

Paired, Clustered, and Recurrent Similes
in Homer's *Iliad*

by

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ABSTRACT

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This paper explores relationships among similes in Homer's *Iliad*. The first five points of the paper examine some of the possible relationships and associations that occur among similes that are paired or clustered in close proximity to each other in the poem; the sixth point discusses the relationship between two almost identical similes that occur in completely different books of the *Iliad*. The focus of the paper is to demonstrate that the paired, clustered, and recurrent similes treated here contain not only a point of comparison to the narrative itself but also a structural connection that links the similes together.

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Paired, Clustered, and Recurrent Similes in Homer's *Iliad*

In *Traces of the Rhapsode: An Essay on the Use of Recurrent Similes in the Iliad*, J. T. Sheppard argues that the similes of the *Iliad* are more than mere decoration, but that they follow a consistent pattern and structure throughout the poem:

“[Homer’s] similes are rarely isolated and detachable decorations, relevant only to their immediate context. More often they are so related to each other, and so arranged, like the incidents, in formal patterns, that they become an important element in the organic structure of the poem.”¹

Sheppard presents a convincing case that the similes follow a kind of macro-structure (my term), which highlights the larger episodes and plot of the *Iliad*. As Sheppard suggests, some similes do indeed seem to bear a relation to each other even across largely separated sections of the poem. This device is particularly evident, for example, in the similes of books 8 and 16 that will be treated in detail later in this paper.² At the same time, however, there also appears to be a micro-level relationship among similes, in which the poet uses similes in closely positioned pairs or clusters *as well as* across large sections of the poem. Edwards also points out that ancient scholars understood there to be “other parallels” that go beyond the primary point of comparison to the narrative adding to the effect of Homer’s similes.³

This paper explores these uses of the Homeric simile in the *Iliad*. The first five points of the outline (below) examine some of the possible relationships and

associations that occur among closely positioned pairs and clusters of similes; the last section of the paper examines the relationship between two widely separated similes (separated by eight books, in fact), including some attention to a few related similes occurring in the intervening books of the poem.

For the purposes of this paper, a pair is defined as two similes (a cluster three or more) that often occur within a few lines of one another, or sometimes occurring across widely separated sections of the poem, each of which bear a relationship to the other(s) as a kind of unit. In other words, such pairs and clusters have a structural connection from simile to simile *in addition to* containing a point of comparison to the narrative individually.

A list of such pairs and clusters occurs in Appendix II of this paper. At present, the list is not an exhaustive one. As I give continued study to Homeric similes in general, more pairs and clusters may be added to the list, while some may be removed. Moreover, I have not as yet developed a refined method of my own for deciding what groupings of similes constitute a related pair or cluster according to the above definition. Admittedly, my selection is somewhat subjective. The main criterion to this point, however, has been simply that the similes have some demonstrable contextual connection or interplay relationship to one another. What is meant by contextual connection and interplay relationship will be seen by the examples discussed later.

Furthermore, it should be stated that not all similes that occur in close proximity to each other in the narrative may be considered a pair or cluster according to the

adopted definition. Also, just because the poet may repeat the same simile or an almost identical one in different sections of the poem does not mean that such multiple occurrences have some kind of structural connection to each other. Indeed, some similes that occur within a few lines of one another or that are repeated across large sections do *not* always appear to have a demonstrable relationship to other similes. For this reason, some similes that occur near each other in the poem are not included in the list in Appendix II. Moreover, it is important to be aware of the potential danger of over-interpreting closely positioned similes, or recurrent similes, forcing some kind of connection between them when in fact no such connection may exist. It is indeed possible to tease out a fallacious connection between similes merely to prove a thesis.

That said, in examining the pairs and clusters in the list, a natural set of categories appears to emerge among some of them. For purposes of organization, these categories are arranged in the following six-point outline:

- I. Contrast and Comparison
- II. Points of Progression in the Narrative
- III. Amplification, Intensification, or Expansion of a Previous Simile⁴
- IV. Shift of View or Change of Distance Perspective
- V. Panoramic Photography
- VI. Pivotal Points in the Narrative⁵

This outline uses terminology that I have developed in an attempt to classify some of the various kinds of relationships and interplays that occur among some (though by no means all) of the pairs and clusters referenced on the list. The pairs and clusters that are noticed in this paper are only a sampling; no attempt is made here to notice every reference on the list. Furthermore, the use of this outline for analyzing

the similes is not intended to imply that all other pairs and clusters on the list would fit into the *same* six-point outline even if all the similes on the list could be shown to have some kind of relationship to each other. That is, some pairs and clusters not analyzed here may require other categories not included in the outline. It is also possible that some pairs and clusters might be interpreted in such a way as to cross over two or more of the points in the outline.

I. Contrast and Comparison

Contrast and comparison occurs when at least two similes are used to highlight some kind of contrast or comparison in the narrative. This phenomenon appears to be the simplest and most straightforward use of pairs. As one example, in book 3 the Achaeans and Trojans advance on each other, with Menelaus leading the Achaeans, and Paris leading the Trojans. At sight of one another, both men have opposite responses, both of which are highlighted by similes drawing special attention to their contrasting reactions. The scene is introduced at *Iliad* 3.21-37:

Τὸν δ' ὥς οὖν ἐνόησεν ἀρηϊφίλος Μενέλαος
ἐρχόμενον προπάραιθεν ὁμίλου μαρκὰ βιβάντα
ὥς τε λέων ἐχάρη μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ σώματι κύρσας,
εὐρών ἢ ἔλαφον κεραὸν ἢ ἀγριὸν αἶγα
25 πεινῶν· μάλα γάρ τε κατεσθίει, εἴ περ ἀν' αὐτὸν
σεύωντα ταχέες τε κύνες θαλεροὶ τ' αἰζηοί·
ὥς ἐχάρη Μενέλαος Ἀλέξανδρον θεοειδέα
ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδὼν· φάτο γάρ τισεσθαι ἀλείτην·
αὐτίκα δ' ἐξ ὀχέων σὺν τεύχεσιν ἄλλο χαμάζε.
30 Τὸν δ' ὥς οὖν ἐνόησεν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδῆς
ἐν προμάχοισι φανέντα, κατεπλήγη φίλον ἦτορ,
ἄψ δ' ἐτάρων εἰς ἔθνος ἐχάζετο κῆρ' ἀλεείνων.
ὥς δ' ὅτε τίς τε δράκοντα ἰδὼν παλινορσος ἀπέστη
οὔρεος ἐν βήσση, ὑπὸ τε τρόμος ἔλλαβε γυῖα,
35 ἄψ δ' ἀνεχώρησεν, ὠχρὸς τέ μιν εἶλε παρειάς,
ὥς αὐτίς καθ' ὁμίλον ἔδυσ Τρώων ἀγερώχων

δείσας Ἀτρέος υἱὸν Ἀλέξανδρος θεοειδής.

But when Menelaus, dear to Ares, caught sight of him as he came out in front of the throng with long strides, then just as a lion is glad when he comes upon a great carcass, having found a horned stag or a wild goat when he is hungry; for greedily he devours it, even though swift dogs and vigorous youths set on him: so was Menelaus glad when his eyes beheld godlike Alexander; for he thought that he had got his revenge on the one who had wronged him. And immediately he leapt in his armor from his chariot to the ground.

But when godlike Alexander caught sight of him as he appeared among the champions, he was panic-stricken at heart, and he drew back into the throng of his comrades, avoiding fate. And just as a man at the sight of a snake in the glades of a mountain starts back, and trembling seizes his limbs beneath him, and he draws back again and pallor lays hold of his cheeks, so did godlike Alexander, seized with fear of Atreus' son, shrink back into the throng of the lordly Trojans.⁶

Here the narrative first describes Menelaus' response at the sight of Alexander.

Menelaus is compared to a hungry lion that is glad to find the carcass of a horned stag or wild goat, which he quickly devours, even though youths and dogs try to turn him away. The poet then says that such was the response of Menelaus when he saw Paris, because he thought he could now have revenge on the one who had stolen his wife. By contrast, when Paris caught sight of Menelaus, he is panic-stricken. His panic is likened to that of a man who, suddenly stumbling upon a snake in a mountain forest, is seized with terror in his limbs and his face is drained of color. Thus Alexander shrank back among the throngs of his soldiers.

Even though the subject matter of these two similes is nothing alike (i.e. lions, stags, wild goats, youths and dogs in one; and snakes, mountain glens, pale cheeks,

and weak limbs in the other), their mere *placement* in the narrative presents a kind of interplay between them. One can image an identical physiological response in both similes, the rush of adrenaline (the fight or flight response) and the pounding heart for both the eager lion and the frightened man. However, the physiology, though identical in both situations, arises from quite opposite expectations of the near future—Menelaus wants to fight; Alexander rushes in flight. Therefore, the poet appears to have carefully chosen his imagery to highlight a *contrasting* situation in the narrative with similes that are on one level almost *comparative* in nature. The result is an interplay between the similes that heightens the excitement of the encounter between the two heroes.

Next, one particularly interesting set of pairs highlights a contrast early in the poem, one pair in book 3, the other in book 4. Each of these two pairs highlights the same contrast between the Achaeans and Trojans (i.e. the noise of the Trojans and the silence of the Achaeans). Moreover, they also carry (at least in part) the same motif in both pairs in the set. The contrast focuses on “clamor” versus “silence” and the part of the motif that is repeated is that of noisy animals compared to the Trojans.

The first pair is at *Iliad* 3.1-14. This book begins with a description of the marshalling of the Trojan troops with the immediate use of a simile calling attention to the clamorous noise the army makes in its advance. Immediately, the Achaean advance is described, but their army is said to move in silence:

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κόσμηθεν ἅμ' ἠγεμόνεσσιν ἕκαστοι,
Τρῶες μὲν κλαγγῇ τ' ἐνοπῇ τ' ἴσαν, ὀριθες ὥς,
ἦύτε περ κλαγγῇ γεράνων πέλει οὐρανόθι πρό,
αἶ τ' ἐπεὶ σὺν χειμῶνα φύγον καὶ ἀθέσφατον ὄμβρον,

- 5 κλαγγῇ ταί γε πέτονται ἐπ' Ὠκεανοῖο βράων,
 ἀνδράσι Πυγμαίοισι φόνον καὶ κῆρα φέρουσαι·
 ἡέριαι δ' ἄρα ταί γε κακὴν ἔριδα προφέρονται·
 οἳ δ' ἄρ' ἴσαν σιγῇ μένεα πνεύοντες Ἀχαιοί,
 ἐν θυμῷ μεμαῶτες ἀλεξέμεν ἀλλήλοισιν.
- 10 Εὗτ' ὄρεος κορυφῆσι Νότος κατέχευεν ὀμίχλην,
 ποιμέσιν οὐ τι φίλην, κλέπτῃ δέ τε νυκτὸς ἀμείνω,
 τόσσον τίς τ' ἐπιλεύσσει ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ λάαν ἴησιν·
 ὧς ἄρα τῶν ὑπὸ ποσσὶ κοίσαλος ὄρνυτ' ἀελλῆς
 ἐρχομένων· μάλα δ' ὤκα διέπρησσαν πεδίοιο.

