

Zeus and Mount Ida in Homer's *Iliad*

ABSTRACT

This article explores the part played by Mount Ida in the *Iliad*. It begins with some consideration of Ida in the early 'history' of Troy – the stories of Dardanus and the early line of Trojan kings. The city of Troy (Ilios) has its origins on Mount Ida, and the mountain remains very dear to the Trojans in many different ways. The rivers at Troy have their source on the mountain, and the Trojans acquire their water and wood from there. Moreover, the mountain is a central part of Trojan religious life, including the peak at Gargarus, where Zeus resides for a significant part of the poem. This article considers the two journeys of Zeus to Mount Ida from Olympus in the *Iliad*, and the ways that these are dealt with in the text. It raises questions about the rationale for and the effect of his visits there. It is argued that the poet uses Zeus's absence from Olympus to 'open up' the cosmos, and permit new kinds of divine conduct and intervention. The article concludes with some consideration of the fact that the text offers no reference to the return of Zeus from Ida to Olympus prior to the council of the gods and Theomachy in Book 20.

We begin with the background 'history' of the Trojans in Homer's *Iliad* in which Mount Ida plays a crucial role. It is Aeneas who provides us with a basic account of the Trojan genealogy in a speech to Achilles (20.206-41). The story begins with Dardanus, the eponymous hero of the Dardanians, and runs through to Aeneas's own time in the war for Troy. Dardanus, the son of Zeus,¹ established a settlement in his own name, Dardania, 'since not yet was sacred Ilios built on the plain as a city of mortal men, but they still lived on the ridges of many-fountained Ida' (20.216-8). The account of Aeneas is quite bare really, not least because the poem's audience, presumably, knows the story well enough. The *Iliad* promotes the idea that the first three kings – Dardanus, Erichthonius and Tros – remained on or around Mount Ida during the periods of their kingships. A major change then occurred in the next generation. Tros had three sons – Ilios, Assaracus and Ganymede, who all went their own way. Ganymede went to Olympus as cup-bearer to Zeus,

¹ We learn that Zeus loved this son more than any other child born to him from a mortal woman (20.304-5). Homer is not forthcoming about the girl's name, nor her provenance, but the references suggest that Dardanus was conceived on Ida. This, at least, would help to explain why it was on this mountain that Troy had its origins, not somewhere else.

whereas his brother Assaracus, the great-grandfather of Aeneas, stayed on the mountain at Dardania.² Ilus, on the other hand, the great-grandfather of Hector and Paris (through Laomedon and Priam), left the mountain and headed to the coast, where he established the new city of Troy in his name (Ilios). The three brothers, therefore, are identified with where they led their lives – one on Mount Olympus, another on Mount Ida, and the third in a new city on the plain beside the Hellespont. Ganymede, of course, has no progeny, and so the house of Assaracus and the house of Ilus constitute the two main parts of the Trojan people. Given that the city and the poem are named after him, Ilus is quite an important background figure, and his tomb is a significant landmark in the *Iliad* (especially at 24.349).³

Aeneas's account of Mount Ida's part in the origins of Troy is one indication of the mountain's central importance in the *Iliad*. But it is not the only one. The life and identity of the Trojans are inextricably linked to Ida. It is on the mountain that the fertility and wealth of the city are founded – the rains from Zeus that fall there, the rivers that rise on its ridges (12.19-22), the wood for building ships and other structures, the land for flocks and herds, and the various flora and fauna located there.⁴ Ida is a place of sacred sexuality and fertility, both among the gods themselves, and in their various sexual relationships with mortals. The two main epithets of the mountain in the *Iliad* both emphasize the fertility of the place: πολυπίδαξ ('rich in springs', 'many-fountained'), which is peculiar to Ida in Homer (8.47; 14.157, 283, 307; 15.151; 20.59, 218, 23.117); and μήτηρ θηρῶν ('mother of wild animals', 8.47; 14.283; 15.151). The sexual encounter of Zeus and Hera in Book 14, the so-called *Dios Apate*, takes place on Ida, out of doors, on the peak of the mountain, despite Hera's anxiety about being seen. Zeus creates a cloud to protect them from view (14.342-5), and they lie on a kind of raised bed of newly grown grass and flowers – lotus and crocus and hyacinth (14.346-50). It is in this idyllic environment that Zeus proceeds to have a post-coital nap, which provides the opportunity for Poseidon to control events on the battlefield.

