Classical Inquiries

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For example:

In the Homeric Iliad, Andromache is shown in the act of singing three songs of lamentation. Each one of these songs, as "quoted" by the narrative of Homeric poetry, can be considered a masterpiece of lament. You will find these three songs at: (1) Iliad 6.407–439 (2) Iliad 22.477–514 (3) Iliad 24.725–745

In my book *The Ancient Greek Hero in 24 Hours* (2013) [hereafter H24H], when you look at the Table of Contents, only one of these three laments is mentioned, the first one. And you will find the relevant analysis when you read the subsection entitled "The first lament of Andromache," which starts at H24H Hour 3§26. The analysis is introduced, somewhat abruptly, already at Hour 3§19, but the song that I start to analyze there is not the first lament of Andromache but the second one. And then, in Text C of Hour 3, I show the text of Iliad XXII 460–476, but these lines only *introduce* the words of Andromache’s second song of lament. The actual words of her lament come *after* these introductory lines. These words, as "quoted" by Homeric poetry, are at Iliad 22.477–514. Then at Hour 3§21, I describe this second lament as "arguably the most artistic and elaborate of all the laments quoted in the Iliad." And, in the same context, I observe that this song of Andromache is the lengthiest of all laments quoted in the Iliad. **But I never quote in H24H the actual words of this second lament.** **Nor do I quote the actual words of the third lament, as "quoted" by the Master Narrator at Iliad 24.725–745. So, I propose to share with you the texts of the second and the third laments. In this post, which I call Part I of a set of posts that will continue, I concentrate on the text of the second lament, which I will now quote. And please note, before we start, that I use the word quote within quotation marks when Homeric poetry embeds the words of a speaker inside its narrative, while I avoid quotation marks when I quote a text in the modern sense of the word quote.
I summarize here what I say about this passage in Homer the Classic (online 2008, 4§§260–262):

In this passage, Socrates is enumerating some highlights of Homeric poetry as performed by rhapsodes like Ion at the Panathenaia. The enumeration takes the form of a set of accusatives of the rhapsodic subject following the verb ἀιδεῖν 'sing' (ἄιδος): [1] Odysseus at the epic moment when he leaps upon the threshold, ready to shoot arrows at the suitors; [2] Achilles at the epic

Iliad 22.477–514 [1]

What happens then . . .

Iliad 22.515 [2]

For the moment, I concentrate on the emotion of pity as evoked in this passage. Here I find it relevant to quote again a text I had quoted in the Introduction to H24H:

Hour 0 Text G

{Socrates is speaking;} Hold it right there. Tell me this, Ion—respond to what I ask without concealment. When you say well the epic verses and induce a feeling of bedazzlement [ἐκπλήξις] for the spectators [θεόμενοι]—as you sing of Odysseus leaping onto the threshold and revealing himself to the suitors and pouring out the arrows at his feet, or of Achilles rushing at Hector, or something connected to the pitiful things about Andromache or Hecuba or Priam—are you then in your right mind, or outside yourself? Does your mind [πσυχὴ], possessed by the god [ἐνθουσιασεῖν], suppose that you are in the midst of the actions you describe in Ithaca or Troy, or wherever the epic verses have it?

Plato Ion 535b–c [3]

Homer epic Iliad

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Odyssey Pausanias

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moment when he lunges at Hector; or [3] some other highlighted thing, here unspecified (τοιαύτα), from epic moments involving Andromache, Hector, or Priam.

There are five epic moments recounted here in ever-increasing compression and non-specificity. The first two moments have to do primarily with the emotion of terror, and they feature the main heroes of the Odyssey and the Iliad respectively, [1] Odysseus and [2] Achilles. The next three moments have to do primarily with the emotion of pity, and they feature the main heroes on the other side of the Trojan War: [3b] Andromache, [3c] Hector, and [3d] Priam. The link between the two moments of terror and the three moments of pity is [3a] Hector, who exemplifies the emotion of terror when he is about to be killed by the one who hates him most of all, his enemy Achilles, but who also exemplifies the emotion of pity when he says his last farewell to the one who loves him most of all, that is, [3b] his wife Andromache. In the wording of Plato’s Ion, the pairing of [3a] Hector and [3b] Andromache creates a thematic link for the transition from terror to pity.

Plato’s reference to ‘something connected to the pitiful things about Andromache’ indicates that the epic character of Andromache is specially connected to the emotion of pity. In the language of epic, this emotion is formally expressed by way of lamentation. In all three of Andromache’s appearances in the Iliad, there is an element of lament. When we hear her speak in Iliad XXIV (725–745), she is performing a formal lament for Hector; when we hear her in Iliad XXII (477–514), much of what she says corresponds morphologically to the words of a formal lament. Already in her first appearance, in Iliad VI (407–439), the language of lament is evident in her words as she and Hector part forever, she going back to her weaving at the loom while he goes off to his death. In short, the Homeric character of Andromache displays a distinct virtuosity in the art of lamentation.

Notes


[3] Στ’ ἔχε δὲ μοὶ τοῦ ἔπει, ἦ’ κακ’ καὶ μή ἀποκρύψη ὅτι ἂν σε ἐρωμαι· ὅταν εὐ ὑπή καὶ ἐκπλήξης μᾶλιστα τούς χωσμένως, ὥς τὸν Ὅδυσσα ἄνει τὸν οὐδόν ἐςπράξῃ ἄνης, ἐκφανή γνώμην τοῖς μησηρά καὶ κέκληκα τοῖς ὁπτοῖς πρὸ τῶν ποδῶν, ὡς ἄλληλα ἐπὶ τὸν ἔκτορα ὁμών, ὥς καὶ τὸν Ἀνδρόμην ἐλεύνης τοῦ ἐπὶ Ἐκάθης ἄνει πρία Πριάμου, τότε πότερον ἐμφαρίς ἐν ζ’ συντό γγνη καὶ παρά τοῖς πράγμασιν οἴοτα σου εἰς ἔτη ὡς ὡς λέγεις ἐνδοειδόζωσας, ἐν ἑ Ἐθάκ αὐτὴν ἢ ἐν τροῖα ὑπὸς ἄν ’ καὶ τὸ ἔπει ἐκθ’.

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Tags: Andromache, Epic, Hour 3, Iliad, lament, Master Narrator, pity, Socrates

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