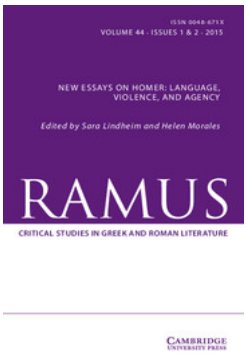

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The true subject of the *Iliad*, Simone Weil famously wrote, is force. Time and again, 'the human spirit is shown as modified by its relation with force, as swept away, blinded, by the very force it imagined it could handle, as deformed by the weight of the force it submits to'.[1] Force turns men, perpetrators of violence and its victims alike, into things: objectification is its bane. Homer's clarity about the moral degradation of war, that machine of force, is what makes him, in Weil's accounting, not just the first but the greatest of poets.

Weil's provocative claim has recently been rearticulated by the literary critic Wai Chee Dimock, writing that in the *Iliad* the '"storm surge" of violence unleashed by the massed armies unfolds in the domain of physics, obeying only physical laws'; the war at Troy comes to behave and feel 'like a natural disaster'.[2] But Dimock also brings Weil's *Iliad* into the Anthropocene. She emphasizes not only the likeness between mass violence in Homer's epic and the epic damage wrought by a catastrophe like Hurricane Katrina but also the narrowing gap between manmade and natural disasters as our capacity to harm scales up. Like Weil, though, Dimock conceptualizes force through the non-human in order to drive home the way force destroys the human. The objectifying effects of natural forces arise in part from the sheer asymmetry of power between a human body and, say, a hurricane. Yet the problem also lies with the object-nature of these forces themselves: indifferent to human lives and values, indiscriminate in the violence they wreak, incapable of being blamed for their fury. To become the victim or the vehicle of such forces is to forfeit personhood.

In both Weil and Dimock, then, we find the assumption that 'nature' *qua* power is not just non-human but dehumanizing. If we go back to the *Iliad*, a working division between the violence of the natural world and that of the human world also seems inscribed into the organization of the poem. Although the poem teems with forest fires, duststorms, lightning, whirlwinds and earthquakes, these natural disasters are almost entirely confined within the boundaries of the simile.[3] The plain of Troy is itself a strangely 'weatherless space', largely evacuated by 'real' natural forces to make room for human beings acting like

1. Weil (2005), 3.
2. Dimock (2008), 73f.
3. Bonnafé (1984), i.13f., estimates that 87% of the similes in the *Iliad* refer to nature or life in nature (including animal life). On the image of hostile nature conveyed in the similes, see Bonnafé (1984), i.22-38; Bouvier (1986), 246-52; Redfield (1994), 189-92.

natural forces.[4] Force enters the epic by electrifying human bodies, making them at once super- and subhuman.

Neither Weil nor Dimock, however, pays much attention to the point in the poem where a natural force breaks out of the confines of the simile and moves to the foreground of the battlefield usually dominated by humans. Indeed, the episode has received comparatively little attention in scholarship on the *Iliad*. In Book 21, Achilles meets the river that the Trojans call Scamander and the gods call Xanthus in a battle of sorts. In many respects, the representation of Scamander would seem to emphasize precisely his difference from the human. Unlike other gods in the poem, the river god does not assume human form to engage Achilles, thereby remaining outside the shared social and moral space where most encounters between mortals and immortals take place.[5] Nor does

Figure 1. Attic red-figure *kylix* with Heracles and Achelous, c. 470 BCE. Attributed to the Boot Painter. Photograph by Bruce M. White. © Princeton University Art Museum. Museum purchase, Carl Otto von Kienbusch Jr Memorial Collection Fund. 2010-59.

Scamander go a hybrid route by taking on the most common theriomorphic form of river gods in Greek art from at least the seventh century BCE on, that of a bull (see fig. 1), though a simile in which he roars '*like* a bull' (μεμυκὼς ἠΰτε ταῦρος, 21.237) may indicate that the poet of these lines was aware of another representational tradition.[6] Homer instead takes on the challenge of animating the river itself into Achilles' opponent in battle.

4. The phrase 'weatherless space' is from Purves (2010b), 323, who is referring to Fränkel (1921), 102 (= Fränkel [1997], 108f.). Purves goes on to deftly analyze the very porosity of the simile's boundary and wind's infiltration into the narrative space of the epic.

5. I have argued elsewhere that the gods' adoption of human form in Homer helps to establish them as moral agents in a mortal/immortal community: see Holmes (2010), 41-83, esp. 76-78.

6. Nagy (1992), 325, argues that the simile at *Il.* 21.237 is a conscious acknowledgement of a variant tradition for representing river combatants as bulls. On the many representations of Achelous as a human-faced bull (and bull-headed human) in Greek vase painting and on coins beginning in the seventh century BCE, see Waser (1909), 2780-82; Gais (1978), 357-59; Weiß (1984), 15-20; Ostrowski (1991), 16-18; Currie (2002), 29. River personifications become less zoomorphic and more anthropomorphic in the

Scamander's objectifying power appears confirmed by the fact that he threatens Achilles not just with death but with a death that forecloses any recuperation of the lost life by the community—namely, the death without burial that, as Jean-Pierre Vernant has written, 'dissolve[s] [sc. the hero] into confusion and return[s] him to chaos, utter nonhumanity'.[7] Dodging the river's fury, Achilles fears that he will die like a swineherd caught in a winter torrent, a fate far worse than the two he imagined he was choosing between when he left for Troy (21.274-83). Scamander has an even more inglorious end in mind, boasting to his brother Simois that by burying Achilles in mud and sand, he will deny him proper rites and a tomb:

> φημὶ γὰρ οὔτε βίην χραισμησέμεν οὔτε τι εἶδος,
> οὔτε τὰ τεύχεα καλά, τά που μάλα νειόθι λίμνης
> κείσεθ' ὑπ' ἰλύος κεκαλυμμένα· κὰδ δέ μιν αὐτὸν
> εἰλύσω ψαμάθοισιν ἅλις χέραδος περιχεύας
> μυρίον, οὐδέ οἱ ὀστέ' ἐπιστήσονται Ἀχαιοὶ
> ἀλλέξαι· τόσσην οἱ ἅσιν καθύπερθε καλύψω.
> αὐτοῦ οἱ καὶ σῆμα τετεύξεται, οὐδέ τί μιν χρεὼ
> ἔσται τυμβοχόης, ὅτε μιν θάπτωσιν Ἀχαιοί.
>
> (*Il.* 21.316-23)

> For I declare that neither his strength nor his beauty will help him at all,
> nor his armor, lovely as it is, armor that somewhere in the depths of the flood
> will lie, covered with mud. But deep down
> I will wrap his own body in sand, piling it under a mass of rubble,
> nor will the Achaeans know how
> to gather his bones, so much mire will I cover over him.
> And here a monument will be set up for him, nor will he have any need
> of a funeral mound, when the Achaeans honor him with the rites of death.[8]

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classical period. For literary representations, see Archil. frr. 287-89 (West); S. *Tr.* 9-17, with Clarke (2004a); Ael. *VH* 2.33. Bull-bellowing rivers also appear in ancient Near Eastern sources: see Nagler (1974), 150, with n.26; D'Alessio (2004), 26f. A scholiast (Schol. *BE[4] Hom. *Il.* 21.237 [μεμυκὼς ἠΰτε ταῦρος]) sees Homer's decision to represent Scamander as a river in terms of technical confidence: Ἀρχίλοχος μὲν οὐκ ἐτόλμησεν Ἀχελῷον ὡς ποταμὸν Ἡρακλεῖ συμβαλεῖν, ἀλλ' ὡς ταῦρον, Ὅμηρος δὲ πρῶτος ποταμοῦ καὶ ἥρωος ἠγωνοθέτησε μάχην. ἑκάτερος οὖν τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν ἐμέτρησε τῇ δυνάμει ('Archilochus did not dare to pit Achelous in the form of a river against Heracles, but [cast him] in the form of a bull. Homer, by contrast, was the first to set up a battle of a river and a hero. Each poet, then, fitted the same topic to his talent').

7. Vernant (1991b), 71f. On the body abandoned without burial, see also Holmes (2010), 32-34, arguing that this body is designated by *sōma*. On the encroachment of animals and the breakdown of burial customs in the latter books of the poem, see Segal (1971), 30-32, and Redfield (1994), 169, 183-203, who describes Book 21 as part of the cresting of the poem's 'rising arc of horrors'.

8. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

Scamander's threat is a culminating moment in the poem's growing horror and fascination with the mutilation of the corpse, the denial of burial, and the descent into 'utter nonhumanity'.