The lushness of this scene within the *Iliad* is in keeping with allusions to other narratives of sexual activity of gods and mortals on the mountain in the

² G.S. Kirk seems to think, although with no real evidence to support his view, that Assaracus and his descendants must have stayed on at Dardania: 'probably a rural area or group of villages rather than a town. . . . Thus the Dardanioi of 2.819 are from the foothills of Ida where indeed Aeneas was herding cattle when he was nearly caught by Akhilleus in the course of his raids on Lurnessos and Pedasos at 20.89-92': *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 1 (Cambridge 1985) 252-3. See also M.W. Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 5 (Cambridge 1991) 316.

³ See also 10.415; 11.166 and 371-2. Dardanus is therefore the common ancestor of both houses, and the epithet 'son of Dardanus' (Δαρδανίδης) is used of Priam throughout the poem. The city also has 'Dardanian' gates.

⁴ For the wildlife on Ida (that is, the modern Kaz Dag), see J.M. Cook, *The Troad: An Archaeological and Topographical Study* (Oxford 1973) 306.

broader mythological corpus.⁵ Zeus spied Ganymede when he was on Ida, according to later sources, and took him from there up to Olympus to be his male lover and cup-bearer.⁶ Homer largely ignores this aspect of the story in the *Iliad*, and also says nothing about Ganymede being observed on Mount Ida. It is usually assumed that the homosexual element in the story has been deliberately left out of the *Iliad*, although the reference to Ganymede's beauty seems to point to this aspect.⁷ Ida too was the scene of Aphrodite's seduction of Anchises when he was working there as a royal herdsman – an encounter which produced Aeneas himself. This particular tryst is referred to three times in the *Iliad*, without very much detail, although it is fully described in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*.⁸ In the next generation, Paris sits in judgement on the three divine beauty contestants – Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite – when he is a shepherd on Ida, in the so-called 'Judgement of Paris'. Even the *Iliad*, which is quite unforthcoming on this mythical episode (see 24.25-30), alludes to the place where the judgement took place (μέσσωλον, 24.29).⁹ The city of Troy was therefore 'born' from Mount Ida (in the time of Ilus, as above), and its doom is sealed in a divine episode also situated on the mountain.

The common denominator in most of this activity is the figure of Zeus, who plays the crucial role both in creating Troy and destroying it. Gargarus, the peak of Ida, is a cult site of Zeus in the *Iliad* (for example, 22.168-72) and a special retreat for him within the poem. He spends about a third of the poem on the mountain, usually on Gargarus. Mount Ida is really for him alone of the gods, unless he chooses otherwise. He is able to separate himself there from the other deities, and be physically closer to the Trojans, to whom he offers some support as a favour to Thetis (1.493-530). Zeus's two descents to Ida from Olympus in Books 8 and 11 are mostly designed to emphasise this new level of support for the Trojans, especially for Hector himself. It

⁵ On this subject, see J. Griffin, 'Theocritus, the *Iliad*, and the East', *AJP* 113 (1992) 189-211, who argues (esp. 201) that the motif of pastoral sexual encounters informs the Asiatic aspect of Trojan identity that does not happen in the case of the Achaeans.

⁶ For the Iliadic references to Ganymede, see 5.266 and 20.232-5. The *Little Iliad* offers a very different genealogy, with Ganymede being the son of Laomedon (Homer *OCT* vol. 5 [Allen], 131, fr. VI. 4.). The *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* offers the same genealogy as the *Iliad* (see M.W Edwards, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 5 [Cambridge 1991] 319). In Vergil's *Aeneid* (5.252-7) Ganymede is seen by Zeus when he was hunting on Mount Ida and taken up from there by Zeus's eagle.

⁷ J. Bremmer, 'An Enigmatic Indo-European Rite: Pederasty' *Arethusa* 13 (1980) 286.

⁸ For the Iliadic references, 2.819-20; 5.312-3; 20.208-9.

⁹ For the debate on the 'Judgement' in the *Iliad*, see K. Reinhardt, *Das Parisurteil* (1938), reprinted in *Tradition und Geist* (Göttingen 1960) 16-36; M. Davies, 'The Judgement of Paris and *Iliad* 24', *JHS* 101 (1981) 56-62; C.J. Mackie, '*Iliad* 24 and the Judgement of Paris', *CQ* 63.1 (2013) 1-16. For the Cypria references, Homer *OCT* vol. 5, 102.16-17; cf. 120, fr. V.5. For the date of the *Cypria*, M.L. West, *Greek Epic Fragments* (Cambridge MA 2003) 13.

goes without saying that it is no bad thing for Hector to have the favour of Zeus, especially when he hears the word from the divine messenger herself (11.195-6). The reader of the poem, however, is conscious of the broader cosmic struggle for the city, and the doom that it ultimately faces. And so Zeus's interventions from Ida also have the effect of highlighting Trojan inferiority to the Greeks in the war.

