



SHORTER NOTES

ACHILLES REVOLUTIONARY? HOMER, *ILIAD* 1.191

ABSTRACT

At the climax of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in the Iliad, Achilles ponders whether to kill the king (1.191). The first half of the line, however, has received little attention, but the various interpretations that have been put forth have been unconvincing. This article proposes an interpretation that reveals an Achilles at least momentarily contemplating fomenting a revolt on the part of the army against Agamemnon's authority.

Keywords: Achilles; *Iliad*; Homer; Agamemnon; ἀνίστημι

As the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in the first book of the *Iliad* reaches its climax, Achilles ponders whether to kill Agamemnon on the spot (1.188–92):

ἐν δέ οἱ ἦτορ στήθεσσι λασίοισι διάνδιχα μερμήριζεν,
ἦ ὅ γε φάσγανον ὄξυ ἐρυσσάμενος παρὰ μηροῦ
τούς μὲν ἀναστήσειεν, ὃ δ' Ἀτρεΐδην ἐναρίζοι,
ἦε χόλον παύσειεν ἐρητύσειέ τε θυμόν.

His heart in his shaggy breast pondered in two ways,
Whether, drawing his sharp sword from his thigh,
... and kill the son of Atreus,
Or whether he should stop his anger and restrain his spirit.

The first part of line 191 has caused some discomfort and even perplexity. *Lfgre* s.v. ἀνίστημι 1aα reports: ‘exact nuance unclear, depending on ref<erent> of τούς’. Ameis–Hentze–Cauer offer: ‘die einen, die in der Nähe des Agamemnons Sitzenden, ἀναστήσειεν, aufjagen sollte, indem er auf jenem einspränge’.¹ Similarly Latacz: ‘Am ehesten sind die Leute um Agamemnon gemeint (AH), die versuchen könnten Achill am Totschlag zu hindern. ἀναστήσειεν bedeutet daher wohl “zum Aufstehen bewegen” (= in Aufruhr bringen, wegjagen).’² Lattimore translates: ‘driving away all those who stood between’, while Alexander renders the phrase as ‘scatter the men’.³ This interpretation assumes a great deal: that Agamemnon has a quasi-bodyguard around him, which must be removed before Achilles can strike. Fränkel’s suggestion, that τούς refers to Achilles’ followers, who should cover him after he has killed

¹ K.F. Ameis, C. Hentze and P. Cauer, *Homer's Ilias für den Schulgebrauch erklärt*, 7th edn, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1913); cf. P. Cauer, ‘Ueber eine eigenthümliche Schwäche der homerischen Denkart’, *RhM* 47 (1892), 74–113, at 75–6.

² J. Latacz, R. Nünlist and M. Stoevesandt, *Homers Ilias Gesamtkommentar*, vol. 1, part 2 (Munich, 2003).

³ R. Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago, 1951); also C. Alexander, *The Iliad. Homer* (New York, 2015). A.T. Murray, *Homer: Iliad*, rev. W.F. Wyatt (Cambridge, Mass., 1999) has ‘break up the assembly’.

Agamemnon, is equally implausible.⁴ Taking a somewhat different tack, Eustathius suggested that the verse contains a hysteron proteron, so that Achilles' killing of Agamemnon would cause perturbation and confusion in the assembly and drive the assembled away.⁵ But while killing Agamemnon might indeed cause the assembled army to flee, it is hard to see how or why this would be the object of Achilles' pondering, either before or after killing the king.

All of these interpretations depend on an unattested meaning of ἀνίστημι: 'scatter, drive away'. LSJ offer a somewhat different interpretation, glossing ἀνίστημι III at line 191 as to 'make people rise, break up an assembly by force', but the only parallel they cite is Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.42 ἐκκλησίαν ἀναστήσαι, which they translate 'adjourn it'. We might consider *Il.* 2.85 as a parallel, but in that passage both situation and syntax are different. There, after his baneful dream sent by Zeus, Agamemnon has called a council of the elders (2.53). The king recounts his dream while, as normal, standing, outlines his plan to test the army, and then sits down (2.76); Nestor stands up and somewhat hesitantly agrees to go along with the plan. He then leads the way out of the council into the assembly and 'the sceptre-bearing kings got up again and obeyed the shepherd of the people' (οἱ δ' ἐπανεστήσαν πείθοντό τε ποιμένοι λαῶν | σκηπτοῦχοι βασιλῆες, 2.85–6). Here the intransitive ἐπανεστήσαν simply means to 'stand up' and leave.

