

H O M E R



THE ILIAD

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TRANSLATED BY
ROBERT FAGLES

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY BERNARD KNOX



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THE ILIAD



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With an Introduction and Notes by
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THE ILIAD

THE ILIAD

including line numbers

BOOK ONE

SING, goddess, the anger* of Achilles, Peleus' son,
the accursed anger which brought the Achaeans countless
agonies and hurled many mighty shades of heroes into
Hades,*
causing them to become the prey of dogs and
all kinds of birds; and the plan of Zeus was fulfilled. [5]
Sing from the time the two men were first divided in strife—
Atreus' son,* lord of men, and glorious Achilles.
Which of the gods was it who set them to quarrel and fight?
The son of Zeus and Leto,* for he was bitter against the
king, and
roused an evil plague through the camp, and the people
went on
 dying, [10]
because the son of Atreus had dishonoured his priest
Chryses.
This man had come to the swift ships of the Achaeans to
redeem his daughter, bringing a boundless ransom and
holding
in his hands the woollen bands of Apollo who shoots from
afar,*
fixed to a golden staff. He entreated all the Achaeans, but
[15]
especially the two sons of Atreus, marshals of the people:
'You sons of Atreus, and you other well-greaved Achaeans,
may the gods who have their homes on Olympus grant
that you sack the city of Priam and return safely home.
Only release my dear child, and accept this ransom, and
[20]
show reverence to Zeus' son Apollo who shoots from afar.'

Then all the rest of the Achaeans shouted their approval, that they should be in awe of the priest and accept the splendid ransom, but this found no favour in the heart of Atreus' son Agamemnon; he sent Chryses roughly away, and added a harsh command: [25]

'Let me not discover you, old man, beside our hollow ships, either dawdling here now or returning again later, in case your staff and the god's bands prove no help to you. I will not let the girl go; before I do, old age will find her in my house in Argos, far from her fatherland, going [30] back and forth at the loom and serving me in my bed. Go, do not provoke me; this way you will return unharmed.'

So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and did as he said, and silently made his way along the shore of the loud-roaring sea.

Then, going some way apart, the old man prayed at length [35]

to lord Apollo, whom Leto of the beautiful hair bore:

'Hear me, lord of the silver bow, you who stand guard over Chryse and sacred Cilla, and govern Tenedos* with your power,

Smintheus;* if ever I built a temple that pleased you or if I ever burnt for you the fat-wrapped thigh-bones * [40] of bulls or goats, I beg you to fulfil this plea for me: may the Danaans pay for my tears with your arrows.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him, and came down from Olympus' heights furious in his heart, his bow and lidded quiver hanging from his shoulders. [45] The arrows clattered against the angry god's shoulder as he moved; and he came on like nightfall.

Then, sitting apart from the ships, he let fly an arrow,
and his silver bow sang out with a terrible noise.
First he went after the mules and the swift dogs, and then
loosed [50]
piercing arrows at the men themselves, shooting without
cease;
and all the time the corpse-pyres burnt, crowded together.

For nine days the god's shafts ranged throughout the
camp,
and on the tenth Achilles summoned the people to an
assembly;
the goddess Hera of the white arms had put this into his
mind, [55]
since she cared for the Danaans, because she saw them
dying.
So when they had assembled and were gathered together,
swift-footed Achilles rose and spoke among them:
'Son of Atreus, I think we shall now be turned back from
here
to wander home again—if, that is, we can avoid death—
[60]
if the Achaeans are to be beaten down by plague as well as
war.

Come, let us interrogate some prophet or priest
or interpreter of dreams, for dreams too come from Zeus,
who may tell us why Phoebus Apollo is so bitter against us,
whether he finds fault with us over some vow or
hecatomb,* [65]
to see if he will accept the savour of lambs and
unblemished
goats, and so be willing to turn the plague away from us.'

So he spoke and took his seat again, and among them
rose
Calchas, the son of Thestor, by far the best of bird-
interpreters,

who understood the present, the future, and the past, [70]
and had guided the ships of the Achaeans to Ilium
by the prophetic skill which Phoebus Apollo had given him.
With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them:
'Achilles, dear to Zeus, you command me to explain
the anger of Apollo, the lord who shoots from afar. [75]
Well, I shall speak, but you must mark my words and swear
to come to my help willingly in both word and deed,
because I think I shall infuriate a man who has supreme
authority over the Argives, and whom the Achaeans obey.
A king is the more powerful when he is angry with a lesser
man, [80]
because even if he stifles his anger there and then
he feeds the resentment afterwards in his breast until
he brings it to fulfilment. Now tell me if you will protect
me.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
'Take courage, and speak out whatever divine truth you
know. [85]
I swear by Apollo, dear to Zeus, to whom you, Calchas,
pray when you expound divine revelations to the Danaans,
that while I live on earth and have the power of sight
no one will lay heavy hands on you by the hollow ships,
no man of all the Danaans, not even if you mean
Agamemnon, [90]
who now boasts that he is by far the best of all the
Achaeans.'

Then the blameless prophet took courage and spoke:
'It is not over a vow or hecatomb that he finds us at fault,
but because of his priest, whom Agamemnon dishonoured
and did not accept the ransom and release his daughter;
[95]
that is why the shooter from afar* torments us, and will do
so again.
Nor will he drive the ugly, shameful plague from the

Danaans

until the girl with darting eyes is returned to her father,
without ransom and without payment, and a holy hecatomb
is taken to Chryse; only then might we appease and
persuade him.' [100]

So he spoke and took his seat again, and among them
rose

the hero son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon,
full of distress; his dark heart was filled to the brim
with fury, and his two eyes were like flashing fire.

First of all he addressed Calchas, with a look of hate: [105]
'Prophet of evil, never yet have you told me anything good;
it is always dear to your heart to prophesy calamities,
and you have never given us good news or brought it to
fulfilment.

And so now you prophesy and speak publicly to the
Danaans,

claiming that the one who shoots from afar is tormenting us
[110]

because I was not willing to accept the splendid ransom
for the girl, Chryses' daughter, even though it is my desire
to keep her in my house; and indeed I prefer her to
Clytemnestra

my wedded wife, since she is in no way inferior to her in
stature or in beauty, nor in understanding or
accomplishments. [115]

Even so, I am prepared to give her back, if that is the better
course;

I would wish the people to survive rather than to perish.
But you must at once get ready another prize for me, so
that I

alone of the Argives am not without one, since that cannot
be right;

you can all see that my prize is going elsewhere.' [120]

Then in answer glorious swift-footed Achilles addressed

him:

'Most illustrious son of Atreus, rapacious beyond all other men,

how can the great-spirited Achaeans give you a prize?

We know of no great common store of possessions anywhere;

everything that we sacked from cities has been distributed, [125]

and it is not fitting that the people should collect it together again.

No; you must now give the girl up to the god, and the Achaeans

will compensate you three- and fourfold, if ever Zeus grants that we tear apart the strongly walled city of Troy.'

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him: [130]

'Godlike Achilles, great man though you may be, do not try to

deceive me in this, since you will not outwit nor get the better of me.

Are you telling me to give the girl back and to sit here meekly

with no reward, simply so that you may keep your prize?

Well, if the great-spirited Achaeans award me a prize, suiting it to my desire, equal in status to the other, I will accept it;

but if they will not, then I shall myself come and take one, either yours, or the prize belonging to Ajax or Odysseus, and carry it away; and the man to whom I come will be angry.

However, we shall give thought to this at a later time; [145]

as for now, come, let us drag a black ship down to the bright sea,

and gather some oarsmen for the purpose, and put on board

a hecatomb, and embark Chryses' fair-cheeked daughter

herself. And let there be one man, a counsellor, as captain, either Ajax or Idomeneus or glorious Odysseus, [145] or you, son of Peleus, most outrageous of men, so that you may make offerings and appease the far-worker* for us.'

Looking at him darkly swift-footed Achilles addressed him:

'You wear shamelessness like a garment, and your mind is full of greed!

How can any of the Achaeans readily obey your orders, to [150]

join an expedition or to try their strength with men in battle?

For my part, I did not come here to fight because of the Trojan

spearman, since they have done me no wrong at all:

they have never driven off my cattle or my horses,

nor have they ever destroyed my crops in rich-soiled Phthia,* [155]

nurturer of men, since between us lies a very great distance, of shadowy mountains and the roaring sea.

It was you we followed, shameless brute, to please you, to win

honour for Menelaus and for you, you dog, from the Trojans.

But you care nothing for this, and pay it no heed. [160]

And now you threaten to take my prize from me in person, for

which I laboured hard, and the sons of the Achaeans gave it to me.

I never receive a prize equal to yours whenever the Achaeans

sack some well-populated citadel of the Trojans;

it is always my hands that sustain the greater part of the [165]

violent conflict, but when there is a sharing-out of booty

your prize is by far the greater, and I go back to my ships
with

some small thing, yet dear to me, exhausted by the
fighting.

So now I shall return to Phthia, since it is far and away
better

to go home on my curved ships; I am not minded to stay
here, [170]

without honour, heaping up riches and wealth for you.'

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed
him:

'Run away, then, if your heart so urges you. I shall not beg
you

to stay on my account, since there are many others near
me

to give me honour, and especially Zeus the counsellor.

[175]

Of all the Zeus-nurtured kings you are the most hateful to
me,

for strife and war and battles are always dear to your heart;
and even if you are very strong, that must be a gift from
some god.

Go home with your ships and your companions and
lord it over the Myrmidons; I care nothing about you, and

[180]

your anger does not trouble me. But this is my threat to
you:

Phoebus Apollo is taking Chryses' daughter from me,
and I shall send her back on my ship with my companions;
but I shall come myself to your hut and take away Briseus'
lovely-cheeked daughter, your prize, so that you may know
well [185]

how much more powerful I am than you, and so that others
too

may fear to speak to me as an equal and match me face to face.'

So he spoke, and grief rose up in the son of Peleus, and the heart

in his hairy chest was divided in two as he deliberated whether to draw his sharp sword from beside his thigh and [190]

drive the others away, and kill the son of Atreus, or to suppress his bitter anger and subdue his heart. He was pondering this in his heart and in his mind, and was drawing his great sword from its scabbard, when Athena came

from the high sky; the goddess white-armed Hera had sent her, [195]

since she loved and cared equally for both men in her heart.

She stood behind Peleus' son and grasped him by his fair hair,

appearing to him alone, and none of the others saw her.

Achilles was amazed, and turned round, and at once recognized

Pallas Athena, for her eyes shone with a terrible light; [200] and he addressed her, speaking with winged words:*

'What are you doing here, daughter of aegis-wearing Zeus?

*
—

Is it to mark these arrogant insults from Atreus' son Agamemnon?

I tell you this plainly, and I believe it will be fulfilled: one day soon his high-handedness will cause him to lose his life.' [205]

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena addressed him:

'I have come from the high sky to stop your fury, hoping that

you will obey me. The goddess Hera of the white arms sent

me,
for she loves and cares equally for both of you in her heart.
Come, leave off your strife and take your hand from your
sword, [210]

though you may abuse him in words, and tell him how
things will be.

For I tell you this plainly, and indeed it will be fulfilled:
one day you will have three times as many splendid gifts to
pay for these insults. Restrain yourself now, and do as we
say.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed her:
[215]

'Goddess, a man must respect the words of you both,
however great the anger in his heart; for it is better this
way.

If a man obeys the gods, they are more ready to listen to
him.'

So he spoke, and set his heavy hand on the silver hilt,
and

thrust the great sword back into its scabbard, and did not
disobey [220]

the word of Athena; and she went away towards Olympus,
to the house of Zeus, wearer of the aegis, to join the rest of
the gods.

Then the son of Peleus once again addressed the son of
Atreus

with wounding words, and was not yet ready to give up his
anger:

'Wine-sodden man, with the eyes of a dog and the heart of
a deer! [225]

Never yet have you been brave enough to arm with the
people for war,

or to set out for an ambush with the best of the Achaeans,
for that course seems to you to be as dangerous as death.

No, it is much better to skulk in the broad camp of the

Achaeans

and to take away the gifts of any man who speaks out
against you. [230]

You are a people-devouring king, for you rule over
nonentities;

otherwise, son of Atreus, this would be the last outrage you
caused.

But I tell you this plainly, and I swear a great oath with it:
by this staff, which will never again grow leaves and shoots
since it first left the trunk where it was cut in the
mountains, [235]

nor will it sprout again, for the bronze axe has stripped
away

the leaves and bark all around it, and now in turn the
judgment-

giving sons of the Achaeans hold it in their hands,
upholding

the ordinances of Zeus; and this will be a mighty oath to
you:

one day longing for Achilles will come upon the sons of the
Achaeans, [240]

every one of them; and then, for all your grief, you will
have no power

to help them, when many fall and die at the hands of man-
slaying

Hector; and you will tear apart the heart within you in
anger,

because you denied all honour to the best of the
Achaeans.'

So the son of Peleus spoke and flung the staff, studded
[245]

with golden nails, to the ground, and sat down himself.

On the other side Atreus' son still raged; but among them
Nestor

of the sweet words leapt up, the clear-voiced orator of the

Pylians,*

from whose tongue flowed a voice sweeter than honey.
In his lifetime two generations of mortal men had already
[250]

died, those who had been raised with him and those born
afterwards in holy Pylos, and he was now ruling over the
third.

With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them:

‘Surely great distress is coming to the land of Achaea!

How Priam and the sons of Priam would be overjoyed, [255]

and all the rest of the Trojans would be glad in their hearts,
if they were to hear of all this fighting between the pair of
you,

you who excel among the Danaans in both counsel and
battle.

Come, listen to me. You are both younger than me,
and I have in times past kept company with better men
[260]

than you, and never did they treat me with disdain.

I have never seen, nor shall I ever see, such men as

Peirithous and Dryas, shepherd of his people,

and Caeneus and Exadius and godlike Polyphemos,*

[and Theseus, son of Aegeus, who resembled the
immortals.]* [265]

They were the mightiest of all men on earth in their rearing;
they were the mightiest, and they fought with the
mightiest,

with mountain-dwelling beasts, and they dealt them an
appalling death.

These were my companions when I came from Pylos,
from a far distant land, because they had summoned me.
[270]

I gave a good account of myself in the fighting; and against
them

no one of mortals who now live upon the earth could fight.
Moreover, they listened to my advice and obeyed my

words.

So you too both should listen to me, since it is better to listen.

You, great man though you are, must not take the girl from this man, [275]

but let her be, since the Achaeans' sons first gave him her as a prize.

As for you, son of Peleus, do not seek to rival a king by force,

since a staff-holding king to whom Zeus grants glory enjoys a greater portion of honour than other men do.

Even if you are stronger, it is because your mother is a goddess; [280]

but he is the greater, because he rules over more people.

Son of Atreus, give up your anger; it is I who entreat you to renounce your bitterness against Achilles, who is a mighty bulwark for all the Achaeans in ruinous war.'

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him: [285]

'Very well, old man; all that you say is according to due measure.

But this man desires to be above all other men, desires to rule over all men, to lord it over everyone, to give orders to all, though I think some will not obey him. Even if the gods who live for ever have made him a spearman, [290]

is this a reason for insulting words to burst from his mouth?'

Breaking in on him, glorious Achilles answered:

'I should certainly be called a coward and a man of no account

if I were to give way to you in everything you say.

Go and give these orders to others, but do not instruct me, [295]

because I have no mind to listen to you any further.

But I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your

mind:

I shall not fight you with my bare hands for the girl's sake,
not you

or anyone else; you all gave her to me, and then you took
her away.

But as for the rest of the possessions that I keep in my
black ship, [300]

you will not take any of them and carry them off against my
will.

Come on now, put me to the test, so that these here also
may see,

and quickly your black blood will gush out over my spear.'

So these two fought with violent words, one against the
other,

and stood up, and broke up the assembly beside the
Achaeans' ships. [305]

Peleus' son went away to his huts and well-balanced ships
with the son of Menoetius* and his own companions,
and Atreus' son dragged a swift ship down to the sea, and
picked out twenty rowers to go in it, and loaded on to it a
hecatomb

for the god, and brought Chryses' lovely-cheeked daughter
and [310]

set her on it; and much-scheming Odysseus went aboard as
captain.

So they embarked and sailed along the watery
pathways, and
the son of Atreus commanded the people to purify
themselves.

When they had purified themselves and thrown the
defilement

into the sea,* they sacrificed to Apollo unblemished
hecatombs [315]

of bulls and goats, beside the shore of the unresting sea,
and

the savour reached the high sky, caught up in the whirling smoke.

So they busied themselves throughout the camp; but Agamemnon did not give up the quarrel and the threat he had made to Achilles before this, but spoke to Talthylus and Eurybates, [320] the two who were his heralds and diligent attendants: 'Go to the hut of Achilles, son of Peleus, and take Briseus' lovely-cheeked daughter by the hand and bring her here. If he does not give her to you, then I shall come in person and get her, and with more men; and that will be the worse for him.' [325]

So he spoke, and sent them away, and laid a harsh command on them.

Reluctantly they made their way along the shore of the unrelenting sea, and came to the huts and ships of the Myrmidons. They found Achilles beside his hut and his black ship, sitting inactive; and when he saw them he was not glad. [330]

The two men were terrified, and stood there, in awe of the king, and did not address a word to him or ask him questions;

but he understood in his heart and spoke to them:

'Welcome, heralds, messengers of Zeus and of men. Come closer; it is not you I blame, but Agamemnon, [335] who is sending you here for the girl, Briseus' daughter. Come, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus,* bring the girl out and give her to these men to take away. Let them be witnesses in the sight of the blessed gods and of mortal men, and of him, that ruthless king, if ever in future [340] a need arises for me to turn ugly destruction away from the rest. His mind is surely hurtling towards ruin, and he has not the sense to look before him and behind, to

ensure that the Achaeans survive, fighting beside their ships.'

So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear companion, and [345]

brought Briseus' lovely-cheeked daughter out of the hut and

gave her to them to take away. They returned to the Achaeans' ships,

and the woman went with them, reluctantly. But Achilles wept,

and at once took himself apart from his companions and sat on

the shore of the grey sea, gazing out over the boundless expanse. [350]

Stretching out his arms he prayed at length to his dear mother:

'Mother, you gave me birth to live for only a short while, so surely

the Olympian, Zeus the high-thunderer, ought to have bestowed

some honour on me; but as it is he has given me none, not even

a little. Atreus' son, wide-ruling Agamemnon, has dishonoured [355]

me. He has taken away my prize in person, and keeps it for himself.'

So he spoke, shedding tears, and his revered mother heard him

as she sat in the depths of the sea next to her aged father.

Quickly she rose up from the grey sea like a mist,

and took her seat in front of him as he wept his tears, [360]

and stroking him with her hand she spoke to him, saying:

'Child, why are you weeping? What sorrow has entered your heart?

Tell me, do not hide it in your mind, so that we both may know.'

With a heavy groan, swift-footed Achilles addressed her:

'You do know. Why should I tell you all this when you know it? [365]

We went to Thebe, the sacred city of Eëtion,* and sacked it and brought all the plunder here. This the sons of the Achaeans distributed properly among themselves,

and picked out for Atreus' son Chryses' lovely-cheeked daughter.

But then Chryses, the priest of Apollo who shoots from afar, [370]

came to the swift ships of the bronze-shirted Achaeans, intending

to redeem his daughter, bringing a boundless ransom, and holding in his hands the woollen bands of Apollo the far-shooter,

fixed to a golden staff, and he entreated all the Achaeans, but especially the two sons of Atreus, marshals of the people. [375]

Then all the rest of the Achaeans shouted their approval, that they should be in awe of the priest and accept the splendid ransom,

but this found no favour in the heart of Atreus' son Agamemnon, and he sent him roughly away, and added a harsh command.

The old man went back in anger; and Apollo heard him [380]

when he prayed, because he was very dear to him, and let loose deadly shafts against the Argives; and the people

kept dying, one after another, and the god's arrows ranged

everywhere throughout the Achaeans' broad camp. Our prophet,
with sure knowledge, explained the far-worker's divine will to us, [385]
and it was I who first urged that we should at once appease the god;
but at this anger took hold of Atreus' son, and instantly he rose
and made threats against me, which have indeed been fulfilled.

Now the darting-eyed Achaeans are sending the girl, Chryses' child,
with a swift ship to Chryse, and are taking gifts for the lord Apollo, [390]
while heralds have lately come and taken from my hut that other girl,
Briseus' daughter, whom the sons of the Achaeans gave to me.

I beg you, if it is in your power, have care for your son; go to Olympus and entreat Zeus, reminding him of any service of word or deed that you have done to Zeus' heart. [395]

Indeed, I often heard you boasting in the halls of my father, when you said that you alone among the immortals averted ugly destruction from Cronus' son of the dark clouds,

at the time when other Olympians, Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athena, were wishing to tie him down. [400]
But you, goddess, came and released him from his bonds, quickly summoning to high Olympus the hundred-handed one

called Briareus by the gods, but all men call him Aegaeon;* and he is mightier than his father. He took his seat next to the son of Cronus, exulting in his triumph, and [405]

the blessed gods cowered in fright and did not try to bind

him.

Sit beside Zeus now and take hold of his knees* and remind him

of this, to see if he will agree to help the Trojans by penning the Achaeans in by their ships' sterns along the seashore and

killing them; so that they all may take delight in their king, [410]

and that the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, may come to

know his delusion, in that he did not honour the best of the Achaeans.'

Then Thetis answered him, shedding tears:

'Ah, my child, why did I bear you, giving birth to such suffering ?

If only you could sit at ease by your ships without tears and grief,[415]

since your portion of life is but short, and not at all long.

But you are doomed to a swift death, to be wretched beyond

all men; it was indeed to a cruel destiny that I bore you in my halls.

Still, I shall say these words for you to Zeus who delights in the

thunderbolt, going to snow-covered Olympus, to see if he will listen; [420]

and as for you, sit now beside your swift-travelling ships and

rage against the Achaeans, and hold back altogether from the war.

Zeus went yesterday to Ocean to join the blameless Ethiopians*

and to take part in a feast, and all the other gods went with him;

on the twelfth day he will come again to Olympus, [425]

and then I shall go to Zeus' house with its bronze floor
and I shall entreat him; and I believe I shall persuade him.'

So she spoke and went away, leaving him there,
bitterly angry in his heart because of the well-girdled
woman,
whom they were taking from him by force, against his will.
[430]

Now Odysseus was nearing Chryse with the holy hecatomb,
and
when they had sailed into the harbour with its many deep
bays
they furled the sail and stowed it in the black ship, and
then quickly slackened the forestays and laid the mast
in its crutch, and with oars rowed the ship on to an
anchorage. [435]

Out they threw the anchor-stones, and made the stern-
cables fast,
out they themselves landed on to the shore of the sea,
out they brought the hecatomb for Apollo who shoots from
afar,
out stepped Chryses' daughter from the sea-traversing
ship.

Then much-scheming Odysseus escorted her to the altar
[440]

and gave her into her father's arms and said to him:
'Chryses, Agamemnon, lord of men, has sent me to
bring you your daughter and to offer a holy hecatomb to
Phoebus on the Danaans' behalf, that we may appease the
lord
who has been bringing grief and lamentation on to the
Argives.' [445]

So he spoke, and gave her into his arms, and with joy
he received
his dear child. Quickly the others set out the holy hecatomb
for the god in due order around the well-built altar;

then they washed their hands and lifted up the barley grains.

And among them Chryses prayed in a loud voice, lifting up his

hands: [450]

‘Hear me, god of the silver bow, you who stand guard over Chryse

and sacred Cilla, and rule over Tenedos with your power: you listened to me when I prayed to you before, and gave me honour, and bore heavily on the Achaean people; so this time also bring this plea to fulfilment for me: [455] now turn aside the ugly plague from the Danaans.’

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him. When they had prayed and sprinkled the barley grains, they first

pulled back the beasts’ heads, then slit their throats and flayed them,

then cut away the thigh-bones and wrapped them in fat, covering [460]

them above and below, and laid raw hunks of meat upon them.

These the old man burnt on billets of wood, and poured gleaming wine

over them; and young men held five-pronged forks in their hands.

When the thigh-bones were burnt up and they had tasted the entrails,

they chopped the rest of the meat small and threaded it on skewers, [465]

and cooked it with great care, and then drew it all off.

When they had finished their work and made the meal ready

they feasted, and no one’s heart lacked a fair share in the meal.*

When they had put from themselves the desire for food and

drink,
young men filled mixing-jars to the brim with drink and
[470]

distributed it to all, after first pouring libations into the
cups.

So all day long the young men of the Achaeans set about
appeasing the god with songs, chanting a beautiful paean,*
singing of the far-worker; and he heard it and was glad in
his heart.

When the sun went down and darkness came over
them, [475]

they lay down to sleep beside the ship's stern-cables;
but when early-born Dawn with her rosy fingers appeared,
then they put out to sea for the broad camp of the
Achaeans,

and Apollo who shoots from afar sent them a following
wind.

The men set up the mast and spread the white sail aloft,
[480]

and the wind blew into the belly of the sail, and a dark
wave sang out loudly about the stem as the ship sailed on,
speeding over the waves and keeping close to its course.

When they reached the broad camp of the Achaeans
they dragged the black ship up on to the land, [485]
high on the sands, and positioned long props under it,
and themselves dispersed to their huts and their ships.

But still he raged, sitting idle beside his swift-travelling
ships,

the son of Peleus, sprung from Zeus,* swift-footed Achilles.
No longer did he frequent the assembly where men win
glory, [490]

nor ever go to the war, but wasted his dear heart away,
staying

where he was, but yearning for the battle-cry and the
fighting.

But when the twelfth dawn from that day appeared,
the gods who live for ever did indeed return to Olympus,
all together, and Zeus led the way. Thetis did not forget
[495]
her son's requests, but rose up through the waves of the
sea,
and early in the morning flew up to the vast high sky and
Olympus.
She found Cronus' wide-thundering son sitting apart from
the rest
on the topmost peak of Olympus, mountain of many ridges.
Sitting in front of him, she caught him by the knees with
her [500]
left hand and with her right reached up and grasped his
chin,*
and addressed Zeus, the son of Cronus, entreating him:
'Father Zeus, if ever I was of service to you among the
immortals
in word or in deed, then bring this plea to fulfilment for me:
honour my son; he is fated to have the briefest life of all
men, [505]
and now Agamemnon, lord of men, has dishonoured him—
he has taken away his prize in person, and keeps it for
himself.
I beg you, Olympian Zeus, counsellor, to honour him;
give victory to the Trojans, until such time as the Achaeans
make amends to my son and increase his honour.' [510]
So she spoke; and Zeus the cloud-gatherer gave her no
answer,
but sat for a long time in silence. Thetis had grasped his
knees,
and kept tight hold of them, and asked him a second time:
'Promise me without fail, and nod your head in assent, or
else
deny me (for you have nothing to fear), and so I will know

well [515]

how much I am the least honoured among all the gods.'

Then, deeply angered, Zeus the cloud-gatherer addressed her:

'This will surely prove a bad business; you will cause me to quarrel with Hera, and she will provoke and abuse me. Even as it is, she is always arguing with me among the immortal [520]

gods, saying that I take the Trojans' side in the fighting.

Go away now, in case Hera finds out that you are here.

I shall see to this matter, and bring it to fulfilment; look,

I shall nod my head in assent to you, so that you will trust me,

for this is the most important sign that comes from me to the [525]

immortals; no word of mine can be revoked or beguiled or denied, when once I have nodded my head in assent.'

So the son of Cronus spoke, and nodded his dark brows in assent,

and the locks of the lord's deathless hair swung forward on his immortal head, and he made great Olympus tremble. [530]

So these two left their plotting and went their separate ways;

Thetis leapt from shining Olympus into the deep sea,

and Zeus went to his house. All the gods stood up together from their seats in the presence of their father, and no one dared

to stay seated as he approached, but they all stood facing him. [535]

There he seated himself on his throne; but Hera knew well when she saw him that Thetis had been scheming with him, Thetis the silver-footed, daughter of the ancient of the sea.*

At once she addressed Zeus, the son of Cronus, in jeering words:

‘Crafty schemer, which of the gods has been plotting with you now? [540]

It is always your delight to keep away from me and ponder in secret before deciding something. Never yet have you brought yourself to tell me openly what you are brooding on.’

Then the father of gods and men answered her:

‘Hera, do not expect to know about all my thoughts; [545] they will turn out hard for you, even though you are my wife.

As for those that it is fitting for you to hear, no one will know before you, either of gods or men; but when I am minded to muse on something apart from the gods, you must not seek to know it or to question me closely.’ [550]

Then the ox-eyed lady Hera answered him:

‘Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said? In the past I have not questioned you closely or sought to know,

but you have devised whatever you wished in complete peace;

but now I am terribly afraid in my mind that silver-footed Thetis, [555]

daughter of the ancient of the sea, has contrived to beguile you.

Early in the morning she sat beside you and grasped your knees,

and I fancy you have nodded your head in assent, saying you will

honour Achilles, and kill many of the Achaeans beside their ships.’

Then Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed her in answer: [560]

‘You are possessed,* and always fancying things; I cannot elude you.

Even so you will achieve nothing, and this will take you further from my heart, and that will be the worse for you. If this is how things are, it must be that I wish them to be so.

You should sit in silence and abide by my words; if not,
[565]

all the gods who are on Olympus will be unable to help you when I come near and lay my irresistible hands upon you.'

So he spoke, and the lady ox-eyed Hera was afraid, and sat in silence, bending her heart to submission, and in Zeus' house the gods of the high sky were troubled;
[570]

but among them Hephaestus the famed craftsman began to speak,

out of concern for his dear mother, Hera of the white arms: 'Well, this will indeed be a bad business, and not to be borne,

if you two give rise to strife in this way because of mortals, and provoke brawling among the gods. There will be no pleasure [575]

at all in the splendid feast, since ill feeling will prevail.

To my mother I give this advice, though she knows it herself:

to give in to our dear father Zeus, so that he will not again reprimand her, and so throw our feast into disarray.

What if the Olympian god of the lightning had a mind to
[580]

hurl us bodily from our seats? He is much the most powerful here.

No, you must approach him with words that are gentle, and then straightaway the Olympian will be merciful to us.'

So he spoke, and leaping up he placed a two-handled cup

in his dear mother's hand, and addressed her: [585]

'Be patient, my mother, and endure, troubled though you

are,
or else I may see you, dear as you are to me, beaten
before my eyes; and then, though grieved, I would not be
able
to help you, since it is a hard thing to defy the Olympian.
Indeed, once before when I was eager to come to your help
[590]

he seized me by the foot and flung me from the divine
threshold:
all day long I dropped through the air, and with the sun's
setting
fell upon Lemnos,* and there was little life left in me;
but straight after my fall the Sintian men* took care of me.'

So he spoke, and the goddess Hera of the white arms
smiled, [595]
and as she smiled took the cup from her son in her hand.
Then he, moving from left to right, poured out sweet nectar
for all the other gods, drawing it off from the mixing-bowl;
and unquenchable laughter broke out among the blessed
gods,
when they saw Hephaestus shuffling* about the house.
[600]

And so the whole day long until the setting of the sun
they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the
feast,
nor were they denied the beautiful lyre which Apollo held,
nor the Muses, who sang antiphonally with their lovely
voices.

But when the bright light of the sun had gone down
[605]
they went to prepare for sleep, each to their own house,
to where the far-famed bow-legged god Hephaestus
had in his cunning skill built a house for each of them.
And Zeus, the Olympian god of the lightning, went to his
bed,

where he always rested when sweet sleep came upon him;
there [610]
he went up and slept, and beside him was Hera of the
golden throne.

BOOK TWO

Now all other beings, gods and horse-marshalling men,
slept the night long, but sweet sleep did not keep hold of
Zeus;

he was pondering in his mind how he might give honour to
Achilles, and kill many men beside the Achaeans' ships.
And this seemed to him in his heart to be the best plan,
[5]

to send a destructive Dream to Agamemnon, son of
Atreus.

Addressing the Dream, he spoke with winged words:
'Away now, destructive Dream, to the Achaeans' swift
ships;

go into the hut of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and
repeat everything to him exactly as I instruct you. [10]
Command him to arm the flowing-haired Achaeans with
all speed, because now he may take the Trojans' city with
its

wide streets; the immortals dwelling on Olympus are no
longer

divided in their purpose, for Hera has bent the wills of
them all

by her pleading, and affliction has laid hold of the Trojans.'
[15]

So he spoke, and when it had heard his words the
Dream departed,
and came without delay to the swift ships of the Achaeans.
It made for Atreus' son Agamemnon, and found him
asleep in his hut, and deathless slumber was poured over
him.

It stood above his head* in the likeness of Neleus' son [20]

Nestor, whom Agamemnon valued most of the elders;
assuming this likeness, the god-sent Dream addressed
him:

‘You sleep, son of Atreus, war-minded breaker of horses;
but a man of counsel should not sleep the whole night
through,

one to whom the people are entrusted and who has so
many cares. [25]

Now listen quickly to me; I am a messenger to you from
Zeus,

who though far away is deeply concerned for you and
pities you.

He commands you to arm the flowing-haired Achaeans
speedily, because now you may take the Trojans’ city with
its

wide streets. The immortals dwelling on Olympus are no
longer [30]

divided in their purpose, for Hera has bent the wills of
them all

by her pleading, and affliction sent from Zeus has laid hold
of

the Trojans. Store this then in your heart; do not let
forgetfulness

possess you, when once mind-cheering sleep has released
you.’

So it spoke and departed, and left him there,
pondering [35]

these things in his heart, which would not be fulfilled;
he thought he would take the city of Priam on that same
day,

fool that he was, and did not know what deeds Zeus was
planning,

who was about to inflict even more anguish and
lamentation on

both Trojans and Danaans in the course of the harsh

conflict. [40]

He woke from his sleep, and the divine voice was poured over him;

he started up, then stood and clothed himself in his soft tunic,

beautiful and not yet worn, and threw over it his great cloak.

Under his shining feet he bound his fine sandals, and from his shoulders he slung his silver-riveted sword.

[45]

He picked up his ancestral, never-decaying staff, and holding it

made his way along the ships of the bronze-shirted Achaeans.

Now the goddess Dawn had reached high Olympus, to announce the daylight to Zeus and the other immortals, when Agamemnon commanded the clear-voiced heralds

[50]

to summon the flowing-haired Achaeans to an assembly.

So they made the summons, and the men gathered with great speed.

But first he held a council of the great-spirited elders beside the ship of Nestor, the king who was born in Pylos. When he had called them together he framed a subtle plan: [55]

‘Listen to me, friends. A god-sent Dream came to me in my sleep

through the deathless night, and it most closely resembled glorious Nestor in appearance and stature and form.

It stood above my head and spoke these words to me:

“You sleep, son of Atreus, war-minded breaker of horses;

[60]

but a man of counsel should not sleep the whole night through,

one to whom the people are entrusted and who has so

many cares.

Now listen quickly to me; I am a messenger to you from Zeus,

who though far away is deeply concerned for you and pities you.

He commands you to arm the flowing-haired Achaeans
[65]

speedily, because now you may take the Trojans' city with its

wide streets. The immortals dwelling on Olympus are no longer

divided in their purpose, for Hera has bent the wills of them all

by her pleading, and affliction sent from Zeus has laid hold of

the Trojans. Store this in your heart." So it spoke, and [70] flew away from my sight, and sweet sleep released me.

So come, let us see if we can arm the sons of the Achaeans for battle.

But first I shall test them with words, as is right, and I shall urge them to flee in their many-benched ships, and you must go among them and try to hold them back with words.' [75]

So he spoke and took his seat again, and among them arose Nestor, who was king in sandy Pylos.

With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them:

'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives, if anyone else of the Achaeans had told us of this dream
[80]

we would say it was false, and would turn our backs on it; but the man who saw it claims to be the best of the Achaeans.

So come, let us try to arm the sons of the Achaeans for battle.'

So he spoke, and was the first to leave the assembly,

and the rest,
all the staff-holding kings, stood up after him and obeyed
[85]

the shepherd of the people; and the people rushed to
meet them.

As when troops of swarming bees stream out
from a hollow rock in bursts, one after another,
and settle in clusters on springtime flowers, and
then, massing together, fly off in different directions; [90]
so the numerous tribes streamed out by companies
from their ships and huts along the wide sea shore
to the assembly place. And among them blazed Rumour,
Zeus' messenger, urging them ever onwards; and so they
gathered.

And the assembly was in turmoil, and the earth groaned
[95]

under the men as they sat down, and there was an uproar.

Nine

heralds set about holding them back, shouting, hoping to
stop

their clamour and make them listen to the Zeus-nurtured
kings.

So the people hastily sat down, and kept to their seats,
and stopped their shouting. Then lord Agamemnon arose,
[100]

holding the staff which Hephaestus had made by his craft.
Hephaestus had given it to lord Zeus, the son of Cronus,
and then Zeus had given it to the guide, slayer of Argus;*
lord Hermes gave it to Pelops, whipper of horses, and
Pelops in his turn gave it to Atreus, shepherd of the
people. [105]

Atreus as he died left it to Thyestes, rich in flocks,
and Thyestes in his turn left it to Agamemnon to wield,
to rule over many islands and the whole of Argos.*

Leaning on this staff, Agamemnon addressed the Argives:
'Friends, Danaan heroes, ministers of Ares! Zeus, the son

of [110]

Cronus, has mightily snared me in a cruel delusion,
hard god that he is, who once promised and assured me
that I

should return home only after sacking strongly walled
Ilium;

but now he has planned an evil deception, and tells me to
return to Argos without glory, after losing many of my
people. [115]

This must I suppose be pleasing to Zeus the all-powerful,
who has indeed destroyed the crowns of many cities,
and will do so again; for his might is the greatest of all.
But this will be a shameful thing for future men to hear,
that so fine and numerous a host of Achaeans fought [120]
a vain and futile war, fighting against men who were
fewer in number, with no success to be shown at its end.
If we were minded, both Achaeans and Trojans, to make
a solemn truce and both sides to reckon their numbers,
the Trojans to count up those who have houses in the city,
[125]

and we Achaeans to arrange ourselves in groups of ten;
and if each group were to choose a Trojan to pour their
wine,
then there would be many tens who lacked a wine-pourer
—

so greatly, I say, do the sons of the Achaeans outnumber
the Trojans who dwell in the city. But they have allies [130]
from many cities on their side, men who wield the spear,
who thwart me mightily and prevent me from sacking
Ilium,

that well-populated city, for all my desire to do so.

Already nine years from great Zeus have passed, and, as
we see,

the ships' timbers have rotted and their rigging has gone
slack; [135]

and our wives and our infant children must be sitting

in our halls longing for our return, while our enterprise,
the cause of our coming here, remains quite
unaccomplished.

Come then, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:
let us go away in our ships to our dear native land, [140]
because we shall never capture Troy of the wide streets.'

So he spoke, and roused the spirit in the breasts
of all those in the army who did not know his purpose.
The assembly was stirred like the tall waves of the sea,
the open sea by Icaria,* when the East and South Winds
[145]

churn it up, swooping down from the clouds of father
Zeus.

As when the West Wind moves over a deep cornfield
and stirs it, and the ears of corn bend before its violent
onset,
so the whole assembly was stirred, and the men rushed
shouting towards the ships, and underneath their feet the
dust [150]

rose and hung suspended in the air. They called to each
other
to lay hold of the ships and drag them down to the bright
sea,
and they began to rake out the slipways and pulled the
props from
under the ships; in their longing for home their shouts
reached the sky.

Then the Argives would have returned home, against
their

destiny, [155]
if Hera had not spoken to Athena with these words:
'Daughter of aegis-wearing Zeus, Atrytone,* this will not
do!

It seems that the Argives are about to flee home to their
dear native land, over the broad back of the sea. If they

do,
they will leave to Priam and the Trojans a reason to boast
— [160]
I mean Argive Helen, on whose account many of the
Achaean
have died at Troy, far from their dear native land.
Go now among the people of bronze-shirted Achaeans
and with coaxing words try to hold back every man, and
do not let them drag their well-balanced ships down to the
sea.’ [165]

So she spoke, and the goddess grey-eyed Athena did
not disobey her,
but went swooping down from the peaks of Olympus,
and quickly came to the swift ships of the Achaeans.
There she found Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in scheming,
standing idle; he had not laid hold of his well-benched
black ship, [170]

because sadness had entered his heart and his spirit.
Standing nearby the goddess grey-eyed Athena addressed
him:

‘Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many
schemes,
are you really about to fall into your many-benched ships,
all of you, and to run home like this, to your dear native
land? [175]

If so, you will leave to Priam and the Trojans a reason to
boast—

I mean Argive Helen, on whose account many of the
Achaean
have died at Troy, far from their dear native land.
Come now, do not delay, but go among the people of the
Achaean,
and with coaxing words try to hold back every man, and
[180]

do not let them drag their well-balanced ships down to the sea.'

So she spoke, and he knew he had heard a goddess's voice,
and set off at a run, throwing away his cloak, which was retrieved
by the herald Eurybates, who came from Ithaca and served him.
He himself went to meet Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and [185]
received from him the ancestral, never-decaying staff,
and holding it made his way along the ships of the bronze-shirted Achaeans.

Whenever he came across a king or man of eminence, he would stand beside him and try to restrain him with coaxing words:

'You are possessed! It is not right to threaten you as if you [190]

were a coward; go, sit down again and make all your people sit as well.

You do not yet know clearly what the son of Atreus intends;

he is testing the Achaeans' sons now, but soon he will hit them hard.

Did we not all hear what he said in the council? I am afraid that in his bitterness he may punish the sons of the Achaeans. [195]

Great is the temper of kings who are nurtured by Zeus; their honour comes from Zeus, and Zeus the counsellor loves them.'

But whenever he saw a man of the common people yelling out,

he would belabour him with the staff and shout at him:

'You are possessed! Sit down quietly and listen to the words of others [200]

who are better fighters than you; you are feeble and
unwarlike,
not someone to be reckoned with either in war or in
counsel.
There is no way that we Achaeans can all be kings here.
Many rulers are an evil thing; let there be a single
commander,
one king, to whom the son of crooked-scheming Cronus
has given [205]
[a staff and the power to judge, to decide for his people].'

So by his authority he brought them under control,
and they streamed
back again from their ships and huts to the assembly
place,
with the noise of a wave of the loud-bellowing sea when it
crashes on to a great beach, and the wide sea echoes its
roar. [210]

So they all settled down and kept to their seats,
except for
one man, Thersites, who kept whining on; his talk was full
of chaos,
and he had a mind crammed with words, numerous and
disorderly,
though he used them in a wild and unruly way, to argue
with the kings;
and he would say what he thought would be amusing to
the [215]
Argives. He was the ugliest man who had come to besiege
Ilium:
he was bandy-legged, and lame in one foot, and his
shoulders
were hunched together, narrowing on to his chest, and his
head grew to a point, and sprouted a scanty crop of hair.
He was especially hated by Achilles and Odysseus, for it
was [220]

his way to provoke them; but now against glorious
Agamemnon
he began to shout abuse, yelling and screaming. The
Achaeans
were outraged in their hearts, and grew violently angry
with him;
but still he harangued Agamemnon, shouting at the top of
his voice:
'What is your complaint this time, Atreus' son? What more
do you want? [225]
Your huts are crammed full of bronze, and there are many
women in your huts, expressly chosen, whom the
Achaeans
give to you before anyone else whenever we capture a
city.
Is it more gold you hanker after, gold such as one of the
horse-
breaking Trojans may bring from Ilium as ransom for his
son, [230]
whom I or another Achaean have captured and delivered
here?
Or is it a young woman you want, to couple with in love,
and to keep her apart for yourself? It is not right for one
who is their leader to make trouble for the sons of the
Achaeans.
Weak fools, wretched fools, women of Achaea, no longer
men! [235]
Let us make our way home in our ships and leave this one
here at Troy to brood on his winnings; he will soon find out
whether the rest of us will come to his help or not. And
now
he has even dishonoured Achilles, a much better man than
him,
taking his prize away in person and keeping it for himself.
[240]
But there is no rage in Achilles' heart, and he is slow to act

—
otherwise, son of Atreus, this would be your last outrage.'

So Thersites spoke, provoking Agamemnon, shepherd of the people.

But glorious Odysseus quickly came up and stood beside him,

and looking at him darkly rebuked him with hard words:
[245]

'Thersites, you may be a clear-voiced speaker, but your words are wild.

Restrain yourself; do not hope to be the one man who argues with kings.

I do not believe there is any mortal less warlike than you, out of all those who came with the sons of Atreus to besiege Ilium.

So—let's have no more bawling out the names of your kings, [250]

trying to make sure of a voyage home by flinging abuse at them.

We do not yet know for sure how these things will be, whether

we sons of Achaeans will return home in triumph or in defeat;

yet here you sit and behave insolently towards

Agamemnon,

shepherd of the people, because the Danaan heroes give him [255]

a great many gifts; your speech is nothing but jeering abuse.

But I tell you this plainly, and it will certainly be fulfilled:

if ever I find you playing the fool again as you are now,

may the head of Odysseus no longer sit on his shoulders,

and may I no longer be called the father of Telemachus,

[260]

if I do not lay hands on you and strip you of your

garments,
your cloak and your tunic, which cover up your shame,
and send you away weeping to the swift ships, when I
have
thrashed you out of the assembly with shameful blows.'

So he spoke, and with the staff beat Thersites on his
back [265]
and shoulders; he doubled up, and a huge tear fell from
his eyes,
and on his back a bloody weal swelled up, raised by
the blows of the golden staff. He sat down again, terrified
and in pain, and with a helpless look wiped the tear away.
But the rest, vexed though they were, laughed happily to
see it, [270]
and this is what they would say, each man looking at his
neighbour:

'Well, we know that Odysseus has done countless fine
things,
both leading us with good counsel and deploying us in
battle,
but this is by far the best thing he has done among the
Argives,
stopping this blustering and intemperate man speaking in
the

assembly. [275]
I do not think Thersites' proud spirit will ever again urge
him
to use such insulting words to pick fights with the kings.'

So spoke the mass of men; and now Odysseus, sacker
of cities,
stood up, holding the staff, and by his side grey-eyed
Athena
in the likeness of a herald commanded the people to be
silent, [280]
so that the nearest and the furthest of the sons of the

Achaeans

might hear what he said and reflect on his advice.

With generous intent he spoke out among them:

‘Son of Atreus, lord, it seems now that the Achaeans are minded

to make you thoroughly disgraced among mortal men, and
[285]

they will not fulfil the promise that they made to you
on their voyage here from Argos,* rearer of horses: that
you

would return home only after sacking Ilium of the strong
walls.

They are behaving like young children or widowed women,
when they start wailing to each other about their return
home— [290]

clearly the battle-toil discourages them, and so they want
to go back.

Even a man who spends one month apart from his
wife will brood impatiently beside his many-benched ship,
which

winter storms and swelling seas keep confined to the
shore;

but in our case this is now the ninth circling year that we
have [295]

remained here inactive. I do not therefore blame the
Achaeans

for their brooding impatience beside the curved ships; yet
it is

surely a shameful thing to wait so long and return empty-
handed.

Be patient, my friends, and hold out for a time, and we will
learn

whether Calchas prophesies truly to us or not. What I shall
[300]

now say we remember well in our minds, and you are all
witnesses, those whom the spectres of death have not

carried off:

it seems like yesterday or the day before that the
Achaean's ships

assembled at Aulis,* bringing ruin to Priam and to the
Trojans,

and we on sacred altars that surrounded a spring were
[305]

sacrificing unblemished hecatombs to the immortals,
under a beautiful plane tree from which bright water
flowed,

when a momentous sign appeared: a snake with a blood-
red back,

hideous, that the Olympian himself had dispatched into
the light,

slithered out from under the altar and made for the plane-
tree. [310]

Now in this were some sparrow's fledglings, infant
children,

on the topmost branch, cowering under the leaves,
eight of them, and the mother who bore them made nine.

The snake swallowed them down, all squeaking piteously,
and

their mother fluttered about them, lamenting her dear
brood, [315]

and as she cried over them it coiled itself up and caught
her by the wing.

But when it had devoured the sparrow's children and their
mother,

the god who had caused it to appear made it into a clear
sign:

the son of crooked-scheming Cronus turned it to stone,
and we stood there in amazement at what had happened.

When this dreadful prodigy had interrupted the
gods' hecatombs,

Calchas straightaway interpreted it for us, and spoke out:
"Why have you fallen silent, flowing-haired Achaeans?"

It is for us that Zeus the counsellor has revealed this great sign—

late appearing, and late in fulfilment, but its fame will never die. [325]

As this creature has devoured the children and the sparrow herself,

eight of them, and the mother who bore them made nine, so shall we make war at Troy for that number of years, and in the tenth we shall take the city with its wide streets.”

So he spoke out, and all this has now been fulfilled. [330]

So come, stand firm where you are, all you well-greaved Achaeans, until such time as we take the great city of Priam.’