Now when they were marshaled, the several companies with their leaders, the Trojans came on with a clamor and a cry, like birds, like the clamor of cranes that arises before the face of heaven when they flee from wintry storms and boundless rain, and with clamor fly toward the streams of Ocean, bringing slaughter and death to Pygmy men, and in the early dawn they offer evil strife. But the Achaeans came on in silence, breathing fury, eager at heart to come and assist each other.

Just as when the South Wind pours a mist over the peaks of a mountain, a mist that the shepherd loves not, but that to the robber is better than night, and a man can see only so far as he can throw a stone, just so a dense dust cloud rose up from beneath their feet as they went; and very swiftly did they speed across the plain.

First, the Trojan companies, when they were marshaled, advanced with a clamor that is likened to the noise made by cranes when they flee winter rainstorms and clamorously fly to the streams of Ocean. Immediately following this somewhat mysterious simile, the poet then describes the Achaeans as coming on in silence. Here a simile is introduced, the point of comparison of which is not clear until the simile ends. Interestingly, the point of comparison turns out to be between the dense cloud of dust rising from the feet of the Achaean army likened to a thick mist that pours over the peaks of a mountain. In both similes the picture is that of an airborne

phenomenon (birds in one simile, mist in the other), yet each phenomenon is quite opposite with respect to the *sound* that each produces.

One might think that with mist pouring over a mountain, one might hear the *noise* of wind, and thus perhaps the simile would not be a fitting one to describe the *silence* of the Achaeans. However, the mist itself would not create the noise; the mist itself is silent, and it is mist that is the poet's main focus of attention. In the same way, one might argue that the Achaeans' feet would be noisy as their marching made dust rise from the ground. But again, it is not the dust making the noise, and it is dust on which the poet focuses. For that matter, the sound and silence that these two similes highlight is not the general rustling noise of movement made by one army while the other managed to move along without making a sound. Instead, the comparison concerns *vocal* noise, and with respect to vocal noise, the Trojans are clamorous and the Achaeans are silent.

This concept is further highlighted in the second pair in this set that occurs at *Iliad* 4.422-438:

‘ Ως δ’ ὄτ’ ἐν αἰγιαλῷ πολυχηεὶ κῦμα θαλάσσης
δρυντ’ ἐπασσύτερον Ζεφύρου ὑπο κινήσαντος·
πόντω μὲν τε πρῶτα κορύσσεται, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
425 χέρσῳ ῥηγνύμενον μεγάλα βρέμει, ἀμφὶ δέ τ’ ἄκρας
κυρτὸν ἐὸν κορυφοῦται, ἀποπτύει δ’ ἀλὸς ἄχνην·
ὡς τότε ἐπασσύτεραι Δαναῶν κίνυντο φάλαγγες
νωλεμέως πολεμόνδε· κέλευε δὲ οἴσιν ἕκαστος
ἡγεμόνων· οἳ δ’ ἄλλοι ἀκὴν ἴσαν, οὐδέ κε φαίης
430 τόσσον λαὸν ἐπεσθαι ἔχοντ’ ἐν στήθεσιν αὐδῆν,
σιγῇ δειδιότες σημάντορας· ἀμφὶ δὲ πᾶσι
τεύχεα ποικίλ’ ἔλαμπε, τὰ εἰμένοι ἐστιχόωντο.
Τρῶες δ’, ὡς τ’ οἶες πολυπάμονος ἀνδρὸς ἐν αὐλῇ
μυρίαὶ ἐστήκασιν ἀμελγόμεναι γάλα λευκόν,
435 ἀζηχῆς μεμακῦϊαι ἀκούουσαι ὄπα ἀρνῶν,

ὡς Τρώων ἀλαλητὸς ἀνὰ στρατὸν εὐρὺν δρώρει·
οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἦεν ὁμὸς θρόος οὐδ' ἴα γῆρυς,
ἀλλὰ γλῶσσ' ἐμέμικτο, πολὺκλητοὶ δ' ἔσαν ἄνδρες.

As when on a sounding beach the swell of the sea beats, wave after wave, before the driving of the West Wind; out on the deep first it is gathered in a crest, but then it breaks on the land and thunders aloud, and around the headlands it swells and rears its head, and spews out the salt brine; so on that day did the battalions of the Danaans move, rank after rank, without ceasing into battle; and each leader gave orders to his own men, and the rest marched on in silence; you would have said that they who followed in such multitudes had no voice in their breasts, all silent as they were through fear of their commanders; and on every man flashed the inlaid armor in which they went clad. But for the Trojans, just as ewes past counting stand in the fold of a man of much substance to be milked of their white milk, and bleat without ceasing as they hear the voices of their lambs: so arose the clamor of the Trojans through the wide army; for they had not all like speech or one language, but their tongues were mixed, and they were men summoned from many lands.

Here again, the vocal noise made by each army is compared, and this comparison is again highlighted by two similes. In this example, however, the order of mentioning the two armies is reversed; the Achaeans are first and the Trojans second. The Achaeans are likened to the sea that is driven by the West Wind, and it pounds the land wave after wave with a loud thunderous noise. At first glance, the simile may seem to accentuate a noisy Achaean army. However, when the poet again resumes the narrative, he immediately says that “each leader gave orders to his own men, and the rest marched on in *silence*...they who followed...had *no voice* in their breasts, all *silent* as they were...” (Il. 429-431). Perhaps a bit to the audience’s surprise, the narrative itself is what brings the significance of this wave simile into

sharper focus. At first it seems like the point of comparison in the wave simile, with its waves beating on the shore, may be that of sound as it “breaks on the land and thunders aloud.” However, when the narrative resumes, the comparison appears to be more to *movement* than to noise as the army advances (in silence) “wave after wave.”

Immediately, the poet calls attention to the clamor of the Trojans (l. 433). This clamor arises from the fact that the Trojan army is made up of people of varying speech, which fact evokes a simile likening this clamor to numberless ewes standing in a fold waiting to be milked. These ewes bleat without ceasing as they hear the voices of the lambs. So, says the poet, did the Trojans give out a clamor that rose throughout the vast army. Thus once again the clamoring Trojans are compared to a large group of noisy animals.

Therefore, these examples of the use of simile pairs in comparison and contrast situations in the narrative indicate that the poet uses similes not merely as isolated decorations randomly inserted here and there. Instead, at least some similes appear to be strategically placed in the narrative in relation to each other for the rhetorical effect of highlighting a comparison or contrast.⁷

II. Points of Progression in the Narrative

By points of progression in the narrative it is meant that certain pairs or clusters of similes seem to highlight a forward motion in the narrative or hold the narrative in suspense until a pivotal event in the story line occurs. One example of this point can be seen in a cluster of three similes at *Iliad* 11.291-309:

ὣς εἰπὼν ὄτρυνε μένος καὶ θυμὸν ἑκάστου.
ὥς δ' οὐδ' ὅτε τις θηρητῆρ κύνας ἀργιόδονας

σεύη ἐπ' ἀγροτέρῳ συῖ καπρίῳ ἡὲ λέοντι,
 ὧς ἐπ' Ἀχαιοῖσιν σεῦε Τρῶας μεγαθύμους
 295 Ἔκτωρ Πριαμίδης, Βροτολοιοῦ ἴσος Ἄρηι.
 αὐτὸς δ' ἐν πρώτοισι μέγα φρονέων ἐβεβήκει,
 ἐν δ' ἔπεσ' ὑσμίνῃ ὑπεραεὶ ἴσος ἀέλλι,
 ἦ τε καθαλλομένη ἰοειδεὰ πόντον ὄρινει.
 Ἐνθα τίνα πρώτον, τίνα δ' ὕστατον ἐξεάριξεν
 300 Ἔκτωρ Πριαμίδης, ὅτε οἱ Ζεὺς κῦδος ἔδωκεν;
 Ἄσαϊον μὲν πρῶτα καὶ Αὐτόνοον καὶ Ὀπίτην,
 καὶ Δόλοπα Κλυτίδην καὶ Ὀφέλιον ἠδ' Ἀγέλαον,
 Αἴσυμνον τ' Ὀρόν τε καὶ Ἴππόνοον μενεχάρμη.
 τοὺς ἄρ' ὁ γ' ἠγεμόνας Δαναῶν ἔλεν, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
 305 πληθύν, ὡς ὁπότε νέφεα Ζέφυρος στυφελίξῃ
 ἀργεστᾶο Νότοιο, βαθείῃ λαίλαπι τύπων·
 πολλὸν δὲ τροφὴ κῦμα κυλίνδεται, ὑψόσε δ' ἄχνη
 σκίδνεται ἐξ ἀνέμοιο πολυπλάγκτοιο ἰωῆς·
 ὧς ἄρα πυκνὰ κάρησθ' ὑφ' Ἐκτορι δάμνατο λαῶν.

So saying he roused the force and heart of every man. And just as when a huntsman sets his white-toothed hounds on a wild boar or a lion, so on the Achaeans did Hector, Priam's son, peer of man-destroying Ares, set the great-hearted Trojans. He himself with high heart strode among the foremost, and fell on the conflict like a blustering tempest that leaps down and lashes to fury the violet-hued deep.

Who then was first, and who last, to be slain by Hector, Priam's son, now that Zeus granted him glory? Asaeus first, and Autonomous, and Opites, and Dolops, son of Clytius, and Opheltius, and Agelaus, and Aesymnus, and Orus, and Hipponous, firm in the fight. These leaders of the Danaans he slew and then fell on the mass of men, and just as when the West Wind drives the clouds of the white South Wind, striking them with a violent squall, and many a swollen wave rolls onward, and on high the spray is scattered by the blast of the wandering wind, just so many heads of men were laid low by Hector.