When the *Iliad* begins, Zeus and his divine entourage are entirely absent from their usual abode. Even though he spends most of his time on the two mountains, Olympus and Ida, in the course of the *Iliad*, it is significant that he is actually absent from both of these places at the beginning. When Achilles makes his complaint to Thetis about Agamemnon's treatment of him, she replies to him that Zeus and all the other gods departed the day before to feast with the Ethiopians at Ocean (1.424-5).¹⁰ The government of the cosmos has gone away for twelve days to the edge of the world. This seems to prolong and exacerbate Achilles' suffering and frustration.¹¹ He has to rage for eleven days, and refrain from the fighting for that period before Thetis can even go to Zeus on Olympus and make her plea on his behalf (1.421-4; cf. 1.488-92).¹² The brief sea-journey of the Greeks to take Chryseis back to her father, and the offering of a hecatomb to appease Apollo, help to convey some sense of the delay that Thetis and Achilles face in waiting for Zeus to get back (1.428-89).¹³ The crisis in the Greek army at the beginning of the *Iliad* is paralleled by a power vacuum in the realm of the gods.

The assistance sought from Zeus is really a *quid pro quo* for Thetis's part in an obscure struggle that took place on Olympus some time earlier.¹⁴ Achilles is in the happy position of knowing that Thetis once saved Zeus from being overthrown, when the other Olympians – Hera, Poseidon, and Pallas Athena – tried to tie him up (1.396-400). She managed to prevent the coup by calling Briareus, the hundred-handed god, up to Olympus. Briareus duly sat himself down beside Zeus, and his presence terrified the other gods so much that Zeus's Olympian rivals thought the better of it. The loyal and unwavering support of Thetis in his moment of need has meant that Zeus is firmly in her debt. And so Thetis – or more properly Achilles – has every intention of calling in the favour (1.503-10). But she has to wait first for

¹⁰ Cf. 1.221-2, where Athena goes from the council of the Greeks directly back to Olympus to join the other gods, a passage which Kirk (n.2) 76 calls 'a mild oral inconsistency'.

¹¹ It is worth comparing the same twelve-day period, which Achilles himself arranges with Priam for the mourning of Hector (24.656-67).

¹² On this aspect, R. Scodel, 'The Gods' Visit to the Ethiopians in *Iliad* 1', *HSCP* 103 (2007) 83-98.

¹³ See J. Latacz, 'Zeus' Reise zu den Aithiopen (zu *Il.* 1, 304-495)', in G. Kurz, D. Müller and W. Nicolai (eds), *Gnomosyne: Menschliches Denken und Handeln in der frühgriechischen Literatur* (Munich 1981) 53-80.

¹⁴ West, 'Eumelos: A Corinthian Epic Cycle?', *JHS* 122 (2002) 109-33.

Zeus and the other gods to return from their extended absence among the Ethiopians. After he does return (at 1.493-5), Zeus is situated on one of the two mountains – either Olympus or Ida – for the rest of the poem, usually with a keen interest in the Trojan war.

In keeping with the realities of history, regal power in the *Iliad* is usually associated with notions of height or separation, both in the human and divine spheres. Priam and his family live up on the citadel of Pergamus in their various palaces, in close proximity to the temples of Athena and Apollo (6.242-50, 297-8, 504-16 etc.). The acropolis at Troy corresponds to Gargarus on nearby Ida as the principal space of the regal figure. On Mount Olympus too the gods have their own palaces (11.75-7), but it is Zeus who occupies the peak, often to watch over the world and contemplate his actions (for example, 11.80-83). It goes without saying that his frequent presence on the peak of the mountain conveys the extent of his separation from the human realm.¹⁵ But it is also significant that he is separate from the other gods in the notional topography and layout of Olympus. When Thetis arrives there to make her plea, she finds him sitting apart from the others on the peak (1.498-9). Because of his separation from them, Zeus is conveniently able to have a discreet conversation with her when she arrives (1.503-27). She begins by identifying him with Olympus, his seat of power (1.508; cf. 494, 497, 499), and then supplicates him again when he remains silent after her initial plea. Finally he nods his head downwards in assent and makes great Olympus shake (1.528-30). When she leaves, he returns to his palace and sits down on his throne among the other gods, who rise up to greet him (1.533-6). A dispute with Hera takes place after she discerns clearly enough why Thetis has come up to heaven. It is in this context that Hephaestus' narrative of being thrown from Olympus is told (1.590-94). The story of how he became a cripple reiterates, from a different perspective, the height of Olympus and its distance from the earthly realm, to say nothing of the power of Zeus in throwing him down in the first place.

