Trojan Politics and the Assemblies of Iliad 7

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The political character of the Iliad has been illuminated by recent scholarship.1 Despite the largely Achaean emphasis of the poem, scholars have also noted the interpretive importance of the contrast and com-

plementarity of other portrayed groups. The Achaeans, gods, and Trojans use similar institutions to confront analogous assumptions about political power. These notional polities represent potential political arrangements for the epic’s audiences: the public assembly and the smaller elite council reflected in deliberation scenes echo the institutions shared by many Greek states in the late Archaic age.

Within each political group, language-use is essential in mediating conflicts and mitigating danger. Indeed, these two functions are embodied in the contrast between the language of the assembly—which is, generally, highly rhetorical and replete with poetic devices—and that of the council, which is simpler.

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and contains a greater proportion of plans and directives. The assembly is also crucial for community cohesion and for authorizing political and military actions. The epic takes pains to establish assembly practices in Book 1: one speaker presents a problem, another responds, and a third mediates. This pattern recurs among the Achaeans and the gods where we also find frequent alternation between full assembly scenes and more sober small councils.

The epic presents fewer Trojan political meetings. And those


depicted emphasize deficient features of the city’s political institutions (see Tables 1–3 for summaries of the meetings of the three polities). In part, the epic marks Trojan political difference by marginalizing any deliberative council and limiting opportunities for debate. An under-analyzed assembly scene in Book 7 presents a microcosmic view of the limits on advice and deliberation in the Trojan polity. This paper examines how the Trojan assembly in Book 7, its separate proposals, and its re-contextualization in a messenger speech

8 As Mackie argues, Talking Trojan 15–26, Trojan assemblies are more chaotic than their Achaean counterparts: they exhibit fewer speech-exchanges and are characterized by their noise. Cf. Barker, Entering the Agon 68–74. For Trojan political gatherings see Table 3. For summary comments on Trojan political character cf. Hammer, Iliad as Politics 46–47. Elmer, Poetics of Consent 144, concludes that Trojan consensus “involves a denial of community rather than an affirmation of it.”


10 For Book 7 as “below the [Iliad’s] standard of excellence” with scenes that “are compressed and perfunctory” see M. L. West, The Making of the Iliad: Disquisition and Analytical Commentary (Oxford 2011) 187.
reveal both the limitations of Trojan politics and the subtlety of the Homeric characterization. In turn, this reading suggests that Trojan marginalization of debate and advice is positioned in part as responsible for the destruction of the city.\textsuperscript{11} As a result, the assembly in Book 7 functions as an index of the epic’s political questions. This argument, additionally, demands a reconsideration of Book 7 by illustrating its importance to the epic as a whole.

\textit{The assemblies of Book 7}

Book 7 sets out three political scenes in close succession which frame essential differences between the Trojans and the Achaeans. First, in the Achaean \textit{boule}, Nestor calls for fortifications and the burial of the dead (7.323–344). Then, during an assembly held before Priam’s home, Antenor stands to speak. While these scenes advance the plot, the juxtaposition of subsidiary themes—who can advise and authorize advice—offers a unique opportunity for examining the \textit{Iliad’s} presentation of Trojan politics.

Despite the clear contrast in characterization developed through the assemblies of Book 7, the Trojan assembly scene has suffered from a lack of analysis.\textsuperscript{12} A partial cause of this, perhaps, is that this scene echoes the negotiations that preceded the war,\textsuperscript{13} when Odysseus and Menelaos sought to

\textsuperscript{11} Sale, \textit{GRBS} 35 (1994) 7–9, suggests that a “flaw” in Trojan culture “keeps them from returning Helen and making appropriate restitution.” To Sale, Trojan political and economic structure gives undue influence to a small oligarchic body of elders who take bribes and help to perpetuate the war in their interests. Ultimately, though Sale does not make this clear, such implicit complaints about the Trojan elders would make them guilty of offences similar to those attributed to the kings in Hesiod’s \textit{Works and Days}.

\textsuperscript{12} On Book 7 see Sale \textit{GRBS} 35 (1994) 76–77; Elmer, \textit{Poetics of Consent} 135–137.

resolve the conflict through diplomacy. The *Iliad* ‘remembers’ this: in Book 3, Antenor mentions that Odysseus and Menelaos stayed in his house (3.205–225). Objection to the Trojan assembly arises from its fit in the Iliadic context: a debate over the return of Helen at this time seems suspect (although the epic justifies it with the broken oath of Book 3). Indeed, the contents of both the Achaeian council and the Trojan assembly are analeptic—Nestor’s proposal to build fortifications is also anachronistic for this moment in the war.

Yet what makes both political scenes fit—and even necessary—is the way in which they bring into relief critical political differences between the Achaeans and the Trojans. Where

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14 When the embassy occurred is unclear. The A scholion (*Il* 3.206a [II 397 Erbse], πρὸ τοῦ στρατεῦσαι: Ἀντήνωρ ξενίζει φιλοφρόνως) places the event before the military expedition while Apollodorus (3.28–29) sets it after Lemnos.