So he spoke, and the Argives gave a great yell, and the ships

resounded loudly around to the shouts of the Achaeans, as they acclaimed the speech of godlike Odysseus. [335]

Then among them the horseman Gerenian* Nestor spoke up:

‘Come, come! Truly, your speeches are like children’s, infants, who know nothing of the business of war.

What is now to become of our oaths, and the agreements we made?

We may as well throw into the fire all men’s counsels and stratagems, [340]

those libations of unmixed wine, and the right hands we trusted in;

we are fighting with words, but to no purpose, and we cannot

find a remedy, even though we have been here for a long time.

Son of Atreus, you must hold your purpose unshaken, as before,

and command the Argives in the harsh conflict, and [345]

leave these others to die, the one or two of the Achaeans
who are plotting in secret—though it will all come to
nothing—
to go back to Argos before they find out about the promise
of Zeus who wears the aegis, whether it is false or not.
I believe that the son of Cronus, the all-powerful, nodded
assent [350]
to us on the day that the Argives boarded their swift-
travelling
ships, bringing bloodshed and doom to the Trojans, when
he
flashed lightning on our right, showing us an auspicious
sign.
So let no one hurry to sail away towards his home
until each man of you has slept with the wife of a Trojan,
[355]
and has exacted vengeance for Helen's struggles and
groans.
But if anyone has an overwhelming desire to leave for
home,
let him merely touch his well-benched black ship, and
in the sight of all he will meet death and destruction.
Come, lord, consider well and listen to the advice of
another; [360]
whatever I say to you, you should not cast it aside.
Separate the army by tribes and by clans, Agamemnon,
so that clan may support clan and tribe may support tribe.
If you do this, and if the Achaeans follow your orders,
you will find out the cowards among the leaders and
people, [365]
and the brave men, because they will fight in their own
companies.
You will find, too, if it is by divine will that you fail to
destroy the city,
or because of men's cowardice and their ignorance of
warfare.'

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him:
'Once again, old man, you far surpass the Achaeans' sons
in debate. [370]

Father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, how I wish that
I had ten counsellors such as this man among the
Achaeans!

Then the city of lord Priam would soon reel before us,
when it has been captured and devastated by our hands.
But Zeus, Cronus' aegis-wearing son, has brought me
anguish, [375]

pitching me into disputes and quarrels that cannot be
resolved.

We fought, I and Achilles, for the sake of a girl,
matching violent words, and I was the first to become
angry;

but if ever we can agree on one course of action, no
longer

will the Trojans' evil day be put off, not even for a short
time. [380]

So go now and make your meal, and prepare for Ares'
warfare;

let each man take care to sharpen his spear and fettle his
shield,

let each man take care to give their meal to his swift-
footed horses,

let each man take care to inspect his chariot well and
prepare for war,

so that all day long we may join in the judgement of
hateful Ares. [385]

There will certainly be no intervening respite, not even a
little,

until the coming of night brings men's fury to judgement.
Sweat will cover the strap across his chest of each man's
body-

protecting shield, and the hand on his spear will grow

weary, and
sweat will cover each man's horse as it strains at the
polished

chariot. [390]

And if I chance to see anyone attempting to hang back
from
the battle by the beaked ships, there will be no sure way
for him thereafter to escape the dogs and vultures.'

So he spoke, and the Argives gave a great roar, like a
wave
churned up by the South Wind's onset, falling on to a
steep shore [395]
against a jutting rock that the breakers, driven by winds
from every quarter, never leave, but come at it from every
side.

They rose quickly to their feet and scattered to their ships,
and lit fires, everyone in his own hut, and ate their meal.
Each man sacrificed to one of the gods who live for ever,
[400]

praying that he would escape death and the grind of Ares'
warfare.

But Agamemnon, lord of men, sacrificed a bull,
a fat five-year-old, to the all-powerful son of Cronus, and
summoned the elders, chieftains of the whole Achaean
force:

Nestor came first of all, and the lord Idomeneus, [405]
then the pair called Ajax and the son of Tydeus,
then sixth came Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in scheming.
Uninvited came Menelaus, master of the war-cry,
for he knew in his heart how troubled his brother was.
They stood around the bull, and lifted up the barley grains,
[410]

and among them lord Agamemnon spoke in prayer:
' Mightiest, most glorious Zeus of the dark cloud, dwelling
in the

upper air, grant that before the sun sets and darkness
comes
I shall hurl the palace of Priam down headlong,
blackened in smoke, and burn its doors with ravaging fire,
[415]
and that I shall rip Hector's tunic into tatters on his chest,
slashed by the bronze; and may great numbers of his
companions
fall face-forward on the earth, biting the ground with their
teeth.'

So he spoke, but the son of Cronus did not yet fulfil his
prayer;
he accepted the sacrifice, but prolonged their miserable
toil. [420]

Now when they had prayed and sprinkled the barley
grains,
first they pulled back the bull's head, slit its throat and
flayed it,
then cut away the thigh-bones and wrapped them in fat,
covering
them above and below, and laid raw hunks of meat on
them.
These they laid on to billets of dead wood and burnt them,
[425]
then spitted the entrails and held them over Hephaestus'
fire.

When the thigh-bones were burnt up, and they had tasted
the entrails,
they chopped the rest of the meat small and threaded it
on skewers,
and cooked it with great care and then drew it all off.
When they had finished their work, and made the meal
ready, [430]
they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the
meal.

But once they had put from themselves the desire for food and drink,
among them the horseman Gerenian Nestor began to speak:

‘Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon lord of men,
let us not spend more time conversing, nor any longer
[435]

postpone the work which a god is putting into our hands.
Come now, let the heralds of the bronze-shirted Achaeans
make a proclamation and assemble the people by ships,
and let us go together as we are throughout the broad
camp
of the Achaeans, so that we may quickly stir up bitter
Ares.’ [440]

So he spoke, and Agamemnon lord of men did not
disobey him.
Immediately he ordered the clear-voiced heralds to make
a proclamation, calling the flowing-haired Achaeans to
war;

so they made their proclamation, and the men gathered
very quickly.

Then Atreus’ son and with him the kings, nurtured by
Zeus, [445]

busily mustered the army, and in their midst was grey-
eyed Athena,
holding the precious aegis, ageless and immortal,
from which fluttered a hundred tassels,
all golden, all of them skilfully woven, each worth a
hundred oxen.

Holding this she darted swiftly in and out of the Achaean
people, [450]

provoking them to action, and in each man she stirred up
strength

in his heart to engage in the war and fight without
ceasing;

and so then war became sweeter to them than a return
in their hollow ships to their dear native land.

As when devastating fire blazes through an enormous
forest [455]

on a mountain peak, and its glare is seen from afar,
so as they marched the glitter from the stupendous mass
of bronze

flashed all around through the upper air and reached the
high sky.

As the numerous companies of winged birds,
geese or cranes or swans with their long necks, gather
[460]

on the Asian water-meadow, by the streams of Caÿster,*
and soar this way and that, exulting in their wings, and
settle with a clamour, and the meadow resounds with their
cries,

so the army's numerous companies poured out from ships
and huts on to the plain of Scamander;* and the ground
under [465]

the feet of men and horses gave back a terrifying sound.
They took their stand on the flowery plain of Scamander,
numberless as the leaves and flowers that appear in
spring.

As many as the numerous companies of swarming
flies

that swarm about the sheepfold of a herdsman [470]

in the season of spring, when pails brim with milk,
so many were the flowing-haired Achaeans facing the
Trojans

and taking their stand on the plain, raging to break them
utterly.

And just as goatherds easily separate their far-
wandering

flocks of goats, when they have become mixed up in the
pasture, [475]

so the commanders mustered their men on this side and
on that,
ready for the conflict; and in their midst was lord
Agamemnon,
his gaze and head like Zeus who delights in the
thunderbolt,
in girth like Ares, and with the chest of Poseidon.
Just like an ox which far surpasses all the rest of a herd,
[480]
a bull, which stands out among the cattle gathered round
it,
even so Zeus made the son of Atreus on that day,
conspicuous in the soldiery, pre-eminent among the
heroes.

Tell me now, Muses who have your homes on Olympus
—
for you are goddesses, and are present, and know
everything, [485]
while we hear only rumour, and know nothing—
who were the commanders and princes of the Danaans.
As for the soldiery, I could not describe or name them,
not even if I had ten tongues and ten mouths,
an indestructible voice, and a bronze heart within me,
[490]
unless the Muses of Olympus, daughters of aegis-wearing
Zeus, were to recount all those who came to besiege
Ilium.
So I shall relate the ships' captains and the number of
their ships.*

Of the Boeotians, Peneleos and Leïtus were their
captains,
and Arcesilaus and Prothoënor and Clonius; [495]
these were the men who lived in Hyria and rocky Aulis,
Schoenus and Scolus and Eteonus with its many peaks,
Thespeia, Graea, and Mycalessus of the wide dancing-

places,
and who occupied Harma and Eilesium and Erythrae,
and those who possessed Eleon and Hyle and Peteon,
[500]

Ocalea and the well-built fortress of Medeon,
Copae, Eutresis, and Thisbe rich in doves, and
those who lived around Coronea and grassy Haliartus,
those who inhabited Plataea and who lived in Glisas,
those who possessed Lower Thebes,* that well-built
fortress, [505]

and sacred Onchestus, Poseidon's splendid grove,
and who inhabited Arne, rich in vines, and who held Mideia
and sacred Nisa and Anthedon on the far borders.
Of these people, fifty ships had come, and in each
one hundred and twenty young Boeotians had embarked.
[510]

Those who lived in Aspledon and Minyan Orchomenus
were led by Ascalaphus and Ialmenus, sons of Ares,
whom Astyoche bore in the house of Actor, Azeus' son,
to mighty Ares; a modest virgin, she went up to her
chamber
and there the powerful god lay with her in secret. [515]
Under these was marshalled a fleet of thirty hollow ships.

The captains of the Phocians were Schedius and
Epistrophus,
sons of Iphitus, the great-hearted son of Naubolus.
These were the men who held Cyparissus and rocky Pytho,
sacred Crisa and Daulis and Panopeus, [520]
and those who occupied Anemorea and Hyampolis,
and those whose homes were by the bright river Cephissus,
and those who inhabited Lilaea next to the springs of
Cephissus.

They were accompanied by forty black ships.
Their captains ordered the ranks of the Phocians and [525]
stationed them on the left flank, close to the Boeotians.

The Locrians were commanded by Oïleus' son, swift Ajax,
the lesser one, not as huge as Ajax, son of Telamon, but much smaller. He was of slight build, and wore a linen jerkin,
but he far excelled all the Hellenes and Achaeans with the spear. [530]

These were the men who lived in Cynus and Opous and Calliarus, in Bessa and Scarphe and lovely Augeiae, Tarphe and Thronion, and the land around Boagrius' waters.

Accompanying Ajax came forty black ships of the Locrians who live opposite sacred Euboea. [535]

As for the fury-breathing Abantes, who held Euboea, Chalcis and Eiretria and Histiaea, rich in vines, Cerinthus next to the sea and the steep fortress of Dius, those who inhabited Carystus and those who lived in Styra —

these in their turn were commanded by Elephenor, a shoot of Ares,* [540]

son of Chalcodon, captain of the great-hearted Abantes. With him came the swift Abantes, their hair streaming behind them,
spearmen raging with their out-thrust ash shafts to tear through the corslets on their enemies' chests. Accompanying Elephenor came forty black ships. [545]

Then there were those who lived in Athens, a well-built city,

the people of great-hearted Erechtheus, whom long ago Athena

Zeus' daughter nurtured, after the grain-giving earth had borne him,

and established him in Athens, in her own rich temple; and there with an offering of bulls and rams the young men [550]

of the Athenians appease him in each year's wheeling course.

These in their turn were commanded by Menestheus, Peteus' son.

No man had yet been born upon earth who was his equal in the deployment of chariots and shield-bearing men; only Nestor could rival him, since he was from an older time. [555]

Accompanying Menestheus came fifty black ships.

Ajax brought twelve ships from Salamis, and stationed them where the Athenians' troops were deployed.

As for those who inhabited Argos and fortified Tiryns, Hermione and Asine which lie on the deep gulf, [560] Troezen and Eionae, and vine-bearing Epidaurus, and those young Achaean men who held Aegina and Mases,

they in their turn were led by Diomedes, master of the war-cry,

and Sthenelus, dear son of far-famed Capaneus.

Third with them came Euryalus, a man resembling the gods, [565]

son of Mecisteus the king, who was the son of Talaus.

Diomedes, master of the war-cry, commanded the whole force,

and accompanying them came eighty black ships.

As for those who inhabited the well-built city of Mycenae,

wealthy Corinth and well-built Cleonae, [570]

and who lived in Orneiae and lovely Araethyrea,

and Sicyon, where Adrestus was the first king,

and those who inhabited Hyperesie and steep Gonoëssa and Pellene, and had their home in Aegion

and all the coastal strip of Aegialus, and broad Helice— [575]

the captain of their hundred ships was Agamemnon,
son of Atreus, and with him came by far the most
numerous
and best men. He stood in their midst, armed in flashing
bronze,
exulting, conspicuous among all the heroes because
he was the best, and brought by far the largest army.
[580]

As for those who lived in low-lying Lacedaemon, riven
by
gorges, in Pharis and Sparta and Messe rich in doves,
and who lived in Bryseiae and lovely Augeiae,
and those who held Amyclae and the maritime fortress of
Helus,
and who possessed Laas and lived around Oetylus, [585]
these and their sixty ships were commanded by his
brother,
Menelaus, master of the war-cry. They were stationed
apart,
and he moved among them, drawing strength from his
passion,
urging them on to battle; most of all he desired in his
heart
to exact vengeance for Helen's struggles and groans.
[590]

As for those who lived in Pylos and lovely Arene,
Thryon where Alpheus is forded, and well-built Aepy,
and whose home was Cyparresseis and Amphigeneia,
Pteleus and Helus and Dorion, where the Muses
met Thamyris the Thracian on his way from Oechalia,
[595]
from the house of Eurytus the Oechalian, and ended his
singing,
because he boasted that he would win the prize, even if
the

Muses themselves, daughters of aegis-wearing Zeus, were to sing;
in their anger they mutilated him, and took away his marvellous
gift of singing, and made him forget his lyre-playing art.
[600]

Of these the commander was the horseman, Gerenian Nestor,
and with him were mustered ninety hollow ships.

As for those who held Arcadia, under Cyllene's steep mountain,
near the tomb of Aepytus, where men fight hand to hand,
and those who lived in Pheneus and Orchomenus, rich in flocks, [605]

Rhipe and Stratië and Enispe, swept by winds,
and those who possessed Tegea and lovely Mantinea,
and those who possessed Stymphelus, and who lived in Parrhasië, these were commanded by the son of Ancaeus, lord Agapenor, with sixty ships; and in each ship [610]
many men of Arcadia skilled in warfare had embarked.
Atreus' son Agamemnon, lord of men, had himself given them
well-benched ships to cross the wine-faced open sea,
since they had no knowledge of seafaring matters.

As for those who lived in Buprasium and glorious Elis, [615]
all the land that Hyrmine and Myrsinus on the far borders
and the rock of Olenus and Alesion enclose between them,
of these there were four captains, and each man was accompanied
by ten swift ships, and many Epeians had embarked on them.

Some were commanded by Amphimachus and Thalpius, [620]
one a son of Cteatus and the other of Eurytus, both of

Actor's family.

Diores, the mighty son of Amarynceus, was captain of the third,

and godlike Polyxeinus was captain of the fourth division, the son of king Agasthenes, who was the son of Augeas.

As for those from Dulichium* and the sacred Echinean [625]

Islands, who live across the sea opposite Elis, these were commanded by Meges, the equal of Ares, Phyleus' son, whom the horseman Phyleus, dear to Zeus, fathered;

he had long ago quarrelled with his father and migrated to Dulichium. Accompanying him came forty black ships. [630]

Odysseus led the great-spirited Cephallenians, who held Ithaca and Neritum with its trembling leaves, and lived in Crocyleia and rugged Aegilips, and those who possessed Zakynthos and inhabited Samos, and those who possessed the mainland and the coast opposite. [635]

Of these the captain was Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in scheming.

Accompanying him came twelve ships with red-painted prows.

Thoas, son of Andraemon, commanded the Aetolians who occupied Pleuron and Olenus and Pylene, Chalcis that lies on the coast, and rocky Calydon; [640] the sons of great-hearted Oeneus were no longer alive, nor Oeneus himself, and fair-haired Meleager was dead,* to whom all power had been entrusted to rule over the Aetolians.

Accompanying him came forty black ships.

The Cretans' commander was Idomeneus, famed with the spear. [645]

They possessed Cnossus and fortified Gortyn,

Lyctus and Miletus, and Lycastus with its chalk cliffs,
and Phaestus and Rhytion, well-populated cities; and
there were other men, who lived in Crete of the hundred
cities.

Of all these Idomeneus, famed with the spear, was
commander, [650]

and with him Meriones, the equal of Enyalios, killer of
men.

Accompanying them came eighty black ships.

Tlepolemus, the valiant and mighty son of Heracles,
brought from Rhodes nine ships of proud Rhodians,
who lived on Rhodes in three separate settlements, [655]
Lindos and Ialysus and Cameirus with its chalk cliffs.

Their commander was Tlepolemus, famed with the spear,
whom Astyocheia bore to mighty Heracles, when he had
carried her off from Ephyre, from the river Selleïs, after
sacking many cities of strong young men, nurtured by
Zeus. [660]

Now when Tlepolemus had grown up in their well-built
house

he soon afterwards killed his father's maternal uncle,
Licymnus, a shoot of Ares, who was now an old man.

At once he built some ships, and assembling a great
company

fled away across the sea, because the other sons and
[665]

grandsons of mighty Heracles had threatened him.

After many wanderings and hardships he came to Rhodes,
and his men settled there by tribes in a threefold division,
and were loved by Zeus, who rules over both gods and
men,

and the son of Cronus showered them with astounding
wealth. [670]

Nireus brought three well-balanced ships from Syme,
Nireus, the son of Aglaea and lord Charopus,

Nireus, who was the handsomest man of all the Danaans who came to besiege Ilium, excepting the blameless son of Peleus; but he was a feeble man, and few people came with him. [675]

As for those who possessed Nisyros, Crapathos, and Casos, and Cos, city of Eurypylus, and the Calydnian Islands, these men were commanded by Pheidippus and Antiphus, the two sons of King Thessalus, the son of Heracles, and with them were mustered thirty hollow ships. [680]

Now all those whose home was Pelasgian Argos, and those who lived in Alus and Alope, and those from Trachis, and those who possessed Phthia and Hellas of beautiful women, and were called Myrmidons and Hellenes and Achaeans, the captain of their fifty ships was Achilles. [685] But they had no thought for war's hideous clamour, because there was no one to lead them in the battle line; glorious swift-footed Achilles was lying among the ships, angry over the girl, Briseus' daughter of the beautiful hair, whom he had chosen from Lyrnessus' spoils after much labour, [690] when he had sacked Lyrnessus and the walls of Thebe, and had struck down Mynes and Epistrophus, famous spearmen, who were the sons of King Euenus, son of Selepus. And so he lay there, grieving for her; but he was soon to rise again.

As for those who possessed Phylace and flowery Pyrasus, [695] the precinct of Demeter, and Iton mother of flocks,

Antron by the sea and Pteleus with its beds of grass,
these were commanded by warlike Protesilaus
while he was alive, but now the black earth held him
below.

His wife was left behind in Phylace, tearing her cheeks in
grief, [700]

in a half-built house. One of Dardanus' people killed him
as he leapt from his ship, the very first of the Achaeans.
Even so

they were not leaderless, though they yearned for their
captain;

Podarces, a shoot of Ares, was their marshal, Iphicles'
son, who was himself the son of Phylacus rich in flocks,
[705]

and he was full brother to great-hearted Protesilaus,
and older than him in years; but the hero warlike
Protesilaus

was the better man, and more skilled in war. His people
did not lack a leader, though they longed for this fine man.
Accompanying Podarces came forty black ships. [710]

As for those who lived around Pherae beside Lake
Boebei's,
in Boebe and Glaphyrae and well-built Iolcus,
the captain of their eleven ships was Admetus' dear son,
Eumelus, borne to him by Alcestis, bright among women,
the most beautiful of the daughters of Pelias. [715]

As for those who lived in Methone and Thaumacië
and possessed Meliboea and rugged Olizon,
their captain was the skilled archer Philoctetes,
in charge of seven ships; in each of them fifty rowers
had embarked, well skilled in fighting strongly with their
bows. [720]

But he was lying on an island, enduring cruel agonies,
on sacred Lemnos, where the Achaeans' sons had left him,
suffering from the foul wound of a deadly water-snake.

There he lay in torment; but the Argives would soon
turn their minds to lord Philoctetes beside their ships.*

Even so [725]

his men were not leaderless, though they longed for their
captain;

Medon, the bastard son of Oileus, was their marshal,
he whom Rhene had borne to Oileus, sacker of cities.

As for those who possessed Tricce and craggy Ithome,
and those who held Oechalia, city of Oechalian Eurytus,
[730]

these men were commanded by the two sons of Asclepius,
excellent healers both, Podaleirius and Machaon;
and with them were mustered thirty hollow ships.

Those who possessed Ormenion and the spring
Hypereia,
and those who possessed Asterion and Titanus' white
peaks [735]

were led by Eurypylus the splendid son of Euaemon.
Accompanying him came forty black ships.

As for those who possessed Argissa and lived in
Gyrtone,
in Orthe, and the city of Elone and white Oloösön,
they were commanded by Polypoetes, steadfast in war,
[740]

the son of Peirithous, who was fathered by immortal Zeus;
renowned Hippodameia had borne him to Peirithous
on the day that he took his revenge on the hairy
Centaurs*

and expelled them from Pelion as far as the Aethices' land;
he was not alone, but with him came Leonteus, a shoot of
Ares, [745]

son of high-hearted Coronus, himself the son of Caeneus.
Accompanying them came forty black ships.

Gouneus brought twenty-two ships from Cyphus.
Following him were the Enienes and the Peraebi, steadfast

in war,
who made their homes around Dodona, where winters are
harsh, [750]
and by those who worked the land around lovely
Titaëssus,
which pours out its beautiful waters into the Peneius,
though it does not mingle with silver-eddy Peneius,
but flows along on its surface like olive oil; it is a
branch of the waters of Styx, dreadful river of oaths.*
[755]

Prothous, son of Tenthredon, was captain of the
Magnetes,
who lived around Peneius and Pelion with its quivering
leaves. The swift Prothous was their commander,
and accompanying him came forty black ships.

These then were the leaders and commanders of the
Danaans. [760]
Now tell me, Muse, who was the most outstanding of those
who followed Atreus' sons, both themselves and their
horses.

The finest horses belonged to the son of Pheres,
now driven by Eumelus; they were swift as birds, and were
alike
in coats and age, their backs dead level measured by the
rule. [765]

Apollo of the silver bow had raised them in Pereia,
both mares, and they carried in them the terror of Ares.
Of men, by far the best was Ajax, Telamon's son, so long
as

Achilles kept up his anger; but Achilles was much the
strongest,
as were the horses which carried Peleus' blameless son;
[770]

but he was lying beside his curved sea-traversing ships,
full of anger against Agamemnon, shepherd of the people,

the son of Atreus; and his people were amusing
themselves
on the seashore by throwing the discus and javelin,
and shooting with the bow; and each man's horses stood
beside [775]
his chariot, cropping clover and wild, marsh-growing
parsley,
doing nothing. The chieftains' chariots stood well covered
near
their huts, while the men, yearning for their captain, loved
by Ares,
wandered up and down through the camp and did not
fight.

So the Achaeans marched on as if the whole earth
were
grazed by fire, [780]
and the ground under their feet groaned as if thunder-
delighting Zeus
was angry, as when he lashes the earth around Typhoeus
in the land of the Arimi, where men say is Typhoeus' bed. *
Just so the earth groaned loudly under their feet
as they marched; and very quickly they crossed the plain.
[785]

Now to the Trojans a messenger came, wind-footed
swift Iris,
with a message for them, full of pain from aegis-wearing
Zeus.
They were holding an assembly at Priam's gates,
all gathered together, both the young and the old; and
swift-footed Iris stood close to Priam and addressed him,
[790]
likening her voice to that of Priam's son Polites, who was
the Trojans' lookout, and, trusting in his feet's speed, used
to sit
on top of the burial-mound of ancient Aesyetes,* watching

for when the Achaeans would attack from their ships.
Assuming this man's likeness, swift-footed Iris addressed
Priam: [795]

'Old man, it is always your way to delight in endless
speeches,
just as before in times of peace; but now relentless war
has arisen.

I tell you, I have taken part in many battles of men, but
never before have I seen such a host, nor one so
numerous.

More than anything, they are like leaves or grains of sand
[800]

as they march, ready to fight, over the plain towards the
city.

Hector, to you especially I give this command, and you
must carry it out:

there are many allies throughout the great city of Priam,
speaking

different tongues, for they come from peoples spread over
the earth;

let each one of these give orders to those he rules over,
[805]

and let him marshal his countrymen and then lead them
out.'

So she spoke, and Hector did not fail to recognize a
goddess' voice,
and quickly broke up the assembly. The Trojans rushed to
arms,

all the gates were opened, and the peoples streamed out,
on foot and in chariots, and a great clamour arose. [810]

There is in front of the city a steep mound, set at
some distance from it on the plain, with clear space
around it, to which men give the name of Batieia, but
the immortals call it the burial-mound of the dancer
Myrine.*
_

There now the Trojans and their allies marshalled themselves.* [815]

The Trojans' commander was great Hector of the glittering helmet,
Priam's son; and with him were armed by far the best and most numerous people, raging to fight with their spears.

The captain of Dardanus' people was the valiant son of Anchises,

Aeneas, whom the goddess Aphrodite bore to Anchises, [820]

a goddess lying with a mortal on the slopes of Ida.

He was not alone, but with him were the two sons of Antenor,

Archelochus and Acamas, well skilled in all the arts of battle.

Those who inhabited Zeleia, under the lowest shoulder of Ida,

wealthy men, who drank the black waters of Aesepus, [825]

called Troes—these were led by the splendid son of Lycaon,

Pandarus, to whom Apollo himself had given his bow.

As for those who held Adresteia and the land of Apaesus,

and possessed Pityeia and the steep mountain of Tereia, their captains were Adrestus and Amphius of the linen jerkin, [830]

the two sons of Merops from Percote, who above all men was skilled in seercraft; he tried to prevent his sons from going to man-destroying war, but they would not listen

to him, for the spectres of black death were leading them on.

As for those who occupied Percote and Practius, [835] and possessed Sestus and Abydus and bright Arisbe,

their captain was Asius, son of Hyrtacus, marshal of the army—

Asius, son of Hyrtacus, whom huge gleaming horses had brought from Arisbe, which is near the river Selleïs.

Hippothous led the tribes of Pelasgians, famous spearmen, [840]

who had their home in Larisa of the rich soil.

Their captains were Hippothous and Pylaeus, shoots of Ares,

two sons of Pelasgian Lethus, who was himself the son of Teutamus.

Acamas and the hero Peirous were leaders of the Thracians,

all those whose lands the strong-flowing Hellespont encloses. [845]

Captain of the Ciconian spearmen was Euphemus, son of

Troezenus, who was himself the son of Ceas, nurtured by Zeus.

Pyraechmes led the Paeonians with their curved bows from far-off Amydon, by the broad-flowing Axios, whose water is the most beautiful that flows over the earth. [850]

The Paphlagonians were led by hairy-chested Pylaemenes, from the land of the Eneti, home of a strain of wild mules; they possessed Cytorus and inhabited Sesamon, living in splendid houses around the river Parthenius and Cromne and Aegialus and lofty Erythini. [855]

The Halizones' captains were Odius and Epistrophus from far-off Alybe, which is the birthplace of silver.

The Mysians' leaders were Chromis, and Ennomus the bird-seer—

though bird-lore could not save him from black doom;

he was beaten down by the hands of Aeacus' swift-footed
grandson [860]
in the river, along with the other Trojans he cut down
there.

Phorcys and godlike Ascanius were leaders of the
Phrygians
from far off Ascanië; and they were raging to fight in the
crush of battle.

The Maeonians were commanded by Mesthles and
Antiphus,
two sons of Talaemenes, whom the lake Gygaea bore;
[865]
they led the Maeonians, whose homeland was under
Tmolus.

Nastes commanded the Carians, who spoke a foreign
tongue;
they held Miletus and the thickly wooded Mount Phthires,
and the waters of Maeander and Mycale's steep peaks.
Their leaders were Amphimachus and Nastes, [870]
Nastes and Amphimachus, splendid sons of Nomion.
Amphimachus came to the war wearing gold ornaments,
like a girl,
the fool; they gave him no protection against miserable
death
when beaten down by the hands of Aeacus' swift-footed
grandson,
in the river; and war-minded Achilles carried off his gold.
[875]

Sarpedon and blameless Glaucus were captains of the
Lycians,
who came from far-off Lycia, beside the rolling Xanthus.

BOOK THREE

Now when both sides had been marshalled with their leaders,
the Trojans advanced, screeching and shouting like birds;
as when the screech of cranes is heard in the high sky,
when they have fled from winter's onset and prodigious rain,
and screaming fly towards the streams of Ocean,* [5]
bringing death and destruction to the Pygmy men,*
challenging them through the air to deadly conflict.
But the Achaeans went on in silence, breathing fury,
raging in their hearts to fight on each other's behalf.

As when the South Wind sheds a mist over mountain peaks— [10]
no friend to shepherds but for the thief better than night—
when a man can see only as far as he can throw a stone,
so under their feet a dense cloud of dust arose from the men
as they marched; and very quickly they crossed the plain.

When they had advanced to within close range of each other, [15]
from the Trojans Alexander,* handsome as a god, came out to fight,
wearing over his shoulder a leopard-skin and a curved bow and a sword; shaking his two spears, tipped with bronze, he issued a challenge to all the best men of the Argives to fight with him in grim conflict, matching strength to strength. [20]

When Menelaus, dear to Ares,* caught sight of Alexander

advancing with great strides in front of the soldiery,
just as a lion exults when it lights upon a great corpse,
discovering an antlered stag or a wild goat—the lion is
starving, and devours it quickly, in case swift hounds [25]
and strong young men are on its trail—so Menelaus
exulted when his eyes fell on Alexander, handsome as a
god,
and, thinking to avenge himself on the wrongdoer,
he quickly leapt fully armed from his chariot to the ground.

Now when Alexander, handsome as a god, saw him
appear [30]
in the front ranks, his dear heart was shattered, and he
withdrew into his companions' ranks, to avoid the death-
spectre.

As when a man who has seen a snake in a mountain glen
starts back, and a trembling seizes hold of his legs,
and he jumps backwards and pallor grips his cheeks, [35]
so Alexander, handsome as a god, shrank back into the
mass of proud Trojans, terrified by the son of Atreus.

But when Hector saw him he rebuked him with shaming
words:

'Paris, Disaster-Paris, superbly beautiful, woman-crazy
seducer!

I wish you had never been born, or had else died
unmarried. [40]

Indeed I would have preferred this, and it would have been
far better

for you than to be thus mocked and despised by others.

How the flowing-haired Achaeans must laugh out loud,
thinking

that with us a chieftain becomes a champion only because
he is

handsome to look at, even if there is no strength or
courage in his heart. [45]

Was this how you were when you sailed over the sea

in your sea-traversing ships with a band of trusty
companions,
and lived among foreigners and carried off a beautiful
woman
from a distant land, kin of spear-fighters as she was,
to be a great affliction to your father, the city, and all the
people, [50]

but a delight to your enemies and a disgrace to yourself?
Can you really not stand up against Menelaus, dear to
Ares?

You would find out what kind of man he is whose lovely wife
you keep;

and then your lyre would be of no help to you, nor
Aphrodite's gifts,
nor your hair and beauty, when you roll in the dust's
embrace. [55]

But the Trojans are great cowards; otherwise by now you
would be
wearing a stone garment,* in return for all the misery you
have caused.'

Then Alexander, handsome as a god, addressed him in
turn:

'Hector, you reproach me deservedly, and not beyond my
deserts—

always your heart is like an axe which keeps its edge, and
[60]

which cuts through a plank in the hands of a man who
shapes

ship-timber with his skill, and it adds power to his stroke;
just so is the never-wavering heart in your breast.

But do not throw the sensual gifts of golden Aphrodite in
my face;

indeed, men should never spurn the gods' splendid gifts,
[65]

that they alone can bestow, and no man can have them by

choice.

But now, if you want me to engage in the battle and fight, make all the rest of the Trojans and Achaeans sit down, and set me in the middle ground against Menelaus, dear to

Ares,

to do battle for the sake of Helen and all her possessions;

[70]

and whichever of us is victorious and proves the stronger, let him

fairly take all the possessions and the woman, and carry them home.

And let everyone else make a solemn truce and pledge friendship;

so may you all live on in rich-soiled Troy, and may they return

to horse-rearing Argos and Achaea, home of beautiful women. [75]'

So he spoke, and hearing his words Hector was greatly pleased,

and went into the middle ground and forced back the Trojans'

companies, gripping his spear in the middle; and they all sat down.

But the flowing-haired Achaeans began to shoot at him, making

him their mark and trying to hit him with arrows and stones. [80]

Then the lord of men, Agamemnon, gave a great shout:

'Hold back, Argives; sons of the Achaeans, do not shoot!

Hector of the glittering helmet is impatient to tell us something.'

So he spoke, and they held back from the fighting and quickly

fell silent. Then Hector addressed both the armies: [85]

'Listen to me, Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans, and hear

the words of Alexander, on whose account this quarrel has arisen.

His command is that all the rest of the Trojans and Achaeans

should lay their fine armour on the earth that nourishes many,

and that he and Menelaus, dear to Ares, should fight alone [90]

in the middle ground for the sake of Helen and all her possessions.

Whichever of them is victorious and proves the stronger, let him

fairly take all the possessions and the woman and carry them home.

Let the rest of us make a solemn truce and pledge friendship.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still. [95]

Then Menelaus, master of the war-cry, addressed them:

'Listen now to me too, for it is my heart that chiefly feels this pain; I am minded that today the Argives and Trojans should go their separate ways, since you have suffered much

because of my quarrel, and because of Alexander, who began it. [100]

Whichever one of us has death and his destiny in store for him,

let him die, and the rest of you may quickly go your separate ways.

Now bring two lambs, one white and the other black, to be offered to Earth and Sun, and let us bring a third for Zeus.

Bring mighty Priam out here, so that he can make a solemn truce [105]

in person; his sons are arrogant and unreliable, and he will make sure

no one oversteps the mark and so wrecks the oaths sworn

by Zeus.

Young men's minds are for ever floating high in the air,
but when an old man takes a hand he looks to the future
and the past,
and so the matter may be best concluded for both sides.'
[110]

So he spoke, and both Achaeans and Trojans were glad,
since they hoped to put an end to the miseries of war.
They held back their chariots in the ranks and jumped down
from them, and took off their armour and laid it on the
ground,
close to one another, and there was little space between
them. [115]

Hector sent two heralds off to the city, with orders
to bring the lambs quickly and to summon Priam,
and lord Agamemnon sent Talthybius to go off to
the hollow ships, and ordered him to fetch two
lambs; and he did not disobey glorious Agamemnon. [120]

Now Iris came with a message to white-armed Helen,
in the likeness of her husband's sister, the wife of Antenor's
son,
whom the lord Helicaon, the son of Antenor, had as his wife
—

Laodice, the most beautiful of the daughters of Priam.
She found Helen in her hall; she was weaving a great web,
[125]

a red double cloak, and on it she was working the struggles
of the horse-breaking Trojans and the bronze-shirted
Achaeans

that they were undergoing for her sake at the hands of
Ares.

Standing close to her swift-footed Iris addressed her:
'Come with me, dear bride, and witness the extraordinary
deeds [130]

of the horse-breaking Trojans and the bronze-shirted

Achaeans:

those who before were waging tear-laden war on each other
on the plain, and lusting after the deadly conflict,
are now, look, seated in silence, and the fighting has stopped;
they are leaning on their shields, and their long spears are stuck [135]
in the ground beside them. Alexander and Menelaus, dear to Ares,
are about to fight over you with their long spears, and you will be famed as the dear wife of the one who wins.'

So the goddess spoke, and thrust into Helen's heart sweet longing
for her former husband and her city and her parents. [140]
At once she wrapped a white linen scarf round her head and hurried from her chamber, shedding a soft tear, not alone, but two women servants accompanied her: Aethre daughter of Pittheus, and ox-eyed Clymene. Quickly they reached the place where the Scaean gates* were. [145]

Those who attended Priam—Panthous and Thymoetes, Lampus, Clytius and Hicetaon, shoot of Ares, and Ucalegon and Antenor, both men of sound judgement, all elders
of the people—these were sitting with him at the Scaean gates.
Because of old age they had given up warfare, but they were [150]
excellent speakers, like cicadas which perch on trees in a wood, singing away in their lily-like voices;
such were the leaders of the Trojans, as they sat on the tower.

When they saw Helen making her way to the tower, they spoke softly to one another, in winged words: [155]

'It is not a matter of blame that the Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans should suffer agonies for so long over such a woman; she is terribly like the immortal goddesses to look on. But for all her beauty, it is better for her to go away in their ships, and not stay here as a future affliction for us and our children.' [160]

So they spoke, but Priam raised his voice and called to Helen:

'Come here, dear child, and sit beside me, so that you can see

your former husband, your kinsmen and your friends—you are not to blame in my eyes, but the gods are to blame,

who have stirred up tear-laden war for me with the Achaeans— [165]

and so that you can give a name to that monstrous man, that valiant and mighty Achaean, and tell me who he is. There are certainly others who are taller in stature, but I have never yet cast eyes on anyone as handsome as him, nor one so full of dignity. He looks like a kingly man.' [170]

Then Helen, bright among women, answered him and said:

'Dear father-in-law, you deserve my respect and awe; evil death should have been my choice when I came here with your son, leaving my home and my family, my late-born daughter and the pleasant company of my friends. [175]

But that is not how it happened, and so I waste away in tears.

Now I will tell you what you ask and question me about: that man is the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, both a noble king and a mighty spearman, and he was also

my
husband's brother, bitch-faced that I am—if this ever really
happened.' [180]

So she spoke, and the old man marvelled at him, and
said:

'Fortunate son of Atreus, child of good fortune, blessed by
the gods,
you have indeed many sons of the Achaeans under your
sway.

In time past I travelled to Phrygia, rich in vines, and there
I saw a great many Phrygians, men with nimble horses,
[185]

the peoples of Otreus and of godlike Mygdon,* who
at that time were encamped along the banks of Sangarius.*
I was their ally, you see, and was numbered among them
on the day that the Amazons* came, who are a match for
men.

But not even they were as many as the darting-eyed
Achaeans.' [190]

Next the old man's eyes fell on Odysseus, and he asked
her:

'Come, tell me about this man too, dear child; who is he?
He is shorter in stature than Agamemnon, son of Atreus,
but broader in the shoulders and chest to look upon.
His armour is lying on the earth that nourishes many, [195]
but he is prowling along the ranks of men like a ram;
I would say he was like a thick-fleeced ram
that roams in and out of a huge flock of white sheep.'

Then in answer Helen, daughter of Zeus, said to him:
'Now that one is the son of Laertes, much-scheming
Odysseus, [200]

who was reared in the land of Ithaca, rugged though it is,
and
who is skilled in all kinds of trickery and cunning schemes.'

Then in his turn sagacious Antenor addressed her:

'Lady, what you have said is indeed quite true.
Glorious Odysseus has been here before, some time ago
[205]
with Menelaus, dear to Ares, on a mission concerning you.*
I received them as guest-friends and welcomed them in my
halls,
and I came to know the appearance of both, and their
clever schemes.
When they mingled with the Trojans in their assembly and
all were standing, broad-shouldered Menelaus was the
taller, [210]
and when both were sitting Odysseus was the more
dignified.
But when they began to weave their cunning speeches
before us all,
Menelaus for his part spoke with a rapid fluency,
briefly but very clearly, not being a man of many words,
nor stumbling in speech; and indeed he was the younger
man. [215]
But whenever much-scheming Odysseus leapt to his feet
he would stand there and look down, eyes fixed on the
ground,
not waving the staff backwards and forwards, but
holding it stiffly, like a man who did not know what to do;
you would take him for a surly person, a genuine fool. [220]
But when he released his great voice from inside his chest,
speaking words like flakes of snow falling in winter,
then no other mortal could compete with Odysseus,
and we were no longer so surprised at the sight of him.'

The third man whom the old man saw was Ajax, and he
asked: [225]

'Who is that other Achaean, a valiant and mighty man,
whose head and broad shoulders stand out above the
Argives?'

Then long-robed Helen, bright among women,

answered:

‘That is the massive Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans.
And on the other side, among the Cretans, stands
Idomeneus, [230]

like a god, and around him are gathered the Cretan
captains.

Many times Menelaus, dear to Ares, entertained him
in our house, whenever Idomeneus came from Crete.
And now I can see all the other darting-eyed Achaeans,
whom I could easily recognize and name for you, [235]
but there are two marshals of the peoples I cannot see:
horse-breaking Castor and Polydeuces the skilful boxer,
full brothers of mine, born to the same mother as me.
Either they did not accompany the army from lovely
Lacedaemon,
or they did come here in their sea-traversing ships [240]
but are now reluctant to enter the battle of men, made
uneasy by my disgrace and the many insults against me.’

So she spoke; but the life-giving earth already held
them
back home in Lacedaemon, in their dear native land.

Now heralds were bringing offerings to the gods
throughout the city, [245]
to ratify the treaty—two lambs and cheering wine, fruit of
the earth,
in a goatskin bag; and Idaeus the herald brought a
shining mixing-bowl and wine-cups, made of gold,
and standing next to the old man Priam he roused him,
saying:

‘Up now, son of Laomedon; * the chieftains of the Trojan
[250]

horse-breakers and the bronze-shirted Achaeans are calling
you to go

down on to the plain, to make a solemn truce.

Alexander and Menelaus, dear to Ares, are about

to fight for the woman's sake with their long spears;
the woman and her possessions will go to the one who
wins, [255]

and the rest of us will make a solemn truce and pledge
friendship—

we to live on in rich-soiled Troy, and they to return to
horse-rearing Argos and Achaea, home of beautiful
women.'

So he spoke, and the old man shuddered, and told his
companions

to yoke the horses, and they quickly obeyed his order. [260]

Priam mounted the chariot and pulled back on the reins,
and

Antenor climbed into the finely made chariot beside him,
and

they drove the swift horses through the Scaean gates on to
the plain.

When they reached the assembled Trojans and
Achaeans,

they got down from the chariot to the earth that nourishes
many [265]

and strode to the middle ground between the Trojans and
Achaeans.

Immediately Agamemnon, lord of men, rose to his feet,
and with him much-scheming Odysseus. Excellent heralds
drove the solemn truce offerings together, and mixed wine
in a bowl, and poured water over the kings' hands. [270]

Then the son of Atreus with his hand drew the knife
that always hung next to his sword's great scabbard,
and cut hairs from the lambs' heads, and the heralds
distributed these among the Trojan and Achaean chieftains.
Then Atreus' son prayed in a loud voice, holding up his
hands: [275]

'Father Zeus, ruling from Mount Ida,* greatest and most
glorious,

and you, Sun, who sees all things and hears all things!
Rivers and Earth, and you two who below the earth punish
men who have died, if any have sworn false oaths*—
be witnesses, and see that these solemn oaths are kept.

[280]

If it should happen that Alexander kills Menelaus, then
let him keep Helen for himself, and all her possessions,
and let us return home in our sea-traversing ships.
But if fair-haired Menelaus should kill Alexander, then
the Trojans must give back Helen and all her possessions,

[285]

and must pay the Argives the compensation that is proper
and recognized as such, even by generations in time to
come.

But if Priam and the sons of Priam are unwilling to pay me
compensation when Alexander has fallen, then

I shall fight on after that to secure reparation, [290]

and I shall stay here until I reach the end of the war.'

So he spoke, and slit the lambs' throats with the pitiless
bronze.

He laid them on the ground, gasping as their life ebbed
away, for the bronze had taken away their strength.

Then they drew the wine from the mixing-bowl into cups

[295]

and poured it out, and prayed to the gods who live for ever.

And this is what one of the Trojans or Achaeans would say:

'Zeus, greatest and most glorious, and all you other gods;
whichever side is the first to violate these oaths, may their
brains be poured out on the ground as this wine is, theirs
and [300]

their children's; and may their wives be mastered by
strangers.'

So they spoke, but the son of Cronus did not yet fulfil
their prayers.

And among them Priam of the line of Dardanus spoke,

saying:

‘Listen to me, Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans;
I am now going back to Troy that is swept by the winds,
[305]

since I cannot bring myself to see my dear son
doing battle before my eyes with Menelaus, dear to Ares.
Zeus doubtless knows, as do the other immortal gods,
for which of the two the end of death has been appointed.’

So the godlike man spoke, and laid the lambs in his
chariot, [310]

then mounted himself, and pulled back on the reins,
and Antenor climbed into the finely made chariot beside
him.

So the two of them went on their way, back towards Ilium;
but Hector, the son of Priam, and glorious Odysseus
first measured out the ground, and after that [315]
took two lots and shook them in a bronze helmet,
to see which man should throw his bronze-tipped spear
first.

And the peoples prayed, and held up their hands to the
gods,

and this is what one of the Achaeans or Trojans would say:
‘Father Zeus, ruling from Mount Ida, greatest and most
glorious; [320]

whoever it was who brought these troubles on to both
sides,

grant that he may die and go below into the house of
Hades,

but grant too that we may enjoy friendship and a solemn
truce.’

So they spoke, and great Hector of the glittering helmet
shook

the lots, looking away; and the lot of Paris quickly leapt out.
[325]

Then they all sat down in ranks, in the place where each

one's

high-stepping horses and finely worked armour lay.

Then that man put his fine armour on over his shoulders—
glorious Alexander, husband of Helen of the beautiful hair.

First of all he fastened greaves around his shins, [330]

splendid ones, fitted with silver ankle-pieces;

then over his chest he put on a corslet which belonged
to his brother Lycaon; and it fitted him equally as well.

Around his shoulders he threw his silver-riveted sword,
made of bronze, and after that his huge, massive shield.

[335]

On his powerful head he set a well-made helmet with a
horse-tail crest; and the plume nodded terribly above him.

Then he chose a stout spear, which fitted his grasp.

And in the same way Menelaus, dear to Ares, put on his
armour.

So when they were armed among the soldiery on either
side, [340]

they strode into the middle ground between Trojans and
Achaeans,

glaring grimly at each other; and amazement gripped the
onlookers,

both horse-breaking Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans.

They took their stand near each other on the measured
ground,

shaking their spears and full of rage at each other. [345]

Alexander was the first to throw his far-shadowing spear,
and it hit the perfectly balanced shield of Atreus' son, but
the spear did not shatter it, for its bronze point was bent
back

on the mighty shield. Then Menelaus, Atreus' son, stood up
ready to throw the bronze, and made a prayer to father

Zeus: [350]

'Lord Zeus, grant me revenge on the man who wronged me
at the start,

glorious Alexander, and beat him down under my hands,
so that among later generations too a man may shudder to
think of wronging the host who has offered him friendship.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and
threw it, [355]

and it hit the perfectly balanced shield of Priam's son;
the massive spear passed through the shining shield
and drove through the intricately worked corslet,
going straight on to cut through the tunic next to his ribs;
but Paris leaned aside and avoided the black death-spectre.
[360]

Then the son of Atreus drew his silver-riveted sword and
swinging his arm high struck the other's helmet plate, but
there
the sword shattered into three or four pieces, and fell from
his hand.

Atreus' son gazed up at the broad high sky and cried out:
'Father Zeus, there is no one who causes more mischief
than you! [365]

Truly, I thought I had taken revenge on Alexander for his
villainy,
but instead my sword has broken in my hands, and my
spear
sped uselessly from my hand, and I did not strike him
down.'

So he spoke, and sprang and seized Paris by the
horsehair-crested helmet,
and swinging him round began to drag him towards the
well-greaved Achaeans. [370]

Paris was being choked by the embroidered strap at his soft
throat,
which was drawn tight under his chin to secure his helmet;
and
now Menelaus would have dragged him away, winning
immense glory,

had not Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, been sharp enough to see it,

and broken the strap that was made from a slaughtered ox's hide. [375]

The helmet came away empty in Menelaus' brawny hand, and the hero whirled it round his head and flung it among the well-greaved Achaeans, and his trusty companions retrieved it;

then he leapt back towards Paris, raging to kill him with his bronze-tipped spear; but Aphrodite snatched Paris away [380]

very easily, as a god will do, wrapping him in a dense mist, and set him down in his fragrantly perfumed chamber.

She herself went off to summon Helen, and found her on the high tower, with a large group of Trojan women around her. Grasping Helen's nectar-scented veil in her hand she pulled it [385]

and spoke to her, likening herself to a woman of many years,

a wool-comber, who when Helen lived in Lacedaemon used to work fine wool; and Helen loved her very much.