After his Ethiopian sojourn Zeus stays on Mount Olympus until Book 8, when he goes to Ida for a brief visit (8.47-437). Despite his promise to help the Trojans as a favour to Thetis, and the re-statement of this at the beginning of Book 2, at 3-4, he actually does very little for them in the early books when he is situated on Olympus. It is during this time that Athena is allowed full scope on the battlefield to assist the Greeks, especially Odysseus and Diomedes. In the course of this support she is up and down from Olympus with regularity, sometimes without any clear statement in the text about her movements. First, she plays a significant part in the triumph of Odysseus in the assembly of the army (esp. 2.166-84, 278-82, 445-54). She then seems to return to Olympus (she is back there at 4.1-23), only to descend again to stir up the fighting between the two sides (4.69-104). At the beginning of Book 5

¹⁵ Richard Buxton has some good things to say about mountains in Greek mythology, in *Imaginary Greece: The Contexts of Greek Mythology* (Cambridge 1994) esp. 81-96.

she is prominent in her support of Diomedes on the ground in the fighting (note 5.1-8, 124-32, 133-43, 290-1). Then she is back on Olympus trying with Hera to provoke Zeus (5.418-25). The next time she descends for battle from Olympus (5.765-77) it follows an emphatic harnessing scene in which Athena herself and Hebe prepare the horses and chariot for the descent (5.719-32). Her magnificent departure from Olympus on a horse-drawn chariot, and her conversation with Zeus prior to doing so, anticipate her role in the humiliating wounding of Ares by Diomedes shortly afterwards (5.846-63).

Zeus, therefore, supports the Trojans as a favour to Thetis (from Book 1), but Athena has a fairly free rein to do as she likes on the battlefield itself. The rhetoric of Zeus in the first book is scarcely borne out by events on the ground immediately afterwards, in which the gods who support the Greeks play a key part. The dominance of the Greeks in the early books runs parallel to the static nature of Zeus's presence on Olympus. He is present on Olympus right through the first seven books prior to his discussion with an anxious Poseidon about the wall that the Greeks have built to defend their ships (7.443-63). Zeus then thunders all night long (7.478-9), which might be seen to foreshadow a more active interest in support of the Trojans in the struggle for the city.

At the beginning of Book 8, rather out of the blue, Zeus decides to go to Mount Ida. His visit there is preceded by an assembly of all the gods on the topmost ridge of Olympus, in which he gives some firm instructions. He tells them (8.5-27) that, if anyone gets involved supporting Greeks or Trojans in battle, they will come back to Olympus struck by lightning and in a bad way. Or he will take him and hurl him into Tartarus under the earth. He concludes his warning by affirming his superior strength to the other gods and goddesses.¹⁶ Even if they took hold of a golden chain and tried to drag him from heaven, he could overcome them easily enough, because he is so much the greater (8.27). To some degree the emphasis in the speech on the distances involved between heaven, earth, Hades and Tartarus reiterates the punishment that Hephaestus received (1.590-4), not to mention the fate of the Titans (cf. 8.477-81; 14.273-9). Athena reluctantly agrees to the stern injunction presented to her (8.31-7), but Zeus still offers her hope to continue supporting the Greeks (8.39-40). He then harnesses his horses and heads off to Ida, 'many-fountained, mother of wild animals, to Gargarus, where is his precinct and his fragrant altar' (8.47-8).

The picture that the *Iliad* provides us of Mount Ida's fertility, both in this passage and elsewhere, is quite different from the descriptions of Olympus. The Trojans can thrive on the mountain, and use it as they see fit, whereas Olympus is entirely separate from the human realm. When Zeus goes from Olympus to Ida it is a *descent* from the sky to the earthly realm (οὐρανόθεν

¹⁶ Notwithstanding 1.396-400, as above, where Zeus has to rely on the gentle Thetis to keep his hegemony in place.

καταβάς, 11.184), from a heavenly mountain to an earthly one. So even though we call them both 'mountains', they are quite different really as far as divine spaces are concerned. The Trojans can claim some ownership of Mount Ida. They have given the peak a name, and built a τέμενος and a βωμός for their worship of Zeus.¹⁷ The affection of Zeus for Troy is founded partly on the fact that Hector himself used to burn many thigh bones of oxen for him on the peaks there (22.168-72). The shared space of Ida also involves actual encounters between mortals and gods, including the various sexual liaisons between Trojans and gods (as above).

