

Classical Civilisation Unit 2 Greek and Roman Literature

Tuesday 8 June 2004 Afternoon Session

For use in Topic 1, Question 3

Zeus and Athene discuss the fate of Hector (Hektor).

The translation of E. V. Rieu

They were watched by all the gods – in silence, till the Father of men and gods turned to the others with a sigh and said: “I have a warm place in my heart for this man who is being chased before my eyes round the walls of Troy. I grieve for Hector. He has burnt the thighs of many oxen in my honour, both on the rugged heights of Ida and in the lofty citadel of Troy. But now the great Achilles is pursuing him at full speed round the city of Priam. Consider, gods, and help me to decide whether we shall save his life or let a good man fall this very day to Achilles son of Peleus.” 5

“Father!” exclaimed Athene of the Flashing Eyes. “What are you saying? Are you, the Lord of the Bright Lightning and the Black Cloud, proposing to relieve a mortal man, whose doom has long been settled, from the pains of death? Do as you please; but do not expect the rest of us to applaud.” 10

“Be reassured, Lady of Triton and dear Child of mine,” said Zeus the Cloud-compeller. “I did not really mean to spare him. You can count on my goodwill. Act as you see fit, and act at once.” With which encouragement from Zeus, Athene, who had been itching to play her part, sped down from the peaks of Olympus. 15

Source: HOMER, Iliad, Book 22, pp.401-402 (Penguin)

The translation of M. Hammond

And all the Gods looked on. The father of men and gods was the first of them to speak: “Oh, I love this man who is being pursued around the wall under the gaze of my eyes. My heart is saddened for Hektor, who has burned the thigh-bones of many oxen to me on the peaks of valleyed Ida, and again on the city’s height. But now godlike Achilleus on his swift feet is chasing him round the city of Priam. Well then, give thought to it, gods, and consider whether we shall save him from death, or bring him down now, for all his bravery, at the hands of Achilleus son of Peleus.” 5

Then the bright-eyed goddess Athene said to him: “Father, master of the bright lightning and the dark clouds, what is this you are saying? Do you intend to take a man who is mortal and long ago doomed by fate, and release him from grim death? Do it then – but we other gods will not all approve you.” 10

Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her: “Do not worry, Tritogeneia, dear child. I do not speak with my heart in full earnest, and my intention to you is kind. Do as your purpose directs, and do not hold back any longer.”

With these words he urged on Athene what she herself already desired, and she went darting down from the peaks of Olympus. 15

Source: HOMER, Iliad, Book 22, p. 355 (Penguin)

The translation of R. Lattimore

... while all the gods were looking upon them.
 First to speak among them was the father of gods and mortals:
 “Ah me, this is a man beloved whom now my eyes watch
 being chased around the wall; my heart is mourning for Hektor
 who has burned in my honour many thigh pieces of oxen 5
 on the peaks of Ida with all her folds, or again on the uttermost
 part of the citadel, but now the brilliant Achilleus
 drives him in speed of his feet around the city of Priam.
 Come then, you immortals, take thought and take counsel, whether
 to rescue this man or whether to make him, for all his valour, 10
 go down under the hands of Achilleus, the son of Peleus.”
 Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athene spoke to him:
 “Father of the shining bolt, dark misted, what is this you said?
 Do you wish to bring back a man who is mortal, one long since
 doomed by his destiny, from ill-sounding death and release him? 15
 Do it, then; but not all the rest of us gods shall approve you.”
 Then Zeus the gatherer of the clouds spoke to her in answer:
 “Tritogeneia, dear daughter, do not lose heart; for I say this
 not in outright anger, and my meaning toward you is kindly.
 Act as your purpose would have you do, and hold back no longer.” 20
 So he spoke, and stirred on Athene, who was eager before this,
 and she went in a flash of speed down the pinnacles of Olympus.

Source: HOMER, *Iliad*, Book 22, pp.439-440 (University of Chicago Press)

The translation of E. V. Rieu (Revised by Peter Jones and D. C. H. Rieu)

All the gods were looking on. The Father of men and gods then began and spoke his mind:
 “This is an unhappy business! I have a warm place in my heart for this man who is being
 chased before my eyes round the walls of Ilium. I grieve for Hector. He has burnt the thighs of
 many oxen in my honour, on the heights of Mount Ida with its many ridges and on the lofty citadel
 of Ilium. But now godlike Achilles is pursuing him at full speed round Priam’s town. Consider, 5
 gods, and help me to decide whether we shall save his life, or let a good man fall this day to
 Achilles son of Peleus.”
 The goddess grey-eyed Athene replied:
 “Father, lord of the vivid lightning, god of the dark cloud, what are you talking about? Are
 you proposing to reprieve from the pains of death a mortal man whose destiny has long been 10
 settled? Do what you like, then; but not all the rest of us gods will approve.”
 Zeus who marshals the clouds replied and said:
 “Have no fear, Triton-born Athene, dear child. I was not in earnest and do not mean to be
 unkind to you. Act as you see fit, and act at once.”
 So he spoke, and encouraged Athene, who had already set her heart on action, and she came 15
 swooping down from the heights of Olympus.

Source: HOMER, *Iliad*, Book 22, p.385 (Penguin)