

Doom and Sorrow: Achilles' physical expression of mourning in the *Iliad*

Achilleus learns of Patroklos' death; *Il.* 18.15-35¹

Ἦος ὁ ταῦθ' ὤρμαινε κατὰ φρένα καὶ κατὰ θυμόν, 15
τόφρα οἱ ἐγγύθεν ἦλθεν ἀγαοῦ Νέστορος υἱὸς
δάκρυα θερμὰ χέων, φάτο δ' ἀγγελίην ἀλεγεινὴν·
ὦ μοι Πηλέος υἱὲ δαΐφρονος ἧ μάλα λυγρῆς
πέυσεαι ἀγγελίης, ἧ μὴ ὦφελλε γενέσθαι.
κεῖται Πάτροκλος, νέκυος δὲ δὴ ἀμφιμάχονται 20
γυμνοῦ· ἀτὰρ τά γε τεύχε' ἔχει κορυθαίολος Ἔκτωρ·
ὥς φάτο, τὸν δ' ἄχεος νεφέλη ἐκάλυψε μέλαινα·
ἀμφοτέρησι δὲ χερσὶν ἔλων κόνιν αἰθαλοεσσαν
χεύατο κακ' κεφαλῆς, χαρίεν δ' ἦσχυνε πρόσωπον·
νεκταρέω δὲ χιτῶνι μέλαιν' ἀμφίζανε τέφρη. 25
αὐτὸς δ' ἐν κονίησι μέγας μεγαλωστί ταυσθεῖς
κεῖτο, φίλησι δὲ χερσὶ κόμην ἦσχυνε δαΐζων.
δμῶαί δ' ἄς Ἀχιλεὺς λήισσατο Πάτροκλός τε
θυμόν ἀκηχέμεναι μεγάλ' ἴαχον, ἐκ δὲ θύραζε
ἔδραμον ἀμφ' Ἀχιλῆα δαΐφρονα, χερσὶ δὲ πᾶσαι 30
στήθεα πεπλήγοντο, λύθεν δ' ὑπὸ γυῖα ἐκάστης.
Ἀντίλοχος δ' ἐτέρωθεν ὀδύρετο δάκρυα λείβων
χεῖρας ἔχων Ἀχιλῆος· ὃ δ' ἔστενε κυδάλιμον κῆρ·
δεῖδιδε γὰρ μὴ λαιμὸν ἀπαμήσειε σιδήρῳ.
σμερδαλέον δ' ὤμωξεν· 35

While he pondered thus in mind and heart, there came up to him the son of lordly Nestor, shedding hot tears, and spoke the grievous tidings: 'Alas, son of battled-minded Peleos, woeful is the tidings you must hear, such as I would wish had never been. Low lies Patroklos, and around his corpse they are fighting – his naked corpse – but his armour Hektor of the flashing helmet holds.'

So he spoke, and a black cloud of grief enfolded Achilles, and with both hands he took the dark dust and poured it over his head and defiled his fair face, and on his fragrant tunic the black ashes fell. And he himself in the dust lay outstretched, mighty in his mightiness, and with his own hand he tore and marred his hair. And the handmaidens whom Achilles and Patroklos had taken as booty shrieked aloud in anguish of heart, and ran out from inside around battle-minded Achilles, and all beat their breasts with their hands, and the knees of each one were loosed beneath her. And facing them Antilochos wailed and shed tears, holding the hands of Achilles, who groaned in his noble heart; for he feared that he might cut his throat with the knife. The terribly did Achilles groan aloud...

Refusal to eat; *Il.* 19.205-214

ἦ τ' ἄν ἔγωγε 205
νῦν μὲν ἀνώγοιμι πολεμίζειν υἱᾶς Ἀχαιῶν
νήστιας ἀκμήνους, ἅμα δ' ἠελίῳ καταδύντι

¹ all *Iliad* translations are. A.T. Murray, revised by W.F. Wyatt (Loeb, 1999)

τεύξεσθαι μέγα δόρπον, ἐπὴν τεισαίμεθα λώβην.
πρὶν δ' οὐ πως ἂν ἔμοιγε φίλον κατὰ λαιμὸν ἰεῖν
οὐ πόσις οὐδὲ βρῶσις ἑταίρου τεθνηῶτος 210
ὅς μοι ἐνὶ κλισίῃ δεδαίγμενος ὄξει χαλκῷ
κεῖται ἀνὰ πρόθυρον τετραμμένος, ἀμφὶ δ' ἑταῖροι
μύρονται· τό μοι οὐ τι μετὰ φρεσὶ ταῦτα μέμηλεν,
ἀλλὰ φόνος τε καὶ αἷμα καὶ ἀργαλέος στόνος ἀνδρῶν.