15 Antenor describes the speaking styles of Odysseus and Menelaos (3.204–224). His descriptions, however, appear to be wholly aesthetic, cf. Mackie, *Talking Trojan* 38–40. For the diplomacy and Antenor’s role see T. Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore 1993) 594–596; cf. Procl. Comm. ad Pl. *Alc.* I 214.3–6 (II 267 Segonds). In the broader mythical tradition (as the *Iliad* mentions, 11.122–142) a Trojan named Antimachos, bribed by Paris, attempted to persuade the Trojans to murder Menelaos. This scene appears in art (see Paus. 10.27.3; Gantz 595), Bacch. fr.15 (where Antenor’s wife, Theano, plays a role), and Soph. *Helene Apaitesis* (fr.176 ff.). According to schol. *Il* 3.205a (II 396), Antenor’s household was spared by Agamemnon during the sack.


17 West, *Making of the Iliad* 195, suggests that the Trojan assembly is depicted so as to explain a truce long enough for the building of the
the first council scene illustrates the relative functionality of the Achaean political institutions, the assembly scene of *Iliad* 7 functions as an index of the obstacles that attend Trojan politics. This process occurs through several steps—first, a useful, if impossible, proposal is made in the assembly and rejected. Next, an authority figure provides an unsatisfying but necessary resolution. Finally, we may sense the tension in the Trojan polity through the speech of the messenger, Idaios, who addresses a full and functional Achaean assembly.

The Greek council (7.323–344) closes with political unity as everyone assents to Nestor’s proposal.\(^\text{18}\) The Trojan assembly, occurring outside Priam’s home (346), corresponds in location to the Greek *boule* (held in Agamemnon’s residence, 313). The contrast in institutional location indicates a difference in the power structure.\(^\text{19}\) In addition, as a scholiast notes, there is something amiss with the gathering itself: no one seems to have called it and it happens in a “terribly disturbed” fashion (δεινὴ τετρηχυῖα, 346).\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{18}\) Elmer, *Poetics of Consent*, examines the poetics of praise/consent (*epainos*) and shows convincingly that the political struggle in the *Iliad* is largely one that contemplates the dynamics and relevance of communal assent. Communal assent is absent or abortive at critical moments in the narrative. Where the Trojans do assent communally (as in Book 18) the outcome is disastrous.

\(^{19}\) The Achaean assembly, we learn in Book 11, takes place by Odysseus’ ship in the middle of the camp, which illustrates its communal function. See Barker, *Entering the Agon* 68; cf. J. S. Clay, *Homer’s Trojan Theater: Space, Vision and Memory in the Iliad* (Cambridge 2011) 49 and fig. 3.

\(^{20}\) Kirk, *The Iliad* 280, compares the language of the disorder to the gathering of the Achaean assembly in Book 2, but does not seem to be able to account for the adjective *dein*, which he attributes to metrical need. The scholiast speculates that the people came together because they were agitated: schol. *Il. bΤ 7.346b (III 282), τετρηχυῖα: τεταραγμένη, ἢ διὰ τὸ προ- λέχθεντα ἢ διὰ τὸ πολύκλητοι δ’ ἔσον” (4.438) ἢ διὰ τὸ διχογνωμεῖν περὶ Ἑλένης ὡς Αντίνηρ καὶ Αντίμαχος (7.347–353, 11.123–125). δηλοὶ ὡς οὐχ οἱ βασιλεῖς συνήθησαν συνότος, ἀλλ’ ἀγανακτοῦντες ἦκον εἰς τὰ βασίλεια.
assembly implies, is used to create a false unity and facilitate the maintenance of the status quo rather than resolving a conflict or saving the people.\textsuperscript{21} Since this scene echoes arguments prior to the siege, the \textit{Iliad} may through retrospection blame Trojan suffering in general on their use of language in decision making.

Not only does the Trojan assembly point up disruption in the Trojan \textit{agora}, but it also implicitly stresses the absence of Trojan advisors or a functional council. As part of this, the rejection of Antenor, a figure whose characterization parallels Nestor’s to an extent, represents the marginalization of debate and deliberation.\textsuperscript{22} That Antenor is central to this moment was probably unsurprising. The tradition, as reflected in art, mythography, and the scholia, contrasts Antenor with the royal family in important ways—for example, he is a good host (he houses Odysseus and Nestor and prevents their murders) in contrast to the antisocial behavior of Paris that prompts the war.\textsuperscript{23} Just in case, however, the \textit{Iliad} has told his story in Book 3—he is set

\textsuperscript{21} This scene also anticipates that a \textit{good} leader will use speech to resolve conflicts and forestall or prevent civil violence. See Kirby, \textit{Ramus} 21 (1992) 34–50; H. Roisman, “Nestor the Good Counsellor,” \textit{CQ} 55 (2005) 17–38; and Christensen, in \textit{Reading Homer} 151–153.

\textsuperscript{22} Schol. \textit{Il}. 7.345a (III 281–282) draws the parallel between Nestor and Antenor directly: Τρώων αὐτ’ ἀγορῆ: ἔδει γὰρ τῶν τοῦ βασιλέως ὡψ ἠττωμένων καὶ κυνὸνευσάσης τῆς πόλεως ὑπὸ Διομήδους, δυσελπίδων ὄντων διὰ τὴν παράβασιν, σκοπεῖν τι τῶν ἀναγκαίων. ἐστὶ δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἐλληστερίων. In Bacchylides’ fragmentary \textit{Antenoridai}, Antenor is called εὔβοιος ἥρως (fr.15.37).

