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The Epiphany at *Iliad* 4.73–84

ABSTRACT: A common interpretation of *Il.* 4.73–84, best articulated in DE JONG 2004, incorrectly maintains that the warriors believe they witness an omen. In fact, they experience an epiphany. The idiosyncrasies of the epiphany contribute to the development of a prominent theme in the transition from *Iliad* 3 to *Iliad* 4.

This article explicates the following passage in which Athene heads down to the plain of Troy:

Ὡς εἰπὼν ὄτρυνε πάρος μεμαΐαν Ἀθήνην,
βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων ἄϊξασα.
οἶον δ' ἀστέρα ἤκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω,
ἢ ναύτησι τέρας ἢ ἐ στρατῶ εὐρέϊ λαῶν,
λαμπρόν· τοῦ δέ τε πολλοὶ ἀπὸ σπινθήρες ἴενται·
τῶ ἔϊκυι' ἦϊξεν ἐπὶ χθόνα Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη,
καὶ δ' ἔθορ' ἐς μέσσον· θάμβος δ' ἔχεν εἰσορόωντας,
Τρῳᾶς θ' ἵπποδάμους καὶ ἐυκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοῦς·
ὧδε δέ τις εἶπεσκεν ἰδὼν ἐς πλησίον ἄλλον·
“ἦ ῥ' αὐτίς πόλεμός τε κακὸς καὶ φύλοπις αἰνὴ
ἔσσειται, ἢ φιλότῃτα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι τίθησι
Ζεὺς, ὅς τ' ἀνθρώπων ταμίης πολέμοιο τέτυκται.”

Speaking so he [Zeus] stirred up Athene, who was eager before this,
and she went in a flash of speed down the pinnacles of Olympus.
As when the son of devious-devising Kronos casts down
a star, portent to sailors or to widespread armies of peoples
glittering, and thickly the sparks of fire break from it,
like that star Pallas Athene swept flashing earthward,
and she plunged between the two hosts; and amazement seized the beholders,
Trojans, breakers of horses, and strong-greaved Achaians.
And thus they would speak to each other, each looking at the man next him:
'Surely again there will be evil war and terrible
fighting, or else now friendship is being set between both sides
by Zeus, who is appointed lord of the wars of mortals.' (*Il.* 4.73–84)¹

1 All translations of passages from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are based on those in LATTIMORE 1951 and 1965, respectively, with modifications where appropriate. I use LATTIMORE's versions of proper nouns. All Greek quotations come from the relevant Oxford Classical Texts.

My analysis of this scene will run as follows. I begin by arguing that a common reading of this passage, such as that offered in DE JONG 2004, wrongly and unnecessarily maintains that the two armies believe they are witnesses to an omen. I then show that the scene portrays an epiphany, as RICHARDSON, DE JONG 2001, and CONSTANTINIDOU have each proposed in passing. I close by demonstrating how the specific idiosyncrasies of this epiphany contribute to the development of a prominent theme in the transition from *Iliad* 3 to *Iliad* 4 – namely, the distance between men and gods.

Before turning to the previous work on this passage, I need first to choose a definition of epiphany and second to review the assumption underlying our investigation: archaic Greek epic distinguishes between omen and epiphany.² On the first point: our poems possess a vocabulary for what we call omens, using the words *teras* (e.g., *Il.* 2.324) and *sēma* (e.g., *Od.* 21.413), but not a vocabulary for what we label an epiphany.³ The specification *epiphaneia* does not appear in that corpus, but the anachronistic term nevertheless can be used to identify a discernable event in archaic Greek epic.⁴ I follow TURKELTAUB who, in exploring the same texts as I do, defines an epiphany as

a manifestation of a god in a form that is both perceptible to the poem's mortal characters and that communicates to the mortal in a comprehensible and revelatory manner the god's divine nature or identity either directly or by being explicitly connected with a miraculous occurrence.⁵

Rightly observing that they are of a different sort and that in any event to include them would 'explod[e] our field of investigation', TURKELTAUB excludes 'those scenes in which the mortal witnesses divine actions, recognizes their divine nature, and yet never perceives the god himself'.⁶ A bit later in our discussion we will have occasion to follow TURKELTAUB again in distinguishing between types of epiphanies.

On the second point: scholars have traced the ways in which epiphanies can 'have much in common with other forms of sacred semiosis, including oracles and portents'.⁷ Nevertheless, archaic Greek epic constructs two distinct experiences of communica-

2 By 'archaic Greek epic', I mean the poems of Homer and Hesiod as well as all the Homeric Hymns and extant fragments of other early epics, such as the *Cypria*.

3 COOK (2012) 54 notes the prevalence of *phainesthai* in epiphanic scenes in Homeric epic.

4 TURKELTAUB (2003) 11. As a general rule, I do not cite dissertations because they have not been refereed for publication. I make an exception for TURKELTAUB's 2003 dissertation, which has become something of a cult hit among scholars who work on epiphany.

5 TURKELTAUB (2003) 13. Accordingly, as TURKELTAUB (2007) 55 observes, 'scenes that do not make the mortal's recognition of the god entirely obvious' are to be set aside. Cf. PIETTRE (2001) 212.

6 TURKELTAUB (2003) 12 and 13, respectively. Cf. TURKELTAUB (2003) 12: 'The plague Apollo sends in *Iliad* 1 displays his divine power and is eventually recognized by the Achaeans as a manifestation of his power, but it is not the same thing as Athena's intervention later in the book when she appears to Achilles and prevents him from killing Agamemnon'. For events labeled *epiphaneiai* in later sources in which 'the god manifests his presence not by his personal perceptibility whatever its nature, but by the signs or miracles he performs', see VERSNEL (1987) 50–1, quotation from 50. I note the move among scholars of Homeric poetry to discuss in terms of epiphanies scenes that do not fit TURKELTAUB's criteria: for example, COOK (2012) 53 speaks of the recognition scene between Odysseus and Penelope as 'the central epiphanic moment', and STEVENS (forthcoming) describes as 'a kind of epiphanic play' the moment in which Zeus pushes Hektor forward with his hand (*Il.* 15.694–5).