Here Agamemnon, having been wounded in battle, has just withdrawn to the ships (l. 284). When Hector caught sight of him withdrawing, he roused the Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians to fight even harder. A progression in the narrative at this

point is highlighted by three similes in the following manner. The first simile of the cluster focuses on Hector as the *impetus* behind the action of the Trojan army; the second simile highlights him at the *center* of the action; and the third simile focuses on the *consequences* of Hector's action in the previous two stages of progression.

In the first simile, Hector is likened to a huntsman who urges his white-toothed dogs on a wild boar or a lion in the hunt. The picture that one sees is the huntsman behind the dogs, urging them on toward the game. The huntsman simile at *Iliad* 17.725-734 describes this picture more explicitly.⁸ There the poet describes dogs "that in front of hunting youths dart on a wounded wild boar" (Il. 725-726). It seems likely therefore that in the simile under consideration here the huntsmen are also behind the dogs as they rush on the game. The idea in the simile under consideration is much the same. Hector urging the army forward is similar to huntsmen urging their dogs on a wild boar or lion. That said, however, it does not seem likely that Hector would be *physically* behind the army as it moved forward. The verb *εβεβήκει* in line 296 is pluperfect, suggesting that Hector is already among the forefront of the army. Thus the poet's comparison of Hector to the huntsman does not necessarily call attention to Hector's physical location relative to his army, but it rather serves to highlight the fact that Hector is the driving force, the *impetus* behind his army's movement.

Immediately following this first simile the poet introduces the second one that does in fact highlight Hector's physical location. "He himself with high heart strode (*εβεβήκει*) among the foremost" in the fray of the fighting (l. 296). The poet no longer highlights Hector as the *impetus* behind the action. Instead, he now turns

attention to Hector as the foremost warrior who has positioned himself squarely at the point where the two armies clash. He likens Hector to the way a “blustering tempest” impacts the surface of the sea, stirring it to violence. Hector has now taken his stand at the very point, as it were, where the winds and the waters meet.

The narrative next describes in five lines the names of the numerous Achaean leaders whom Hector slew. Following the list of names, the third simile in the cluster appears, and the point of comparison again advances from the actions of Hector in the forefront of the battle to the consequences of Hector’s action as a result of his front-line fighting. Where the second simile likens Hector to the wind and water meeting; now the third simile draws a point of comparison between what happens when winds and clouds and waters meet in a violent clash and what happened when Hector stormed upon the Achaean leaders in a bloody collision. This simile has the West Wind and the “clouds of the South Wind” striking the water and creating huge waves (ll. 306-307). The crests of rolling waves meet with violent winds and give off a spray of innumerable water droplets. These droplets the poet compares to the countless rolling heads of Achaeans slain by the raging Hector.

Moulton, in *Similes in the Homeric Poems*, discusses the second and third of these three similes (in his analysis, he calls them the “first” and “second”). He groups these two together because of the similarity of the subject matter within them (i.e. clashing winds and waves). Moulton believes that the second of these two represents an “expansion” or “intensification” of the first one:

“Although the vehicle has changed somewhat [between the two ‘wind and wave’ similes] (Hector is now the

wind battering clouds and sea, rather than a whirlwind descending on the sea), the change is not great: the details of the second simile function to amplify the image of the first, and result in conferring on it greater force. It is appropriate that the expansion here accompanies a reference to the widening field of Hector's victims at 304-305; he slaughters certain chieftains (cf. the catalogue in 301-304), and then the multitude..."⁹

While I certainly concur with Moulton's overall analysis of these two similes, it does appear that the huntsman simile may deserve to be included in the analysis. Thus by the use of three successive similes (not just two), Homer has not merely expanded and intensified a first simile by the use of a second one, but he has done more. He has also traced Hector's urging of the army, Hector's own fighting actions, and the consequences of Hector's fighting by the use of no less than three similes.

Another example of similes highlighting this kind of progression in the narrative can be seen by Homer's use of another cluster of three similes found in book 12. Here the Trojans have advanced to the wall before the Achaean ships, and the battle hangs in the balance. In fact, it is this "hanging in the balance" which the next cluster of three similes serves to highlight. These similes not only highlight the fact that the fighting hangs in the balance, but all three of them also use a similar motif to carry this theme through till the balance of the fighting tilts in favor of the Trojans. The motif is that of "stones" and "weights in balance," and "rocks held high" until finally Hector raises that one fateful stone which crashes through the gates of the Achaean barrier to the ships. This cluster occurs at *Iliad* 12.421-455:

ἀλλ' ὥς τ' ἀμφ' οὐροισι δὺ' ἀνέρε δριμάασθον,
μέτρ' ἐν χερσὶν ἔχοντες, ἐπιξύνω ἐν αροῦρη,

ὦ τ' ὀλίγω ἐνὶ χώρῳ ἐρίζητον περί ἴσης,
ὡς ἄρα τοὺς διέεργον ἐπάλξεις· οἱ δ' ὑπὲρ αὐτέων
425 δήρουν ἀλλήλων ἀμφὶ στήθεσσι βοείας
ἀσπίδας εὐκύκλους λαισήϊά τε πετρόεντα.

ἀλλ' ἔχον ὡς τε τάλαντα γυνὴ χερνήτις ἀληθής,
ἧ τε σταθμόν ἔχουσα καὶ εἴριον ἀμφὶς ἀνέλκει
435 ἰσάζουσ', ἵνα παισὶν ἀεικέα μισθὸν ἄρηται·
ὡς μὲν τῶν ἐπὶ ἴσα μάχη τέτατο πτόλεμός τε,
πρὶν γ' ὅτε δὴ Ζεὺς κῦδος ὑπέρτερον Ἔκτορι δῶκε
Πριαμίδη, ὃς πρῶτος ἐσήλατο τεῖχος Ἀχαιῶν.

Ἔκτωρ δ' ἀρπάξας λᾶαν φέρει, ὃς βα πυλάων
ἐστήκει πρόσθε, πρυμνὸς παχύς, αὐτὰρ ὑπερθεν
ὄξυς ἔην· τὸν δ' οὐ κε δὺ' ἀνέρε δήμου ἀρίστω
ῥηιδίως ἐπ' ἀμαξαν ἀπ' οὐδεὸς ὀχλίσειαιαν,
οἴοι νῦν βροτοὶ εἰς· ὁ δὲ μιν βέα πάλλε καὶ οἶος·
450 τὸν οἱ ἔλαφρόν ἔθηκε Κρόνου πάϊς ἀγκυλομήτεω.
ὡς δ' ὅτε ποιμὴν βεῖα φέρει πόκον ἀρσενος οἴος
χειρὶ λαβῶν ἑτέρῃ, ὀλίγον τέ μιν ἄχθος ἐπείγει,
ὡς Ἔκτωρ ἰθύς σαινίδων φέρε λᾶαν ἀείρας,
αἶ βα πύλας εἴρυντο πύκα στιβαρῶς ἀραρυίας,
455 δικλίδας ὑψηλάς·

But as two men with measuring rods in hand
contend about the landmark stones in a common field,
and in a narrow space contend each for his equal share,
so did the battlements hold these foes apart, and over
them they struck the bull's hide shields about one
another's chests, the round shields and the fluttering
bucklers... But both sides held their ground, as a careful
woman, who labors with her hands at spinning, holds
the balance and raises the weight and the wool in either
scale, making them equal, so that she may win a meager
wage for her children; so evenly was strained their war
and battle until Zeus granted the greater glory to
Hector, Priam's son, who was first to leap inside the
wall of the Achaeans...

And Hector snatched up and carried a stone that lay
in front of the gate, thick at the base, but sharp at the
top; not easily would two men, the best of the people,
have heaved it up from the ground and on to a wagon—
men such as mortals now are—yet easily did he wield it

even by himself; the son of crooked-counseling Cronos made it light for him. And as when a shepherd easily carries the fleece of a ram, taking it in one hand, and but little does its weight burden him, so Hector lifted up the stone and carried it straight against the doors that guarded the close and strongly fitted gates...

While the two armies are fighting and neither side is able to gain ground, Homer introduces the first “stone simile” to underscore this feature of the battle. He likens this situation to two men who are contending about a common field. The contention is taking place in a confined area where a “landmark stone” has been placed. Each man is fighting for what he perceives as his rightful share of the land. Similarly, the two armies clashed one against another with the clattering noise of shields. The narrative continues for a brief four lines in which both sides hold their ground while many are wounded with the thrusts of bronze, and the walls and battlements are spattered with blood.

Then in line 431, the second simile of the cluster appears, continuing the “balanced fighting” narrative and the “weight-balance” motif of the similes. The poet here likens this undecided fighting to a woman working with her hands at spinning. “She holds the balance and raises the weight and the wool in either scale, making them equal” (ll. 433-435). So, says the poet, was the war and battle in equal balance until at last Zeus gave the glory to Hector to break down the Achaean wall.

After an intervening 12 lines of narrative, at line 451 the poet introduces the third and final simile in this cluster. He likens Hector’s heroic strength, with which he easily lifts the weight of the stone that he will use to break down the gates, to a shepherd holding a ram’s fleece in his hand. Hector raises that stone in the air as

easily as the shepherd with only one hand raises the fleece. The weight of the fleece burdens this shepherd “but a little.” When at last that stone comes crashing against the walls, this cluster of similes has completed its purpose. The war and the narrative are no longer suspended in balance, and the Trojans at last come pouring through the breach upon the dismayed Achaeans.

Therefore, these two clusters (11.291-309 and 12.421-455) serve to illustrate that at least some pairs or clusters of similes accent some kind of progression or turning point in the narrative of the *Iliad*.