In the likeness of this woman bright Aphrodite addressed her: '

Come with me; Alexander is calling for you to return home. [390]

There he is in his chamber, on the spiral-decorated bed, glowing in his beauty and clothing. You would not think he had come from fighting with someone, but was going to the dance, or had just returned and was sitting down to rest.'

So she spoke, and quickened Helen's heart within her breast; [395]

and when she recognized the goddess's beautiful neck, her desirable breasts and her bright-sparkling eyes,

she was amazed, and spoke to her, saying:

‘Lady, why are you so anxious to lead me astray like this?
Are you intending to take me away to some well-populated
city, [400]

to somewhere in Phrygia or lovely Maeonia, where
there is perhaps some other mortal man who is dear to
you?

Or is it because Menelaus has overcome glorious
Alexander,

and wishes to take me, loathed woman, to his home,
that you now stand beside me here with guile in your
heart? [405]

Well, go and sit beside him yourself, and forsake the path
of the gods, and never set your feet again on Olympus,
but all the time suffer on his behalf and wait on him,
until such time as he makes you his wife, or even his slave.
As for me, I will not go there to serve that man’s bed, [410]
for that would bring blame on me; all future Trojan women
will despise me, and I already have grief enough in my
heart.’

At this bright Aphrodite became enraged and addressed
her:

‘Do not provoke me, obstinate woman, or I may grow angry
and
desert you, and come to hate you as violently as now I love
you; [415]

I may well plan some fatal enmity between the two sides,
Trojans and Danaans, and then you will die a wretched
death.’

So she spoke, and Helen, daughter of Zeus, was afraid,
and went away, covering her face with her shining white
veil,
in silence, and no Trojan woman saw her; a divinity guided
her. [420]

When they reached the splendid house of Alexander,

the women servants at once turned to their tasks, while she,
bright among women, went to her high-roofed chamber.
Then the goddess Aphrodite who loves to smile brought
a chair and placed it for her opposite Alexander; and [425]
Helen, daughter of Zeus the aegis-wearer, took her seat on
it,
and turning her eyes away from him spoke sharply to her
husband;
'So you have returned from the fighting! I wish you had
died there,
beaten down by the mighty man who was my husband
before you.
There was a time when you would boast that you were a
better man [430]
than Menelaus, dear to Ares, in strength of arm and with
the spear;
so go now, make your challenge to Menelaus, dear to Ares,
to fight you once again, face to face. But no—I advise you
to hold back, and not to match your strength recklessly
with fair-haired Menelaus in battle or in the fighting, [435]
because you may be quickly beaten down by his spear.'

Then Paris answered and addressed her with these
words:

'Wife, do not attack my heart with these harsh taunts.
Yes, this time Menelaus defeated me, with Athena's help,
but another time I shall defeat him; we too have gods on
our side. [440]

Come now, let us go to bed and find delight in love;
never before has desire enveloped my senses like this,
not even when I first stole you away from lovely
Lacedaemon
and sailed away in my sea-traversing ships, and on the
island

Cranaë* I took you to bed and made love to you—that is

how [445]

I now desire you, and sweet longing takes hold of me.'

So he spoke, and led the way to the bed, and his wife went with him.

And so the two of them lay together on the fretted bed; but Atreus' son prowled among the soldiery like a wild beast,

hoping to catch sight of Alexander, handsome as a god.

[450]

But no man of the Trojans or of their far-famed allies could point Alexander out to Menelaus, dear to Ares; certainly

they would not have hidden him out of love, if anyone had seen him, since they all hated him like the black death-spectre.

Then Agamemnon lord of men spoke among them: [455]

'Listen to me, Trojans and Dardanians and allies:

since the victory clearly belongs to Menelaus, dear to Ares, you must give back Argive Helen, and her possessions along with her, and must pay the compensation that is proper

and recognized as such, even by generations in time to come.'

So spoke Atreus' son, and the rest of the Achaeans applauded him.

BOOK FOUR

Now the gods were sitting beside Zeus, gathered in assembly on a golden floor, and in their midst lady Hebe served them with nectar, and they pledged each other in golden cups, looking out towards the city of the Trojans. Then the son of Cronus tried to provoke Hera with [5] taunting words, speaking out with a hidden purpose: 'Menelaus has a pair of goddesses to support him, Hera of Argos and Athena of Alalcomenae;* and yet they are sitting here as onlookers, leaving him alone and enjoying the spectacle, while Aphrodite who loves to smile [10]

stands always beside Paris, keeping away death's spectres; and just now she saved him when he thought he would die. Even so, the victory clearly belongs to Menelaus, dear to Ares,

so let us consider how these things should be done: whether we should again stir up destructive war and [15] grim conflict, or bring both sides together in friendship. If this second way proves pleasing and welcome to all, then the city of lord Priam could continue to thrive, and Menelaus could take Argive Helen home again.'

So he spoke, and Athena and Hera muttered to each other; [20]

they were sitting close together, plotting misery for the Trojans.

Athena was silent, and did not say a word, feeling resentful towards father Zeus, and harsh bitterness gripped her; but Hera's breast could not contain her anger, and she addressed him:

'Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said?

[25]

How can you expect my toil to count for nothing, unfulfilled

—

the sweat that I poured painfully out, and my horses' weariness

as I was gathering a force to bring misery to Priam and his sons?

Do as you will—but, I tell you, we other gods will not all approve.'

Then, deeply angered, Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her: [30]

'You are possessed! How have Priam and the sons of Priam done you such great wrong that you rage so relentlessly to tear Ilium apart, that well-built city?

Only if you were to enter its gates and long walls yourself, and to eat the raw flesh of Priam and the sons of Priam and

[35]

the rest of the Trojans, would you perhaps satisfy your anger.

Do as you will. I would not want this quarrel to become a great conflict between the two of us in time to come—but I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your mind:

whenever it is my passionate desire to destroy a city and

[40]

I choose one inhabited by men who are dear to you, do not try to thwart my anger, but leave me to do as I will. I give way to you in this willingly, though with an unwilling heart,

because of all the cities under the sun and the starry high sky

that are inhabited by men who live on the earth, [45]

the most prized in my heart was always sacred Ilium, and Priam and the people of Priam of the fine ash spear.

Never has my altar lacked a fair share of the feast, of drink-

offerings and the savour of burnt flesh, which is our privilege.'

Then the lady ox-eyed Hera answered him: [50]
'There are three cities which are by far the dearest to me,
Argos and Sparta and Mycenae of the wide streets, and
these you may sack, whenever they incur your heart's
hatred.

I shall certainly not stand in your way, nor grudge them to
you,
for if I was resentful and stopped you destroying them [55]
I would gain nothing by it, since you are far stronger than
me.

But you must not allow my labour to come to nothing,
since I too am divine and my ancestry is the same as yours,
and

I am the most honoured of crooked-scheming Cronus'
children,
in two ways: through my birth, and because I am renowned
[60]

as your wife, and you are lord of all the immortals.
So—let us give way to each other in this matter,
I to you and you to me; and the rest of the immortal gods
will follow us. Command Athena immediately to enter
the grim conflict between Trojans and Achaeans; tell her
[65]

to try to ensure that the Trojans are the first to give offence
to the far-famed Achaeans, by breaking their oaths.'

So she spoke, and the father of gods and men did not
disobey her,
but immediately addressed Athena with winged words:
'Go as fast as you can to the Trojan and Achaean camps,
[70]

and try to ensure that the Trojans are the first to give
offence to the far-famed Achaeans, by breaking their
oaths.'

So speaking he roused Athena, who was already eager to go,
and she went swooping down from the peaks of Olympus.
Just as a meteor that the son of crooked-scheming Cronus
[75]

sends as a portent to sailors or to a people's broad
encampment,
a bright star, and a shower of sparks shoots out from it;
so Pallas Athena swooped down to earth, and sprang into
the middle ground; and amazement gripped the onlookers,
horse-breaking Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans alike.
[80]

And this is what they would say, each man looking at his
neighbour:

'Surely evil war and grim fighting will break out again,
or else Zeus will bring about friendship between both sides,
Zeus who is the dispenser of war to mankind.'

That is what the Trojans and Achaeans were saying; and
[85]

Athena stole into the mass of Trojans in the likeness of a
man,

Laodocus, the son of Antenor, the mighty spearman,
and looked for godlike Pandarus, in the hope of finding him.
And she found him, the blameless and mighty son of
Lycaon,

standing idle, and around him were strong ranks of shield-
bearing [90]

men, who had come with him from the waters of Aesepus.*

Standing beside him she addressed him with winged words:

'War-minded son of Lycaon, will you perhaps do as I tell
you,

and have the courage to let fly a swift arrow at Menelaus,
and so win gratitude and glory before all the Trojans, [95]

but most of all in the sight of the prince Alexander?

From him especially you would be sure to receive splendid

gifts,
if he were to see Menelaus, the warlike son of Atreus,
struck down by your shaft and laid on the painful pyre.
So come, shoot an arrow at splendid Menelaus, [100]
and vow to sacrifice to Lycian-born Apollo,* renowned
with the bow, a splendid hecatomb of first-born lambs
when you return to your home in Zeleia, the sacred city.'

So Athena spoke, and swayed the thoughts of a
thoughtless man.

At once he took out his well-polished bow, made from the
horns [105]

of a full-grown wild goat that he himself had once shot in
the chest

as it emerged from a rocky place while he waited in a hide,
and he hit it in the chest; and it fell backwards on to the
rock.

On its head grew horns of sixteen palms' length, and
these a craftsman who worked in horn had fitted together,
[110]

smoothing the whole bow skilfully, and adding a tip of gold.
Pandarus braced the bow's point firmly against the ground,
and bent it back and strung it, and his excellent
companions held

their shields in front of him, in case the warlike sons of the
Achaeans

charged him before Menelaus, Atreus' warlike son, was shot
down. [115]

Then he opened the lid of his quiver, and from it took an
arrow,

feathered, not yet released, and a bearer of black agony.

Quickly he fitted the bitter shaft to the bowstring and
vowed to sacrifice to Lycian-born Apollo, renowned
with the bow, a splendid hecatomb of first-born lambs [120]
when he returned to his home in Zeleia, the sacred city.

Then, gripping the notches and ox-gut string together, he

pulled,
bringing the string back to his chest and the iron tip to the
bow.

When he had bent the great bow so that it made an arc
it sang out, the string gave a loud cry, and the sharp arrow
[125]

leapt forth, raging to fly into the enemy soldiery.

But, Menelaus, the blessed immortal gods had not
forgotten you,
and the first to your aid was Zeus' daughter who gathers
the spoils.*

She stood before you and fended off the sharp-pointed
arrow,
turning it away from your flesh just like a mother brushing
[130]

a fly from her child who is lying in sweet sleep, and with
her own hand she guided it instead to where its gold
buckles

held his belt together and overlapped the double corslet.
The bitter arrow struck the close-fitting belt, and driving
through the elaborately decorated belt forced its way [135]
through the finely worked corslet and the loin-plate,
a defence against missiles, that he wore to shield his flesh;
this was his best protection, but the arrow flew straight
through it too, just grazing the surface of the hero's flesh;
and at once dark blood began to flow from the wound.
[140]

As when a woman stains ivory with purple dye,
a woman of Maeonia or Caria,* to be a cheek-piece for
horses;
it lies in the store chamber, and many horsemen pray
that their horse might wear it, but it lies there, a king's
delight,
both an adornment for his horse and a glory for his
charioteer; [145]

just so, Menelaus, were your shapely thighs stained
with blood, and your shins and handsome ankles below.

At this Agamemnon, lord of men, shuddered,
when he saw the black blood flowing down from the wound,
and Menelaus himself, dear to Ares, shuddered too; [150]
but when he saw that the barbs and binding were still
outside his flesh the spirit was gathered back into his
breast.

With a deep groan lord Agamemnon spoke to his
companions,
holding Menelaus by the hand, and they groaned with him:
'Dear brother, so it was for your death that I swore those
oaths, [155]

setting you alone in front of the Achaeans to fight the
Trojans;

now they have shot you, and trampled on the solemn
oaths.

But an oath cannot count for nothing, nor the blood of
lambs,

nor unmixed wine libations, nor our right hands that
confirmed the pact.

Even if the Olympian does not bring fulfilment immediately,
[160]

he will do so in full, however late, and men will pay a high
price,

with their own lives and with their wives' and children's
lives as well:

for I know this very well in my mind and in my heart,
that there will come a day when sacred Troy will be
destroyed,

and Priam and the people of Priam of the fine ash spear,
and [165]

Zeus, the son of Cronus, seated on high, dwelling in the
upper air,

will himself shake the dark aegis in the face of all men,

in anger at their oath-breaking. So this will not be
unfulfilled;
but terrible grief will come on me because of you,
Menelaus,
if you die here and complete your life's allotted portion.
[170]

And then I will return to thirsty Argos covered in contempt,
for the Achaeans will immediately think of their homeland,
and we will abandon Argive Helen* here, for Priam and the
Trojans to boast over; and the ploughland will rot your
bones
as you lie here in Troy with your mission unaccomplished.
[175]

And this is what one of the arrogant Trojans will say as he
leaps up and down on the grave-mound of splendid
Menelaus:
"This is how Agamemnon's anger should always turn out!
He brought an army of Achaeans here on a useless errand,
and look, he has gone back home to his dear native land
[180]
with empty ships, leaving the brave Menelaus behind."
So they will say; and then I hope the wide earth will gape
before me.'

Then fair-haired Menelaus spoke, minded to give him
courage:
'Do not despair, and do not alarm the people of the
Achaeans;
the sharp arrow did not lodge in a fatal place; before it
could, [185]
my bright gleaming belt protected me, and underneath it
my body-shield and the loin-plate that bronze-smiths
forged.'

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him:
'Dear Menelaus, I pray that it is as you say.

But a healer will attend to your wound and will spread [190]
ointments on it to deliver you from your black pain.'

So he spoke, and addressed Talthybius, the godlike
herald:

'Talthybius, go as fast as you can and summon here
Machaon,

the worthy son of Asclepius* the excellent healer,
so that he can examine Menelaus, Atreus' warlike son,
[195]

whom some man skilled in archery has shot at and
wounded—

some Trojan or Lycian, bringing glory to himself but grief to
us.'

So he spoke, and the herald heard and did not disobey
him,

but set off for the people of bronze-shirted Achaeans,
looking out keenly for the hero Machaon. He found him
[200]

standing idle, and around him were strong ranks of shield-
bearing

men, who had come with him from horse-rearing Tricce.

Standing close, he addressed him with winged words:

'Quickly, son of Asclepius! Lord Agamemnon summons you
to examine Menelaus, the warlike captain of the Achaeans,
[205]

whom some man skilled in archery has shot at and
wounded—

some Trojan or Lycian, bringing glory to himself but grief to
us.'

So he spoke, and quickened the spirit in Machaon's
breast,

and they set off through the soldiery along the wide
Achaean camp.

When they reached the place where fair-haired Menelaus
[210]

lay wounded, and around him all the best men were gathered
in a circle, he went and stood in their midst, a man like a god,
and at once pulled the arrow out from the close-fitting belt;
and as it was pulled out the sharp barbs were broken backwards.

Then he loosened the gleaming belt, and underneath it the
[215]

body-shield and loin-plate that bronze-smiths had forged.
When he saw the wound, where the bitter arrow had struck,
he sucked the blood from it and skilfully applied soothing ointments
that Cheiron had long ago given his father as a token of friendship.

While they were attending to Menelaus, master of the war-cry, [220]

the ranks of shield-bearing Trojans came on at them, and the Achaeans armed again, and called up their desire for battle.

Then you would not have seen glorious Agamemnon drowsing,
nor shrinking in fear, nor hanging back from the fighting, but fervently eager for the battle where men win glory.
[225]

He left his horses behind, and his chariot, inlaid with bronze;
his attendant kept the snorting horses in reserve—he was Eurymedon, the son of Ptolemaeus, who was Peiraeus' son —

and gave him strict orders to hold them nearby until weariness
should overtake his limbs while he marshalled his many troops; [230]
and so on foot he roamed up and down the ranks of men.

If he saw any of the swift-horsed Danaans busying themselves
he would stand nearby and try to strengthen their courage:
'Argives, do not let your surging courage ebb away;
men who swear falsely will get no help from father Zeus,
and [235]
those who were the first offenders, by breaking their oaths,
will have their tender flesh devoured by vultures, while
we in our turn will carry off their dear wives and infant
children in our ships, when we have sacked their city.'

But whenever he saw men holding back from hateful war [240]
he would rebuke them severely with angry words:
'Contemptible Argive braggarts, have you no shame?
Why are you standing there in a daze, just like fawns
that are exhausted after running a long way over a plain,
and stop still, and there is no courage in their hearts? [245]
That is how you are standing, in a daze, and not fighting.
Are you waiting for the Trojans to reach the place where
your ships
with their fine sterns are drawn up on the shore of the grey
sea,
to see if the son of Cronus will hold his protecting hand
above you?'

So he ranged through the ranks of men as their commander, [250]
and as he went among the mass of men he came upon the
Cretans,
who were arming themselves under war-minded
Idomeneus.
Idomeneus was in the front rank, like a wild boar in his
courage,
and Meriones was urging on the rearmost companies.
When he saw them Agamemnon lord of men was delighted,
[255]

and he immediately addressed Idomeneus with gentle words:

‘Idomeneus, I esteem you above all the swift-horsed Danaans, whether it is in war or in any other kind of enterprise, or in feasting, whenever the best men of the Argives mix gleaming wine in a bowl for a meeting of elders. [260] While the other flowing-haired Achaeans may drink up only their fixed portion, your cup always stands full, just as mine does, for you to drink when the spirit moves you.

Up, then, for battle! Be the man you have always claimed to be!’

Then in answer to him Idomeneus, leader of Cretans, spoke: [265]

‘Son of Atreus, I will surely be your faithful companion, just as I promised and undertook at the outset of this war. But you must stir up all the other flowing-haired Achaeans, to fight as soon as we may, because the Trojans have undone their oaths. Now death and calamity are in store for them, [270]

since they were the first to offend, by breaking their oaths.’

So he spoke, and the son of Atreus passed on, glad in his heart.

As he went through the mass of men he found the two called Ajax; they were arming, and a cloud of foot-soldiers came with them.

As when a goatherd on his lookout sees a cloud [275] approaching over the open sea, driven by the West Wind, and because he is far away it seems to him blacker than pitch

as it advances over the sea and brings a great whirlwind with it,

and he shudders when he sees it, and drives his flock into a cave;

so the close-packed companies of Zeus-nurtured strong young men [280]

advanced towards the deadly battle under the two called Ajax,

dark-coloured, and bristling with shields and spears.

When he saw them the lord Agamemnon was delighted, and he addressed them, speaking with winged words:

'You two named Ajax, commanders of bronze-shirted Argives, [285]

I give you no orders, since it is not fitting to urge you on, and you yourselves are driving your people to fight with vigour.

Father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, how I wish that

there was a spirit like this in the breasts of everyone!

Then the city of lord Priam would quickly reel before us, [290]

captured and devastated by our hands.'

So he spoke and left them, and went on in search of others.

Next he found Nestor, the clear-voiced speaker of the Pylians,

preparing his companions and urging them on to fight, and they were led by huge Pelagon, and Alastor and Chromius, [295]

and lord Haemon, and Bias, shepherd of the people. He had deployed the charioteers in front, with their horses and chariots,

and behind them large numbers of excellent foot-soldiers, to be a bulwark in war. The weakest he drove into the middle,

so that even the reluctant would be compelled to fight. [300]

First he gave orders to the charioteers, instructing them to

hold their horses back and not to cause disorder among the soldiery:

‘Let no one, relying on his own chariot-skill and bravery, be in a rage to fight the Trojans alone, in front of the rest, nor let him retreat, for this way you will be the less effective. [305]

But if a man in his chariot comes within reach of an enemy’s,

let him thrust with his spear, since that is much the better way.

This is how men in times past would storm cities and their walls,

keeping this strategy and resolution firmly in their hearts.’

So the old man urged them on, for he knew the wars of long ago; [310]

and when he saw him lord Agamemnon was delighted, and addressed him, speaking with winged words:

‘Old man, I could wish that your knees’ vigour was equal to the spirit in your breast, and your strength was unimpaired; but

old age that comes to all wears you down. How I wish that another [315]

man could take on your age, and you could join the younger men!’

Then Nestor the Gerenian horseman answered him:

‘Son of Atreus, I too could fervently wish myself to be the man I was when I killed glorious Ereuthalion.*

But the gods do not grant everything to men at once; [320] I was a young man then, but now old age presses hard on me.

Nonetheless, I shall go with my charioteers and direct them with counsel and in words, for that is the privilege of old men.

The spear-fighting will be done by younger men, who are

later-born than me, and have confidence in their strength.’
[325]

So he spoke, and Atreus’ son passed on, glad in his heart.

He found the son of Peteos, Menestheus, whipper of horses, standing idle, and with him were Athenians, raisers of the war-cry.

Close by them stood much-scheming Odysseus, and around him the ranks of Cephallenians, no weaklings, [330] were standing idle, for their people had not yet heard the war-cry,

since the companies of horse-breaking Trojans and Achaeans

had but recently roused themselves to action. So they waited,

standing there, waiting until another Achaean band should advance

and make an attack on the Trojans, and so begin the fighting. [335]

When he saw them Agamemnon, lord of men, rebuked them,

and he addressed them, speaking with winged words:

‘Son of Peteos, who was a king nurtured by Zeus—
and you too, you expert in low cunning, obsessed with gain —

why are you cowering here out of the way, waiting for others? [340]

You two ought to be taking your stand among the front ranks

and going to face the searing heat of the battle.

You are the first to be invited to any feast of mine, whenever we Achaeans prepare a feast for the elders, where it is your pleasure to eat roast meat and drink [345], cups of honey-sweet wine for as long as you wish; but now you would happily look on even if ten Achaean squadrons

were
fighting with the pitiless bronze, before you stirred
yourselves.'

Then much-scheming Odysseus looked at him darkly
and replied:
'Son of Atreus, what words are these that cross your teeth's
barrier? [350]
How can you say that I hang back from the battle,
whenever
we Achaeans stir up bitter war against the horse-breaking
Trojans?
If this is your concern and your desire, you will soon see
Telemachus'
dear father fighting in the thick of the front ranks of horse-
breaking
Trojans. But as for you, your words are nothing but empty
wind.' [355]

At this lord Agamemnon smiled, when he saw that
Odysseus
was angry, and taking back his words answered him:
'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many
schemes,
I have no great need to rebuke you, nor am I giving you
orders,
because I know that the spirit which you keep in your
breast [360]
is kindly disposed; and your thoughts are my thoughts.
So come; if hard words have been spoken, we shall later
make things right—and may the gods throw all this to the
winds.'

So he spoke and left them, and went in search of
others.
He found the son of Tydeus, high-spirited Diomedes,
standing [365]
inactive surrounded by his horses and close-jointed

chariots,
and next to him was standing Sthenelus, son of Capaneus.*
When he saw Diomedes lord Agamemnon rebuked him,
and addressed him, speaking with winged words:
'Son of war-minded Tydeus the horse-breaker, what is this?
[370]

Why are you cowering here, eyeing the battle-lines?
Tydeus would not have been content to skulk like this,
but would engage the enemy far in front of his companions;
that is what those who saw him in action used to say. I
myself
never met or saw him, but they say he excelled all other
men. [375]

He did once come to Mycenae, not with hostile intent
but as a guest, with godlike Polyneices, trying to raise an
army;
they were planning a campaign against Thebes' sacred
walls,*
and earnestly begged my people to give them illustrious
allies—

and they were ready to give them, and agreed to their
request. [380]

But Zeus sent us ill-omened signs, and dissuaded us;
and so when they had set out and were some way on the
road,

and had come to Asopus' grassy meadows, thick with
reeds,

the Achaeans appointed Tydeus to be their envoy.

So he set off, and came upon a large number of
Cadmeians* [385]

holding a feast in the house of powerful Eteocles.

Though he came as a stranger, alone among many
Cadmeians,

the horse-driver Tydeus was not afraid, but challenged
them

to athletic contests, and beat them in every event,

easily; that was the kind of support that Athena gave him.
[390]

At this the Cadmeians, whippers of horses, grew angry,
and on his way back they laid a strong ambush, gathering
fifty young men together; and there were two captains,
Maeon, son of Haemon, a man resembling the immortals,
and Autophonus' son Polyphontes, steadfast in war.* [395]
On these men too Tydeus let loose an ugly death,
for he killed them all, sending only one back to his home;
it was Maeon he sent, persuaded by signs from the gods.
Such a man was Tydeus the Aetolian; but he fathered a son
inferior to him in battle, though one better at making
speeches.' [400]

So he spoke, and mighty Diomedes gave him no
answer,
put to shame by the rebuke of his respected king;
but the son of splendid Capaneus answered:
'Son of Atreus, do not tell lies when you know the truth.
We can claim to be much better than our fathers, [405]
since we actually captured the city of seven-gated Thebes,*
though we led a smaller force, and against stronger walls,
trusting in signs from the gods and in the help from Zeus,
while they perished as a result of their own recklessness.
So do not rank our fathers' honour equal to ours.' [410]

But mighty Diomedes looked at Sthenelus darkly and
said:
'Friend, be silent, sit down and listen to what I say.
I am not angry with Agamemnon, shepherd of the peoples,
because he is urging the well-greaved Achaeans to fight;
it is him that the glory will attach to if the Achaeans [415]
cut down the Trojans and capture sacred Ilium, and his
will be the greater grief if the Achaeans are cut down.
So come, let us two also call up our surging courage.'

So he spoke, and jumped from his chariot to the
ground, fully armed,

and the bronze rang out terribly on the lord's chest as he
[420]

leapt; and then even the most steadfast would have felt
some fear.

As when waves of the sea beat on an echoing shore,
in quick succession under the West Wind's driving force;
they first raise themselves up on the open sea, and then
break with a great roar on the dry land, and, arching high,
[425]

rear to a crest on both sides of headlands and spew salt
spray;

so then the companies of Danaans moved in quick
succession

relentlessly towards the battle; each one's leader gave the
orders,

and the rest came on in silence, and you would not think
that so large an army had a voice in their breasts as they
followed, [430]

so silent they were, in fear of their leaders. Around them all
gleamed the finely worked armour that they wore in their
ranks.

But as for the Trojans, just like sheep who stand in great
numbers

in the courtyard of a wealthy man, waiting to yield their
white milk,

bleating incessantly because they can hear their lambs'
cries, [435]

so a confused clamour arose throughout their broad camp;
they did not all use the same speech or language, but their
tongues were mixed, summoned as they were from many
lands.

Ares urged them on, and grey-eyed Athena urged the
Achaean,

and there were Terror and Panic, and endlessly raging
Strife, [440]

sister and companion of man-slaughtering Ares,
who at first raises herself to only a lowly height but later,
though she walks on the earth, rears her head to reach the
high sky.

She now cast the poised conflict into the middle ground,
striding through the soldiery and swelling the agonized
cries of men. [445]

When the sides had met in a single place and come to
grips,
then there was a clash of leather shields and spears and
the fury of bronze-armoured warriors. Bossed shields
smashed against each other, and a tremendous clamour
arose,
made up of the groans of dying men and the exultant [450]
cries of their killers; and the earth ran with blood.
As when two torrents in winter sweep down from the
mountains
and, fed by great springs, unite their floods in spate at a
place where watercourses meet in some deep ravine,
and a shepherd far away in the mountains hears their roar;
[455]
such was the uproar and commotion of the armies as they
clashed.

Antilochus was the first to kill a Trojan chieftain,
a fine man fighting in the front rank, Echepolus, Thalysius'
son.

Throwing first, he hit the plate of his horsehair-crested
helmet;

the bronze spear-point struck him on the forehead and
pierced [460]

right through the bone, and darkness covered his eyes,
and he toppled like a tower in the fierce conflict.

When he fell lord Elephenor seized him by the feet,
Elephenor

Chalcodon's son, captain of the great-hearted Abantes,

and dragged him out of missiles' way, eager to strip him quickly [465]
of his armour; but his eagerness was short-lived, because
as he dragged the dead man away great-spirited Agenor
saw him,
and, as he stooped, stabbed him with his bronze-tipped
spear
in the side where his shield left him exposed, and loosened
his limbs.
So his breath left him, and over him a grim tussle began
[470]

as Trojans and Achaeans fought each other; like wolves
they leapt upon each other, and man struggled with man.

Next Ajax, son of Telamon, felled the son of Anthemion,
Simoeisius, a man in the prime of youth, whom his mother
had borne by the banks of Simoeis on her way down from
Ida, [475]

when she had been there with her parents to inspect their
flocks.

And so they called him Simoeisius, but he did not repay
his dear parents for his upbringing; his life-span was brief,
for he was beaten down by the spear of great-spirited Ajax.
As he advanced among the front ranks, Ajax struck him
[480]

on the right nipple, and the bronze tip passed clean
through
the shoulder, and he fell to earth in the dust like a poplar
that has grown tall in a wide, low-lying water-meadow;
it is trimmed below, but from the very top branches sprout,
and then a chariot-maker fells it with the flashing iron,
[485]

meaning to bend it into a wheel-rim for a handsome
chariot,

and it lies drying beside the banks of a river.

Such was Simoeisius, son of Anthemion, slain by Ajax

sprung

from Zeus. Then Antiphus of the bright corslet, Priam's son, threw his sharp spear at Ajax from among the soldiery.

[490]

He missed him, but hit Leucus, Odysseus' excellent companion,

in the groin as he was dragging the dead man to one side, and he collapsed over it and the body dropped from his hand.

Odysseus' spirit was deeply angered at Leucus' death, and he strode through the front-fighters helmeted in gleaming bronze; [495]

taking his stand very close to Leucus he looked keenly around

and then threw his shining spear. The Trojans retreated when they saw him throw, and he did not let it fly in vain, but hit Democoön, one of Priam's bastard sons, who had come from Abydos, where he kept swift mares. [500]

Odysseus, enraged for his companion, hit him with his spear

on the temple, and the bronze spear-point passed through and out the other side; darkness covered his eyes, and he fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him. The front-fighters retreated, and glorious Hector with them, [505]

and the Argives gave a great yell, and dragged the dead men back,

and pressed on even further. But Apollo, looking down from Pergamus,* grew indignant and shouted to the Trojans:

'Up with you, horse-breaking Trojans—do not yield the battle

to the Argives! Their flesh is not made of stone or iron, able [510]

to withstand the flesh-tearing bronze when they are hit.

Moreover Achilles, lovely-haired Thetis' son, is not fighting,

but is brooding over his heart-sore bitterness beside his ships.'

So spoke the terrible god from the city, while the daughter
of Zeus, splendid Tritogeneia,* urged on any of the
Achaeans [415]
she saw holding back as she went among the soldiery.

Next, his due destiny shackled Diores, son of
Amarynceus:
he was struck by a jagged stone on the right leg,
close to his ankle; a captain of the Thracians threw it,
Peirous, the son of Imbrasmus, who had come from Aenus.
[520]

The pitiless stone smashed the two tendons to nothing,
and his bones as well, and he fell backwards in the dust,
stretching out both hands towards his dear companions,
gasping out his life. Peirous, the man who threw the stone,
rushed up and thrust his spear in by the navel; Diores'
bowels [525]
all spilled out on to the ground, and darkness covered his
eyes.

But as Peirous ran back Thoas the Aetolian hit him with
his spear
in the chest above his nipple, and the bronze point stuck
fast
in his lung. Thoas came up close and wrenched the massive
spear
out of his chest; then, drawing his sharp sword, he drove it
[530]
into the middle of Peirous' belly, and robbed him of his life.
Yet he did not strip his armour; Peirous' companions
surrounded him,
Thracians with hair piled high, and with long spears in their
hands,
and though Thoas was huge and powerful and splendid

they drove him back; and he was shaken, and gave ground.
[535]

So the two warriors lay stretched in the dust next to each other,
one a Thracian and the other a man of the bronze-shirted Epeians,
both leaders; and around them many others were being killed.

Then no longer could any man have faulted their war-work as he entered the action—anyone who, as yet uninjured and unstabbed by [540] piercing bronze, was roaming in the thick of battle, with Pallas Athena taking him by the hand and holding off the missiles' onset; for on that day many men of the Trojans and Achaeans lay sprawled next to each other, face down in the dust.

BOOK FIVE

NEXT, to Diomedes, the son of Tydeus, Pallas Athena gave fury and daring, so that he might distinguish himself among all the Argives, and also win illustrious fame. From his helmet and shield she caused unwearied fire to blaze, like the star* that in late summer rises to shine with especial [5] brightness after it has bathed in the waters of Ocean. Such was the fire she made blaze from his head and shoulders, and she thrust him into the battle's midst, where the turmoil was greatest.

There was among the Trojans a man called Dares, a blameless, rich man, a priest of Hephaestus. He had two sons, [10] Phegeus and Idaeus, both skilled in every art of battle. These separated themselves from the rest and rushed out to face Diomedes from their chariot, while he was on the ground, on foot. When they had advanced to within close range of each other, Phegeus was the first to fling his far-shadowing spear, but [15] the spear-point passed over the left shoulder of Tydeus' son and did not hit him. Then Tydeus' son threw his bronze-tipped spear, and the weapon did not fly in vain from his hand, but hit Phegeus in mid-chest, and toppled him from the chariot. Idaeus sprang back, leaving his beautifully made chariot,

[20]

and did not have the courage to stand over his slain brother;
nor indeed would he himself have escaped death's black spectre,
had not Hephaestus rescued him, shrouding him in night, unharmed,
so that his old priest might not be utterly overwhelmed by grief.

The son of great-spirited Tydeus drove off their horses [25]
and gave them to his companions to take back to the hollow ships.

When the great-spirited Trojans saw the two sons of Dares, that one had fled and the other was lying dead by his chariot,

anger swelled up in them all; but grey-eyed Athena took impetuous Ares by the hand and addressed him in these words: [30]

'Ares, doom of mortals Ares, bloodstained sacker of walled cities,

shall we not leave the Trojans and Achaeans alone to struggle

together, and see to which side father Zeus grants the glory?

Let us withdraw, and in this way avoid the anger of Zeus.'

So she spoke, and led impetuous Ares away from the battle, [35]

and made him sit beside the high banks of Scamander, and the Danaans began to drive the Trojans back. Each of their leaders killed his man: first, Agamemnon, lord of men, toppled huge Odysseus, captain of the Phrygians, from his chariot;

he was the first to turn away, and Agamemnon planted his spear [40]

in his back between the shoulders, and drove it out through

his chest.

He fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him.

Then Idomeneus killed Phaestus, the son of Borus,
the Maeonian, who had come from rich-soiled Tarne.
Spear-famed Idomeneus pierced him with his long lance
[45]

in the right shoulder as he was about to climb into his
chariot;

he tumbled from the chariot, and hateful darkness took
him.

Idomeneus' attendants stripped him of his armour, and
then Menelaus, Atreus' son, with his sharp spear killed
Scamandrius, the son of Strophius, a man skilled in the
chase, [50]

a fine hunter, whom Artemis herself had taught to
shoot down all kinds of wild beasts that live in mountain
forests.

But this time Artemis shooter of arrows could not help him,
nor could the marksmanship in which he formerly excelled,
because Atreus' son Menelaus, famed with the spear, [55]
struck him with a spear in the back as he fled before him,
between the shoulders, and drove it through his chest.
He collapsed on to his face, and his armour clattered about
him.

Meriones struck down Phereclus, son of Tecton who was
Harmon's son, who had the skill in his hands to fashion all
kinds [60]

of intricate work, for Pallas Athena loved him above all
others.

It was he who had built for Alexander the well-balanced
ships

which began the trouble, and brought misery to all the
Trojans

and to himself, since he knew nothing of the gods'
ordinances.

Meriones went after him, and when he caught up with him
[65]

struck him in the right buttock, and the spear-point
passed clean through under the bone into his bladder.
Phereclus screamed and fell to his knees, and death
enveloped him.

Meges killed Pedaeus, son of Antenor—a bastard son,
but
glorious Theano had brought him up with the same faithful
care [70]

that she gave to her own dear children, out of regard for
her husband.

The spear-famed son of Phyleus came close to him and
struck with his sharp spear at the muscle in his neck; the
bronze
passed clean through his teeth, severing the tongue's root,
and
he collapsed in the dust, the cold bronze clenched in his
teeth. [75]

Eurypylus, son of Euaemon, killed glorious Hypsenor,
the son of proud-spirited Dolopion, who was the priest of
Scamander and was honoured by the people as if he were a
god.

As he fled before him Eurypylus, Euaemon's splendid son,
ran him down and lunging forward drove his sword through
[80]

Hypsenor's shoulder, and sheared off his heavy arm.
The bloody arm fell to the ground, and dark death and
his cruel destiny came down and fastened on his eyes.

So they laboured on in the fierce conflict. As for the son
of Tydeus, you could not tell whose side he was on, [85]
whether he was allied with the Trojans or with the
Achaeans.*

He stormed over the plain like a river in spate, a winter
torrent that quickly sweeps dykes away in its surging

course;
close-built embankments cannot hold it back, nor can
walls raised to defend flourishing orchards resist its [90]
sudden onslaught, when the heavy rain from Zeus has
fallen,
and far and wide destroys the fruits of strong men's toil.
So the close-packed ranks of Trojans were thrown by
Tydeus' son
into confusion, nor for all their numbers could they
withstand him.

Now when Pandarus, the splendid son of Lycaon, saw
him [95]

storming over the plain, scattering the companies before
him,

he quickly aimed his curved bow at the son of Tydeus,
and hit him in the right shoulder as he charged forward,
on a plate of his corslet. The bitter arrow flew through it,
holding a straight course, and his corslet was spattered
with blood. [100]

Then Lycaon's splendid son let out a great shout over him:

'Up with you, great-spirited Trojans, whippers of horses!

The best of the Achaeans has been wounded, and I do not
think

he will long hold out against my mighty arrow, if it truly was
the lord son of Zeus* who sent me here when I left Lycia.'

[105]

So he spoke, boasting, but the swift arrow did not fell
Diomedes,

and he turned back and stood in front of his horses and
chariot and spoke to Sthenelus, son of Capaneus:

'Quick, dear son of Capaneus, get down from the chariot,
so that you can pull the bitter arrow from my shoulder for
me.' [110]

So he spoke, and Sthenelus jumped from the chariot to
the ground,

and standing by him pulled the swift arrow out from behind his shoulder,
and the blood speared up through the closely woven tunic.
Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke in prayer:
'Hear me, daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis, Atrytone:
[115]

if ever you stood beside my father with kindly intent
in deadly war, this time be a friend to me too, Athena.
Let me kill this man; grant that he may come within my
spear-cast,
this man who shot me before I saw him, and who claims
that
I do not have long to look upon the bright light of the sun.'
[120]

So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard him,
and brought lightness to his legs and his arms again.
Standing nearby she addressed him with winged words:
'Take courage now, Diomedes, to fight against the Trojans;
I have thrust into your breast the fury of your father, [125]
fearless fury, such as the shield-wielding horseman Tydeus
had.

And I have taken from your eyes the mist that was there
before,
so that you can easily distinguish between god and man.
So if some god now comes down here to test you,
you must not fight face to face with any of the immortal
gods— [130]

except only that if Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, enters
the battle, you may wound her with the sharp bronze.'

So grey-eyed Athena spoke, and went away, and the
son
of Tydeus at once set off and joined the front-fighters.
Though even before he was raging in his heart to fight the
Trojans, [135]

yet now three times that fury seized him, like a lion that a shepherd watching over thick-fleeced sheep in open country has wounded but not killed when it leapt over his sheepfold's fence; he has provoked its strength, but he cannot then defend his flock, and the lion gets into the enclosures, and the helpless sheep [140] run about in panic. They fall in heaps, piled one on another, and the lion, still raging, leaps away over the fold's high fence. So did mighty Diomedes plunge raging in among the Trojans.

Next he killed Astynous and Hypeiron, shepherd of the people; one he pierced above the nipple with his bronze-tipped spear, [145] and struck the other's collarbone with his great sword next to the shoulder, and sheared it away from his back and neck. He left them where they were, and went after Abas and Polyidus, the sons of Eurydamas, the aged expounder of dreams. He had interpreted no dreams for them when they left for Troy, [150] and now mighty Diomedes stripped them of their armour. Next he went after Xanthus and Thoön, two sons of Phaenops, both late-born; their father was now worn out by grim old age, and had fathered no other son to inherit his possessions. Diomedes killed them, depriving them of their dear lives, [155] both of them, and bequeathed lamentation and cruel grief

to their father, since he could not welcome them back alive from the war. Distant cousins shared out his wealth.

Next he caught two sons of Priam of the line of Dardanus,
Echemmon and Chromius, as they rode out in one chariot.
[160]

As a lion springs on a herd of cattle and breaks the neck of a calf or cow as they graze in a wooded place,
so the son of Tydeus thrust them both brutally from their chariot,
though they resisted, and stripped them of their arms.
He gave the horses to his companions, to drive back to the ships. [165]

While he was spreading havoc among the ranks of men,
Aeneas
saw him and set off through the battle and the confusion of spears,
seeking godlike Pandarus, in the hope of finding him.
And he came upon the blameless and mighty son of Lycaon,
and standing before him spoke directly to him: [170]
'Pandarus, where now are your bow and your winged arrows,
and your fame? No man here can compete with you in archery,
nor does any man in Lycia boast that he is better than you.
Come now, lift your hands to Zeus and let fly an arrow at this man,
the one who stands supreme here, who is inflicting great hurt [175]
on the Trojans, loosening the knees of many fine men—
unless he is some god who has a grudge against the Trojans,
being angry over a missed offering; a god's anger is hard to bear.'

Then in answer the splendid son of Lycaon addressed him:

‘Aeneas, counsellor of the bronze-shirted Trojans, [180] this man seems to me exactly like Tydeus’ war-minded son, for I recognize him by his shield and his vizored helmet, and the look of his horses; but I do not know for sure if it is a god.

If this is the man I think it is, Tydeus’ war-minded son, this crazed assault cannot happen without a god, and some immortal [185]

must be standing close to him, his shoulders shrouded in mist,

who has turned aside the swift arrow that was on course to hit him;

I have already let fly an arrow at him, and it hit his right shoulder, passing right through the plate of his corslet, and I believed that I was on the point of sending him to Hades, but [190]

even so I did not fell him. So some resentful god must be here.

Here I do not have horses, or a chariot that I can mount; yet in Lycaon’s halls you must know that I have eleven chariots,

fine ones, freshly built, brand new. Over them cloths are spread, and next to each of them pairs of horses [195] stand, champing on white barley and emmer wheat.

And indeed as I left, my father, the old spear-fighter Lycaon, gave me much advice in his well-built house, telling me I should take my stand in a horse-drawn chariot and lead the Trojans into the harsh conflict of battle. [200] I did not listen to him—and it would have been much better if

I had—wanting to spare my horses, in case they ran short of fodder in

places where men are crowded together, and they used to plentiful food.

So I left them behind, and I came to Ilium on foot,
relying on my bow, but that was to turn out no use to me:
[205]

already I have let fly an arrow at two of their champions,
the son of Tydeus and Atreus' son, and in both I have
made the blood flow with a clear hit, but it only provoked
them

the more. So it was for a miserable destiny that I took down
my

curved bow from its peg, on the day that I came leading my
[210]

Trojans to beautiful Ilium, doing a service to glorious Hector.
But if I ever go back home and cast eyes on my native land,
on my wife and on my great high-roofed house,
may some stranger cut off my head, there and then,
if I do not smash this bow with my hands and throw it [215]
into the blazing fire; it was useless gear to bring with me.'

Then Aeneas, captain of the Trojans, answered him:
'Do not talk like that, I beg you! Nothing will change until
you and I go to meet this man with chariot and horses,
to match our strength and bring him to the test in full
armour. [220]

So come, climb into my chariot, and you will see the
worth of the horses of Tros,* which have the skill to range
swiftly over all the plain, whether in pursuit or retreat.
They will carry us safely back to the city, if Zeus continues
to give the glory to Diomedes, the son of Tydeus. [225]
Come now, take the whip and the shining reins, and
I will get down from the chariot, and enter the fighting—
or you can go to meet this man, while I take care of the
horses.'

Then the splendid son of Lycaon addressed him:
'Aeneas, you must take care of the reins and the horses
yourself; [230]
they are more likely to pull the curved chariot under the

hands of
their accustomed driver, if we have to flee from Tydeus'
son.

I am afraid that if they cannot hear your voice they will
grow
restive and take fright, and refuse to carry us out of the
battle,
and then the son of great-spirited Tydeus could attack [235]
and kill us and drive away your single-hoofed horses.
No, you must drive the chariot and horses yourself,
and I will face his onslaught with my sharp spear.'

So they spoke, and mounted the finely worked chariot,
and, raging, guided the swift horses towards Tydeus' son.
[240]

Sthenelus, the splendid son of Capaneus, saw them
coming,
and quickly addressed Tydeus' son with winged words:
'Diomedes, son of Tydeus, delight of my heart, I can
see two mighty men coming at you, raging for the fight,
filled with immense strength; one is the skilled bowman,
[245]

Pandarus, who boasts that he is the son of Lycaon,
while the other boasts that he was born the son of
blameless Anchises, and that his mother was Aphrodite.
Come, let us retreat in our chariot, and do not, I beg you,
storm
like this through the front-fighters, or you may lose your
dear life.' [250]

But mighty Diomedes looked at him darkly and
addressed him:
'Do not talk to me of flight; I do not think you will persuade
me.

I am not the kind of man to hang back from the fight,
nor to cower in fear; my fury is still firmly fixed within me.
But I am loath to mount my chariot, and will go to meet

them [255]

just as I am; Pallas Athena does not allow me to be afraid.

As for those two, their swift horses will not carry them home,

away from me, even if one or the other of them escapes.

And I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your mind:

if Athena of many counsels grants me the glory of [260]

killing these two, you must leave these swift horses

of ours here, tying their reins to the chariot-rail, and

turn your mind to Aeneas' horses; make a dash for him

and drive them from the Trojans to the well-greaved

Achaeans.

You must know, they are of the same stock that Zeus the

wide- [265]

thunderer gave to Tros as compensation for his son

Ganymedes,

for they were the best of all horses under the dawn and the sun.

Anchises, lord of men, bred from this bloodstock by deceit,

by putting mares to the stallions without Laomedon's

knowledge.*

From them six foals were born in his halls, and of these

[270]

he kept four for himself, and raised them at his manger,

and he gave two, provokers of panic, to Aeneas.

If we were to capture these we would win glorious fame.'

As they were speaking to one another in this way,

the other two quickly closed on them, driving their swift

horses. [275]

Then the splendid son of Lycaon was the first to speak:

'Steadfast-hearted, war-minded son of proud Tydeus!

So my swift shot, my bitter arrow, did not fell you; but this

time

I will test you with my spear, and perhaps I will strike you

down.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and threw it, [280]

and hit the shield of Tydeus' son; and the bronze point flew clean through it and reached Diomedes' corslet.

At this Lycaon's splendid son gave a great shout:

'You are hit, deep in your side! I do not think you will hold out much longer; you have given me great glory.'
[285]

Fearlessly, mighty Diomedes addressed him:

'You missed—you did not hit me! I think that before you are finished with all this one or other of you will fall and with his blood glut Ares, the fighter with the oxhide shield.'

So he spoke and hurled his spear, and Athena guided it on to [290]

Pandarus' nose by his eye, and it went through his white teeth.

The relentless bronze cut his tongue away at the root, and the point then came out underneath his chin.

He tumbled from the chariot, and his bright-glittering armour

clattered about him, and the swift-footed horses [295] started in fear; and there his life and fury ebbed away.

Now Aeneas jumped down, holding his shield and long spear,

fearing that the Achaeans would drag the dead man away from him.

He stood astride him like a lion, trusting in his strength, holding before him his spear and perfectly balanced shield, [300]

raging to kill anyone who might come to challenge him, and yelling terribly. But the son of Tydeus picked up a rock in his hand, a mighty feat, which not even two men such as mortals now are could hold up, but he easily lifted it on his own.

With this he hit Aeneas on the hip-joint, where the thigh-bone [305]

revolves in the hip socket, and men call it the cup.

He smashed Aeneas' cup, and severed both sinews as well, and the rough rock stripped away his skin. The hero sank to his knees and stayed there, propping himself on the ground with his brawny hand; and black night covered his eyes.

[310]

Then indeed Aeneas lord of men would have died, had not Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, been quick to see him —

his mother, who had borne him to Anchises, herdsman of cattle.

Around her dear son she wrapped her white arms, and held before him a concealing fold of her white dress as a [315]

defence against missiles, in case any of the swift-horsed Danaans

should hurl a spear into his chest and take away his life.

So she set about rescuing her dear son from the fighting by stealth; but the son of Capaneus did not forget the agreement that Diomedes, master of the war-cry, had made with him. [320]

He held back his own single-hoofed horses, keeping them from the battle's confusion, and tied their reins to the chariot-rail,

and made a dash for the fine-maned horses of Aeneas, and drove them away from the Trojans to the well-greaved Achaeans.