Yet of course the fact that it is the river himself making the kind of boast familiar from mortal combat reminds us that Scamander is not simply a natural force operating outside the boundaries of a moral community. He can 'make himself like a man' (ἀνέρι εἰσάμενος, *Il.* 21.213) in order to speak to Achilles (the voice rises from the eddies, indicating that Scamander's anthropomorphism is limited to his speech). He attends the council of the gods that Zeus calls at the start of Book 20. More important still, he does not drag Achilles down to a world without burial norms but, rather, meets him there. Up until Book 21, the poem (apart from its blunt opening lines) had only imagined the possibility of a corpse being eaten by scavengers. It is Achilles who makes the horror a reality when he tosses the dead man Asteropaeus into the river, where the delicate fat around the corpse's kidneys becomes food for eels and other fish (21.202-04). Scamander's wrath is in fact triggered by Achilles' flagrant violations of a code of honor as much as by Achilles' pollution of his waters on a more concrete level. Finally, he intervenes in the narrative not just out of anger but out of an explicit desire to protect the Trojans. We would therefore be mistaken to characterize the river as something physical that obeys only physical laws, or raw nature acting outside and against culture, or non-human force undermining the human. Then again, no one familiar with early Greek religion would be surprised at the continuity between the physical world and the moral order that we see in Book 21. No doubt some scholars would question any division between these two domains. We may wonder whether it makes sense to call Scamander a force of nature at all.

The episode with Scamander muddies clean breaks between human and non-human force, nature and culture, ethics and physics, people and things, super-human and subhuman. It calls into question the very purchase of these categories on our interpretive framework. The kinds of cuts between nature and culture or person and thing that readers of the *Iliad* like Weil and Dimock often assume do owe a great deal to post-Homeric intellectual traditions organized by the 'inquiry into nature' beginning in the sixth century BCE and the emergence of the physical body as an object at odds with the embodied subject in the fifth—to say nothing of their later histories.[9] What the Scamander episode maps is therefore a more unfamiliar terrain than is often recognized. It is complicated by its own contiguities and terms of difference—between Scamander and Achilles, between Scamander and Apollo, between Scamander and the anonymous winds and rains of the weather similes, between Scamander and a rock. Yet at the same time, the terrain revealed in Book 21 is not totally foreign. A river god is a particular kind of person. The force of a forest fire, when channeled through a figure embedded in a social community and with responsibilities to

9. On the emergence of the physical body, see Holmes (2010).

that community, does, the poem suggests, threaten a moral order. The dynamics of water are not unknown to us.

Given this complex picture of overlap and difference, we may find ourselves better oriented towards the complexities of the terrain in Book 21 if we speak not in terms of 'nature and culture' but in terms of what Donna Haraway has described as 'naturecultures'.[10] Haraway's neologism, developed in the context of a manifesto on companion species, does not situate itself in an orthogonal relation to a discourse of 'nature and culture' but, rather, attends to the thick skein of manifold differences between human and non-human—in short, to relationality as dynamic and specific. In this article, I approach Scamander as something of a companion species with the aim of being more attentive to the specificities of his agency in the epic and, more broadly, to the contours of natureculture in the *Iliad*. In so doing, I hope to open up further lines of inquiry into the moral and affective landscape of the *Iliad* as a space traversed by naturalcultural forces whose differences do not map easily onto our usual categories and whose dimensions come most sharply into focus not in isolation but in the encounter and in the relation.

More specifically, I want to analyze the aspects of Scamander that I have just outlined—on the one hand, his stubbornly non-human form, his chaotic and destructive power; on the other hand, his place among the Olympian gods (reinforced by his position in the theomachy) and his attempts to protect the Trojans from Achilles—not as opposed but as complementary. These aspects can best be understood through Scamander's enactment of a uniquely fluid dynamics of power. Scamander's agency is informed, on the one hand, by a dynamics of waters and winds figured as forces liable to spiral out of control and to overwhelm those in their path. On the other hand, it is shaped by the river's affective alliance with the Trojans, an alliance grounded in a kourotrophic relationship that, together with Achilles' insults, motivates Scamander's anger and what I call his 'will-to-protect'. Scamander's intervention in the epic narrative therefore represents not just the unleashing of a river but the unleashing of the force of quasi-parental care that threatens to bury Achilles and, with him, the plotline that leads to Troy's destruction.

In the first section of the paper, I take a closer look at the conditions under which Scamander's power is let loose in order to better understand its dynamics. The battle

10. Haraway (2003). Redfield's masterpiece on 'nature and culture' in the *Iliad*, originally published in 1975, is a far more supple analysis of the crossings of those terms than the title might suggest, and my reading of Scamander is deeply indebted to Redfield's study of purity and impurity (at 160-223). It is not a coincidence that the most important species at the juncture of nature and culture for Redfield is also the star of Haraway's manifesto—namely, the dog (see Redfield [1994], 193-99), though the valences of the canine are very different in the two. The stability and separability of the categories 'nature' and 'culture' in Redfield's analysis, however, rely on a nineteenth-century anthropological framework, on which see Descola (2012), 28-39, and Descola (2013), 57-88; Haraway (2003) sketches a more promising way forward. See also the perceptive remarks at Lynn-George (1993), 221, on moving beyond entrenched dualisms in our inquiry into Homeric values and esp. Purves in this volume on Homer's 'vibrant materialism'; Purves begins with a similar critique of the dualism implicit in Weil's reading of force.

that Scamander wages against Achilles has traditionally been read—first by the scholiasts, then by modern scholars—in structural terms as a means of deferral.[11] Together with Thetis' commissioning of Achilles' new arms and the theomachy, the battle keeps at bay a little longer the moment that the epic is driving towards: the death of Hector (and, beyond it, the death of Achilles and the fall of Troy). It is no doubt true that Scamander participates in a deferral strategy. Nevertheless, far from being merely a tool of narrative technique, the brief upsurge of riverine will at the border between mortal combat and theomachy—and as the point of passage between them—enacts a form of power that is as much about the dynamics of affect and emotion as it is about achieving targeted ends.[12]

Scamander's rage mirrors and counters Achilles' untrammeled bloodlust, which is a temporary placeholder for his monomaniacal desire to kill Hector in Books 20 and 21. But, as I have just suggested, Scamander also expresses care and a will-to-protect that is fleetingly efficacious during the suspension of the epic's linear movement before it is forced to yield to an Olympian mandate to let the city's fated destruction proceed unchecked. The intertwining of care with anger enlarges the river's mirroring of Achilles, whose fury is driven, after all, by the loss of Patroclus. In the second part of the paper, I explore Scamander's care for the Trojans in the context of the kourotrophic function of rivers in ancient Greece and then reconsider his status as an agent of disruptive energies at a culminating point in the epic. By exploring the fluid dynamics of care enacted by the river god, I hope to establish a framework for better understanding his transition from landscape feature to moral agent and back again as at once exceptional and deeply embedded in the poem's naturalcultural logic of life and death, affect and aggression.

Scamander into the Breach

In order to understand the unusual conditions under which Scamander enters the action of the *Iliad*, we should first recognize that for much of the epic, Scamander appears, when he appears at all, as a feature of the landscape, one of the few orientation points on the otherwise bare plain of Troy.[13] Nevertheless, if we look briefly at one of the most important places where the river appears outside of Books 20 and 21, the excursus on the destruction of the Achaean wall at the start

11. See Scheibner (1939), 113; Bremer (1987), esp. 36f.

12. I use the terms 'affect' and 'emotion' to capture both shifts of intensity within a body, here a fluid body, as it is acted upon and directs its energies back outwards (that is, affect, a term often used in contemporary discourse as an inheritance from Spinoza via Deleuze but whose deeper history lies in a concept of *dynamis* in Greek medicine and philosophy) and the cohesion and expression of feeling within a social framework (that is, emotion). These terms introduce a difference, however, that is hardly present in the *Iliad*, where emotion is conceptualized in terms of the always-dynamic state of fluids and breath: life and mind are always processual. See further nn.31-34 below.

13. *Il.* 2.459-68, 5.36, 5.774, 7.329, 11.499. On the bareness of the landscape of combat, see Bouvier (1986), 242-46.

of Book 12, we can see aspects of Scamander that will come into play in those books.