III. Amplification, Intensification or Expansion of a Previous Simile

Amplification of a previous simile involves the use of a second or a third simile in a pair or cluster to amplify, intensify, or expand an idea occurring in an earlier simile of the same pair or cluster. In analyzing pairs of similes, Moulton discusses the concept of a “sequence of comparisons” by the use of multiple similes in which there is “either verbal repetition or the repetition of certain key motifs...” and “the effect is to elaborate or intensify the initial comparison.”¹⁰

I see a similar use of similes in the pair that occurs in *Iliad* 11.548 and 558. Here the Trojans are getting the better of the Achaeans. Some of the Achaeans’ finest heroes have been wounded in the fighting. At line 544 the narrative begins describing the retreat of Aias, who retreats but not without a fight. Zeus roused him to flight, and he took his seven-fold ox-hide shield on his back and began retreating slowly as he glanced from side to side. Then two similes, occurring back to back, describe this gradual retreat, with the second simile appearing to provide insight to the narrative by

amplifying or expanding on the insight provided by the first one. The similes appear

at *Iliad* 11.548-565:

ὥς δ' αἶθωνα λέοντα βοῶν ἀπὸ μεσσαύλοιο
ἔσσεύαντο κύνες τε καὶ ἀνέρες ἀγροιώται,
550 οἳ τέ μιν οὐκ εἰῶσι βοῶν ἐκ πῖαρ ἐλέσθαι
πάννουχοι ἐγρησσοντες· ὁ δὲ κρειῶν ἐρατίζων
ἰθύει, ἀλλ' οὐ τι πρήσσει· θαμέες γὰρ ἀκοντες
ἀντίον αἰσσοῦσι θρασειάων ἀπὸ χερῶν,
καϊόμεναί τε δεταί, τάς τε τρεῖ ἔσσύμενός περ·
555 ἠῶθεν δ' ἀπονόσφιν ἔβη τετιηότι θυμῷ·
ὥς Αἴας τότ' ἀπὸ Τρώων τετιημένος ἦτορ
ἦε πόλλ' ἀέκων· περὶ γὰρ διέ νηυσὶν Ἀχαιῶν.
ὥς δ' ὄτ' ὄνος παρ' ἀρουραν ἰὼν ἐβίησατο παῖδας
νωθῆς, ᾧ δὴ πολλὰ περὶ ῥόπαλ' ἀμφὶς ἐάγη,
560 κείρει τ' εἰσελθὼν βαθὺ λήιον· οἳ δέ τε παῖδες
τύπτουσιν ῥοπάλοισι· βίη δέ τε νηπίη αὐτῶν·
σπουδῆ τ' ἐξήλασσαν, ἐπεὶ τ' ἐκορέσσατο φορβῆς·
ὥς τότ' ἔπειτ' Αἴαντα μέγαν, Τελαμώνιον υἱόν,
Τρῶες ὑπέρθυμοι πολυηγερέες τ' ἐπίκουροι
565 νύσσοντες ξυστοῖσι μέσον σάκος αἰὲν ἔποντο.

And just as a tawny lion is driven from the fold of the cattle by dogs and country people, who do not allow him to seize the fattest of the herd, as they watch the whole night through, but he in his lust for flesh goes straight on, yet accomplishes nothing, for thick the darts fly to meet him, from bold hands, and blazing brands, before which he quails though he is very eager, and at dawn he departs with sullen heart; so Aias then gave way before the Trojans, sullen at heart and much against his will, for greatly did he fear for the ships of the Achaeans. And as when an ass that passes by a cornfield gets the better of boys—an obstinate ass about whose ribs many a cudgel is broken—and he goes in and wastes the deep grain, and the boys beat him with cudgels, though their strength is but puny, and with difficulty they drive him out when he has had his fill of fodder; so then did the Trojans, high of heart, and their allies gathered from many lands, strike great Aias, son of Telamon, with spears square on his shield, and constantly press on him.

The first simile at line 548 compares the retreating Aias to a tawny lion that vigilant dogs and country people drive from their cattle. The lion, though hungry and determined, is able to seize no prey, and, reluctantly, must flee with an empty stomach. Thus Aias finally gave way against his will before the Trojans, greatly fearing for the Achaean ships. The second simile in the pair begins almost immediately (l. 558) and describes virtually the same situation by the use of quite different imagery. In this simile, Aias is likened to an obstinate ass that invades a cornfield and “gets the better of boys” who try to run him out with cudgels. The boys break many a cudgel on his back in the process while the ass manages “to have his fill of fodder” before he leaves (l. 562). So did the Trojans and their allies strike Aias on the shield and ceaselessly press on him.

Edwards points out that ancient scholars saw numerous points of comparison in this second simile to various details of the narrative. For example, they perceived that the simile in general represents Aias’ scorn of the Trojans and how he yielded only to Zeus and not to them. Ancient scholars also saw a connection between Aias’ determination and the greediness of the ass; they also thought that the comparison is heightened further by the fact that the poet says that the ass is obstinate and accustomed to numerous blows.¹¹

While the points of comparison to the narrative may be many, it is perhaps more difficult to say just what the function of this second simile might be when compared to the first one in the pair. At the risk of over-analysis, perhaps the following attempt will provide at least some satisfaction. The first simile describes a lion’s *unsuccessful*

attempt at obtaining food, at last being driven from the cattle by the rustics and their watchdogs. In the same way, Aias is unsuccessful in his *ultimate goal* of warding off the Trojans from the ships. The narrative makes clear in the next book that the Trojans have their day at the ships. It is also important to note in passing that the main point of comparison for this first simile is between Aias and the lion.

The second simile then may be seen as an expansion of the image of the first one by perhaps implicitly providing some insight into the circumstances that neither the narrative nor the first simile explicitly provide. To illustrate, it is significant that whereas the lion was unsuccessful in his quest for food, the ass, though somewhat bruised in the attempt, “got the better of the boys” and “had his fill of fodder” before he left the field. Perhaps significant is the fact that the point of comparison drawn at the end of this simile, unlike the first one, is *not* Aias directly. Instead, the main comparison is to the Trojans who, like the boys breaking their cudgels, spent many valuable resources of war (spears and allies from many lands) before they could finally push back that one man—Aias! In that sense, perhaps, Aias got the better of the Trojans and at least had some “fill” by requiring the employment of so many Trojan resources to turn him away before he finally abandoned his attempt.

IV. Shift of View or Change of Distance Perspective

By shift of view or change of distance perspective it is meant that in some pairs one simile uses imagery that views the action from a nearby perspective while the other views the action from a distance. The concept is similar to that of a movie camera zooming in on the action then zooming out in the next scene to a relatively far

distance. Two examples will be noticed here, one which views the action from afar in the first simile and up close in the second, the other where this order is reversed.

The first example comes from *Iliad* 16.633-644. In this section, Sarpedon has been slain and the fight rages on between Trojans and Achaeans for his body.

Patroclus urges Meriones that they must rush on and fight for the body. Patroclus then led the way and godlike Meriones followed him into the fray. The poet then introduces two similes:

τῶν δ' ὡς τε δρυτόμων ἀνδρῶν ὀρυμαγδὸς ὄρωρεν
οὔρεος ἐν βήσσης, ἕκαθεν δέ τε γίγνεται ἀκούη,
635 ὡς τῶν ὄρνυτο δοῦπος ἀπὸ χθονὸς εὐρυοδείης
χαλκοῦ τε ῥινοῦ τε βοῶν τ' εὐποιοιτάων,
νυσσομένων ξίφεσίν τε καὶ ἔγχεσιν ἀμφιγύοισιν.
οὐδ' ἂν ἔτι φράδμων περ ἀνὴρ Σαρπηδόνα δῖον
ἔγνω, ἐπεὶ βελέεσσι καὶ αἵματι καὶ κόνιησιν
640 ἐκ κεφαλῆς εἴλυτο διαμπερὲς ἐς πόδας ἄκρους.
οἱ δ' αἰεὶ περὶ νεκρὸν ὀμίλειον, ὡς δτε μυῖαι
σταθμῶ ἐνὶ βρομέωσι περιγλαγέας κατὰ πέλλας
ὄρη ἐν εἰαρινῇ, ὅτε τε γλάγος ἄγγεα δεύει·
ὡς ἄρα τοὶ περὶ νεκρὸν ὀμίλειον

And from them—just as the din arises of woodcutters in the glades of a mountain, and from afar is the sound of it heard—so from them went up a din from the broad-wayed earth, of bronze and of hide and of well-made shields, as they thrust at one another with swords and two-edged spears. Nor could a man, though he knew him well, any more have recognized noble Sarpedon, since he was utterly enwrapped with missiles and blood and dust, from his head to the very soles of his feet. And they ever thronged about the corpse as in a farmstead flies buzz about the full milk pails in the season of spring when the milk drenches the pails; so they thronged about the corpse.

The first simile seems to zoom out from the up-close fighting and compares the noise of clashing spears, shields, and swords to woodcutters in the mountains. The

noise of axes chopping at the base of trees arises in the glades of a mountain, and goes out into the “broad-wayed” earth—“from afar is the sound of it heard” (ll. 634-636). At this point in the simile, one feels as though he has been suddenly transported away from the loud, nearby noise of clashing battle gear. The perspective is that of sitting atop some distant rock in the mountains and hearing, from a distance, the faint echoing sound of woodcutters’ axes chopping down trees. Just so, says the poet, was the din of fighting around the body of Sarpedon. This faint noise seems a rather striking way of describing the noise of battle. The effect is that one feels somehow separated from the grueling scene and able to view it all with an almost aloof objectivity.

Then the narrative shifts up-close again to the fighting, specifically to the body of Sarpedon. The body is now so mangled that it is not even recognizable, “enwrapped with missiles and blood and dust, from his head to the very soles of his feet” (ll. 638-640). Thus the poet introduces another striking simile that, although again describing noisy battle, actually employs the imagery of another quiet scene. The scurry about the body of Sarpedon is likened to the way that flies buzz around milk pails on a quiet farmstead. The camera, as it were, has zoomed in on a minute detail of quiet farm life. Interestingly, both similes in this pair use quiet sounds to describe loud noises. However, the first simile requires one to be distant from the source of the sound (woodcutting would be too loud up-close), but the second one requires one to be near the source of the sound (buzzing flies would be inaudible even

from a short distance away). Once again the poet appears to have used a pairs of similes that not only interact with the narrative but also interact with each other.