Zeus therefore heads down from the (unnamed) peak of Olympus to the peak of Ida (Gargarus).¹⁸ He then sits down and takes enjoyment looking down on the city and the ships. There is no reason given in the text for his sudden movement there. An audience might assume that he needs to go closer to the city to get a better view, but there is no real sense of this in the text itself. The gods in the *Iliad* do like to watch the fighting, and they have special powers of sight to do so.¹⁹ Zeus himself takes delight in looking down at the city and the ships, and he does so equally from both Olympus and from Ida: ([Zeus] εἰσορόων Τρώων τε πόλιν καὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν, 8.52 (when he is on Ida) = 11.82 (when he is on Olympus)).²⁰ He can see great distances the other way too, looking up at Olympus from Ida, and he actually sees Hera and Athena leaving Olympus to cause trouble for the Trojans in direct contravention of his earlier warning (8.381-98). He sends off Iris in response to this challenge to tell them to desist from their actions, and he duly returns himself to Olympus shortly afterwards (8.397-408, 438-9). Likewise, Hera can see Zeus from Olympus sitting on the peak of Ida prior to her seduction of him there (14.157-8). The world is a small place for the Olympian gods, and Zeus does not need to move around physically, from mountain to mountain, to see what he wants to see.²¹

His first visit to Ida is really the activation of his earlier promise to Thetis, and his first concrete support for the Trojan cause. It is a signal of his desire

¹⁷ Note that Laogonus, son of Onetor, a priest of Idaean Zeus among the Trojan ranks, is killed by Meriones at 16.603-7.

¹⁸ On Homer's account of Gargarus and the physical setting of the actual peak of the mountain (Kaz Dag), see Kirk, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 2 (Cambridge 1990) 302. The thrust of J.V. Luce's book, *Celebrating Homer's Landscapes: Troy and Ithaca Revisited* (London 1998), among other publications that have emerged on this topic, is that we can identify Homer's descriptions in the physical geography of the landscape (or *vice versa*).

¹⁹ On this general subject, Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford 1980) esp. chap. 6, 'The Divine Audience and the Religion of the *Iliad*'; and J.S. Clay, *Homer's Trojan Theater* (New York 2011) 3-6, 63.

²⁰ For a contrary view, that 11.82-3 are problematic, and are better taken as Zeus sitting on Ida, see B. Hainsworth, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 3 (Cambridge 1993) 229-30.

²¹ Cf. the conversation between Zeus (seemingly on Ida) and Hera (seemingly on Olympus) over Sarpedon's fate (16.431-61; cf. 18.356-67 and 19.340-51).

to be more direct in the exertion of his majesty and power than he has been in previous books. It is a cosmic sign of a new turn in the fighting in the divine sphere, and it is delivered with repeated blasts of thunder and lightning (8.68-77, 133-6, 167-71). In the first case, Zeus thunders aloud and sends a flash of lightning into the army of the Achaeans, who are struck by wonder and fear at what they see (8.68-77). Diomedes then rescues Nestor from Hector in battle and kills Hector's charioteer, Eniopeus. This is immediately followed by an Achaean triumph, and it is clear that the Trojans would have been penned into the city like lambs, had not Zeus taken further action (8.130-6). And so again he thunders out and lets fly with a lightning bolt, this time in front of the horses of Diomedes, causing them to be struck by terror and to shrink back. Nestor duly reads the signs and advises Diomedes to let Hector go his own way (8.139-44). But, even now, Diomedes is reluctant to draw back (8.146-50). And when Hector abuses him (8.161-6), he ponders going after him again (8.167-8), but 'three times he hesitated in his mind and heart, and three times Zeus the counsellor thundered out from the mountains of Ida' (8.169-70). Hector (rightly) sees the state of play in the divine sphere, and the new support he is receiving from Zeus (8.171-83). There is a definite sense, however, that he needs all the help that he can get.