\textsuperscript{23} The scholia mark Antenor as god-fearing (schol. \textit{Il}. b\textit{T} 7.347a [III 282], ὃς πρόξενος Ἐλλήνων καὶ δημιουργῶν καὶ θεοσεβῆς), a description that qualifies men as civilized and law-abiding in the \textit{Odyssey}; see Cook, \textit{The Odyssey in Athens} 100–101.
up as an authority on speech and the assembly when he contrasts the speaking styles of Agamemnon and Odysseus (3.203–224). In Book 7, Antenor stands, unbidden,24 with only the epithet πεπνυμένος as an introduction (7.345–353):25

Then the Trojan assembly was held on the city peak of Ilium, terribly disordered, alongside the doorways of Priam’s home. Among them prudent Antenor began to speak publicly:

“Hear me, Trojans, Dardanians, and allies, so that I may speak what the heart in my chest bids me. Come now, let us give Argive Helen and her possessions too

24 Barker, Entering the Agon 68–69, compares Antenor to Achilles in Book 1, a figure who stands up and speaks for the good of the community. Compare Nestor in the council in Book 9.

to the sons of Atreus to take away; now we fight
even though we made false the sacred oaths; thus I do not expect
that anything advantageous for us will happen unless we do this.”

Antenor makes his proposal with some striking rhetorical
choices. Instead of addressing the leaders, he calls to the
assembled Trojans and allies and invokes a collective with his
choice of verbal person (κέκλυτε μεν Τρῶες καὶ Δόρδανοι ἥδ’ ἐπίκουροι, δοσμέν, μαχόμεσθα, ἰέζομεν).26 At first glance, he
crafts a communal body politic in his call for unified action—
yet in appealing to this ‘we’, he proposes an action that
implicitly creates an opposition in Paris’ desire (supported, presumably, by the royal family).27 Where Nestor and Odysseus
manipulate direct addresses to recreate and support Achaean
unity,28 Antenor’s address at first obscures but ultimately dis-
closes disunity. In an act that is at once politically astute—he
does not attack Paris—but also dangerous (in creating a politi-
cal will distinct from Priam’s family), Antenor clarifies this
danger and gives voice to unspoken dissent. His willingness to
take collective responsibility for the actions of the few reflects
the reality of the Trojan situation—the consequences of the few

26 Cf. Elmer, Poetics of Consent 136.
27 Elmer, Poetics of Consent 135, sees all three speakers in the Trojan as-
sembly (Antenor, Paris, Priam) as making “superficial attempts to include
the community in the decision-making process.” Since his focus is on collective
approbation, Elmer does not consider the rhetorical manipulation of the
idea of the collective extensively (but his study certainly lays the ground-
work).
28 Nestor begins his speech by calling on the leader and the group (πολλοὶ
γὰρ τεθανάσι κάρη κοιμόωντες Ἀχαῖοι, 7.328) and by alternating between
what Agamemnon should do (τὼ σε χρὴ πόλεμον μὲν ἢν ἃμ’ ἢν παῖσαι Ἀχαίων, 331) and the responsibilities/actions of the group (αὐτοὶ δ’ εὐχρήµονοι κυκλήσομεν ... κατακήμονες αὐτοὺς ... δείµομεν ἢκα / πύργους ὑψῆλοις εἰλαρ νηών τε καὶ αὐτῶν ... ἐν δ’ αὐτοῖς πύλας ποιήσομεν εὗ ἀραρίσας ... ὡς φαθ’, οἱ δ’ ἂρα πάντες ἐπήνησαν βασιλῆες, 332–344). This
is typical of Nestor’s language throughout the epic. See R. P. Martin, The
Language of Heroes: Speech and Performance in the Iliad (Ithaca 1989) 106–109,
and Mackie, Talking Trojan 32.

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are paid by the many. His subsequent language is abrupt and urgent; as he calls for actions that will never be performed, his speech’s dominant mood is pragmatic but defeatist. For, as the following scene indicates and as W. M. Sale has suggested, the Trojans simply lack the political institutions (and, thereby, traditions) to manage this conflict.  

The expectations of the assembly pattern are not disappointed when Paris, here taking the ironic position of the ‘aggrieved’ party shared by Agamemnon in Book 1, stands to speak (7.354–364). Paris’ speech and its contents reflect importantly on Antenor’s approach and on the situation in Troy. When Achilles induces Calchas to speak at the beginning of the poem, it is Achilles himself who first mentions Agamemnon (συμπάντων Δαναῶν, οὐδ’ ἦν Ἀγαμέμνονα εἰπης, 1.90). Antenor, by contrast, neither speaks Paris’ name nor blames him. Antenor’s omission and circumlocution attests to the delicate dance of Trojan public speech; conversely, by appealing to the people directly and calling for their collective will to return the girl, Antenor may sound rebellious.

What the Trojans at large think of his proposal is left unsaid. Before Paris speaks, his language is marked as the private affair between two men: where Antenor’s speech is clearly public address (ἀγορεύειν), Paris seems to be addressing only Antenor with προσηύδα, even though he has been clearly marked with

29 According to Sale, GRBS 35 (1994) 64, the Trojans cannot force Paris to give Helen back because “either they simply lack the political institutions to carry this out … or else they want to fight.” Elmer, Poetics of Consent 136, is more forceful: Paris’ response in this assembly “asserts a personal right to decide without regard for the will of the group.”

