλύμπιος ἄγγελος ἦλθε
λύσασθαι φίλον υἷον ἰόντ' ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν,
δῶρα δ' Ἀχιλλῆϊ φερέμεν τά κε θυμὸν ἰήνη.
ἄλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ τί τοι φρεσὶν εἶδεται εἶναι;
αἰνῶς γάρ μ' αὐτόν γε μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἄνωγε
κεῖς' ἰέναι ἐπὶ νῆας ἔσω στρατὸν εὐρὺν Ἀχαιῶν.
24.194–199

Lady, an Olympian messenger came from Zeus that I should go to the ships of the Achaeans to ransom my son, and to bring gifts for Achilles that will warm his heart. But come; tell me how does this seem to you in your mind? For my strength and my heart bid me to go to that place, to the ships within the wide camp of the Greeks.

While there is nothing unusual in a man and his wife having a conversation about family issues, Priam's discussion of his course of action with Hecuba can also be seen as a deliberate step to include her in the decision-making process. Priam's decision to share the divine message with Hecuba presents the first opportunity for both the public and private spheres to coordinate their efforts. As the king of Troy, Priam must decide what course of action to pursue in response to the actions of Achilles, and such negotiation, at least among mortals, must be carried on by male characters. However, as I argued in Chapters 1 and 2, war has drawn women into the public sphere and into conflicts with men. Here, I suggest that Priam recognizes this effect of war on the women in his kingdom, and it is for this reason that he includes Hecuba in the discussion of Zeus' plan. He, of course, differs in this way from Hector, who ignores the advice of his mother

and Andromache (6.263–268 and 6.433–440). Priam feels obligated to reach an agreement with Achilles, μὲν αὐτόν γε μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἄνωγε. In his capacity as king, he must acknowledge and manage the Trojans' grief over the loss of their greatest hero; as a father he must do the same for his family's grief over the loss of their son.

Hecuba, however, gives no indication that she appreciates Priam's request for her advice, but instead describes his suggestion as pure madness:

ὦ μοι πῆ δὴ τοι φρένες οἴχονθ', ἧς τὸ πάρος περ
ἔκλε' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους ξείνους ἢ δ' οἴσιν ἀνάσσεις;
πῶς ἐθέλεις ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν ἐλθέμεν οἶος
ἀνδρὸς ἐς ὀφθαλμοὺς ὅς τοι πολέας τε καὶ ἐσθλοὺς
υἰέας ἐξενάριξε: σιδήρειόν νύ τοι ἦτορ.
24.200–205

O my, where is your mind going, for which formerly you were famed amongst foreign men and those over whom you rule? How can you wish to go to the ships of the Achaeans alone, before the eyes of the man who killed many of your good sons: now your heart is made of iron.

Hecuba thus disregards what Priam stresses in his address to her, the fact that the gods have approved his idea. In so doing, she exhibits the sort of skepticism about divine messages that would have served Agamemnon well when he received a deceitful dream from Zeus (2.5–15), where it becomes clear that the Homeric gods can and do deceive mortals. Hecuba presumably doubts the divine origin of the plan since it so neatly coincides with Priam's previously expressed desire to approach Achilles in his lament from the wall (22.416–428). Thus, Hecuba makes no mention of the plan's connection to Zeus but asserts instead that Priam belongs behind the walls with the women, children, and others who can no longer fight. She has reminded him of his place prior to the death of Hector. However, now that Hector has died, Priam must reassume the role as leader of the public community. Although Hecuba tries to keep Priam's focus on his

family, he in contrast shows that he is responding to the pull of his public duty in the wake of his son's death.