7 PLATT (2011) 10.

tion with the gods when it comes to omens and epiphanies. Three factors are relevant. First, gods use omens to send messages to mortals, and mortals extract the message from the omen by reading it analogically or metaphorically. For instance, Odysseus reminds the Achaians of Kalchas's interpretation of an omen that appeared at Aulis. After a snake devoured eight baby sparrows and the mother sparrow herself, Kalchas analogically aligns the number of sparrows with the length of the war (*Il.* 2.326–9). On other occasions, characters still think metaphorically but not analogically in taking an omen to show divine favor or warning. For instance, after Aias predicts Troy's sack and Hektor's retreat (*Il.* 13.810–20), an omen appears: “Ὠς ἄρα οἱ εἰπόντι ἐπέπτατο δεξιὸς ὄρνις, / αἰετὸς ὑψιπέτης· ἐπὶ δ' ἴαχε λαὸς Ἀχαιῶν / θάρσυνος οἰωνῶ.” (As he spoke so, an ominous bird winged by at his right hand, / a soaring eagle, and the host of the Achaians, made brave / by the bird sign, shouted ...) (*Il.* 13.821–3). The Achaians deem the eagle to represent a phenomenon other than itself, namely, divine confirmation of Aias's claims. An epiphany is another matter. In epic epiphanies, ‘mortals both perceive gods and recognize their divinity’⁸ and analogical or metaphorical decoding does not come into play.⁹ This distinction leads to our second point: we have to reckon with the troublesome English word ‘portend’. An epiphany can be taken to portend certain events – Athene's epiphany suggests to Nestor that Telemachos will not ‘turn out mean and cowardly’ (*Od.* 3.371–9) – but that does not make it an omen, which, again, requires an act of analogical or metaphorical reading. Third, omens and epiphanies differ in their respective politics. In epic, omens are for everyone: elites (e.g., *Od.* 21.413–15), commoners (e.g., *Il.* 8.247–52), and even a slave (see *Od.* 20.100–15) engage with omens.¹⁰ By contrast, certain types of epiphanies can be restricted to elites. For instance, in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, only elites have face-to-face conversations with gods.¹¹ Non-elite characters can experience epiphanies (as we will see), but my point is that the poets of archaic epic limit access to specific sorts of epiphanies whereas they do not limit access to omens. Let us query, then, whether in the passage from *Iliad* 4 the characters (think they) witness an omen or experience an epiphany.

Of the numerous analyses of this passage that elect for the omen option, I find DE JONG's the best representative as well as the most intriguing.¹² I will first quote and then paraphrase her interpretation (please find the key to her terminology in footnote 13), before turning to a detailed critique of her position. Focusing on the simile at *Il.* 4.75–8, DE JONG writes,

Athena is not transformed into a shooting star, but resembles one. The complication here is that this resemblance is noted not only by the NF_p, who uses it to illustrate for the NeFe₁ Athena's quick descent, but also by the characters (the Greek and Trojan soldiers): as appears from the

8 TURKELTAUB (2007) 53.

9 Cf. PLATT (2011) 54.

10 READY (2014) 41–2.

11 Cf. TURKELTAUB 2007, LOVATT (2013) 82, and PETRIDOU (forthcoming).

12 See also FENIK (1968) 183, SCOTT (1974) 99, TSAGARAKIS (1982) 140, DIETRICH (1983) 56, BANNERT (1988) 63–4, and SCHNEIDER (1996) 86.

tis-speech 82–4 ... , they interpret what they see as an omen from Zeus, which implies that they (think they) have seen a shooting star, just as the NF₁ ‘predicted’ they would in 76 ... In other words, the passage Δ 75–80 is focalized *doubly* ... : what for the NF₁ and his addressee has the status of a simile only, is reality for the soldiers as F₂.¹³

To paraphrase DE JONG’s reading: when we get to the *tis*-speech, we realize that the characters (think they) just saw an omen; we then return to the simile and see that its shooting star is actually the omen they (think they) saw. Although DE JONG does not pursue this line of argument, additional corroboration for this interpretation appears in verse 79: ‘θάμβος δ’ ἔχεν εισορώωντας’ (and amazement seized the beholders). For in two other passages, ‘being amazed’ (by way of a word from the root *thamb-*) at what one ‘sees’ is the reaction to an omen.¹⁴ When Zeus sends a thunderclap and a lightning bolt, ‘οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες / θάμβησαν’ (seeing it / they [the Achaians] were stunned) (*Il.* 8.76–7). The assembled Ithakans see two birds tearing at each other: ‘θάμβησαν δ’ ὄρνιθας, ἔπει ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσιν’ (Then all were astounded at the birds, when their eyes saw them) (*Od.* 2.155). In light of these two passages, the armies’ response at *Il.* 4.79 suggests that they are reacting to an omen.¹⁵

DE JONG’s analysis begins with a salient reminder: ‘Athena is not transformed into a shooting star’. Some critics argue just that,¹⁶ while others find the passage ambiguous as to whether Athene is like a star or actually metamorphoses into a star.¹⁷ In truth,

13 DE JONG (2004) 134–5, emphasis in original. A key to DE JONG’s terminology and notation: (1) A focalizer (F) is a person ‘(the narrator or a character) through whose eyes the events and persons of a narrative are seen’ (DE JONG [2001] xiv). (2) The primary narrator-focalizer (abbreviated NF₁) is the figure we have in mind when we talk about the Homeric narrator (DE JONG [2004] 29–45). (3) The primary narratee-focalizee (abbreviated NeFe₁) is the ‘addressee of the Iliadic NF₁ ... , who like the NF is external and for the greater part remains imperceptible’ (DE JONG [2004] 53, emphasis in original). (4) The ‘narrator-text’ comprises ‘those parts of the text which are presented by the narrator, i. e., the parts between the speeches’ (DE JONG [2001] xv, emphasis in original). (5) A secondary focalizer (abbreviated F₂) is a character who functions as a focalizer. Note that the primary narrator-focalizer (NF₁) ‘represents in the narrator-text the focalization of one of the characters’ (whom, again, we designate F₂) (DE JONG [2004] 101), hence the designation ‘primary’. This hierarchy emerges in the notation NF₁[F₂]. On F₂ and the dynamics of the NF₁[F₂] relationship, see DE JONG (2004) 101–23.

14 STOCKINGER (1959) 142. DE JONG (1987) 73 implicitly refers to these parallels.

15 According to Odysseus, the Achaians were amazed (*thaumazomen*, *Il.* 2.320) by the omen that appeared (*ephanē*, *Il.* 2.308) at Aulis.