30 Nearly every instance of ἀγορεύειν in the narrative relates to a speech where a plan or proposal is made. Notable exceptions are Hephaistos’ speech to Hera (1.572), Asios’ prayer to Zeus (12.173), Achilles’ vaunt over Lykaon (21.121), and his conversation with Thetis (24.142).

31 Meaning simply to ‘speak’, verse final προσηύδα prefaces speeches to single addressees; meta-compounds direct speech to groups. On this distinction see H. Fournier, “Formules homériques de référence avec verbe ‘dire’,” RPhil 20 (1946) 31, 50–51, and 66; cf. P. Chantraine, Dictionnaire étymologique.
the public turn of speaking formula as standing up among them (τοῖς δ’ ἀνέστη):32

"Ἀντήνορ σὺ μὲν οὐκέτ’ ἐμοὶ φίλα ταῦτ’ ἀγορεύεις·
οἰσθα καὶ ἄλλον μῦθον ἀμείνους τούδε νοήσαι.
εἰ δ’ ἐτέον δὴ τούτον ἀπὸ σπουδῆς ἀγορεύεις,
ἐξ ἄρα δὴ τοὶ ἐπείτα θεοὶ φρένας ὠλεσαν αὐτοῖ.
αὐτάρ ἐγὼ Τρώεσσι μεθ’ ἵππωνοις ἀγορεύσω·
ἀντικρὺ δ’ ἀπόφηγμα γυναικέα μὲν οὐκ ἀποδώσω·
κτήματα δ’ ὅσι’ ἀγόμην εὖ Ἀργεὺς ἡμέτερον δῶ
πάντ’ ἐθέλω δόμαι καὶ οἴκοθεν ἅλλ’ ἐπιθεῖναι.”

"Antenor, no longer do you speak these things dear to me—you know how to think up yet another muthos better than this.
If you say this truthfully in public and earnestly indeed,
then the gods themselves have surely already obliterated your wits.
But I will speak out publicly among the horse-taming Trojans:
I refuse this straight-out; I will not hand over the woman;
but, however many things I took from Argos to our home,
I am willing to give them back and to add other things from my household.”

If Paris’ speech introduction implies something disorderly, then
his response confirms it.33 His language echoes (or anticipates)
the dynamic expanded between Polydamas and Hektor where

32 For the importance of these ‘standing’ formulas see W. Arend, Die typischen Szenen bei Homer (Berlin 1975) 116; Mackie, Talking Trojan 24–25.
33 According to Sale, GRBS 35 (1994) 10, Paris is “one aspect of Troy’s hamartia, a man who puts legitimate self-interest ahead of his fellow citizens’ equally legitimate interests.”
an advisor’s good advice draws the ire of the prince.\textsuperscript{34} Paris confirms Antenor’s public speech but uses an understatement to dismiss him (his words are “no longer dear”) and demeans this specific proposal by saying that he knows how to think better, rationalizing or minimizing the proposal by claiming that the gods have completely destroyed his thoughts.

Then Paris redirects his speech and announces that now he is in fact speaking publicly to all the Trojans (αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ Τρώεσσι μεθ’ ἵπποδόμιος ἀγορέυσο),\textsuperscript{35} He refuses to return the girl (ἀντικρύ δ’ ἀπόφημι), but he does offer remuneration. Again, unlike the opening dispute when Agamemnon overreacts and is prompted by Achilles’ counter-reaction to dangerous proposals, here the situation is compressed to one turn for each speaker followed by an intervention. Paris dismisses a proposal, nevertheless admits that something is wrong, and offers a counterproposal.\textsuperscript{36} In the light of the oaths that have been broken and the severity of the siege, audience and Trojans alike know that his suggestion is pointless.

Paris’ bellicose diction also points to the disjunction between the assembly context and the ruling family. For example, the adverb ἀντικρύ is typically used to describe the movement of weapons.\textsuperscript{37} Whereas Antenor attempts to create a collective identity, Paris eschews this conceit altogether. In his speech there is only the “you” of his antagonist (σὺ, ἀγορέυεις, οἶσθα)

\textsuperscript{34} See n.9 above. In Book 18 Hektor begins his response to Polydamas in the same way (18.285 = 7.757). Cf. Mackie, Talking Trojan 37, for Antenor’s dismissal.

\textsuperscript{35} For the assertive performative nature of this use of the future tense see J. P. Christensen, “First-Person Futures in Homer,” \textit{AJP} 131 (2010) 554.

\textsuperscript{36} For the suggestion that Paris has no shame (ἀίδος) whatsoever and that he simply refuses to entertain the suggestion in the manner of one who is socially “deviant” see R. Scodel, \textit{Epic Facework: Self-presentation and Social Interaction in Homer} (Swansea 2008) 21; cf. 53 where Scodel argues that Paris “fundamentally lacks the concern for his reputation that drives other heroes.”

\textsuperscript{37} Cf. Kirk, \textit{The Iliad} 282.
and the first-person inflection of his own actions (ἀγορεύσω, ἀποδώσω, ἀγόμην, ἐθέλω).