Hecuba's further statements suggest her hatred for Achilles as she speaks of the desire to eat his liver *ἀνδρὶ πάρα κρατερῶ, τοῦ ἐγὼ μέσον ἦπαρ ἔχοιμι ἐσθέμεναι προσφῦσα* (24.212–213). Her comments are much stronger than the other images of “eating someone raw”.¹ Only three characters are associated with cannibalism in the *Iliad*: Achilles, Hecuba, and Hera.² The language of the poem makes Hecuba another example of inverted gender roles as the anger of an elderly woman is expressed in the same language as the wrath of the central protagonist of the poem, whose very anger drives the narrative. Hecuba's disproportionate anger is a direct response to Achilles' excessive wrath that has deprived her of the proper burial rites for her son. In Homeric society men cook and consume their meat during a sacrifice since proper feasting is a sign of civilization.³ Hecuba's wish to consume Achilles' liver raw suggests that she has descended below the level of human behavior. She is no longer grieving in an appropriate way and has lost her proper outlet for grief: the funeral service for her son. Hecuba is a representative of private grief that, like communal grief, has grown dangerously excessive. In like manner Priam, in his public capacity as king, must channel the grief of the people while in his capacity as *paterfamilias* he must also do something to remedy the situation. Hecuba, therefore, cannot convince him to stay in the palace. Her own words reveal the need for Priam's urgent attention to this problem affecting the public and private spheres.

Priam then replies:

¹ For the images of “eating someone raw” see 4.34–36 and 22.346–347. For the parallel instances of *omophagia*, see Richardson (1993) *ad* 24.212–213.

² Beye (1974) 91.

³ Wilson (2002) 33.

μή μ' ἐθέλοντ' ἵεναι κατερύκανε, μή δέ μοι αὐτὴ
ὄρνις ἐνὶ μεγάροισι κακὸς πέλεν: οὐδέ με πείσεις.
εἰ μὲν γάρ τις μ' ἄλλος ἐπιχθονίων ἐκέλευεν,
ἢ οἱ μάντιές εἰσι θυοσκόοι ἢ ἱερῆες,
ψεῦδός κεν φαῖμεν καὶ νοσφιζοίμεθα μᾶλλον:
νῦν δ', αὐτὸς γὰρ ἄκουσα θεοῦ καὶ ἐσέδρακον ἄντην,
24.218–219

Do not hold me back while I am wishing to go, do not be an evil omen for me in my house. You will not persuade me. If some other one of mortals were bidding me, either seers who are sacrificers or the priests, we would rather think and consider it false: but now, I indeed myself heard the god and saw her.

Priam's words mirror the language of Nestor when he encourages the Greek elders to trust in Agamemnon's dream on the grounds that he is their leader (2.79–83). The resonance between the two scenes confirms Hecuba's aforementioned distrust of the gods, for Agamemnon is in fact being tricked by Zeus in Book 2 (5–6). Thus, Priam and Hecuba are justified in their assertions to each other: he in pursuing a course of action that has in fact been ratified by the gods, and she in hesitating to trust the gods. Nevertheless, Hecuba's feelings would not allow for resolution to the final conflict of the narrative, which will be decided between Achilles and Priam. Hera had offered similar displeasure at the prospect of restoring the body to Priam earlier in Book 24 (24.56–63). In this way Hecuba fits the paradigm of female characters in the *Iliad* who present obstacles to plot resolution such as Andromache in Book 6 when she attempts to keep Hector from his impending death on the battlefield.

Following this brief exchange with Hecuba, Priam berates a group of his remaining sons who are helping him load his wagon with the ransom for Achilles:

σπεύσατέ μοι κακὰ τέκνα κατηφόνες: αἴθ' ἅμα πάντες
Ἐκτορος ὠφέλετ' ἀντὶ θοῆς ἐπὶ νηυσὶ πεφάσθαι.
ὦ μοι ἐγὼ πανάποτμος, ἐπεὶ τέκον υἱάς ἀρίστους
Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ, τῶν δ' οὐ τινά φημι λελεῖφθαι,
Μήστορά τ' ἀντίθεον καὶ Τρωῖλον ἱπποχάρμη

Ἐκτορά θ', ὃς θεὸς ἔσκε μετ' ἀνδράσιν, οὐδὲ ἐώκει
ἀνδρός γε θνητοῦ πάϊς ἔμμεναι ἀλλὰ θεοῖο.
τοὺς μὲν ἀπώλες Ἄρης, τὰ δ' ἐλέγχεα πάντα λέλειπται
ψεῦσταί τ' ὄρχησταί τε χοροῖτυπήσιν ἄριστοι
ἀρνῶν ἢ δ' ἐρίφων ἐπιδήμιοι ἀρπακτῆρες.
24.253–264