The normal Homeric expression for adjourning an assembly occurs shortly afterwards: λύσαν δ' ἀγορήν (1.305).⁶ Moreover, if we were to take τοὺς μὲν ἀναστήσειεν to be its equivalent, then the notion that Achilles pondered (μερμήριζεν) whether to put an end to the assembly and kill Agamemnon or to restrain his anger makes little sense. The scholia report that Aristarchus athetized line 192 because he considered both τοὺς μὲν ἀναστήσειεν and ὁ δ' Ἄτρεΐδην ἐναρίζοι to be alternatives (although it is not clear how he understood ἀναστήσειεν),⁷ and therefore someone added line 192 to give Achilles an alternative to ponder;⁸ the bT scholia rightly reject this idea because the two clauses of line 191 go together, and both constitute components of Achilles' anger.⁹ ἀναστήσειεν and ἐναρίζοι are secondary optatives replacing deliberative subjunctives; Achilles is contemplating doing both. The μὲν and δέ do not represent alternatives but rather parallel actions contemplated by

⁴ Cf. H. Fränkel, *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens* (Munich, 1968), 80 n. 2: 'Achilleus will "seine Leute aufrufen ... [damit sie ihm folgen und ihn nach der Tat decken] und selbst den Atreiden erschlagen"'. I thank James O'Sullivan who wrote the article on ἴστημι in the *Lfgre* for tracking down this reference.

⁵ Cf. M. van der Valk, *Eustathii commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem pertinentes, Volumen I* (Leiden, 1971), 126–7.

⁶ *Lfgre* s.v. λύω 2c also cite *Il.* 19.276, 2.808, 24.1; *Od.* 2.69, 2.257.

⁷ G.S. Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary. Volume I: Books 1–4* (Cambridge, 1985), on 188–92 thinks Aristarchus argued 'that what Achilles was trying to decide was whether to rouse up the others or to kill Agamemnon himself'. This is indeed implausible, as Achilles has already drawn his sword.

⁸ Aristarchus on 1.192: <ἦε χόλον παύσειεν> ὅτι ἐκλύεται τὰ τῆς ὀργῆς διὸ ἀθετεῖται. A^{int} (Erbse). F. Schironi, *The Best of the Grammarians: Aristarchus of Samothrace on the Iliad* (Ann Arbor, 2018), 715 reconstructs Aristarchus' reasoning thus: 'For Aristarchus, then, it is much more "dramatic"—and in line with Achilles' character—to have the hero pondering only the possibility of killing Agamemnon without even considering the alternative of restraining his anger and adopting a tamer course of action.' W. Leaf, *The Iliad* (London, 1900–2), vol. 1, ad loc. does not explain how he takes τοὺς μὲν ἀναστήσειεν, but agrees with the athetesis of line 192 because διάνδιχα 'does not require two alternatives expressed; and 192 entirely spoils the picture'.

⁹ θέλει εἰπεῖν ὡς δύο ἐβουλεύσατο, ἀναστήσαι ἐκείνους καὶ ἀνελεῖν Ἀγαμέμνονα ὅθεν περισσόν φασι τὸν <ἦε χόλον παύσειεν> (192). ἀλλ' οὐχ οὕτως, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἐκείνος ἀναστήσαι καὶ ἀνελεῖν Ἀγαμέμνονα ἐν θετέον, τὸ δὲ <ἦε χόλον παύσειε> (192) (BCE⁴)T (Erbse).

Achilles. The suggestions, then, that have been proposed—namely that, in parallel to his slaying of Agamemnon, Achilles pondered whether to drive away either Agamemnon's (supposed) bodyguard or his own (supposed) followers—are unconvincing, nor would ending the assembly have any bearing on the assassination of Agamemnon.