The Homeric assembly pattern anticipates a mediator, and the formula τοῖσι δ᾽ ἀνέστη evokes this turn-taking. Again, we hear nothing of the assembly’s reaction to the two speeches.38 Where the debates of Iliad 1 among the Achaean feature multiple speakers and respondents, the Trojan scene unfolds more like the divine assembly at the end of the epic when Apollo pleads for Hektor’s burial and Hera opposes him (24.33–76). As in Book 1, the initial proposal is the ‘safest’ and perhaps more cosmically stabilizing choice. Agamemnon’s dispute with Achilles meets with the failed mediation of Nestor and subsequent chaos; Zeus acts as a mediator and judge to affirm the rite of burial for Hektor. Priam’s introductory lines only reinforce his position as a mediator—he is a counselor equal to the gods (θεόφιν μήστωρ ἀτάλαντος),39 on equal footing with Nestor with the speech introduction (ὦ σφιν ἐὐφρονέων ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπε).40 Here, in Book 7, Priam stands for what seems to be a rather superficial iteration of the pattern. And as Priam stands forth as a mediator, his language, while accommodating, only valorizes the aims of his son.41

Unlike his son, Priam clearly speaks to the assembly (μετέ-ειπε). And the style and content of his speech, then, disclose latent limits on dissent in the Trojan polity (7.365–379):

38 Note the absence of Hektor in this scene. Schol. Il. 347a (III 282) suggests that he is silent because he is ashamed to end the conflict. Cf. Elmer, Poetics of Consent 132–139.

39 As a descriptive preface to a speech, θεόφιν μήστωρ ἀτάλαντος is unique. Two other characters are similarly described (14.318 Perithoos, 17.477 Patroklos), but neither is “especially renowned for council” (Kirk, The Iliad 282). Cf. Od. 2.10 and 3.409.

40 Nestor is described thus four times (1.253, 2.78, 7.326, 9.95); see Dickson, Nestor 103, for this introduction and its implications. Cf. Scodel, Listening to Homer 70; Roisman, CQ 55 (2005) 24–27. This complete line also is applied to Thoas at 15.285 and Polydamas at 18.253.

41 For Priam’s support of his son see Sale, GRBS 35 (1994) 77–78; Nicolai, Philologus 127 (1983) 1–27.

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And saying this he [Paris] sat down and among them rose Dardanian Priam, a counselor equal to the gods—well-intentioned towards them he spoke publicly and spoke among them:

“Hear me Trojans and Dardanians and allies, so that I may speak what the heart in my chest bids me.

Now, take your dinner throughout the city as you have before and be mindful of the watch and keep each other awake.

At dawn let Idaios go to the curved ships to repeat the plan of Alexandros, on whose account this conflict has arisen, to Atreus’ sons, Agamemnon and Menelaos—and also to propose this wise plan, if they wish to stop the ill-sounding war until we have burned the corpses; we will fight again later until the god separates us and grants victory to one side at least.”

So he spoke and they all heard him and obeyed.

Priam’s speech is at once similar to Nestor’s before the Achaeans council and Antenor’s recent address. Like Nestor, Priam makes practical proposals for burial rites, but he also appropriates Antenor’s rhetorical approach in calling to the Trojans and their allies as a collective (κέκλυτέ μεν Τρῶες καὶ Δάρδανοι ἥδ’ ἐπίκουροι, / ὥφρ’ εἴπω τά με θυμός ἐνι στήθεσσι κελεύει).
κελεύει). This repetition of Antenor’s opening lines demands some notice. Must Priam calm the assembly and keep their attention? No Achaean gathering begins with such a request—in fact, an initial plea for attention may have a marked use in the Iliad; the imperative “hear me” is used for mixed groups where the authority of the speaker or the parameters of the speech-situation are in doubt. Since Priam addresses a mixed group (allies and Trojans), it may be appropriate that he calls them to attention in the same way. The context, on the other hand, suggests another explanation: perhaps there still is disorder in the assembly, both as a feature of Trojan assemblies in general and as an indication of ongoing reactions. Priam must command the attention of his people because they are disturbed by the exchange between Paris and Antenor—an exchange that dictates their fate in no small fashion.

Furthermore, Priam’s actions and words—as he commands his people to eat and set a guard—anticipate the authoritative closure of an assembly after the completion of mediation. In short, before addressing the issues of the assembly, Priam pre-

42 More than a dozen manuscripts omit these lines, but without them there would be no address at all. Kirk, The Iliad 282, is troubled by the fact that there is no variation from Antenor’s speech, but the close repetition may be intentionally jarring. Cf. Il. 8.5–6, where Zeus calls together the assembly of the gods and addresses them.

43 For example, speeches made to the Achaeans and the Trojans before the duels (3.86, 97, 304, 7.67). Cf. Agamemnon’s closing threat to the Trojans at 3.456.

44 Compare Hektor’s use of this address to rally the Trojans and their allies (8.497, 17.220). Cf. Mackie, Talking Trojan 91.