The second example of a pair of similes used in this way occurs at *Iliad* 22.21-32:

- ὣς εἰπὼν προτὶ ἄστυ μέγα φρονέων ἐβεβήκει,
σευάμενος ὡς θ' ἵππος ἀεθλοφόρος σὺν ὄχεσφιν,
ὃς βᾶ τε ρεῖα θέησι τιταινόμενος πεδίοιο·
ὡς Ἀχιλεὺς λαιψηρὰ πόδας καὶ γούνατ' ἐνώμα.
25 Τὸν δ' ὁ γέρον Πρίαμος πρῶτος ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσι,
παμφαίνοιθ' ὡς τ' ἀστέρ' ἐπεσσύμενον πεδίοιο,
ὃς βᾶ τ' ὀπάρης εἶσιν, ἀρίζηλοι δέ οἱ αὐγαὶ
φαίνονται πολλοῖσι μετ' ἀστράσι νυκτὸς ἀμοργῶ·
ὄν τε κύν' Ὀρίωνος ἐπὶ κλησὶν καλέουσι.
30 λαμπρότατος μὲν ὁ γ' ἐστὶ, κακὸν δὲ τε σῆμα τέτυκται,
καὶ τε φέρει πολλὸν πυρετὸν δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν·
ὡς τοῦ χαλκὸς ἔλαμπε περὶ στήεσσι θεόντος.

So he spoke, and went toward the city in great eagerness, speeding as speeds with a chariot a horse that is winner of prizes, and one that easily runs at full speed over the plain; so swiftly plied Achilles his feet and knees.

The old man Priam was first to see him with his eyes, as he sped all gleaming over the plain like the star that comes up at harvest time, and brightly do its rays shine among the many stars in the dead of night, the star that men call by name the Dog of Orion. Brightest of all is he, yet he is a sign of evil, and brings much fever on wretched mortals. So did the bronze gleam on the breast of Achilles as he ran.

Admittedly, the contrast between the two similes in this pair is not as striking perhaps as the previous example, but the distance perspective still appears to be present at least on some level. The scene is that in which Achilles is speeding toward the city of Troy, having driven the Trojans back from the ships all the way to the city. At this point (l. 22), a simile is introduced likening Achilles to a prize-winning horse speedily pulling a chariot. This horse easily runs full speed across the plain. Likewise,

Achilles moves swiftly toward Troy. At first notice, this simile does not seem to emphasize a distance perspective like the first simile in the previous pair. In fact, the point of view in terms of distance from the horse seems to be neutral for the most part. One might view such a running horse up-close or from a distance. However, when compared to the second simile, viewing a running horse even from far away one would seem to be relatively near. As Achilles runs across the plain, old Priam is watching from the city wall. It is here that the second simile likens Achilles to a star rising (it is on the horizon) at harvest time. Among its companion stars, this star (the Dog of Orion and portent of evil) shines brightest of all. Therefore, although the first simile in this pair seems at first to be distance neutral, once the second simile is developed the shift of view and the change in distance perspective becomes more apparent. That is, no matter how closely (or from how far away) the first simile views the speeding horse, the second simile has clearly zoomed out to an astronomical distance! Thus once again the poet seems to use a pair of similes to describe events in the narrative from widely divergent perspectives.

V. Panoramic Photography

Another use of simile is seen in the cluster of five similes at the end of *Iliad* 17. In this cluster one may observe a kind of panoramic scanning of a scene in the narrative. Here the poet uses individual similes one after another to call attention to various details of a larger scene. It is as if it were not possible to develop the intensity of this scene adequately by simply recording it in mere narrative or by using only one simile. As Scott puts it, the poet “makes the summary picture at the end of book 17 a

colorful and, therefore, notable scene—one which will be remembered easily by his audience.”¹² Homer places at the end of book 17 no less than five similes to highlight as much detail as possible, adding texture and intensity to one of the most suspenseful scenes of the *Iliad*. In fact, 31 out of the last 39 lines of *Iliad* 17 are simile material all grouped around the same scene. Only in *Iliad* 2.455-483, where 28 out of 29 lines are simile material, is there a comparable concentration of similes grouped around a single scene. Interestingly, as Edwards points out, book 17 as a whole has the highest concentration of simile material of any book in the *Iliad* with 15.6% of the total number of lines in the book composed of similes.¹³

The technique the poet uses here might be compared to that of a series of photographs with which a photographer attempts to capture a wide panoramic view that is larger than can be encompassed in a single photograph. Thus a photographer may take a series of overlapping photographs in succession from one side of the scene to the other until all is included. Once the photographs have been taken and developed, they all must be displayed side by side in their proper sequence in order that the entire panorama may be visible to the observer. Comparing this technique of photography to the poet’s use of simile in the last thirty-nine lines of *Iliad* 17 can aid in understanding the dynamics of simile and narrative in this part of the *Iliad*.

At the end of *Iliad* 17, Patroclus has been killed, Hector has taken his armor, and while the two armies are fighting over Patroclus’ body, Menelaus dispatches Antilochus to bear the sad news to Achilles (l. 685). Then in line 715 Telemonian Aias suggests to Menelaus that he (Menelaus) and Meriones should carry the corpse

out of the fray, while Telemonian Aias and Oilean Aias, one in heart as well as in name, fend off Hector and the Trojan warriors from behind. At this point Homer introduces the first in a cluster of five similes, each of which highlights a specific detail of this struggle.

For purposes of illustration and analysis, the movement of the scene will be conceived of as moving from right to left. That is, the Trojans and Hector are at the far right moving to the left in pursuit of the two Aiantes who are in the middle of the scene. In turn the two Aiantes are also moving to the left while providing a wall of protection between the Trojans behind them and Menelaus and Meriones directly before them at the far left. In this framework, each successive simile in the cluster follows the movement from right to left and back again, giving added depth, texture, and suspense to the scene. The first simile is introduced at line 725:

- 725 ἴθυσαν δὲ κύνεσσιν εἰκότες, οἳ τ' ἐπὶ κάπρῳ
βλημένῳ αἰξῶσι πρὸ κούρων θηρητήρων·
ἕως μὲν γὰρ τε θέουσι διαρραῖσαι μεμαῶτες,
ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ἐν τοῖσιν ἐλίξεται ἀλκι πεποιθώς,
ἄψ τ' ἀνεχώρησαν διὰ τ' ἔτρεσαν ἀλλυδὶς ἄλλος.
730 ὡς Τρῶες ἦος μὲν ὀμιλαδὸν αἰὲν ἔποντο,
νύσσοντες ξιφεσίῃ τε καὶ ἔγχεσιν ἀμφιγύοισιν·
ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ῥ' Αἴαντε μεταστρεφθέντε κατ' αὐτοὺς
σταίησαν, τῶν δὲ τράπετο χρώς, οὐδέ τις ἔτλη
πρόσσω αἰξᾶς περὶ νεκροῦ δηριάασθαι.

And they charged straight on them like hounds that in front of hunting youths dart on a wounded wild boar; for a while they rush on him eagerly to destroy him utterly, but when he wheels among them trusting in his might, then they give ground and scatter in flight, one here, one there; so the Trojans for a while ever pressed on in throngs, thrusting with swords and two-edged spears, but whenever the two Aiantes wheeled about

and stood against them, then would their color change,
and no man dared dart out and do battle for the dead.

This first simile is a classic Homeric image of hounds and youths hunting a wild boar.¹⁴ The hounds, while youths are in pursuit from the rear, charge on their prey; at first they are eager with fearless confidence. The obvious point of comparison in this first part of the simile is to the Trojans who are in confident pursuit of the four Greeks who are making off with Patroclus' body. Indeed, as one often sees in Homer's similes, one might expect the poet to develop this comparison even further and close the simile with a line something like this: "So the Trojans rushed on against the two Aiantes..." However, as is sometimes the case, the poet instead shifts, mid-simile, to a second point of comparison by developing the behavior of the pursued wild boar instead of further developing the action of the hounds and youths in pursuit of him. Interestingly, the behavior of the wild boar as a point of comparison to the Aiantes is only implicit in the image until the poet resumes the narrative: "whenever the two Aiantes wheeled about" (l. 732). Even then, however, the comparison to the Aiantes is only explicitly stated after the comparison between the Trojans and the hounds has been resolved in the narrative. It is also worthy of notice that this first simile carries no direct allusion to Menelaus and Meriones (who are at the front of the motion), evidently because the poet chooses to examine them more closely later with a different simile. Thus in a sense, the direct center of this first photograph is the point of contact between the Trojans and the two Aiantes; Menelaus and Meriones, however, are not yet even in the picture.

Meanwhile, between the first and second similes, the narrative moves a little to the left and introduces the two out front for the first time: “Thus [Menelaus and Meriones] were hurrying to carry the corpse out of the battle to the hollow ships” (Il. 735-736). Here the poet takes another photograph as it were, but the center of this second photograph is not the point of contact between the Aiantes and the Trojans. Instead, the center is the point of contact between Menelaus and Meriones on the left-hand side and the bustle of fighting that follows on their heels in the right-hand side of the photograph:

735 ὥς οἱ γ' ἔμμεμαῶτε νέκυν φέρον ἐκ πολέμοιο
 νῆας ἐπι γλαφυράς· ἐπὶ δὲ πτόλεμος τέτατό σφιν
 ἄγριος ἤυτε πῦρ, τὸ τ' ἐπεσσύμενον πόλιν ἀνδρῶν
 ὄρμενον ἐξαίφνης φλεγέθει, μινύθουσι δὲ οἴκοι
 ἐν σέλαι μεγάλω. τὸ δ' ἐπιβρέμει ἰς ἀνέμοιο.
 740 ὥς μὲν τοῖς ἵππων τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν αἰχμητάων
 ἄζηχῆς ὀρυμαγδὸς ἐπήιεν ἐρχομένοισιν·

Thus the two were hurrying to carry the corpse out of the battle to the hollow ships, and against them was strained a conflict fierce as fire that, rushing on a city of men with sudden onset, sets it aflame, and houses fall in the mighty glare, and the might of the wind drives it roaring on. So against them as they went came ever the ceaseless din of chariots and of spearmen.

In this simile, the Aiantes and the Trojans, instead of being highlighted separately as in the first simile are condensed into one faceless fighting mass that moves along close behind Menelaus and Meriones, threatening to overtake them. This conflict of fighting follows so close behind them in fact, that it is like a “fierce... rushing fire” that overtakes a city as it is driven by gusts of wind (Il. 736-739). One can image that the attempt to escape such a fire would involve so

concentrated an act of fleeing that those in flight must not pause even for a moment to look back—all energy must be directed at getting away from the immediate threat. That is just the circumstance that the poet creates for Menelaus and Meriones as they rely on their comrades to fight off their pursuers. However, even with this help, the conflict is so close behind them that the feeling is similar to that of having the flames of a rushing fire licking at their very heels.