The wall is first proposed in Book 7 by Nestor, who recommends gathering the bodies of all the Achaeans who have fallen 'beside the fair-flowing Scamander' (ἐΰρροον ἀμφὶ Σκάμανδρον, 7.329) to build a massive funeral pyre. Atop this pyre he proposes erecting a wall as a defense for the army and the ships against the Trojan assault. Poseidon, fearing that the massive earthwork rivals the wall that he and Apollo once built for Laomedon, is given permission by Zeus to level it, but only after the sack of the city and the Achaeans' departure (7.448-63).

The wall's future destruction is, in fact, described five books later.[14] The poem describes a scene in which Poseidon and Apollo marshal the Trojan rivers, including Scamander, to flood the plain as Zeus contributes torrents of rain (12.13-33). Every trace of the wall is lost. The rivers here are forces of erasure, restoring the landscape to what it was prior to the arrival of the Achaeans before returning to their courses.[15] If in Book 21, a Scamander clogged with corpses is metonymic of the crisis of burial generated by Achilles' killing spree, here the rivers disperse the last remnants of the carnage they witnessed in an 'antifuneral' that asserts the primacy of the Trojan landscape over the memory of fallen Argive warriors and mortal aspirations to permanence.[16] As Andrew Ford has aptly observed, in the destruction of the wall Scamander finally (but also proleptically) realizes his threat to Achilles in Book 21 by washing the bodies of the fallen Achaeans out to sea en masse and destroying their tomb-monument.[17] In so doing, he enacts an elemental force capable of scattering the human but also of protecting the pre-war contours of the Troad. These aspects of Scamander's power anticipate his portrayal in Book 21.

It is only at the start of Book 20, however, that the crescendo of events building up to the meeting between Achilles and Scamander is initiated properly. Scamander there appears among the gods in attendance at the assembly convened by Zeus. His presence is by no means exceptional. The assembly is on a cosmic

14. The account of the Achaean wall is unusual in a number of respects, and the passage in which its destruction is described has been seen as suspect since antiquity: see Scodel (1982), 33-35; Porter (2011), esp. 2-12. The problems with the passage are not relevant here.

15. But what time is being restored? It could be peacetime Troy (and a reading of Scamander in 'topocosmic terms', on which see below, would support this). But if the Achaean wall is, as Porter argues, 'a *virtual image* of Troy' (Porter [2011], 22, emphasis original; see also 32f.), then its destruction could point to a 'deep-time' notion of the land as it was *before* Troy.

16. 'Antifuneral': see Redfield (1994), 167-69, 183-86; see also Ford (1994), 153. For Redfield, the antifuneral 'is in the *Iliad* emblematic of the impurity latent in war' (183), although insofar as the destruction of the wall is focalized from the perspective of the gods and, arguably, the landscape, it takes on a purifying quality. Here we meet the tension between the 'purity' of a landscape and the 'purity' of human culture. As Ford (1994), 152, remarks, 'in Greek terms, eroding rains, washing streams, and destructive torrents are the elements most inimical to the hopes of graves and tombs'. Scodel (1982) reads the watery destruction of the wall even more broadly, in terms of a deluge, modeled on Near Eastern sources, that marks the boundary between the Heroic Age and the present age.

17. Ford (1994), 155.

scale, involving not just the Olympian gods but all the rivers and the nymphs (only Ocean is absent).[18] Nevertheless, by naming Scamander among the participants, the poem allows hitherto latent aspects of his being to emerge. The river is now present in a community of immortal agents who are about to be entrusted by Zeus with the responsibility of ensuring the narrative's fidelity to what is fated by intervening in the mortal drama on the battlefield and eventually squaring off against each other.

For what motivates the assembly is Zeus's fear that Achilles, returning to battle after the death of Patroclus in a state of boundless grief and fury, will destroy the walls of Troy and sack the city 'beyond what is fated' (ὑπέρμορον, 20.30; cf. 21.517). Zeus seeks to avert this outcome by lifting the ban he had imposed at the start of Book 8 on divine intervention, an act that Whitman calls 'the official dissolution of the Plan of Zeus'.[19] He now invites the gods to interfere at their will, lending support to one side or another 'however the mind of each directs' (ὅπῃ νόος ἐστὶν ἑκάστου, 20.25). If the *Dios boulē* is seen as an expression of Zeus's control over the world more broadly and not just the plot of the *Iliad*,[20] its suspension here registers as all the more unusual. It is true that different gods had violated Zeus's ban and intervened in the plot prior to Book 20. But those intrusions had been stealth operations, rogue calculations. In the assembly, Zeus formally unleashes the pantheon of divine minds, thereby creating a new kind of narrative space whose topography is important for our understanding of the particular nature of Scamander's agency.

This space is defined in part by a logic of deferral, as I said earlier. The report to Achilles at the beginning of Book 18 that Patroclus is dead thrusts us back into the stream of events that was suspended by Achilles' withdrawal from battle.[21] As soon as he decides to reenter battle and kill Hector, Achilles must accept his own death at Troy as imminent, as Thetis reminds him: 'You will be fast-visited by fate, then, child, speaking thus: for straightaway after Hector your death stands ready' (ὠκύμορος δή μοι, τέκος, ἔσσεαι, οἷ' ἀγορεύεις· / αὐτίκα γάρ τοι ἔπειτα μεθ' Ἕκτορα πότμος ἑτοῖμος, 18.95f.). Yet the end is not so close at hand. J.M. Bremer has counted no fewer than twelve 'retardations' of the fated plot after the exchange between Achilles and Thetis, starting with the creation of Achilles' new armor, which takes up the rest of Book 18.[22] Book 19 is devoted to Achilles' reconciliation with Agamemnon in a general assembly,

18. The poem is by no means worried about the capacity of what we would classify as geographical features to travel far afield. On this aspect of the personification of landscape, see Clarke (1997), esp. 68f. on rivers and Scamander in particular.

19. Whitman (1958), 272.

20. On this broader meaning of *Dios boulē*, see Allan (2008).

21. The third movement of the poem is usually located at 18.354 or 19.1 (note that on both calculations, it is shorter than the other two movements) in structural analyses of the poem, most of which favor a tripartite structure, perhaps corresponding to the days of recitation: see Richardson (1993), 2f.

22. Bremer (1987), 33-36.

and that assembly is mirrored at the start of the next book up on Olympus. Books 20 and 21 delay Hector's death still further.

Yet deferral alone does not capture the peculiar climate of Books 20 and 21. Equally important is the fact that the instructions from Zeus to his fellow gods are, in fact, a lack of instruction. After all, his only aim is to avoid an outcome that, though unfated, suddenly seems possible—namely, the premature sack of Troy by Achilles. In order to avert this, the gods are allowed to do what they will. The events of Books 20 and 21 unfold, then, in something of a topsy-turvy world where fate might be breached and the gods are deliberately left to their own devices by the hegemonic mind of the poem. It is true that Zeus himself, who assumes the role of bemused spectator, seems relatively unconcerned about anything going seriously wrong. For everyone else, though, the chaos feels real. The gods, reluctant to make war against each other, have to be urged on by Zeus after their initial skirmishes (20.155). Hades is terrified by the first throes of battle, worried that the quaking earth will crack open and expose the underworld to both mortals and immortals (20.61-65).[23] Episodes that are supposed to be obstacles to one rogue story threaten to institute another that is just as wild.

The force driving the destabilization at work here is, of course, Achilles, who is 'straining to plunge into combat opposite Hector' (Ἕκτορος ἄντα μάλιστα λιλαίετο δῦναι ὅμιλον, 20.76). That the verb used here (λιλαίομαι) is often used of weapons hungering after flesh casts Achilles as a missile whose path to its target has to be, if not blocked, then complicated.[24] But diverting Achilles is easier said than done. In a first attempt, Apollo goads on Aeneas to meet Achilles in battle. Aeneas is about to fall at Achilles' hands when Poseidon suddenly notices what is happening. He appeals to his fellow spectators, Hera and Athena, to help him stop an event that is sure to anger Zeus by foreclosing what is fated (μόριμον)—namely, the survival of Aeneas' seed (20.300-08). The goddesses, however, refuse to intervene, on the grounds that they are bound by oath never to do anything that would ward off the day of destruction from Troy, leaving Poseidon to save Aeneas by himself. Hera and Athena's inflexible commitment to Troy's destruction stands in contrast to Poseidon's fidelity to the dictates of the master plan, expressed in terms both of fate and of Zeus's will, while at the same time anticipating Scamander's equally fierce allegiance to Troy, again in defiance of fated outcomes. It is only the swelling up of that allegiance that will succeed in thwarting Achilles, albeit at the risk of another unfated outcome.