45 For comparison see Nestor in Book 9 (53–78), who addresses the conflict between Diomedes and Agamemnon by a seeming agreement and a remonstration followed by commands that maintain unity in the Achaean host under Agamemnon’s leadership. Note, however, the contrast in persons—where Priam uses the second-person imperative, Nestor uses the inclusive first-person plural: δόρπα τ’ ἐφοπλισόμεθα. φυλακτήρες δὲ ἐκστοι / λέξαςθων παρὰ τῷ φρον ὀρκυκήν τείχεος ἐκτός (66–67). On this scene see Christensen, in Reading Homer 138–142.
emptively ends it without resolution. Only after issuing commands does he acknowledge the previous debate—with his fourth imperative he asks the herald to repeat to the sons of Atreus Paris’ μῦθος and his own πυκινὸν ἔπος (an armistice for the burning of the dead, 375–376). As David Elmer notes, the speech separates those proposals that concern the common good and “the broader community” (a meal, posting of guards, etc., the πυκινὸν ἔπος) from those that are “more or less a private transaction,” Paris’ offer of compensation but not Helen’s return (here, the μῦθος).46

During this process, Antenor’s suggestions have been forgotten. Note also that Priam’s command is to relay the message to the two Atreidai (Ἀτρεΐδῃς Ἀχαμέμνονι καὶ Μενελάῳ); no thought is given to the Achaeans at large. Thus, Priam projects his understanding of the operation of power upon his adversaries. This point is worth contemplating further, because such a command is not typical: Chryses, for example, “begs all of the Achaeans, but the two Atreidai, leaders of the host, especially” (1.15–16: χρυσέῳ ἀνὰ σκήπτρῳ, καὶ λίσσετο πάντας Ἀχαιούς, / Ἀτρείδα δὲ μάλιστα δύω, κοσμήτορε λαῶν). That Antenor, too, frames the solution to the conflict as giving Helen back to the Atreidai (δώο µεν Ἀτρείδησιν ἄγειν) illustrates a consistency in Trojan political understanding. For them, the war is between two noble families and each side is ruled accordingly.

Priam also uses contrasting diction to distinguish between his proposal and his son’s. He qualifies his ἐπος as πυκινὸν (“wise”).47

46 Elmer, Poetics of Consent 136–137.
47 Martin (Language of Heroes 22) distinguishes between μῦθος and ἐπος in that the former “implies authority and power” while “epos implies nothing about these values.” Thus, the πυκινὸν ἐπος corresponds to directives “set in a context of intimate relationship” (39, on 7.375, 11.788, Nestor to Patroklos; 24.75, Zeus on his order for Achilles; 24.744, Andromache referring to words of Hektor.) The contrast between the μῦθος of Paris, which is just a proposal, and the qualified πυκινὸν ἐπος may be indicated by phrases like πυκινὸν φόνον (15.461), πυκινὴν … βοῦλην (2.55, 10.302, cf. 9.76; 14.294, cf.
and follows his cremation proposal with a statement in the future indicative: “we will fight (μοχησόμεθ') again later until the god makes a distinction and gives victory to one of us” (377–378). This closing first-person plural verb, combined with his imperatives, attempts, however futilely, to end the assembly with an invocation of collective action. Coupled with the contrasting presentation of the plans, this statement may reveal his essential expectation. Priam, perhaps like the audience, has no doubt that the Achaean will reject Paris’ proposal. What he does here by not pursuing the debate and by refraining from commenting on any possible negotiation between Paris and the Achaean is to maintain familial and martial unity. The assembly ends with a line reserved for contexts in which everyone “hears and obeys” (οἴ δὲ ὁρά τοῦ μᾶλα μὲν κλών ἤδ' ἐπίθυν-το). Honest Priam, introduced as a mediator like Nestor, nevertheless seems to make a summary ruling like Zeus. In Priam’s case, however, the options in the debate are both dangerous. (But Zeus, to be fair, does choose a wider stability over serving the whims of his family.) Priam’s act, however, is more than a forgetful omission. The Iliad offers an illuminating coda to the Trojan assembly. Idaios’ speech to the Achaean, in departing from a mere recitation of the assembly’s proceedings, elucidates Priam’s management of the debate and the latent tensions in the city. As what Irene de Jong calls secondary focalizers, mes-

Hymn.Hom.Ven. 38 and 243), πυκινὸν δόλον (6.187), or even πυκινὸν δόμον (e.g. 12.301), implying that the plan is well-made or well-fitted as the scholion suggests (schol. Il. 7.375 a [III 284]: πυκινόν, ἑπειδὴ τὸ τοῦ ἄνακτος τοὺς κάμνεται, ἥνα δὲ ἢς ἐπιμιγρύμενοι ἀλλήλως ἀφομον τοῖς ποιήσασθαι εἰρήνην λάβωσιν. ὁ ἐπετυγόδον δ ὤ. Ἐλληνες, τούτο δοκοῦσι χαριζέσθαι). The implicite contrast, then, is that Priam’s plan is well-suited to the situation whereas Paris’ is not.

The line follows seven speeches in the Iliad and, in marking unmitigated acceptance of the speeches’ directives, signals either an end to discussion or a renewal of action in battle (9.79, 14.133, 14.378, 15.300, 24.54, 24.738). Also, the subsequent narrative reinforces his authority: everyone eats and Idaios goes to the Achaean (7.380–381).
sengers can reveal unspoken or even suppressed information in the way they “select, add to and interpret the information they have to convey.”49 Idaios’ combination of Priam’s and Paris’ speeches, his additions and alterations, reveal possible Trojan reactions and suppressed dissent.