Schesmer was on the right track when he correctly glossed ἀνίστημι as 'anfeuern', 'zur Tätigkeit veranlassen'.¹⁰ He recognized that the basic meaning of ἀνίστημι is neither to adjourn a meeting nor to scatter some or all of the assembled Greeks, nor to drive someone out of the way, but rather to 'raise up', 'rouse up', or 'arouse into action': cf. *Il.* 7.116, 10.176, 15.64, 18.358.¹¹ Indeed, at *Il.* 2.694, we are told that, while 'Achilles lay grieving over her [Briseis], soon he would rise up into action' (τάχα δ' ἀνστήσειεσθαι ἔμελλεν). But Schesmer limited the τοὺς in the phrase τοὺς μὲν ἀναστήσειεν to the Greek chieftains. The quarrel, however, is taking place in a public assembly and τοὺς must refer to the assembled λαός; Achilles intends to rouse up the army, to rouse them to action. Indeed, the meaning seems obvious, but commentators have perhaps shied away from it because it opens an unexpected and somewhat disconcerting feature of Achilles' character. What Achilles appears to contemplate is not only regicide but to foment open rebellion on the part of the army, an action that would have the gravest political consequences for the whole expedition, either aborting the whole undertaking or choosing a new leader.¹²

Shocking as it may seem, Achilles' impulse has not been unmotivated if one understands his confrontation with Agamemnon not only as a personal one but as one fraught with political implications. It has been prepared for by the whole series of events leading up to this critical moment and played out in public before the assembled λαός. In the first gathering, Chryses had politely requested that his daughter be returned in exchange for a bountiful ransom. The assembled army loudly expressed its approval of the seer's request, but 'it did not please Agamemnon' (ἀλλ' οὐκ Ἀτρεΐδῃ Ἀγαμέμνονι ἦνδανε θυμῷ, *Il.* 1.24), who not only rudely threatens the seer but also alludes to his daughter's future servitude. The king's private pleasure trumps public opinion (cf. 1.112–13).

In his study that focusses on the importance of the consent of the λαός, who, he argues, to some degree models Homer's audience, Elmer puts special weight on this first assembly, saying: 'In the case of the poem's initial assembly, the crucial fact [is] that the rebuff of Chryses violates the most fundamental principle ... the principle that collective will should be decisive in scenes of collective decision making.'¹³ He further emphasizes the political character of the scene:

Agamemnon's public rejection of Chryses' suit ... belongs specifically to the field of political action, for Agamemnon's repudiation of Chryses occurs in a context that bears all the hallmarks of collective deliberation: an issue that ultimately impinges on the welfare of the community as a whole is presented publicly, before an audience consisting of the group and its leaders, and all are given the opportunity to express their will regarding the outcome.¹⁴

¹⁰ I. Schesmer, 'Zu Homer A 191', *Philologische Wochenschrift* 47 (1927), 765–6.

¹¹ LSJ s.v. II: 'rouse to action', 'stir up'. Cf. *Lfgre* s.v. 1.αγ.

¹² Much later, during the embassy, Achilles again suggests that the army consider simply taking off and going home (9.414–15).

¹³ D.F. Elmer, *The Poetics of Consent: Collective Decision Making in the Iliad* (Baltimore, 2013), 66.

¹⁴ Elmer (n. 13), 63.

On reflection, this opening scene is a bit of a surprise as the proem ends with the Muse instructed to begin her song precisely ‘from the time that first they distanced themselves by quarrelling’, Agamemnon and Achilles. In tracing the seeds of their quarrel back to its source in Agamemnon’s offensive behaviour which ignored acceptable social norms and dismissed the approval of the army, the confrontation between the two kings takes on a public and political character.

In contrast to earlier work on Homeric society that viewed *hoi polloi* of little account, recent studies have demonstrated the importance and centrality of the role of the *laos*. Raaflaub, for instance, notes:

[T]he assembly, despite its well-known deficiencies in institutionalized power, occupies a crucial position in the community. Populated by those men who fight in the army and are militarily indispensable to the community as well as those who have done so earlier and whose experience and wisdom make them ‘politically’ indispensable, the assembly occupies the middle (*to meson*), the communal sphere (*koinon*), the space shared by all citizens, elite and non-elite alike, and there deals with business that is public.¹⁵

Or again:

Though not regulated, the assembly clearly is an indispensable part of communal life. There is no vote but the men express their opinion unmistakably by voice or feet. The leader is not formally obliged to heed their opinion but if he ignores it and fails he is in trouble, and it is difficult to act against their firmly expressed opinion.¹⁶

