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The Foundations of Formation of the European Mentality – Homeric Principles of Enemy Estimation

It has been mentioned several times by the researchers of Homeric epics that the Homeric style is characterized by the epic objectivity.[1] This event is not typical for the epics, in general. For example, Hesiod, who is the junior representative of the generation of Homer, forms his negative or positive attitude concerning certain phenomena or figures quite univocally. I. e. Prometheus – the friend of humanity is intentionally considered as a negative figure by Hesiod, unlikely to the interpretation of this symbol by Aeschylus.[2] In *Argonautica,* which belongs to the later period – Hellenistic era (Apollonius of Rhodes is considered to be the follower of Homeric tradition), I can utterly choose certain protagonists which have to belong to the negative category from the "enemy's camp" of the Greeks.[3] On the other hand, in the *Iliad* by Homer the objectivity towards the enemy is maintained to the level, which is obviously desired even for the humanity of the 21st century filled by the propaganda of toleration. As we can see, here, as well as while reflecting several other phenomena, prevails the objectivity and the view of the world which represents Homer as being ideal even for the followers of "western humanism" of our century. This characteristic of Homeric epics is expressed in relief in the attitude towards the estimation of the enemy represented in the *Iliad.*

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[1]   See A. Ф. Лосев on epic objectivity.
[2]   For the detailed review of this issue compare to Chikhladze N., Genesis and Formation of the Fictional Character Oppositions of Prometheus, Tbilisi 2006, 42 ff. (in Georgian).
[3]   I. e. Pelias, Aeets, Bebryces.

It is generally known, that two opposing parts – Achaeans and Trojans are shown in the poem. We cannot doubt that the poet himself has to be considered as a supporter of the Achaeans. However, the reader of the *Iliad* might have a question – which party deserves the sympathy of the poet? It is obvious at the first sight that the ground for this question is the fact that Trojan protagonists are portrayed in the *Iliad* with utter sympathy. It is not accidental, that after reading the *Iliad* the majority of the readers name Hector as the protagonist who deserves more sympathy. Other Trojan protagonists, such as Priamos, Hecabe, Andromache and several others are portrayed with surprising sympathy. In this case we have to consider not only the certain protagonists but the attitude of Homer *towards the most hostile city for Achaeans – towards Troy and its custodians.*

If we have a look on the *Iliad,* we would mention that neither the poet himself nor the Achaean protagonists of the *Iliad* have the sense of objectivity towards the worthy opponents. It would be hard to discuss the details of this issue in one article limited by the regulations. I would only try to examine the manner exhibiting the basic symbols and figures of the opposing part in the *Iliad.*

Let us begin from the Troy. We have to say, that none of the epithets connected to Troy can be considered as containing the negative meaning:

1) Epithets, which are used for Troy/Ilion as well as other populated areas: ἱρέη – holy (21x); εὐρεῖα – broad (9x); ἐριβῶλαξ, ἐρίβωλος – very fruitful (6x); ἐϋκτίμενος – well-equipped (3x); ἐρατεινή – lovely (1x).

2) Epithets, which are used only for Ilion and very rarely for other cities: εὐρυαγύια – with nice streets (8x); αἰπεινή – highly risen (7x); εὖ ναιόμενον – densely populated (6x); ἠνεμόεσσα - shrouded in wind (6x); εὐτείχεος – with solid wall (4x); ὑψίπυλος – with high gate (2x).

3) Epithets, which exclusively belong to Troy/Ilion: εὔπωλος – rich with horses (22x); ἄστυ μέγα – big city (8x); ἐΰδμητος – solidly built (8x), εὔπυργος – with high, beautiful castel (1x); ὀφρυόεσσα – hilly (1x).

Troy is also often named as the city of Priamos – Πριάμοιο πόλις, Πριάμοιο πόλιν (9 x) Ἄστυ Πριάμοιο/ Ἄστυ μέγα Πριάμοιο (16x).

As we can see, the majority of the epithets are positive.[4] It is worth mentioning, that not only the poet's attitude but also the attitude of the Achaean protagonists towards Troy is positive.

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[4] See Nizharadze K., Mythopoetic and Historical Perception of Troia according to Homer, Tbilisi 2009 (in Georgian).