First, it is clear that Idaios confronts a difficult task—Priam has asked him to convey Paris’ muthos and his own epos. In performance, he also adds ideas from Antenor’s rejected speech. While it is not the case that all messenger speeches repeat the original instruction verbatim, Idaios’ task exceeds what is demanded of other messengers.50 I chart here how Idaios combines and supplements these speeches;51 this blending of authorized proposals and veiled dissent is a political act in itself:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Priam and Paris’ Plans</th>
<th>Idaios’ Speech</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Priam, 7.373-374</td>
<td>7.387-397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>εἰπέμεν Ἀτρείδης Ἀχαίς ἀμένον καὶ Μενελάῳ</td>
<td>εἰπείν, αἵ κέ περ ὑμιν φίλον καὶ ἡδο γένοιτο,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>μύθον Ἀλεξάνδροι, τοῦ εἶνεκα νεῖκος ὅραμε</td>
<td>μύθον Ἀλεξάνδροι, τοῦ εἶνεκα νεῖκος ὅραμε</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris, 363-364</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>κτήματα δ’ ὀσ’ ἀγόμην ἔξι</td>
<td>κτήματα μὲν ὀσ’ Ἀλέξανδρος</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ἄργεως ἡμέτερον δῶ</td>
<td>κολῆς ἐνι νησίν</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


50 See de Jong, Narrators and Focalizers 180–185. Other speakers do speak “on their own initiative,” as de Jong puts it (181: Iris and Hypnos). Idaios’ speech falls somewhere between the ideal fidelity of messenger speeches and the radical “initiative” of a speaker like Iris, who, for example, departs from the recorded message to give advice and try to persuade Poseidon (15.158–218).

51 For Idaios’ speech as “mainly made up of vv. reported from Paris and Priam just before, but … enlivened by his personal additions,” see Kirk, The Iliad 284.
Note that almost all of Idaios’ modifications occur where he reports Paris’ proposal. In general, the modifications and additions alter the tone of his message in bracing for negative Achaean response. But these alterations may have a political valence as well. First, Idaios’ address is to all the Achaeans (Ἀτρεΐδη τε καὶ ἄλλοι ἀριστῆες Παναχαιῶν), and not just to Menelaos and Agamemnon as advised by Priam. Further, Idaios ascribes authority to his message by claiming that “Priam and the Trojans together order him to speak” (ἠνώγει Πρίαμος τε καὶ ἄλλοι Τρῶες ἄγαυοι); here he creates a Trojan entity to reflect the Achaean king-and-people paradigm that he has just invoked, and anticipates, perhaps, that he will deliver messages beyond those ordered by Priam.52 This unified polity possesses a grammatical tension: ἠνώγει is singular. Priam orders, and everyone else may have been appended as an afterthought.

Regardless of whether we interpret Idaios as stumbling or delivering a coded message, he hedges about whether the muthos

52 For Idaios’ relay of Priam’s instructions as a “private transaction” see Elmer, Poetics of Consent 137; but the analysis above shows that Idaios communicates more than Priam intended.
of Alexander “will be sweet to his audience” (αἴ κέ περ ὑμιν φίλον και ᾿ηδόν γένοιτο). In effect, Idaios concedes that the proposal is not a sure thing. And he also attempts to gain the benevolence of his audience by deflecting blame from himself and the other Trojans, by isolating Paris (Ἀλεξάνδροι, τού εἶναι νείκος δρωφε), by calling Helen “the wedded wife of glorious Menelaos” (κουριδίην δ’ ᾿αλοχον Μενελάου κυδαλίμου) and by opposing the Trojans’ wishes to Paris’ trouble-making (ἡ μήν Τρώες γε κέλονται).

Apart from these blandishments, Idaios’ words also have a certain rhetorical agility. De Jong (183) has described this speech as an example of a messenger who can “change the mode of presentation … from direct into indirect speech” and thus “make explicit the tone of the message conveyed or stress his/her role as an intermediary.” Idaios transforms and distances Paris’ declared refusal (οὐκ ἀποδώσω) through indirect discourse (οὔ φησιν δώσειν). But Idaios increases this distancing effect as well through the structure of his speech and the thematic opposition between Paris alone and the rest of the Trojans.

Although Idaios gives the muthos and epos in proper sequence, he nevertheless presents Paris’ propositions in reverse. While Paris refuses to return Helen but offers to return the goods (362–364), Idaios starts with Paris’ concession and interjects “would that he had perished,” to express a like-mindedness with his audience before he breaks the real news—Paris will not

53 This, described as a captatio benevolentiae by de Jong, Narrators and Focalizers 184, is an instance of a messenger changing the order of presentation for rhetorical reasons. Kirk compares Il. 4.17 where Zeus offers an “unusually polite address” to the other gods (The Iliad 284). Where Zeus is “unusually” (even menacingly?) polite, we should perhaps understand Idaios as nervous if not resigned (supported by the placement of περ and καί, 387).

54 De Jong considers this word choice “indicative of [Idaios’] (and the other Trojans’) sentiment that Paris should have given Helen back” (Narrators and Focalizers 184). Kirk (The Iliad 284) says Idaios “fulsomely translates.”
give her back. Here, too, Idaios may communicate the sentiments of many Trojans—even Hektor wishes that his brother had died “childless and unmarried” (3.40).\textsuperscript{55} Most importantly, Idaios suspends the outcome of Paris’ message by enjambling the main point (“he says he will not return,” οὔ φησιν δώσειν) in the following line (393).\textsuperscript{56} And, to add indignation to suspense, he reveals that Paris will not return Helen, even though the Trojans ask it. Idaios polarizes the Trojan city through other contrasts as well. His verbs stage a contest between the desires of all the Trojans (with Priam) and the destructive behavior of one (Paris). Although the command was Priam’s, Idaios uses third-person plural verbs to contrast with Paris’ solitary actions. And, for the external audience, the opposition between the selfish desires of the leader and the common concern of the people recalls the tension in Book 1 where the Achaeans shout en masse for Agamemnon to accept Chryses’ offer.\textsuperscript{57}