Hammer and Haubold focus on the other side of the equation, the question of the power and authority of the ‘shepherd of the people’ and Agamemnon’s shortcomings.¹⁷ Although Agamemnon has precipitated the plague and, as a consequence, the death of the flock which he ought to be protecting, he apparently takes no action; it is Achilles who calls the second assembly: the entire expedition is in jeopardy.¹⁸ While there is nothing anomalous about one of the *basileis* calling an assembly, nevertheless, in the present situation, Agamemnon’s inaction for nine days leaves a vacuum that suggests that care of his flock is not his primary concern. Moreover, if Achilles can figure out that the plague is due to Apollo’s anger (as plague god), there is no reason to think that Agamemnon could not also have done so. In swearing to protect Calchas from the king’s anger, Achilles has already pointedly raised questions about Agamemnon’s authority. The king now must give in, which he does with strikingly bad grace, not to the *λαός*, but to a higher divine authority, Apollo. While declaring

¹⁵ K. Raaflaub, ‘Politics and interstate relations in the world of ancient Greek *poleis*: Homer and beyond’, *Antichthon* 31 (1997), 1–27, at 19. See also J. Haubold, *Homer’s People: Epic Poetry and Social Formation* (Cambridge, 2000), 35: ‘The assembly, finally, opens a space in which the joint efforts of shepherd and group are co-ordinated with the aim of ensuring the success of social life.’ For the Homeric assembly, see F. Ruzé, *Délibération et pouvoir dans la cité grecque de Nestor à Socrate* (Paris, 1997), 13–106.

¹⁶ K. Raaflaub, ‘Archaic and Classical Greek reflections on politics and government: from description to conceptualization, analysis, and theory’, in H. Beck (ed.), *A Companion to Ancient Greek Government* (Chichester, 2013), 71–92, at 77.

¹⁷ D. Hammer, *The Iliad as Politics: The Performance of Political Thought* (Norman, OK, 2002), especially 82–92; cf. Haubold (n. 15), 17–46. A. Porter, *Agamemnon, the Pathetic Despot. Reading Characterization in Homer* (Cambridge, Mass., 2018), ch. 4 gives a full-fledged commentary on Agamemnon’s behaviour and its shortcomings in *Il.* 1.6–344.

¹⁸ J.V. Andreev, ‘Die politischen Funktionen der Volksversammlung im homerischen Zeitalter’, *Klio* 61 (1979), 385–405, at 394.

that he wants his army to be safe rather than to perish, he immediately insists that the army provide him with another γέρας, declaring: ‘All of you observe how my γέρας goes off elsewhere’ (λεύσσετε γὰρ τό γε πάντες ὃ μοι γέρας ἔρχεται ἄλλη, 1.120). Possibly, the king expects the *laos* to intervene on his behalf. In his angry response, Achilles allies himself with the λαός: the spoils have all been distributed and cannot be redistributed.

The army’s role in allotting γέρα has not received the emphasis it deserves. It implies that the λαός has the prerogative to evaluate its leaders. This equalizes the balance of power, or rather it demonstrates the interdependence of the λαός and its leaders. If the ‘shepherd of the people’ must care for the well-being of his flock, ideally, the people, in turn, have the ability to reward good leadership in the distribution of γέρα. In the exchange that precedes his pondering from which we began, Achilles points out that Agamemnon has no right to rescind the division of spoils; γέρα, he insists, are a prerogative that does not belong to Agamemnon, but are the army’s to award (1.161–2).¹⁹ Agamemnon, for his part, responds not only by insisting that Achilles acknowledge the king’s greater power but also by threatening anyone else from imagining himself his equal (1.185–7). As Hammer puts it: ‘Agamemnon recognizes that Achilles’ statements go far beyond a particular grievance or breach of custom to a more fundamental question of who shall govern.’²⁰ The social compact that acknowledges Agamemnon’s leadership and which underpins the whole expedition has been broken. In the king’s threat, Achilles recognizes not just a personal affront but also an attack upon the prerogatives of the Greek army as a whole. The λαός has previously indicated its disapproval of Agamemnon’s conduct in the earlier assembly when it urged the king to respect the priest of Apollo and accept the ransom for his daughter (1.22–3). Achilles might be seen as exploiting an existing tension between the king and the army, a tension heightened by the disastrous plague that Agamemnon’s conduct has precipitated. At least momentarily, Achilles contemplates nothing short of a *coup d’état*.