The third simile then follows immediately without any intervening narrative. This unusual technique is used even more extensively in the cluster of similes in book 2 lines 455 to 483 referred to above. This technique of setting similes back to back has the effect of holding the scene in suspense. Like the second simile, the third once again shifts the center of focus in much the same way as a photographer pans the camera further to one side in order to fill out the panoramic scene. Interestingly, this third simile focuses in on Menelaus and Meriones and gives no notice whatsoever to the din of fighting that follows so close to the right of them:

οἱ δ' ὥς θ' ἡμίονοι κρατερὸν μένος ἀμφιβαλόντες
ἐλκωσ' ἐξ ὄρεος κατὰ παιπαλόεσσαν ἀταρπὸν
ἢ δοκὸν ἢ δόρυ μέγα νήιον· ἐν δέ τε θυμὸς
745 τείρεθ' ὁμοῦ καμάτῳ τε καὶ ἰδρῶ σπευδόντεσσι·
ὥς οἱ γ' ἐμμεμαῶτε νέκυν φέρον.

But as mules put forth on either side their great strength and drag from the mountain down a rugged path a beam perhaps, or a great ship's timber, and within them their hearts as they strive are distressed with weariness and sweat, so they hurried to carry the corpse.

One curious feature about this third simile beyond its mere setting in the cluster is the change of subject matter within the simile itself. Even within the same narrative

scene the poet changes the texture of the poem by shifting from a scene of chaotic, destructive motion to a peaceful location of relative quiet and serenity. This technique is quite effective here as the poet uses the image of mules dragging a wooden beam down a mountainside in order to highlight a chaotic, noisy battle; it creates, so to speak, a completely different tone for the audience. While the first two similes create an atmosphere of noise, confusion and violent motion, this third one brings a sudden change, creating an atmosphere of much quieter, methodical, and even *constructive* activity.

Furthermore, in reading this simile in context one feels as if one has not only been suddenly carried from the battlefield to the quiet mountainside, but it is almost as if one is transported into the very heads of these working mules: “within them their hearts as they strive are distressed with weariness and sweat” (ll. 744-745). These animals are apparently trained to do this work and they exert all their energy in the process. Thus, the simile creates the image of individuals in a struggle so intense that they are completely oblivious to their surroundings. The strength and movement of every muscle, nerve, bone and tendon, “distressed with weariness and sweat,” are animated by an absolute, undivided mental focus. The effect therefore of this simile is to move the audience up-close, almost looking into the sweaty faces of Menelaus and Meriones.¹⁵ They are so intent on their all-important task that they might be described as being alone in the midst of chaos. This effect would not be possible without the contextual contribution made by the other noisy similes in the scene. Thus the whole image of the Trojans pursuing the Aiantes pursuing the rescuers of the body is made

complete only by the use of multiple similes carefully chosen and strategically placed to give the audience a feeling perhaps of what it was like to be there.

Just as any good photographer who is not content to stop with only one photograph of a striking image takes several shots of a scene to be sure of getting just the right one, so the poet again scans the scene by the use of more similes. This time however he scans the scene in the opposite direction of the motion beginning at 17.746:

αὐτὰρ ὀπισθεν

Αἴαντ' ἰσχανέτην, ὡς τε πρῶν ἰσχάνει ὕδωρ
ὕληεις, πεδίοιο διαπρύσιον τετυχηκῶς,
ὅς τε καὶ ἰφθίμων ποταμῶν ἀλεγεινὰ βέεθρα
750 ἴσχει, ἄφαρ δέ τε πᾶσι ῥοὸν πεδίωνδε τίθησι
πλάζων· οὐδέ τί μιν σθένει ῥηγνῦσι βέοντες.
ὡς αἰεὶ Αἴαντε μάχην ἀνέεργον ὀπίσσω
Τρώων· οἱ δ' ἄμ' ἔποντο, δῶα δ' ἐν τοῖσι μάλιστα,
Αἰνείας τ' Ἀγχισιάδης καὶ φαίδιμος Ἕκτωρ.

And behind them the two Aiantes held back the foe, as a ridge holds back a flood—some wooded ridge that chances to lie all across a plain and that holds back even the harmful streams of mighty rivers, and immediately turns the current of them all to wander over the plain, nor does the might of their flood break through it—so the two Aiantes ever kept back the battle of the Trojans, but these ever followed after and two among them especially, Aeneas, Anchises' son, and glorious Hector.

Here the poet likens the two Aiantes to a wooded ridge that lies across a plain preventing a flood of mighty rivers on one side from spilling disastrously over to the other side. The two Aiantes thus form a critical dividing line between two quite opposite sets of conditions. On one side is the Trojan army bringing with them the clanging and pounding din of battle in determined pursuit to overtake the two

Achaean making away with Patroclus' body. On the other side are Menelaus and Meriones, who, by virtue of the wall of protection provided for them have a relatively clear path of escape with the body to the ships. Interestingly, this image is quite effective in maintaining the mood of the previous simile of the mules in the mountains while reminding the audience that the perilous threat is still near at hand. In the mule simile the poet created the mood of the relatively quiet hillside activity of lumbermen and mules moving wooden beams. In the present simile the poet retains that relatively peaceful image on one side of the wooded ridge while at the same time permitting the din and rush of battle to continue on the other side of it.

Line 753 introduces the last simile in the cluster. It brings to a close both the battle scene and the whole of book 17. A close reading of this simile suggests that it encompasses a view of the fighting that takes in more than the narrow conflict over Patroclus' body as in the previous four similes. It appears to encompass a wider aspect of the Trojan army's destructive activity and the effect of that activity on the Achaeans as a whole:

755 τῶν δ' ὡς τε ψαρῶν νέφος ἔρχεται ἢ κολοιῶν,
 οὐλον κεκλήγοντες, ὅτε προΐδωσιν ἰόντα
 κίρκον, ὃ τε σμικρῆσι φόνον φερεὶ ὀρνίθεσσιν,
 ὡς ἄρ' ὑπ' Αἰνεΐα τε καὶ Ἑκτορι κοῦροι Ἀχαιῶν
 οὐλον κεκλήγοντες ἴσαν, λήθοντο δὲ χάρμησ.

And as a cloud of starlings or daws flies, shrieking cries of destruction, when they see a falcon coming on them that brings death to small birds, so before Aeneas and Hector fled the youths of the Achaeans, shrieking cries of destruction, and forgot all fighting.

Back in line 719, just before this cluster of similes begins, Telemonian Aias had told Menelaus that he and Oilean Aias would fight off Hector and the Trojans. Now, in this last simile the poet not only mentions Hector with the Trojans but Aeneas as well. Thus the poet appears to take in a wider view than the earlier image in order to encompass the broader conflict. The point of comparison in this last simile of the cluster is evidently between the fleeing Achaeans as a whole and a “cloud of starlings or daws” which flutters quickly away with “shrieking cries” at the threat of a falcon suddenly swooping among them (ll. 755-757). Thus “many fair pieces of armor fell around and about the trench as the Danaans fled” (ll. 760-761). As the poem later makes clear, Menelaus and Meriones are able to make their escape with the body back to the ships. However, as book 17 and this cluster of similes ends, it is not distinctly clear that the plan to escape with Patroclus’ body has been successful. The only clue at this point is the impression that these similes leave with the audience. At the end of book 17, the poet last left Menelaus and Meriones in mid-simile, their circumstances being likened to an open plain under the protection of a fortuitously positioned wooded ridge that held back a raging flood. Thus, their successful escape to the ships is merely implied by the imagery of the fourth simile and by the fact that nothing else is said about them either in the narrative or by the use of additional similes.

It is also interesting to note that the images in this cluster of similes alternate between fire and water. In the second simile, the fighting between the Trojans and the

two Aiantes was like a rushing fire; the third simile portrays the Trojan onslaught as a flood. Then the first line of book 18 states that "...they fought like blazing fire."

In summary, panoramic photography appears to be a useful way of analyzing the interplay of simile and narrative in the five similes at the end of *Iliad* 17. This technique of analysis demonstrates that such interplay heightens the suspense of this section. First, using several similes one after another, the poet weaves rich detail into the narrative that provides texture and depth. Second, by varying the imagery from one simile to the next (i.e. hunting hounds, blazing fire, working mules, rushing waters, and startled birds) the poet is able to demonstrate nuance and variation among and between separate parts of the same scene. Last, by use of the fourth simile (the wooded ridge holding back the flood waters), the poet leaves the audience with a subtle feeling of ambiguity. It is only implied in the imagery of this simile that Menelaus and Meriones have escaped with the body, but the narrative does not explicitly state it to be so. By contrast, the fifth simile completes the cluster with which the poet leaves open the possibility, that with the Achaeans in full rout, the body of Patroclus might have been abandoned in the rush of flight. The audience will have to wait for the outcome.

VI. Pivotal Points in the Narrative

In addition to the use of similes in close proximity to each other, occasionally the poet may repeat the same simile, or a similar one, in somewhat widely separated sections of the poem. Sometime these repeated similes seem to bear no particular relationship to each other; sometimes, however, the poet appears to use them in a way

that highlights the larger structure of the poem itself. An example of such a use of similes occurs at *Iliad* 8.553-561 and 16.294-302. The first of these is used in connection with the advance of the Trojans against the Greek ships in book 8; the other is used of the counter-advance of the Greeks in book 16. While each of these two similes may relate in some way to other similes that are closer to them in the narrative,¹⁶ it is difficult to overlook their significant position at these pivotal points in the poem.

These similes might be called sky similes¹⁷ because in them the poet develops the imagery of the sky's upper air at opposite times of the day under different atmospheric conditions. One simile describes the moon glow on a clear night; the other is presumably a daytime sky as a thunderstorm begins to clear. These distinctions allow identical language in both similes to mark shifts in the narrative in *opposite* directions. Book 8.66-74 introduces the context of the first of these two similes. The passage depicts the Greeks and Trojans locked in even combat, but the equilibrium is broken at noon when Zeus tilts his scales for the Trojans:

Now as long as it was morning and the holy day was waxing, so long the missiles of either side reached their mark, and the men kept falling. But when the sun had bestrode mid heaven, then it was that the father lifted up his golden scales, and set in them two fates of grievous death, one for the horse-taming Trojans, and one for the bronze-clad Achaeans; then he grasped the balance by the middle and raised it, and down sank the day of doom of the Achaeans. So the Achaeans' fates settled down on the bounteous earth and those of the Trojans were raised aloft toward wide heaven.¹⁸

This passage is significant first because it establishes the direction of the next several books—doom for the Greeks, success for the Trojans. However, it is also significant because while the Trojans’ end of the scales tilts *up* to the expanse of the sky, Zeus sends a thunderbolt *down* among the Greeks (Il. 75-76). Here Homer subtly introduces an image, that of a storm, which he continues to use in one form or another throughout the Trojan assault of the ships. A storm, a natural phenomenon, is a condition in which the violence of nature is at work—howling winds; turbulent, dark, foreboding clouds; frighteningly loud claps of thunder; destructive fiery lightning. This fitting image begins in book 8, reaches a climax in book 16 when the ship of Protesilaus is set ablaze, and finally starts to subside a little with the second simile of this pair in book 16.