Hurry, my bad, grief-causing children: if only all of you together would have been wounded by the swift ships instead of Hector. Alas, I am completely hapless, since I fathered the best sons in wide Troy, of whom I think not a single one has survived, not godlike Mestor or Troilus the charioteer or Hector, who was like a god amongst men, nor did he seem to be the child of a mortal man but of a god. These ones, Ares destroyed, and all these disgraceful ones have been left behind, the best liars and dancers, and native thieves of wooly kids.

Clearly Priam is frustrated and angry over the situation with Achilles. He takes his anger out on his remaining sons. Aristarchus thought that the word *κατηφόνες* had a feminine connotation in this instance⁴ whereas the noun itself simply means “one who causes shame or disgrace,”⁵ which makes sense here since Priam is criticizing his sons for their inability to function in the masculine sphere. At this point in the poem, the king must return to the public sphere and bring resolution to the conflict. His speech suggests that none of his remaining sons are capable of properly governing. Because Priam now lacks a qualified son to manage the conflicts of the public sphere, he must return and take up his former position. The frustrated king is reemerging as the leader of his people. The resolution of the plot requires his return to public life. For with Priam behind the walls, Hector receives no funeral, and the poem never ends.

While preparations are made for the journey to seek their son's body, Hecuba asks Priam to pray to Zeus for safe passage:

τῇ σπεῖσον Διὶ πατρί, καὶ εὖχεο οἴκαδ' ἰκέσθαι

⁴ Richardson (1993) *ad* 24.253.

⁵ “LSJ m. sing. (*κατηφών*).” The LSJ cites this line as its only use in the Homeric corpus.

ἄψ ἐκ δυσμενέων ἀνδρῶν, ἐπεὶ ἄρ σέ γε θυμὸς
ὀτρύνει ἐπὶ νῆας ἐμεῖο μὲν οὐκ ἐθελούσης.
ἀλλ' εὐχέο σύ γ' ἔπειτα κελαινεφεΐ Κρονίωνι
Ἰδαίῳ, ὅς τε Τροίην κατὰ πᾶσαν ὀράται,
αἴτει δ' οἰωνὸν ταχὺν ἄγγελον, ὅς τέ οἱ αὐτῶ
φίλτατος οἰωνῶν, καὶ εὐ κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον,
δεξιόν, ὄφρα μιν αὐτὸς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖσι νοήσας
τῶ πίσυρος ἐπὶ νῆας ἱῆς Δαναῶν ταχυπάλων.
εἰ δέ τοι οὐ δώσει ἐὼν ἄγγελον εὐρύοπα Ζεὺς,
οὐκ ἂν ἔγωγέ σ' ἔπειτα ἐποτρύνουσα κελοίμην
νῆας ἐπ' Ἀργείων ἰέναι μάλα περ μεμαῶτα.
24.287–298

Pour an offering to father Zeus, and pray that you come quickly home from your enemies, since your heart stirs you to their ships even though I am opposed to it. But pray then to the dark-clouded son of Cronus, the Idaean, who looks down on all of Troy, request the swift messenger bird, which is the most dear to him of all birds, and is greatest in strength, on the right side, so that you yourself having seen it with your own eyes and trusting in him might go to the ships of the Greeks with fast horses. If far-seeing Zeus should not give his messenger to you, I would not urge you to go to the ships of the Argives even though you are especially eager.

This is only the second time in the poem that a sign is sought and given by the gods.⁶ In the present case in Book 24, the sign from Zeus, conspicuous for its rarity, elevates the concerns of Hecuba, who has already proven that she is a wary consumer of divine messages and at the same time recalls the earlier encounter between Hecuba and Hector when she encourages Hector to pour libations to Zeus upon entering Troy (6.257–259). However, Priam, unlike Hector, will accept her suggestion.