The Greeks always had the paradigmatic view of the victory gained in Troy and even the victories gained in the Greek-Persian wars were challenged by the defeat of Troy and its allies.[5]

Accordingly, two opposing parts are clearly represented in the *Iliad.* It is natural, that the author considers that the Greeks (Achaeans) have positive function, as they struggle against the Trojans, who behave unjustly;[6] on the other side – obviously represented enemy, which terribly insulted the whole Hellas. In such circumstance it seems natural to consider, that the Trojans mainly have to be represented in the *Iliad* with the negative function. It is less likely that the audience of Homer should not distinguish the direction of poet's sympathy. However, in antic period it was already mentioned, that in the *Iliad* there is not clearly defined good and bad, sympathetic and antipathetic. As we have already mentioned, some of the scientists consider, that in this case we are facing with epic objectivity, which is typical for Homer. He represents both of the combating parties with the prism of epic objectiveness and therefore we can not detect the negative estimation of the enemy in the poem.

I consider that the scholars exaggerate a bit while discussing the epic objectivity, as so-called neutral attitude towards the opposing parties is not a necessary poetic principle for Homer. Let us recall the *Odyssey:* here in all of the contexts when somebody is opposing Odysseus or his supporters, this opposing part is represented with utter antipathy. The best examples of it are the companions of Odysseus on one hand and the suitors on the other, which are getting punished for their guiltiness, according to the poet.[7] Nobody can say, that the poet with epic objectivity had to have especially hostile attitude towards the suitors. However, it is hard to find anybody, who will have the sympathy towards the suitors after reading the *Odyssey.* The only thing that can happen is that they should have pity on the scene of their slaughter. We do not even discuss those protagonists, who are against Odysseus in any of the context.[8]

Afterwards if we return back to the *Iliad,* it will become obvious that here we are facing completely different situation. Moreover – the majority

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[5]   In this regard the works of Greek poets (Aeschylus, Euripides) as well as historians (Herodotus, Thucydides) are significant.

[6]   It is significant, that Menelaos, while asking Zeus for support in the war against Trojans, pays the attention to the fact that the Trojans infringed one of the traditions – the custom of hospitality, for which they deserve punishment by Zeus, who is the patron of this tradition.

[7]   Гордезиани Р., Проблемы Гомеровского Эпоса, Тбилиси 1978, 146.

[8]   Cyclops, Circe, Lestrigons.

of readers of the *Iliad* consider that Hector is portrayed with the biggest sympathy. One may consider it as a sympathy expressed towards only one Trojan character and not consider it typical for other characters. However, even the superficial analyze of the *Iliad* makes us assured that the attitude of poet towards Hector coincides with the attitude towards Trojans and, to the certain extent, towards the allies of the Trojans. This can also be concluded from the following circumstance: Troy itself is represented in the poem as one of the cities which is nearly ideal. According to Gordeziani, "Troy and the society of Trojans is distingui-shable and developed in all terms. City is portrayed by the epithets and described in a manner which makes the reader to consider it as the most beautiful city in Homer's world. It is well-guarded and has the variety of allies. The inhabitants of Troy, their speech and their behavior express all signs typical for refinement and high civilization. Nothing is fabulous and unnatural in the exclusiveness of Homer's Troy. Therefore it was considered as the city which embodies beauty and wealth of the world."[9] Homer achieves this by means of forming consecutively positive attitude towards Troy and Trojans, which is realized on several levels: a) estimation by the poet – in this case we imply what the poet says about Troy and Trojans; b) expression of the attitude towards the opposing part of the Achaeans; c) representation of the basic coordinating signs of the main Trojan protago-nists. We can say that on the levels mentioned above the opposing part is represented in quite positive manner. We have already discussed the epi-thets portraying Troy. Below we will discuss the Trojan protagonists parti-cularly.

Hector is represented as quite traditional caracter. Twenty-two epithets (ἀνδροφόνος, ἀτάλαντος Ἄρηι, βοὴν ἀγαθὸς, διίφιλος, δῖος, θρασύς, θρα-σὺς ἡνίοχος, ἱππόδαμος, κορυθαίολος, κρατερός μήστωρ φόβοιο, μεγάθυ-μος, μέγας, ὄβριμος, πελώριος, ποιμήν λαῶν, Πριαμίδες, Πριαμίδες ἴσος Ἄρηι, Πριάμοιο παῖς, φαίδιμος, φλογὶ εἴκελος, χαλκοκορυστής) are used towards him and none of them has the negative meaning. In terms of character Hector is represented as the noblest character among the caracters of the *Iliad*, which is one of the most impressive examples of expressing respect and admiration towards the enemy in the history of literature.[10]

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[9]   Gordeziani R., Ancient Greek Literature, Tbilisi 2002, 111 (in Georgian).