Before Scamander rises up against Achilles, however, Achilles' own mode of action undergoes a shift. Following two false starts at a showdown with Hector, Achilles' rage is effectively stripped of its object and becomes a desire to kill indiscriminately: 'I will now go after the others, whomever I catch' (νῦν αὖ

23. For Near Eastern examples of the motif, see West (1995).
24. For λιλαίομαι, see e.g., *Il.* 11.574, 15.317, 21.168.

τοὺς ἄλλους ἐπιείσομαι, ὅν κε κιχείω, 20.454). The shift to indiscriminate slaughter is, on the one hand, a precondition of Achilles' *aristeia*. The marriage of ambition and gore in the closing lines of Book 20 (ὁ δὲ ἵετο κῦδος ἀρέσθαι / Πηλεΐδης, λύθρῳ δὲ παλάσσετο χεῖρας ἀάπτους, 20.502f.) is entirely conventional; so, too, is Achilles' straining against the limits of the human.[25] On the other hand, Achilles' rampage is uncommonly hyperbolic. In substituting an entire army for Hector, the poem opens the door to an escalation of force that endangers not only the architecture of the plot but whatever moral parameters of battle remain. Under these conditions, Achilles' murderous intent, once aimed at a single target, becomes like a fire raging through the glens of a parched mountainside (20.490-94; cf. 21.12-14). We are here approaching the point where the boundaries of the simile will collapse, where the mortal warrior who is *like* a forest fire will meet a literal storm surge, raging out of control until it is itself thwarted by a literal holocaust.

Book 21 takes us to the breaking point. The book begins by subtly shifting our attention to the river. Scamander now becomes visible in two different but interlocking ways, as if through a double helix.[26] Each captures a different aspect of the river god—namely, as flowing and mercurial water and as a protector and avenger; each gives us a different perspective on Achilles' transgressions, one staged in terms of magnitude and pollution, the other in terms of interpersonal intimacy.

It is in the first instance—that is, as a river—that Scamander himself makes visible the cosmic scale of Achilles' killing. At the start of Book 21, Achilles drives half of the fleeing Trojan army into the river. He then leaps in after them and kills to the point of exhaustion, at which point he stops, captures twelve young men, 'astonished in fear, like fawns' (τεθηπότας ἠΰτε νεβρούς, 21.29), to sacrifice to Patroclus, and then jumps right back in, hungry for more slaughter (δαϊζέμεναι μενεαίνων, 21.33). The mass of bodies piling up in Achilles' wake will become starkly apparent in a couple of hundred lines when Scamander complains that he is so clogged with corpses (στεινόμενος νεκύεσσι, 21.220) he can no longer flow to the sea (flow expressing riverine life as a form of intentionality, here blocked: note the marked epithet ἐϋρρεῖος at 21.1).[27] The clogging of the river signals a shift in the scale of Achilles' violence, horrific not just in terms of numbers but in terms of its pollution of a sacred water source.[28] The cosmic nature of the problem means that it is no accident that Hephaestus' first task when he finally appears is to cremate the bodies that Achilles has left

25. That Achilles is called equal to a god (δαίμονι ἶσος, 20.493; cf. 21.18, 227) signals the formal mode of the *aristeia*. Cf. 5.438, 459, 884 (Diomedes); 16.705, 786 (Patroclus).

26. For this doubleness in representations of proto-natural forces (e.g., personifications like Hypnos and Eros), see further Holmes (2010), 66f.

27. I thank Mark Payne for helping me think through this point. On the equivalence between life and movement in early Greek poetry and religion, see Clarke (1995).

28. The sacred status of river water is established already at Hes. *Op*. 737-41, 757-59. See further Cole (2004), 35 and 57, on the sanctity of flowing water in ancient Greek culture and Toutain (1926), 5f., for later evidence that entering or crossing a river could be seen as transgressive.

behind, clearing the stage for the fight in the final books over a single dead body. Hector's corpse, at least, is a mess that Achilles can clean up. By contrast, in Book 21 the carnage threatens to overwhelm first Scamander and eventually Achilles himself.

Scamander's complaint not only allows us listeners to 'see' the damage wrought by Achilles' rampage before he reveals it more nakedly, rising up and 'roaring with foam and blood and corpses' (μορμύρων ἀφρῷ τε καὶ αἵματι καὶ νεκύεσσι, 21.325). It also casts him as a being capable of reacting to violation (contrast the 'mute earth' [κωφὴν…γαῖαν, 24.54] outraged by Achilles' abuse of Hector's corpse in Book 24 yet dependent on the Olympians for protection). But before we get to this reaction, the poem narrows its gaze to focus on two named warriors, whose finely-detailed encounters with Achilles stage in close-up an anger indifferent to appeals for pity and any other ethical protocol. It is as a witness to these killings, and, more specifically, as a witness mocked for his impotence, that Scamander first becomes visible not just as river but as mind.

The first to be killed is Lycaon, a son of Priam whom Achilles had already captured and ransomed once and who has recently returned to the battlefield. The exchange between the two warriors signals, as a number of readers have observed, a new world order. Lycaon requests that his life be spared. In rejecting that request, Achilles contrasts his attitude in the present with his practice earlier in the war of ransoming captives: driven by grief at the death of Patroclus, he has grown hardened to pity.[29] Achilles' pitilessness is exaggerated by the fact that Lycaon, having abandoned his weapons and armor on the banks of the river, is naked; his descent into brutality is confirmed by his treatment of the suppliant's corpse. Hurling it into the river, he boasts that Lycaon's body, instead of being mourned by his mother on a bier and given proper burial rites, will be carried out to sea by Scamander to be consumed by fish (21.122-27).

Being eaten rather than being buried is, as we have seen, the poem's worst nightmare. We see this traumatic fantasy realized in the very next episode. Achilles squares off against the ambidextrous Asteropaeus, who manages to wound him lightly. Achilles is, however, victorious, and having killed his opponent, throws his body into the river, where the fish and the eels rise up to nibble at the delicate flesh. There is a sense of regression here. Asteropaeus is descended from a river, Axios, and he acts here as the mortal avatar of another—Scamander himself. Yet he is not supposed to be returned to river waters.[30] The most significant casualty in these lines is the moral order of which burial is metonymic in the last books.

29. On the substitution of revenge (*poinē*) for ransom (*apoina*) in the poem, see Wilson (2002), 13-39; Holmes (2007), 76f.

30. '…the matter that begot and nourished him is now re-absorbing his life' (Tsitsibakou-Vasalos (2000), 5; see 3-6 on Asteropaeus' lineage).

During these two scenes, Scamander is coming into focus as a moral agent and an avenger. Indeed, if aspects of Achilles' rampage look transgressive—the absence of pity, the abuse of the corpse, the polluting and clogging of the river with dead bodies—it is because Scamander is enraged by them. His anger is first triggered by Achilles' boasts over Lycaon's corpse:

> ὣς ἄρ' ἔφη, ποταμὸς δὲ χολώσατο κηρόθι μᾶλλον,
> ὅρμηνεν δ' ἀνὰ θυμὸν ὅπως παύσειε πόνοιο
> δῖον Ἀχιλλῆα, Τρώεσσι δὲ λοιγὸν ἀλάλκοι.
>
> (*Il.* 21.136-38)

> He spoke, but now the river grew angry in his heart,
> and he thought of how he might put an end to the labor
> of shining Achilles and fend off destruction from the Trojans.

Scamander's rage motivates him to act *qua* god (that is, a being capable of acting on a mortal's 'inner' being in an unmediated way) a few lines later: precisely *because* he is angry at the slaughter of the young men whom Achilles had pitilessly killed alongside his waters (ἐπεὶ κεχόλωτο δαϊκταμένων αἰζηῶν, / τοὺς Ἀχιλεὺς ἐδάϊζε κατὰ ῥόον οὐδ' ἐλέαιρεν, 21.146f.), he gives strength to the river-sprung warrior Asteropaeus. But, as we have just seen, Asteropaeus falls, too, and as Achilles starts slaughtering the rest of the Paeonians, the river in his anger finally speaks:

> ὦ Ἀχιλεῦ, περὶ μὲν κρατέεις, περὶ δ' αἴσυλα ῥέζεις
> ἀνδρῶν· αἰεὶ γάρ τοι ἀμύνουσιν θεοὶ αὐτοί.
> εἴ τοι Τρῶας ἔδωκε Κρόνου παῖς πάντας ὀλέσσαι,
> ἐξ ἐμέθεν γ' ἐλάσας πεδίον κάτα μέρμερα ῥέζε·
> πλήθει γὰρ δή μοι νεκύων ἐρατεινὰ ῥέεθρα,
> οὐδέ τί πῃ δύναμαι προχέειν ῥόον εἰς ἅλα δῖαν
> στεινόμενος νεκύεσσι, σὺ δὲ κτείνεις ἀϊδήλως.
> ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ καὶ ἔασον· ἄγη μ' ἔχει, ὄρχαμε λαῶν.
>
> (*Il.* 21.214-21)

> O Achilles, you exceed men in strength, you exceed them
> in the evils you practice; for always the gods themselves are giving
> you aid.
> If the child of Cronus has granted to you the destruction of all the
> Trojans,
> drive them at least from my streams and practice your baneful acts
> on the plain.
> For my lovely streams are full of corpses,
> and I am in no way able to send my shining stream forth to the sea

choked with corpses, as you go on killing to annihilation.
But come now and let be: amazement holds me, leader of men.