Here, for the first time in the poem, the public and private spheres have agreed on a course of action for the war. Previously, Hector, the liaison between the two spheres, had not taken the

⁶ Nestor seeks a sign that Zeus will not let the Trojans prevail in the conflict as the Greeks are being routed, and the god thunders in approval (15.372–378). Likewise, a sign is given only once in the *Odyssey* when an eagle appears to Telemachus and Peisistratus as they are setting out from the house of Menelaus (Ody.15.160–165). See Richardson (1993) *ad* 24.292–298.

advice of the private sphere, neither from Hecuba nor Andromache.⁷ Priam and Hecuba have come together as a united front to represent both realms, and Priam agrees to seek a bird of omen. While the gods often send their aid through such messages, they can also deceive humans as evident by Agamemnon's dream (2.5–15). Upon receiving a favorable sign from Zeus, he and Hecuba know that the Olympian will protect him. In this way the poem foreshadows its own end and assures the audience that the Olympians and Zeus in particular will give resolution to the final conflict caused by Achille's wrath, the theme which opened the poem.

Thus, Priam travels with divine assistance to Achilles' quarters, where he convinces him to accept ransom in exchange for Hector's body. After this successful mission, as Priam returns with the body, Cassandra calls the Trojans out to meet the cart.

πρῶται τόν γ' ἄλοχός τε φίλη καὶ πότνια μήτηρ
τιλλέσθην ἐπ' ἄμαξαν εὐτροχον ἀΐξασαι
ἀπτόμεναι κεφαλῆς: κλαίων δ' ἀμφίσταθ' ὄμιλος.
καὶ νύ κε δὴ πρόπαν ἦμαρ ἐς ἠέλιον καταδύντα
Ἔκτορα δάκρυ χέοντες ὀδύροντο πρὸ πυλάων,
εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ἐκ δίφροιο γέρων λαοῖσι μετηύδα:
εἴξατέ μοι οὐρεῦσι διελθέμεν: αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
ἄσεσθε κλαυθομοῖο, ἐπὴν ἀγάγωμι δόμον δέ.
24.710–717

First, his wife and his mother the queen pulled out their hair and threw themselves on the wagon, clasping Hector's head. The crowd was gathered around weeping. And now they would have mourned Hector all day long until the setting of the sun, shedding tears outside the gates of the city, if the old man had not addressed the people from the running board of his chariot: "Give way so that I may pass with the mules: but then take your fill of crying after I bring him home."

Although Priam has lost a son, he must restrain his own grief as well as that of his wife, daughter-in-law, and people. It is his duty to ensure that the funeral is carried out appropriately.

⁷ While Hecuba suggests that Hector propitiate Zeus with wine, Andromache offers him tactical advice about stationing troops near the Scaean Gate to prevent a future breach (6.43–440). However, as discussed in Chapter 1, Hector ignores the advice from both of these women.

Similarly, Priam does not want the people to give up hope for the outcome of the war. Although Hector has died, the battle for Troy will rage on for some time. Priam must keep his people focused.

Priam's interactions with the mourning women recall Hector's contact with grieving women when he returns to Troy (6.237–241). Like Hector, Priam remains calm and gives sound advice to the women in order to temper their grief.⁸ Thus, the Priam who returns from the plains of Troy is not the man who left several hundred lines earlier. He is once more a public figure capable of leading his people, one who will allow the women to weep for Hector at the appropriate time and in the appropriate space. He, unlike Hector, is able to balance the concerns of both the private and public spheres.

Priam has then, with the help of the gods and the approval of his wife, brought about resolution to the conflict that has animated the narrative since Hector's death in Book 22. The poem then concludes with laments by Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen, the same women with whom Hector had his three encounters in Book 6. Three laments similarly are given by Priam, Hecuba, and Andromache following the death of Hector in Book 22. These speeches from Book 24 reflect in many ways the same concerns that the women expressed in their earlier speeches. Andromache shows her concern for Astyanax and herself, while Hecuba speaks of Hector's piety.⁹ Helen grieves the loss of Hector but also appears concerned for her own status. Her first comments to both Priam (3.171–180), when they have their conversation on the wall and to Hector, (6.343–358) during her discussion with him in Paris' house, include reproaches against herself. She degrades herself as means of ingratiating herself to her Trojan audience. Her speech

⁸ Richardson finds Priam impatient in this scene and compares it to the earlier scene in which Priam rebukes his remaining sons (1993) *ad* 24.707–718.