In book 8, as soon as Zeus tips his scales to the Trojans’ favor, the hearts of the Greeks melt away and their army retreats. The Trojans advance, first past the wall, then through the ditch. As the day wears on, gods and goddess on Olympus contend about which of the two armies should prevail. Finally, nighttime comes at *Iliad* 8.485-488 with a temporary lull in the fighting, a kind of calm before the worst part of the storm to come:

Then into Oceanus fell the bright light of the sun
drawing black night over the face of the earth, the giver
of grain. Much against the will of the Trojans sank the
daylight, but over the Achaeans welcome and thrice-
prayed-for came the darkness of night.

The activities of the Trojan camp after nightfall provide the immediate setting for the first sky simile in the pair. Hector addressed the Trojans and they gathered

enough firewood to build a thousand campfires to burn through the night (Il. 542, 547, 562). Perhaps they wanted the Greeks to know that just because the fighting had stopped, that did not mean the Trojans had gone back to the city. They were still nearby, ready to attack at morning's light. The first sky simile occurs at *Iliad* 8.553-561:

Οἱ δὲ μέγα φρονέοντες ἐπὶ πολέμοιο γεφύρας
 ἦατο παννύχιοι, πυρὰ δὲ σφισσι καίετο πολλά.
 555 ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστρα φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην
 φαίνεται ἀριπρεπέα, ὅτε τ' ἐπλετο νήνεμος αἰθήρ·
ἐκ τ' ἔφανε πᾶσαι σκοπιαὶ καὶ πρόνες ἀκροὶ
καὶ νάπαι οὐρανόθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερράγη ἀσπετος αἰθήρ,
 πάντα δὲ εἶδεται ἄστρα, γέγηθε δὲ τε φρένα ποιμήν·
 560 τόσσα μεσηγὺ νεῶν ἠδὲ Ξάνθοιο βροάων
 Τρώων καιόντων πυρὰ φαίνετο Ἴλιόθι πρό.

These then with high hearts stayed the whole night through along the lines of war, and their fires burned in multitudes. Just as in the sky about the gleaming moon the stars shine clear when the air is windless, and into view come all mountain peaks and high headlands and glades, and from heaven breaks open the infinite air, and all the stars are seen, and the shepherd rejoices in his heart; in such multitudes between the ships and the streams of Xanthus shone the fires that the Trojans kindled before Ilios.

The simile in this passage seems to view the Trojan camp from a distance, as if one were observing a thousand campfires dotting the landscape like stars in the night sky. The sky is clear; the stars flicker; the air is windless; and the blue-white moon glow pours over the landscape. Identical to the second sky simile of book 16 are the words (underlined above) “all mountain peaks and high headlands and glades appear in view”(Il 557-558). This air breaking forth (ὑπερράγη) is the αἰθήρ, the upper air. The Greeks thought of the αἰθήρ as a clear air called “upper” because it is above the

ἄθρ, the lower humid air or mist. In the simile, Homer envisions the upper air, accompanied by the glow of the moon and flickering stars, as “breaking forth” from above under calm, windless atmospheric conditions. This ἀθήρ seems to move in and fill the whole landscape. The scene is a calm one. In the context of the battle frenzy earlier in the narrative combined with Zeus’ promise that at dawn he would make casualties of the Greek army, the poet seems to introduce this simile to create the feeling that a change is occurring in the atmosphere. A coming storm against the Greeks looms in the distance beyond the calm night’s horizon.

Throughout books 9 to 16, Homer repeatedly uses this image of violent weather (among other images) to characterize what is happening to the Greeks. For example, book 9 opens with a simile at lines 4-8 likening the Greek fear during that night to violent weather:

Just as two winds stir up the teeming deep, the North Wind and the West Wind that blow from Thrace, coming up suddenly, and immediately the dark wave rears itself in crests and casts much seaweed out along the shore, so were the hearts of the Achaeans torn within their breasts.

The Trojan assault continues as book 10.5-10 presents another bad-weather description of Agamemnon’s fear:

Just as when the lord of fair-haired Hera lightens when he makes ready either much rain unspeakable or hail or snow, when the snowflakes sprinkle the fields, or perhaps the wide mouth of bitter war, so often did Agamemnon groan from the deep recesses of his breast, and his heart trembled within him.

Again, at 11.296 Hector pursues Agamemnon and other Greek fighters:

And fell on the conflict like a blustering tempest that leaps down and lashes to fury the violet hued deep... just as when the West Wind drives the clouds of the white South Wind, striking them with a violent squall, and many a swollen wave rolls onward, and on high the spray is scattered by the blast of the wandering wind, just so many heads of men were laid low by Hector.¹⁹

At last with many Greek warriors wounded in book 16, Patroclus urges Achilles to send him into the battle, “in the hope I may prove a *light* of deliverance to the Danaans” (16.39). In reply, Achilles refers to the Trojans as a “dark cloud”—“But come,” Achilles says, “put my glorious armor on your shoulders and lead out the war-loving Myrmidons to the fight if indeed the *dark cloud* of the Trojans has surrounded the ships” (l. 66). Achilles also warns him that “when once you have placed the *light* of deliverance among the ships,” leave the fighting and return to the Myrmidon camp (l. 95-96). This language of Achilles and Patroclus, referring to the presence of the Trojans as a “dark cloud” and the mission of Patroclus as “light,” actually anticipates the sky simile of book 16. One might even say that these words are a kind of “weather forecast” that looks toward the coming simile.

Thus when Patroclus enters the battle and drives back the Trojans from the burning ship of Protesilaus, Homer then introduces at *Iliad* 16.294-302 the second sky simile that completes the image he began in book 8:

295 ἡμιδαῆς δ' ἄρα νηῦς λίπετ' αὐτόθι· τοὶ δὲ φόβηθεν
 Τρῶες θεσπεσίῳ ἠμάδῳ· Δαναοὶ δ' ἐπέχυντο
 νῆας ἀνά γλαφυράς· ὄμαδος δ' ἀλίαστος ἐτύχθη.
 ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀφ' ὑψηλῆς κορυφῆς ὄρεος μέγαλοιο
 κινήσῃ πυκινὴν νεφέλην στεροπηγερέτα Ζεὺς,
 300 ἔκ τ' ἔφανευ πᾶσαι σκοπιαὶ καὶ πρόωνες ἄκροι
 καὶ νάπαι, οὐρανόθεν δ' ἄρ' ὑπερράγη ἄσπετος αἰθήρ.

ὥς Δαναοὶ νηῶν μὲν ἀπώσαμενοι δῆιον πῦρ
τυτθὸν ἀνέπνευσαν, πυλέμου δ' οὐ γίγνεται ἔρωή·

And half-burnt the ship was left there, but the Trojans were driven in rout with a wondrous din, and the Danaans poured after them among the hollow ships, and an unceasing din arose. And as from the high crest of a great mountain Zeus who gathers the lightning moves a dense cloud away and all mountain peaks and high headlands and glades appear in view, and from heaven breaks open the infinite air, so the Danaans, when they had thrust consuming fire back from the ships, caught their breath briefly; but there was no ceasing from war.

This simile, like its counterpart in book 8, marks a turn of fortune, this time in the opposite direction of that in book 8. Zeus the lightning gatherer, through the entry of Patroclus into the battle, causes the overcast, stormy sky to break up. Clearing begins; the dense storm cloud departs from the Greek camp; a change is in the air. Two lines from the simile in book 8 are repeated here (underlined above): “and all mountain peaks and headlands and glades appear in view, and from heaven breaks open the infinite air” (ll. 299-300). Once again the upper air (αἰθήρ, literally translated the “immeasurably vast upper air” (ἄσπετος αἰθήρ), breaks forth. Where the simile in book 8 is a clear nighttime sky before the arrival of a storm, this simile seems to describe a daytime sky where the αἰθήρ breaks forth after the storm departs.

Shortly later in book 16, Homer then turns the storm image on the Trojans, and the dark cloud blows in their direction beginning at line 364:

And as from Olympus a cloud comes into heaven
out of the bright air when Zeus spreads a tempest...

Another simile at book 16.384-393 expands this image when Patroclus drives

Hector with his men and horses away from the ships and across the plain:

And just as beneath a tempest the whole black earth
is oppressed on a day in harvest time when Zeus pours
down rain most violently, when in resentment he grows
angry against men who by violence give crooked
judgments in the place of assembly and drive justice
out, regarding not the vengeance of the gods; and all
their rivers flow in flood, and many a hillside then do
the torrents furrow deeply, and down to the dark sea
they rush headlong from the mountains with a mighty
roar, and the tilled fields of men are wasted; so mighty
was the roar of the mares of Troy as they rushed on.

The storm now blows in on the Trojans with the vengeance of an angry god.

Flooded rivers rise quickly; water washes down from mountains and hills and pours into the valleys below; the Trojans are swept away. An interesting distinction here is that where the storm against the Greeks beginning in book 8 seemed to come on gradually, the storm against the Trojans builds quickly. In book 8 there was a temporary interruption in the fighting in the scene with the Trojan fires. In this passage, the image is that of a swift torrent of water that sweeps them away. The Trojans are routed from the ships; atmospheric conditions have changed; the shift in the narrative is complete.

Thus these two sky similes that enclose a large section of the *Iliad* (books 8-16), including thematically related similes, are more than merely clever comparisons to some isolated detail in their immediate context. Instead, they are incorporated into an overall structure of the poem. They actually seem to become a kind of simile-narrative along side the war narrative. In other words, a story, the account of a storm,

is introduced with a simile highlighting the onset of hostile conditions, is developed further by other similes, and is concluded by repeating part of the first one, only this time highlighting the subsiding of hostile conditions.