There is never any real sense that the Trojans are suddenly in control of the battlefield in a meaningful or lasting way. Zeus on Ida is a *protector*, not a provider of victory.²² And indeed he offers assistance to the Greeks also within Book 8 itself. Hera manages to put a bright idea into Agamemnon's head (8.217-9), which ends ultimately in a prayer from Agamemnon to Zeus (8.236-44). This is duly followed by a positive omen of an eagle dropping a fawn down beside his altar (8.247-50). The Greeks take heart from the omen, and fight more eagerly. Teucer then kills many men (8.273-315), and Ajax has some significant moments in the fighting too (8.330-4). Thus, even in the context of Idaean Zeus's active support for Troy, he can still find time to favour the Greeks.²³ Hera fails in her bids to get Poseidon and Athena actively involved in the fighting in Zeus's absence (8.198-211; 8.350-6, 8.397-408), but Zeus himself holds out hope for them. And, as it turns out, Hera is more successful on Zeus's next trip to Ida. She learns quickly that a cleverer ruse is required to circumvent the watch of Zeus on Ida. Poseidon, on the other hand, is able to support the Greeks by taking advantage of Zeus's naïve belief that the other gods would not be involved in supporting

²² Cf. the role of Scamander at 21.238-9, who tries to protect the Trojans in his flow from the rampant Achilles.

²³ Kirk (n. 18) 319 notes that, by sending a positive omen to the Greeks at 8.245-6, 'Zeus reacts immediately and sympathetically, in accordance with his tendency to volte-face in this Book.' Zeus also responds to Aias's prayer at 17.648 (= 8.245). Kirk also notes (n. 18) 319-20 that, 'Zeus's acquiescence goes against his intention of helping the Trojans; yet neither he nor the poet (let alone the whole epic tradition and the audience) can allow the Achaeans to be wiped out.'

either side whilst he is so close on the peak of Mount Ida (Zeus, 13.7-9; Poseidon, 13.10-31).

Thus Zeus's physical movement from Olympus to Ida in Book 8, from heaven to Troy, is a key part of his enhanced level of support for the Trojans. It also initiates new kinds of divine conflict over the fate of the city. The presence of a second mountain for Zeus to go to is the poet's way of opening up the cosmos to the other gods in the *Iliad*. The extent of the movement in the divine realm is obviously quite different from the human setting where everyone is 'stuck' at the siege of Troy. Zeus's first visit to Mount Ida in Book 8 is notably short and inconclusive, and lasts only about 400 lines. There is no explicit reason given in the text for his motivation in going to Ida in the first place, or why he returns to Olympus when he does. But, as we have seen, his new location seems to signal his desire to be a more emphatic supporter of the Trojans; and his return seems to be related to the attempt of Hera and Athena to ignore his instructions and to thwart his plans.

Zeus departs again for Ida shortly afterwards (at 11.181-4), in what is a much longer visit, and a more significant one in terms of the events that take place on the field of battle. As we will see, he remains on Ida until Book 17 or 18, possibly later, and so his tenure there is associated with Hector's assault on the ships and with the deaths of Sarpedon and Patroclus. Zeus's transition to Ida is anticipated by his sending down of Eris (Strife) to the ships of the Achaeans (11.3-4). He then sends turmoil upon them, and bloodied dewdrops come dripping down from the sky as a portent of the many heads that he will cast down to Hades (11.52-5). Agamemnon is totally dominant on the battlefield in the first part of Book 11, and Zeus's motivation in descending to Ida is again a protective one – to make sure that Hector does not get himself killed (11.163-94). He comes to Ida bearing the thunderbolt in his hands (11.184), but on this occasion his message is conveyed verbally by Iris. Hence, there is a more precise and specific enunciation of his will (11.195-209) – that Hector should lie low whilst Agamemnon is raging among the leading men. But then, when Agamemnon is wounded in the fighting, Hector should enter the battle himself, until he comes to the ships and the sun sets. After Zeus's instructions have been relayed to him, Hector leaps from his chariot and urges his men to fight. He is very thoughtful of his own safety, however, in keeping with Zeus's advice, and only comes fully into battle after the wounding of Agamemnon by Coön a short time later (11.248-56, 284-90).

Inevitably, this is a nervous and rather short-term fix for Hector. Zeus's intervention, and Hector's obedient response, help to inform Agamemnon's *aristeia*, not to mention the comparative inferiority of Hector to the best of the Achaeans. Indeed, Hector himself is quite unabashed about the fact that the wounding of Agamemnon provides him with new opportunities on the field of battle: οἴχετ' ἀνὴρ ὄριστος, ἐμοὶ δὲ μέγ' εὖχος ἔδωκε | Ζεὺς Κρονίδης ('the best man is gone, and Zeus, the son of Cronos, has given

great glory to me.')