Achilles curtly recognizes Scamander's request. He refuses, however, to stop his rampage until he has met Hector in battle. The crisis appears to have been averted—the river, acknowledging that Achilles' actions may in fact be sanctioned by Zeus, makes a request, Achilles seems to grant it—but in fact Achilles jumps back into the river, a decision that is, to put it lightly, miscalculated.

I have been speaking of Scamander's anger in terms of a cognitive response to Achilles' actions. But anger is more accurately a stuff that roils up within; if it is not checked or 'digested', it is channeled into—or channels itself into—destructive action.[31] Redfield memorably describes *cholos* as 'a whole-body reaction, the adrenal surge which drives men to violent speech and action'.[32] For Scamander *cholos qua* 'whole-body reaction' takes on new meaning: violent anger 'is' seething water that swells up into a wave. If in Book 5, Diomedes in his *aristeia* is *like* a 'winter-swollen river' that breaks through the strong dikes and mounded banks to wreak destruction on the works of men (5.87-92),[33] we are now witnessing the river, in an *aristeia* of his own, breach its confines.[34] The attack enacts the fluid dynamics of anger outside the frame of the human form, in terms proper to a river's mode of power but continuous with the behavior of anger within a human being.[35] Scamander boils up in a swell (οἴδματι θύων, 21.234), he stirs up his streams (ῥέεθρα κυκώμενος, 21.235), and eventually a wave falls against Achilles' shield, knocking him over; later, the river strikes his shoulders from above, like a weapon or a daemonic hand (21.269).[36] Scamander rises up, darkening the surface of his waters, '*in order to* [ἵνα] stop the labor of brilliant Achilles and fend off destruction from the Trojans' (21.249f.; cf. 21.314). Something of that intentionality is communicated, too, in the simile of the gardener

31. For *cholos* as a fluid, see Padel (1992), 78-98, esp. 82; Clarke (1999), 90-97 (anger is 'a rushing movement of fluid into the breast', 92), and generally 79-115 for a rich and important discussion of the dynamics of what Clarke calls 'mental life'; and Purves in this volume. The *kradiē* 'swells' (οἰδάνεται) with anger at *Il*. 9.646; it can be 'quelled' (σβέσσαι χόλον, 9.678); it is like smoke waxing or rising up (ἀέξεται) in the chest (18.110). The verb that describes the surging of wind and water is *thu(n)ō*, on which see Clarke (1999), 80-83. A fluid dynamics of emotion does not, however, play much role in Clarke's own discussion of Scamander (Clarke [1999], 274-76; see also Clarke [1997], 68).

32. Redfield (1994), 14.

33. For torrents in similes, see also *Il*. 4.452-56; 5.598f.; 11.492-96; 16.384-93 (where the swelling of the rivers expresses divine retribution), with Soutar (1939), 69-73; Bonnafé (1984), i.26-28.

34. *Cholos* is frequently described as a force that has to be checked or contained (e.g., *Il*. 1.192, 4.24, 8.461). In the case of Scamander, it is in part because his streams have already been blocked that the waters flood so that the 'cause' of his anger has to be understood in terms of Achilles' actions as literally blocking the river's flow *and* as instigating an emotional response, as I argue above.

35. It is relevant to note that the poem refers to the force of a river as ἶς ποταμοῖο (21.356)—that is, the same word (ἶς) is used of the force that allows a human being to run or throw a weapon (e.g., 5.244f., 7.269, 11.668, etc.): see Clarke (1999), 111f. Here, the limits of Weil's designation of force as non-human are especially evident.

36. On the hand as a symbol of the gods' power, see Holmes (2010), 53-56.

channeling the irrigation stream among his plants (21.257-62). The figure of the gardener initially appears allied with the purposiveness of the river. Once the water gains the momentum to outstrip the man's ability to control it, however, the gardener becomes allied with Achilles, who cannot outrun the river, and intentionality becomes immanent within the river as a force too strong for mortals to master or shepherd or deflect. That Achilles stays one step ahead of the flood, empowered by Poseidon and Athena, enrages Scamander further. Rage becomes a surging crest of water at the same time it is poured into Scamander's appeal to his brother to help him bury Achilles (21.306f.; cf. 21.324f.). The stirring of a god to action, often communicated by the verb *ornumi*, acquires new form in the cresting of the river's waters and the outpouring of speech. In Scamander's anger, the seamlessness of river and mind is especially evident.[37]

The unleashing of Scamander's force is dramatic and terrifying. He is on the verge of swallowing Achilles up when his protector gods, Hera and Hephaestus, finally intervene decisively. By pitting fire against water they translate the battle into a proper theomachy (and allow Achilles to drop back down to the level of a mortal who will soon meet his destined opponent, Hector). It is no wonder that readers have seen in Scamander here the outlines of an ancient chaos demon or likened the scene to a descent into Hades.[38] Scamander does represent a kind of chaos. But the raw power of Scamander's waters is not simply elemental, non-human, and therefore outside the moral landscape of the poem. On the contrary: Scamander belongs to that landscape even as, diverted from the riverbed, he traces out new contours within it. I have been focusing on the channeling of Scamander's anger into a nakedly liquid form of aggression against Achilles. Like the gardener's stream, the river's anger threatens to get out of control, to overwhelm the boundaries of the narrative space set out by Zeus in the assembly at the start of Book 20—temporary deferral of Achilles' meeting with Hector—and to destroy the fated story altogether. I want now to take a closer look at what motivates Scamander's anger and the nature of rivers more generally as kourotrophic in the ancient world, before coming back to Scamander's disruptive and counter-hegemonic intentionality.

The Fluid Dynamics of Care

Scamander explicitly says to Achilles that he is angry because his lovely streams are full of corpses and blocked from flowing to the sea. Yet the poem gives other

37. Contrast this seamlessness with the hylomorphism of Aristotle, who describes anger as both a boiling of the blood and a cognitive response (*de An*. 403a31).

38. For the chaos demon, see Nagler (1974), 147-57. Nagler sees an equivalence between Scamander and Oceanus, 'who symbolizes the inchoate, disorganized condition of the cosmos which always threatens to return' (151) and thus takes the battle between Scamander and Achilles as 'the climax of the *Iliad* on its mythic level of organization' (152). For Hades, see Mackie (1999), 493-500.

reasons for his anger as well. It is first triggered, as we have seen, when Achilles pitilessly kills Lycaon and Asteropaeus. The problem here, however, is not just what Achilles does but what he says. Boasting over Lycaon's death, he turns his attention to the entire army and declares that Scamander is powerless to save all these men, despite having received sacrifices of many bulls and horses over the years.[39] Then, following the death of Asteropaeus, he frames his victory as evidence that the children of Zeus are stronger than the seed of rivers, tracing his own lineage back to Zeus through Peleus and Aeacus. By way of further proof, he again emphasizes the river's inability to offer protection (καὶ γὰρ σοὶ ποταμός γε πάρα μέγας, εἰ δύνατaί τι / χραισμεῖν· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔστι Διὶ Κρονίωνι μάχεσθαι, 'for right beside you is a great river, if he can at all / ward off harm. But there is no way to do battle with Zeus, son of Cronus…', 21.192f.). If Achilles has forgotten that the great river beside them is himself a son of Zeus, the poem has not: the second line of Book 21 refers to 'eddying Xanthus, whom immortal Zeus begot' (Ξάνθου δινήεντος, ὃν ἀθάνατος τέκετο Ζεύς, 21.2).[40] Achilles' oversight drives home his heedless violation of the divine river's honor.[41]

It is worth taking a closer look at the specific charge that Achilles levels at the river. Scamander, Achilles boasts, is powerless to protect the Trojans.[42] For he did not defend (ἀρκέσει) Lycaon's body, nor could he protect (χραισμεῖν) Asteropaeus. In fact, it is explicitly in order to protect that Scamander first intervenes in the battle narrative, hiding the fleeing Trojans in his awesome eddies (κρύπτων ἐν δίνῃσι βαθείῃσιν μεγάλῃσι, 21.239). More than once, his actions are motivated by his desire to ward off destruction from the Trojans (Τρώεσσι δὲ λοιγὸν ἀλάλκοι, 21.138; cf. 21.250). Scamander, then, is not only a force of destruction or a chaos demon but a positive force, protective of life.