He gave them to Deipylus, his dear companion, whom he esteemed [325]

above all his peers, because their minds thought alike, telling him to drive them to the hollow ships. Then the hero

mounted his own chariot and took up the shining reins,
and at once drove the strong-hoofed horses towards
Tydeus' son,

raging. Diomedes was pursuing Cypris* with the pitiless
bronze, [330]

knowing what an unwarlike goddess she was, and not one
of those reckoned to take command when men are at war—
she was certainly no Athena, nor Enyo,* sacker of cities.

When the son of great-spirited Tydeus caught up with her,
after pursuing her through the dense soldiery, he sprang
forward [335]

and, lunging, stabbed her with his sharp spear on the wrist,
where it was soft. The spear passed clean through the
deathless

garment which the Graces had woven for her, piercing the
flesh

above the palm's base, and the goddess' deathless blood
flowed;

this was ichor, the kind of blood that flows in the blessed
gods, [340]

for they eat no bread, and do not drink gleaming wine,
and so are without blood, and men call them immortals.

She gave a loud scream, and let her son fall from her,
but Phoebus Apollo caught him up in his arms, protecting
him

in a dark cloud, in case any of the swift-horsed Danaans
[345]

should hurl a bronze spear into his chest and take away his
life.

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, shouted aloud over
her:

'Daughter of Zeus, stay away from warfare and fighting!

Is it not enough that you lead feeble women astray?

If you keep joining the battle, I think you will come to be

[350]

terrified of war, even when you only hear others speak of it.'

So he spoke, and she went away, distraught and in great pain.

Wind-footed Iris lifted her up and led her out of the mass of men,

exhausted with pain, and her lovely skin was darkening.

On the left of the battlefield she found impetuous Ares

[355]

sitting alone, his spear and swift horses resting against a cloud.

Falling to her knees she urgently entreated her dear brother,

begging him for his horses with their headbands of gold:

'Dear brother, help me to escape. Give me your horses, so that

I may reach Olympus, where the immortal gods have their seat. [360]

I am sorely troubled with a wound, which a mortal man gave me—

Tydeus' son, who would now fight even against father Zeus.'

So she spoke, and Ares gave her the horses with golden headbands,

and she mounted the chariot, suffering in her dear heart,

and Iris mounted beside her and took up the reins in her hand, [365]

and whipped the pair to make them go; and they flew willingly on.

Soon they arrived at steep Olympus, seat of the gods,

and there swift wind-footed Iris pulled up the horses,

unyoked

them from the chariot, and threw immortal fodder before them.

Bright Aphrodite collapsed on to the knees of Dione [370]

her mother, who took her daughter in her arms, and stroking her with her hand addressed her, saying:
'Dear child, which of the Uranian* gods has done this to you so thoughtlessly, as if you had committed some public mischief?'

Then Aphrodite who loves to smile answered her: [375]
'It was the son of Tydeus, arrogant Diomedes, who wounded me,
because I rescued my dear son from the fighting by stealth
—

Aeneas, who is by far the dearest of all men to me.
This grim conflict is no longer between Trojans and Achaeans,
but now the Danaans are fighting against immortals as well.' [380]

Then Dione, bright among goddesses, answered her:
'Endure, my child, and bear this, distressed though you are;
many of us who have our homes on Olympus have suffered
at men's hands, when we tried to inflict harsh pain on each other.

Ares for one suffered, when Otus and mighty Ephialtes,
[385]

the sons of Aloeus, bound him in strong chains;
for thirteen months he was imprisoned in a bronze jar,
and then even Ares, insatiable in war, would have died
had not their stepmother, the beautiful Eëriboea, taken
the news to Hermes; he stole Ares out of the jar—and he
was [390]

now in a weak state, for the cruel chains were wearing him
down.*

Again, Hera suffered when the mighty son of Amphytrion*
wounded her in her right breast with a three-barbed
arrow, and incurable anguish seized hold of her.

Monstrous Hades suffered too with the rest,* hit by a swift
arrow [395]

when that same man, the son of Zeus who wears the aegis,
shot him at Pylos among the dead men and gave him over
to pain.

He went away to the house of Zeus on high Olympus,
grieving
in his heart and pierced through with agony, for the arrow
had driven into his massive shoulder, and was vexing his
heart. [400]

But Paeëon* spread pain-killing ointments on his wound
and healed him, since he was not made to suffer death.
Heracles was a hard and violent man, not troubled by the
outrages

he committed with his bow on the gods who hold Olympus.
As for you, the goddess grey-eyed Athena set this man
against you, [405]

fool that he is, since Tydeus' son does not know in his heart
that the man who fights with immortals is not at all long-
lived;

such a man has no homecoming from war and grim
conflict*

to find his children crying 'Daddy' as they climb on to his
knees.

So let the son of Tydeus, even if he is very mighty, now
[410]

take care that no god more warlike than you fights against
him;

or else Aegialeia, the prudent daughter of Adrestus
and the steadfast wife of Diomedes, breaker of horses, may
one day rouse her household from sleep with mourning
cries,

longing in vain for her wedded husband, the best of the
Achaeans.' [415]

So she spoke, and with her hands wiped away the ichor
from

Aphrodite's wrist; it was healed, and the harsh pain was

soothed.

Now the others had been watching this, Athena and Hera,
and they began to tease Cronus' son Zeus with mocking
words;

and the first to speak was the goddess grey-eyed Athena:
[420]

'Father Zeus, will you be angry at what I am going to say?
I do believe that Cypris has been persuading some Achaean
woman

into following the Trojans, whom she now loves to excess,
and while she was caressing this lovely robed Achaean
woman

she scratched her delicate hand on a golden pin.' [425]

So she spoke, and the father of gods and men smiled,
and calling golden Aphrodite to him spoke to her:

'Warfare's business, my child, is not for you; your task is
to occupy yourself with matters of desire and marriage,
leaving all this to be the concern of swift Ares and Athena.'
[430]

As they were talking to each other in this way,
Diomedes, master of the war-cry, sprang forward at
Aeneas.

He knew that Apollo himself had spread his arms over him,
but even so he was not in awe of the great god, and kept
rushing at

Aeneas, to kill him and to strip him of his famous armour.
[435]

Three times he sprang at him, raging for the kill, and
three times Apollo battered his shining shield back;
but when he charged for the fourth time, like some divine
being,

Apollo who shoots from afar gave a terrible shout and
addressed him:

'Think, son of Tydeus, and shrink back, and do not hope to
[440]

match yourself with gods! The races of immortal gods and of men who walk upon the earth can never be the same.'

So he spoke, and Tydeus' son drew back a little space, avoiding the anger of Apollo who shoots from afar.

As for Aeneas, Apollo set him apart from the mass of men [445]

in the holy shrine on Pergamus where his temple stood.*

There Leto and Artemis,* shooter of arrows,

nursed him in the spacious sanctuary and renewed his glory;

and Apollo of the silver bow fashioned a phantom in the exact likeness of Aeneas and with the same armour, [450]

and around this phantom the Trojans and glorious Achaeans hewed at each other's oxhide shields, held before their chests,

both round shields and those made from stretched shaggy hides.

Then indeed Phoebus Apollo addressed impetuous Ares:

'Ares, doom of mortals, bloodstained Ares, sacker of walled cities, [455]

will you not go after this man and take him from the battle?

I mean Tydeus' son, who would now fight even against father Zeus.

First he grappled with Cypris and wounded her on the wrist, and after that he came at me like some divine being.'

So he spoke, and settled down on the heights of Pergamus, [460]

while murderous Ares went among the Trojan ranks and urged them

on, in the likeness of Acamas, swift commander of the Thracians,

and gave instructions to the Zeus-nurtured sons of Priam:

'You sons of Priam, a king nurtured by Zeus, how long will you allow your people to be killed by the Achaeans?

[465]

Will you wait until they are fighting about your strongly
made gates?

Lying there is a man whom we honour as much as glorious
Hector—

Aeneas, the son of great-hearted Anchises. Come, let us
rescue our fine companion from the roaring tumult of
battle.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each
man. [470]

Then Sarpedon too rebuked glorious Hector with hard
words:

'Hector, tell me, where has that fury gone that you had
before?

You used to say, I recall, that you could hold the city on
your own,

without men or allies, just you and your brothers and
brothers-in-law.

And yet I cannot see or make out a single one of them now,
[475]

but they are cowering like hounds around a lion,
while we, who are only here as your allies, do the fighting.

I indeed have come a very great distance to be your ally:
Lycia is far away, beside the Xanthus with its swirling
waters,

where I left my dear wife and my infant son, and [480]

a great store of treasure, such as a poor man would envy;
but for all that I urge on the Lycians, and am myself raging
to fight man to man, even though I have no possessions
here

that the Achaeans would want to plunder and carry off.

Meanwhile, you stand idle, and do not even order your
people [485]

to stand their ground and fight to protect their wives.

Take care that you are not caught in the all-embracing
meshes

of a corded net, and so become the prey and spoil of your enemies,
because they will very soon sack your well-populated city.
And yet all this should be your concern day and night—
[490]
to entreat the captains of your far-famed allies to hold
unceasingly
to their task; this way you may shake off their harsh
rebuke.'

So Sarpedon spoke, and his words bit into Hector's thoughts;
at once he leapt fully armed from his chariot to the ground,
and ranged through the whole camp, shaking two spears,
[495]
urging the Trojans to fight, and rousing up the grim conflict.
They turned and rallied, and stood facing the Achaeans,
but the Argives massed and stood their ground, and did not
run.
As when on a sacred threshing-floor a wind carries the chaff
away
when men are winnowing, at the time when fair-haired
Demeter* [500]
separates grain and chaff under the hurrying winds, and
the heaps of chaff grow white; so then did the Achaeans
turn white under the fall of dust which the horses' hoofs
kicked up through their ranks, and sent up to the high
brazen sky,
as the men closed again in battle, and the charioteers kept
wheeling back. [405]
So they drove their hands' fury forward; and impetuous
Ares,
roaming everywhere, drew a veil of night over the battle
to help the Trojans. He was carrying out the commands of
Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, who had ordered him
to wake the spirit of the Trojans, when he saw Pallas Athena

[510]

leaving the field; for she was the Danaans' champion.
Then he sent Aeneas out from his richly endowed
sanctuary,
and thrust fury into the breast of the shepherd of the
people.

Aeneas took his place among his companions, and they
were glad

when they saw him coming back alive and restored to
health, [515]

and full of noble fury; but they did not question him at all,
for the toil

before them, stirred up by the god of the silver bow and by
Ares,

doom of mortals, and by endlessly raging Strife, would not
let them.

As for the Danaans, the two called Ajax, with Odysseus
and Diomedes,
were driving them on to fight; but even without their urging
[520]

the men had no fear of the Trojans' violent onslaught,
but stood their ground like clouds that the son of Cronus
holds motionless over the peaks of mountains on a
windless day,

while the fury of the North Wind and of the other
blustering winds which scatter the shadowing clouds with
[525]

their shrill blasts is asleep; so the Danaans stood unmoved,
waiting for the Trojans, and refused to turn in flight.

Atreus' son roamed through the ranks, with constant
exhortations:

'My friends, be men, and put courage in your hearts,
and feel shame before each other in the fierce crush of
battle! [530]

Men who feel shame are more often saved than killed,
while those who run away find neither glory nor courage.'

So he spoke, and quickly threw his spear and hit a
leading man,
a companion of great-spirited Aeneas, Deicoön, who was
the son of Pergasus, and whom the Trojans honoured as
much as [535]

Priam's sons, since he was always quick to fight in the front
ranks.

Lord Agamemnon hit him with his spear on the shield,
which could not stop it, and the bronze flew right through,
driving beyond the belt into the base of his belly.

He fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him.
[540]

Then in his turn Aeneas killed two of the best men of
the Danaans,

Crethon and Orsilochus, the sons of Diocles,
whose father's home was in well-built Pherae;* he was a
man of great wealth, and was descended from a river,
Alpheus, which flows in a broad stream through the Pylians'
land, [545]

and he fathered Ortilochus to be king over many men.

Ortilochus in turn was father to great-spirited Diocles,
and to Diocles there were born two sons, twins,
Crethon and Orsilochus, who were skilled in all battle's arts.

When they reached youth's fullness they accompanied
[550]

the Argives in their black ships to Ilium rich in horses,
to win compensation for Atreus' sons, Agamemnon and
Menelaus; but there the end of death covered them both.
They were like a pair of lions raised by their mother
in deep wooded thickets high in the mountains, lions [555]
that pillage the enclosures of men's farms, and carry off
their cattle and sturdy sheep, until they in their turn
fall into men's hands and are killed with the sharp bronze;

just so were they overcome at the hands of Aeneas
and crashed to the ground like lofty pine trees. [560]

When they had fallen the warrior Menelaus felt pity for
them,
and strode through the front-fighters helmeted in gleaming
bronze,

shaking his spear. Ares stirred up the fury in him, intending
that he should be beaten down by the hands of Aeneas.

But Antilochus, great-spirited Nestor's son, saw him, and
[565]

strode up through the front-fighters; he was greatly afraid
that

the people's shepherd might be hurt and bring all their toil
to nothing.

The two men were poising their sharp spears ready in their
hands,

facing each other and in a frenzy to fight, when Antilochus
came

and stood very close to the shepherd of the people, and
[570]

Aeneas, swift fighter though he was, did not stand his
ground

when he saw the two men standing firm, side by side.

So these dragged the dead men back into the Achaean
people,

and laid the wretched pair in the arms of their companions,

and turned back and began to fight again in the front ranks.

[575]

There they killed Pylaemenes, who was the equal of
Ares,

captain of the great-spirited shield-bearing Paphlagonians.

He was standing still when Menelaus, son of Atreus, famed
with the spear, pierced him with his spear, hitting his
collarbone.

Antilochus struck down Mydon, his attendant and

charioteer, [580]

Atymnius' fine son, as he wheeled his single-hoofed horses, hitting him with a rock full on his elbow; and the reins with their

white ivory decoration fell from his hands and dropped into the dust.

Antilochus sprang at him and drove his sword into Mydon's temples,

and he fell from the well-made chariot, gasping for breath, [585]

head-first in the dust, buried up to his head and shoulders.

For some time he stuck there—for the sand was deep—until his horses kicked him and laid him flat on the dusty ground.

Antilochus whipped them up, and drove them back to the Achaean camp.

But Hector noticed them across the ranks, and sprang after them [590]

with a yell; and companies of the Trojans followed him in all their strength. They were led by Ares and lady Enyo, she bringing with her Confusion, reckless in war, while Ares held a spear of prodigious size in his hands, roaming now in front of Hector and now behind him. [595]

When he saw him Diomedes, master of the war-cry, shuddered.

As when a man who is crossing a great plain stands helpless before a swift-moving river that flows towards the sea,

and seeing it churned into foam runs back a little way; so then Tydeus' son drew back, and spoke to his people: [600]

'My friends, in the past we have been filled with amazement at

glorious Hector, as a spearman and a brave fighter, but there is

always one of the gods at his side, to save him from ruin,

as now Ares stands there next to him, in the likeness of a mortal.

Come, keep your faces towards the Trojans, and retreat
[605]

steadily, and do not rage to pit your strength in battle
against gods.'

So he spoke, and the Trojans came up very close to
them.

Then Hector killed two men who were skilled in warfare,
Menesthes and Anchialus, who were both in one chariot.
When they fell huge Ajax, Telamon's son, felt pity for them;
[610]

he went forward, and standing nearby let fly with his
shining spear,
and hit Amphius, the son of Selagus, who lived in Paesus,
a man of much property and rich in corn-land; but his
destiny
had brought him to come to the help of Priam and his sons.
Ajax, son of Telamon, hit him on his belt, and [615]

he far-shadowing spear lodged at the base of his belly,
and he fell with a thud. Illustrious Ajax ran up to strip him
of his armour, but the Trojans rained their spears on him,
sharp and gleaming, and he caught many of them on his
shield.

Setting his heel on the dead man he pulled the bronze-
tipped spear [620]

out of him; but he could not then strip the fine armour
from Amphius' shoulders, since he was hard pressed by
missiles,

and was also frightened by the proud Trojans' steadfast
defence,

who confronted him bravely in numbers, grasping their
spears,

and who, for all his size and strength and splendour, [625]

forced him back from them; and he was shaken and withdrew.

So they laboured away in the fierce crush of battle. Then Tlepolemus, the great and valiant son of Heracles, was roused by his harsh destiny to attack godlike Sarpedon.

When they had advanced to within close range of each other, [630]

one a son and the other a grandson of Zeus the cloud-gatherer,

Tlepolemus was the first to speak to the other man:

‘Sarpedon, counsellor of the Lycians, what compulsion is forcing you, a man unskilled in fighting, to cower here? Men lie when they say that you are the offspring of Zeus [635]

who wears the aegis, since you fall far short of those men who in former generations were fathered by Zeus—such men as they say the mighty Heracles was.

He was my steadfast-spirited, lion-hearted father, and long ago came here in search of the mares of Laomedon,* [640]

with no more than six ships and a smaller force of men, but he sacked the city of Ilium and made widows of its streets.

But you have a coward’s heart, and your people are dying. I do not think that your coming here from Lycia will prove to be a defence to the Trojans, not even if you are very strong; [645]

no, you will pass through Hades’ gates, beaten down at my hands.’

In answer to him Sarpedon, the captain of the Lycians, said:

‘Tlepolemus, Heracles did indeed destroy sacred Ilium, but only through the folly of a man, splendid Laomedon, who rewarded his good deeds with words of abuse and

[650]

refused him the mares, on whose account he had come so far.

As for you, I say that you will here meet death and the black

spectre at my hands; beaten down under my spear, you will give the glory to me and your life to Hades, master of famous horses.'

So spoke Sarpedon, and Tlepolemus lifted his ash spear, [655]

and both the long spears flew from their hands at the same time. Sarpedon hit the other in the middle of his neck, and the pain-loaded point passed clean through it, and dark night came down and covered his eyes.

But Tlepolemus hit Sarpedon on the left thigh with his [660] long spear, and the point sped furiously through, grazing the bone; but as yet his father kept destruction from him.

The glorious companions of godlike Sarpedon began to carry him from the fighting; the long spear dragged and weighed him down, but in their haste no one noticed [665]

or thought to pull the ash spear from his thigh so that he could stand, such was the trouble they had in protecting him.

On the other side the well-greaved Achaeans began to carry

Tlepolemus from the fighting. Glorious Odysseus of the enduring

spirit saw him, and his dear heart within him was raging: [670]

he pondered then in his heart and in his spirit whether to pursue the son of loud-thundering Zeus further or to take away the lives of more of the Lycians.

But it was not great-hearted Odysseus' destiny to kill the mighty son of Zeus with the sharp bronze, and so

[675]

Athena turned his thoughts towards the mass of Lycians.
He killed Coeranus and
Alastor and Chromius, Alcandrus and Halius and Noëmon
and Prytanis; and then
glorious Odysseus would have slain yet more Lycians,
had not great Hector of the glittering helmet been quick to
notice. [680]

He strode through the front-fighters, helmeted in gleaming
bronze,
bringing terror to the Danaans; and at his coming
Sarpedon,
the son of Zeus, was glad, and addressed him plaintively:
'Son of Priam, do not let me lie here, to become the prey
of the Danaans, but help me; and after this may my life
leave me [685]

in your city of Troy, since it seems I was not after all
destined to return to my home in my dear native land,
to bring gladness to my dear wife and my infant son.'

So he spoke, but Hector of the glittering helmet did not
reply,
and rushed past him, impatient to thrust back the Argives
[690]

as quickly as possible, and to take away the lives of many.
Then his glorious companions made godlike Sarpedon
sit beneath a handsome oak, sacred to Zeus who wears the
aegis;
and the ash spear was wrenched out of his thigh
by mighty Pelagon, who was his dear companion. [695]
His life's breath left him, and a mist spread over his eyes,
but then he recovered, and a gust of the North Wind
blew on him and revived his feebly breathing spirit.

Now the Argives, faced by Ares and bronze-helmeted
Hector,
at no time turned in flight towards the black ships [700]

nor made a counter-attack, but retreated steadily to the rear when they realized that Ares was helping the Trojans.

Who was the first, and who the last to be slaughtered by Hector, son of Priam, and by brazen Ares?

Teuthras first, and then Orestes, whipper of horses, [705]

Trechus the spearman from Aetolia, and Oenomaus,

Helenus, son of Oenops, and Oresbius with his glittering loin-plate,

who lived in Hyle, carefully husbanding his wealth,

on the shore of the Cephisian lake; and near him

lived other Boeotians, possessors of a richly fertile land.

[710]

When the goddess white-armed Hera saw the Argives being slaughtered in the fierce crush of battle,

she straightaway addressed Athena in winged words:

‘Daughter of Zeus the aegis-wearer, Atrytone, this will not do!

Worthless indeed was the undertaking we gave to Menelaus — [715]

that he would sack strongly walled Ilium before returning home—

if we allow murderous Ares to rage in this way.

Come now, let us two also call up our surging courage.’

So she spoke, and the goddess grey-eyed Athena did not disobey her.

Hera set about harnessing her horses with golden headbands, [720]

Hera, elder goddess, daughter of great Cronus,

and Hebe quickly fitted the curved wheels to the chariot.

These are bronze, with eight spokes, on the ends of the iron axle;

their rims are made of gold, imperishable, and on them

are fitted tyres of bronze, a wonder to look on, and [725]

the hubs are made of silver, revolving on both sides.

The car is woven of tightly plaited gold and silver straps,

and there are double rails running right round it;
from it extends a silver pole, and on to its end Hera
lashed a fine golden yoke, and to this she fastened [730]
the golden yoke-straps. Then she led her swift-footed
horses
under the yoke, impatient for strife and the battle-cry.

And Athena, the daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis,
let fall on to her father's threshold the soft embroidered
robe which she herself had laboured over with her own
hands, [735]

and put on the tunic of Zeus who gathers the clouds,
and clothed herself in armour for war, the bringer of tears.
Around her shoulders she threw the tasselled aegis,
a terrifying sight, around which is set in a circle Panic,
and with it Strife and Courage, and with it chilling Rout,
[740]

and with it the head of the hideous monster Gorgon,
terrifying and grim, a portent of Zeus who wears the aegis.
On her head she placed a twin-crested helmet with four
plates,

golden, decorated with foot-soldiers from a hundred cities.
She stepped on to the brightly blazing chariot, and gripped
the spear, [745]

heavy, thick, and massive, with which she beats down
ranks of men,

of heroes with whom she, child of a mighty father, is
enraged.

Then Hera quickly lashed the horses with her whip, and
of their own accord the gates of the high sky groaned open,
gates held

by the Seasons,* who have charge of the great sky and
Olympus, [750]

either to push aside the dense cloud or to close it up
together.

Through these gates they steered the horses, driven on by

the whip,
and they found the son of Cronus sitting apart from the
other gods on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus.
There the goddess white-armed Hera reined in the horses
[755]

and put a question to Zeus, the supreme son of Cronus,
saying:

‘Father Zeus, are you not angry with Ares for these cruel
deeds,

the great numbers of fine Achaean people he has killed,
pointlessly and recklessly—a cause of grief to me, while
Cypris

and Apollo of the silver bow take their ease, delighted to
have [760]

unleashed this madman, who has no notion of divine order?

‘Father Zeus, will you be at all angry with me if I give Ares
a painful thrashing and drive him from the battlefield?’

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed
her:

‘I will not; stir up Athena who gathers the spoils against
him, [765]

for she is the one most used to dealing out harsh pain to
him.’

So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not
disobey him,

and whipped the horses; and they flew willingly onward
between the earth and the high sky, set with stars.

As far as a man can see with his eyes into the misty
distance [770]

as he sits on a lookout, gazing out over the wine-faced sea,
so far is the leap of the loud-whinnying horses of the gods.

When they came to Troy and the streams of the two rivers,
to the place where Simoeis and Scamander unite their
waters,*

there the goddess white-armed Hera reined in the horses

and [775]

freed them from the chariot, and poured a thick mist
around them;

and Simoeis thrust up ambrosia for them to graze on.

But the two goddesses set out, stepping like wild
pigeons,

full of rage to come to the help of the Argives.

When they came to where the most numerous and the best
men [780]

were standing, crowding around the mighty horse-breaker
Diomedes, in the likeness of flesh-devouring lions

or wild boars whose strength is in no way feeble, there

the goddess white-armed Hera stopped and cried aloud,

taking the appearance of great-hearted Stentor the brazen-
voiced, [785]

whose shout was as loud as that of fifty other men:

‘Shame, Argives, you things of disgrace, admired only for
your

handsome looks! As long as glorious Achilles came into the
battle

the Trojans never marched out in front of the Dardanian
gates,* because they were in terror of his massive spear.

[790]

But now they are fighting far from their city, by our hollow
ships.’

So speaking she quickened the fury and spirit in each
man.

Then the goddess grey-eyed Athena made quickly for the
son

of Tydeus, and she found the lord beside his horses and
chariot,

cooling the wound which Pandarus had dealt him with his
arrow, [795]

for sweat was causing the broad strap of his round shield
to chafe it. It was troubling him, and his hand was growing

weary as he held up the strap and wiped away the dark blood.

The goddess laid her hand on the horses' yoke and spoke to him:

'Truly Tydeus fathered a son who bears him little resemblance: [800]

Tydeus was short in stature, but he was a fighter!

Even at the time when I would not allow him to fight or push himself forward—when alone of the Achaeans he came

as an envoy to Thebes,* alone among a crowd of Cadmeians,

and I told him to restrain himself as he feasted in their halls — [805]

even then, with the same audacious spirit as in former times

he challenged the young Cadmeians and beat them in every event,

easily; that was the kind of supporter I was to him.

And now here I stand beside you and keep you from harm, and with all my heart urge you to do battle with the Trojans; [810]

but either weariness from your many assaults has sunk into your limbs,

or perhaps it is heart-sapping fear that has gripped you. If so,

you are no offspring of Tydeus, the son of war-minded Oeneus.'

Then in answer mighty Diomedes addressed her:

'I know you, goddess, daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis; [815]

so I shall speak openly and hide nothing from you.

It is not heart-sapping fear that grips me, nor irresolution;

I am still holding in my mind the commands that you gave me:

you would not allow me to fight the blessed gods face to face,

except only that if Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, should enter [820]

the battle I was allowed to wound her with the sharp bronze.

For that reason I am now falling back, and I have ordered all the rest of the Argives to gather around me here; I can see that it is Ares who is lording it on the battlefield.'

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena addressed him: [825]

'Diomedes, son of Tydeus, delight of my heart, you should not on this account be afraid of Ares or any other

of the immortals; that is the kind of support I give to you.

So come now, direct your single-hoofed horses first against Ares,

go close and strike him; do not be in awe of impetuous Ares, [830]

this crazed god, this shape formed of evil, this two-faced scoundrel,

who not long ago spoke with Hera and me and undertook to fight against the Trojans and bring aid to the Argives, but now stands alongside the Trojans, and has forgotten his promise.'

So speaking she pulled Sthenelus back with her hand and shoved [830]

him from the chariot towards the ground, and he quickly leapt down.

She mounted the chariot and stood beside glorious Diomedes,

a raging goddess; and the oaken axle groaned aloud at its load, for it carried a fearsome goddess and the best of men.

Pallas Athena laid hold of the whip and reins, and [840]

at once directed the single-hoofed horses straight at Ares,

who was stripping the armour from huge Periphas,
Ochesius' illustrious son, by far the best man of the
Aetolians.

Bloodstained Ares was busy stripping him, but Athena put
on
the helmet of Hades, so that the towering god should not
see her. [845]

When Ares, doom of mortals, saw glorious Diomedes,
he left monstrous Periphas to lie there, in the place
where he had killed him and robbed him of his life,
and made straight for Diomedes, breaker of horses.
When they had advanced to within close range of each
other, [850]

Ares first lunged over the yoke and the horses' reins
with his bronze-tipped spear, raging to take the life from
him;

but the goddess grey-eyed Athena caught it with her hand
and forced it up and out of the chariot, so that it flew
aimlessly by.

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, lunged in his turn
[855]

with his bronze-tipped spear, and Pallas Athena drove it
at the base of Ares' belly, where his loin-plate was belted;
here Diomedes hit and wounded him, biting through his fine
flesh,

and pulled the spear out again; brazen Ares bellowed,
as loud as the yells of nine- or ten-thousand men grappling
[860]

with each other on a battlefield in the war-god's strife.

At this, fear and trembling seized both Achaeans and
Trojans,

so loud was the bellowing of Ares, insatiable in war.

Like a dark mass of air that appears out of the clouds
when a violent wind springs up after burning heat, [865]
so brazen Ares appeared before Tydeus' son Diomedes,

rising with the clouds right up to the wide high sky.
Quickly he came to the seat of the gods, steep Olympus,
and took his seat next to Zeus, Cronus' son, grieving in his
heart,

and showed him the immortal blood flowing from the
wound; [870]

full of complaint he addressed Zeus with winged words:
'Father Zeus, are you not angry when you see cruel deeds
like this?

We gods always have to endure the most appalling
sufferings

through each other's scheming when we do favours to
men.

We are all at war with you, because you fathered this
witless girl, [875]

this cursed goddess, whose mind is always set on deeds of
malice.

All of the other gods who live on Olympus obey
your will, and we are each of us subject to you; but her
you do not reproach in word or deed, but let her run free,
just because you yourself are the father of this murderous
child. [880]

Now she has let loose Tydeus' son, arrogant Diomedes,
in crazed assault against the immortal gods.

First he closed with Cypris and wounded her on the wrist,
then hurled himself at me, Ares himself, like some divine
being.

But my swift feet carried me away, or I would now be
suffering [885]

long-lasting anguish there among the ghastly piles of dead,
or would live on enfeebled by the blows of his bronze.'

Zeus who gathers the clouds looked at him darkly and
said:

'You two-faced scoundrel, do not sit here and whine to me!
Of all the gods who live on Olympus you are the most

hateful to me: [890]

strife and war and fighting are always dear to your heart.
Your mother's spirit too is ungovernable, one that does not
yield—

Hera, whom I find it hard to control with my words;
so I think it is at her prompting that you are suffering like
this.

Even so, I shall not allow you to be in pain any longer, [895]
for you are my offspring, and your mother bore you to me;
but if any other god had fathered you, to cause such
carnage,
you would long ago have been lower than the offspring of
Uranus.'

So he spoke, and summoned Paeëon to cure him,
and Paeëon spread pain-killing ointments over his wound
[900]

and healed it; for Ares was not made to suffer death.

As when fig-juice thickens white milk when it is
liquid but very quickly becomes clotted when a man
stirs it,* so swiftly did Paeëon heal impetuous Ares.

Then Hebe bathed him, and dressed him in fine clothes,
and [905]

he took his seat beside Cronus' son Zeus, exulting in his
glory.

Then the two goddesses returned to the house of great
Zeus,

Argive Hera and Athena of Alalcomenae, when they had
halted the man-slaying exploits of Ares, doom of mortals.

BOOK SIX

So the grim fighting of Trojans and Achaeans was left to itself,
and the battle ranged widely, this way and that over the plain,
each side aiming their bronze-tipped spears at the other
in the ground between the waters of Simoeis and Xanthus.

Ajax, son of Telamon, bulwark of the Achaeans, was the first [5]
to break through the Trojan line, bringing hope to his companions,
by striking down a man who was the best of the Thracians,
Acamas, son of Eussorus, a valiant and mighty man.
Throwing first, Ajax hit him on the ridge of his horsehair-crested
helmet, and the bronze point lodged in his forehead,
piercing [10]
through to the bone; and darkness covered his eyes.

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, killed Axylus
the son of Teuthras, who lived in well-built Arisbe;
he was rich in possessions and hospitable towards men, for
his house was by the roadside, and he would entertain everyone. [15]
But not one of these could now save him from miserable death
by standing before him to face his enemy; Diomedes
robbed
two men of their lives, Axylus and his attendant Calesius,
who was
his charioteer at this time, and both sank below the earth.

Euryalus killed first Dresus and then Opheltius, [20]
and went after Aesepeus and Pedasus, whom long ago
the river nymph Abarbareë had borne to blameless
Bucolion;*

Bucolion was the son of splendid Laomedon, his first
to be born, but his mother gave birth to him in secret.
Bucolion lay in love with this nymph while tending his
sheep, [25]

and she conceived and gave birth to twin sons;
but Mecisteus' son loosened their fury and shining limbs,
and he stripped the armour from their shoulders.

Next Polypoetes, steadfast in war, killed Astyalus,
and Odysseus with his bronze-tipped spear slew Pidytes,
[30]

who came from Percote, and Teucer killed brilliant Aretaon.
Ablerus was killed by the shining spear of Antilochus,
Nestor's son, and Agamemnon, lord of men, slew Elatus,
who lived beside the banks of broad-flowing Satnioeis,
in steep Pedasus.* The hero Leïtus overtook Phylacus [35]
as he was running away, and Eurypylus slew Melanthius.

Next Menelaus, master of the war-cry, captured
Adrestus
alive. His horses, bolting in panic over the plain, had
tripped over
a tamarisk branch and broken the pole away where it was
joined
to the curved chariot, and had run off by themselves
towards [40]

the city, where the rest of the Trojans were fleeing in terror.
Adrestus was whirled out of the chariot next to the wheel,
head-first on to his face in the dust. Menelaus, Atreus' son,
stood over him, holding his far-shadowing spear,
and Adrestus grasped him by the knees, entreating him:
[45]

'Son of Atreus, take me alive, and accept a fitting ransom;

there is much treasure stored up in my rich father's house,
bronze and gold and elaborately worked iron, from which
my father would gladly give you a boundless ransom,
if he learnt that I was alive by the ships of the Achaeans.'

[50]

So he spoke, and would have persuaded the heart in
Menelaus' breast;

he was about to hand him over to his attendant to escort
to the swift ships of the Achaeans, but Agamemnon
ran up and stood before him, and berated him loudly: '
My dear brother Menelaus, why so concerned for other
men? [55]

Can it be that you were so generously treated by Trojans
back in your own home?*_ Let not one of them escape sheer
ruin

at our hands, not even the man-child which a mother
carries in her womb, not even him, but let them all
be obliterated from Troy, to vanish unremembered.' [60]

So speaking the hero turned his brother's purpose,
urging destiny's decree; and Menelaus thrust the hero
Adrestus from him with his hand, and lord Agamemnon
stabbed him in the side. Adrestus fell back, and Atreus' son
set his heel on his chest and pulled out the ash spear. [65]

Next Nestor called out to the Argives with a great
shout:

'Friends, Danaan heroes, attendants of Ares,
let no one hang back here, greedy for spoils,
hoping to carry the biggest portion back to his ships!
Killing men is our task; afterwards you may take booty [70]
when you will, stripping the bodies that lie about the plain.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each
man.

And then the Trojans, dear to Ares, would have been forced
back

into Ilium by the Achaeans, overcome by feebleness of

spirit,
had not a man stood next to Aeneas and Hector—Priam's
son [75]

Helenus, by far the best of bird-interpreters, who said to
them:

'Aeneas and Hector! On you, above all Trojans and Lycians,
rests the labour of war, since you are the best at
both fighting and planning, whatever the enterprise.

Make a stand here, go up and down among the people and
[80]

rally them in front of the gates before they run away and
fall

into their women's arms, and become a joy to our enemies.
Then, when you have stirred all the companies to action,
we shall make our stand here and fight with the Danaans,
even though we are very weary; for necessity bears hard
on us. [85]

But you, Hector, must go into the city, and speak there to
your mother and mine. Tell her to gather the matrons
at the temple of grey-eyed Athena on the city's heights,
and to unlock the doors of the sacred house, and tell her
to choose the robe which she judges to be the loveliest [90]
and largest in her hall, and which is most precious to her,
and to lay it on the knees of Athena of the beautiful hair,
and to promise to sacrifice twelve heifers in her temple,
yearlings

untouched by the goad, in the hope that Athena will pity
the city and the Trojans' wives and their infant children.
[95]

So she may keep the son of Tydeus away from sacred Ilium,
that savage spearman, ruthless deviser of panic rout,
the one I reckon to be the mightiest of the Achaeans.

Not even Achilles, leader of men, caused us so much terror,
and they say he is the son of a goddess. But this man's
rage [100]

goes too far, and no man can match him in fury.'

So he spoke, and Hector did not disobey his brother.
At once he leapt fully armed from his chariot to the ground,
and ranged through the whole army, shaking his two sharp
spears,
stirring them to fight and rousing up the grim conflict. [105]
They rallied and took their stand facing the Achaeans;
and the Argives gave ground and left off the slaughter,
thinking some immortal had come from the starry high sky
to give help to the Trojans, seeing how they had rallied.
Then Hector gave a great shout and called out to the
Trojans: [110]

‘High-hearted Trojans, and you allies of far renown!
Be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage,
while I go back into Ilium to talk to the elders, who are
our counsellors, and tell our wives to pray to the gods
and to promise to make them an offering of hecatombs.’
[115]

So Hector of the glittering helmet spoke, and went on
his way;
and the dark hide kept knocking at his ankles and neck,
the hide which ran as an outer rim around his bossed
shield.

Now Glaucus, Hippolochus’ son, and the son of Tydeus
came together in the ground between the sides, in a rage
to fight. [120]

When they had advanced to within close range of each
other

Diomedes, master of the war-cry, was the first to speak:

‘Who among men doomed to die are you, my lord?

I have never seen you in the battle where men win glory
before; and yet now you have gone far beyond everyone
else [125]

in daring, since you stand up against my far-shadowing
spear.

Unhappy are the parents whose sons oppose my fury!

But if you are some immortal, come down from the high sky,

I am not the kind of man to fight against sky-dwelling gods. Not even the son of Dryas, mighty Lycurgus,* not even he [130]

lived for long after quarrelling with the gods of the high sky: long ago he pursued the nurses of frenzied Dionysus throughout the sacred land of Nysa;* they all threw their Bacchic staffs to the ground, wounded by the ox-goad of man-slaying Lycurgus, and Dionysus fled, plunging below [135]

the sea's waves, and Thetis took him, terrified, to her bosom,

for cruel trembling had seized him at the man's threats.

But then the gods who live at their ease were angry with Lycurgus,

and Cronus' son blinded him; and indeed he did not have long

to live, since he was hated by all the immortal gods.* [140]

So I too am unwilling to fight against the blessed gods.

But if you are one of mortals who eat the fruit of the tilled earth,

come closer, so that you may sooner be caught in the snares of death.'

Then the illustrious son of Hippolochus addressed him: 'Great-spirited son of Tydeus, why do you ask about my family? [145]

As is the family of leaves, so it is also with men:

the wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but the forest breaks

into bud and makes more when the spring season comes round.

So with the family of men, one generation grows and another ceases.

But if you really want to know for certain, to find out exactly

[150]

about my family, it is one which many people know.
There is a city, Ephyre,* in a corner of horse-rearing Argos,
and here lived Sisyphus, who more than any man loved
gain—

Sisyphus, son of Aeolus.* He fathered a son, Glaucus,
and Glaucus had a son, blameless Bellerophon,* to whom

[155]

the gods gave beauty and manhood fit to win lovers;
but Proetus* planned mischief for him in his heart, and
since he was much stronger drove him out of the land of
Argos—for Zeus had made him subject to Proetus' staff of
power.

Proetus' wife, glorious Anteia, was mad with desire for him,

[160]

and longed to make secret love with him, but she could not
sway

sagacious Bellerophon, because he was a right-thinking
man.

Accordingly the queen spoke deceitfully to Proetus:

"Proetus, you must kill Bellerophon, or else be killed
yourself; he wanted to make love with me against my will."

[165]

So she spoke, and anger seized her lord at what he had
heard,

but he held back from killing, for he felt awe at this in his
heart;

instead he sent Bellerophon to Lycia, and gave him some
deadly signs,

many life-destroying things, marked by him in a folded
tablet,

and told him to show these to his father-in-law, so ensuring
his death. [170]

So Bellerophon set off for Lycia under the gods' blameless
guidance;

but when he reached Lycia and the flowing Xanthus,

the king of broad Lycia treated him with honour and generosity:

for nine days he entertained him, and sacrificed nine oxen, but when rosy-fingered Dawn appeared on the tenth day [175]

he questioned Bellerophon, and asked to see the message that he had brought for him from his son-in-law Proetus.

When he was given the deadly message from his son-in-law he first of all ordered Bellerophon to kill the ferocious Chimera;

this was a being sprung from the gods, not from men, [180] a lion in front, a serpent behind, and in her middle a goat, and she breathed out a terrible fury of blazing fire.

Bellerophon, guided by portents from the gods, killed her. For his second task he fought with the far-famed Solymi,* and this, he said, was the hardest battle with men he had endured. [185]

Then for his third task he slew the Amazons,* who are a match for men.

But on his return the king wove another cunning plot against him:

after choosing the best fighters from broad Lycia

he set them in an ambush; but they did not return home, because blameless Bellerophon slaughtered them to a man. [190]

When the king realized that he was of noble, divine descent,

he kept him in Lycia, and offered him his own daughter, and gave him half of all the honours of his kingship; and the Lycians cut out for him an estate of their very best land, fine country of vineyards and ploughland, for him to cultivate. [195]

War-minded Bellerophon's wife bore him three children, Isandrus and Hippolochus and Laodameia.

Zeus the counsellor lay with Laodameia, and she gave birth to godlike Sarpedon, whose helmet is made of bronze.

But even Bellerophon came to be hated by all the gods,
[200]

and he wandered on his own over the Aleian plain,*
gnawing at his spirit and avoiding the trodden ways of men.
His son Isandrus was killed by Ares, insatiable in war,
while fighting against the far-famed Solymi, and Artemis
of the golden reins became angry with Laodameia and
killed her. [205]

Hippolochus was my father, and I declare myself his son;
he sent me to Troy, and would often give me instructions—
always to be the best and to stand out above other men,
and
not to bring disgrace on my father's family, who were
by far the most distinguished in Ephyre and in broad Lycia.
[210]

This, then, is the family and bloodline which I boast is
mine.'

So he spoke, and Diomedes, master of the war-cry, was
glad.

He planted his spear in the earth that nourishes many,
and addressed the shepherd of the people in affectionate
words:

'You must then be a guest-friend of my family from ancient
times! [215]

Long ago glorious Oeneus* entertained blameless
Bellerophon

in his halls and kept him there for twenty days, and
they gave each other fine gifts of guest-friendship:
Oeneus gave Bellerophon a belt, shining with purple dye,
and Bellerophon gave Oeneus a gold two-handled cup,
[220]

which I left behind in my palace when I came here.

Tydeus I do not remember, as I was still small when he
left me, at the time when the Achaean force perished at
Thebes.

Therefore I am your dear guest-friend in the heart of Argos,
and you are mine in Lycia whenever I go to that land. [225]
Let us then avoid each other's spears, even in the thick of
battle;
there are many Trojans and their far-famed allies for me
to kill, whoever a god sends me and my legs can overtake,
and
there are many Achaeans from whom you may slay those
you can.
Let us exchange our armour, so that these men too may
know [230]
that we claim to be guest-friends from our grandfathers'
time.'

So they spoke together, and jumped down from their
chariots,
and clasped each other's hands and made their friendship
firm.
But then Zeus the son of Cronus took away Glaucus' wits,
since he exchanged armour with Diomedes, Tydeus' son,
[235]
gold in return for bronze, a hundred oxen's worth for nine.

Now when Hector had reached the Scaean gates and
the oak tree,
the Trojans' wives and daughters ran up and surrounded
him,
asking about their sons and brothers and relations
and husbands. But he told them all to pray to the gods,
[240]
each in turn; for misery was already in store for many of
them.

When he arrived at Priam's splendid house, which was
constructed with polished stone porticoes—in it
there were fifty chambers made of polished stone,
built so as to be close to each other; and there the sons
[245]

of Priam used to sleep next to their wedded wives;
and opposite, for his daughters, opening off the courtyard,
there were twelve roofed chambers made of polished
stone,
built so as to be close to each other, and there the sons-in-
law
of Priam used to sleep next to their respected wives— [250]
there his mother, the gently dowered lady, came to meet
him,
bringing with her Laodice, the most beautiful of her
daughters.
She gripped his hand tightly in hers, and addressed him,
saying:
'My child, why ever have you left the daring battle, to come
here?
The sons of the Achaeans—evil name!—must be pressing
hard on [255]
you as they wage war around the city; and your heart has
sent you
to come here and hold your hands up to Zeus from the
city's height.
Wait, I beg you, so that I can bring you honey-sweet wine,
for you to pour libations to father Zeus and the other
immortals
first; and after that you may enjoy it, if you will drink. [260]
When a man is weary, wine greatly increases his fury,
even as you are weary, fighting to defend your kinsmen.'

Then in answer to her Hector of the glittering helmet
spoke:

'My revered mother, do not offer me mind-cheering wine,
for fear that you sap my limbs' fury, and I forget my
courage. [265]

And awe restrains me from pouring gleaming wine to Zeus
with unwashed hands; nor is it right to pray to Cronus' son
of the dark clouds when one is spattered with blood and

gore.

No; you must go to the temple of Athena who gathers the spoils,

with offerings, once you have gathered the matrons together; [270]

then choose the robe which you judge to be the loveliest and largest in your hall, and which is most precious to you, and place it on the knees of Athena of the beautiful hair, and promise that you will sacrifice twelve heifers in her temple,

yearlings, untouched by the goad, if only she will pity [275] the city and the Trojans' wives and infant children.

So may she keep the son of Tydeus away from sacred Ilium, that savage spearman, ruthless deviser of panic rout.

Go now to the temple of Athena who gathers the spoils, and I shall go in search of Paris, to summon him, [280]

to see if he is willing to listen to my words. How I wish that the earth would gape beneath him! The Olympian raised him

to be a sore affliction to the Trojans and to great-hearted Priam

and his sons. If I could see him going down to Hades' house I could say that my heart had forgotten its joyless grief.' [285]

So he spoke, and she went away into her house and summoned

her servants, and they went through the city to gather the matrons.

She herself went down into a sweet-smelling chamber where her robes were stored: richly embroidered work of Sidonian women whom Alexander himself, who looked like a god, [290]

had brought from Sidon, when he sailed over the wide sea on the voyage which brought well-born Helen to his home. Lifting out one of these Hecuba took it as a gift for Athena,

the one that was the most intricately worked, and the largest,
and it shone like a star, and lay stored under all the rest.
[295]

Then she set off, and many matrons hurried after her.

When they reached the temple of Athena on the city's heights

Theano of the beautiful cheeks opened the doors for them —

Theano, Cisseus' daughter, wife of Antenor, breaker of horses,

whom the Trojans had made the priestess of Athena. [300]

Then they all with loud cries held up their hands to Athena, and Theano of the beautiful cheeks took the robe

and laid it on the knees of Athena of the lovely hair,

and called out in prayer to the daughter of great Zeus:

'Lady Athena, city's defender, bright among goddesses,

[305]

shatter the spear of Diomedes, and grant that he may fall

face-down in front of the Scaean gates, and we will

straightaway sacrifice twelve heifers to you in your temple,

yearlings untouched by the goad, if only you will pity

the city and the Trojans' wives and their infant children.'

[310]

So she spoke in prayer, but Pallas Athena lifted her head in denial.

Now while they were praying in this way to great Zeus' daughter,

Hector had set off for the splendid house of Alexander,

which Paris himself had built with the help of those

who then were the finest craftsmen in rich-soiled Troy;

[315]

they had made for him a chamber and a hall and a

courtyard

next to the houses of Priam and Hector, on the city's

heights.

There Hector, loved by Zeus, went in, and in his hand was a spear eleven cubits long; the shaft's bronze point gleamed before him, and round it ran a golden neck-ring.

[320]

He found Paris in his chamber, looking after his magnificent armour,

his shield and corslet, and turning his curved bow over in his hands.

Argive Helen was sitting there with her serving-women, instructing her maidservants over their far-famed handiwork.

Seeing him Hector rebuked him with shaming words: [325]

'You are possessed! It is not good to nurse this anger in your heart.

Our peoples are dying, fighting around the city and its steep walls,

and it is on your account that war and the battle-cry blaze about this city; and you would be quick to quarrel with anyone else you saw holding back in the face of hateful war. [330]

So get to your feet, or the city will soon be destroyed by deadly fire.'

Then in answer Alexander who looked like a god addressed him:

'Hector, you rebuke me rightly, and not beyond the proper limit,

so I shall answer likewise, and you must listen and mark my words.

It is not so much through anger or resentment at the Trojans [335]

that I sit in my chamber, but wanting to give way to my misery.

But now my wife has persuaded me with beguiling words, urging me to return to battle; and I too think that this would

be

the better course, since victory shifts from one man to another.

But come, wait here a while, and let me put on Ares' armour— [340]

or else go first, and I shall follow; I think I shall overtake you.'