⁹ Richardson (1993) *ad* 24.718–776.

in Book 24 is no different as she tries to defend her behavior before all the Trojans by making herself a victim of fate.

Andromache, his wife, is the first to approach Hector's body and lead the lament: ¹⁰

ἄνερ ἀπ' αἰῶνος νέος ὄλεο, καὶ δέ με χήρην
λείπεις ἐν μεγάροισι: πάϊς δ' ἔτι νήπιος αὐτῶς
ὄν τέκομεν σύ τ' ἐγὼ τε δυσάμμοροι, οὐδέ μιν οἴω
ἦβην ἴζεσθαι: πρὶν γὰρ πόλις ἦδε κατ' ἄκρης
πέρσεται: ἦ γὰρ ὄλωλας ἐπίσκοπος, ὅς τέ μιν αὐτὴν
ῥύσκει, ἔχεις δ' ἀλόχους κεδνὰς καὶ νήπια τέκνα,
αἱ δὴ τοι τάχα νηυσὶν ὀχήσονται γλαφυρῆσι,
καὶ μὲν ἐγὼ μετὰ τῆσι
24.725–732

Husband, you died at a young age, and left me behind as a widow in this palace: the child whom you and I bore, ill-fated as we are, is yet a child, nor do I think that he will reach young adulthood: for the city will be utterly destroyed before this. For you have died, the guard who used to watch over the city itself, and who used to protect the diligent wives and the infant children, who truly will be soon loaded on swift ships and I amongst them.

Andromache's speech reinforces what she said before in Books 6 and 22, returning again to the themes of widowhood and her orphanhood. Hector has left her without a husband in a world where women and children need protection. Andromache depicts fear for the future of Astyanax and herself. During her speech to Hector in Book 6, she beseeches him not to make their son an orphan and her a widow since she had already lost her whole family at the hands of Achilles (6.407–465). Her speech in Book 22 has a stronger level of reproach than her final lament here.¹¹ There, she speculated that even his father's old friends would no longer honor him or even offer him food but send him out of their sight (22.490–507). In the speech in Book 24, she envisions

¹⁰ The order of speeches of lament here does not follow the order of escalating affections (wife, brother or brother's wife, and parents) Kakridis (1987) 20. Book 6 had the standard order of escalating affections (parents, brother, wife) in which a person speaks first with his parents then his brother and finally his wife. Similarly, the laments from the wall following the death of Hector in Book 22 also follow the order of escalating affections.

¹¹ Dué (2002) 73.

Astyanax either serving as a slave with her in a foreign land, or less optimistically and more realistically, thrown from the top of a tower (24.732–739; *Ilias Parva* fr. 19.3–5 Davies).

Hector's death has forced Andromache to face the reality of what awaits Astyanax, for killing the father and leaving the son alive is demonstrated to be a foolish tactic not only in epic but throughout the Greek tradition. With Hector gone the wall dividing the private and public spheres has disappeared for Andromache, leaving Astyanax and her alone to face the dangers of war.

Andromache proceeds to lament the manner of Hector's death:

ἔμοι δὲ μάλιστα λελείψεται ἄλγεα λυγρά.
οὐ γάρ μοι θνήσκων λεχέων ἐκ χειρᾶς ὄρεξας,
οὐδέ τί μοι εἶπες πυκινὸν ἔπος, οὗ τέ κεν αἰεὶ
μεμνήμην νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμέματα δάκρυ χέουσα.
24.742–745

There will be left behind especially grievous woes for me. For you did not die in your bed stretching out your arms to me, nor did you speak some clever word to me, which I might always remember day and night shedding tears.