16 For example, MOULTON (1979) 292 n. 40 and PETRIDOU (forthcoming).

17 For example, EDWARDS (1980) 10. According to a scholion, ‘ἡ Ἀθηνᾶ ὁμοιουμένη αὐτῷ εἰς τὴν γῆν παρεγένετο’ (Athena became like it [the star] [i. e. *took* the form of it] and came to earth) (schol. b *Il.* 4.75–9a2 ERBSE). For this translation of *homoioumenē*, compare a scholiastic comment, preserved on a papyrus fragment, on *Il.* 2.795 explaining Aristarchus’s athetesis of *Il.* 791–5: ‘οὐδέποτε ὑπὸ Διὸς πεμπομένη ἡ Ἴρις ὁμοιοῦται τινι, ἀλλ’ αἰεὶ αὐτοπρόσωπος παραγ[ε]ίνεται’ (never when sent by Zeus does Iris become like [i. e., take the form of] someone else, but she always comes in her own person) (ERBSE [1969] 169). Cf. also schol. AbT *Il.* 2.20b. Another scholion on *Il.* 4.76, however, declares, ‘καλῶς ἢ πολεμικῆ πολειμικῶ σημείω εἰκασταί’ (schol. bT *Il.* 4.76 ERBSE). We can translate either ‘Nicely does the warlike one [Athene] resemble a sign of war’ or ‘Nicely is the warlike one [Athene] made to be like [i. e., take the form of] a sign of war’: in other words, the scholion implies either that Athene is merely like a star or that she actually turns into a star. For the former translation, compare a scholion on *Il.* 8.338–40, a simile in which Hektor is likened to a dog and his successive victims are each likened to a single boar or lion: ‘ὁ Ἐκτωρ εἰκασταί

Il. 4.75–8 clearly presents a simile: Athene is only like a star; she does not turn into a star. A simile in Homeric epic is a statement in the shape ‘A like B’ (e.g., ‘Πηλεΐδης δ’ οἴκοιο λέων ὡς ἄλτο θύραζε’ [The son of Peleus bounded to the door of the house like a lion] [*Il.* 2.4.572]) or ‘As B, so A’ (e.g., ‘ὡς δ’ ὄρνις ἀπτῆσι νεοσσοῖσι προφέρρησι / μαστακ’, ἐπεὶ κε λάβρησι, κακῶς δ’ ἄρα οἱ πέλει αὐτῆ, / ὡς καὶ ἐγὼ πολλὰς μὲν αὐπνοὺς νύκτας ἴανον’ [For as to her unwinged young ones the mother bird brings back / morsels, wherever she can find them, but as for herself it is suffering, / such was I, as I lay through all the many nights unsleeping] [*Il.* 9.323–5]). Critically, these statements are marked above all by the fundamental dissimilarity, the unbridgeable gap, between the tenor (A) and the vehicle (B). The tenor and vehicle are similar in certain respects, but, as scholars have repeatedly shown, what makes a simile work is its juxtaposition of radically unlike terms: no matter how similar a man is to a lion, a man is not a lion.¹⁸ To be sure, when a god takes on a physical form different from his or her usual form – that is, when we can speak of divine metamorphosis – the poet can also deploy an ‘A like B’ statement.¹⁹ For instance, Athene disguises herself as Laodokos: ‘ἦ δ’ ἀνδρὶ κέλη Τρώων κατεδύσεθ’ ὄμιλον, / Λαοδόκῳ Ἀντηνοριδῆ, κρατερῷ αἰχμητῆ’ (She like [in appearance to] a man merged among the Trojans assembled, / Laodokos, Antenor’s son, a powerful spearman) (*Il.* 4.86–7); later she disguises herself as Deiphobos: ‘κιχῆσατο δ’ Ἔκτορα δῖον / Δηϊφόβῳ εἰκυῖα δέμας καὶ ἀτειρέα φωνή’ (and she caught up with brilliant Hektor, / being like [in appearance to] Deiphobos in form and weariless voice) (*Il.* 22.226–7). This kind of metamorphosis, however, cannot be classed as a simile because the poet is emphasizing the degree of similarity between the tenor and vehicle (between, for example, Athene and Deiphobos): they are so similar that the tenor is mistaken for and in effect becomes the vehicle.²⁰

Proof that we are dealing with a simile at *Il.* 4.75–8 comes in the passage’s introductory adjective *hoios*, which only ever introduces similes in the epics.²¹ And what of *eikuia*, a participle from **eikō* that the poet uses in the resumptive clause at verse 78 to return us to the narrative proper? Observe that participial forms of the verb **eikō* can

κυνὶ ἐνὶ καὶ ὁ ἀποκτεινόμενος θηρὶ ἐνὶ’ (Hektor resembles a single dog and the one being killed a single beast) (schol. AbT *Il.* 8.338–40 ERBSE). For the latter translation, compare a scholion on *Il.* 4.87, wherein Athene takes on the attributes of Laodokos: ‘καλῶς δὲ τοῦτῳ εἴκασται’ (Nicely is she made to be like [i.e., take the form of] this man [Laodokos]) (schol. T *Il.* 4.87a1 ERBSE). These scholia suggest that already ancient commentators debated what happens in *Il.* 4.75–8.

18 For the defining features of a simile, see READY (2011) 14, and for previous bibliography on the criterion of dissimilarity, see 14 n. 9.

19 Cf. PETRIDOU (forthcoming).

20 In READY (2011) 21, I place these sorts of ‘A like B’ statements in the category of ‘comparison’: to be distinguished from a simile, a comparison in my model is a statement marked by the similarity of tenor and vehicle (READY [2011] 15). Cf. TSAGALIS (2012) 489–90. It can be of heuristic value to distinguish between short and long similes (TSAGALIS [2012] 490; cf. CUDDON [2013] s. v. ‘epic simile’), but we should cease using length as one of the criteria for distinguishing between a simile and a comparison (cf. READY [2011] 14).

21 I provided above LATTIMORE’s translation of verse 75. A more literal translation would run, ‘And of what sort is a star that the son of devious-devising Kronos casts down’

introduce similes just as easily as they can scenes of metamorphosis.²² An instance of the former usage appears in a description of the Trojan elders:²³

ἀλλ' ἀγορηταὶ
ἔσθλοί, τεττίγεσσιν ἐοικότες, οἳ τε καθ' ὕλην
δενδρέω ἐφεζόμενοι ὄπα λειριόεσσαν ἰεῖσι·
τοῖοι ἄρα Τρώων ἡγήτορες ἦντ' ἐπὶ πύργῳ.

yet they were excellent
speakers still, and clear, as cicadas who through the forest
settle on trees, to issue their delicate voice of singing.
Such were they who sat on the tower, chief men of the Trojans. (*Il.* 3.150–3)

An example of the latter usage appears a moment later in *Iliad* 3 when Aphrodite disguises herself in order to meet with Helen on the wall of Troy:²⁴

γρηῖ δέ μιν εἰκνία παλαιγενεῖ προσέειπεν
εἰροκόμῳ, ἧ οἱ Λακεδαίμονι ναιετοῶσῃ
ἦσκειν εἶρια καλά, μάλιστα δέ μιν φιλέεσκε·
τῆ μιν ἔεισαμένη προσεφώνεε δι' Ἀφροδίτη·

and spoke to her, likening herself to an aged woman,
a wool-dresser who when she was living in Lakedaimon
made beautiful things out of wool, and loved her beyond all others.
Likening herself to this woman Aphrodite spoke to her: (*Il.* 3.386–9)

Given the multifunctional nature of participial forms of the verb **eikō* and given that the introductory adjective *hoios* at verse 75 signaled the advent of a simile, we should translate *tōi eikui'* at the start of verse 78 as 'like that star ...', not 'likening herself to that star' in the sense of 'taking the form of a star'. In short, the passage begins with a word used exclusively to introduce similes and then after that introduction moves toward its conclusion with a word frequently used to introduce similes. All indications are that the passage is a simile, not an instance of metamorphosis.