So he spoke; and Hector of the glittering helmet did not answer;

but Helen addressed him with honey-sweet words:

'Brother-in-law, I am a bitch and a cold-hearted mischief-maker;

I wish that on that first day when my mother bore me [345] an evil storm-wind had carried me away to some mountain or into the surge of the loud-roaring sea, where the waves would have swept me away, before these things could happen.

But since the gods have ordained that these dire things shall be,

then I wish that I was the wife of a better man, one who knew [350]

the meaning of disgrace, and the outrage that men can feel.

As for this man, his wits are not firmly fixed, nor will they ever

be so; and I think he will receive his reward for that.

But come, enter, and sit down on this chair, brother-in-law, since it is your mind that war's toil especially besets, because [355]

of me, bitch that I am, and because of Alexander's delusion.

Zeus has given us a wretched portion, so that in time hereafter

we may become a theme for the songs of generations yet to come.'

Then in answer great Hector of the glittering helmet said:

‘Do not make me sit, Helen; loving as you are, you will not win me [360]

over, for my heart is already urging me to go to the Trojans’ help,

since they long for me while I stay away from them.

Your task is to rouse this man—and he should stir himself to action,

and so be able to catch me up while I am still in the city.

Now I will go to my own house, in order to see the people [365]

of my house and my dear wife and my infant son,

since I do not know if I shall ever come back to them again,

or if the gods will soon beat me down under the Achaeans’ hands.’

So Hector of the glittering helmet spoke and departed, and quickly came to his well-appointed house, [370]

but he did not find white-armed Andromache in his halls;

she had left with their son and a finely robed woman servant,

and was standing on the tower, crying and lamenting.

When Hector could not find his blameless wife at home

he went and stood at the threshold and said to the serving-women: [375]

‘Come, serving-women, and tell me this truthfully:

where has white-armed Andromache gone from the hall?

To my sisters’ houses, or those of my brothers’ finely robed wives?

Or has she gone to Athena’s temple, where all the other lovely-haired

Trojan women are seeking to appease the dread goddess?’ [380]

Then in answer his trustworthy housekeeper addressed him:

‘Hector, you order me to speak the truth; she has not gone to your sisters’ houses or those of your brothers’ finely robed wives,
nor has she gone to Athena’s temple, where all the other lovely-haired Trojan women are seeking to appease the dread goddess, but [385]
she has gone to the great tower of Ilium, because she has heard that the Trojans are hard pressed, and the Achaeans are triumphant.
She went in a great hurry, making towards the wall, like a frenzied woman; and a nurse has taken the child with her.’

So the housekeeper spoke, and Hector hurried from the house, [390]
back by the way he had come, along the well-built streets. When he had passed through the great city, and had reached the Scaean gates, from where he would go out on to the plain,
his richly dowered wife came rushing to meet him, Andromache, the daughter of great-hearted Eëtion*— [395]
Eëtion, who had lived under wooded Placus, in Thebe under Placus,* and had ruled over the Cilician people; and his daughter was married to bronze-helmeted Hector. She came now to meet him, and the nurse came with her, carrying at her breast the child of tender mind, only a baby, [400]
Hector’s cherished son, who resembled a beautiful star, and whom he called Scamandrius, but all the rest called Astyanax, because Hector on his own defended Ilium.*
When he saw the child Hector smiled without speaking, but Andromache wept tears as she stood beside him, [405]
and gripping his hand tightly in hers she spoke to him:

‘Man possessed, your fury will destroy you! You have no
pity
for your infant son or for me, ill-fated woman, I who will
soon be your widow; for soon the Achaeans will all set on
you
and kill you. And when I lose you, it will be better for me
[410]

to sink down below the earth, because when you have gone
to meet your death there will be no comfort for me,
but only misery. I have no father or revered mother—
my father was killed by glorious Achilles when
he sacked the well-populated city of the Cilicians, Thebe
[415]

of the high gates; though he killed Eëtion, he did not strip
him

of his armour, for he was held back by awe in his heart, but
cremated him with his finely worked armour and heaped up
a burial-mound over him. And the mountain nymphs,
daughters of Zeus the aegis-wearer, planted elm trees
round it. [420]

And as for the seven brothers who lived with me in my
halls,

they all went down on the same day to the house of Hades;
swift-footed glorious Achilles slew them, every one,
as they tended their shambling oxen and white-fleeced
sheep.

As for my mother, who was queen under wooded Placus,
[425]

he carried her off here with the rest of the plunder,
but then set her free in return for a boundless ransom, and
Artemis the arrow-shooter shot her down in her father’s
halls.

Hector, you are my father and my revered mother
and my brother, and you are my tender husband; [430]
come, show me pity, and stay here on this tower, and
do not make your son an orphan and your wife a widow.

Station the people beside the fig tree, where the city
is most easily scaled and the wall is open to assault—
three times their best men have made an attempt there,
[435]

under the two called Ajax and far-famed Idomeneus,
and under the sons of Atreus and Tydeus' stalwart son;*_
perhaps some man skilled in divine revelations has told
them,
or it is their own hearts that instruct them, and urge them
on.'

Then in answer great Hector of the glittering helmet
addressed
her: [440]

'Wife, all this concerns me too; but I would feel terrible
shame
before the Trojans and the Trojan women with their trailing
robes

if I were to hang back from the battle, like a coward.
Nor does my heart order me to do this, since I have learnt
always to be brave and to fight among the foremost
Trojans, [445]

winning great glory for my father and for myself.
For I know full well in my mind and in my heart
that the day will come when sacred Troy will be destroyed,
and Priam and the people of Priam of the fine ash spear.
Yet I am not as troubled by the Trojans' future pain, [450]
or by what Hecuba herself will endure, or lord Priam,
or my brothers, the many and brave men who will
fall in the dust, overcome by our enemies, as much as
by your pain, when some bronze-shirted Achaean
leads you weeping away, robbing you of the day of
freedom; [455]

to be in Argos, weaving at the loom at another woman's
command,
and carrying water from the spring Messeïs or Hypereia,*_

much against your will; and a harsh necessity will lie upon you.

And some man when he sees you shedding a tear will say:

“That is the wife of Hector, who was always the greatest

[460]

of the horse-breaking Trojans, when they fought around Ilium.”

That is what they will say; and it will be a fresh grief for you,

widowed of a man who might have saved you from the day of slavery.

May I be dead, and hidden under a mound of the heaped earth,

before I hear your cries as you are dragged captive away.’

[465]

So speaking illustrious Hector stretched out his arms to his son;

but the boy shrank back crying into the bosom of his finely girdled nurse, terrified at the sight of his dear father and frightened by the bronze and the horsehair crest, seeing how it nodded on top of his helmet, a terrifying thing. [470]

His dear father and his revered mother laughed out loud, and at once illustrious Hector took the helmet from his head

and laid it, gleaming brightly, on the ground.

He kissed his dear son and dandled him in his arms,

and spoke in prayer to Zeus and all the other gods: [475]

‘Zeus, and all you other gods, grant that this son of mine

may be marked out above the Trojans, as I am, and be

strong and brave as me, and may he rule Ilium by might;

and may men one day say as he returns from battle, “This man

is far better than his father.” May he kill his enemy and

[480]

bring home bloody spoils, and may his mother's heart be glad.'

So he spoke, and laid his son in his dear wife's arms, and she took him to her sweet-smelling bosom, laughing through her tears. Seeing this, her husband pitied her, and stroked her with his hand, and spoke to her, saying:
[485]

'Woman possessed! Do not grieve too much for me in your heart.

No man is going to dispatch me to Hades before my due time;

and as for that time, no man, I say, can ever escape it, whether coward or brave, when once he has been born. Go back to the house and take charge of your own tasks,
[490]

the loom and the distaff, and tell your women servants to go about their work. War must be the concern of men, of all those who were born in Ilium, and mine more than any.'

So speaking illustrious Hector picked up his helmet with its horsehair crest, and his dear wife set off for home,
[495]

often turning round to look at him, and weeping huge tears. Very soon she came to the well-appointed house of man-slaying Hector, and inside it she found many women servants, and roused up lamentation in them all. So they wept for Hector in his house while he was still alive,
[500]

for they did not believe he would come back again from the war, escaping the fury and hands of the Achaeans.

Nor had Paris delayed long in his lofty house, but when he had put on his fine armour, intricately worked with bronze, he hurried through the city, confident in his swift feet. [505]

As when a horse that is kept at the manger and fed full with barley
breaks its tether and gallops exultantly, hoofs drumming,
over the plain, since its habit is to bathe in the waters
of a sweet-flowing river; it holds its head high, and its mane
flows about its shoulders, and confident in its splendour
[510]

its legs carry it easily to the haunts and pastures of horses;
so Paris, Priam's son, strode down from high Pergamus,
shining brightly in his armour like the beaming sun, and
laughing
aloud as his swift feet carried him along. Very soon he
caught up with his brother, glorious Hector, as he was
about [515]

to turn away from the private conversation with his wife.
Then Alexander who looked like a god was the first to
speak:

'Dear brother, surely I have detained you in your haste,
by dawdling and not coming at the right time, as you told
me.'

Then in answer Hector of the glittering helmet
addressed him: [520]

'You are possessed! No one whose judgement is rightly
ordered
could deny your battle-work its due, since you are a
stalwart man;
but you hang back wilfully and refuse to fight, and at that
the heart in my breast is pained, when I hear shameful
reports
about you from the Trojans, who endure great toil on your
behalf. [525]

Still, let us go on. Later we shall set all this right, if ever
Zeus

allows us to set up the wine-bowl of freedom in our halls,
in honour of the gods of the high sky, who live for ever,

after we have driven the well-greaved Achaeans out of
Troy.'

BOOK SEVEN

So illustrious Hector spoke, and rushed out of the gates,
and with him went his brother Alexander, both raging
in their hearts to join the battle and the fighting.
As when a god sends a breeze to eager sailors,
when they are weary from sweeping the sea with their oars
[5]

of polished pine, and exhaustion has loosened their limbs,
so these two appeared before the desperate Trojans.

Then they began the killing. Paris slew King Areïthous'
son,

Menesthus who lived in Arne,* and he was the son of
Areïthous the club-wielder and ox-eyed Phylomedusa. [10]
Hector struck Eïoneus in the neck with his sharp spear,
underneath his fine bronze helmet, and loosened his limbs.
Glaucus son of Hippolochus, captain of the Lycians,
hit Iphinous, Dexius' son, in the shoulder with his spear
in the crush of battle as he leapt up behind his swift mares,
[15]

and he fell from his chariot to the ground, his limbs
slackened.

When the goddess grey-eyed Athena saw that these
two
were cutting down the Argives in the crush of battle,
she set off and swept down from the heights of Olympus
to sacred Ilium. Apollo, looking down from Pergamus, [20]
came to meet her, since he was plotting victory for the
Trojans.

These two encountered each other by the oak tree,*
and lord Apollo, son of Zeus, addressed her first:

‘Daughter of great Zeus, why have you come yet again
raging from Olympus, urged on by your great heart? [25]
Is it to grant the battle’s victory in turn to the Danaans,
because you have no pity for the Trojans as they die?
Come now, listen to me, and it will be much better for us:
let us now put an end to the fighting and the conflict,
for this day; and after this they will fight again, until they
reach [30]

their goal in Ilium, since it is the desire of you immortal
goddesses that this city should be utterly destroyed.’

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena
addressed him:

‘Let it be so, shooter from afar; indeed I too had this in
mind

when I came from Olympus to join the Trojans and
Achaeans. [35]

So tell me, how do you mean to put an end to this war of
men?’

Then in answer lord Apollo, son of Zeus, addressed her:

‘Let us arouse savage fury in Hector, breaker of horses,
to challenge one of the Danaans to fight, man against man,
matching strength to strength in the grim conflict; [40]

then perhaps the bronze-greaved Achaeans will be
alarmed,

and will send someone out to fight alone against glorious
Hector.’

So he spoke, and the goddess grey-eyed Athena did not
disobey him.

Now Helenus, Priam’s dear son, understood in his heart
the plan which the designing gods had decided upon; [45]
he went and stood next to Hector, and spoke to him:

‘Hector, son of Priam, the equal of Zeus in scheming,

I beg you to listen to me, since I am your brother:

make all the other Trojans and Achaeans sit down, but
yourself challenge whoever is the best of the Achaeans [50]

to fight with you in grim conflict, matching strength to strength.

I do not think it is your destiny yet to die and meet death—that is how I hear the voice of the gods who live for ever.'

So he spoke, and Hector was mightily glad when he heard his words, and strode into the middle ground, grasping the middle of his spear, [55]

and held back the Trojan companies; and they all settled down.

And Agamemnon made the well-greaved Achaeans sit down too,

and Athena and Apollo of the silver bow settled themselves too,

taking on the likeness of vultures, and perching on a tall oak tree that was sacred to father Zeus who wears the aegis, [60]

taking pleasure in the sight of the men, whose ranks sat close-packed, bristling with shields and helmets and spears.

As when the West Wind suddenly springs up, and ripples unfurl over the open sea, and the sea grows black beneath it,

so were the ranks of Achaeans and Trojans as they settled [65]

on the plain. Then Hector spoke out to both sides:

'Listen to me, Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans, and I will tell you what the spirit in my breast urges me.

Cronus' son who sits on high has left our oaths unfulfilled, and has misery in mind for both of us in his plans, [70]

until the day that you take Troy with its fine fortifications or are yourselves beaten down beside your sea-traversing ships.

In your midst are the champions of all the Achaeans; if the spirit of any one of them impels him to fight with me, let him come before all as a champion against glorious

Hector. [75]

This I declare, and may Zeus be a witness for us:
if this man should take me down with the sharp-bladed
bronze,
let him strip my armour and carry it off to his hollow ships;
but he should return my body to its home, so that in death
the Trojans and their wives may grant me the due rite of
fire. [80]

But if I overcome him, and Apollo grants me my prayer,
I shall strip his armour and take it back to sacred Ilium,
and hang it in the temple of Apollo who shoots from afar,
but him I shall return after death to his well-benched ships,
so that the flowing-haired Achaeans may bury him and [85]
heap up a grave-mound for him beside the broad
Hellespont.*

And one day a man may say, even one of generations to
come,
as he sails past in his many-benched ship over the wine-
faced sea:
“That is the burial-mound of a man who died long ago;
he fought as a champion once, and illustrious Hector killed
him.” [90]

This is what someone will say; and my fame will never die.’

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still;
they were ashamed to refuse his challenge, yet afraid to
accept it.

Finally Menelaus stood up and spoke out among them,
rebuking them bitterly, and groaning deeply in his heart:
[95]

‘Oh, you are full of brave words—Achaean women, no
longer men!

This will indeed bring contempt on us, beyond endurance,
if not a single Danaan man will go to meet Hector.

May you all turn into water and earth, each one of you,
sitting here bereft of spirit, utterly lacking desire for glory;

[100]

I myself will put on armour to fight this man; as for the
snares
of victory, they are held above us by the immortal gods.'

So he spoke, and put on his splendid armour.

Then, Menelaus, the end of your life would have come
at the hands of Hector, for he was by far the stronger man,
[105]

had not the kings of the Achaeans leapt up and seized you,
and if Atreus' son himself, wide-ruling Agamemnon, had not
gripped you by the right hand and spoken directly to you,
saying:

'Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, you are out of your mind! There
is

no need for this madness. Restrain yourself, troubled
though you are, [110]

and do not out of rivalry hope to fight a better man than
you—

Hector, son of Priam, whom other men shrink to face.

Even Achilles shuddered to confront him on the battlefield
where men win glory, and he is a far better man than you.

No, go now and sit with the band of your companions, and
[115]

the Achaeans will put forward another champion against
this man.

Hector may be without fear and unable to get his fill of
fighting,

but I think that even he will gladly bend his knee in rest, if
he

can escape from the fierce fighting and the grim conflict.'

So speaking the hero turned his brother's thoughts
aside, [120]

urging what destiny had decreed, and Menelaus was
persuaded.

His attendants then gladly took the armour from his

shoulders;

but Nestor rose to his feet and spoke out among the Argives:

‘This is not good! Great sorrow is coming to the land of Achaea!

Surely Peleus, the aged driver of horses, would groan aloud — [125]

Peleus, that excellent counsellor and speaker of the Myrmidons,

who once took great delight in questioning me in his house,*

asking me about the ancestry and birth of all the Argives.

If he now heard that they were all cowering before Hector he would raise his hands repeatedly to the immortal gods, [130]

praying for his life to leave his body and go down to Hades’ house.

Father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, if only I were as young as I was when men fought beside the fast-flowing Celadon —

men of Pylos gathered together against spear-wielding Arcadians

by the walls of Pheia, along the waters of Iardanus.* [135]

Among them Ereuthalion* stood up as a champion, a man like a god,

wearing on his shoulders the armour of lord Areïthous—

glorious Areïthous, to whom men and fine-girdled women

gave the name of Club-Wielder, because he used to fight

not with the bow and arrows nor with the long spear, [140]

but would smash enemy companies down with an iron club.*

Lycurgus killed him by cunning, not by force, on a narrow

road, where his iron club could not save him from death;

before he could use it Lycurgus skewered him through the middle

with his spear, and he sprawled on his back on the ground.

[145]

He stripped Areïthous of the armour that brazen Ares had given him

and from this time forward always wore it in the grind of Ares' war;

but when Lycurgus was growing old in his halls

he gave it to his dear attendant Ereuthalion to wear, and he was wearing it when he challenged all our best men.

[150]

They began to tremble, and were terrified, and no one dared stand;

but my much-enduring spirit released in me the courage to enter the battle—and I was the youngest-born of them all.

So I fought with him, and Athena fulfilled my boast,

and he was the tallest and mightiest man that I ever killed,

[155]

and there he lay, his bulk spreadeagled this way and that.

If only I were as young again, with my strength unimpaired!

Then Hector of the glittering helmet would soon meet his match.

But not one of you, who are champions of all the Achaeans, has the desire and passion to meet Hector face to face.'

[160]

So the old man provoked them, and nine men in all stood up.

Easily the first to rise was Agamemnon, lord of men,

and next after him rose mighty Diomedes, Tydeus' son,

and after them the pair called Ajax, clothed in impetuous courage,

and after them Idomeneus and Idomeneus' attendant [165]

Meriones, who was the equal of man-slaying Enyalios,*

and after them Eurypylus, the splendid son of Euaemon,

and then rose Thoas, Andraemon's son, and glorious

Odysseus,

all of them eager to do battle with glorious Hector.
Then among them Nestor, the Gerenian horseman, spoke again: [170]

‘Now shake lots thoroughly, to see who will be chosen;
that man will surely gladden the well-greaved Achaeans,
and will himself be gladdened in his heart, if only he can
escape from the fierce fighting and the grim conflict.’

So he spoke, and they marked their lots, each man his own, [175]

and threw them into the helmet of Atreus’ son
Agamemnon.

And the people prayed, holding their hands up to the gods,
and this is what they would say, each looking up to the
wide high sky:

‘Father Zeus, let it be the lot of Ajax, or that of Tydeus’ son,
or even that of the king himself of Mycenae, rich in gold.’
[180]

So they spoke; Nestor, the Gerenian horseman, shook
the helmet,
and out leapt the lot that they had indeed wished for,
that of Ajax. A herald carried it round the whole group
from left to right, showing it to all the Achaean champions,
and each man disclaimed it when he did not see his own
mark. [185]

But when, carrying it round the whole group, he came to
the man
who had marked and thrown it into the helmet, illustrious
Ajax
held out his hand, and the herald stood by him and handed
it to him,
and Ajax saw and recognized his mark, and was glad in his
heart;

he threw the lot on to the ground at his feet, and spoke:
[190]

‘My friends, this is indeed my lot! And I am glad

in my heart, because I think I shall defeat glorious Hector.
So come; while I am putting on my armour for the battle,
you must pray to the lord Zeus, son of Cronus, silently
to yourselves, so that the Trojans do not overhear you—
[195]

or no, pray out loud, since we have no fear of any man;
no one can pit his will against mine and force me back
by force or by craft, since I do not think I was born
and bred on Salamis to be so utterly lacking in skill.'

So he spoke, and they prayed to lord Zeus, son of
Cronus, [200]

and this is what they would say, each looking up to the
wide high sky:

'Father Zeus, you who rule from Ida,* mightiest and most
glorious,
grant that Ajax may be victorious and win bright glory;
but if Hector also is dear to you, and you care for him,
give both men equal strength, and make their glory equal.'
[205]

So they spoke, and Ajax began to arm himself in
flashing bronze.

When he had put all his armour about his body he then
strode out, looking like monstrous Ares advancing
when he goes to war and looks for men whom Cronus' son
has brought together to fight in the fury of life-devouring
strife. [210]

Just so Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans, rose up towering,
with a smile on his terrible face, his legs beneath him
making great strides while he shook his far-shadowing
spear.

The Argives were glad when they saw him, but
a dreadful trembling stole over the limbs of every Trojan,
[215]

and even Hector's heart began to knock against his chest;
but he could not retreat or turn back into the mass of

people,
since it was through his own battle-lust that he had
challenged Ajax.
Ajax drew close to him, carrying his tower-like shield,
bronze
with seven oxhide layers, made for him by the craftsman
Tychius, [220]
by far the best of leather-workers, whose home was in
Hyle;*
he had made the flashing seven-oxhide shield for Ajax from
well-nourished bulls, and had laid on top an eighth layer of
bronze.
Holding this in front of his chest, Ajax son of Telamon
stood very close to Hector, and threateningly addressed
him: [225]
'Now, Hector, you will find out for certain, one
against one, what kind of champions the Danaans also
have among them,
even apart from Achilles the lion-hearted breaker of ranks.
He is now lying by his curved sea-traversing ships,
deeply angry against Agamemnon, shepherd of the people;
[230]
but we have the kind of men who can stand up against you,
and there are many of us; so begin the battle and the
fighting.'

Then in answer great Hector of the glittering helmet
spoke:
'Ajax son of Telamon, sprung from Zeus, ruler of the people;
do not put me to the test as if I were some feeble child,
[235]
or a woman who knows nothing of war's business.
No, I know well enough about battles and the killing of men;
I know how to handle my toughened shield to the right
and the left—which for me is what real shield-work means.
I know how to storm into the battle of swift chariots, and

[240]

I know in close combat how to step to deadly Ares' dance.
Prepare! I have no wish to look for a chance to catch a man
like you
unawares with my cast; I will throw openly, to see if I can
hit you.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and
threw it,

and hit the terrible seven-oxhide shield of Ajax on its [245]
outer covering of bronze, which was the eighth layer upon
it.

The relentless bronze tore its way through six folds,
but was stopped by the seventh hide. Then in his turn
Ajax, sprung from Zeus, let fly his far-shadowing spear
and hit the perfectly balanced shield of Priam's son. [250]
The massive spear passed through the shining shield,
and forced its way through his intricately worked corslet;
it cut clean through Hector's tunic, next to his ribs,
but he leaned to one side and avoided death's black
spectre.

Then both together grasped their spears and pulled them
out [255]

and fell upon each other like flesh-devouring lions,
or like wild boars whose strength is far from feeble.

Priam's son jabbed his spear at the middle of Ajax's shield,
but the bronze did not break through, and its tip was bent
back.

Ajax sprang at Hector and pierced his shield; straight
through [260]

went the spear, and smashed back his raging advance;
driving on, it cut his neck, and the black blood spurted out.
Even so Hector of the glittering helmet did not stop
fighting,

but fell back, and in his brawny hand picked up a rock
which was lying on the plain, black, jagged, and huge.

[265]

Hurling this he hit Ajax's terrible shield of seven hides on its centre, on the boss, and the bronze rang out all around;

but Ajax in his turn picked up a much bigger stone and whirling round flung it, forcing enormous strength into it, and the millstone-like rock smashed the shield inwards,

[270]

and Hector's knees crumpled, and he fell on to his back, splayed

out, crushed under his shield; but Apollo soon set him upright.

Then they surely would have hewed at each other with swords

at close quarters, had not the heralds, messengers of Zeus and men,

come forward, one a Trojan and the other a bronze-shirted Achaean, [275]

Talthybius and Idaeus, both men of good judgement, and held up their staffs in the middle ground between both; and Idaeus the herald, a man skilled in wise counsel, spoke out:

'Dear sons, put an end to this battle and do not fight any more;

Zeus who gathers the clouds holds you both dear, [280]

and you are both excellent spearmen; this we all know.

But now night is upon us, and it is good to give way to night.'

Then in answer Ajax, son of Telamon, addressed him:

'Idaeus, you two must tell Hector to say these words; it was through his own battle-lust that he challenged all our champions. [285]

Let him be the first to stop, and I will certainly follow his lead.'

Then in answer to him huge Hector of the glittering

helmet said:

‘Ajax, some god has given you stature and might and sound

judgement, and you are by far the best Achaean spear-fighter;

so let us now put an end to fighting and conflict, [290]
for today. After this we shall fight again, until some deity
decides between us, and gives the victory to one or the
other.

But now night is upon us, and it is good to give way to
night,

and then you will bring joy to all the Achaeans beside their
ships,

and especially whatever kinsmen and companions you
have. [295]

I for my part shall go through the great city of lord Priam,
and

gladden the Trojans and the Trojan women with their trailing
robes,

who are about to go into the sacred assembly to pray on
my account.

But come, let us give each other gifts that bring glory with
them,

so that men from among Achaeans and Trojans may say:
[300]

“Truly these two fought each other in heart-devouring
strife,

but then they parted and were joined in friendship.”

So speaking he fetched a silver-riveted sword and gave
it

to Ajax, together with its scabbard and skilfully cut belt,
while Ajax gave him a sword-belt, bright with purple dye.

[305]

So they parted; one went back to the Achaean host
and the other left for the gathering of Trojans; and these

were glad when they saw him coming, alive and unharmed,
having escaped the fury and irresistible hands of Ajax;
they escorted him to the city, scarcely believing he was
safe. [310]

And on the other side the well-greaved Achaeans escorted
Ajax, exulting in his victory, to glorious Agamemnon.

When they reached the huts of lord Agamemnon,
the son of Atreus sacrificed an ox on their behalf,
a male beast, five years old, to the all-powerful son of
Cronus. [315]

This they flayed and prepared, and divided into joints,
and chopped the meat skilfully and threaded it on to
skewers,

and cooked it with great care and then drew it all off.

When they had finished their work and made the meal
ready

they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the
meal; [320]

and the hero son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon,
honoured Ajax with the whole length of the chine.

When they had put from themselves the desire for food and
drink,

then first of all the old man began to weave a scheme—
Nestor, whose counsel even before this had proved to be
the best. [325]

With generous intent he spoke and addressed them:

'Son of Atreus, and you other champions of all the
Achaeans!

Seeing that many flowing-haired Achaeans have been
killed,

and violent Ares has now spilled their dark blood along
Scamander's

clear waters, and their shades have gone down to Hades,
[330]

at dawn you must hold the Achaeans back from fighting.

Let us assemble then and bring the dead men back here on
wagons
hauled by oxen and mules. After that let us burn them
a little way from the ships, so that each may take a man's
bones
home to his children, when we return to our native land.*
[335]

Let us then pile up one single grave-mound around the
pyre,
throwing it up in a heap from the ground, and up against it
let us
quickly build a high-towered wall,* to protect both ships
and men.
In this wall let us construct some well-fitting gates,
so that there shall be a way through them to drive chariots;
[340]
and close to it on the outside let us dig a deep ditch,
which with its circuit may protect chariots and men, in case
we should one day be pressed hard by the proud Trojans'
onslaught.'

So he spoke, and all the kings gave their approval.
The Trojans also held an assembly on Ilium's city heights,
[345]
next to Priam's gates;* they were full of fear and confusion,
and among them sagacious Antenor was the first to speak:
'Listen to me, Trojans and Dardanians* and allies,
and I shall tell you what the heart in my breast urges.
Come now—let us give Argive Helen and her possessions
with her [350]
back to Atreus' sons to carry away. We are fighting now
because
we have broken our solemn oaths; I do not therefore
suppose
that any advantage will come to us, unless we do as I say.'

So speaking he sat down again; and among them there

stood up glorious Alexander, husband of Helen of the lovely hair, [355]

who answered and addressed winged words to him:

‘Antenor, what you now advise does not please me; you know

that you could have thought of some better speech than this.

But if you really are in earnest when you say this openly, then surely the gods themselves must have destroyed your wits. [360]

So I shall speak out among the Trojans, breakers of horses: I declare outright that I will not give the woman back, though

as for the possessions that I brought from Argos to my house, I am

willing to give them all back, and to add more from my own store.’

So speaking he sat down again; and among them there stood up [365]

Priam of Dardanus’ line, the equal of the gods in counsel, who with generous intent spoke and addressed them:

‘Listen to me, Trojans and Dardanians and allies, and I shall tell you what the heart in my breast urges.

Prepare and eat your supper now throughout the city, as always, [370]

and be sure to set sentries, and let each man be vigilant.

And when dawn comes, let Idaeus go to the hollow ships and report to Atreus’ sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus, the words of Alexander, on whose account this quarrel has arisen.

And let him add this shrewd proposal: ask if they are willing [375]

to hold back from war’s hideous clamour until we burn our dead. After this we will fight again, until some deity

decides between us, and gives the victory to one side or the other.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he said.

Then they ate their supper in ranks throughout the army,
[380]

and when dawn came Idaeus made his way to the hollow ships;

there he found the Danaans, attendants of Ares, at assembly,

beside the stern of Agamemnon's ship. Taking his stand in their midst the loud-voiced herald addressed them:

'Sons of Atreus and you other princes of all the Achaeans,
[385]

Priam and the other splendid Trojans instruct me to report to you—

in the hope that it may be acceptable and pleasing to you—the words of Alexander, on whose account this quarrel has arisen:

as for the possessions which Alexander brought to Troy in his

hollow ships—if only he had died before he did—all these
[390]

he is willing to give back, and to add more from his own store;

but as for the wedded wife of glorious Menelaus, he says he will not give her up, though the Trojans strongly urge him to.

Furthermore they told me to invite you, if you are willing, to hold back from war's hideous clamour until we have burnt
[395]

our dead; and after that we shall fight again until some deity

decides between us, and gives the victory to one side or the other.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still;
but at last Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke among
them:

‘Let no man now accept the possessions of Alexander,
[400]

nor Helen; even a very foolish man can see that the snares
of death are already fastened tight around the Trojans.’

So he spoke, and all the sons of the Achaeans shouted their
approval, amazed at the words of Diomedes, breaker of
horses.

Then lord Agamemnon addressed Idaeus: [405]

‘Idaeus, you have yourself heard the Achaeans’ words,
how they answer you; and I too am pleased with what they
say.

But as for burning your dead, I do not at all begrudge it
you;

when there are dead men there can be no reason to hold
back

from appeasing them swiftly with fire, now that they have
died. [410]

May Zeus, Hera’s loud-thundering husband, witness these
oaths.’

So speaking he held his staff up in the sight of all the
gods,

and Idaeus went back towards sacred Ilium.

Now the Trojans and Dardanians were sitting in assembly,
all gathered together, waiting for when Idaeus should
come. [415]

And he came, and standing in their midst reported
his message. Then with great haste they busied themselves
with two tasks, some to collect the dead and others to look
for wood.

And on their side the Argives hurried from their well-
benched ships,

some to collect the dead and others to look for wood. [420]

The sun was rising through the high sky from the deep waters of peacefully flowing Ocean, its light beginning to strike the tilled land, when the two sides met. It was a hard matter to distinguish one dead man from another, but when they had washed the bloody gore from them with water, [425]

weeping warm tears, they lifted them on to wagons.

Great Priam forbade them to cry out,* and so they piled their dead on to a pyre in silence, grieving in their hearts; then after burning them in the fire they returned to sacred Ilium.

In the same way, the well-greaved Achaeans on their side [430]

piled their dead on to a pyre, grieving in their hearts; and after burning them in the fire they set off for the hollow ships.

When it was not yet dawn, but still the night that is half-light,

a troop of Achaeans, specially chosen, gathered around the pyre

and piled up a single grave-mound around it, throwing it up [435]

in a heap from the ground, and up against it they built a wall with high towers, to protect both ships and men.

In this wall they constructed well-fitting gates, so that there should be a way through them to drive chariots, and close to it on the outside they dug a deep ditch, [440] great and wide, and inside it they planted stakes.

The flowing-haired Achaeans were busying themselves with this

and the gods, sitting with Zeus the lightning-sender in their midst,

marvelled at the great work of the bronze-shirted Achaeans.

Among them Poseidon the earthshaker was the first to

speak: [445]

'Father Zeus, is there any mortal left on the boundless earth
who will tell the immortals of his thoughts and purposes?
Can you not see? Here are the flowing-haired Achaeans
again—
they have built a wall in front of their ships, and have
driven a ditch
around it, but they have not offered splendid hecatombs to
the gods. [450]
Doubtless its fame will extend as far as the dawn spreads
its light,
and then men will forget the wall which Phoebus Apollo and
I
once laboured hard together to build for the hero
Laomedon.'*

Then, deeply angered, Zeus who gathers the clouds
addressed him:
'Come, come, earthshaker of wide power—what a thing to
say! [455]
Some other god might well shudder at this invention, one
who
was far inferior to you in his hand's strength and his fury,
but your fame will surely extend as far as the dawn spreads
its light.
Consider now; when the flowing-haired Achaeans have after
this
gone away with their ships to their dear native land, [460]
you may tear this wall down and scatter it all over the salt
sea;
you may cover the great seashore once again with sand,
and so,
you may be sure, the Achaeans' great wall will be blotted
out.'

So they spoke, one to another, in this way. And the sun

went down, and the Achaeans' work was finished, and
[465]

they slaughtered oxen, hut by hut, and ate their supper.
Some ships had arrived from Lemnos, carrying wine,
many of them, sent by Euneus who was the son of Jason,
he whom Hypsipyle had borne to Jason, * shepherd of the
people;

and as a special gift to Atreus' sons Agamemnon and
Menelaus [470]

Jason's son gave them a cargo of sweet wine, a thousand
measures.

From these ships the flowing-haired Achaeans bought their
wine,

some in exchange for bronze, some in exchange for
flashing iron,

some in exchange for hides, some in exchange for living
cattle,

and some in exchange for slaves; and they prepared a
splendid feast. [475]

Then all night long the flowing-haired Achaeans feasted,
and in the city the Trojans and their allies did the same;
but all night long Zeus the counsellor planned misery for
the Achaeans,

and kept up a terrifying thunder. Pale fear began to grip
them,

and they spilled the wine from their cups on to the ground,
and no one [480]

dared drink until he had made a libation to Cronus' all-
powerful son.

Then they lay down to rest, and received the gift of sleep.

BOOK EIGHT

Now saffron-robed Dawn was spreading over the whole earth,
and Zeus who delights in thunder called an assembly of gods
on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus.
He himself addressed them, and the gods all listened with care:

‘Hear me, all you gods and goddesses, and I shall [5]
tell you what the heart in my breast commands me;
and let no one, whether female divinity or male, try to
frustrate my plan; you must all approve it here
so that I may quickly bring these matters to an end.
If I see anyone turning his back on the other gods and [10]
wanting to go and help the Trojans or to the Danaans,
he will be struck down and have a painful return to
Olympus;

or else I shall seize and hurl him into murky Tartarus,
far, far away, where there is the deepest pit under the
earth,
and there are gates of iron and a threshold of bronze, [15]
as far below Hades as the high sky is above the earth.*
Then he will learn how far I am the strongest of all the
gods.

So come now, gods, and test me, so that you all may find
out:

let down a rope of gold from the high sky,* and
all of you, gods and goddesses, take hold of it; even so,
[20]

however hard you toil at it, you will not be able to drag me,
Zeus the supreme counsellor, from the high sky down to

earth.

But if ever I were to turn my mind to hauling on the rope,
I could pull you up, and the earth and the sea with you;
and then I would fasten the rope around a crag of Olympus,
[25]

and everything would then be left hanging, high in the air.
That is how much stronger I am than both gods and men.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still,
amazed at his words, for he had spoken with great force.
At last the goddess grey-eyed Athena spoke among them:
[30]

'Our father, son of Cronus, supreme among rulers,
we do know well that your strength is irresistible;
but for all that we feel pity towards the Danaan spearmen,
who will surely bring their lives to a miserable end, and
perish.

Still, we shall hold back from the warfare, as you command,
[35]

and will offer to the Argives such counsel as will benefit
them,
so that they do not all perish as a result of your anger.'

Then Zeus who gathers the clouds smiled at her and
said:

'Be comforted, my dear child, Tritogeneia; I did not speak
with serious intent; and towards you I am minded to be
gentle.' [40]

So he spoke, and harnessed under the yoke his two
horses,
brazen-footed swift flyers who had flowing manes of gold,
and himself put on clothes of gold, and took up his whip,
golden and skilfully made, and mounted his chariot.
Then he whipped the horses into motion, and they eagerly
[45]

flew on between the earth and the starry high sky.
He came to Ida with its many springs, mother of wild

beasts,
to Gargarus, where he has a precinct and a smoking altar.
There the father of gods and men reined in his horses and
untied them from the chariot, and poured a thick mist
about them. [50]

He himself sat down on the mountain peaks, exulting in his
glory,
watching the city of the Trojans and the ships of the
Achaean.

Now the long-haired Achaeans took their meal in haste,
each in his own hut, and at once began to arm themselves,
and

on their side, in the city, the Trojans too were arming
themselves— [55]

fewer in number, but still raging to join the battle's mêlée,
through

hard necessity, since they were fighting for their wives and
children.

All the gates were opened, and the people streamed out,
soldiers on foot and in chariots; and a huge clamour went
up.

When the ranks had met in one place and come to
grips,
then there was a clash of leather shields and spears and
the fury of bronze-armoured warriors. Bossed shields
smashed against each other, and a tremendous clamour
arose,

made up of the groans of dying men and the exultant
cries of their killers; and the earth ran with blood. [65]

Now as long as it was still morning and the sacred day
was growing,
both sides' missiles struck home, and the people kept
falling;
but when the sun stood astride the midpoint of the high
sky,

then indeed father Zeus held up his golden scales,* and in them

he put two spectres of death, the bringer of long misery,
one for [70]

the horse-breaking Trojans and one for the bronze-shirted Achaeans.

Taking the bar by the centre he lifted it up, and the Achaeans'

destined day sank down; their spectres settled on the earth that

nourishes many, while the Trojans' leapt up to the broad high sky.

Zeus himself thundered loudly from Ida, and let fly [75]

a blazing flash into the Achaean host; and when they saw it they were stunned, and pale fear took hold of them all.

Then neither Idomeneus nor Agamemnon had the will to stand firm,

nor did the two called Ajax, attendants of Ares, stand firm.

Only Gerenian Nestor, protector of the Achaeans, stood his ground— [80]

not that he willed it, but his horse was exhausted, hit by an arrow

from glorious Alexander, the husband of lovely-haired Helen;

it was hit on the top of its head, where a horse's mane starts

to grow upon its skull, and it is a most vulnerable point.

The arrow sank into its brain, and it reared up at the pain, [85]

and reeling from the bronze it stampeded the other horses.

While the old man was trying to cut the horse's trace-reins, slashing at them with his sword, Hector's swift horses

came up through the mêlée, carrying their daring charioteer

Hector; and then the old man would have lost his life, [90]

had not Diomedes, master of the war-cry, been quick to notice.

He gave a terrible cry, and urged Odysseus to help him:

‘Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many schemes,

where are you running, turning back into the crowd like a coward?

Take care! Someone may plant a spear in your back as you flee; [95]

stand firm, and let us drive this cruel warrior away from the old man.’

So he spoke, but much-enduring glorious Odysseus did not

hear him, and ran past to the hollow ships of the Achaeans.

Tydeus’ son, though on his own, plunged into the front-fighters

and took his stand in front of the chariot of the old man, [100]

Neleus’ son, and addressed him, speaking with winged words:

‘Old man, it seems that the young fighters are wearing you down;

your power has gone to nothing, painful old age presses hard on you,

your attendant is exhausted, and your horses are slowing down.

Come now, get up on to my chariot, and you will see [105]

what the horses of Tros can do in pursuit and retreat,

galloping this way and that across the plain, these

inspirers of panic rout, that I captured from Aeneas.*

Let our two attendants see to your horses, and let us steer mine

straight at the horse-breaking Trojans, so that Hector may

[110]

know whether the spear in my hands too is full of rage.’

So he spoke, and Nestor the Gerenian horseman did not disobey him.

Then the two powerful attendants, Sthenelus and courteous Eurymedon, saw to Nestor's horses, and the two others got up into the chariot of Diomedes. [115] Then Nestor took the shining reins into his hands, and lashed the horses, and they quickly drew close to Hector, who charged straight at them, raging; Tydeus' son threw his spear, but missed Hector, and hit his attendant and charioteer, who was Eniopeus, the son of arrogant Thebaeus, [120] on his chest next to the nipple, as he held the horses' reins. He toppled from the chariot, and his swift-footed horses started back; and there his life and fury were loosened. Bitter grief for his charioteer crowded thick into Hector's heart, but he left him, distressed though he was for his companion, [125] to lie there, and went in search of another bold charioteer; and not for long did his horses lack a master, since he quickly found daring Archeptolemus, Iphitus' son, and made him mount behind his swift-footed horses, and gave the reins into his hands.

Then dreadful deeds, impossible to bear, would have been done, [130] and they would have been penned inside Troy like lambs, had not the father of gods and men been quick to notice. He thundered terribly, and launched a shining bolt, and made it fall to the ground in front of Diomedes' horses; a terrifying flame of burning sulphur shot up from it, [135] and the horses took fright and cowered under the chariot; the shining reins slipped from Nestor's hands, and

he was afraid in his heart and spoke to Diomedes:
'Quick, Tydeus' son, turn your single-hoofed horses back in flight;

can you not see that there is no courage to be had from Zeus? [140]

Now Zeus, the son of Cronus, is granting glory to Hector—for today, though tomorrow it will be our turn, if he so wishes.

There is no man, however powerful, who can thrust aside the will of Zeus, since Zeus is much stronger than we are.'

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, answered him:
[145]

'Old man, all that you have said is according to due measure;

but this is a bitter grief that comes over my heart and spirit,

because one day Hector will speak among the Trojans and say,

"Tydeus' son ran before me and went back to his ships."

So one day he will taunt me; then may the wide earth gape before me.' [150]

Then Nestor, the Gerenian horseman, answered him and said:

'Ah, son of war-minded Tydeus, what a thing to say!

Even if Hector calls you a coward and a weakling,

the Trojans and Dardanians will not believe him, nor

the wives of the great-spirited Trojan shield-bearers, [155]

when you have hurled their tender bedfellows into the dust.'

So he spoke, and wheeled the single-hoofed horses round in flight,

back through the mêlée, and the Trojans and Hector gave an

astonishing shout and showered them with whirring missiles.

Great Hector of the glittering helmet shouted loudly after Diomedes: [160]

‘Son of Tydeus, the swift-horsed Danaans used to honour you above others, with the best place, the best meat and full cups of wine, but now they will despise you; you have turned out to be a woman.

Well, away with you, feeble doll! It will not be because of my yielding that you will climb our walls, or carry off our women [165]

in your ships; before that happens I shall give you your destiny.’

So he spoke, and Tydeus’ son’s mind was divided, whether to wheel his horses round and fight, matching strength to strength. Three times he pondered in his mind and in his heart, and three times Zeus the counsellor thundered from Mount Ida, [170]

sending the Trojans a sign that the battle was veering to one side.

Then Hector gave a loud shout and called out to the Trojans:

‘Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters, be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage! I see that the son of Cronus favours us, and promises victory [175]

and great glory to me, but affliction for the Danaans—those fools, who have devised the fortifications you can see,

feeble and futile as they are. They will not hold back my fury;

horses can easily jump across the ditch that they have dug. As soon as I find myself among their hollow ships, [180]

then let men turn their thoughts to destructive fire, so that I can set their ships ablaze with flames, and kill the Argives next to their ships, panic-stricken amidst the smoke.'

So he spoke, and summoned his horses, and said to them:

'Xanthus and you, Podargus, Aethon and bright Lampus, [185]

now is the time when you must repay me for the lavish care that Andromache, daughter of great-hearted Eëtion, gave you, serving you mind-cheering wheat, and mixing it with wine, to drink when the spirit urged you, before she served me, I who am proud to be her tender husband. [190]

So come, press on as fast as you can, and we shall seize the shield of Nestor, whose fame reaches the high sky—they say it is all made of gold, both itself and its cross-struts—

and strip from the shoulders of horse-breaking Diomedes his finely worked corslet, which Hephaestus laboured to make. [195]

If we can capture these two things, I could hope that the Achaeans will this very night embark on their swift ships.'

So he spoke, boastfully, and lady Hera was angry with him, and stirred on her throne, and caused high Olympus to shake.

She spoke to the huge god Poseidon, face to face: [200]

'Do you see this, earthshaker of far-reaching power?

Not even the heart in your breast has pity for the Danaans as they die—yet they bring you many pleasing offerings to Helice

and Aegae,* and you have always desired them to be victorious.

Suppose that we who side with the Danaans were minded [205]

to beat the Trojans back, and so frustrate wide-thundering Zeus,
he would surely feel distressed, sitting there alone on Ida.'

At this the lord earthshaker was deeply angered and answered her:

'Hera, your words are reckless; what a thing to say!
I certainly would not wish the rest of us to fight against Zeus [210]

the son of Cronus, since he is very much stronger than we are.'

So they spoke, one to another, in this way. Meanwhile the space beyond the ships that was bounded by wall and ditch

was filled with both horses and shield-bearing men, close packed together; it was Hector, Priam's son, equal of swift Ares, [215]

who penned them in, since Zeus had given him the glory. And he would have burnt the well-balanced ships with blazing fire,

had not the lady Hera put it into Agamemnon's mind to take it

on himself to set about urging the Achaeans to swift action. He made his way along the huts and ships of the Achaeans [220]

holding his great purple cloak in his brawny hand, and stopped by the deep-bellied black ship of Odysseus, which was in the middle, so that a shout could carry both ways,

both towards the huts of Ajax, Telamon's son, and towards Achilles';

for these had dragged up their well-balanced ships at the furthest points, [225]

trusting in their courage and in the strength of their hands.

Agamemnon called out to the Danaans in a far-carrying shout:

‘Shame, Argives, you things of disgrace, admired only for
your
handsome looks! We claim to be the best men—but where
are our
boasts now, those empty, loud boasts that you made on
Lemnos* [230]
as you ate your fill of the meat of straight-horned oxen
and drank from bowls that brimmed with wine? You claimed
that each man could stand up to one- or two-hundred
Trojans
in battle; yet now we are not even good enough to face one
man,
Hector, who will soon burn our ships with destructive fire.
[235]
Father Zeus, did you ever ruin a powerful king like this
before,
driving delusion into him and robbing him of great glory?
And yet I say that I never passed by any splendid altar of
yours
on my unlucky voyage here in my many-benched ship
without burning on all of them the fat and thigh-bones of
oxen, [240]
impatient as I was to sack the strongly walled city of Troy.
So, Zeus, I beg you, fulfil this plea at least for me:
grant that we may get away safely and escape, and do not
allow
the Achaeans to be beaten down like this by the Trojans.’

So he spoke, and the father pitied him as he wept
tears, and [245]
nodded his assent that his people should survive and not
perish.
Straightaway he sent an eagle, the best omen among
winged things,
holding in its claws a fawn, the offspring of a swift hind;
it dropped the fawn beside the splendid altar of Zeus,

where

the Achaeans used to sacrifice to Zeus, source of all omens.

[250]

And when they saw that the bird had come from Zeus, they sprang

more vigorously at the Trojans, and called up their battle-lust.

Then no man of the Danaans, numerous though they were,

could boast that he drove his swift horses in front of

Tydeus' son,

urging them across the ditch, matching his strength in the close fight. [255]

Diomedes was easily the first to kill a Trojan chieftain,

Agelaus, son of Phradmon; he had wheeled his horses in flight,

and as he turned Diomedes skewered him in the back with his spear,

right between the shoulders, and drove it through his chest.

Agelaus fell from his chariot, and his armour clattered about him. [260]

After him came the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus,

and behind them the two called Ajax, clothed in impetuous courage,

and after him Idomeneus, accompanied by his attendant Meriones, the equal of Enyalios, slayer of men,

and after them came Eurypylus, Euaemon's splendid son. [265]

The ninth to come was Teucer, tensing his curved bow,

and he took his stand behind the shield of Ajax, Telamon's son.

Ajax would lift the shield a little way, and then Teucer would peer out and let fly an arrow, shooting someone down

in the mêlée; and the man would fall there and give up his life, [270]

and Teucer would turn and shelter with Ajax, like a child running to its mother, and Ajax would cover him with his shining shield.

Which man of the Trojans did blameless Teucer first kill? The first were Orsilochus and Ormenus and Ophelistes, Daetor and Chromius and godlike Lycophontes, [275] and Amopaon the son of Polyaemon, and Melanippus; all of these he laid in quick succession on the all-nourishing earth.