She had wanted Hector to die at home in his old age, but such deaths only come to those living in a city at peace. Hector's death left her without an opportunity to say goodbye and contributed to a feeling of unresolved tension. When a husband dies, he leaves his wife and children without protection in a dangerous world. Andromache wishes for a world at peace where the public and private spheres were properly divided and Greeks were not beating at the walls of her city.

Hecuba next begins her lament with these words:

Ἐκτορ ἐμῷ θυμῷ πάντων πολὺ φίλτατε παίδων,
ἦ μὲν μοι ζωὸς περ ἑὸν φίλος ἦσθα θεοῖσιν:
24.749–750

Hector, most dear to my heart by far of all my children, when you were alive you were dear to the gods.

Hecuba's speech is much more restrained than the one she delivered following Hector's death in Book 22.¹² Both her speeches of lament speak of Hector's greatness and his closeness to the gods. In her earlier speech she recalled that he was her boast throughout the city and treated as a god (22.431–436). Here she describes him as special to the gods, ἦ μὲν μοι ζωὸς περ ἔων φίλος ἦσθα θεοῖσιν (24.750). Similarly, she expresses joy that Achilles failed both to bring Patroclus back to life and even to harm Hector's body. She believes that Hector has conquered Achilles in his death. As the man's mother, she achieves glory through Hector's victory over Achilles in death. The unvanquished nature of his flesh, a sign of his closeness to the gods, glorifies Hecuba before the Trojan people one final time. The uncorrupted state of Hector's body also reflects positively on her husband's achievement in retrieving it, again reinforcing that dramatic closure has been achieved through the resolution of gender tension during the conversation between Hecuba and Priam regarding the return of the body. Hecuba's speech is also significant in that while Andromache's words induce weeping from the assembled women, (746) her speech elicits grief from the whole crowd (760). It therefore appears that she and Priam share the responsibility of defining Hector's role in the larger community.

Helen delivers the last of the three laments:

Ἐκτορ ἐμῷ θυμῷ δαέρων πολὺ φίλτατε πάντων,
 ἀλλ' οὐ πω σεῦ ἄκουσα κακὸν ἔπος οὐδ' ἀσύφηλον:
 ἀλλ' εἴ τις με καὶ ἄλλος ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ἐνίπτοι
 δαέρων ἢ γαλόων ἢ εἰνατέρων εὐπέπλων,
 ἢ ἔκυρή, ἔκυρὸς δὲ πατὴρ ὡς ἦπιος αἰεὶ,
 ἀλλὰ σὺ τὸν ἐπέεσσι παραιφάμενος κατέρυκες
 σῆ τ' ἀγανοφροσύνη καὶ σοῖς ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσι.
 τῷ σέ θ' ἅμα κλαίω καὶ ἔμ' ἄμμορον ἀχνυμένη κῆρ:

¹² Richardson (1993) *ad* 24.748–759.

οὐ γὰρ τίς μοι ἔτ' ἄλλος ἐνὶ Τροίῃ εὐρείῃ
ἦπιος οὐδὲ φίλος, πάντες δέ με πεφρίκασιν.
24.763,771–775

Hector, dearest to my heart by far of my brother-in-laws ... but I have never heard a bad or insolent word from you: but if some one reproached me, either one of your brothers or sisters or sisters-in-law, or your mother, your father was always gentle, you used to restrain whoever spoke gently with words and with your gentleness and with your gentle words. I weep both for you and my ill-fated self grieving in my heart. For no one else in broad Troy is kind to me, but they all shudder at me