DE JONG, then, correctly remarks that there is no shooting star for the characters to see. I dispute, however, her contention that the characters *believe* they see an ominous shooting star. Nor is a potential variant on this argument – they may not think they see a shooting star, but they do think they see an omen – any better. DE JONG'S reading of the simile and the *tis*-speech requires a closer look.

Initially, DE JONG writes of the simile likening Athene to a shooting star that 'the resemblance is noted not only by the NF₁, ... but also by the characters'. She then specifies that the characters '(think they) have seen a shooting star' and 'what for the NF₁ and his addressee has the status of a simile only, is reality for the soldiers as F₂'. I stumble

22 Cf. READY (2011) 70–2.

23 See also, e.g., *Il.* 2.337–8, 2.800–1, 3.222, 3.449, 5.87–93, 5.782–3, and 12.146–51.

24 See also, e.g., *Il.* 22.227 and 24.347–8.

over three related points.²⁵ First, the proposal that ‘they (think they) have seen a shooting star’ renders the simile no longer a simile. Yet, as DE JONG herself notes, a simile in the narrator-text that ‘illustrates . . . an event as it is seen, experienced by a character’ always remains a simile.²⁶ For example – to quote from DE JONG’s analyses – ‘for him [Diomedes] the war god is as frightening as a swift-flowing and foaming river for a traveller’; ‘The Trojans compare Idomeneus to a flame.’²⁷ Diomedes does not think he is looking at a river. The Trojans do not think they are looking at a flame. Let us assume for the sake of argument that in *Iliad* 4 the warriors focalize the simile (but see my third point below), meaning that the narrator takes us inside their heads, as it were, and shows us that they think that what they see is similar to a shooting star.²⁸ If the poet is playing by his usual rules for these sorts of similes, they cannot think they have seen a star. Second, I fail to understand the proposition ‘what for the NF₁ and his addressee has the status of a simile only, is reality for the soldiers as F₂’. To my knowledge, no other simile in the narrator-text that presents a character’s viewpoint works this way. In fact, no other simile in the Homeric epics offers so profound a disjunction. Third, I question the very assumption that the characters focalize verses 75 to 77. The warriors come into focus with the *eishoroōntas* of verse 79. DE JONG correctly observes that ‘[t]heir object of focalization . . . must be found in what precedes’,²⁹ but to go back to verse 75 is to go back too far. Their focalization begins at the first hemistich of verse 79 – ‘κὰδ δ’ ἔθορ’ ἐς μέσσον’ (and she plunged between the two hosts) – a fact brought out by the used of a period at the end of verse 78 in VAN THIEL’s 1996 edition of the *Iliad*. It is unlikely that the poet would ask the audience to retroject the characters’ focalization any earlier. If we instead understand the Trojan and Achaian amazement to be a response to Athene’s leaping ‘*es meson*’ (between the two hosts), the passage takes its places alongside four others in which characters are amazed (via a word from the root *thamb-*) at the appearance of another or others. In those four passages, the amazement arises when that other or others enters ‘into’ some space: ‘*es meson*’ (into the space between) (*Il.* 3.341 and 23.814); ‘*androu es aphneiou*’ (to [the house of] a man of substance) (*Il.* 24.482); and ‘*es klisiēn*’ (into the shelter) (*Od.* 16.178).³⁰ In sum, if the characters do not think they see a shooting star, they do not think they see a shooting star that they can take as an omen.

25 Note as well the illogical slippage that emerges over the course of the presentation. The characters cannot think they see something that resembles a shooting star, but that they know is not a shooting star, and simultaneously also (think that they) see a shooting star. Given that DE JONG’s analysis ends with the latter option (i. e., they [think that they] see a star), it appears to be her preference. Cf. DE JONG (1987) 73 n. 19: ‘the passage 75–6 is not (only) a comparison . . . but also a description of what the characters actually see’. Other scholars are of the same mind: see those listed in note 12.

26 DE JONG (2004) 126.

27 DE JONG (2004) 128 and 135, respectively.

28 The concept of focalization is what WILLCOCK (1970) 124 was in need of when he noted that this simile ‘is a little different from the usual simile’.

29 DE JONG (1987) 73 n. 19.

30 Cf. *Il.* 8.75–7: ‘αὐτὸς δ’ ἐξ Ἰδης μεγάλ’ ἔκτυπε, δαϊόμενον δὲ / ἤκε σέλας μετὰ λαὸν Ἀχαιῶν· οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες / θάμβησαν’ (and he [Zeus] himself crashed a great stroke from Ida and sent a blazing thunderbolt among the people of the Achaians; seeing it / they were stunned).

For its part, the *tis*-speech at verses 81 to 84 does not suggest that the characters believe they have seen an omen (shooting star or otherwise). In the speech, the *tis* takes whatever it is that he has seen as proof that Zeus is at work and ponders what the divinity is up to: he will see either the resumption of battle or to peace between the warring sides.³¹ The speaker, that is, proposes two possible outcomes, understanding what he has seen to be ambiguous as to its import. As I have shown in a 2014 article, however, omens do not trigger that sort of reaction in Homeric epic.³² Characters do not find omens ambiguous; they never draw conflicting messages from a given omen. When Odysseus (*Il.* 2.299–300) and Telemachos (*Od.* 15.180–1) acknowledge that an omen reader could err in his or her analysis, neither character proposes an alternative interpretation, an absence in keeping with the fact that mortal characters provide a given omen with one and only one interpretation. Yet this point emerges most clearly when a character challenges another's reading of an omen by rejecting the proposition that an omen has been sent at all: note Hektor's response to Poulydamas (*Il.* 12.237–40) and Eurymachos's response to Halitherses (*Od.* 2.180–2).³³ The characters are so far from offering discrepant interpretations of an omen that they do not even challenge an interpretation with another interpretation.³⁴ Based on these findings, I extrapolate that the *tis*-speech in *Iliad* 4, positing as it does two possible readings, does not contain a response to an omen.³⁵ Because, as we will see below, we can account for the content of the *tis*-speech in a different way, there is no need to make the passage in *Iliad* 4 an exception to the rule.