[10]   Concerning the characterization of the protagonists in details see Nizharadze K., op. cit. Hector, Priamos, Eneas, Andromachus, Sarpedon, Glaucus, 153 ff.

Priam, regardless to his non-appearance on the battlefield because of the elderly age, is still remarkable as the highest ruler of the city and the guarantee of the existence of Troy. Homer portrays the King of Trojans with all of the features typical for experienced and wise King, on one hand, and the father thoughtful of their children, on the other. All of his 14 epithets (ἀγακλῆος, ἄναξ, βασιλεύς, γέρων, δαΐφρων, Δαρδανίδης, διοτρεφὴς βασιλεύς, εὐμμελίες, θεοειδής, θεόφιν μήστωρ ἀτάλαντως Λαομεδοντιάδης, μεγαλήτωρ, μέγας) have positive content as well.

Aeneas is also represented in the *Iliad* with 10 epithets having the positive meaning (Ἀγχισιάδης, ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν, δαΐφρων, κεκορυθμένος, αἴθοπι χαλκῷ, μήστωρ φόβοιο, παῖς Ἀγχίσαο, πόδας ταχὺς, Τρώων ἀγός, Τρώων βουληφόρος, υἱός Ἀγχίσαο). Care is typical for him, which is motivated by his mortal origin and, at the same time, the readiness which is conditioned by the fact that he is a son of goddess.

Andromache is one of the impressive caracters of the *Iliad.* Her character is significantly more than just devoted and loving wife. Andromache is represented as a woman, who has fully identified the meaning of her life with the life of her husband. Her epithets are: θυγάτερ μεγαλήτορος Ἠετίωνος, λευκώλενος.

None of the 9 epithets of Sarpedon has negative meaning as well (ἄναξ, ἀνήρ ὥριστος, ἀντίθεος, ἀτίθεος χαλκοκορυστής, ἄρχος Λυκίων, δῖος, Δῖος υἱός, Λυκίων ἀγός, Λυκίων βουληφόρος). The character of this caracter is very interesting, as it is coordinated by so-called "Lycian self-consciousness", as the responsibility towards his land and the Lycians is expressed in his every word.

The epithets dedicated to Glaucus are very minor – only two: Ἱππολόχοιο παῖς, Λυκίων ἀγὸς ἀνδρῶν. However, the author represents his quite interesting character. Courage and origin gives Glaucus the possibility of saying his word directly to his comrades in the most responsibly situation.

Paris is the only exception, which is sometimes mentioned as Δύσπαρι (ominous, sinister Paris). However, we can say that the reader of the *Iliad* also should not have the negative attitude towards him, as he also has some signs of the character, which should be typical for the member of the noble family and society.

It is natural, that after discussing these and other cases we would have the question: what is the reason of such favourable (at the first sight) attitude towards the enemy? We might consider that the principle of balance, which is applied by Homer while exposing the Trojans and Achaeans, plays certain role. It is obvious, that Homer tries to reach certain parity between the opposing parts in quantitative as well as

quantitative terms. I consider that different kind of explanation should apply here: as it has been mentioned several times, for Homer the war, despite of being the field for exposing his protagonists, is the common disaster. In order to show this, he tries to portray the opposing parties as the equally punished victims of this disaster. It would be enough to change his attitude towards one of the parties and expose it with the obviously negative function in order to reduce the condolence towards one of the parties destroyed by the war. The reader of Homer would originally have the negative attitude towards the enemy of the Greeks. In order to somehow balance this unilateral attitude, he attempts to clarify the positive characteristics of the opposing part on the other side.

Concerning the *Odyssey:* here all of the collisions have personal character and is not connected to the global disaster. Therefore in this case Homer lets himself to infringe the parity between the parties and represent the power connected to his character with the negative colors. Therefore we might consider, that that the attitude towards the enemy represented in the *Iliad* is very close to the common human understanding of tolerance, which is appealed by the contemporary humanist intellectuals and which, despite of the western humanism and democracy declared for many times, is often infringed by the contemporary states.