Scamander's protective function is, from one perspective, nothing special. This is what gods do, they protect those whom they love.[43] In fact, Scamander insists to Hera that he is less at fault than the Trojans' other allies (21.371), and several lines earlier, suffering under Hephaestus' flames, he cries out 'what do I have to do with strife and succor?' (τί μοι ἔριδος καὶ ἀρωγῆς, 21.360). While Scamander's defense is obviously motivated by his desire to

39. On animal sacrifices to rivers in antiquity, see Waser (1909), 2777; Weiß (1984), 15; Ostrowski (1991), 12f.; Parker (2011), 138, with n.59.

40. Cf. Hes. *Th*. 337-45, where Scamander is born from Tethys and Oceanus.

41. His arrogance scandalized later readers: Athenaeus excised the verses as shockingly impious, while Plato lists Achilles' ill treatment of the river god among those details that make the *Iliad* deeply unsuitable for young men in the *Republic* (3, 391b).

42. Hector had made a structurally similar boast over the body of Patroclus implicating Achilles as failed protector (ὦ δείλ', οὐδέ τοι ἐσθλὸς ἐὼν χραίσμησεν Ἀχιλλεύς, 'Wretch! Achilles, great as he was, could do nothing to help you', 16.837), a failing that Achilles himself recognizes at 18.98-100. The verbal echo underscores the mirroring of Achilles and Scamander not just as wild forces but as givers-of-care angered by impotence. On χραισμεῖν, see Lynn-George (1993), who observes that it is always negated in the *Iliad* (208); cf. 210f. on Achilles' boast over Scamander.

43. The protective function is also important to the definition of a leader in Homer, who is entrusted with protecting the people (*laos*) (though in the *Iliad*, the three major leaders, Agamemnon, Achilles and Hector, all fail at this task): see Haubold (2000), 24-32.

escape the fire's assault, his status as landscape feature for most of the *Iliad* does suggest that he stands largely on the sidelines of the battle for Troy as it is played out among the gods.

But at the same time, the river's capitulation to Hephaestus seems to clear the path to Troy's destruction. Although it is often observed that the resounding defeat of the pro-Trojan gods in the theomachy rehearses the city's defeat in the future just beyond the end of the *Iliad*, only Scamander's defeat looks directly consequential, rather than simply analogical or illustrative. For under duress he swears an oath never again to ward off ruin from Troy, not even when it is burning. His defeat now bars him from intervening in the future. In short, Scamander's protective function is strange and special in the *Iliad*.

I suggest we can gain a better understanding of Scamander's will-to-protect by putting it in the context of his status as a river with kourotrophic responsibilities. We have considerable evidence, starting from Homer and running through late antiquity, that rivers in ancient Greece were believed to exercise a protective function, particularly with regard to the young (although in an environment where freshwater was usually scarce, we should not underestimate the importance of rivers as generally life-sustaining). Hesiod, for example, refers to rivers as appointed by Zeus to 'raise men' (ἀνδρὰς κουρίζουσι, *Th*. 347). The *Iliad* itself testifies to the kourotrophic power of rivers in Book 23, when, as Patroclus' funeral pyre is being prepared, Achilles remembers the lock of hair that he had been nurturing for Spercheius, the river of his own homeland.

> στὰς ἀπάνευθε πυρῆς ξανθὴν ἀπεκείρατο χαίτην,
> τήν ῥα Σπερχειῷ ποταμῷ τρέφε τηλεθόωσαν·
> ὀχθήσας δ' ἄρα εἶπεν ἰδὼν ἐπὶ οἶνοπα πόντον·
> "Σπερχεί', ἄλλως σοί γε πατὴρ ἠρήσατο Πηλεύς,
> κεῖσέ με νοστήσαντα φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν
> σοί τε κόμην κερέειν ῥέξειν θ' ἱερὴν ἑκατόμβην,
> πεντήκοντα δ' ἔνορχα παρ' αὐτόθι μῆλ' ἱερεύσειν
> ἐς πηγάς, ὅθι τοι τέμενος βωμός τε θυήεις.
> ὣς ἠρᾶθ' ὁ γέρων, σὺ δέ οἱ νόον οὐκ ἐτέλεσσας.
> νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ οὐ νέομαί γε φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν,
> Πατρόκλῳ ἥρωϊ κόμην ὀπάσαιμι φέρεσθαι."
>
> (*Il*. 23.141-51)

> Standing apart from the pyre he cut off a golden lock of hair,
> whose flourishing he had been tending for the river Spercheius.
> In distress he looked out over the wine-dark sea and spoke:
> 'Spercheius, in vain did my father Peleus make a vow to you,
> that there upon my return to my dear fatherland
> I would shear off my hair for you and make a holy hecatomb,
> sacrificing fifty rams, unblemished, on that spot,

> into your streams, where you have your precinct and your smoking altar.
> Thus did the old man promise, but you have not accomplished his intention.
> But now, since I will not make my way back to my dear fatherland,
> I will grant this lock to Patroclus to bear.'

Spercheius, it turns out, does no better repaying Peleus' promise of sacrifice than Scamander had done with the sacrifices of the Trojans. Achilles cuts the lock of hair he had been keeping for the river, thereby cutting short his relationship with his kourotrophic protector.

The Homeric scholiasts note that, at least by their own day, the practice of young men cutting hair for a river on reaching adulthood was widespread in Greece.[44] It seems to have been common in the classical period as well. In the opening lines of the *Choephoroi*, Orestes declares he has brought back a lock of hair for the river Inachus in return for keeping him safe (πλόκαμον Ἰνάχῳ θρεπτήριον, 6).[45] Bruno Currie has recently pointed to evidence that rivers played an important role in rites of passage not just for young men but also for girls.[46] Most interestingly, Currie cites a first- or second-century CE letter that describes a ritual at Troy where virgins ready for marriage are led to the Scamander. They bathe in the river's waters and then pronounce as a ritual formula 'take, Scamander, my virginity' (λαβέ μου, Σκάμανδρε, τὴν παρθενίαν).[47] On the basis of the evidence, Currie concludes that 'collective prenuptial lustration in a local river…must have been a fairly widespread event in Archaic Greece'.[48]

These coming-of-age practices can be read in light of a deep and well-attested association between rivers and fertility more generally in antiquity.[49] They point, too, to an understanding of rivers as places of origin and the space of home. 'In archaic thought,' writes Jennifer Larson, 'the local river often stands in preference to district or town as a man's birthplace. Heroes are conceived and born beside a river, which thereafter represents the land of their nurture and is an important focus of their loyalty and identity.'[50] In the *Iliad*, Sarpedon, for example, is always located not just in Lycia but by the banks of 'whirling Xanthus' (2.876f.,

44. Schol. *Il. ad* 14.246, *ad* 23.142a1, 23.142a2.

45. See also, e.g., Paus. 1.37.3, Philostr. *Her*. 13.4 and Waser (1909), 2777f.; Ostrowski (1991), 12; Larson (2001), 98; Parker (2011), 75f.

46. Girls, moreover, could also dedicate a lock of hair as symbolic of their virginity: see Currie (2002), 31, with n.78.

47. Ps.-Aeschin. *Ep*. 10.2-3.

48. Currie (2002), 32.

49. See, e.g., S. *OC* 685-91; Artem. *Oneir*. 2.38, with Borthwick (1963), 231-36; Gais (1978), esp. 369f.; Currie (2002), 32, with n.86; Lee (2006), 323f.

50. Larson (2001), 98. Cole (2004), 27, writes, 'Citizens had a responsibility to defend the soil that gave them birth and nourishment, and therefore every city projected a strong identity not only with its territory but with the earth itself and the local springs and rivers that were its sources of water.' The relationship between rivers and cities is emphasized, too, by the frequent representation of rivers on coins.