Helen believes that Hector's death has weakened her position in Troy. In keeping with the self-centeredness that she displays in her other appearances in the poem, she turns the attention of the speech from Hector to her own plight. She even suggests that she has no other advocates in Troy now that Hector is dead, though she will marry another one of Priam's sons after Paris dies (*Ilias Parva* p.106.28-29 Allen). Helen's expressed desire to have died before the war started, (24.764) a recurrent theme in her rhetoric (3.173 and 3.428f) seems here intended to invoke pity in the assembled Trojans. On the other hand, Helen's affection for Hector seems genuine, and is perhaps motivated in part by the fact that he is one of the few male characters who do not view her in sexual terms. While Helen seems the unlikely choice to deliver the final lament over the body of Hector, her understanding of song's ability to give *kleos* as it is exhibited through her work on the tapestry of the Trojan War (3.131–128) make her an ideal candidate to give the final lament over Hector's body. Her final song can be described as the first song in honor of Hector, the dead hero.¹³

Following her speech, the crowd moans, and Priam tempers their grief, in a like manner as he tempered Hecuba's and his own, and reminds them of their duty:

ἄξετε νῦν Τρωῶες ξύλα ἄστυ δέ, μὴ δέ τι θυμῶ
δείσητ' Ἀργείων πυκινὸν λόχον: ἦ γὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς

¹³ Pantelia (2002) 25-26.

πέμπων μ' ὧδ' ἐπέτελλε μελαινάων ἀπὸ νηῶν
μὴ πρὶν πημανέειν πρὶν δωδεκάτη μόλιη ἠώς.
24.778–781

Now, Trojans, bring wood into the city, do not fear any clever ambush of Argives in your heart. For Achilles when he was sending me on my way from the black ships said that he would not harm us until the dawn came on the twelfth day.

Priam appears completely in control of his emotions. Despite his personal connection to the hero being mourned, he has remained the public figure letting the women of the family grieve for Hector in public. His speech here is much more restrained than the one delivered following Hector's death (22.38–65). His visit to the masculine sphere has rejuvenated Priam and restored him to his public position. The speech contains brief, clear instructions for the people.¹⁴ As king of Troy, Priam must observe the proper face for the state and regulate the funeral of the hero. This is an important role for any king and a particularly difficult task when his son is that hero. Priam asks them to perform their duty and promises them freedom from the attacks of Achilles until the twelfth dawn. He has secured this truce from Achilles, a sure sign that he is the public provider. He was the only man who approached the hero and returned with his life. The people recognize him as leader. Thus, by the end of the poem, both Priam and Achilles have fully reintegrated into the public sector as part of the resolution of the last major conflict of the poem.

¹⁴ Richardson (1993) *ad* 24.778–781.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

The nine year siege of Troy has necessitated that all able bodied Trojan men leave the safety of the city walls and fight the enemy on the plains before Troy. The women do not fight in the combat units that leave the city. Instead, the city requires that they support their husbands, sons, and brothers in any way they can by offering hot baths, food, or drink when the men return from the battlefield. The Scaean gate, as I have demonstrated, can usefully be seen as a boundary between the masculine world of the battlefield and the now feminized atmosphere of the city within the walls. The narrative deploys Hector as a liaison between these two worlds in Book 6, where the women, who are no longer able to watch silently from the battlements, find themselves drawn into the public sphere and into conflict with the men. In Book 6, Hecuba and Andromache offer aid and advice to Hector while Helen reproaches her husband Paris for his behavior in battle. Hector's death in Book 22 shakes Priam from his inactivity and brings him back into the public sphere, where he resumes his role as public leader, in which capacity he emerges as the second liaison between the two worlds of Troy. Priam, unlike his son, chooses to heed advice from the female sphere when he takes the suggestion of his wife Hecuba in Book 24 to seek an omen from Zeus before departing for the Achaean camp. As I have stated, only here in the *Iliad* do the masculine and feminine spheres of Troy manage to respond successfully to the gender dynamic that the war has imposed on the city; and the significance of this fact is dramatized in the narrative by the rare granting of an omen in response to a mortal petition.¹ The successful cooperation of both sexes brings resolution to the final conflict of the poem as Priam ransoms Hector's body from Achilles and gives him a proper funeral in Troy.

¹ Nestor seeks an omen of assurance that Zeus will not allow the Achaeans to be destroyed by their ships (15.372–378). However, such omens are rarely granted and only to positively valorized characters who seek confirmation from the highest god that they will receive what the plot of the narrative must deliver.

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