31 Cf. STOCKINGER (1959) 142–3.

32 READY (2014) 38–40.

33 Hektor: 'τύνη δ' οἰωνοῖσι ταυπτερύγεσσι κελεύεις / πείθεσθαι, τῶν οὐ τι μετατρέπομ' οὐδ' ἀλεγίζω, / εἴτ' ἐπὶ δεξι' ἴωσι πρὸς ἡῶ τ' ἠελιὸν τε, / εἴτ' ἐπ' ἀριστερὰ τοῖ γε ποτὶ ζόφον ἠερόεντα' (you tell me to put my trust in birds, who spread / wide their wings. I care nothing for these, I think nothing of them, / nor whether they go by on our right against dawn and sunrise / or go by to the left against the glooming mist and the darkness) (*Il.* 12.237–40). Eurymachos: 'ταῦτα δ' ἐγὼ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων μαντεύεσθαι. / ὄρνιθες δέ τε πολλοὶ ὑπ' αὐγᾶς ἠελίοιο / φοιτῶσ', οὐδέ τε πάντες ἐναῖσμοι' (But when it comes to these things I am far better at prophesying than you. / Many are the birds who under the sun's rays wander / the sky; not all of them mean anything) (*Od.* 2.180–2).

34 I go on to argue for the importance of this phenomenon by linking it to the characters' faith in an omen as a mechanism for transmitting a message and ultimately to the democratization of omen reading as a means of discerning the gods' intentions. See READY (2014) 40–5.

35 Notice as well that, whereas a *tis*-speech can function as an omen (see *Od.* 18.111a–17), omens are nowhere interpreted in *tis*-speeches. One additional point: READY 2014 examines the characters' relationship to omens, and for that reason the article's conclusions are germane to our passage in *Iliad* 4. I add here that *Il.* 17.547–50 suggests the narrator treats omens the same way as I find the characters treat them in READY 2014: 'ἦῦτε πορφυρέην ἶριν θνητοῖσι τανύσση / Ζεὺς ἐξ οὐρανόθεν, τέρας ἔμμεναι ἢ πολέμοιο, / ἢ καὶ χειμῶνος δυσθαλπέος, δὲ ρά τε ἔργων / ἀνθρώπους ἀνέπαυσεν ἐπὶ χθονί, μῆλα δὲ κήδει' (As when in the sky Zeus strings for mortals the shimmering / rainbow, to be a portent and sign of war, or of wintry / storm, when heat perishes, such storm as stops mortals' / work upon the face of the earth, and afflicts their cattle). As I rehearse elsewhere, similes describe repeated events (READY [2011] 95). In this passage, Zeus uses at one time a rainbow to signal that war is coming, at another time a rainbow to signal that a storm is coming. The verses rely on our understanding that Homeric gods use omens to comment on a specific situation, such as the fate of a martial expedition or the return of a ruler. No scenario exists in which the matter to be addressed is so ill defined that an omen signaling war or a storm becomes appropriate. The passage, then, does not imply that, when Zeus makes a rainbow, mortals assign it two possible meanings and debate whether it means war or a storm.

I turn to the last bit of evidence in support of DE JONG's reading, that the phrase 'θάμβος δ' ἔχεν εισορόωντας' (amazement seized the beholders) in verse 79 signals the reaction to an omen. That hemistich could just as easily mean something else: the warriors are amazed at the appearance of a striking figure.³⁶ Several parallels to verse 79 support this interpretation. Two passages use the same exact words. When the Trojans and Achaians see Paris and Menelaos enter the space marked out for their duel, 'θάμβος δ' ἔχεν εισορόωντας' (amazement seized the beholders) (*Il.* 3.342) (see also *Il.* 24.481–2). One passage uses *thambos* and *ekhō*, and, although a verb of seeing is absent, the idea is implied. When the Achaians see Aias and Diomedes enter the space marked out for their duel, 'θάμβος δ' ἔχε πάντας Ἀχαιοῦς' (wonder settled on all the Achaians) (*Il.* 23.815). Still another passage uses the verb *thambeō* and the verb *eishoraō*. When Agamemnon and Achilles encounter the souls of the suitors in the underworld, 'τῶ δ' ἄρα θαμβήσαντ' ἰθὺς κίον, ὡς ἐσιδέσθην' (These two in wonderment went up to them as they saw them) (*Od.* 24.101). Finally, in another passage, we find *thambeō* and a reference to sight. After Athene beautifies Odysseus, Telemachos sees the transformed figure reenter Eumaios's hut: 'θάμβησε δέ μιν φίλος υἱός, / ταρβήσας δ' ἐτέρωσε βάλ' ὄμματα' (His beloved son was astonished / and turned his eyes in the other direction) (*Od.* 16.178–9).³⁷ These parallels should guide our understanding of the scene in *Iliad* 4. Which striking figure's appearance could prompt the warriors' amazement? Only Athene herself as 'she plunged between the two hosts' (*Il.* 4.79–80).³⁸ The warriors, that is, may experience an epiphany.³⁹

So, either their seeing what they think is an omen or their experiencing an epiphany could prompt the characters' reaction at *Il.* 4.79. Because the other supposed evidence for the omen hypothesis has proven illusory, we should try out the epiphany hypothesis.⁴⁰ Scholars who favor this reading point to two items.⁴¹ First, in archaic Greek epic, mortals regularly react with amazement to an epiphany, and a word

36 Cf. RICHARDSON (1974) 208: 'Amazement is also the common reaction to an unexpected visitor'; and KRIETER-SPIRO (2009) 124 ad 342: 'θάμβος: bez. die Reaktion auf eine unerwartete oder unheimliche Erscheinung'.

37 Additional parallels emerge if one looks at other words for 'amazement': for instance, when Odysseus materializes in the Phaiakian court, 'θαύμαζον δ' ὀρόωντες' ('they wondered looking at him') (*Od.* 7.145).

38 Cf. STOCKINGER (1959) 21 n. 17: 'θάμβος δ' ἔχεν εισορόωντας ... geht eindeutig auf die Erscheinung der Athene' (cf. his 142–3).

39 For bibliography on Homeric epiphanies, see PLATT (2011) 57 n. 82 and COOK (2012) 53 n. 1. For ways the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* differ when it comes to epiphanies, see PUCCI (1986) 9–10 and (1998) 82 and TURKELTAUB (2003) esp. Chapters 8 and 9.

40 Note as well that, although as REECE (1993) 38–9 reminds us a scene of departure can include an omen that appears to the characters in the story, no scene of arrival has one. I follow RIMMON-KENAN's (1994) 3 definition of 'story': 'the narrated events, abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in their chronological order, together with the participants in these events'. When the narrator likens Athene in her descent to earth to an ominous rainbow (*Il.* 17.547–52), no character in the story interprets the omen. By the way, this passage in *Iliad* 17 closely resembles that in *Iliad* 4. My suggestion that characters do not focalize the simile at *Il.* 4.75–8 makes it parallel to the simile in *Iliad* 17, which also lacks characters as focalizers.