(11.288-9). And so, with the coast clear, and with Zeus's support, he proceeds to dominate the battlefield, although not for very long (11.284-309).²⁴ The support of Idaean Zeus for Hector is part of a balanced role in the fighting (cf. 11.336-7), just as it was in Book 8. Hector manages to escape from Diomedes, who hits him on the helmet and knocks him down (11.349-53). He is able to revive himself and then proceeds to go back in his chariot within the ranks of the army (11.354-60). Hector also keeps well away from Ajax (11.542), whom Zeus drives back from the Trojan ranks in fear (11.544-56), although he is still able to keep them away from the ships. The main effect of Zeus's support for Hector in Book 11 is to keep him safe from Agamemnon, Diomedes, and Ajax. Paris, on the other hand, is the victor with his bow and arrow, first hitting Diomedes (11.368-83), then Machaon (11.504-7), and then Eurypylus (11.575-84). With these three victories Paris is able to help turn the tide of battle and draw Patroclus, and then Achilles, back into the fighting.

Zeus's journey to Ida, therefore, again emphasizes his support for Hector in a moment of danger, rather than providing for him any sustained dominance of the field of battle. For the reader, Zeus's active support may have the effect of undercutting Hector's heroism, in that he spends so much of the book avoiding imminent defeat. It is important to bear in mind that in some ways Zeus never really departs from supporting the Greeks. Troy is a doomed city, and Zeus merely offers fleeting support. Poseidon, on the other hand, is very successful in discreetly helping the Greeks, and in taking advantage of Zeus's naivety in expecting the gods not to involve themselves in the fighting when he is perched on Ida (13.7-9). Even prior to the *Dios Apate* Poseidon is supporting the Greeks in a major way (14.147-52). The culmination of this is that Hector is knocked out by Ajax and has to be rescued (14.402-39). The victory of Poseidon is explicit, and the Muses are invoked to list the Trojan victims (14.508-22).

After the *Dios Apate* the benefits for the poet of having Zeus separated from the other gods are even more clear. When he wakes from his nap, Zeus jumps up and sees Hector coughing up blood and the Trojans in rout (15.4-11). He castigates Hera and tells her to call Iris and Apollo to Ida (15.12-33, 53-5). Hera duly leaves Ida for Olympus (15.78-9), venturing there as quickly as the mind of a man who wants to be here or there (15.80-3).²⁵ When she gets to Olympus, the gods are in Zeus's house, and they all greet her (especially Themis). Hera holds a kind of *concilium deorum* in her husband's absence (and that of Poseidon), and they offer their individual thoughts on Zeus. Even Athena is terrified that Zeus will return to Olympus and lay his hands on them, if they offer further resistance to his commands (15.135-37). Hera duly fetches Iris and Apollo, as instructed (15.143-8), and the two gods depart for Ida where Zeus is sitting on Gargarus (15.151-5).

²⁴ On this 'short *aristeia* of Hektor', see Hainsworth (n. 20) 259.

²⁵ On this simile, see R. Janko, *The Iliad: A Commentary*, vol. 4 (Cambridge 1994) 237.

Hera meanwhile stays on Olympus (15.149-50). Zeus then sends Iris to Poseidon (15.157-67) and she goes down from the hills of Ida to Ilios (15.168-9). Apollo, on the other hand, goes down from Ida, like a swift falcon, a little later in the same book (15.236-8).

Book 15, therefore, is anchored to Zeus's presence on Mount Ida and his intention to sort out the state of play in battle. His emphatic support for Hector is explicit throughout the book (note especially 15. 72-7 and 596-9). But, as with earlier phases of his support for Hector, the doom of the Trojans is highlighted. First of all, Hector's three cousins (Caletor, the son of Clytius, Dolops, son of Lampus, and Melanippus, son of Hicetaon) are killed in the fighting in quick succession (15.419-21, 525-45, 545-91). Then it is made explicit that Zeus's support will switch to the Greeks as soon as fire strikes one of their ships (15.599-602; cf. 16.122-9, 293-357). Zeus therefore remains on Ida throughout Book 15, and remains in support of the Trojans, although he is waiting for the moment to turn from them.

The emphasis on Zeus's presence on Mount Ida falls away from Book 16 onwards, when the ships are first struck with fire, and he turns his support towards the Greeks. There is no explicit reference to Zeus's presence on Ida at all after Book 15, although we can infer that he is still meant to be there well after that. Homer quietly eases Zeus away from Ida and never explicitly tells us when he returns to Olympus. At 16.433-8 he converses with Hera about the imminent doom facing Sarpedon. The last time we heard about Hera she was on Olympus (15.78-9), and we have to assume (from 16.644-83) that Zeus is still meant to be on Ida. In the later passage Zeus continues to look down on the battle and then speaks to Apollo about the body of Sarpedon (16.667-75). Apollo goes down from the hills of Ida to take Sarpedon to Lycia (16.676-83).