Agamemnon, lord of men, was glad to see him slaying whole companies of the Trojans with his powerful bow, and he came and stood beside him and addressed him: [280]

‘Teucer, dear man, son of Telamon, captain of the people, shoot on like this, and perhaps you will prove to be the Danaans’

salvation, and Telamon’s, who nurtured you as a child and cared for you in his house, though you were his bastard;

now bring him closer to glory, even though he is far away. [285]

And I tell you this plainly, and it will surely be fulfilled: if ever Zeus who wears the aegis and Athena grant that I may tear Ilium apart, that well-built city, it will be in your hands—after myself—that I shall first place the prize of honour, either a tripod, or a pair of horses with their chariot, [290]

or a woman, who will go up to your bed and share it with you.’

Then in answer blameless Teucer addressed him: ‘Atreus’ glorious son, why do you urge me on when I am eager

on my own account? Be sure that while the strength is in me

I will not stop; ever since we forced them back towards Ilium [295]

I have been looking for a chance to kill men with my bow. Eight arrows with long barbs I have let fly, and they have all stuck fast in the flesh of war-swift strong young men; but this maddened dog I am not able to strike down.'

So he spoke, and let fly another arrow from his bowstring, [300]

straight at Hector, and his heart longed to shoot him down. But he missed Hector, and with his arrow struck blameless Gorgythion, Priam's brave son, in the chest; his mother had come in marriage from Aesyme,* beautiful Castianeira, who was in stature like a goddess. [305]

As when in a garden a poppy droops its head to one side, heavy with the weight of its seed and with spring showers, so his head, weighed down by his helmet, slumped to one side.

Then Teucer let fly another arrow from his bowstring, straight at Hector, and his heart longed to shoot him down. [310]

But he failed a second time, for Apollo made him miss his mark,

and he hit Archeptolemus, Hector's daring charioteer, in his chest next to the nipple as he launched himself into battle. He toppled from the chariot, and his swift-footed horses started back, and there his life and fury were loosened. [315]

Bitter grief for his charioteer crowded thick into Hector's heart,

but he left him there, grieved though he was for his companion,

and called to his brother Cebriones, who happened to be

nearby,
to pick up the horses' reins; and Cebriones heard and
obeyed him.
Hector himself jumped to the ground from the gleaming
chariot, [320]
with a terrible yell; he picked up a large rock in his hand
and made
straight for Teucer, his heart driving him on to knock him
down.
Teucer had pulled a bitter arrow from his quiver and fitted it
to the bowstring; as he drew the string back to his
shoulder,
raging to shoot at him, Hector of the glittering helmet hit
him [325]
with the jagged rock at the point where the collarbone
marks off
the neck and chest, and it is a most vulnerable spot, and
broke his bowstring. Teucer's hand went numb at the wrist
and
he sank to his knees, motionless, and the bow fell from his
hand.
Ajax did not desert his brother when he fell, but ran up
[330]
and stood over him and sheltered him with his shield.
Then two trusty companions lifted him on to their
shoulders,
Mecisteus, the son of Echius, and glorious Alastor,
and carried him, groaning deeply, back to the hollow ships.
Then once again the Olympian stirred up fury in the
Trojans, [335]
and they drove the Achaeans straight back towards the
deep ditch;
Hector strode among the front-fighters, exulting in his
strength:
as when a hound snaps at a wild boar or a lion from

behind, biting its flanks and hindquarters and running it down
on swift feet, and keenly watches the lion's twists and turns, [340]
so Hector pressed hard on the flowing-haired Achaeans, all the time killing the hindmost; and they turned in flight. When they had passed the stakes and crossed the ditch in their flight, and many had been beaten down by Trojan hands,
they halted beside the ships and made a stand there, [345] calling out to each other and holding up their hands, each man praying in a loud voice to all the gods, while Hector was wheeling his fine-maned horses this way and that,
glaring with the eyes of Gorgo* or of Ares, doom of mortals.

When the goddess white-armed Hera saw them she felt pity, [350]
and straightaway she addressed Athena with winged words: 'Daughter of Zeus the aegis-wearer, look at this! Shall we two
give up caring about the Danaans as they die? It is our last chance.
They will surely bring their lives to a miserable end, dying under the onslaught of one man, Hector, Priam's son; his fury [355]
is now irresistible—you can see what terrible things he has done.'

Then in answer to her the goddess grey-eyed Athena said:
'If only this man could utterly lose his fury and his life, slain in his native land at the hands of the Argives! But my father is crazed, and his mind is set on no good— [360]
hard god, always opposing me and frustrating my schemes. He has not the smallest memory of the many times I saved

his son, when exhausted by the labours that Eurystheus set him.

Heracles had only to cry out to the high sky, and Zeus would send me down from the high sky to bring him help.

[365]

Had I been shrewd enough to know all this in my mind when

he was sent down to the house of Hades the gate-guardian, to bring the hound of hateful Hades back from Erebus, he would not have escaped over the fast-flowing streams of Styx.*

But now Zeus hates me, and has carried out Thetis' designs, [370]

that one who kissed his knees and took his chin in her hand,

and entreated him to honour Achilles, sacker of cities; but the day will come when he calls me his dear grey-eyes again.

Now, you must harness your single-hoofed horses for us, while I go into the palace of Zeus who wears the aegis

[375]

and clothe myself in armour for war, to see whether Hector of the glittering helmet, Priam's son, will be glad when we two show ourselves along the battle-lines of war, or whether the Trojans too will glut the dogs and vultures with their fat and flesh, when they fall beside the Achaeans' ships.' [380]

So she spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not disobey her;

she set about harnessing her horses with their golden headbands—

Hera, elder goddess, daughter of great Cronus.

But Athena, daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis, let fall on to her father's threshold the soft embroidered

[385]

robe which she herself had laboured over with her own hands,
and put on the tunic of Zeus the gatherer of clouds,
and clothed herself in armour for war, the bringer of tears.
She stepped on to the brightly blazing chariot and gripped the spear,
heavy, thick, and massive, with which she beats down ranks of men, [390]
of heroes with whom she, child of a mighty father, is enraged.

Then Hera quickly lashed the horses with her whip; and of their own accord the gates of the high sky groaned open, gates held by the Seasons,* who have charge of the great sky and Olympus, either to push aside the dense cloud or to close it up together. [395]

Through these gates they steered their horses, driven on by the whip.

But when father Zeus saw them from Ida he was terribly angry,
and dispatched Iris the golden-winged with a message: 'Away now, swift Iris, and turn them back, and do not let them come up against me; it is not good that we should meet in battle. [400]

For I tell you this plainly, and it will surely be fulfilled: I shall lame these swift horses in their harness, and I shall fling them both out of the chariot and shatter it to pieces. And not even in the circle of ten returning years will they be healed of the wounds which my thunderbolt will inflict on them; [405]
so the grey-eyed one may learn what it is to fight with her father.

With Hera I am not so much angry or so incensed,
since it is always her custom to thwart me in everything I
say.'

So he spoke, and storm-footed Iris arose to take her
message,
and set off from the mountains of Ida for far Olympus. [410]
Just outside the gates of many-valleyed Olympus she met
the pair
and tried to stop them, and reported Zeus' words to them:
'Where is your fury taking you? Why does the heart in you
rage so?

The son of Cronus will not allow you to help the Argives.
The son of Cronus has threatened—and it will be fulfilled—
[415]

to lame these swift horses of yours in their harness, and to
fling you both out of the chariot and shatter it to pieces,
and not even in the circle of ten returning years will you be
healed

of the wounds which his thunderbolt will inflict on you;
so you may learn, grey-eyed one, what it is to fight with
your father. [420]

With Hera he is not so much angry or so incensed,
since it is always her custom to thwart him in everything he
says.

But you are indeed most wretched, and a shameless bitch,
if you are really bold enough to raise your huge spear
against Zeus.'

So Iris of the swift feet spoke, and departed from them,
[425]

and then Hera addressed Athena with these words:

'Daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis, I can no longer
agree to our fighting against Zeus just for mortals' sake!
Let some of them die and let the others live, as chance has
it,

and let Zeus make judgements on the Trojans and the

Danaans [430]

according to the thoughts in his heart, as is right.'

So she spoke, and turned the single-hoofed horses back;

and the Seasons unyoked the fine-maned horses and tethered them at their immortal mangers, and leaned the chariot body against the shining courtyard wall. [435]

Then the goddesses took their seats on golden chairs among the rest of the gods, troubled in their hearts.

Now father Zeus had driven his fine-wheeled chariot and horses from Ida to Olympus, and had come to the seat of the gods. The renowned earthshaker unyoked his horses for him, and [440]

set the chariot body on its base, and spread a cloth over it. Wide-thundering Zeus took his seat on a golden throne, and great Olympus trembled underneath his feet.

Only Athena and Hera took their seats apart from Zeus, and said nothing to him nor asked him any questions; [445] but he understood in his mind and addressed them:

'Athena and Hera, why are you so troubled?

Surely you are not weary from the battle where men win glory,

from slaying Trojans, for whom you have a terrible hatred?

It is not possible, such is my fury and my invincible hands, [450]

for all the gods on Olympus to turn me from my purpose; but as for you two, trembling seized your bright limbs before you even saw war and the cruel deeds of war.

I tell you this plainly, and it would surely have been fulfilled: if my thunderbolt had struck you, you would never have returned [455]

in your chariot to Olympus, where the immortals have their seat.'

So he spoke, and Athena and Hera muttered to each other,
sitting close together and planning misery for the Trojans.
Athena was silent, saying not a word, being full of
resentment

towards father Zeus, and savage bitterness gripped her;
[460]

but Hera could not contain the anger in her breast, and
said:

‘Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said?
We know very well that your strength is not negligible,
but for all that we feel pity for the Danaan spearmen,
who will surely bring their lives to a wretched end, and die.
[465]

Still, we will certainly hold back from war, if you command
us,

and will offer to the Argives such counsel as will benefit
them,

so that they do not all perish as a result of your anger.’

Then in answer to her Zeus who gathers the clouds
said:

‘In the morning, ox-eyed lady Hera, if you wish it, [470]
you will see the son of Cronus in even greater fury,
destroying great numbers of the Argive spearmen’s army;
for towering Hector will not cease from the fighting
until swift-footed Achilles is roused up beside his ship,
on the day when they will fight by their ships’ sterns [475]
in a dreadful narrow space, for the sake of the dead
Patroclus;

so it is ordained. As for your anger, it does not concern me,
not even if you roam as far as the lowest limits of
the earth and the sea, where Iapetus and Cronus sit,*
taking no delight in the rays of Hyperion the sun or in [480]
the winds, and deep Tartarus surrounds them. Even if

your wanderings take you there, your ill-temper will not concern me; there is no more shameless a bitch than you.'

So he spoke, and white-armed Hera made no reply. Now the bright light of the sun dropped into Ocean, [485] drawing black night over the grain-giving earth. The Trojans were not glad when the light sank down, but for the Achaeans dark night's coming was welcome, an answer to many prayers.

Now illustrious Hector led the Trojans away from the ships, and held an assembly, beside the swirling river, [490] in an open place where the ground was clear of dead men. They jumped to the ground from their chariots and began to listen to the speech which Hector, dear to Zeus, made. In his hand he held a spear eleven cubits long, and the shaft's bronze point gleamed before him, and round it ran a golden neck-ring. [495]

Leaning on this he made his speech to the Trojans: 'Listen to me, Trojans, Dardanians and allies; I had thought that we would destroy all the Achaeans and their ships, and would then make our way back to windswept Ilium, but darkness has come and prevented us, and that above all [500]

has saved the Argives and their ships along the seashore. So let us now give way to black night's persuasion, and prepare our supper; unyoke your fine-maned horses from their chariots, and throw fodder before them; bring oxen and sturdy sheep from the city, quickly, [505] and supply yourselves with mind-cheering wine and bread from your halls, and collect a great quantity of wood, so that all night long until early-born dawn we may keep

many fires alight, and their brightness may reach the high sky,

in case during the night the flowing-haired Achaeans [510] stir themselves to escape over the broad back of the sea.

They must not board their ships when they wish, without a fight;

no, when they reach home, many of them must have a wound

to tend, one inflicted by an arrow or a sharp spear as they leapt on to their ships, so that others too may hesitate before [515]

waging tear-laden war against the horse-breaking Trojans.

Let the heralds, dear to Zeus, proclaim throughout the city that boys in their early youth and grey-haired old men

should bivouac on the god-built walls around the city,

and that the womenfolk should each light a great fire [520]

in their halls; and let there be a trustworthy guard set, so that

no enemy band may enter the city while its people are absent.

Let this be done, great-hearted Trojans, as I declare.

Let these sound orders of mine suffice for the present, and

I shall make announcements tomorrow to the horse-breaking Trojans: [525]

I pray in hope to Zeus and all the other gods that I shall drive

these dogs, brought here by death-spectres, away from here,

[those whom the spectres carry upon their black ships.]

So for this night we must keep watch at our stations,

and tomorrow, at break of day, let us put on our armour [530]

and wake fierce Ares beside the hollow ships,

and then I shall know if mighty Diomedes, Tydeus' son,

will drive me back from the ships towards the wall, or if I

will cut him down with the bronze and carry off his bloody

arms.

Tomorrow he will discover if he has the courage to
withstand [535]

the onslaught of my spear; but I rather think that when the
sun

rises for tomorrow he will lie, speared through, in the front
ranks,

and many of his companions around him. If only I
could be immortal and ageless for all my days,
and honoured as Athena and Apollo are honoured,
as surely as this coming day will bring ruin to the Argives!'

So Hector spoke, and the Trojans shouted their
approval.

They set free their sweating horses from the yoke,
and tethered them with leather thongs, each beside his
chariot;

and from the city they brought oxen and sturdy sheep,
[545]

quickly, and they supplied themselves with mind-cheering
wine

and bread from their halls, and collected a great quantity of
wood;

[and they sacrificed perfect hecatombs for the immortals,]*
and the winds carried the savour from the plain up to the
high sky.

[But sweet though it was the blessed gods did not feast on
it, [550]

and had no wish to, for sacred Ilium was deeply hateful to
them,

and Priam and the people of Priam of the fine ash spear.]

So they sat for the whole night, along the battle-lines of
war,

with great thoughts in mind, and their fires burnt in great
numbers.

As when in the high sky stars shine out in their brilliance

[555]

around the shining moon, when the upper air is windless,
and every crag and jutting peak and mountain glen is clear
to see; boundless bright air breaks down from the high sky,
and all the stars are visible, and the shepherd is glad in his
heart;

so many were the fires that the Trojans kindled in front of
Ilium, [560]

shining out between the ships and the streams of Xanthus.
A thousand fires were burning on the plain, and beside
each

sat fifty men in the brightness of the blazing fire.

Their horses stood champing on white barley and emmer
wheat

beside their chariots, waiting for Dawn on her lovely throne.

[565]

BOOK NINE

So the Trojans kept their watch; but the Achaeans were gripped by awesome Rout, the companion of chilling Panic, and all their best men were struck down by unbearable grief. As when two winds churn up the fish-rich sea, the North Wind and the West, blowing from Thrace; [5] suddenly they start up, and the dark waves mass and rise to a crest, and spew out heaps of seaweed along the shore; so were the hearts of the Achaeans torn in their breasts.

The son of Atreus was struck to his heart with huge grief, and went among the clear-voiced heralds, ordering them [10] to summon each man to an assembly, calling him by name, but not to shout aloud; and he was busy himself with the foremost.

They took their seats in the assembly, in despair; and Agamemnon stood up, weeping tears like a spring of black water which pours its dark stream down over a sheer cliff; [15]

so Agamemnon addressed the Argives, groaning deeply: 'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives! Zeus the son of Cronus has snared me in a cruel delusion, hard god that he is, who before this promised and assured me that I should return home only after sacking strongly walled Ilium; [20]

but now he has planned an evil deception, and orders me to go back to Argos without glory, after losing many people. This must I suppose be pleasing to Zeus the all-powerful,

who has indeed destroyed the crowns of many cities,
and will do so again; for his might is the greatest of all. [25]
But come, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:
let us flee with our ships, back to our dear native land,
because we shall never take Troy with its wide streets.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still.
For a long time the Achaeans' sons were speechless with
despair, [30]

but at last Diomedes of the mighty voice spoke among
them:

'Son of Atreus, I will begin by challenging your folly, here,
lord, in the assembly, where it is proper; so do not be angry.
You have already insulted my courage in front of the
Danaans,*

saying that I was no fighter, and a coward; and all this [35]
is known to the Argives, both young men and old.

The son of crooked-scheming Cronus gave you gifts by
halves:

along with your staff he granted you honour beyond all
men,

but courage, which confers most authority, he did not give
you.

Man possessed, do you really think the sons of the
Achaeans [40]

are no fighters and cowards, as you tell us they are?

If your own heart especially is urging you to go home,
then go. The way lies before you, and your ships are stood
to

by the sea, the many ships that came with you from
Mycenae;

but the rest of the flowing-haired Achaeans will stay here
[45]

until such time as we sack Troy—or no, rather let them also
take flight in their ships to their dear native land, and

we two, I and Sthenelus, will fight on until we reach our goal in Ilium; for it was with a god that we came here.'

So he spoke, and the sons of the Achaeans all shouted in approval, [50]

amazed at the words of horse-breaking Diomedes.

Then the horseman Nestor stood up and spoke among them:

'Son of Tydeus, in warfare your might is beyond others', and in counsel you are the best of all men of your age.

No one of the Achaeans could treat your words with contempt, [55]

or argue against them, but your speech did not reach its end—

but then, you are a young man, and you could be my son, my latest-born. Still, there was good sense in your words to the Argive kings, since you spoke according to due measure.

But come; because I declare proudly that I am senior to you, [60]

let me speak out and make everything plain, and no one will treat my words with scorn, not even lord Agamemnon; since shut out from brotherhood, from law and from hearth is the man who falls in love with bitter civil discord.

Now, for the moment, let us surrender to black night and [65]

prepare our meal, and let sentries be posted outside the wall,

along the ditch we have dug, each in their place.

These are the orders I give to the younger men; after that, Atreus' son, you must take the lead, for you are the most kingly.

Give your elders a feast—the right thing to do, causing you no shame, [70]

since your huts are full of wine, which the Achaeans' ships bring in every day from Thrace over the broad open sea.

All hospitality is your duty, for you rule over many people.
When many are gathered together you must listen to the man

who offers the best advice; the Achaeans are all in urgent need [75]

of good and shrewd advice, because our enemies are lighting

many fires near the ships, and what man could be glad at that?

This night will either break the army in pieces or save it.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he said.

Out hurried the sentries wearing their armour, [80]

led by Thrasymedes, Nestor's son, shepherd of the people,
and by Ascalaphus and Ialmenus, sons of Ares,

and by Meriones and Aphareus and Deïpyrus,

and by glorious Lycomedes, the son of Creion.

There were seven captains of the guards, and with each went [85]

one hundred young men, holding long spears in their hands.

They filed out and took their posts between the ditch and the wall,

and there they lit fires, and each man prepared his meal.

Then Atreus' son gathered the elders of the Achaeans together

in his hut, and set before them a feast to satisfy their hearts. [90]

They reached out for the food that lay ready before them,
and when they had put away the desire for eating and drinking,

the very first to begin weaving his counsel was the old man Nestor, whose advice in time past too had proved to be the best.

With generous intent he spoke and addressed them: [95]

‘Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men,
with you I shall begin, and with you I shall end, because
you are lord over many peoples, and Zeus has entrusted to
you

a staff and ordinances, for you to give counsel on their
behalf.

Therefore you must above all men give and take advice,
[100]

and must carry out another’s proposal, if his heart urges
him

to speak for the good; he will depend on you, whatever he
begins.

Now I shall speak as it seems to me to be best,
because there is no one who will think of a better plan
than that which I have long held in my mind, and still hold,
[105]

since the time when, Zeus-born, you went to Achilles’ hut
and took away the girl, Briseus’ daughter, despite his
anger,

entirely against our judgement; and indeed I did my utmost
to dissuade you, but you gave in to your great-hearted
spirit

and dishonoured a mighty man, whom even the immortals
[110]

have honoured—you took his prize and kept it. Still, let us
even now consider how we may appease and persuade him
with acceptable gifts and with flattering words.’

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed
him:

‘Old man, you are not wrong when you describe my
delusion. [115]

I was deluded, and I myself do not deny it. The man whom
Zeus loves in his heart is worth many people—as he has
now

honoured that man, and has beaten down the Achaean

people.

But because I was deluded and yielded to base feelings
I am willing to make amends, and to pay him a boundless
ransom. [120]

In the presence of you all let me name the splendid gifts:
seven tripods untouched by fire, and ten talents of gold,
twenty gleaming cauldrons, and twelve powerful horses,
race-victors, prize-winners with the speed of their feet.
The man who came to own all that my single-hoofed horses
[125]

have brought me in prizes would not be lacking in booty,
nor would he be without possession of precious gold.
And I will give him seven women, skilled in fine handiwork,
Lesbians, whom I chose when he himself took Lesbos,
the well-built city, and they surpassed all womankind in
beauty. [130]

These I will give him, and with them the one I then took
away,
Briseus' daughter; and moreover I will swear a great oath
that I have never gone up to her bed nor lain with her,
as is the usual way of mankind between men and women.
All these will be put before him immediately; but if some
day [135]

the gods grant us to sack the great city of Priam, let him
enter it
at the time when we Achaeans are sharing out the booty
and pile his ship high with gold and bronze, all that he
wants,
and let him choose for himself twenty Trojan women,
those who are the most beautiful after Argive Helen. [140]
And if we reach Achaean Argos, that most fertile of lands,
he can be my son-in-law, and I will treat him like Orestes,*
my last-born, who is raised amidst great abundance.
And I have three daughters in my well-constructed hall,
Chrysothemis and Laodice and Iphianassa;* of these he
may [145]

take the one he chooses to be his own, without bride-gifts,*
to Peleus' house. And I will give him dowry-gifts as well,
in plenty, such as no man has ever given with his daughter:
I will give him seven well-populated cities,
Cardamyle and Enope and Hire with its grassy pastures,
[150]

sacred Pherae, and Antheia with its deep meadows,
beautiful Aepeia, and Pedasus, country of vines.*
All these are near the sea, on the borders of sandy Pylos,
and in them live men who are rich in sheep and rich in
cattle,
and they will honour him with gifts, as if he were a god,
[155]

and under his staff's rule they will live in obedient
prosperity.

All this will I do for him, if only he gives up his anger.
Let him give way—only Hades is implacable and inflexible,
and that is why of all gods he is the most hated by mortals
—

and let him take his place below me, since I am the more
kingly, [160]

and because I declare that I am older than him by birth.'

Then the Gerenian horseman Nestor answered him, and
said:

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men,
the gifts that you now offer lord Achilles are not to be
despised;

so come, let us select men and dispatch them to go [165]
without delay to the hut of Achilles, son of Peleus.

Come now, let those on whom my eye falls accept this
duty:

first of all Phoenix, dear to Zeus, should be the leader,
and with him should go huge Ajax and glorious Odysseus,
and of the heralds let Odios and Eurybates accompany
them. [170]

Bring water for our hands, and command holy silence,
for us to pray to Cronus' son Zeus, to see if he will pity us.'

So he spoke, and his words were pleasing to them all.
Straightaway heralds poured water over their hands,
and young men filled mixing-jars to the brim with wine
[175]

and distributed it to all, after first pouring libations into the
cups.

When they had made libations and drunk to their hearts'
desire,

they set out from the hut of Atreus' son Agamemnon;
and the horseman Gerenian Nestor kept giving them
instructions,

looking sharply at each man, but especially at Odysseus,
[180]

as to how they should try to persuade Peleus' blameless
son.

So they* went along the shore of the loud-roaring sea,
praying earnestly to the earth-holder, shaker of the earth,
that they would easily persuade the great heart of Aeacus'
grandson.*

And so they came to the huts and ships of the Myrmidons,
[185]

and they found him delighting his heart with a clear-voiced
lyre,

fine and intricately worked, and on it was a silver cross-
piece;

he had chosen it from the spoils when he sacked Eëtion's
city.*

With this he was delighting his heart, singing the glorious
deeds of men,

and only Patroclus was with him, sitting opposite him in
silence, [190]

watching for the time when Achilles should end his singing.
So they came forward, and glorious Odysseus led them,

and stopped in front of him. Achilles leapt up in amazement, still holding his lyre, and left the seat where he had been sitting; and likewise Patroclus, when he saw the men, stood up. [195]

Swift-footed Achilles greeted and addressed them: 'Welcome, my true friends! Some pressing need must bring you here, the Achaeans I love the most, even in my anger.'

So speaking glorious Achilles led them into his hut, and sat them down on seats spread with bright purple cloths, [200]

and at once spoke to Patroclus, who was standing nearby: 'Son of Menoetius, quick, bring out a larger mixing-bowl and make the mixture stronger, and set out a cup for each man; these men who have come under my roof are my dearest friends.'

So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear companion. [205]

In the light of the fire he set down a great butcher's block, and laid on it the backs of a sheep and a fat goat, and also the chine of a full-grown hog, rich with fat. Automedon held them for him, while glorious Achilles jointed them.

He chopped the meat carefully and threaded it on to skewers, [210]

and Menoetius' son, a man equal to the gods, built up the fire.

When the fire had burned down and the flame had faded he spread the embers out and laid the skewers above them,

resting them on props, and sprinkled sacred salt over them. Then, when he had cooked the meat and piled it on to platters, [215]

Patroclus fetched bread and set it out on the table in fine baskets; but Achilles apportioned the meat. He then took his seat facing godlike Odysseus, against the opposite wall, and ordered his companion Patroclus to sacrifice to the gods; and he threw the first pieces into the fire. [220]

They reached out for the good things that lay ready before them, and when they had put from themselves the desire for food and drink

Ajax nodded to Phoenix. But glorious Odysseus noticed this, and filling a cup with wine he drank a toast to Achilles:

‘Greetings, Achilles! We have not lacked our fair share [225]

in the feasting, either in the hut of Agamemnon, Atreus’ son,

or indeed here now, for there is much food here to satisfy our hearts. But pleasant feasts are not now our concern, Zeus-nurtured man; we see great suffering, too great, and we are afraid. It is in the balance whether we save or lose [230]

our well-benched ships—unless you put on courage’s garment.

The high-hearted Trojans and their far-famed allies have pitched their camp up against the wall and the ships, and have lit many fires throughout their camp, and they think

they will no longer be held back, but will fall on our black ships. [235]

Zeus, the son of Cronus, reveals signs favourable to them by his

lightning on the right; and Hector exults greatly in his strength,

raging prodigiously, trusting in Zeus, and respecting neither men nor gods; a cruel frenzy has entered him.

He prays for the bright Dawn to appear as soon as possible,

and [240]

vows that he will hack the tops of the stern-posts from our ships,

and burn the ships themselves with ravaging fire, and cut down

the Achaeans beside them, panic-stricken amidst the smoke.

And I have a terrible fear in my heart that the gods will fulfil his threatening words, that it will indeed be our fate

[245]

to perish here at Troy, far from Argos, rearer of horses.

Up, then, if you are determined, late though it is, to rescue the weary Achaeans' sons from the Trojans' war-clamour.

You will certainly suffer if you delay, for once evil is done there is no cure to be found; long before that happens,

consider [250]

how you may keep the day of disaster away from the Danaans.

My dear friend, your father Peleus, surely impressed this on you

on the day that he sent you from Phthia to join

Agamemnon:

"My son, as for strength, Athena and Hera will give it to you if they so wish it; but you must curb the great-hearted spirit in [255]

your breast, since it is a better thing to preserve good fellowship.

Avoid the strife that leads to destruction, and the Argives, both young and old, will show you the more respect."

That is what the old man told you, but you are forgetting it.

Give way, even now, and leave off your heart-sore bitterness; [260]

if you quit your anger Agamemnon will give you worthy gifts.

Come now, listen to me, and I shall describe to you all the gifts which Agamemnon has promised to you from his huts:

seven tripods untouched by fire, and ten talents of gold,
twenty gleaming cauldrons, and twelve powerful horses,
[265]

race-victors, prize-winners with the speed of their feet.
The man who came to own all that his single-hoofed horses
have brought him in prizes would not be lacking in booty,
nor would he be without possession of precious gold.
He will give you seven women, skilled in fine handiwork,
[270]

Lesbians, whom he chose when you yourself took Lesbos,
the well-built city, and they surpassed all womankind in
beauty.

These he will give you, and with them the one he then took
away,

Briseus' daughter; and moreover he will swear a great oath
that he has never gone up to her bed nor lain with her,
[275]

as is the usual way of mankind between men and women.
All these will be put before you immediately; but if some
day

the gods grant us to sack the great city of Priam, you may
go into it when we Achaeans are sharing out the booty,
and pile your ship high with gold and bronze, all that you
want, [280]

and you may choose for yourself twenty Trojan women,
those who are the most beautiful after Argive Helen.

And if we reach Achaean Argos, that most fertile of lands,
you can be his son-in-law, and he will treat you like Orestes,
his last-born, who is raised amidst great abundance. [285]

And he has three daughters in his well-constructed hall,
Chrysothemis and Laodice and Iphianassa; of these you
may

take the one you choose to be your own, without bride-
gifts,

to Peleus' house. And he will give you dowry-gifts in
addition,

in plenty, such as no man has ever given with his daughter:
[290]

he will give you seven well-populated cities,
Cardamyle and Enope and Hire with its grassy pastures,
sacred Pherae, and Antheia with its deep meadows,
beautiful Aepeia, and Pedasus, country of vines.
All these are near the sea, on the borders of sandy Pylos,
[295]

and in them live men who are rich in sheep and rich in
cattle,
and they will honour you with gifts as if you were a god,
and under your staff's rule they will live in obedient
prosperity.

All this will he do for you, if only you give up your
bitterness.

But if the hatred in your heart for Atreus' son is now too
great, [300]

both for the man and his gifts, at any rate have pity on all
the rest

of the Achaeans, suffering in the camp, and they will
honour you

as a god; and you could well win vast glory in their eyes,
for now you could kill Hector, since his murderous madness
will bring him very close to you; he reckons he has no equal
[305]

among the Danaans who have been brought here in their
ships.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many
schemes,

I must say what I say with frankness, and tell you bluntly
what thoughts are in my mind and how they will be fulfilled,
[310]

so that you do not sit there trying to coax me, each in his
way;

for that man is as hateful to me as the gates of Hades
who hides one thing in his mind but says another.
I shall tell you, then, what seems best to me:
I do not think that Atreus' son Agamemnon will persuade
me, [315]
or the other Danaans, since I now see that battling with
the enemy, on and on without ceasing, earns no gratitude.
The man who just stands there and the man who fights
bravely
get the same share; coward and brave are equally
honoured;
a man dies just the same, whether he has done much or
nothing. [320]
I have endured pain in my heart, always risking my life in
battle,
but I get no more of a share than others, not even a little.
Like a bird which brings all the morsels she can find
to her unfledged young, and suffers herself because of it,
so I too have passed many nights without sleeping, and
[325]
have come through days that were bloodstained with
fighting,
struggling against men, fighting for the sake of their
wives.*
Twelve cities of men have I sacked from my ships,
and on land I claim eleven such around rich-soiled Troy.
From all of these I took much splendid treasure, and [330]
always I brought it back and gave it all to Agamemnon,
son of Atreus; and he would stay behind by the swift ships
and take it, sharing it out in small lots, keeping most for
himself.
All that he gave as prizes to the chieftains and kings is
stored safely in their keeping; from me alone of the
Achaeans [335]
he took my prize, and keeps the wife who warmed my
heart. Well,

let him sleep beside her and take his pleasure. Why must
Argives
make war against Trojans? Why did Atreus' son assemble
an army
and bring it here? Was it not for lovely-haired Helen's sake?
Are then Atreus' sons the only ones among mortal men
[340]

who love their wives? Surely every good man of sound
mind

loves his own and cherishes her, just as I for my part
loved mine from my heart, though she was won by my
spear.

But now that he has cheated me, taking my prize from my
arms,

let him not test me—I know him too well; he will not
persuade me. [345]

No, Odysseus, let him take thought with you and the other
kings

as to how you may keep destructive fire away from the
ships.

He has certainly laboured very hard while I was absent;

he has built a wall, look, and dug a ditch alongside it,
a great wide one, and he has planted stakes in it; [350]

but for all that he cannot contain the might of Hector,
killer of men. So long as I was fighting with the Achaeans
Hector was unwilling to do battle away from his walls,
but came only as far as the Scaean gates and the oak tree;
there once he waited for me alone,* and scarcely escaped
my attack. [355]

But now, since I have no wish to fight against glorious
Hector,

tomorrow I shall make a sacrifice to Zeus and all the other
gods,

and I shall drag my ships down to the sea and pile them
full;

then you will see, if you have a mind to and if it matters to

you,
my ships sailing at break of day over the Hellespont [360]
rich in fish, and my men in them straining at their oars.
And if the famed earthshaker grants me a good voyage,
on the third day we should reach rich-soiled Phthia. I have
much wealth there, which I left when I came here—to my
cost.

And from here I shall take more—gold and red bronze, [365]
and women with fine girdles, and grey iron—everything,
at any rate, that fell to my lot; but my prize, the one he
gave me,

lord Agamemnon, Atreus' son, has taken back, violently
insulting me. Tell him everything that I am telling you,
quite openly, so that the rest of the Achaeans may be
angry too, [370]

in case he is hoping to cheat some other man of the
Danaans,

clothed as he always is in shamelessness. But as for me,
he would not dare to look me in the face, the dog.

I will not join him in his counsels, or in his actions;
he has cheated and wronged me. Let him not try to deceive
me [375]

again with words—once is enough; let him ruin himself
as he pleases; Zeus the counsellor has robbed him of his
wits.

I abominate his gifts, and I value him no more than a
splinter.

Not even if he were to offer me ten or twenty times
all that he now possesses, and anything else he may
acquire, [380]

or all the wealth that flows into Orchomenus or into Thebes
in Egypt,* where the houses are crammed full with
treasure,

and which has one-hundred gates, and two-hundred men
can ride out through every one, with chariots and horses;
not even if he gave me gifts as numerous as the sand or

dust— [385]

not even then would Agamemnon win over my heart, until
he has paid me back in full for this heart-wounding outrage.

I will not marry a daughter of Atreus' son Agamemnon,
not even if she rivals golden Aphrodite in her beauty,
and is a match for grey-eyed Athena in the work of her
hands— [390]

not even then will I marry her; let him choose another
Achaean,
whose rank is equal to his, and who is more kingly than I
am.

If the gods preserve me, and if I reach my home, then
surely Peleus himself will search out a wife for me:
there are many Achaean women throughout Hellas and
Phthia, [395]

daughters of chieftains who defend their cities, and
whichever of these I want I shall make my dear wife.
Indeed, my proud spirit has many times moved me
to take a wedded wife there, a well-matched partner,
to enjoy the treasures that aged Peleus has amassed; I do
not think [400]

that anything is of equal worth to my life, not even all the
wealth

they say that Ilium, that well-populated city, once
possessed

in time of peace before the sons of the Achaeans came,
nor all the wealth that the stone threshold of the archer
Phoebus Apollo guards inside his temple in rocky Pytho.*
[405]

Cattle and flocks of sturdy sheep can be got by raiding, and
tripods and herds of chestnut horses can be made one's
own,

but raiding and getting cannot bring back a man's life
when once it has passed beyond the barrier of his teeth.

My mother, Thetis of the silver feet, tells me that there are
[410]

two spectres carrying me towards the end of death: *
if I remain here and fight around the city of the Trojans,
I shall lose my homecoming, but my fame will never die,
while if I go back home to my dear native land,
my noble fame will be lost, but my life will be long, [415]
and the end of death will not come quickly upon me.
As for the rest of you, I would advise you all to
sail home, because you will never reach your goal
of taking sheer Ilium, since Zeus the wide-thunderer has
stretched his hand over it, and its people have taken heart.
[420]

So go back now and report my answer plainly to the
Achaeans' chieftains—for that is the office of elders—
so that they can devise another, better plan in their minds,
such as will safeguard their ships and the Achaean people
beside the hollow ships, since this plan that they have
invented [425]
as a result of my stubborn anger will not work out for them.
But let Phoenix stay behind and spend the night with us,
so that he may sail with me on my ships to our dear native
land

tomorrow, if he so wishes; I will not compel him to come.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still,
[430]

amazed at his words, so forcibly had he refused them.
But at last Phoenix, the old horse-driver, spoke out,
bursting
into tears, because he feared greatly for the Achaeans'
ships:
'Illustrious Achilles, if returning is really in your thoughts,
and you have no mind at all to keep destructive fire [435]
from the swift ships, because bitterness has entered your
heart,
how can I be left behind here, dear child, without you,
alone? Your father, the old horse-driver Peleus, sent me to

you

on the day that he dispatched you from Phthia to

Agamemnon,

a mere lad, not yet skilled in warfare that touches all men
alike, [440]

nor yet in debate, where men grow into distinction.

For this reason he sent me to teach you all these things,
to be both a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.

So, dear child, I have no wish to be left alone after this
without you, not even if a god himself were to promise
[445]

to scrape away my old age and make me young and
vigorous,

as I was when I first left Hellas of the beautiful women,
escaping from a quarrel with my father Amyntor, Ormenus'
son,

who was furious with me because of a lovely-haired
concubine;

he was infatuated with her, and dishonoured his wife, [450]
my mother; and she would take me by the knees,
entreating me

to lie with the concubine first, to make her loathe the old
man.

I listened to her and did the deed; but my father quickly
found out

and cursed me at length, and called on the hateful Furies
to make sure that he would never set on his knees a dear
son [455]

who was born to me. And the gods fulfilled his curses—
Zeus of the world below* and dread Persephone.

[I planned to kill him with the sharp bronze, but one
of the immortals stayed my anger, putting into my mind
the talk of my people and how men would censure me,
[465]

so that I should not be called a father-slayer among the
Achaeans.]*_

After this the spirit in my breast could no longer be
confined,
to continue living in my father's halls while he was so
angry.

Even so, my cousins and kinsmen who lived round about
earnestly entreated me and tried to keep me there in his
halls, [465]

and sacrificed many sturdy sheep and shambling
crook-horned cattle; and many a hog, rich with fat,
was stretched out over Hephaestus' flame to be singed,
and much wine was drunk from the old man's jars.

Nine nights they passed sleeping close around me, [470]
keeping watch by turns, and the fires never went out—
one in the portico of the well-walled courtyard, and
another in the entrance, in front of the doors of my room.

But when the tenth dark night came upon me,
I broke down the close-fitting doors of my room [475]
and escaped, and leapt over the courtyard wall, easily,
unseen by the men on guard and the women servants.
So I became a fugitive through Hellas of the wide dancing-
floors,

and came to rich-soiled Phthia, mother of flocks,
to lord Peleus; and he received me with kindness, [480]
and loved me as a father loves his own dear son,
a last-born only son, heir to many possessions, and he
enriched me, and made over a numerous people to me,
and I lived on the frontier of Phthia, ruling over the
Dolopians.*

And, godlike Achilles, I made you into the great man you
are, [485]

loving you with all my heart; you never wanted to go to a
feast

with anyone else, or to eat a meal in your own halls
until I had set you on my knees and given you your fill,
first cutting your meat and holding the wine to your lips;
many times have you soaked the tunic on my chest, [490]

dribbling wine down it in your childish helplessness.
So, I have endured much on your account, and toiled hard,
knowing that the gods were not going to bring into being
any offspring of mine; I made you my son, godlike Achilles,
so that one day you could protect me from ugly
destruction. [495]

So come, Achilles, master your great spirit; you should not
have a pitiless heart—even the gods can be made to bend,
though their greatness and honour and power exceed our
own.

Men can sway them with sacrifices and propitiating prayers,
petitioning them with drink-offerings and the smoke of
burnt offerings, [500]

whenever a man has overstepped the mark and done
wrong.

Indeed, there are Pleas for Forgiveness, daughters of great
Zeus,

who are lame and wrinkled, and their eyes are squinting,
and their office is to follow in pursuit of Delusion.

Now Delusion is strong and swift-footed, and therefore
[505]

far outruns them all, and gets in first, bringing hurt to men
all over the world; but the Pleas follow and heal them.

If a man respects these daughters of Zeus when they
approach,

they give him great blessings and listen to his prayers;
but if anyone denies and stubbornly rejects them, they go
[510]

to Cronus' son Zeus and entreat him, asking for Delusion
to go along with him, so that he will be hurt, and pay the
price.

So come, Achilles; you too must grant the daughters of
Zeus

the respect that bends the minds of others, fine men
though they are.

If Atreus' son was not offering you gifts, and promising

more to come, but was persisting in his furious rage,
I would not be telling you to cast your anger aside and
to defend the Argives, however much they have need of
you;
but as it is, he is offering you much now, and has promised
more,
and he has sent the best men on a mission to entreat you,
[520]

choosing them from the Achaean people—and they are also
the Argives you love most. Do not scorn their words or their
coming here, though before this your anger could not be
blamed.

So it was in former times too—the famous tales we have
heard

of heroes, of when violent anger came over one of them;
but [525]

they were open to gifts, and could be won over by
speeches.

There is a story I recall from long ago, just as it happened,
though it
was not a recent event; we are all friends here, so I will tell
it to you.

The Curetes and Aetolians, steadfast in battle, were
fighting
around the city of Calydon, and were slaughtering each
other: [530]

the Aetolians were defending lovely Calydon, while
the Curetes were raging to sack it in the war of Ares.

Artemis

of the golden throne had sent the Aetolians an evil thing,
being

angry because Oeneus had not offered her the first-fruits
from

his hillside orchard. The other gods were feasting on
hecatombs, [535]

and it was only to great Zeus' daughter that he offered nothing;
either he forgot, or he did not intend to do it; but his mind was mightily deluded. Furious, the archer-goddess, that divine being, sent against him a fierce wild boar, a white-tusked creature, which kept causing great damage by ravaging Oeneus' orchard: [540]
it ripped out many tall trees and threw them to the ground, roots, fruits, and blossom all at the same time. This boar was killed by Meleager, the son of Oeneus, after he had gathered together huntsmen and hounds from many cities, for it could not be overcome by a few, [545]
so huge it was, and had set many men upon the painful pyre. The goddess stirred up a great clamour and uproar over it between the Curetes and the great-spirited Aetolians, as to who should win the prize of its head and shaggy hide. Now so long as Meleager, dear to Ares, kept fighting, [550] matters went badly for the Curetes, and they were not able to stand their ground outside the wall, many as they were; but when anger entered Meleager—such as swells the heart in the breasts of other men too, even the sound of mind—because he was angry with his own mother Althaea, [555] he lay beside his wedded wife, beautiful Cleopatra, child of Euenus' daughter Marpessa of the lovely ankles, and of Idas, who was the strongest among earth-dwelling men at that time—he it was who took up his bow to challenge lord Phoebus Apollo over the girl with lovely ankles; [560] later Cleopatra's father and revered mother gave her the name Alcyone in their halls, because Marpessa had endured the fate of

the mournful kingfisher, the halcyon; she would weep
because
Phoebus Apollo, the shooter from afar, had stolen her away
—

it was beside this Cleopatra that Meleager lay, brooding on
his [565]

heart-wounding anger, furious at his mother's curses, who
was

grieving for her brother's killing, and she prayed often to
the gods,

and many times beat with her hands on the earth that
feeds many,

sitting hunched forward and soaking her lap with tears,
as she called upon Hades and dread Persephone to [570]
bring death to her son; and the Fury, the drinker of blood,
whose heart cannot be placated, heard her from Erebus.

And soon the noise and din of the Curetes rose about the
gates,

as they battered the walls; and the elders of the Aetolians
kept sending the best priests of the gods to Meleager,
entreating [575]

him to come out and fight, and promising him a huge gift:
they told him he could choose a magnificent estate in
the place where the lovely plain of Calydon was richest—
a tract of fifty acres, half of it vine-producing country
and half cleared ploughland, to be carved out for himself.
[580]

And many times the aged horse-driver Oeneus entreated
him,

standing on the threshold of his high-roofed chamber and
rattling its close-jointed doors as he implored his son;
many times his sisters and his revered mother entreated
him,

but he refused them all the more; many times his
companions [585]

tried, those who were closest to him and dearest of all.

But for all that they could not win over the heart in his breast,
until missiles rained thick on his chamber, and the Curetes
began to climb on the walls and to set fire to the great city.
Then indeed his finely girdled wife entreated Meleager
[590]

with lamentation, and described in full all the miseries
that happen to people when their city is captured—
the enemy kill the men, fire levels the city with the ground,
and strangers carry off their children and deep-girdled
women.

When he heard this dreadful tale Meleager's spirit was
quicken'd, [595]

and he set off and put on his brightly gleaming armour.

And so, though he had yielded to his anger, he kept the evil
day

from the Aetolians; but they did not give him the many fine
gifts

they had promised, and he saved them from disaster for
nothing.*

Do not, I beg you, have thoughts like his, dear boy, and do
not [600]

let some god turn you on to that course; it will be harder to
defend

the ships when they are already ablaze. There are the gifts
—

take them, and the Achaeans will honour you like a god.

But if you enter the man-destroying conflict without gifts,
you will not have the same honour, even if you drive the
war away.' [605]

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
'Phoenix, aged father, nurtured by Zeus, this is an honour*
I do not need; it is by Zeus' will, I believe, that I am
honoured,
and this will stay with me beside my curved ships, as long

as

the breath remains in my breast and my own knees can lift me. [610]

But I tell you another thing, and you should store in your mind:

do not break my resolve with your grieving and lamentation,

hoping to win favour with the hero son of Atreus; do not take his side, or I, who love you, may come to hate you.

For you, the honourable course is to hurt the man who hurts me; [615]

this way you may have half my kingdom and enjoy half my honour.

These men can take my answer back; you must stay here and sleep on a soft bed, and then as soon as dawn appears we shall decide whether to go home or to stay here.'

So he spoke, and signalled silently to Patroclus with his eyebrows, [620]

to make up a thick bed for Phoenix, so that the others might

think the sooner of leaving the hut for home. Then Ajax, the godlike son of Telamon, spoke out among them:

'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many schemes,

let us go; I do not think our embassy's purpose will be fulfilled, [625]

on this journey at any rate; we must quickly report

his reply to the Danaans, even though it is not good,

for they will surely now be sitting waiting for it. Achilles

has turned the great-hearted spirit in his breast to cruelty, hard man, and he has no regard for his companions' love,

[630]

we who used to honour him above all others beside the ships.

He is without pity. And yet, a man will accept compensation

for his dead brother or his own son from the man who killed him;
the murderer pays a great price and stays among his people,
and the other's heart and proud spirit are restrained, [635]
now that he has accepted amends.* But as for you, the gods
have given you a harsh and implacable heart in your breast

—
and all for one girl. Now we are offering you seven, the very best,
and many other gifts besides; so make your heart gracious, and
respect your obligations as a host—we are here under your roof [640]
on behalf of the whole Danaan army, and we are eager to remain
your nearest and dearest friends among all the Achaeans.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
'Ajax, son of Telamon, sprung from Zeus, ruler of the people,
all that you have said seems much in keeping with my mind; [645]
but my heart swells with bitterness whenever I think of what happened, of how contemptuously Atreus' son treated me
before the Argives, like some wandering migrant who has lost
his rights. No; go back now and report my answer, in public:
I shall not think of entering the bloodstained war [650]
until glorious Hector, the son of wise Priam,
reaches as far as the huts and ships of the Myrmidons,
killing the Argives and consuming the ships with fire.
But I think that when he reaches my hut and black ship

Hector will be held back, raging though he is for battle.’
[655]

So he spoke, and they each picked up a two-handled cup,
made a libation, and returned along the row of ships, and
Odysseus
led the way. But Patroclus ordered his companions and
maids
to make up a thick bed for Phoenix as quickly as they could.
The women obeyed, and made up the bed as he had told
them, [660]
with fleeces and a rug and the softest of linen cloths; and
there
the old man lay down and waited for the bright Dawn.
But Achilles went to sleep in the inmost part of his well-built
hut,
and beside him lay a woman whom he had brought from
Lesbos,
Diomedes of the beautiful cheeks, the daughter of Phorbas.
[665]
Patroclus lay on the other side, and beside him too was a
woman,
Iphigenia of the lovely girdle, whom glorious Achilles had given
him
when he captured sheer Skyros,* the citadel of Enyeus.

Now when the others reached the huts of Atreus’ son,
the sons of the Achaeans stood up and drank their health,
[670]
one here, one there, in golden cups, and began to question
them;
and the first to ask a question was Agamemnon, lord of
men:
‘Odysseus of many tales, great glory of the Achaeans, tell
me:
is he willing to keep destructive fire away from our ships, or

did he refuse, and does anger still grip his great-hearted spirit?' [675]

Then in answer much-enduring glorious Odysseus addressed him:

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, the man has no mind to quench his anger, but is even more filled with fury, and he repudiates you and your gifts. He tells you to take thought among the Argives as to [680] how you may save both the ships and the Achaean people; as for himself, he threatened that as soon as dawn breaks he will drag his well-benched, balanced ships down to the sea.