Conclusion

As stated at the beginning, it does not seem to be the case that all pairs and clusters of similes in the *Iliad* can be demonstrated to interact with each other and with the narrative in the same way as those studied in this paper. Indeed, the similes in Appendix II that are not treated in this paper illustrate that numerous similes, both textually near to and distant from each other, may not have a textual relationship to each other at all. However, the examples treated in this study demonstrate that the poet at least occasionally, either intentionally or not, created stronger associations between simile and text than he did at other places in the poem. Even if this effect was not intentional, such associations argue for the view that the Homeric simile is not merely randomly inserted decoration. Some similes do indeed seem to interact with the narrative in a way that demonstrates a rather complex interweaving with the plot and text beyond the typical point of comparison between simile and narrative.

¹ Sheppard, 200.

² These similes occur at 8.555-563 and 16.297-305. They are examined in detail under item VI in the outline of this paper "Pivotal Points in the Narrative."

³ Edwards, Mark W. *The Iliad: A Commentary*. Vol. V: Books 17-20 (30).

⁴ Moulton (20) uses the terms "expansion" and "intensification" in a manner similar to what is meant by "amplification" in this outline.

⁵ See Appendix I for a listing of similes treated in this outline.

⁶ All English quotations come from the Loeb Classical Library translation, R. T. Murray, revised by William F. Wyatt, 1999.

⁷ *Iliad* 5.499-505 contains a pair that continues the motif of dust highlighting a characteristic of the Achaeans. It is not treated here, however, because strictly speaking it does not appear to be a contrast or comparison. There may be a comparison, however, to the earlier pair noticed in this section of the paper.

⁸ This huntsman and hounds simile (17.725-734) is treated in more detail later in this paper under V. Panoramic Photography.

⁹ Moulton, 20.

¹⁰ Moulton, 19-22. As examples of this use of simile, Moulton discusses the stormcloud similes at *Iliad* 11.297 and 305, the lion similes at *Iliad* 12.292 and 299, and the similes comparing Idomeneus and Meriones to Ares and Phobos at *Iliad* 13.295 and 298.

¹¹ Edwards, 30. The author quotes a translation of a scholia and refers the reader to N. J. Richardson, *CQ* 30, 1980, 279-81.

¹² Scott, 45.

¹³ Edwards, 39.

¹⁴ cf. *Iliad* 11:292-295.

¹⁵ In this sense, this simile might be related to the concept of “distance perspective” on page 19.

¹⁶ Moulton sees the simile in book 16 as part of a sequence that includes two later similes at 16.364 and 384.

¹⁷ Moulton uses the term “cloud images” to describe the similes at *Iliad* 16.297, 364, and 384.

¹⁸ Quotations from the *Iliad* are given only in English when the passage quoted is not part of the specific simile(s) being analyzed.

¹⁹ *Iliad* 11.297-298 and 305-309. The fact that this simile is treated both here and under the “Points of Progression in the Narrative” earlier in this paper is illustrative of the statement on page 3 that some similes may cross over one or more points in the outline.

Appendix I
Conspectus of the Similes as Treated in this Paper

- I. Comparison and Contrast
 1. Book 3
 - 24-28 Menelaus like a lion on its prey
 - 33-37 Alexander like a man panicking at sight of a snake
 2. Book 3
 - 3-7 Trojans clamor like cranes
 - 10-14 Achaean dust cloud like wind-blown mist
 3. Book 4
 - 422-428 Danaans move like waves beating on the coast
 - 433-438 Trojans like bleating ewes

- II. Points of Progression in the Narrative
 1. Book 11
 - 291-295 Hector and Trojans like a huntsman and his dogs
 - 296-298 Hector like a blustering tempest
 - 304-309 Hector's slain like sprayed water droplets
 2. Book 12
 - 424-426 Danaans and Lycians like men defending a field
 - 434-438 Trojans and Achaeans like a spinning woman
 - 451-455 Hector's stone like a ram's fleece

- III. Amplification, Intensification, or Expansion of a Previous Simile
 1. Book 11
 - 548-557 Aias like a tawny lion
 - 558-565 Aias like a stubborn ass

- IV. Shift of View or Change of Distance Perspective
 1. Book 16
 - 633-637 Battle din like the sound of wood chopping
 - 642-644 Battle throng like buzzing flies
 2. Book 22
 - 22-24 Achilles like a race horse
 - 26-32 Achilles' armor gleams like a star

- V. Panoramic Photography
 1. Book 17
 - 725-734 Trojans like hounds on a wild boar
 - 737-741 Trojan conflict like fire on a city
 - 742-746 Menelaus and Meriones like two mules dragging a wooden beam

746-753 Two Aiantes like a wooded ridge
755-759 Achaeans flee like starlings or daws

VI. Pivotal Points in the Narrative

Book 8.555-563 Trojans on the Greeks like a storm cloud

Book 16.294-305 Storm cloud turns from the Greeks

Appendix II

This chart lists selected similes that occur in the *Iliad* in closely positioned pairs or clusters.

The similes treated in the paper are printed in italics.

Book	Lines	Short Identification
Book 2	144-146 147-151	Achaean assembly stirred like waves Achaean assembly stirred like blowing ears of grain
Book 3	3-7 10-14 24-28 33-37	<i>Trojans clamor like cranes</i> <i>Achaean dust like wind-blown mist</i> <i>Menelaus like a lion upon its prey</i> <i>Alexander like a man panicking at sight of a snake</i>
Book 4	422-428 433-438	<i>Danaans move like waves beating on the coast</i> <i>Trojans bleating like ewes</i>
Book 5	136-143 159-165 499-505 519-527 860-861 863-866	Diomedes' fury like that of a maddened lion Diomedes like a lion leaping among cattle Dust on the Achaeans like chaff in a threshing floor Danaan persistence like still-weather mist Ares' cry like that of nine or ten thousand warriors Ares' appearance like darkness in storm clouds
Book 9	1-8 14-16	Achaean hearts like the wind-stirred deep Agamemnon weeping like a fountain
Book 11	62-66 66 67-71 71 291-295 296-298 304-309 474-486 492-497	Hector like a destructive star Bronze like lightening Trojans and Achaeans like reapers Trojans and Achaeans like raging wolves <i>Hector and Trojans like a huntsman and his dogs</i> <i>Hector like a blustering tempest</i> <i>Hector's slain like sprayed water droplets</i> Trojans like jackals rending a stag Aias like a winter mountain torrent

	548-557 558-565	<i>Aias like a tawny lion</i> <i>Aias like a stubborn ass</i>
Book 12	132-136 146-153 156-160 167-172 424-426 434-438 451-455	Polypoetes and Leontius like firm mountain oaks Polypoetes and Leontius like a pair of wild boars Achaean and Trojan missiles like blowing snowflakes Polypoetes and Leontius like defensive wasps or bees <i>Danaans and Lycians like men defending a field</i> <i>Trojans and Achaeans like a woman spinning wool</i> <i>Hector's lifts a stone like a shepherd lifts a fleece of wool</i>
Book 13	470-477 492-495	Idomeneus like a wild boar in the mountains Aeneas like a shepherd
Book 14	393-401 414-418	War cries louder than waves, fire, and wind Hector like a lightning-stricken tree
Book 15	80-85 170-173 263-270 271-277 358-359 362-366 381-384 579-583 586-589 604-610 618-622 624-629 630-638 679-688 690-694	Hera moves swiftly as thoughts Iris swift like wind-blown snow and hail Hector like a running horse Hector like a lion Apollo's pathway as long as a spear's cast Apollo breaks Achaean wall like a child destroys a sand castle Trojans like waves over a ship Antilochus like a hound leaping on its prey Antilochus flees like a wild beast Hector like Ares or like destructive fire Danaans like a firm fixed wall Hector like waves over a ship Hector like a lion Aias like a man skilled in horsemanship Hector like a tawny eagle

Book 16	3-4 7-11 351-356 364-367 482-486 487-491 633-637 642-644 751-754 756-761 765-771	Patroclus weeps like a fountain Patroclus like a weeping girl Danaans like ravening wolves Shouting Trojans like a tempest cloud Sarpedon fell like an oak, poplar, or a pine Sarpedon dies like a slain bull <i>Battle din like the sound of the chopping of wood</i> <i>Battle throng like buzzing flies</i> Patroclus like a rushing lion Patroclus and Hector like fighting lions Trojans and Achaeans like winds through a forest
Book 17	53-60 61-69 109-113 133-139 263-266 281-287 656-667 673-681 725-734 737-741 742-746 746-753 755-759	Menelaus like wind uprooting a tree Trojans like timid herdsman and hounds Menelaus like a retreating lion Aias guards Patroclus' corpse like a lion Trojan din like echoing waters Aias like a wild boar Menelaus like a retreating lion Menelaus' eyes like a keen-sighted eagle <i>Trojans like hounds on a wild boar</i> <i>Trojan conflict like fire on a city</i> <i>Menelaus and Meriones like two mules dragging a beam</i> <i>Two Aiantes like a protective wooded ridge</i> <i>Achaeans flee like starlings or daws</i>
Book 18	207-214 219-221	Achilles' helmet shines like a burning city Achilles' voice like a trumpet
Book 19	357-361 375-381	Achaean armor like snowflakes Achilles' shield like blazing fire
Book 20	490-494 495-499	Achilles rages like wind-blown fire Achilles' horses like bulls treading barley

Book 21	12-16	Achilles' prey like fleeing locusts
	22-26	Trojans flee like frightened fish
	252-255	Achilles rushed like a black eagle
	257-264	Achilles overtaken like one overwhelmed with raging water
Book 22	22-24	<i>Achilles like a race horse</i>
	26-32	<i>Achilles' armor gleams like a star</i>

This chart lists a few similes, either identical or similar, that occur across large sections of the poem.

The similes treated in the paper are printed in italics.

Short Identification	Location of Each Occurrence
Tears like a fountain	Agamemnon's tears 9.14-16 Patroclus' tears 16.3-4
<i>Upper Air</i>	<i>Storm on the Greeks</i> 8.555-563 <i>Storm clears from the Greeks</i> 16.294-305
Sapling in an Orchard	Achilles like a sapling tree 18.56 Achilles like a sapling tree 18.437

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