Surely for my own part I would even now command the sons of the Achaeans to do battle fasting and unfed, and at the setting of the sun to make ready a great meal, when we have avenged the outrage. Until then, down my throat, at least, neither drink nor food with pass, since my comrade is dead, who in my hut lies mangled by the sharp sword, his feet turned toward the door, while round about him our comrades mourn; so it is not at all these things that concern my mind, but slaying, and blood, and the grievous groans of men.

Ritualised Mourning; *Il.* 23.1-23.

ὥς οἱ μὲν στενάχοντο κατὰ πτόλιν· αὐτὰρ Ἀχαιοὶ
ἐπεὶ δὴ νῆάς τε καὶ Ἑλλήσποντον ἴκοντο,
οἱ μὲν ἄρ' ἐσκίδναντο ἐὴν ἐπὶ νῆα ἕκαστος,
Μυρμιδόνας δ' οὐκ εἶα ἀποσκίδνασθαι Ἀχιλλεύς,
ἀλλ' ὅ γε οἷς ἑτάροισι φιλοπτολέμοισι μετηύδα· 5
'Μυρμιδόνες ταχύπωλοι ἐμοὶ ἐρήρηες ἑταῖροι
μὴ δὴ πω ὑπ' ὄχεσφι λυώμεθα μώνυχας ἵππους,
ἀλλ' αὐτοῖς ἵπποισι καὶ ἄρμασιν ἄσσον ἰόντες
Πάτροκλον κλαίωμεν· ὁ γὰρ γέρας ἐστὶ θανόντων.
αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κ' ὀλοοῖο τεταρπώμεσθα γόοιο, 10
ἵππους λυσάμενοι δορπήσομεν ἐνθάδε πάντες.'
ὥς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ὤμωξαν ἀολλέες, ἦρχε δ' Ἀχιλλεύς.
οἱ δὲ τρὶς περὶ νεκρὸν εὐτριχῆς ἤλασαν ἵππους
μυρόμενοι· μετὰ δέ σφι Θέτις γόου ἴμερον ὤρσε.
δεύοντο ψάμαθοι, δεύοντο δὲ τεύχεα φωτῶν 15
δάκρυσι· τοῖον γὰρ πόθειον μῆστωρα φόβοιο.
τοῖσι δὲ Πηλείδης ἀδινού ἐξῆρχε γόοιο
χεῖρας ἐπ' ἀνδροφόνους θέμενος στήθεσσι ἑταίρου·
χαῖρέ μοι ὦ Πάτροκλε καὶ εἰν Αἶδαο δόμοισι·
πάντα γὰρ ἤδη τοι τελέω τὰ πάροιθεν ὑπέστην 20
'Ἐκτορα δεῦρ' ἐρύσας δώσειν κυσὶν ὦμα δάσασθαι,
δώδεκα δὲ προπάροιθε πυρῆς ἀποδειροτομήσειν
Τρώων ἀγλαὰ τέκνα σέθεν κταμένοιο χολωθεῖς.

Thus they made lamentation throughout the city; but the Achaeans, when they came to the ships and the Hellespont, scattered each to his own ship; but the Myrmidons Achilleus did not allow to scatter, but spoke among his war-loving comrades, saying 'Myrmidons of fleet steeds, my trusty comrades, let us not yet loose our single-hoofed horses from their chariots, but with horses and chariots let us draw near and mourn

Patroklos; for that is the privilege of the dead. Then when we have taken our fill of dire lamenting, we will unyoke our horses and take our meal here all together.'

So he spoke, and they raised the voice of wailing all with one accord, and Achilles was the leader. Then thrice about the corpse they drove their fair-manned steeds, mourning; and among them Thetis roused desire of lamentation. Wetted were the sands and wetted the armour of the warriors with their tears; so mighty a deviser of rout was he for whom they mourned. And among them the son of Peleus was leader in the vehement lamentation, laying his may-slaying hands on the breast of his comrade: 'Hail, Patroklos, even in the house of Hades, for now I am bringing to fulfilment all that I promised you before: that I would drag Hektor here and give him raw to dogs to devour, and of twelve glorious sons of the Trojans would I cut the throats before your pyre in my wrath at your slaying.'