Moreover, he said that he advises all the rest of you to sail for home, because you will never reach your goal [685] of taking sheer Ilium, because Zeus the wide-thunderer has stretched his hand over it, and its peoples have taken heart.

So he spoke; and these who went with me will say the same,

Ajax and the two heralds, both men of sound judgement. But the old man Phoenix is sleeping there, urged by Achilles, [690]

so that he can sail with him on his ships to his dear native land tomorrow, if he wishes; but he will not compel him to come.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still, amazed at his words, so forcibly had he spoken. For a long time

the sons of the Achaeans were speechless with despair, but [695]

at last Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke out among them:

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men: I wish that you had never entreated the blameless son of

Peleus

and offered him countless gifts; he is a proud man at any time,

but now you have driven him to even greater arrogance.

[700]

Let us leave him alone, to decide whether he goes or stays; later he will fight again, whenever the heart

in his breast prompts him to and a god stirs him up.

So come, let us all accept what I say: for the present, all should go to bed, now that you have had your hearts'

[705]

fill of food and wine, for that is our fury and courage;

and when lovely Dawn with her rosy fingers appears, you must quickly marshal the people and chariots before the ships,

and urge them on, and fight yourself among the front-warriors.'

So he spoke, and all the kings assented to what he said,

[710]

amazed at the words of Diomedes, breaker of horses.

Then they made libations, and went each to his own hut, and there they lay down to rest, and received the gift of sleep.

BOOK TEN

Now all the other chieftains of the Achaeon people
slept through the night by their ships, overcome by soft
sleep;
but sweet sleep did not take hold of Atreus' son
Agamemnon,
shepherd of the people, as he pondered much in his mind.
As when the husband of lovely-haired Hera flashes his
lightning, [5]
foretelling a heavy fall of rain or a prodigious hailstorm
or a blizzard, when snow covers the ploughed fields,
or somewhere opens the great jaws of harrowing war,
so Agamemnon kept groaning aloud, from the depths
of the heart in his breast, and the spirit within him
trembled. [10]
Whenever he looked towards the plain of Troy
he marvelled at the many fires burning before Ilium,
and at the noise of pipes and flutes and the clamour of
men.
But when he looked at the ships and army of the Achaeans
he would tear the hair from his head by the roots, praying
to [15]
Zeus who sits on high; and his noble heart groaned aloud.
And this seemed to him in his heart to be the best plan,
to go before all others to Nestor, the son of Neleus,
to see if he could with him devise some excellent counsel
that would keep disaster away from all the Danaans. [20]
So he rose, and put a tunic about his chest,
and bound fine sandals under his shining feet,
then slung round himself the hide of a great tawny lion,

blood-dark and reaching to his feet, and picked up his spear.

In the same way trembling gripped Menelaus, for with him too [25]
sleep would not sit on his eyelids; he was afraid that some harm
would befall the Argives, who for his sake had crossed a wide
expanse of water to Troy, determined on audacious war. First he covered his broad back with a leopard's dappled skin, then lifted up a bronze helmet and placed it [30]
on his head, and with his brawny hand picked up a spear. He set off to rouse his brother, who was the supreme ruler over all the Argives, and was honoured by the people like a god.
He found him by the stern of his ship, putting his fine armour
around his shoulders; and he was glad to see his brother come. [35]
Menelaus, master of the war-cry, was the first to speak:
'Brother, why are you arming like this? Are you sending one of your companions to spy on the Trojans? I am terribly afraid that no one will undertake this mission for you, to go out and spy on the enemy forces, alone in the [40]
immortal night; he will have to be a man of very bold heart.'

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him:
'Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, we have need of a plan, you and I,
a shrewd one, that will protect and save the Argives and their ships, since Zeus' mind has turned away from us. [45]
Clearly, he has heeded Hector's offerings more than ours; I have never seen, nor have I heard anyone tell of,

a single man devising as much destruction in one day as Hector, dear to Zeus, has inflicted on the sons of the Achaeans—

and on his own, for he is no dear son of a god or goddess.

[50]

I think that the things he has done will trouble the Argives for

many, many years, such is the harm he has dealt the Achaeans.

But go now, run swiftly along the row of ships and summon Ajax and Idomeneus; and I will go in search of glorious Nestor, and will urge him to rise, to see if he is willing [55] to go out and give orders to the devoted company of the sentries.

They are most likely to listen to him, for it is his son who is in charge of the sentries, he and Idomeneus' attendant

Meriones; to them especially we entrusted this duty.'

Then Menelaus, master of the war-cry, answered him:

[60]

'I will; but what do you mean by these orders and instructions?

Am I to remain there with them, waiting for you to come, or shall I run back to you when I have given them their orders?'

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed him:

'Stay there, in case we somehow miss one another [65] as we go, for there are many footpaths through the camp. Wherever you go, shout aloud to the men to stay awake, reminding each of his ancestry and his father's name, and addressing all with respect. And do not show a haughty spirit;

we too must toil, on our own account—for this, it seems, is

the [70]

heavy affliction that Zeus gave us when we were born.'

So he spoke, and sent his brother on his way with clear orders.

He himself set off to look for Nestor, shepherd of the people,

and found him beside his hut and his black ship, lying on his soft bed. Next to him lay his intricately worked armour, [75]

a shield and a pair of spears and a shining helmet, and by him too lay his bright-gleaming belt, which the old man wore round him when he armed for man-destroying war, leading his people, for he would not give in to painful old age.

Nestor lifted his head and raised himself on his elbow, [80] and addressed the son of Atreus with a question:

'Who are you, going alone about the camp and along the ships

through the dark night, when other mortals are asleep?

Are you looking for one of your mules, or some companion?

Speak; do not creep silently up on me. What do you want here?' [85]

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed him:

'Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans,

you should recognize Agamemnon, Atreus' son, the one whom Zeus has set amidst endless labours, beyond all men,

while there is breath in my breast and my knees can lift me. [90]

I am wandering like this because sweet sleep does not sit on my eyes, and the war and the Achaeans' troubles vex me,

and I am terribly afraid for the Danaans, and my heart will not stay still, and I am distraught, and my heart leaps

out of my breast, and my bright limbs shake beneath me.
[95]

If you are minded to act—since sleep does not visit you
either—

let us go out there to the sentries, to inspect them,
in case they are exhausted by toil and sleeplessness
and have fallen asleep, and have quite forgotten to keep
watch.

The enemy are encamped close by, and we do not know
[100]

what they intend; they might even attack us by night.'

Then Nestor the Gerenian horseman answered him:
'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men,
Zeus the counsellor will surely not fulfil all Hector's designs,
everything that he now hopes for; no, I believe that [105]
he will have more troubles to struggle with, if only Achilles
can turn his dear heart away from his destructive anger.
I shall certainly go with you; but let us also wake some
others,

Tydeus' son the renowned spearman, and Odysseus,
swift-footed Ajax and Meges, the stalwart son of Phyleus.
[110]

And someone should go in search of other men too,
and summon them: I mean godlike Ajax and lord
Idomeneus,

for their ships are furthest away on either side, and not
close by.

As for Menelaus, though I love and respect him, I must
quarrel

with him—and I will not hide it, even if you are angry with
me— [115]

because he is asleep, and has left you to toil on your own.
I could wish that he was working now among all the
chieftains,

entreating them, because an intolerable need has come upon us.'

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed him:

'Old man, at other times I might even urge you to blame him, [120]

since he is often remiss and unwilling to take his part in the toil;

not because he gives way to cowardice or thoughtlessness, but because he always looks to me and waits for my lead.

But this time he woke well before me, and came after me, and I sent him forward to summon the men you are asking about. [125]

Come then, let us go; we shall find them with the sentries, in front of the gates, which is where I told them to gather.'

Then Nestor the Gerenian horseman answered him:

'If that is so, none of the Argives will be angry with him or disregard him, when he gives orders and urges men on.' [130]

So he spoke, and put a tunic on over his chest, and bound fine sandals under his shining feet, and with a clasp fastened about himself a bright purple cloak, long and double folded, and it had a thick wool nap on it. He picked up his stout spear, pointed with sharp bronze, [135]

and set off along the ships of the bronze-shirted Achaeans. The first man whom the Gerenian horseman Nestor roused from sleep was Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in scheming; he called to him, and the sound flowed quickly around his mind,

and he came out of his hut and addressed them, saying: [140]

'Why are you wandering alone like this about the camp, along

the ships, through the immortal night? Has some great need arisen?’

Then Nestor the Gerenian horseman answered him:
‘Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many schemes,
do not be angry; a great grief has indeed crushed the Achaeans. [145]

Come, follow me, and we will wake others too, those who should rightly offer their advice as to whether we flee or fight.’

So he spoke, and Odysseus of many schemes went into his hut
and slung a finely worked shield over his shoulders, and followed them.

They went in search of Tydeus’ son Diomedes, and found him [150]

outside his hut, with his armour. Around him his companions
were sleeping, their heads on their shields; and their spears had been driven into the ground, upright on their butt-ends, and the bronze shone like the lightning of father Zeus. The hero

was asleep, and under him was spread the hide of a field ox, [155]

and a bright rug was pulled up underneath his head.

Nestor the Gerenian horseman stood close to wake him; stirring him with his foot, he rebuked him to his face:

‘Wake up, son of Tydeus! Why sleep all night? Have you not heard that the Trojans are camped on the rising plain, [160]

close by the ships, and only a narrow space now separates us?’

So he spoke, and Diomedes woke and sprang up very quickly,
and addressed Nestor, speaking with winged words:

'You are hard, old man, and you never rest from toil.
Are there not other sons of the Achaeans, younger men,
[165]
who might better go up and down the camp, rousing
each of the kings? Old man, you are impossible to control!'

Then in answer Nestor the Gerenian horseman
addressed him:
'All that you say, my friend, is according to due measure;
I do have blameless sons, and I have men, many of them,
[170]
any of whom could go up and down the camp and summon
people.

But a very great need has overwhelmed the Achaeans,
and matters now stand upon a razor's edge for all of us
Achaeans: either survival, or an exceedingly miserable
death.

So come; if you have any pity for me, go and rouse swift
Ajax [175]
and Meges, Phyleus' son—you are a younger man than I
am.'

So he spoke, and Diomedes slung over his shoulders
the hide
of a great tawny lion, reaching to his feet, and picked up his
spear;
he set off, and woke the two men, and brought them back
with him.

When they joined the sentries at the place where they
[180]
were gathered, they did not find their leaders asleep,
but they were all sitting there, armed and wide awake.
As dogs who keep restive watch over sheep in a fold,
having heard some ferocious wild beast coming down
the mountains and through the woods, and a great clamour
arises [185]
from the men and hounds pursuing it, and their sleep is

lost;

so sweet sleep was lost to the sentries' eyelids too as they kept watch through the uneasy night, since all the time they were facing the plain, waiting to hear the Trojans coming.

The old man was glad when he saw them, and rallied them [190]

with his speech, [and addressed them, speaking with winged words]:

'This is the way, dear children, to keep watch! Do not let sleep catch anyone unawares, in case we become a delight to our enemies.'

So he spoke, and strode over the ditch, and the other Argive kings followed him, all who had been called to the council. [195]

And with them went Meriones and Nestor's splendid son, since they had been invited by the others to join their debate.

When they had crossed over the deep-dug ditch they sat down

in an open space where the ground was clear of the dead men

who had fallen, the place where towering Hector had turned back [200]

from slaughtering the Argives, when night covered the earth.

Sitting there they began to converse with each other, and the first to speak was Nestor the Gerenian horseman:

'My friends, could not some man put his trust in his audacious spirit, to go among the great-spirited Trojans [205]

and see if he could capture some enemy straggler, or perhaps hear some rumour among the Trojans, and so find out their plans, whether they are bent on

remaining here by the ships, away from their homes, or if, having crushed the Achaeans, they will return to their city? [210]

He could find all this out, and then come back to us unscathed, and great would be his fame under the high sky, among all men, and he will receive a noble reward: all the chieftains who have command over ships will each and every one give him a black sheep, [215] a ewe with its suckling lamb, a possession without equal; and he will always be invited to their feasts and banquets.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still, but Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke out among them: 'Nestor, my heart and my proud spirit prompt me [220] to steal into the camp of our enemies the Trojans, who lie close by—but if some other man were to come with me, I would find more encouragement and confidence. When two go together, one can discern before the other what is best for them; and even if one on his own can see this,[225]

his mind has a shorter reach, and his resource is weaker.'

So he spoke, and many men wanted to go with Diomedes.

The two called Ajax, attendants of Ares, wanted to go, Meriones wanted to go, Nestor's son wanted fervently to go,

Atreus' son Menelaus, famed with the spear, wanted to go, [230]

and stalwart Odysseus wanted to steal in among the Trojan soldiery, for the heart in his breast was always daring.

Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke among them:

'Diomedes, son of Tydeus, delight of my heart, you shall choose whichever companion you want, the best [235]

of those who have come forward, for many are raging to go.

But do not, out of respect in your heart, leave the better man
and take the worse with you, yielding to your esteem for him
and looking to his ancestry—not even if he is more kingly.’

So he spoke, and he was terrified for fair-haired Menelaus. [240]

Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke out among them again:

‘If you are really telling me to choose a companion myself, how could I then forget godlike Odysseus, whose heart and proud spirit are ready beyond others’ for all kinds of labours, and Pallas Athena loves him. [245] If he comes with me, we could even pass through blazing fire and return safe together, because his mind has no equal.’

Then in turn much-enduring glorious Odysseus addressed him:

‘Son of Tydeus, do not over-praise me, or dwell on my faults; you are speaking among Argives, who surely know me. [250]

Come, let us go; night is almost at an end, and dawn is near, the stars’ course is advanced, and most of the night has gone; two-thirds of it are spent, and only the third part is left.’

So speaking they both put on their terrifying armour. Thrasymedes, steadfast in war, gave the son of Tydeus [255]

a two-edged sword—because he had left his own by the ship— and a shield, and placed on his head a helmet made of oxhide, without a horn or a crest, the kind that is called a skullcap, and it protects the heads of strong young men.

Meriones gave Odysseus a bow and a quiver and [260]
a sword, and placed on his head a helmet of leather,
carefully made: on the inside it was stretched tight
by many straps, and on the outside close-set pieces
of a shiny-toothed boar's white tusks ran this way and that,
very cunningly made; and inside it was fitted a felt cap.*
[265]

Autolycus had once stolen this from Amyntor, Ormenus'
son,
when he broke into his strongly built house in Eleon, and
he gave it to Amphidamas of Cythera to take to Scandea;
Amphidamas gave it to Molus as a mark of guest-
friendship,
and Molus gave it to his son Meriones for him to wear;
[270]
and now it was set for his protection on the head of
Odysseus.*

So when the two of them had put on their terrifying
armour
they set off, leaving all the chief men where they were.
And Pallas Athena sent them an omen on the right, a heron
close to their path; they could not see it with their eyes
[275]
through the dark night, but they heard its piercing cry.
Odysseus was glad of the bird-omen, and prayed to Athena:
'Hear me, child of Zeus who wears the aegis, you who
stand
by me in all my labours, and who do not forget me when I
am
stirred to action; now especially show me favour, Athena,
[280]
and grant that we may return to the ships in glory,
having done some great deed that will disquiet the Trojans.'

Next, Diomedes, master of the war-cry, prayed in his
turn:

‘Hear me too, daughter of Zeus, Atrytone; go with me
as once you went with my father, glorious Tydeus, [285]
into Thebes, when he went as an envoy from the
Achaeans. *

He had left the bronze-shirted Achaeans beside the Asopus,
and was taking beguiling words to the Cadmeians in
that place; but on his way back he devised terrible deeds,
with your help, bright goddess, and you readily stood
beside him. [290]

So now again be willing to stand beside me and protect me,
and I will in turn sacrifice to you a yearling heifer, broad of
brow,
not yet broken, one that no man has yet led under the
yoke;
I will sacrifice her to you, and I will cover her horns with
gold.’

So they spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard them.
[295]

And when they had prayed to great Zeus’ daughter,
they went on their way like two lions through the black
night,
amidst the carnage, the dead men, the war-gear, and the
black blood.

Nor indeed did Hector allow the proud Trojans to sleep,
but he called together all their chief men to an assembly,
[300]

all those who were leaders and captains of the Trojans;
and when he had summoned them he put forward a shrewd
plan:

‘Is there anyone who will undertake to perform a task for
me,
in return for a great reward? The recompense will be ample:
I will give him a chariot and two horses with powerful
necks, [305]

the best that there are beside the swift ships of the

Achaeans,
to whoever dares—and he will also win glory for himself—
to go up close to their swift-travelling ships, and to find out
whether the swift ships are being guarded as before,
or whether, having now been beaten down at our hands,
[310]

they are thinking among themselves of flight, and, worn out
by sheer weariness, do not care to watch through the
night.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still.
Now there was among the Trojans a son of the sacred
herald
Eumedes called Dolon,* who was rich in gold and bronze—
[315]

a man of most ugly appearance, but swift-footed;
Eumedes had five daughters, and he was the only son.
This man then spoke out to the Trojans and to Hector:
'Hector, my heart and my proud spirit urge me to draw
close
to the swift-travelling ships and find out about them. [320]
So come, hold up the staff there, and swear to me that you
will truly give me the horses and chariot, intricately worked
with bronze, that now carry the blameless son of Peleus,
and
I shall prove no useless spy for you, nor frustrate your
hopes:
I shall go straight through the camp, until I reach the ship
[325]
of Agamemnon, where their chieftains will doubtless
be deliberating in council, whether to flee or to fight.'

So he spoke, and Hector put his hand to the staff and
swore to him:
'Let Zeus himself, the deep-thundering husband of Hera,
witness
that no other Trojan shall ride behind those horses except

you, [330]

and you, I declare, will take your delight in them for ever.'

So he uttered an oath that would come to nothing; but it made

Dolon bold. At once he slung a curved bow over his shoulders,

and over everything threw the pelt of a grey wolf, and on his head a ferret-skin cap, and he took up a sharp spear [335]

and started off from the camp for the ships; but he was not destined to return from the ships and bring word to Hector.

He had left the mass of men and horses behind him and was

on his way, full of fierce intent, when Odysseus, sprung from Zeus,

saw him approaching, and addressed Diomedes: [340]

'Look, Diomedes! Here is a man coming from their camp;

I do not know whether he means to spy on our ships,

or intends to strip the armour from one of the dead men.

Let us first allow him to pass by us on his way to the plain, a little way, and after that we can rush out and capture him [345]

quickly; and if he chances to outrun us on swift feet,

keep forcing him towards the ships, away from their camp,

darting at him with your spear, so that he cannot escape to the city.'

So they spoke, and turned off the path and lay down among

the dead men; and Dolon, in his ignorance, quickly ran past. [350]

But when he was as far ahead as the width of a day's

mule-ploughing—and mules are better than oxen

at dragging the jointed plough through deep fallow land—

the pair ran after him; and he, hearing the sound, stopped still,

thinking in his heart that they were his Trojan companions
[355]

come to turn him back, because Hector had ordered him to return.

But when they were separated by a spear-cast or even less, he realized that they were enemies, and quickened his limbs

into swift flight; and they quickly roused themselves in pursuit.

As when two sharp-toothed hounds, skilled in the chase,
[360]

press in never-renting pursuit on a young deer or a hare, through a wooded land, and it runs screaming before them, so the son of Tydeus and Odysseus, sacker of cities, in never-renting pursuit cut Dolon off from his own people.

Now when in his flight towards the ships he was about to
[365]

fall in with the sentries, then indeed Athena cast fury into Tydeus' son, so that none of the bronze-shirted Achaeans

might boast that he hit Dolon first and Diomedes was second.

Threatening him with his spear, mighty Diomedes addressed him:

'Stop there, or my spear will find you; and then I do not think [370]

you will long escape sheer destruction at my hand.'

So he spoke, and let fly the spear, but deliberately missed the man;

the point of the polished spear passed over his right shoulder

and stuck fast in the ground. Dolon stood motionless, terrified

and stammering, the teeth in his mouth chattering, and he

was [375]

pale with fear. The two caught up with him, panting, and seized him by the arms, and he burst into tears and spoke: 'Take me alive, and I will ransom myself; in my house there is bronze and gold and elaborately worked iron, from which my father would gladly give you a boundless ransom, [380]

if he learnt that I was alive by the ships of the Achaeans.'

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed him:

'Do not despair, and do not let death cast your spirit down; but come, tell me this, and give me an exact account: where are you going all alone, away from your camp to the ships, [385]

through the dark night, when all other mortals are asleep? Do you mean to strip the armour from one of the dead men?

Or has Hector sent you out towards our hollow ships, to spy on everything there? Or did your own heart impel you?'

Then Dolon answered him, and his legs beneath him were trembling:[390]

'Hector has greatly deluded me, driving me out of my mind, promising to give me the single-hoofed horses of splendid Peleus' son, and his chariot, intricately worked with bronze; he has ordered me to go through the swift dark night and come close to our enemies' ships, and to find out [395] whether the swift ships are being guarded as before, or whether, having now been beaten down at our hands, they are thinking among themselves of flight, and, worn out by sheer weariness, do not care to watch through the night.'

At this Odysseus of many schemes smiled and addressed him: [400]

'These were indeed great rewards that your heart longed

for,
the horses of Aeacus' war-minded grandson; but they are
hard to master and to drive, at least for mortal men,
except for Achilles, whom an immortal mother bore.
But come, tell me this, and give me an exact account: when
you [405]
came here where did you leave Hector, shepherd of the
people?
Where is his armour of war lying, and where are his horses?
How are the other Trojans' pickets placed, and where do
they sleep?
What plans have they made among themselves—are they
resolved
to stay where they are, near the ships and far from their
city, or [410]
will they return to the city, having now beaten down the
Achaean?

Then in answer Dolon, son of Eumedes, addressed him:
'Very well, I will give you an exact account of all this:
Hector, in company with all those who are his advisors,
is holding a council beside the grave-mound of godlike
Ilus,* [415]
away from all the hubbub. As to the pickets you ask about,
hero, none has been appointed to defend or guard the
camp.

At every watch-fire there are Trojan men under orders to
stay wide awake and encourage each other to keep guard;
but as for our allies, who are summoned from many lands,
[420]
they are asleep, and leave it to the Trojans to keep watch,
not having their children and wives lying near at hand.'

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed
him:
'I see; but where are they sleeping—among the horse-
breaking

Trojans, or apart from them? Tell me clearly, so that I may know.' [425]

Then Dolon, the son of Eumedes, answered him:
'Very well, I will give you an exact account of all this:
by the sea are the Carians and Paeonians with their curved bows,
and the Leleges and the Caucones and the glorious Pelasgi;
the proud Mysians were assigned a place towards Thymbre,
with [430]
the Phrygians, fighters from horses, and the Maeonian
horse-marshals.*

But why are you asking me to describe all this in detail?
If you two are raging to steal into the Trojan soldiery, over there
at the furthest point, away from the rest, are the Thracians,
newly arrived, and with them is their king Rhesus, Eioneus'
son.* [435]

His horses are the finest and the biggest I have ever seen:
they are whiter than snow, and they run like the winds.
His chariot is finely decorated with gold and silver,
and he has brought with him massive armour of gold,
a wonder to look at; it is not right for mortal men [440]
to wear such things, but only for the immortal gods.
But take me now to your swift-travelling ships,
or else tie me up and leave me here, tightly bound,
and you can both go and test my account, to find out
if I have spoken to you according to the truth, or not.' [445]

Mighty Diomedes looked at him darkly, and addressed him:

'I warn you, Dolon; do not put thought of escape in your heart;
your news may be good, but you have fallen into our hands,
and if we now accept a ransom or let you go free,
you will surely return some day to the Achaeans' swift

ships, [450]

either to spy on us or to fight us, matching strength to strength.

But if you are beaten down by my hands and lose your life, you will never after this be an affliction to the Argives.'

So he spoke. Dolon was about to touch his chin in entreaty

with his brawny hand, but Diomedes lunged with his sword and [455]

drove it through the middle of his neck, severing both tendons;

and his head rolled in the dust while he was still speaking.

They stripped the ferret-skin cap from his head, and

his wolf's pelt and curved-back bow and long spear;

and glorious Odysseus held them aloft in his hand [460]

to Athena who gathers the spoils, and spoke in prayer:

'Be glad with these, goddess; of all the immortals on

Olympus

you will be the first we shall call on for help. Now help us again,

and bring us to the horses and sleeping-places of the Thracians.'

So he spoke, and lifted the spoils high above him and [465]

hung them on a tamarisk bush; above it he set a clear marker,

pulling together a bundle of reeds and sturdy tamarisk branches,

so that they should not miss it, returning through the swift dark night.

So the pair went onward through the war-gear and the black blood,

and as they went came quickly to the company of the Thracians. [470]

These were sleeping, worn out by weariness, and their fine

weapons were piled neatly beside them on the ground,
in three rows; and by each man stood a pair of horses.
Rhesus was sleeping in the midst, and next to him his swift
horses
were tethered with leather straps to the end of his chariot's
rail. [475]

Odysseus saw him first, and pointed him out to Diomedes:
'This must be the man, Diomedes, and these must be the
horses
that Dolon, the man whom we have killed, told us about.
So come, and bring your strong fury into play; this is no
time
to stand idle here with your weapons. Untie the horses—
[480]
or rather I will take care of the horses while you kill the
men.'

So he spoke, and grey-eyed Athena breathed fury into
Diomedes,
and he began to kill, laying about him with his sword; and a
shameful
groaning arose from the men he felled, and the ground
grew red
with blood. As a lion comes upon flocks which have no
herdsman, [485]
either sheep or goats, and it leaps on them with havoc in its
heart,
so the son of Tydeus kept at the men of Thrace, until he
had killed
twelve of them. Whenever Tydeus' son stood over a man
and
struck with his sword, Odysseus of many schemes would
come
from behind and seize him by the foot and drag him out of
the way— [490]
with this plan in his mind, that the fine-maned horses might

pass easily through the camp and not tremble in their hearts

as they trod on dead men; for they were still unused to them.

When the son of Tydeus came upon the Thracian king, he was the thirteenth whose sweet life he plundered as he lay [495]

there gasping; for by Athena's contrivance an evil dream—Diomedes, Oeneus' grandson—had that night stood over his head.*

Meanwhile steadfast Odysseus released the single-hoofed horses and tied them together with thongs, and drove them out of the camp, beating them with his bow, since he had not [500]

thought to pick up the shining whip from the finely worked chariot.

Then he whistled a signal to glorious Diomedes who, however,

hung back, thinking of the most audacious thing that he could do,

either to seize the chariot where the finely worked armour lay and

drag it off by its pole, or else to lift it aloft and carry it away; [505]

or whether he should rob even more Thracians of their lives.

As he was pondering this in his mind, Athena came and stood next to him, and addressed glorious Diomedes:

'Son of great-spirited Tydeus, think now about your return to

your hollow ships; you will not want to reach them in panic flight, [510]

for it may be that some other god will wake the Trojans.'

So she spoke, and he knew he had heard a goddess' voice,

and quickly mounted; and Odysseus struck the horses with his bow, and they flew towards the swift ships of the Achaeans.

But Apollo of the silver bow was not keeping blind watch: [515]
he could see Athena looking after the son of Tydeus, and, enraged with her, went down among the massed soldiery of the Trojans and roused Hippocoön, a counsellor of the Thracians and Rhesus' excellent cousin. He started up from sleep, and when he saw the empty place where the swift horses had stood, [520]
and the men gasping their last amidst the ghastly carnage, he groaned aloud and called on his dear companion by name.

An enormous noise of shouting arose from the Trojans as they flocked to the place; they were amazed at the terrible deeds that the men had done before returning to their hollow ships. [525]

When the pair reached the place where they had killed Hector's spy, Odysseus, loved by Zeus, reined in the swift horses, and Tydeus' son leapt to the ground and placed the bloody spoils

in Odysseus' hands, and then mounted once again. He whipped up the horses, and they flew willingly on [530] towards the hollow ships, for their hearts were set on it. The first to hear the hoof beats was Nestor, and he spoke: 'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives, my heart urges me to speak; will it turn out that I am deceived or right? [535]

The beat of swift-hoofed horses strikes on my ears; may this mean that Odysseus and mighty Diomedes are

driving single-hoofed horses here, straight from the Trojans! But I am terribly afraid in my heart that the Argives' chieftains have suffered some setback, and the Trojans are in full cry after them.'

He had not yet finished speaking when the pair arrived.
[540]

They jumped down to the ground, and the others gladly welcomed them with clasped right hands and cordial words; and the first to question them was Nestor the Gerenian horseman:

'Come now, Odysseus of many tales, great glory of the Achaeans, tell me how you two won these horses. Did you steal into the [545]

Trojan soldiery, or did some god meet you and give you them?

They are amazing, and look to me like the rays of the sun. I am always meeting Trojans in battle—I can claim that I do not hang back by the ships, aged warrior though I am—but I have never yet seen or clapped my eyes on such horses. [550]

No, I think some god met you and made you a present of them, for both of you are dear to Zeus who gathers the clouds, and to grey-eyed Athena, daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis.'

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed him:

'Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, [555] it would be easy for a god, if he wished it, to give us even finer horses than these, since the gods are far stronger than we are.

No, these horses that you ask about, old man, have just

come

here from Thrace. Courageous Diomedes killed their lord,
and twelve companions with him, all of them chieftains.

[560]

The thirteenth man was a scout we caught near the ships,
one whom Hector and the other splendid Trojans
had sent out to be a spy on us in our camp.'

So he spoke, and drove the single-hoofed horses across
the ditch,

laughing aloud, and the other Achaeans went happily with
him. [565]

When they reached the well-built hut of Tydeus' son
they tied the horses up with finely cut leather straps,
at the manger where Diomedes' own swift-footed
horses were standing and munching honey-sweet wheat.
And Odysseus laid the bloodstained spoils of Dolon in [570]
his ship's stern, until they could make an offering to
Athena.

Then they waded into the sea and began to wash off
the abundant sweat from their legs and necks and thighs.

When the waves of the sea had washed away the abundant
sweat from their skin, and their dear hearts were refreshed,
[575]

they stepped into polished baths and soaked themselves;
and having bathed and anointed themselves richly with oil,
the pair sat down to supper, and from the full mixing-bowl
they drew off honey-sweet wine and made an offering to
Athena.

BOOK ELEVEN

Now Dawn arose from her bed beside splendid Tithonus,
to bring light to immortals and to mortals, and Zeus
dispatched Strife to the swift ships of the Achaeans—
a goddess of pain, holding in her hands a portent of war.
She stood on Odysseus' deep-bellied black ship, which was
[5]

in the middle of the line, so that a shout could reach both
ends,
both to the hut of Ajax Telamon's son, and to Achilles' hut;
these had dragged up their balanced ships at the furthest
points,
trusting in their courage and in the strength of their hands.
Standing there the goddess gave out a great, terrifying
shout, [10]

in a piercing voice, and cast into the heart of each Achaean
great strength to take up arms and fight without ceasing;
and at once war became a sweeter thing to them than
a return in their hollow ships to their dear native land.

Then Atreus' son shouted to the Argives, ordering them
[15]

to arm; and among them he himself put on the shining
bronze.

First of all he fastened greaves around his shins,
splendid ones, fitted with silver ankle-pieces;
then over his chest he put on a corslet, one that Cinyras
had once given him as a mark of guest-friendship. [20]
Cinyras had heard in Cyprus the momentous news
that the Achaeans were to sail in their ships for Troy, and
for that reason sent him this gift, to find favour with the
king.

On it there were ten bands of dark-blue enamel,
and twelve bands of gold and twenty of tin; [25]
dark enamel snakes reached up towards the neck,
three on either side, like the rainbows that Cronus' son
imprints on a cloud as a portent for mortal men.
Around his shoulders he slung his sword; on it there were
rivets of gold, shining brightly, and the scabbard holding it
[30]

was silver, fitted with golden shoulder-straps.
He lifted up the body-covering shield, intricately worked
and beautiful and strong; round it ran ten bronze circles,
and on them there were twenty bosses of white tin,
and in the middle there was one of dark-blue enamel. [35]
On the centre was set like a circlet a grim-faced Gorgon,
staring hideously, and about her were Terror and Panic.
From this shield hung a silver shield-strap, and on it
writhed an enamel snake with three heads that twisted
this way and that but grew from a single neck. [40]
On his head he set a twin-ridged helmet with four plates
and a horsetail crest; and the plume nodded terribly above
him.

He chose for himself two stout spears, tipped with bronze
and sharp, and the gleam of their bronze reached
to the high sky. Athena and Hera thundered over him, [45]
to show honour to the king of Mycenae, rich in gold.

Then each man instructed his charioteer to
rein in his horses in good order there by the ditch,
while they themselves, fully armed, streamed over on foot;
and their shouts rose unquenchable in the early morning.
[50]

They formed up at the ditch well before the charioteers,
who arrived soon after them. Cronus' son aroused
a dreadful uproar among them, and from the clear air
rained down drops heavy with blood, because he
intended to hurl many mighty heads down to Hades. [55]

On their side the Trojans formed up on rising ground
in the plain, around huge Hector and blameless Polydamas
and Aeneas, who was honoured by the Trojan people like a
god,
and around the three sons of Antenor—Polybus, glorious
Agenor,
and the unmarried Acamas, who looked like the immortals.
[60]

Among the front ranks Hector carried a perfectly balanced
shield;
like the death-bringing star that appears rising out of the
clouds,*
shining brightly, and then sinks again into the shadowing
clouds,
so Hector would at one time appear among the front ranks,
and at another at the rear, urging them on. And all in
bronze [65]
he shone like the lightning of father Zeus who wears the
aegis.

Just like reapers who start from opposite ends of the
field
of a powerful man, and drive their path through
wheat or barley, and the handfuls fall thick and fast;
so the Trojans and Achaeans surged forward and began
[70]
to cut each other down, and neither side thought of fatal
flight;
the battle kept them head to head, and they stormed in
like wolves. Strife the bringer of groans was glad at the
sight,
for she alone of the gods attended their fighting;
the other gods were not present, but were sitting [75]
peacefully in their own halls, where each one's
fine palace had been built along Olympus' upland glens,
and they were all at odds with Cronus' son of the dark

clouds, because he wished to give glory to the Trojans.
But the father paid them no attention; he had slipped away
[80]

from the others, and was sitting alone, exulting in his glory,
looking out towards the Trojans' city and the Achaeans'
ships,

at the lightning-flash of bronze, at the slayers and the slain.

As long as it was morning, and the sacred day was
growing,

both side's missiles struck home, and the people kept
falling; [85]

but at the time when a woodcutter prepares his meal
in the mountain glens, because he has worn out his arms
with felling tall trees, and weariness comes over his spirit,
and the desire for pleasant food takes hold of his mind,
then the Danaans called out to their companions along the
lines, [90]

and by their courage broke through the enemy ranks.

Agamemnon

was the first to charge; he killed Bienor, shepherd of the
people—

first the man, and then his companion, Oïleus whipper of
horses,

who had leapt down from the chariot and stood facing him,
and as he came raging on Agamemnon pierced his
forehead [95]

with his sharp spear. The heavy bronze helmet could not
stop it,

and it passed through both it and the bone, and his brain
inside

was all turned into pulp; and the man was beaten down in
his rage.

Agamemnon, lord of men, left them both where they were,
their chests gleaming, for he had stripped them of their
tunics, [100]

and he pressed on, looking to kill and strip Isus and Antiphus,
two sons of Priam, one a bastard and one born in wedlock,
both standing in one chariot; the bastard was holding the reins,
while far-famed Antiphus stood beside him. Achilles had once
captured them on Ida's ridges as they tended their sheep
and [105]
bound them with pliant osiers, and set them free for a ransom;
but this time Atreus' son, wide-ruling Agamemnon, hit Isus
on the chest with his spear, above the nipple, and struck Antiphus
with his sword beside the ear, and threw him from the chariot.
He hastened to strip the pair of them of their fine armour,
[110]
recognizing them, for he had seen them before by the swift ships,
when swift-footed Achilles had brought them down from Ida.
As a lion easily crushes the bones of a swift hind's young fawns,
when it has come upon their lair and seized them in its mighty teeth,
and rips out their tender hearts;
[115]
and the mother, even if she chanced to be nearby, cannot help them,
because fearful trembling overcomes her limbs,
and at once she darts away through dense thickets and woodland,
in a sweating fervour to escape the powerful beast's attack;
so not one of the Trojans could keep death from these two,
[120]
but were themselves driven in panic before the Argives.

Next he caught Peisander and Hippolochus, steadfast in

battle,
the sons of war-minded Antimachus, who more than
anyone
had taken the gold of Alexander, a splendid gift, and would
never allow Helen to be returned to fair-haired Menelaus;
[125]

it was his two sons that lord Agamemnon caught, both in
one chariot, and both were trying to hold the swift horses,
but the shining reins had fallen from their hands, and
their horses were in confusion; Atreus' son rose like a
lion before them, and from the chariot they entreated him:
[130]

'Take us alive, Atreus' son, and you will receive a worthy
ransom:

many treasures lie stored in the house of Antimachus,
bronze and gold and elaborately worked iron, from which
our father would gladly give you a boundless ransom,
if he learnt that we were alive by the ships of the
Achaean.' [135]

So these two, weeping, addressed the king with
soft words, but they received a hard answer:

'If you are truly the sons of war-minded Antimachus,
he who once in the Trojans' assembly advised that
Menelaus,
who had come on an embassy with godlike Odysseus,*
should be [140]

killed there and then and not be allowed back to the
Achaean,
then now you will surely pay for your father's ugly act.'

So he spoke, and with a spear-cast to his chest knocked
Peisander
out of his chariot, and he lay flat on his back on the earth.
Hippolochus leapt down, but Agamemnon killed him on the
ground, [145]
slicing his arms away and cutting off his head with his

sword,
and sending the trunk rolling like a log away through the
soldiery.
He left them there, and sped on to where the fighting in the
ranks
was thickest, and with him went other well-greaved
Achaean.
Foot-soldiers killed foot-soldiers, and charioteers slew
charioteers, [150]
slashing at them with the bronze and driving them into
flight;
and on the plain a dust-cloud rose under the chariots,
kicked up
by the horses' thundering hoofs. Lord Agamemnon kept up
the pursuit, killing all the time and urging the Argives
forward.

As when destructive fire falls on a forest full of dry wood,
[155]
and a swirling wind carries it everywhere, and bushes are
uprooted and topple down, driven by the fire's onrush;
so the routed Trojans kept falling before Agamemnon,
son of Atreus, and many strong-necked horses
rattled their empty chariots along the battle-lines of war,
[160]
missing their blameless charioteers, who were now lying
on the earth, far more appealing to vultures than to their
wives.

Now Zeus withdrew Hector from the dust and flying
weapons,
from the slaughter of men and the blood and the uproar,
and Atreus' son pressed on, shouting urgently to the
Danaans. [165]
The Trojans kept pouring back, past the burial-mound of old
Ilus,*
son of Dardanus, across the mid-plain and past the wild fig

tree,*

straining to reach the city; and Atreus' son kept up his pursuit,
screaming, and his irresistible hands were spattered with gore.

When the Trojans reached the Scaean gates and the oak tree,* [170]

there they halted and stood, waiting for one another;
many were still fleeing in panic over the mid-plain, like cattle

stampeded by a lion that has come on them in the dead of night;

the rest have scattered, and one alone faces sheer death,
and

first the lion seizes the neck in its powerful jaws and breaks it, [175]

and then greedily gulps down its blood and all its entrails.

So lord Agamemnon, son of Atreus, pursued the Trojans,
all the time killing the hindmost; and they fled in panic.

Many men fell from their chariots, head-first or on to their backs,

at the hands of Atreus' son, such was the driving fury of his spear. [180]

But when he was about to pull up below the city and its steep wall

then indeed the father of gods and men came down
from the high sky and took his seat on the peaks of Ida of many springs; and he was holding a thunderbolt in his hands.

Quickly he sent Iris of the golden wings away with a message: [185]

'Away now, swift Iris, and give this message to Hector:

as long as he can see Agamemnon, shepherd of the people,
rampaging among the front-fighters and killing the ranks of men,

so long let him hold back, but order the rest of the people

to keep grappling with the enemy in the fierce crush of battle. [190]

But when Agamemnon is struck by a spear or hit by an arrow
and leaps back into his chariot, then I will promise him the strength
to kill, right up to when he reaches their well-benched ships,
and the sun goes down and sacred darkness comes on.'

So he spoke, and wind-footed swift Iris did not disobey him, [195]

but flew down from the heights of Ida to sacred Troy,
and she found glorious Hector, son of wise Priam,
standing behind his horses in his close-jointed chariot.
Swift-footed Iris stood next to him and addressed him:
'Hector, son of Priam, the equal of Zeus in scheming, [200]
father Zeus has sent me to bring you this message:
as long as you can see Agamemnon, shepherd of the people,
rampaging among the front-fighters and killing the ranks of men,
so long hold back from the fighting, but order the rest of the people
to keep grappling with the enemy in the fierce crush of battle. [205]

But when Agamemnon is struck by a spear or hit by an arrow and
leaps back into his chariot, then Zeus will promise you the strength
to kill, right up to when you reach their well-benched ships,
and the sun goes down and sacred darkness comes on.'

So swift-footed Iris spoke, and left him, and Hector [210]

leapt, fully armoured, from his chariot to the ground, and
hefting his sharp spears he ranged through the whole army,

urging the men to fight and rousing them for the grim conflict.

They rallied, and took their stand facing the Achaeans, while the Argives on their side strengthened their companies. [215]

So the battle-order was set, and they stood facing each other, and

Agamemnon was the first to leap out, eager to fight in front of all.

Tell me now, Muses, who have your homes on Olympus, who was the first to come out and oppose Agamemnon, whether of the Trojans themselves or of their far-famed allies. [220]

It was Iphidamas, the son of Antenor, a valiant and mighty man,

who was raised in rich-soiled Thrace, mother of flocks; his mother's father raised him in his house when he was a little child—Cisses, who fathered Theano of the lovely cheeks.

When he reached the time of manhood, when men long for glory, [225]

Cisses tried to keep him there, and offered him his daughter's hand;

but straight after his marriage he left the bridal room, hearing news

of the Achaeans' coming, and went to Troy with an escort of twelve curved ships. He had left these balanced ships at Percote,

and had continued on his journey on foot to Ilium, by himself. [220]

He it was who then came out to face Atreus' son Agamemnon.

When they had advanced to within close range of each other,

Atreus' son threw and missed, and his spear was deflected,

and Iphidamas stabbed him on the belt, below his corslet,
putting his weight behind the blow and trusting in his
brawny hand; [235]

but he could not pierce the gleaming belt, and long before
that

happened his point met the silver and was bent back like
lead.

Wide-ruling Agamemnon grasped the spear with his hand
and pulled it towards himself, raging like a lion, wrenching
it

from Iphidamas' hand, and struck him in the neck with his
sword [240]

and loosened his limbs. There he fell, and slept the sleep of
bronze,

pitiable man, helping his countrymen and far from his
wedded wife,

his bride, from whom he had no joy, though he had given
much:*

first he gave a hundred cattle, and promised a thousand
more,

goats and sheep mixed, from the countless flocks he
owned. [245]

And now Agamemnon, son of Atreus, stripped him of his
gear,

and went back with the fine armour through the Achaean
soldiery.

When Coön saw him—Coön, a man distinguished
among men,

who was the eldest son of Antenor—a powerful grief
for the death of his brother covered his eyes. He came up
[250]

unnoticed with his spear at glorious Agamemnon's side and
stabbed him on the middle of his forearm, below the elbow,
and the point of the shining spear passed clean through.

At this Agamemnon, lord of men, shuddered,

but even so he did not give up the battle and the fighting,
[255]

but sprang at Coön with his wind-hardened spear. At this
Coön, raging, seized the foot of his brother, his father's son,
and began to drag him away, calling out to all the leading
men;

but as he dragged him through the mass, Agamemnon
stabbed him below

his bossed shield with a bronze-tipped spear, and loosened
his limbs, [260]

and coming up to him cut his head off, over the dead
Iphidamas.

So there Antenor's sons filled up the measure of their lives
at the hands

of the king, Atreus's son, and went down into the house of
Hades.

Now the son of Atreus, so long as the blood welled up
warm

from his wound, went up and down the Trojan ranks, [265]

attacking them with spear and sword and great stones;

but when the wound began to dry, and the blood stopped
flowing,

then sharp pains began to assail the fury of Atreus' son.

As when a sharp spasm seizes a woman in labour, a
piercing

pang, sent by the Eilythiaie, goddesses of painful birth,
[270]

bringers of bitter suffering and daughters of Hera,

so sharp pains began to assail the fury of Atreus' son.

He leapt up into his chariot, and ordered the charioteer
to drive towards the hollow ships, for his heart was in
anguish.

He called out in a penetrating voice, shouting to the
Danaans: [275]

'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives,

now it is your task to keep the wearisome conflict away from our sea-traversing ships, since Zeus the counsellor has not allowed me to fight all day against the Trojans.'

So he spoke, and his charioteer whipped the fine-maned horses [280]
towards the hollow ships, and they flew willingly on;
their chests were covered in foam and spattered beneath with dust,
as they carried the wounded king away from the battle.

When Hector saw that Agamemnon was falling back, he called to the Trojans and Lycians with a far-carrying shout: [285]
'Trojans and Lycians, and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters, be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage! Their best man has gone, and Cronus' son Zeus has given me great glory. Now drive your single-hoofed horses straight at the mighty Danaans, and so win even greater glory!' [290]

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each man.
As when a huntsman sets on his white-toothed hounds in pursuit of some boar in the wilds, or a lion, so Hector, Priam's son, the equal of Ares, doom of mortals, set the great-spirited Trojans on in pursuit of the Achaeans. [295]

He himself strode with high confidence among the front-fighters,
and rushed into the fighting like a violent squall that sweeps down and churns the violet-coloured sea into swelling motion.

Who then was the first, and who the last, to be killed by Hector, Priam's son, when Zeus had granted him glory? [300]

They were Asaeus first, and Autonus and Opites,
Dolops, son of Clytius, and Opheltius and Agelaus,
Aesymnus and Orus and Hipponous, steadfast in battle.
These were leaders of the Danaans, and after them he
killed
a mass of men. As when the West Wind pounds clouds that
are [305]
blown up by the clearing South Wind, beating them with its
violent blast, and the waves swell hugely and roll onward,
and the spray is scattered by the veering wind's assault;
so the people were beaten down in their multitudes by
Hector.

Then dreadful deeds, impossible to bear, would have
been done, [310]
and indeed the Achaeans would have fled and fallen by
their ships,
had not Odysseus called out to Diomedes, son of Tydeus:
'Tydeus' son, what has made us forget our surging
courage?
Come here, my friend, and stand by me; we will surely be
blamed if Hector of the glittering helmet captures the
ships.' [315]

Then in answer mighty Diomedes addressed him:
'Certainly I will stay and hold off their attack; but our relief
will be short-lived, since it is clear that Zeus the cloud-
gatherer
wishes to give victory to the Trojans and not to us.'

So he spoke, and toppled Thymbraeus from his chariot
to the
ground, [320]
hitting him with a spear on the left nipple; and Odysseus
felled godlike Molion, who was lord Thymbraeus' attendant.
They left them there, having put an end to their fighting,
and rushed into the soldiery, spreading confusion, as when
two boars fall with fearless intent on a pack of hunting

hounds; [325]

like them they turned and charged, killing Trojans, and the Achaeans

were glad to catch their breath as they fled before glorious Hector.

Next they took a chariot with two men, chieftains of their people,

the two sons of Merops from Percote, who above all men was skilled in seercraft; he had tried to prevent his sons [330]

from going to man-destroying war, but they would not listen

to him, for the spectres of black death were leading them on.

It was these whom Diomedes, the spear-famed son of Tydeus,

robbed of their life and breath, and took away their glorious arms.

And Odysseus slew and stripped Hippodamus and Hypeirochus. [335]

Then the son of Cronus, looking down from Ida, pulled the conflict

taut, making it on equal terms; and both sides kept killing one another.

Tydeus' son hit and wounded Agastrophus, the hero son of Paeon,

on the hip-joint with his spear. His chariot and team were not at hand

for him to escape—he was mightily deluded in his mind, [340]

for his attendant was holding them some way apart, while he

stormed through the front-fighters on foot, until he lost his dear life.

Hector was quick to see this along the ranks, and ran at

them
screaming, and with him went companies of the Trojans.
Seeing Hector, Diomedes, master of the war-cry,
shuddered, [345]
and at once addressed Odysseus, who was close by:
'Look, here is a great affliction rolling in on us—towering
Hector;
come, let us stand firm, wait for him and then drive him
off.'