41 RICHARDSON (1974) 208 (light and amazement), DE JONG (2001) 34 ad 319–24 (amazement), and CONSTANTINIDOU (2010) 94 (light, with a nod to amazement).

from the root *thamb-* often catches that response (e.g., *Il.* 1.199 and 3.398).⁴² Second, the content of the simile is instructive. KULLMANN surmises that a belief in the connection between meteorological happenings and the arrival or epiphany of a god lies behind the simile.⁴³ The simile may have led an ancient audience to understand the passage as presenting an epiphany. Be that as it may, the image brings out not just the speed with which Athene moves but also the light that emanates from her: ‘λαμπρόν-τοῦ δέ τε πολλοὶ ἀπὸ σπινθήρες ἔενται’ (glittering, and thickly the sparks of fire break from it) (*Il.* 4.77).⁴⁴ Now, divine luminescence is another prominent feature of epiphanies.⁴⁵ Taken together, the amazement and the light support the idea that the Trojans and Achaians witness an epiphany. More precisely, the characters see a divinity radiating light.

One may have some lingering doubt as to whether the characters know that they are seeing a god: could they not fail to grasp what they see? The best way to dispel this anxiety is to survey again the parallels for the second hemistich of verse 79 (θάμβος δ’ ἔχεν εἰσορόωντας). In all cases – both those involving omens and those involving the appearance of a striking figure or figures – the characters are to be understood as seeing the visual stimulus for what it is: lightning, two birds, Paris and Menelaos, Aias and Diomedes, the suitors’ souls, the transformed Odysseus, etc. They may on occasion lack the deeper knowledge about those entities that the external audience possesses, but they do not stare in incomprehension. Absent any indication to the contrary (and not wishing to turn Homer into an unreliable narrator), it is best to assume that that trend holds at *Il.* 4.79 and that the warriors perceive a divinity emanating light. The one limitation imposed on the characters’ understanding stems from the traditional dynamics of epiphany scenes: the percipient(s) often cannot identify the god by name.⁴⁶

If some critics have arrived at this point before, no one has to my knowledge addressed the idiosyncrasies of this epiphany: *a group including commoners experiences a visual epiphany in which it sees a god but does not interact with the god.*⁴⁷ That configura-

42 EHNMARK (1935) 18. COOK (2012) 62 n. 25 provides bibliography on this motif. Cf. PETRIDOU (forthcoming).

43 KULLMANN (1956) 90–1.

44 Cf. SCHNEIDER (1996) 86 and PUCCI (1998) 70 n. 1.

45 See, e.g., *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 189 and 278–80. Cf. PETRIDOU (forthcoming). Two passages in the Homeric epics point to this divine radiance. PUCCI (1986) 8–9 and 18 observes that the gold used to represent Athene and Ares on Achilleus’s shield catches this feature. Cf. CONSTANTINIDOU (2010) 93 on the gold that covers Delos upon the birth of Apollo (*Homeric Hymn to Apollo* 135–6). When Athene holds up a lamp in order to light the way for Odysseus and Telemachos, Telemachos attributes the glow that fills the house to the presence of a god (*Od.* 19.36–40). Telemachos does not see Athena holding a lamp and attribute the light to that lamp. On this scene, see WEST (1997) 430, COOK (2012) 99, and PETRIDOU (forthcoming).

46 When Apollo appears to Hektor, Hektor asks, ‘τίς δὲ σὺ ἐσσι φέριστε θεῶν, ὃς μ’ εἴρῃαι ἄντην;’ (Who are you, who speak to me face to face, o noblest / of gods?) (*Il.* 15.247). See also *Od.* 5.333–57 and *Homeric Hymn* 7.17–21 (to Dionysos). Note in addition the *post factum* epiphanies (defined below) in which the divinity’s identity remains unknown: see *Il.* 13.68–72 and *Od.* 1.323.

47 The phrase ‘Τρῳάδες θ’ ἱπποδάμοις καὶ εὐκνήμιδας Ἀχαιοὺς’ (Trojans, breakers of horses, and strong-greaved Achaians) (*Il.* 4.80) refers to the entirety of both armies. Mortal characters (e.g., *Il.* 3.68, 3.156, and 7.67),

tion is not found elsewhere in the *Iliad* wherein (a) individual members of the elite experience epiphanies by themselves; (b) only a select number of elites experience visual epiphanies⁴⁸; and (c), regardless of the type of epiphany, the percipient always interacts with the god. Indeed, (b) and (c) also obtain in archaic Greek epic more broadly.

Let us first note, however, that in archaic Greek epic (a) does not hold across the board: groups such as the one found in *Iliad* 4 collectively experience epiphanies. Accordingly, although the scene in *Iliad* 4 is distinctive from an Iliadic perspective, it would not have been inscrutable to an ancient audience familiar with the range of epiphanies in archaic Greek epic. The *Odyssey* presents an aural epiphany experienced by a group comprised in part of common folk. At the end of *Odyssey* 24, Athene attempts to stop the fight between Odysseus's household and Eupheithes's party of 'hēmiseōn pleious' (more than half) (*Od.* 24.464) of the Ithakans: ἴσχεσθε πτολέμου, Ἰθακήσιοι, ἀργαλίοιο, / ὥς κεν ἀναιμωτί γε διακρινθῆτε τάχιστα' (Hold back, men of Ithaka, from the wearisome fighting, / so that most soon, and without blood, you can settle everything) (*Od.* 24.531–2).⁴⁹ A scene of aural epiphany, everyone hears (but does not see) the goddess.⁵⁰ That everyone includes commoners: Eupheithes's faction comes from among 'pantas Akhaiou' (all the Achaians) (*Od.* 24.438) and the 'Ithakēsioi' (men of Ithaka) (*Od.* 24.443 and 454), and both those expressions almost always refer to collectives that include commoners.⁵¹ In the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo*, the Cre-

the gods (e.g., *Il.* 4.70, 5.32, and 7.35), and the narrator (e.g., *Il.* 11.70, 15.390, and 16.770) use the phrase 'Trojans and Achaians' (with and without various epithets) to denote all the fighters, commoners and *basileis*, at Troy. For an introduction to the different social classes and groups in Homeric epic, see RAAFLAUB (1997) 633–41. On collective epiphanies in antiquity, see GRAF (2004).

TURKELTAUB (2007) 56 divides epiphanies 'by mode of perception into families' (53): '1) the mortal perceives a disguised god and deduces the god's divinity only after the god has left (*post factum* recognition), 2) a god who is disguised or has hitherto not been explicitly recognized announces his true identity (verbal recognition), 3) the mortal recognizes the god's voice (aural recognition), 4) the mortal sees the god (visual recognition), and 5) the mode of recognition is taken for granted and so not specified by the immediate text (unspecified recognition)'. By 'visual epiphany', I mean epiphanies belonging to TURKELTAUB's fourth category.

48 Labeling the phenomenon 'dramatic isolation', TURKELTAUB (2003) 20 observes that 'only a single mortal character experiences the epiphany in its entirety'; he collects bibliography on this phenomenon at 20 n. 36. To be sure, the two Aiantes experience a *post factum* epiphany at *Il.* 13.59–82. By '*post factum* epiphany', I mean epiphanies belonging to TURKELTAUB's first category (see above note). On the select few who experience visual epiphanies, see TURKELTAUB (2007) esp. 63 and 66.