Refusing to Wash; *Il.* 23.43-47

‘οὐ μὰ Ζῆν’, ὅς τις τε θεῶν ὑπατος καὶ ἄριστος,
οὐ θέμις ἐστὶ λοετρὰ καρήατος ἄσσον ἰκέσθαι
πρὶν γ’ ἐνὶ Πάτροκλον θέμεναι πυρὶ σῆμά τε χεῦναι 45
κείρασθαί τε κόμην, ἐπεὶ οὐ μ’ ἔτι δεύτερον ὦδε
ἴξετ’ ἄχος κραδίην ὄφρα ζωοῖσι μετείω.’

‘No, by Zeus, who is highest and best of gods, it cannot be that water should come near my head until I have laid Patroklos on the fire and heaped him a mound and have cut my hair, since never more will a second grief so reach my heart, while yet I am among the living.’

Patroklos appears to Achilles; *Il.* 23.69-92

‘εὐδεις, αὐτὰρ ἐμεῖο λελασμένος ἔπλευ Ἀχιλλεῦ.
οὐ μὲν μευ ζῶοντος ἀκήδεις, ἀλλὰ θανόντος· 70
θάπτέ με ὅττι τάχιστα πύλας Αἴδαο περήσω.
τῆλέ με εἴργουσι ψυχὰι εἶδωλα καμόντων,
οὐδέ μέ πω μίσγεσθαι ὑπὲρ ποταμοῖο ἐῶσιν,
ἀλλ’ αὐτως ἀλάλημαι ἀν’ εὐρυπυλῆς Αἴδος δῶ.
καί μοι δὸς τὴν χεῖρ’ ὀλοφύρομαι, οὐ γὰρ ἔτ’ αὐτίς 75
νίσομαι ἐξ Αἴδαο, ἐπήν με πυρὸς λελάχητε.
οὐ μὲν γὰρ ζωοί γε φίλων ἀπάνευθεν ἐταίρων
βουλάς ἐζόμενοι βουλεύσομεν, ἀλλ’ ἐμὲ μὲν κῆρ
ἀμφέχανε στυγερή, ἣ περ λάχε γιγνόμενόν περ·
καὶ δὲ σοὶ αὐτῷ μοῖρα, θεοῖς ἐπιείκελ’ Ἀχιλλεῦ, 80
τείχει ὑπο Τρώων εὐηφενέων ἀπολέσθαι.
ἄλλο δέ τοι ἔρέω καὶ ἐφήσομαι αἴ κε πίθηαι·
μὴ ἐμὰ σῶν ἀπάνευθε τιθήμεναι ὅστέ’ Ἀχιλλεῦ,
ἀλλ’ ὁμοῦ ὡς ἐτράφημεν ἐν ὑμετέροισι δόμοισιν,

εὔτε με τυτθὸν εἶοντα Μειοίτιος ἔξ Ὀπόεντος 85
ἤγαγεν ὑμέτερόνδ' ἀνδροκτασίης ὑπο λυγρῆς,
ἤματι τῷ ὅτε παῖδα κατέκτανον Ἀμφιδάμαντος
νήπιος οὐκ ἐθέλων ἀμφ' ἀστραγάλοισι χολωθεῖς·
ἔνθα με δεξάμενος ἐν δώμασιν ἰππότα Πηλεὺς
ἔτραφέ τ' ἐνδυκέως καὶ σὸν θεράποντ' ὀνόμηεν· 90
ὥς δὲ καὶ ὅστέα νῶϊν ὀμῆ σορὸς ἀμφικαλύπτοι
χρῦσεος ἀμφιφορέυς, τὸν τοι πόρε πότνια μήτηρ.'