5.479, 12.312-14), and Asteropaeus is only one of many heroes who claim descent from rivers.[51] The Hellenistic mythologers suggest that the relationship between heroes and rivers was especially close in the Troad through the connections they describe between the Trojan royal line and the local rivers and their daughters, the nymphs. The first king of Troy, Teucrus, is the offspring of a nymph of Ida and Scamander.[52] Recall that we are told in Book 6 that Hector calls his son, whom everyone else calls 'Astyanax', by the name 'Scamandrius' (6.402).

Scamander therefore has an especially close relationship with the Trojans, genealogical but also kourotrophic. The relationship is unlike a bond between mortals and immortals that is grounded in a history of events—the judgment of Paris, for example, or Laomedon's refusal to pay Poseidon and Apollo for their building of Troy's walls. It is grounded instead in a particular configuration of space and time—that is, in a history interwoven with genealogy and nurture and in a local community of shared space.[53] Charles Segal, following Theodore Gaster, has described such a space, which he defines as 'the total environment with which man and his city must stand in life-giving relation', as a 'topocosm'.[54]

The figure of a topocosm comes into sharp relief in the poem's description of Scamander's defeat. When Hephaestus descends on the river, his fire consumes the entire ecosystem it supports:

> καίοντο πτελέαι τε καὶ ἰτέαι ἠδὲ μυρῖκαι,
> καίετο δὲ λωτός τε ἰδὲ θρύον ἠδὲ κύπειρον,
> τὰ περὶ καλὰ ῥέεθρα ἅλις ποταμοῖο πεφύκει·
> τείροντ' ἐγχέλυές τε καὶ ἰχθύες οἳ κατὰ δίνας,
> οἳ κατὰ καλὰ ῥέεθρα κυβίστων ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
> πνοιῇ τειρόμενοι πολυμήτιος Ἡφαίστοιο.
>
> (*Il.* 21.350-55)

> The elms burned, and the willows and the tamarisks.
> The clover burned, and the rushes, and the galingale,
> all the plants that grew abundantly beside the streams of the river;
> the eels were suffering, and the fish in the eddies,
> who leapt to and fro through the lovely streams
> afflicted by the blast of Hephaestus, well-furnished with resources.

51. See also, e.g., *Il.* 5.541-49 (Crethon and Orsilochus, descendents of the Alpheius); 16.173 (Menesthius, son of the Spercheius). See further Currie (2002), 32 nn.87 and 88.

52. See Apollod. 3.12.1-6, with Larson (2001), 194f., and Fenno (2005), 482-84.

53. Most rivers presumably would have had this local association although Achelous could be seen as the origin of all freshwater: see D'Alessio (2004). The belief in an underground fluvial network also allowed rivers to connect otherwise distant communities (such as mother cities and colonies): see Cole (2004), 28f.

54. Segal (1963), 26, citing Gaster (1950), 4f. The symbiosis in question should be understood more precisely than in the claims that the archaic Greek feels a continuity with the natural world around him (e.g., Parry [1957], 4, coming in a long line of Romantic readings of early Greek poetry).

Here, the destruction of life at the river's banks anticipates the city's fiery destruction, but it also begins to enact it. The scene gives us a vision of the city that is not limited to the wall but extends into the landscape around those walls and encompasses all the life nourished by the river and nourishing to the people of the city: the elms, the willows, and the tamarisks; the clover, the rushes, and the galingale; the fishes and eels.[55] The scene also subtly anticipates another glimpse of the lost topocosm organized around Scamander, in Book 22. Hector, dream-like, is running for his life around the walls of Troy with Achilles on his heels. They pass the springs of Scamander, one hot, the other cold, where the wives and daughters of the Trojans used to do the washing, before in the time of peace, before the sons of the Achaeans came (τὸ πρὶν ἐπ' εἰρήνης, πρὶν ἐλθεῖν υἷας Ἀχαιῶν, 22.156). The glimpse of the poem's domestic prehistory here strengthens the sense that Scamander was woven into the fabric of Trojan life at the very moment it marks the rending of that fabric.[56]

Scamander's bonds with the Trojans, kourotrophic and topocosmic, motivate his intervention. Indeed, he is the only Trojan ally who steps in to ward off destruction from the Trojans fleeing Achilles' murderous rage in Books 20 and 21.[57] The nature of these bonds, I suggest, also shapes how Scamander's agency is exercised. It is interesting to compare him in this respect to Apollo, who is a more distant and detached defender of the city, seemingly indifferent here to the slaughter of the Trojans. Scamander himself rebukes Apollo for his indifference:

> ὦ πόποι, ἀργυρότοξε, Διὸς τέκος, οὐ σύ γε βουλὰς
> εἰρύσαο Κρονίωνος, ὅ τοι μάλα πόλλ' ἐπέτελλε
> Τρωσὶ παρεστάμεναι καὶ ἀμύνειν, εἰς ὅ κεν ἔλθῃ
> δείελος ὀψὲ δύων, σκιάσῃ δ' ἐρίβωλον ἄρουραν.
>
> (*Il.* 21.229-32)

> Shame, lord of the silver bow, son of Zeus; you have not guarded
> the counsels of Zeus, who strongly commanded you

55. This passage points to the limits of the claim that Homer invokes things from the natural world 'in connexion with their usefulness for man' (Forster [1936], 102; see also Ruskin [1963], 82). On these limits, see further Payne (2014).

56. Bonnafé (1998) notes the shift into the present tense and observes 'la description de lieu s'inscrit donc dans un temps étranger au récit et qui contraste fortement avec lui' (13). References to the priests of Scamander elsewhere in the poem also summon up this time: see 5.76-83, 21.130-32.

57. Slatkin (1991), 88, observes that the capacity to 'ward off destruction' (λοιγὸν ἀμύνειν, a phrase used almost exclusively of the Achaeans) *successfully* within the framework of the *Iliad* is limited to Apollo (esp. in the first book, as agent of plague, and then at 21.539) and Achilles; it is also accorded to Zeus and, importantly for Slatkin's argument, Thetis (*Il.* 1.398). But note that it is not entirely clear how unsuccessful Scamander is; and, in any event, the fact that the phrase is used of him twice in Book 21 (21.138, 250) means his actions should be considered in relationship to the broader dynamic of care and protection in the poem.

> to stand beside the Trojans and defend them, until the setting sun
> finally goes down and shadows the rich plowland.

Scamander's recollection of Zeus's counsels is not entirely accurate. For, as we saw earlier, what concerned Zeus was the prospect of the Danaans sacking Troy 'beyond fate' (ὑπέρμορον). Yet in seeking to avert this outcome, he does not directly command the gods to do anything but rather invites each to pursue his or her own intentions. In Books 20 and 21, Apollo seems uninterested in standing beside the Trojans and defending them, even less in saving Trojans for the sake of saving Trojans. He walks away from single combat in the theomachy on the grounds that mortal lives are too insignificant, too ephemeral to fight over (21.462-67). Leaving his fellow Olympians to quarrel, he turns his attention to Troy in order to make sure the walls hold until their fated time. Apollo is goal-oriented: he knows when it will be time for Achilles to die, for Troy to fall; he knows the arrow that will find its way to the precise point of vulnerability on the hero's body. When he finally does intervene in order to fend off destruction from the Trojans as Achilles bears down on the city walls (21.539f.), he does so by coolly tricking Achilles, distracting him from the gates so that what remains of the army can make its way to safety and Hector can finally meet his destiny. Apollo knows exactly what he is doing. He does not get carried away.

By contrast, once it has taken form and entered the narrative, Scamander's agency is a force that, unchecked, threatens to derail the plot. I argued earlier that in the river's channeling of himself against Achilles, we see not so much the anthropomorphization of a non-human, 'natural' force or, conversely, the appearance of a chaos demon, but rather a shift of intensities in the river, triggered by an encounter at once physical and social, linguistic and enacted, that becomes a fluid dynamics of anger. But as we have seen over the past few pages, Scamander's anger must itself be viewed within a broader interpretive framework, one that acknowledges the river's kourotrophic relationship to the Trojans. Insofar as Achilles' actions—and his words—mock Scamander's power to protect the Trojans and their allies, they are an affront to his honor. Yet the slaughter must also be understood as distressing an agent who cares for those being harmed. These two aspects of Scamander's anger are inseparable, as they are indeed in the motivation for Achilles' rampage: when Hector kills Patroclus, he mocks Achilles' power to protect the one he loves the most, the one he loves *like a child*,[58] at the same time as he imposes a devastating loss on Achilles. In his unleashing of chaotic power, then, Scamander is mirroring (and thereby countering) not only Achilles' bloodlust but also rage born out of loss and the failure to protect. Moreover, he heads off the threat that Achilles poses to the plot (the premature sack of Troy)

58. On the spike in similes that assimilate Achilles to a parent in the closing books of the *Iliad*, see Pratt (2007), 37f., and on the complexities of the parental relationship between Achilles and Patroclus (who also 'mothers' Achilles), see Mills (1990). See also Pratt (2007), 31f., on the will-to-protect as part of the definition of a parent in the poem.

only through the release of energies that are themselves unsubordinated to the master future (the desire to ward off harm from Troy and bury Achilles). If the fated story of Troy on a linear model unfolds as a series of events to be hit, like an archer's targets, the local, single-minded desires that aim to cut their own course through history might be thought of as torrents, rivers flooding their beds.