49 On the debate over how many Ithakans join Eupheithes in fighting Odysseus and his men, see HEUBECK (1992) 410 ad 463–6, whose reading I follow here. Cf. DE JONG (2001) 583 ad 420–66.

50 For the scene as an aural epiphany, see PUCCI (1998) 86. On aural epiphanies in the *Iliad*, see TURKELTAUB (2007) 60–3.

51 For 'all the (sons of the) Achaians', see, e.g., *Il.* 1.22, 7.403, and 18.76 and *Od.* 3.137 and 4.344; a possible exception appears at *Od.* 4.285–8 ('pantes ... huiēs Akhaiōn' [all the ... sons of the Achaians] in the wooden horse were the 'aristoi / Argeiōn' [the greatest / of the Argives] [*Od.* 4.272–3]). For 'men of Ithaka', see *Od.* 2.25, 2.161, 2.229, 15.520, and 24.354. Cf. HEUBECK (1992) 406 ad 415 and 407 ad 420.

When Athene shakes the aegis from the roof of Odysseus's house during the battle with the suitors (*Od.* 22.297–8) is she, as PUCCI (1998) 86 n. 16 asks, 'visible to all', an 'all' that includes Odysseus's slaves (see *Od.* 22.114 and 135) and presumably the suitors' attendants (see *Od.* 16.248 and 253)? Probably not: Apollo remains unseen when he shakes the aegis on the battlefield of Troy and terrifies the Achaians (*Il.* 15.320 2). On Achilles's 'epiphany' before all the Trojans and Achaians (*Il.* 18.203–31), see CONSTANTINIDOU (2010) 98.

tan sailors encounter Apollo disguised as a young man (449–50), and they soon know they are dealing face-to-face with the god after he identifies himself to them by name (474–502). Following TURKELTAUB's schema, we can label this an epiphany involving verbal recognition.⁵² These sailors probably belong to the common folk, or at the very least there are probably commoners among them. On the one hand, the narrator labels them 'πολλές τε καὶ ἔσθλοί' (many fine men) (392), a phrase that refers both to elites (see *Il.* 24.204 and *Od.* 6.284) and to commoners (see *Il.* 4.298 and *Od.* 24.427), and their pursuit of 'πρῆξιν καὶ χρήματα' (business and goods) (397) is a legitimate activity for elites.⁵³ On the other hand, 'Krētōn agos' (the leader of the Cretans) (463 and 525) converses with Apollo. This appellation and construction (i. e., proper noun in the genitive plural + *agos*) is used elsewhere in archaic Greek epic solely for the leader of a warrior band, a band necessarily made up at least in part of commoners (see, e. g., *Il.* 4.265 [*Krētōn agos*] and 5.647 [*Lukiōn agos*]).⁵⁴ Additionally, the Cretans anticipate working the land at Pytho themselves (529–30), a life of toil that elites would likely not tolerate.⁵⁵ In the *Hymn to Apollo*, then, a group that most probably includes common folk experiences an epiphany involving verbal recognition. I surmise that an audience familiar with these sorts of passages would not have been confounded by Athene's epiphany in *Iliad* 4, experienced as it is by a group that includes commoners.

Nonetheless, the epiphany's idiosyncrasies remain. I wish now to consider what they contribute at this precise juncture in the story. To be sure, that Athene appears to all the Trojans and Achaians is in keeping with the fact that her actions will affect them all: she will see to the resumption of fighting between the two sides. But there is more to this epiphany.

As ELMER stresses, in *Iliad* 3 the Trojans and Achaians momentarily become a single group with one goal: they collectively decide to settle the war with a duel between Paris and Menelaos. Their shared *tis*-speeches as the truce is fashioned and the combatants prepare to engage reflect their shared sentiments (*Il.* 3.297–309 and 319–23: see ὦδε δέ τις εἶπεσκεν Ἀχαιῶν τε Τρώων τε' [And thus would murmur any man, Achaian or Trojan] [3.297=3.319]).⁵⁶ Moreover, their reactions to the duel's strange turn of events again signal their common desire that this duel bring the war to an end. Menelaos is about to kill Paris when Aphrodite snatches him from the battlefield (*Il.* 3.373–4). Everyone recognized that Menelaos's victory was imminent: that is why Aphrodite grabbed him when she did; Helen makes note of Paris's defeat in her reply to Aphrodite (*Il.* 3.403–4); and Paris himself admits his defeat to Helen (*Il.* 3.439). When Paris

52 I quote again TURKELTAUB's (2007) 56 definition: 'a god who is disguised or has hitherto not been explicitly recognized announces his true identity (verbal recognition)'.

53 *Contra* FÖRSTEL (1979) 278. See *Od.* 2.77–8, 3.82, 14.384–5, and 19.283–6. Cf. DOUGHERTY (2001) 47–9. Translations of phrases from the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* are based on those in from WEST (2003).

54 For an especially clear reference to commoners in the Achaian army, see *Il.* 2.198 ("Ὀν δ' αὖ δῆμου τ' ἀνδρα' [some man of the people]) (versus 2.188: "Ὀν τινα μὲν βασιλῆα καὶ ἔξοχον ἀνδρα' [some king, or man of influence]).

55 Cf. MILLER (1986) 100. RAAFLAUB (1997) 635 comments, '[T]he master of the elite oikos ... usually does not work himself. Rather, he supervises the workers and makes sure they are well taken care of.'

56 ELMER (2012) 26–37.

disappears, the Trojans aid Menelaos in his search for the missing prince: ‘ἴσον γάρ σφιν πᾶσιν ἀπήχθετο κηρὶ μελαίνῃ’ (since he [Paris] was hated among them all as dark death is hated) (*Il.* 3.454). The Trojans must be understood to be searching for Paris so that Menelaos can finish the job and the war can wrap up.⁵⁷ As for the Achaians, Agamemnon declares to the Trojans, ‘νίκη μὲν δὴ φαίνεται’ ἀρηϊφίλου Μενελάου, / ὑμεῖς δ’ Ἀργεῖν Ἑλένην καὶ κτήμαθ’ ἅμ’ αὐτῇ / ἔκδοτε, καὶ τιμὴν ἀποτινέμεν ἢν τιν’ ἔοικεν’ (clearly the victory is with warlike Menelaos. / Do you therefore give back, with all her possessions, Helen / of Argos, and pay a price that shall be befitting) (*Il.* 3.457–9). The narrator reports the Achaian reaction: ‘ἐπὶ δ’ ἦνεον ἄλλοι Ἀχαιοί’ (the other Achaians applauded him) (*Il.* 3.461). They too believe the duel’s outcome should herald the cessation of hostilities.