At this point, both murder and mayhem are prevented by Athena’s intervention. While the goddess restrains his homicidal rage, Achilles nevertheless continues to insist that it is the army’s place to distribute γέρα. Subsequently, however, he turns his anger against the λαός itself for their inaction in the face of Agamemnon’s outrageous conduct; the king rules over weaklings (οὐτιδανοί), otherwise this would be his last outrage (1.231–2). Finally, in his indictment Achilles directly blames not only Agamemnon but also includes the army itself and its passivity: ‘you have taken away what you gave me’ (ἐπεὶ μ’ ἀφέλεσθέ γε δόντες, 299).²¹ Achilles has abandoned his initial impulse to rouse the army against Agamemnon and kill him, but now his fury against the king extends to the whole army whom he regards as complicit.

If this interpretation of τοῦς ... ἀναστήσειεν and its political implications is persuasive, it may help to solve another problem that has baffled critics: why does Agamemnon decide—out of the blue—to test the army in the following book with its

¹⁹ A γέρας is for the λαός to give (*Il.* 1.137, 162, 276, 368, 392, 422, 509); even Agamemnon acknowledges the prerogative of the army to bestow γέρα (1.123, 135). This is also the thrust of the first half of Sarpedon’s famous speech (12.310–21; cf. *Od.* 7.150, where again it is the δῆμος who grants them).

²⁰ Hammer (n. 17), 84.

²¹ Cf. 1.409–10, and 422, 509. I should like to thank the anonymous referee and Patrick Finglass for their many suggestions that have immeasurably improved this piece.

near disastrous consequences? Agamemnon might well be inclined to test the mood of the army not only after Achilles' withdrawal but also after his attempt to undermine Agamemnon's authority. Will they still be willing to fight? The chaotic and disorderly shouting that marks their entry into the assembly suggests inner turmoil and lack of discipline (2.86–98). But the quarrel in the previous book has brought to the surface not only the hostility of the two Greek kings but also the possibility of the army's rejection of, or even a rebellion against, Agamemnon's authority. The catastrophic failure of the test exposes the instability of Agamemnon's leadership, which only Odysseus' intervention restores as he rebukes the army: εἰς κοῖρανος ἔστω, | εἰς βασιλεύς (2.204–5).

The initial words of line 191 have, I submit, been overlooked or misinterpreted, because their obvious meaning and correct understanding open a new and unsettling political dimension to the epic and its hero.

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PINDAR, NEMEAN 1.24*

ABSTRACT

This note considers a Pindaric crux. It argues that Aristarchus' 'solution' should not have been so readily accepted because the evidence can be interpreted differently, giving more satisfactory sense if ἐκλ' ὡς rather than ἐκλόου is read for the manuscripts' ἐκλόο.

Keywords: Greek literature; Pindar; textual criticism

λέλογχε δὲ μεμφομένοις ἐκλόου ὕδωρ καπῶ φέρειν
 ἀντίον.¹

24 ἐκλόο (-ὠο ΣΒ): Aristarchus²

It is his lot to bring good men against his detractors as water against smoke.³

ἐκλόο in the paradosis, while unmetrical and plainly wrong, is at least a natural subject for the verb λέλογχε ('it is a good man's lot to ...'). Aristarchus' change to ἐκλόου,

* I am grateful to James Diggle, Ben Henry and David Kovacs for helpful comments.

¹ Pind. *Nem.* 1.24–5. This is the text as printed in the Budé, OCT, Teubner and Loeb editions.

² Ben Henry points out *per litteras* that the Teubner apparatus criticus (B. Snell and H. Maehler [edd.], *Pindari carmina cum fragmentis. Pars I: Epinicia* [Leipzig, 1987⁸], 104) is misleading in two respects: (i) 'μεμφομένοι Σ¹⁹' suggests that μεμφομένοι appears in the scholia as a graphetai variant, but it does not appear in the scholia at all (H.L. Ahrens, 'Coniecturae Pindaricae', *Philologus* 16 [1860], 52–9, at 55 thought that it lay behind Σ 34c [= A.B. Drachmann (ed.), *Scholia vetera in Pindari carmina*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1903–27), 3.16.14–15]); (ii) '(-ὠο ΣΒΔ)' suggests that ἐκλόο appears in the scholia to MSS B and D, but it does not appear in MSS ΣΔ.

³ Transl. W.H. Race, *Pindar: Nemean Odes, Isthmian Odes, Fragments* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1997), 7.