In the next book too Zeus seems still to be up on Ida, although he watches Hector 'from afar' (*ἀπ'ἀνευθεν*, 17.198). At 17.591-6 he takes his aegis and enfolds Ida with clouds, and sends out lightning and thunder and shakes the aegis, giving victory to the Trojans. When the Greeks pray to him he takes pity on them, and then scatters the mist (17.648-50). Again in Book 18 there is the suggestion that Zeus is still on Ida when Hera sends Iris to Achilles without the knowledge of Zeus (18.165-8). Hera and Zeus hold another brief conversation shortly afterwards (at 18.356-67), but there is no explicit statement of where they are during this period. Likewise at 19.340-8 Zeus sends Athena to put ambrosia into Patroclus so that the body does not rot, but we are not informed of his whereabouts when he gives the instruction. At the beginning of Book 20 Zeus is firmly situated on Mount Olympus (20.4-6), but the poet has shown no interest in offering a narrative of his return there. This is surprising, since the divine space that Zeus inhabits, first his presence among the Ethiopians, then his return to Olympus, then his two visits to Ida, is an important element of the portrayal of him in the poem.

This article has explored the role of Mount Ida in the *Iliad*, with particular reference to the movement of Zeus there in Books 8 and 11. The argument is put forward that Ida is not a kind of peripheral landmark in the *Iliad*, but a fundamental space in the history and identity of the Trojan people. Indeed Troy's identity as a wealthy and sacred city is significantly bound up in its background on the mountain. Mount Ida is the place where gods and mortals meet and interact, sometimes sexually. Zeus's presence there in the *Iliad* signals, at a basic level, his desire to ensure that Hector stays alive in confronting three superior Greek warriors – Diomedes, Agamemnon, and Ajax. His is largely a protective role, and there is never any sense of real victory associated with it. At the cosmic level, Zeus's movement to Ida opens up the divine sphere to different kinds of interplays and conflicts. New tactics are played out, especially by Athena, Hera and Poseidon, the three great divine enemies of Troy. So, whilst the physical movement of Zeus closer to Troy implies a benefit for the Trojans, it has no major effect on the overall dominance of the Greek side in the conflict.

A surprising aspect of Zeus's movement between the two mountains in the *Iliad* is the absence of any real narrative interest in his return to Olympus in the later books. The reader, of course, can cope well enough with his sudden appearance back on Olympus in Book 20. Olympus is his home base, after all, and the poet scarcely needs to justify his presence there. Nonetheless, Zeus is the father of gods and men, and his tenure on Ida has been a major element in the central books of the *Iliad*. As we have seen, his movement to Ida signalled a new level of support on his part for the Trojan cause; and likewise his return to Olympus follows another change, back to the Greek side. The text is clear that the burning of a Greek ship will cause him to change sides again (15.596-604), and this is precisely what happens shortly afterwards (16.122-9, 284-305).²⁶

One might have expected, therefore, some kind of grand gesture of abandonment of the Trojans in the wake of the firing of Protesilaus' ship. He might have left Ida for Olympus in a kind of cosmic sign of another (final) change in his position back to the Greeks. This is what happens with Apollo's personal abandonment of Hector (22.208-13), and we also see a kind of heavenly retreat by Juno at the end of Vergil's *Aeneid* (12.841-2). But in the case of Zeus in the *Iliad*, it is far too early for such grand symbolic gestures. The fall of Troy is still some time away after the events at the end of the poem. And so the implication of the burning of a Greek ship is left to stand for itself (15.596-604, 16.122-9, 284-305). Indeed Zeus makes his appearance in Book 20 precisely to establish a new kind of open conflict between the gods in the *Theomachy*. Achilles' return to the battlefield in the same book is meant to occur in the context of a fundamental division of the

²⁶ The fact that the ship is owned by a deceased warrior goes some way to highlighting the hollowness of the Trojan victory in burning a ship at all. On this point, see O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings* (Oxford 1992) 173 n. 34.

cosmos that is notionally fair, even if the ultimate outcome of it has already been established. The silent return of Zeus to Olympus seems to reflect the poet's urge not to overstate the doom of the city at the very moment that Achilles goes out on his quest for vengeance.

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