If these flood-like desires, as I have just suggested, are allied closely in the *Iliad* with a will-to-protect and anger at its failure, Scamander seems to enact on a grand scale, at least temporarily, a threat posed at other points in the epic by gods fiercely protective of their mortal children. In Book 16, Zeus considers spiriting his son Sarpedon from the battlefield and certain death at the hands of Patroclus. He is opposed and ultimately swayed by Hera, who points to the chaos his decision would create insofar as it would embolden other gods to carry their own sons from battle (16.443-49; cf. 5.662). Ares, upon hearing of his son Ascalaphus' death, is ready to risk being struck down by Zeus's thunderbolt in order to wreak a father's vengeance before Athena, 'fearing for the sake of all the gods' (πᾶσι περιδείσασα θεοῖσιν, 15.123), intervenes and persuades him to give up his anger (*cholos*). In the final book, Hecuba, who is left behind in Troy to nurse her desire to sink her teeth into Achilles' liver (an echo of Achilles' own, just-repressed desire to eat Hector raw) when Priam goes to retrieve the corpse of Hector in the epic's closing scene of reconciliation, gives us a last troubling glimpse at the savagery of parental grief and the boundary-crossing, counter-hegemonic narratives that it drives towards.[59]

By locating Scamander's anger within this broader framework, we begin to see it as deeply embedded in the *Iliad*'s complex logic of love and violence, care and power. The river that emerges as both an avenger and a protector in Book 21 spectacularly enacts the effects of force untrammeled within a structural vacuum of hegemonic power (the suspension of the 'plan of Zeus'), within a space where the 'natural disaster' is no longer contained by the simile. Yet force here is not purely natural nor objectifying. It participates in a network of social and affective relationships that cross the human and non-human worlds.

Scamander is, then, far more integrated into the epic than has previously been recognized. But he is also unique in the *Iliad*. That he acts *qua* river lays bare a fluid dynamics of care—roiled by love, anger, grief, and a will-to-protect—whose disruptive force magnifies Achilles' own rage, confirming but also trumping its cosmic ambitions. Moreover, the fact that Scamander takes responsibility not just for one warrior but for an entire population precipitates another shift of perspective, such that in these books it seems as if the fate of the entire city, rather than a single hero, hangs in the balance. As we saw earlier, the assault of Hephaestus compels Scamander to swear an oath that he will sit by and 'not ward off the evil day from the Trojans' (μή ποτ' ἐπὶ Τρώεσσιν ἀλεξήσειν κακὸν ἦμαρ, 21.374).

59. See *Il.* 24.200-27, with Holmes (2007), 77-80. See also Slatkin (1993), esp. 85-105, on the 'wrath of Thetis' as a latent but potent counterhegemonic force in the poem.

Finally, while I have argued that we can better understand Scamander by seeing him in relation to parental figures, mortal and immortal, in the *Iliad*, the particular, 'topocosmic' nature of the river as giver of care is also worth bearing in mind. The river becomes intimate with the lives of the community by sustaining them through nurture, *trophē*. The relationship is, on the one hand, formal and social, recognized through the Trojans' sacrifices to Scamander and Scamander's dramatic if doomed attempts to defend their lives at a moment of crisis. On the other hand, the river supports life at a level where the boundaries between person and animal are collapsed. In the economy of consumption at work in its waters, flesh is flesh: life carries on indifferent to the corpse, fish eating the human beings who eat fish. In the moment that Scamander rears up as a tumult of people and river-dwelling creatures and chariots, we are seeing not just a pollution created by Achilles but something of the fluid mixing proper to the river itself and perhaps felt as integral to its powers of fertility and life. The kourotrophic and destructive Scamander of Book 21 may capture something of water as both life-giving and life-erasing.

We have seen that the river's trophic function makes him responsive to the suffering of the Trojans as witness and avenger.[60] Echoes of Scamander's role are perceptible in later Greek literature in tragic 'topocosmic' appeals to rivers and springs (and also forests and meadows) for emotional recognition by characters who feel abandoned by humans and gods alike.[61] In the *Antigone*, for example, Antigone calls to the springs of Dirce and the grove of Thebes to bear witness to how she goes to her death 'unwept' by friends.[62] Philoctetes, finally leaving Lemnos, bids farewell to the world that has sustained him ('come now, I will call upon the land as I leave' [φέρε νῦν στείχων χώραν καλέσω], 1452): the nymphs of the meadows and the Hermaean mount and the island's springs.[63] And Ajax, preparing to commit suicide, addresses not just the light and the soil of his native land but the springs and rivers and plains of Troy as 'my nurture' (ὦ τροφῆς ἐμοί):

> ὦ φέγγος, ὦ γῆς ἱερὸν οἰκείας πέδον
> Σαλαμῖνος, ὦ πατρῷον ἑστίας βάθρον,
> κλειναί τ' Ἀθῆναι, καὶ τὸ σύντροφον γένος.
> κρῆναί τε ποταμοί θ' οἵδε, καὶ τὰ Τρωικὰ
> πεδία προσαυδῶ, χαίρετ', ὦ τροφῆς ἐμοί·
> τοῦθ' ὑμὶν Αἴας τοὔπος ὕστατον θροεῖ,

60. I borrow the hendiadys 'witness and avenger' from Mark Payne's reading of Schiller: see Payne (2014).

61. See further Boehm (1998), 57-60, on the association of characters with particular landscapes in tragedy.

62. S. *Ant*. 844-49. See also E. *Ba*. 5, where Dionysus greets the two rivers of Thebes (Dirce and Ismenus) as part of his homecoming; E. *Hipp*. 555-57, for the identification of Thebes via Dirce.

63. S. *Ph.* 1452-63. These lines are the culmination of Philoctetes' apostrophes to aspects of the Lemnian environment over the course of the play: see also 936-40, 1146-61, with Nooter (2012), 124-46.

τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἐν Ἅιδου τοῖς κάτω μυθήσομαι.

(S. *Aj*. 859-65)

O light, o sacred soil of my native land
Salamis, o ancestral foundation of my hearth,
and famous Athens, and kindred race,
and these springs and rivers, and the Trojan plains,
I address: farewell, you who have nourished me.
This is the last word that Ajax speaks to you:
I will speak the rest to those below in Hades.

The expectation of care from the topocosm looks forward to one of the most famous moments in the poetics of the natural world in Greek literature, Daphnis' farewell in Theocritus' first *Idyll*, addressed in part to the spring of Arethusa and the rivers.

In these later examples, rivers and springs and trees are only witnesses, not agents. Scamander does act in the *Iliad*, but his attempts to save the Trojans are, in the end, futile. Just at the moment when the story is about to careen off into an alternate future where Achilles dies like a swineherd and the city survives, Hephaestus intervenes and beats back the river, fire trumping water. Scamander sinks back into the landscape and a narrative dormancy whose boundary is the projected distant future of the Achaean wall's destruction. Achilles once again narrows his desire to kill, focusing first on Agenor, then on Apollo playing decoy, and at long last on Hector. The fall of the city is now imminent. What must happen will happen. Nevertheless, by tarrying with Scamander in the gap that opens up in Books 20 and 21, we begin to get a better sense of the force that wells up there and what is lost with its defeat. Not just 'force of nature' nor chaos demon nor adversary for the poem's exceptional hero, Scamander is also an agent of care and anger who coheres at the extreme edge of mortal brutality and misery as a force of resistance to the destruction of Trojan lives and a violence without limit. If such a role anticipates what is accomplished by the gods in Book 24 as a form of therapeutic closure to the epic, it also exhausts the river's power to protect those whom he once nurtured. The way is now paved for Troy's transition out of epic into tragedy.[64]

Princeton University
bholmes@princeton.edu

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