'You sleep, and have proved forgetful of me, Achilles. Not while I lived were you unmindful of me, but now that I am dead! Bury me with all speed, let me pass inside the gates of Hades. Far do the spirits keep me away, the phantoms of men that have done with toils, and they do not yet allow me to mingle with them beyond the river, but vainly I wander through the wide-gated house of Hades. And give me your hand, I beg you, for never more will I return out of Hades, when once you have given me my share of fire. Never more in life will we sit apart from our dear comrades and take counsel together, but loathsome fate has gaped around me, the fate that was appointed me even from my birth. And for you yourself also, godlike Achilles, it is fated to die beneath the wall of the wealthy Trojans. And another thing I will tell you, and charge you, if you will listen. Lay not my bones apart from yours, Achilles, but let them lie together, just as we were reared in your house when Menoetios brought me, still a little lad, from Opoeis to your country because of grievous man-slaying on the day I slew Amphidamos' son – fool that I was, but I willed it not – angered over dice. Then the horseman Peleos received me in his house and reared me with kindly care and named me your attendant; so too let one coffer enfold our bones, a golden coffer with two handles, the one your queenly mother gave you.'

Achilleus mourns and attempts to defile Hektor's body; *Il.* 24.1-24

λύτο δ' ἀγών, λαοὶ δὲ θεῶς ἐπὶ νῆας ἕκαστοι
ἔσκιδναντ' ἰέναι. τοὶ μὲν δόρποιο μέδοντο
ὑπνοῦ τε γλυκεροῦ ταρπήμεναι· αὐτὰρ Ἀχιλλεὺς
κλαῖε φίλου ἐτάρου μεμνημένος, οὐδέ μιν ὑπνος 5
ἦρει πανδαμάτωρ, ἀλλ' ἐστρέφετ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα
Πατρόκλου ποθέων ἀνδροτῆτά τε καὶ μένος ἠΰ,
ἦδ' ὅποσα τολύπευσε σὺν αὐτῷ καὶ πάθεν ἄλγεα
ἀνδρῶν τε πτολέμους ἄλεγεινά τε κύματα πείρων·
τῶν μιμησκόμενος θαλερὸν κατὰ δάκρυον εἶβεν,
ἄλλοτ' ἐπὶ πλευρᾷ κατακείμενος, ἄλλοτε δ' αὔτε 10
ὑπτιος, ἄλλοτε δὲ πρηνῆς· τοτὲ δ' ὀρθὸς ἀναστὰς
δινεύεσκ' ἀλύων παρὰ θῖν' ἄλός· οὐδέ μιν ἠὼς
φαινομένη λήθεσκεν ὑπεῖρ ἄλλα τ' ἠίονας τε.
ἀλλ' ὅ γ' ἐπεὶ ζεύξειεν ὑφ' ἄρμασιν ὠκέας ἵππους,
Ἔκτορα δ' ἔλκεσθαι δησάσκετο δίφρου ὀπισθεν, 15

τρὶς δ' ἔρυσσας περὶ σῆμα Μενοιτιάδαο θανόντος
αὔτις ἐνὶ κλισίῃ παυέσκετο, τὸν δέ τ' ἔασκεν
ἐν κόνι ἐκτανύσας προπρηνέα· τοῖο δ' Ἀπόλλων
πάσαν ἀεικείην ἄπεχε χροὶ φῶτ' ἑλεαίρων
καὶ τεθνηότα περ· περὶ δ' αἰγίδι πάντα κάλυπτε 20
χρυσείῃ, ἵνα μή μιν ἀποδρύφοι ἔλκυστάζων.

Then was the assembly broken up, and the men scattered, each man to his own ship. The rest took thought of a meal and sweet sleep, to take their fill; but Achilles wept, ever remembering his dear comrade, nor did sleep, that subdues all, lay hold of him, but he turned ever this way and that, yearning for the manhood and valiant might of Patroklos, thinking on all he had done with him and all the woes he had borne, passing through wars of men and the grievous waves. Thinking on these things he would shed large tears, laying now on his side, now on his back, and now on his face; and then again he would rise to his feet and roam distraught along the shore of the sea. Nor would he fail to see the Dawn as she shone over the sea and the beaches. But he would yoke his swift horses to the chariot, and bind Hektor behind the chariot and drag him; and when he had hauled him thrice about the mound of the dead son of Menoetios, he would rest again in his hut, but would leave Hektor outstretched on his face in the dust. But Apollo kept all defacement from his flesh, pitying the warrior even in death, and with the golden aegis he covered him wholly so that Achilles might not tear his body as he dragged him.

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