Significantly, then, Idaios alters his message’s author(s). Instead of reporting Priam’s pukinon epos, he announces that Priam and the rest of the Trojans order him to propose this epos (294, καὶ δὲ τὸδ’ ἴνωγεν εἰπεῖν ἔπος): Priam’s speech verbatim. Idaios creates a unified image of the Trojans to balance that of Agamemnon and the Achaeans, defined together and against the disunity that Paris represents. With an impossible wish for Paris’ earlier death (390, ὡς πρὶν ὀφελλὴ ἀπολέσθαι), he marks the separation between the strife’s cause and those who suffer for it while also implying that the other Trojans feel the same way. Finally, his assertion that the rest of the Trojans have asked Paris to return Helen along with his revelation that

\textsuperscript{55} Compare Helen in her lament for Hektor (24.764; cf. Kirk, The Iliad 284, on 389–390). Such sentiments are not inherently Trojan—Achilles wishes that Briseis had perished previously (19.59–60).

\textsuperscript{56} According to de Jong, Narrators and Focalizers 183, Idaios thus “dissociates himself from Paris’ statement, which he, like the other Trojans, is not pleased with.”

\textsuperscript{57} On the critical disruption initiated by this moment see Elmer, Poetics of Consent 30–31 and 71–74.
the Trojans and Priam have proposed something more reasonable—to cremate the dead—increases the distance between the two parties and their respective proposals.

In this way, then, Idaios uses distancing techniques to preserve himself and to separate Paris from the other Trojans. Such obfuscation could leave the impression that Priam stands with the rest of the Trojans against Paris. Here, then, from the level of the composition of the Iliad, Paris is set up as a selfish leader, like Agamemnon or even Achilles, whose personal needs bring destruction upon his people.

Conclusions

Idaios’ visit to the Achaean reminds us that Book 7 offers a fragmented mirror-scene for Iliad 1. In Book 7, Paris is an Agamemnon who refuses to give up a woman even though it would be better for his people. Antenor is at once the voice of compromise and of dissent. This scene further reminds us that Book 1 recapitulates general themes of the Trojan War. There is a palpable irony throughout the Iliad in Agamemnon’s indignation over the loss of Chryseis, his seizure of Briseis, and the cause of the entire expedition.

This investigation also elucidates Priam’s difficult position and the linguistic agility of his seemingly bland speech as he copes with the conflict between the interests of his son and the interests of the city. His language reflects a tension between obligations to his people and to a son for whom his patience wanes; his words work between their own lines—he engages in “off-record conversation strategies.”

His use of speech anticipates what much of the epic shows, namely, that Trojan rhetoric functions to marginalize dissent and maintain an embattled unity as the status quo.

The Trojan assembly and Idaios’ subsequent visit to the Achaean camp expose differences in the Achaean and the

Trojan pursuit of political order. In contrast to Achaean procedures, the Trojan assembly has no set order; once a prince or king speaks, the debate ends. Although the Achaeans publicly misuse language in the *agore*—indeed, the rejection of Achilles in Book 1 sets a pattern to be repeated and re-interpreted with Antenor’s appearance—Trojan advisors appear to have no opportunities to ply their trade. Trojan rhetoric reflects this as it refuses debate. The rejection of Antenor constitutes the rejection of beneficial, albeit impossible, advice. Priam’s careful speech and Idaios’ message point to the restrictions placed on debate and language’s potential in the Trojan assembly. In addition, if this scene reflects deliberations preceding the war, the *Iliad* repositions the failure of speech (both the limitation of debate and the barring of dissent) as a partial cause of Trojan suffering. Finally, the unfolding of these themes marks this scene (and Book 7) as essential to the portrayal of political differences and reveals its importance to the epic’s overall rumination on politics and political institutions. Although the Achaeans face terrible consequences for their mistakes in Book 1, their coalition survives (in this epic). This *Iliad* integrates political themes throughout its story to attribute the fall of the city, at least in part, to a failure of its institutions.59

59 A version of this paper was originally presented at the conference “Homer on the Range” at the University of Texas at Austin (2012) and improved by discussion there. Some of the work originated in a dissertation advised by David Sider, Michèle Lowrie, and Leonard Muellner and influenced by correspondence with David Elmer and Elton Barker. In addition, the comments of the editorial board and anonymous referee of *GRBS* helped to clarify the argument greatly.

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### TABLES

1. Achaean Assemblies and Councils

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Diomedes rejects his proposal; Nestor ratifies Diomedes’ comments and dissolves assembly</td>
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<td>Council 4</td>
<td>9.89-172</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impromptu</td>
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<td>Agamemnon proposes retreat</td>
<td>Diomedes proposes that the leaders re-enter battle to rally the troops</td>
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<td><strong>Impromptu Council 2</strong></td>
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<td>Thoas suggests that the best fighters band together</td>
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2. Divine Political Meetings

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3. Trojan Assemblies and Councils

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<td>Assembly 1</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Council (?)</td>
<td>3.146-161</td>
<td>The Trojan elders (without Hektor) contemplate Helen</td>
<td>They long for Helen to be sent away</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source</td>
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<td><em>Pseudo-Council 3</em></td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
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*September, 2014*  
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