In short, the mortal characters of both sides and of every rank have decided the war should be brought to an end. At the start of *Iliad* 4, however, Zeus assembles the gods to figure out how to renew the fighting.⁵⁸ This juxtaposition of mortal and immortal action argues for a particular vision of mortal life: the gods determine what will ultimately happen to men, and, in addition to having no say in the matter, men remain ignorant of what the gods have planned for them. At the point at which the epiphany occurs, then, the gulf between men, thought of as a single class, and gods has come to the fore.⁵⁹

The peculiarities of the epiphany enhance the poem’s exploration of this theme. The lack of interaction between Athene and the mortals of all stripes who see her reaffirms the distance between men and gods.⁶⁰ Moreover, that everyone sees her allows for a *tis*-speech that represents the mortal crowd’s reaction to her appearance and

57 Penelope says to Eurynome, ‘μαί’, ἐχθροὶ μὲν πάντες, ἐπεὶ κακὰ μηχανώνονται. / Ἀντινοῦς δὲ μάλιστα μελαίνῃ κηρὶ ἔοικε’ (Mother, they [the suitors] are all hateful, since all are devising evils, / but Antinoös, beyond the rest, is like black death) (*Od.* 17.499–500). This statement comes right after she wishes that Apollo kill Antinoös (17.494). To hate someone and, at the same time, to associate him with black death is to welcome the prospect of his death.

58 Cf. HEIDEN (2008) 42 and 78.

59 In ELMER’S (2012) 41–4 analysis, too, *Iliad* 3 and 4 contrast the mortal and divine arenas. Focusing on the lack of a Trojan response to Agamemnon’s demands (*Il.* 3.455–61), ELMER (2012) 41 sets the Trojans’ and Achaians’ inability to ‘formulate a collective response’ to the aborted duel against the reaction of ‘the divine community, which successfully negotiates a response to the same uncertain situation’. Both ELMER and I end up in the same place – over the course of this episode, the poem stresses the gap between men and gods – but for different reasons: I think his reading neglects not only the fact that Paris’ (imminent) loss was evident to all but also the implication of the Trojans’ vigorous search for the missing Paris. Again, I take their search for the manifestly bested Paris as indicative of their desire to see the duel through to its conclusion and thereby end the war.

For the theme of the distance between men and gods in Homeric epic, see SAÏD (2011) 316–18 and GARCIA (2013) 161–8 (earlier bibliography noted at 162 n. 8 to which add MARTIN [1993] 231–2). The theme is well studied by those who investigate the distinct vocabulary of the gods: see BROUILLET (2013) with earlier bibliography. One need not overstate the case: KEARNS (2004) 63–7 rightly stresses the intimacy of the heroes’ interactions with the gods in the *Iliad*; see also BROUILLET (2013) 180.

60 As for why Athene is the epiphanic god in this case, I cite ELMER’S (2013) 142 reminder: ‘She is the customary agent of recalibration whenever the poem confronts the possibility of some event that would run counter to poetic ‘destiny’’.

gives voice to commonly held ideas.⁶¹ This representative speech reveals the distinct limits of a mortal perspective when compared with that of a divinity. For the *tis*-speaker inadvertently cites Zeus's earlier words at *Il.* 4.14–16: 'ἡμεῖς δὲ φραζώμεθ' ὅπως ἔσται ταδε ἔργα, / ἢ ῥ' αὖτις πόλεμόν τε κακὸν καὶ φύλοπιν αἰνήν / ὄρσομεν, ἢ φιλότητα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι βάλλωμεν' (Let us consider then how these things shall be accomplished, / whether again to stir up grim warfare and the terrible / fighting, or cast down love and make them friends with each other). SCHNEIDER explains the importance of the cross-reference.⁶² The *tis*-speaker first does not name an agent responsible for the rekindling of war (*essetai*, *Il.* 4.83) and then attributes the possibility of peace to Zeus.⁶³ By contrast, Zeus's first person plurals anticipate a more complex negotiation on Olympus with Hera especially helping to determine what comes next. Further, whereas the *tis*-speaker finds peace a plausible outcome, Zeus suggests it only in order to provoke Hera into demanding the continuation of the war, 'was Zeus selbst will'.⁶⁴ In these ways, the *tis*-speech points up the gap between men and gods.⁶⁵ In short, both the absence of any interaction between Athene and her percipients and the *tis*-speech prompted by everyone's seeing her supply further evidence for the remoteness of men from gods, a theme the poem has been foregrounding when the epiphany takes place.

With this intervention, I have sought to disprove the commonly held belief that in *Iliad* 4 the characters (think they) see an omen. When we let go of that idea, we need not explain away its unfortunate consequences: the passage no longer offers exceptions to the ways similes and omens work in archaic Greek epic. In defending the proposition that the scene presents an epiphany, I have adduced the parallels showing that the epiphany in *Iliad* 4 is not so exceptional as to be incomprehensible and have argued that the epiphany's peculiarities are an important factor in the poem's consideration at this juncture of the gap between men and gods.

This conclusion prompts reflection on two points of method. First, some may yet wish to see the passage as ambiguous. Perhaps it plays with the nature of similarity and with the distinction between omen and epiphany to query the ineffability of the divine body. My response is that, although we rightly spend much of our time finding and exploiting ambiguities in our sources, not everything is ambiguous. Furthermore, just as I have sought to prove that the passage is not in fact ambiguous, so one who wishes to argue for ambiguities must seek to prove those ambiguities. The passage cannot be assumed to be ambiguous just because it has prompted a lot of scholarly comment or because it seems at first glance to be somewhat confused or confusing. It must be shown to be ambiguous. Second, in the first portion of this essay, I rejected readings that make the passage yield a simile that runs counter to the ways similes

61 See DE JONG (1987) 82: 'One speech quoted in the text must be taken as representative for a whole body of speeches with similar content'; see also BECK (2012) 48 and ELMER (2012) 30.

62 SCHNEIDER (1996) 86–7.

63 He presumably also has Zeus in mind as the agent responsible for restarting the war.

64 SCHNEIDER (1996) 87.

65 Cf. BECK (2012) 50 on how 'three τις speeches in the *Odyssey* point out an ironic gap between what a group of people said and thought about their situation, and what was really the case'.

operate and an omen that runs counter to the ways omens operate. Then I presented a reading of the passage that yields an epiphany that runs counter to the ways epiphanies tend to operate. I defend this sequence as follows: we are dealing with different degrees of exceptionality. The readings I rejected make the simile and the omen so exceptional that they contradict at the most basic levels the ways similes and omens function. By contrast, the epiphany reading can be accommodated without violating the core attributes, such as they are, of epiphany scenes.⁶⁶

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66 It helps my argument that epiphany scenes are not rigorously systematized. Cf. COOK (2012) 53 n. 1.

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