So he spoke, and poising his long-shadowing spear
threw it,
aiming at the head, and he did not miss, and hit Hector on
[350]
his helmet's crest; but bronze rebounded from bronze, and
did not reach the handsome flesh, stopped by the vizored
three-layered helmet which Phoebus Apollo had given him.
At once Hector ran a long way back, joining the soldiery,
then
dropped to his knees and paused, propping himself on the
ground [355]
with his brawny hand; and dark night covered his eyes.
But while the son of Tydeus was following his spear-cast
far through the front-fighters to where it had fallen on the
earth,
Hector recovered his breath, and leaping into his chariot
drove off into the mass of men, and avoided the black
death-spectre. [360]
Mighty Diomedes darted after him with his spear, and
addressed him:
'Dog, this time you have escaped death again, though
disaster
came very near you. Once again Phoebus Apollo has saved
you,
the god you doubtless pray to when you enter the thudding
of spears.'

Be sure that I shall make an end of you when I next meet you, [365]

if I too can discover a god somewhere to come to my aid. But now I shall go after the rest, and hope to overtake them.'

So he spoke, and began to strip the arms of Paeon's spear-famed son.

But Alexander, the husband of lovely-haired Helen, aimed his bow at the son of Tydeus, shepherd of the people, [370]

leaning against a pillar of the grave-mound that men had made for Ilus, Dardanus' son, elder of the people in time past.

Diomedes was stripping the bright-shining corslet from mighty Agastrophus' chest, and the shield from his shoulders

and his strong helmet, when Paris pulled against his bow's grip [375]

and shot; and the arrow did not fly vainly from his hand, but hit the flat part of Diomedes' right foot, and the arrow went clean through and stuck in the earth. Paris laughed happily

and leapt from his hiding-place and spoke, boasting:

'You are hit, and my arrow did not fly in vain! How I wish [380]

I had hit you in the base of your belly and taken your life away,

for then the Trojans would have had some relief from their misery,

they who shudder at you as bleating goats before a lion.'

Then mighty Diomedes answered him, in no way alarmed:

'You archer*—braggart, hair-curled dandy, ogler of girls! [385]

If you were to face me in a trial of strength, in full armour,

you would get no help from your bow and your showers of arrows;
and now you have but scratched the flat of my foot, and yet you boast.
I am no more troubled than if a woman or a careless child had hit me,
for the arrow of a cowardly, worthless man is a feeble thing.
[390]

Quite different is the sharp spear that I throw, which takes a man's life there and then, even if it only grazes him; his wife tears her cheeks in grief, his children are made orphans,
and he reddens the ground with his blood and rots away, and there are more vultures gathered round him than women.' [395]

So he spoke, and Odysseus the renowned spearman came near
and stood in front of him. Diomedes sat behind him, and pulled
the sharp arrow from his foot, and a painful spasm ran through his flesh.
He leapt up into his chariot, and ordered the charioteer to drive towards the hollow ships, for his heart was in anguish. [400]

Odysseus, the renowned spearman, was left on his own, and not one
of the Argives stayed with him, for fear had gripped them all.

Deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit:
'What is to become of me now? A great disgrace if I flee, in fear of their massed men; but even worse to be captured
[405]

alone, for Cronus' son has put the rest of the Danaans to flight.

But why does my dear heart debate with me in this way?

I know well that those who run from the battle are cowards,
while those who fight bravely in war must take their stand
unyieldingly, either to kill others or be killed themselves.’
[410]

While he was considering this in his mind and in his
heart,
the ranks of shield-bearing Trojans came up on him, and
penned
him in their midst—but they brought suffering on
themselves.

As when hounds and strong young men close eagerly
in on a boar, and it breaks out of a dense coppice, [415]
whetting its white fangs in its crooked jaws, and they
rush to surround it; the noise of gnashing teeth rises up,
but
they bravely stand their ground before it, terrible though it
is;

so the Trojans closed around Odysseus, dear to Zeus.
And first he wounded blameless Deïopites on the shoulder,
[420]

leaping forward and aiming high with his sharp spear,
and after them he cut down Thoön and Ennomus.
Next, when Chersidamas had jumped down from his
chariot,
he stabbed him with his spear in the groin, under his
bossed
shield; he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with his hand.
[425]

Odysseus left them there, and with his spear wounded
Charops, Hippiasus’ son, full brother of wealthy Socus.
Socus, a man like a god, ran up to protect him, and
standing very close to him addressed Odysseus:
‘Odysseus of many tales, insatiate of trickery and toil, [430]
today you will either boast over two sons of Hippiasus,
when you have killed two fine men and stripped their

armour,
or else you will lose your own life, struck down by my
spear.'

So speaking he lunged at Odysseus' perfectly balanced
shield,
and the massive spear passed through the shining shield,
[435]

and forced its way through his intricately worked corslet,
and tore the flesh right away from his flank; but Pallas
Athena

did not allow it to drive through into the hero's guts.
Odysseus realized that the spear had not hit a fatal place,
and giving ground he addressed Socus: 'Miserable man,
[440]

now sheer destruction is surely catching up with you!
You have indeed stopped me doing battle with the Trojans,
but I tell you here and now that death and its black spectre
will be with you on this day, when beaten down by my
spear you give
the glory to me and your shade to Hades, master of famous
horses.' [445]

So he spoke, and Socus turned and began to run away,
but
as he twisted round Odysseus planted his spear in his back,
between the shoulders, and he drove the point through his
chest,

and Socus fell with a thud. Glorious Odysseus boasted over
him:

'Socus, son of war-minded Hippasus, breaker of horses,
[450]

the end of death has come to you before you could escape
it.

Luckless man, neither your father nor your revered mother
will close your eyes in death, but flesh-eating vultures
will tear at you, flapping their fast-beating wings about you.

But if I die, the glorious Achaeans will bury me with due rites.' [455]

So he spoke, and began to pull war-minded Socus' massive spear out from his flesh and from his bossed shield. As he wrenched it out the blood spurted up, and his heart was distressed.

When the great-spirited Trojans saw Odysseus' blood, they called to each other down the ranks and made for him [460]

all together; and he gave ground, and shouted to his companions.

Three times he shouted in a voice as large as a man's head can hold,

and three times Menelaus, dear to Ares, heard his cry, and quickly spoke to Ajax, who was standing nearby:

'Ajax, son of Telamon, sprung from Zeus, ruler of the people, [465]

I can hear the shouts of stout-hearted Odysseus ringing round me,

and they sound as if the Trojans have cut him off in the harsh

conflict; they have isolated him and are pressing him hard.

Come, let us go through the soldiery; rescue is the best course.

I am afraid that left alone like this something may happen to him, [470]

brave though he is; and that will be a great loss to the Danaans.'

So he spoke and led the way, and the other, a godlike man, followed,

and they found Odysseus, dear to Zeus; and around him the Trojans were swarming like blood-red mountain jackals around a stricken horned stag that a man has shot with an [475]

arrow from his bowstring. The stag evades him on swift feet, as long as its blood is warm and its knees can lift it; but when the swift arrow overcomes it the flesh-eating jackals tear it apart on the mountains, in a dark wood; and then some divine power leads a lion there, a ravaging [480]

beast, and the jackals scatter in fright, and the lion eats the stag.

So the Trojans, many and courageous, crowded round war-minded Odysseus of the cunning wiles, but the hero kept the pitiless day from himself, lunging at them with his spear.

Then Ajax drew near, carrying his shield that was like a tower, and [485]

stood by him, and the Trojans scattered in fright, this way and that;

and then warlike Menelaus took him by the hand and led him away

from the mass of fighters, while his attendant drove up his chariot.

Next, Ajax sprang at the Trojans and killed Doryclus, a bastard son of Priam, and after that wounded Pandocus, [490]

and also wounded Lysandrus and Pyrasus and Pylartes.

As when a brimming river in winter spate, swollen by rain from Zeus, sweeps down from the mountains to the plain, and carries along with it dead oaks and pines in abundance, and flings a mass of driftwood out into the sea, [495]

so then glorious Ajax drove them in confusion over the plain,

cutting down both horses and men. As yet Hector knew nothing of this, since he was fighting on the battle's far left, by the banks of the river Scamander, where men's heads were falling thickest, and an unquenchable clamour was rising [500]

around huge Nestor and around warlike Idomeneus.
Among these Hector was fighting, causing terrible havoc
with spear and chariot-skill, crushing the ranks of young
fighters.
But even so the glorious Achaeans would not have given
ground,
had not Alexander, husband of Helen of the lovely hair,
[505]
checked the great deeds of Machaon, shepherd of the
people,
hitting him with a three-barbed arrow on his right shoulder.
At this the Achaeans, breathing fury, were greatly afraid
that
as the battle shifted towards the Trojans he might be
captured.
At once Idomeneus addressed glorious Nestor: [510]
'Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans,
come, mount your chariot and let Machaon mount beside
you,
and drive your single-hoofed horses with all speed to the
ships;
a healer who has the skill to cut out arrows and apply
soothing ointments is worth a great number of other men.'
[515]
So he spoke, and Nestor the Gerenian horseman did not
disobey him;
straightaway he mounted his own chariot, and Machaon,
son of the blameless healer Asclepius, got up beside him.
He lashed the horses, and they flew eagerly onward
towards the hollow ships, for that is where they wished to
be. [520]

Now Cebriones, standing beside Hector in his chariot,
saw that the Trojans were in confusion, and addressed him:
'Hector, while we two are engaged with the Danaans here
on the furthest flank of war and its hideous clamour, the

rest

of the Trojans are in wild confusion, both horses and men.

[525]

It is Telamon's son Ajax who is causing the rout; I know him well,

from the broad shield he wears across his shoulders. Let us too

direct our horses and chariot straight there, where especially

men in chariots and on foot are clashing in fierce strife, killing each other, and an unquenchable clamour goes up.'

[530]

So he spoke, and lashed the fine-maned horses with his loud whip; and they, hearing the whip's crack, carried the swift chariot at speed in among the Trojans and Achaeans, trampling dead men and shields alike. The axle beneath it and

the rails round the platform were splashed all over with the blood [535]

that was thrown up in showers by the horses' hoofs and by the wheel-tyres. Hector was impatient to enter the mass of men, to leap in and break through them; he caused dreadful confusion among the Danaans, and gave his spear little rest. Up and down the ranks of the fighters he went,

[540]

doing battle with spear and sword and huge stones, but kept away from engaging with Ajax, son of Telamon, [for Zeus was angry with him when he fought with a better man.]*

But now father Zeus, seated on high, aroused terror in Ajax: he stood

dumbfounded, and slung his shield of seven oxhides behind him, [545]

and looking keenly around him like a wild beast, turned in flight

towards his own men, moving slowly step by step and many times wheeling round. As when country people and their dogs drive a tawny lion away from the yard where they keep their cattle, and keeping watch all night will not allow it to take [550] a fat beast from among the cattle; it is desperate for meat, and keeps coming at them, but without success, for spears and burning bundles of sticks fly thick from bold hands against it, and terrify it for all its impatience, and at daybreak it goes away, grieved at heart. So then [555]

Ajax withdrew before the Trojans, grieved at heart, with deep reluctance; for he was greatly afraid for the Achaeans' ships.

As when a stubborn donkey, passing a cornfield, defies the boys driving it, and though many sticks have been broken on its sides

it goes into the field and causes havoc in its deep crop, and [560]

the boys beat it with sticks, but their strength is weak, and they

drive it out with difficulty, only when it has had its fill of food;

so then the high-hearted Trojans and their allies, assembled from many lands, kept attacking great Ajax, Telamon's son, thrusting at the centre of his shield with their polished spears. [565]

At one time Ajax would recollect his surging courage and wheel round, keeping the companies of horse-breaking Trojans at bay, and then again he would turn in flight.

So he prevented them all from marching on the swift ships, standing alone in battle-fury on the ground between Trojans [570]

and Achaeans. Spears were flung at him from bold hands; some, as they flew towards him, stuck in his great shield, and many, before they could reach his white body, came to rest in the ground between, yearning to taste his flesh.

When Eurypylus, the splendid son of Euaemon, saw that [575]

Ajax was being overwhelmed by dense showers of missiles, he went and stood beside him and let fly with his shining spear,

and hit Apisaon, son of Phausius, shepherd of the people, in the liver below his midriff, and quickly loosened his knees.

He leapt forward, and began to strip the armour from his shoulders; [580]

but when Alexander, who looked like a god, saw Eurypylus stripping the armour from Apisaon, he immediately drew his bow against him, and hit him with an arrow in his right thigh; and the shaft broke, and weighed his leg down. At once he withdrew into his companions' band, avoiding the [585]

death-spectre, and with a piercing cry shouted to the Danaans:

'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives, rally now and make a stand, and keep the pitiless day away from Ajax, who is overwhelmed by missiles, and I do not think he will escape war's hideous clamour. Come now, stand fast [590]

around huge Ajax, son of Telamon, and confront the enemy!'

So the wounded Eurypylus spoke, and they stood close beside him, leaning their shields against their shoulders and levelling their spears before them; Ajax came to meet them,

and turned and stood when he had reached his companions' band. [595]

So they fought on in the likeness of blazing fire. Meanwhile Neleus' mares, sweating, were carrying Nestor out of the battle, and with him Machaon, shepherd of the people.

Glorious swift-footed Achilles was aware of this and saw him;

he was standing on the stern of his deep-bellied ship, [600] watching the grim toil of war and the miserable rout.

At once he addressed his companion Patroclus, calling to him from the ship, and Patroclus heard from the hut and came out, looking like Ares; and this was to be the start of his downfall. Menoetius' stalwart son spoke first: [605]

'Why do you call me, Achilles? What need have you of me?'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:

'Glorious son of Menoetius, delight of my heart, now I think that the Achaeans will gather about my knees and entreat me, for an intolerable need has come upon them. [610]

But go now, Patroclus, dear to Zeus, and ask Nestor who this is that he is bringing wounded from the battle. From behind he looks in every way like Machaon, the son of Asclepius; but I did not see the man's eyes, since the horses passed me by as they bolted onward.' [615]

So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear companion, and set off at a run for the huts and ships of the Achaeans.

When the others reached the hut of Nestor, Neleus' son,

they got down from their chariot on to the earth that nourishes many,

and Eurymedon his attendant unyoked the old man's horses [620]

from the chariot. The two then dried the sweat from their

shirts,
standing in the wind beside the seashore, and then
went into the hut and took their seats on the chairs there.
Hecamede of the lovely hair prepared a brew for them, the
girl
whom the old man had won at Tenedos when Achilles
sacked it,* [625]
and she was the daughter of great-hearted Arsinous; the
Achaean
had picked her out for him because he was the best of all in
counsel.

First she pushed up a table before them, a beautiful
thing, well-polished and with dark-enamel feet, and on it
set a bronze bowl with an onion, as a side-dish for the
drink, [630]
and yellow honey and beside it bread made of sacred
barley,
and next to these a very beautiful cup,* which the old man
had brought
from his home; it was studded with golden rivets, and had
four handles; on each handle were two golden doves,
feeding,
one on either side; and underneath it rested on two feet.*
[635]

Other men would find it hard to raise the cup from the table
when it was full, but the old man Nestor could lift it easily.
In this cup the woman who looked like a goddess made
them

a brew of Pramnian wine, grating goat's cheese into it
with a bronze grater, and sprinkling white barley on top;
[640]

and when she had prepared the brew she invited them to
drink.

When they had drunk and driven away their parching thirst
and were engaging each other in pleasant conversation,
Patroclus, a man like a god, appeared standing at the door.

When the old man saw him he jumped up from his shining chair, [645]

took him by the hand, led him in, and told him to be seated.

But Patroclus refused, staying where he was, and addressed him:

‘No chair for me, Zeus-nurtured old man, nor will you persuade me;

he is easily offended and quick to anger, the man who sent me

to find out who the wounded man is that you are bringing back—

but I [650]

know him myself, for I recognize Machaon, shepherd of the people.

So now I shall go back on my errand and report to Achilles; you know well, Zeus-nurtured old man, how terrifying a man

he is, likely to find fault even with one who is blameless.’

Then in answer Nestor the Gerenian horseman addressed him: [655]

‘Why is Achilles now so touched with pity for the Achaeans’ sons,

all those who have been wounded by spears? He knows nothing

of the great grief that has arisen in the camp, now that the best men

are lying in their ships, wounded by thrown and stabbing weapons.

Mighty Diomedes, son of Tydeus, has been wounded by a spear, [660]

while spear-famed Odysseus and Agamemnon have been stabbed;

Eurypylus has been shot in the thigh by an arrow,

and just now I brought this other man out of the battle,

pierced by an arrow from the bowstring. Yet the brave Achilles
cares nothing for the Danaans, and feels no pity for them.
[665]

Is he waiting until our swift ships burn with destructive fire
on the seashore, despite all the efforts of the Argives,
and until we are killed one after another—since my strength
is no longer as it used to be when my limbs were supple?
I wish I was as young and healthy,* and my strength as
secure, [670]

as I was when a dispute arose between us and the Eleians*
over the matter of a cattle raid, and I killed Itymoneus,
the fine son of Hypeirochus, whose home was in Elis.* I was
driving off his herds in reprisal, and while he was defending
his cattle in the front-fighters a spear from my hand struck
him, [675]

and he fell dead, and his rustic people fled in panic.
We drove off a huge amount of booty from the plain:
fifty herds of oxen, and as many flocks of sheep, as many
herds of swine, and as many wandering flocks of goats,
and one hundred and fifty head of chestnut horses, [680]
all mares, many of them with their suckling foals.

All these we drove into Pylos, city of Neleus, into the city
by night; and Neleus was delighted in his heart, because
such success had come my way as a young man going to
war.

When dawn appeared heralds proclaimed in a clear voice
[685]

that all who had a debt owing in bright Elis should come
forward;

and those who were chieftains of the Pylians rounded up
and

shared out the booty, for the Epeians owed a debt to many,
since we in Pylos had become enfeebled and few in
number:

in the years before this Heracles, that violent being, had

attacked [690]

and weakened us, and all our best men had been killed.

We sons of blameless Neleus had been twelve in all,

but of these I alone was left, and all the others had

perished.

As a result of this the bronze-shirted Epeians grew arrogant,
and

in their reckless machinations committed acts of violence
against us. [695]

Out of the booty aged Neleus chose a herd of cattle and a
great flock

of sheep, selecting three hundred, and their shepherds with
them,

because he had a huge debt owing to him in bright Elis:

four prize-winning horses, together with their chariot, had
been

on their way to the games, intending to race for the prize
[700]

of a tripod; but Augeias,* lord of men, had kept them in his
house

and had sent the charioteer away, grieving for his horses.

The old man was enraged at these words and deeds, and
so chose

for himself a huge amount of booty. The rest he gave to the
people

to share out, so that no one to his knowledge should leave
without [705]

a fair share. So we were busy with all this, and making
offerings

to the gods around the city, and on the third day the
Epeians

arrived all together, many men and single-hoofed horses
in great haste, and with them the two Moliones in armour,
still boys, with no experience yet of surging courage. [710]

Now there is a city called Thryoessa, set on a steep hill,
far off beside the Alpheus, on the borders of sandy Pylos,

and to this the Epeians laid siege, raging to destroy it utterly.

But when they had scoured the whole plain, Athena came to us

by night, in haste from Olympus, telling us to arm ourselves, [715]

and she assembled an army in Pylos—men by no means unwilling,

but eagerly impatient to go to war. Now Neleus would not allow me to wear armour, and he hid my horses from me,

because he said that I knew nothing as yet of war's work.

But all the same I surpassed even our own chariot-fighters, [720]

though I was on foot; such was the way Athena framed the battle.

There is a river called Minyeïus* that empties into the sea near Arene,* and there we Pylian chariot-fighters waited for the bright dawn, and the foot-soldiers' bands came streaming up.

Hastily we armed ourselves in our gear, and set out and [725]

came at midday to the sacred waters of Alpheus.

There we sacrificed fine victims to all-powerful Zeus,

and a bull to Alpheus, and a bull to Poseidon,

but to grey-eyed Athena a cow from the herd; and

then we took our supper in ranks throughout the camp,

[730]

and lay down to sleep, each man in his armour,

by the banks of the river. Now the great-spirited Epeians

were camped around the city, raging to destroy it utterly,

but before they could, Ares' mighty handiwork was revealed

to them: when the sun rose bright above the earth we prayed [735]

to Zeus and to Athena and joined together in battle.

When the conflict between Pylians and Epeians began, I

was

the first to kill a man, and I seized his single-hoofed horses

—

he was Mulius the spearman, the son-in-law of Augeias,
whose eldest daughter he had married, fair-haired

Agamede, [740]

and she knew all the drugs that the wide earth nourishes.

As he charged at me I hit him with my bronze-tipped spear,
and he fell in the dust; then I leapt into his chariot and took
my place among the front-fighters. The great-spirited

Epeians

fled in panic this way and that when they saw the leader
[745]

of their chariot-fighters fall, a man who excelled in battle.

But I sprang at them in the likeness of a black tempest,
and I captured fifty chariots, and in each of them two men
fastened their teeth on the earth, beaten down by my
spear.

And indeed I would have cut down the two Moliones, the
sons of [750]

Actor, had not their father, the wide-ruling earthshaker,
carried

them safe from the battle, covering them with a dense
mist.*

So there Zeus granted a great victory to the Pylians,

for we went after them over the wide rolling plain,

killing the men and gathering up their fine armour, [755]

until we brought our chariots to Buprasium, rich in wheat,
and to the Olenian rock and the place that is called the hill
of Alesium;* and there Athena turned our people back.

There I killed my last man and left him there, and the
Achaeans

drove their swift horses back from Buprasium to Pylos,
[760]

and all praised Zeus among gods and Neleus among men.

Such a man I was among men—if I ever was. But Achilles is

the only one who will benefit from his valour—though I think
he will weep much when it is too late and the people have died.

My dear friend, I will tell you the advice that Menoetius gave you [765]

on the day that he sent you from Phthia to join Agamemnon;

we two were in the house, I and glorious Odysseus, and we easily heard all the advice he gave you in his halls.

We had come to the well-appointed palace of Peleus while we

were assembling an army throughout Achaea that nourishes many. [770]

And we found the hero Menoetius there in the house, and you,

and with you Achilles. The aged horse-driver Peleus was burning

an ox's fat-wrapped thigh-bones for Zeus who delights in the thunder,

in an enclosed space of his court; he was holding a golden cup,

and pouring gleaming wine over the burning offerings. [775]

You two were occupied with the ox-meat, when we appeared,

standing in the doorway; Achilles jumped up, amazed, and taking us by the hand led us in and invited us to sit, and put before us the food that is right for strangers to receive.

When we had satisfied our desire for food and drink, [780] I spoke first, saying that both of you should come with us. You readily agreed, and your fathers both gave you much advice:

the old man Peleus exhorted his son Achilles always to be the best, and to stand out above others;

but this was the advice that Actor's son Menoetius gave you: [785]

"My son, Achilles is more distinguished than you in birth, but you are the older. He is far stronger than you, but it is for you to speak shrewdly to him, and give him advice and guidance; and he will obey you, to his benefit." So the old man advised you, but you have forgotten. Even now [790]

you could speak like this to war-minded Achilles, and you might

win him over; who knows if you might with a god's help arouse

his spirit by persuasion? A friend's persuasion is a good thing.

But if in his heart he is trying to avoid some divine revelation,

and his revered mother has brought him a message from Zeus, [795]

let him at least send you out, and the rest of the Myrmidon people

with you, and perhaps you will prove to be the Danaans' saving light.

Let him give you his fine armour to wear into battle, and perhaps the Trojans will mistake you for him and hold back from the battle, and the Achaeans' warlike sons will breathe again, [800]

worn down though they are; there is little breathing-space in war.

Being unwearied, you might easily drive men who are exhausted

in the battle's uproar back to the city from the ships and huts.'

So he spoke, and roused the spirit in the other's breast, and

he set off running past the ships towards Achilles, grandson

[805]

of Aeacus. But when as he ran Patroclus reached the ships of glorious Odysseus, where they held their assembly and public tribunal, and where they had built altars to the gods, there he was met by Eurypylus, son of Euaemon, a man sprung from Zeus, limping out of the battle, [810] wounded in the thigh by an arrow. Sweat was streaming from his shoulders and head, and from his painful wound black blood was oozing; but even so his mind was unshaken.

Seeing this the stalwart son of Menoetius took pity on him, and, groaning, he addressed him with winged words: [815] 'Oh you poor wretches, leaders and rulers of the Danaans—so after all it seems you will glut the swift dogs in Troy with your white fat, far from your friends and native land! But come, tell me, hero Eurypylus, sprung from Zeus, is there any way that the Achaeans can restrain huge Hector, [820]

or are they now to perish, beaten down by his spear?

' Then in turn the wounded Eurypylus addressed him: 'Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, there can be no more defence for the Achaeans; they will fall beside their black ships. All those who were before the best men among us now [825]

lie in their ships, wounded by thrown or stabbing weapons at the Trojans' hands, whose strength is always increasing. But come, help me, and take me to my black ship; cut the arrow from my thigh and wash away the dark blood with warm water, and spread soothing ointments over it— [830]

those excellent medicines that they say you learnt from Achilles,

who was taught by Cheiron, most just of the Centaurs.*

We do have healers, Podaleirius and Machaon, but I think that one of them is lying in his hut nursing a wound,

himself in need of a blameless healer, while the other [835]
is out on the plain, facing the Trojans and ferocious Ares.'

Then in turn the stalwart son of Menoetius addressed
him:

'How can these things be? What are we to do, hero
Eurypylus?

I am on my way to deliver to war-minded Achilles the words
that Gerenian Nestor, protector of the Achaeans, spoke;

[840]

but even so I shall not abandon you, exhausted as you are.'

So he spoke, and gripping the people's shepherd round
the waist

he led him to his hut. An attendant saw them and spread
oxhides

on the ground, and there Patroclus laid him down and with
a knife

cut the sharp, piercing arrow out of his thigh, and with
warm water [845]

washed the dark blood away. Then with his hands he
crushed a bitter

root, a killer of pain, and applied it, and wholly relieved his
agony;

and the wound began to dry, and the blood stopped
flowing.

BOOK TWELVE

So Menoetius' stalwart son attended to the wounded Eurypylus in the huts. Meanwhile the Argives and Trojans fought on in massed conflict, and it seemed that the Danaans' ditch would no longer hold out, nor the wide wall behind it. They had built this to shelter their ships, and had driven the ditch [5] alongside it, to protect their swift ships and the vast booty within its bounds; but they had not offered splendid hecatombs to the gods, and it was built without the immortal gods' sanction, and therefore did not remain standing for long. As long as Hector lived, and Achilles kept his anger alive, [10] and the city of Priam the king remained unsacked, so long the great wall of the Achaeans also endured; but when all the best men of the Trojans were dead, and many of the Argives had been killed, though some were left, and in the tenth year the city of Priam had been sacked, and [15] the Argives had sailed in their ships to their dear native land, then indeed Poseidon and Apollo devised a plan to sweep the wall away, channelling the fury of rivers on to it, all those that flow from the mountain range of Ida to the sea: Rhesus and Heptaporus and Caresus and Rhodius, [20] Granicus and Aesepus, and bright Scamander and Simoeis, [*](#)[_](#)

where many oxhide shields and helmets and a generation of the half-divine had fallen in the dust. Phoebus Apollo diverted all these rivers' mouths to disgorge in the same place,

and for nine days he flung their waters at the wall; and Zeus rained [25]

without ceasing, to sweep the wall more rapidly out to sea. The earthshaker, holding his trident in his hands, himself took the lead, and carried away on his waves all the footings

of logs and rocks which the Achaeans had laboured to lay, and levelled the beach beside the strong-flowing Hellespont; [30]

and when he had swept the wall away he covered the great shore

again with sand, and diverted the rivers back to stream in the channels where their lovely-flowing water had run before.*

This is what Poseidon and Apollo would do in the future; but now war and its clamour were blazing around the [35] well-built wall, and the timbers of its towers reverberated as missiles struck it. The Argives, subdued by Zeus' lash, were penned in and confined next to their hollow ships, terrified by Hector, the ruthless deviser of panic rout. He, as before, was fighting in the likeness of a whirlwind; [40]

as when a boar or a lion is surrounded by hounds and huntsmen and twists about, exulting in its strength, while they form themselves into a close-knit wall and confront it, and hurl their spears thick and fast from their hands; but its superb heart is not daunted [45] or driven away in fear, and it is its courage that kills it; again and again it wheels about, testing the ranks of men, and wherever it charges the ranks of men retreat. So Hector went wheeling about among the soldiery,

urging his companions to cross the ditch; but not even [50]
his swift-footed horses would attempt it for him, but stood
whinnying loudly at its very edge: the wide ditch
terrified them, and it was not easy to jump or to
cross, since its banks along the whole length
were overhanging, and at the top it was planted [55]
with great sharp stakes set close together, fixed there
by the sons of the Achaeans as a defence against the
enemy.

No horse drawing a well-wheeled chariot could easily
get over it, and so the Trojans were thinking to try on foot.
Then Polydamas stood next to daring Hector, and spoke:
[60]

‘Hector, and all you leaders of Trojans and allies,
it is madness to try driving our swift horses over the ditch.
It is extremely hard to cross; there are sharp stakes set
upright in it, and behind them is the Achaeans’ wall.

And there is no room for chariot-fighters to dismount there
[65]

and fight; it is a narrow place, and I think we shall come to
grief.

If high-thundering Zeus in his hatred for them means to
destroy them utterly, and is intent on helping the Trojans,
I for my part would wish this to happen here and now, that
the Achaeans should die here far from Argos, their names
forgotten; [70]

but if they should rally and make a counter-attack from the
ships,

and we become encumbered in the ditch that they have
dug,

I do not think that even one man would then get back
to the city with the news, once the Achaeans have turned
to face us. So come, let us all do what I propose: [75]

let our attendants hold the horses back by the ditch,
and let us arm ourselves in our gear as foot-soldiers
and all accompany Hector in a body; the Achaeans will not

resist us, if indeed they are caught fast in the snares of death.'

So Polydamas spoke, and his prudent advice pleased Hector, [80]

and at once he leapt, fully armed, from his chariot to the ground.

Nor did the other Trojans stay massed together in their chariots,

but when they saw glorious Hector they all jumped down.

Each man then instructed his own charioteer

to hold his horses in good order, there by the ditch, [85]

while they separated and formed themselves up, and,

marshalled into five sections, marched off behind their leaders.

Those who went forward with Hector and blameless Polydamas

were the best and the most numerous, raging beyond the rest

to break through the wall and fight by the hollow ships; [90]

Cebriones made a third with these—Hector had left behind another man, weaker than Cebriones, with his chariot.

Paris led the second company, with Alcathous and Agenor; Helenus and godlike Deïphobus, two sons of Priam,

were in charge of the third, and with them went the hero Asius— [95]

Asius, son of Hyrtacus, whom huge gleaming horses

had brought from Arisbe, which is near the river Selleïs.*

The fourth company was led by the valiant son of Anchises, Aeneas, and with him were the two sons of Antenor,

Archelochus and Acamas, well skilled in all battle's arts.

[100]

The commander of the far-famed allies was Sarpedon, and

he chose Glaucus and warlike Asteropaeus to go with him,

for they seemed to him to be without doubt the best of

all men, after himself; but he stood out above everyone.

When they had formed up, oxhide shields overlapping,
[105]
they eagerly made straight for the Danaans, thinking that
no one
could now resist them, and that they would fall on the black
ships.

The rest of the Trojans and their far-famed allies
followed the advice given by excellent Polydamas;
but Asius, son of Hyrtacus, captain of men, was unwilling
[110]
to leave his horses there with his attendant charioteer,
and drove up close to the swift ships, chariot and all,
fool that he was; he would not escape death's evil spectres
and make his way back from the ships to windswept Troy,
taking delight in his horses and his chariot. Before [115]
he could, his accursed destiny overwhelmed him, in the
spear of Idomeneus, the splendid son of Deucalion.*
Asius charged towards the left of the ships, where the
Achaeans
were returning with their horses and chariots from the
plain;
here he drove his horses and chariot across, and at the
gates [120]
he did not find the doors shut, nor the long crossbar in
place,
since men were keeping them wide open, hoping to save
any of their companions fleeing from the battle to the
ships.
Asius aimed straight with his chariot for this point, and his
men
followed with shrill screams, thinking that the Achaeans
[125]
could resist no longer, but would fall beside their black
ships—
fools, for in the gateway they found two of the best

fighters,
the high-hearted sons of Lapith spear-fighters;
one was mighty Polypoetes, the son of Peirithous, and
the other was Leonteus, the equal of Ares, doom of mortals.
[130]

Now these two took their stand in front of the high
gateway,
looking like high-crested oak trees on the mountains
that day after day stand up to wind and rain,
securely fixed there by their great long roots;
so these two, trusting in the strength of their hands, [135]
stood up to the charge of huge Asius, and did not take
flight.

The Trojans, with a mighty shout, made straight for
the well-built wall, holding up their shields of dried oxhide,
grouped around lord Asius and Iamenus and Orestes,
Adamas, the son of Asius, and Thoön and Oenomaus. [140]
For a time the Lapiths remained behind the wall, trying to
rouse the well-greaved Achaeans to fight in the ships'
defence;

but when they saw that the Trojans were making a rush at
the wall, while the Danaans gave rise to shouting and
panic,
they charged out and began to fight in front of the
gateway, [145]

looking like two wild boars on the mountains that confront
a noisy rabble of men and dogs coming at them; with
slanting forays they smash the underbrush about them,
ripping it up by the roots, and the noise of their clashing
teeth

rises up, until some man with a spear-cast robs them of
their lives. [150]

So the shining bronze clashed on these two men's chests,
battered by enemy missiles, so fiercely did they fight,
trusting in the men above them and in their own strength.
Those above kept hurling stones from the well-built

towers, in defence of themselves and their huts and their
[155]

swift-travelling ships; and these fell to the ground like
flakes of

snow that a fierce blizzard, driving the dark clouds onwards,
heaps up in drifts on the earth that nourishes many;

just so the missiles streamed from the hands of Achaeans
and Trojans alike, and helmets and bossed shields [160]

rang harshly, as rocks huge as millstones struck them.

Then indeed Asius, son of Hyrtacus, groaned aloud,
and striking both thighs spoke out in impotent rage:

‘Father Zeus, so you too have turned out to be a complete
and utter liar! I did not think that the Achaean heroes [165]

would withstand our fury and our irresistible hands;

but they are like flickering-bodied wasps or bees

that have made their habitation by a rocky road, and

will not abandon their hollow house, but face the men

who are tracking them, and fight to defend their children.

[170]

Just so these men, though they are only two, will not
fall back from the gates until they kill or are killed.’

So he spoke, but his speech did not persuade the mind
of Zeus,

whose heart wished rather to give the glory to Hector.

Now other men were fighting about other gates, but it
would [175]

be hard for me to describe this in full, as if I were a god:

everywhere around the wall of stone there arose awesome
fire, and the Argives, for all their exhaustion, were

compelled

to keep fighting for their ships; and all the gods who
supported

the Danaans in battle were grieved in their hearts. [180]

But at this point the two Lapiths rushed into the war
and

conflict, and the son of Peirithous, mighty Polypoetes,
hit Damasus with his spear, through his bronze-cheeked
helmet;

the brazen helmet could not keep it out, and the bronze
point passed clean through and smashed the bone, and his
brain [185]

inside was all turned to pulp; so he crushed the man in his
frenzied charge, and after this he killed Pylon and Ormenus.

Leonteus, a shoot of Ares, hit Hippomachus, son of
Antilochus, with a spear-cast that went through his belt.

Next he drew his sharp sword from its scabbard and [190]
darting through the soldiery first struck down Antiphates
from close quarters, who sprawled on his back on the
ground.

Then he brought down Menon and Iamenus and Orestes,
all of them, one after another, on to the earth that
nourishes many.

While they were stripping the shining armour from
these men, [195]

the young men who accompanied Hector and Polydamas,
who were the best and most numerous warriors, and were
raging

more than the rest to break through the wall and set the
ships ablaze,

were still standing along the ditch, uncertain what they
should do;

for though they were raging to cross it a bird-omen had
appeared [200]

to them, an eagle, skirting the army and flying high from
right to left,

and carrying in its talons the portent of a blood-red snake,
still alive and struggling; this had not forgotten its battle-
lust,

but, twisting backwards, bit its captor on the breast beside
its neck, and the bird, smarting with the pain, let it fall

[205]

to the earth, dropping it in the midst of the soldiery,
and with a scream flew away on the gusts of the wind.
The Trojans shuddered when they saw the writhing snake
lying among them, a sign from Zeus who wears the aegis.
Then indeed Polydamas stood beside bold Hector and
spoke: [210]

‘Hector, it seems you are always rebuking me in
assemblies,
though I give you good advice; it is of course not fitting
for one of the people to speak out against you, in council
or in war, but we must always promote your authority.
Now, however, I shall speak publicly as seems to me best.

[215]

Let us not press on to fight against the Danaans over their
ships;

I will tell you how I think it will end, if indeed it was for
the Trojans that this omen came as they raged to cross the
ditch—

an eagle, skirting the host and flying high from right to left,
and carrying in its talons the portent of a blood-red snake,

[220]

still alive; and then it let it fall before reaching its dear
home,

and did not succeed in carrying it off to give to its children.
So we, even if with our mighty strength we break down the
Achaean’s gates and wall, and the Achaeans give ground,
we shall not return from the ships by the same way in good
order, [225]

since we shall leave many Trojans behind, whom the
Achaeans,

as they defend their ships, will cut down with the bronze.
This is how a prophet would interpret this sign, one whom
the people
trusted, and who had sure knowledge of portents in his
heart.’

Then Hector of the glittering helmet looked at him
darkly,
and said: [230]
'Polydamas, what you advise does not now please me; you
know
that you could have thought of some better speech than
this.

But if you are serious in giving this public advice,
then the gods themselves must have destroyed your wits.
You say I should forget the plans of loud-thundering Zeus,
[235]

the promises that he gave me, and his confirming nod, and
you presume to tell me to put my trust in long-winged
birds,

for which I have not the slightest regard or concern,
whether they fly to the right, towards the dawn and the
sun,

or fly to the left, and towards the murky darkness. [240]

No, let us put our trust in the plans of great Zeus,
who holds sway over all mortals and immortals. There is
one omen that is best of all—to fight for one's fatherland.
Why should you be so afraid of war and conflict?

Even if all the rest of us are killed beside the ships [245]
of the Argives, you need have no fear of dying,
since your heart is not the kind to fight or to face the
enemy.

However, if you do hold back from the slaughter, or
persuade

some other man with your words to turn from the conflict,
you will instantly lose your life, struck down by my spear.'
[250]

So he spoke, and led them on, and the others followed
him

with an astonishing clamour; and Zeus who delights in the
thunder raised a storm-wind from the mountains of Ida

which blew dust straight against the ships, bewildering the Achaeans' minds but giving glory to the Trojans and Hector. [255]

Trusting in signs from Zeus and in their own strength, they kept trying to breach the great wall of the Achaeans, striving to

tear out the towers' abutments and to pull down its battlements,

and to lever out the jutting buttresses that the Achaeans had first sunk in the ground to be supports for the towers. [260]

By uprooting these they hoped to breach the Achaeans' wall,

but the Danaans would not give way; closing the gaps in the battlements with oxhide shields they kept throwing missiles

from behind them at the enemy as they advanced up to the wall.

The two called Ajax were ranging everywhere on the towers, [265]

all the time giving orders and stirring up the Achaeans' fury,

addressing one man with soft words, and rebuking another with

hard ones, if they saw anyone holding far back from fighting:

'Argive friends—exceptional warriors, or mediocre ones, or those who are weaker, since men are by no means [270] all equal in war—now there is work for everyone to do.

But of course you know this for yourselves; let no one turn back to the ships now that you have heard the call for battle,

but press forward and encourage one another, in the hope that Olympian Zeus who sends the lightning will grant us to [275]

fend off the enemy's assault and drive them back to the city.'

So they, with cheering shouts, roused the Achaeans for battle.

As the flakes of snow that fall thick and fast
 on a day in winter, when Zeus the counsellor begins
 to send the snow, revealing his shafts to men— [280]
 he lulls the winds, and keeps the snow falling until
 he has covered high mountain peaks and jutting crags,
 the fields of clover and the rich tillage of men,
 and it settles thickly on the grey sea's bays and beaches,
 and melts on the waves as they break on the shore;
 everything [285]
 is blanketed from above, when Zeus' heavy snowstorm falls
 —

so from both sides the stones flew thick and fast,
 hurled both at the Trojans and by them at the Achaeans,
 without ceasing; and over the whole wall the din rose up.

Even so the Trojans and illustrious Hector would never
 [290]

have broken through the wall's gates and their long
 crossbar,
 had not Zeus the counsellor roused his own son Sarpedon
 against the Argives, like a lion against crook-horned cattle.

At once he held before him his perfectly balanced shield,
 a fine work of beaten bronze, which a bronze-smith had
 [295]

hammered out, and had stitched inside many layers of
 hide,

attached with golden fastenings all the way around its rim.
 Holding this before him, and poising his two spears,
 Sarpedon set out like a mountain-nurtured lion that has
 been

a long time without meat, and its noble spirit drives it on to
 [300]

attack a strongly built farmyard and go after the sheep there;
and even if it finds herdsmen in that very place,
keeping watch over their flocks with dogs and spears,
it refuses to be driven from the sheepfold before attacking it,
and either pounces on a sheep and drags it away, or is itself [305]

struck down in its onslaught by a spear from a quick hand.
So now godlike Sarpedon's spirit impelled him to
make a rush at the wall and break through its battlements.
At once he addressed Glaucus, son of Hippolochus:
'Glaucus, why are we two especially honoured in Lycia [310]

with the best seats and cuts of meat, and ever-full wine-cups,
and all men look on us as if we were gods; and we
enjoy a huge estate, cut out beside Xanthus' banks,
fine land, of orchards and wheat-bearing ploughland?
That is why we must now take our stand in the first rank [315]

of the Lycians, and confront the scorching heat of battle,
so that among the close-armoured Lycians men may say:
"Certainly those who rule us in Lycia are not without glory,
these kings of ours, who eat fattened sheep and drink
choice honey-sweet wine. There is also noble valour in
them, [320]

it seems, because they fight in the first ranks of the
Lycians."

My dear friend, if we two could escape from this war
and were certain to live for ever, ageless and immortal,
I would not myself fight in the first ranks, nor
would I send you into the battle where men win glory; [325]
but now, since, come what may, death's spectres stand
over us
in their thousands, which no mortal can flee from or

escape,
let us go forward, and give the glory to another man, or he
to us.'

So he spoke, and Glaucus did not turn away, or disobey
him,
and they strode straight ahead, leading a great company of
Lycians. [330]

When Menestheus, son of Peteus, saw them he shuddered,
for they were making for his tower, bringing destruction
with them.

He peered along the Achaeans' tower, in the hope of seeing
one

of the leaders, who might keep ruin away from his
companions;

and he saw the pair called Ajax, insatiate of war, standing
there, [335]

and also Teucer, who had recently come up from his hut,
next to them. But he could not shout loud enough to be
heard,

so great was the noise and the clamour that reached the
high sky

as blows rained on shields and horsehair-crested helmets,
and on the gates; these had all been shut, and the Trojans
[340]

were standing at them, trying to shatter them and force a
way in.

At once Menestheus dispatched the herald Thoötes to Ajax:
'Go, glorious Thoötes, run to Ajax and summon him—
or rather both the Ajaxes, for that would be the best course
by far,

since sheer destruction will soon be done here, [345]

so heavily do the Lycian leaders press us, they who before
have showed themselves formidable in the fierce crush of
battle.

But if toil and fighting are springing up about them there as

well,
at least let Ajax, the stalwart son of Telamon, come alone,
and let Teucer, a man skilled in archery, come with him.'
[350]

So he spoke, and the herald heard and did not disobey
him,
but set off at a run along the wall of the bronze-shirted
Achaean, and came and stood by the two called Ajax, and at once
addressed them:

'You two named Ajax, leaders of the bronze-shirted Argives;
the dear son of Peteus, who was sprung from Zeus, directs
you [335]

to go to him, to face the toil of battle, if only for a short
time—

better both of you, for that would be the best course by far,
since sheer destruction will soon be done there,
so heavily do the Lycian leaders press them, they who
before

have showed themselves formidable in the fierce crush of
battle; [360]

but if toil and fighting are springing up about you here as
well,

at least let Ajax, the brave son of Telamon, come alone,
and let Teucer, a man skilled in archery, come with him.'

So he spoke, and huge Ajax, Telamon's son, did not
disobey him,
but at once addressed the son of Oïleus with winged words:
[365]

'Ajax, you and mighty Lycomedes stand here together, both
of you,

and urge the Danaans to fight as strongly as they can;
I shall go over there and meet the enemy's attack, face to
face,

and will quickly return once I have come to their rescue.'

So Ajax, the son of Telamon, spoke, and went on his way, [370]
and Teucer, his brother by the same father, went with him,
and along with them Pandion carried Teucer's curved bow.
They went along inside the wall, and came to the tower
of great-spirited Menestheus, and found men hard pressed,
since the powerful leaders and commanders of the Lycians
[375]
were climbing up the ramparts like a black tempest; and so
they crashed together in battle, and the clamour rose up.

Ajax, the son of Telamon, was the first to kill a man,
great-spirited Epicles, one of Sarpedon's companions,
hitting him with a huge jagged rock which was lying [380]
inside the wall on top of a heap, next to the ramparts. No
man
among mortals who live now, even one in the prime of
youth,
could easily lift it with both hands; but Ajax heaved it high
and flung it, and shattered his four-plated helmet, smashing
all
the bones inside to pieces. Epicles plunged from the high
tower [385]
like an acrobat, and the breath abandoned his bones.
Then, as Glaucus, Hippolochus' mighty son, rushed forward
at the high wall, Teucer hit him with an arrow at the point
where
he saw that his arm was exposed, and put an end to his
battle-lust.
He sprang back from the wall, unobtrusively, so that no
Achaean [390]
should see that he was wounded and shout boastfully over
him.
Grief rose in Sarpedon as soon as he realized that Glaucus
had left the fighting, but he did not forget his battle-lust;
he struck at Alcmaon, Thestor's son, with his spear and

stabbed him,
and wrenched the spear out; Alcmaon followed it and fell
forward [395]

and his armour, intricately worked with bronze, clattered
about him.

Sarpedon seized the battlement with his massive hands
and pulled, and it fell away in one piece, and the wall
above was laid bare; and so he made a path for many men.

Then Ajax and Teucer set upon him together; Teucer hit
him [400]

with an arrow on the shining belt that held his man-
protecting

shield across his chest, but Zeus kept the death-spectres
from

his son, unwilling for him be beaten down at the ships'
sterns.

Then Ajax leapt at him and stabbed at his shield, but the
spear

did not pass right through, though it flung back his frenzied
attack. [405]

Sarpedon gave ground a little way from the rampart, but
did not

fall back completely, since his heart was hoping to win
glory.

Wheeling round he called out to the godlike Lycians:

'Lycians, why abandon your surging courage

in this way? It is hard for me, powerful as I am, to [410]

break through on my own and make a path to the ships.

Forward! The more men, the quicker the work is done!'

So he spoke, and they trembled at their lord's loud
rebuke,

and pressed on all the harder around their king, the
counsellor.

On the other side the Argives strengthened their ranks
[415]

behind the wall, for an enormous task appeared before them:

the powerful Lycians were not able to break through the Danaans' wall and make themselves a path to the ships,
but neither could the Danaan spearmen ever drive back the Lycians from the wall when once they had reached it.
[420]

Like two men who are in dispute over boundary-stones, on common ploughland, holding measuring-rods in their hands,

and quarrelling over the fair division of a narrow patch of earth,

so the battlements separated these men; and over them both sides

kept hewing at the oxhide shields held before the others' chests, [425]

shields both round and made from stretched, fringed hides.

The flesh of many men was gashed by the pitiless bronze, both when fighters exposed their backs as they turned, and when they were stabbed clean through the shield itself.

Everywhere the towers and battlements were spattered
[430]

with the blood of men from both sides, Trojan and Achaean.

But for all that the Trojans could not put the Achaeans to flight;

they held out, just as when an honest wool-working woman holds

her scales, lifting up the wool and weight together and balancing them, to earn some mean pittance for her children; [435]

so the battle and the conflict was pulled taut on equal terms,

until the moment when Zeus gave the greater glory to Hector,

Priam's son, who was the first to leap inside the Achaeans'

wall.

With a far-carrying shout he called out to the Trojans:
'Up with you, Trojan breakers of horses! Break down [440]
the Argive wall, and hurl awesome fire on to their ships.'

So he spoke, driving them on, and every ear caught his
voice,

and they made straight for the wall in a body; then,
gripping

their sharpened spears, they began to scale the abutments.
Hector had seized and was carrying a boulder that was
lying [445]

in front of the gates, broad at its base but pointed above;
not even the two best men in any city, among mortals
who live now, could easily lever it from the ground
on to a wagon, but he lifted it easily, even on his own;
the son of crooked-scheming Cronus made it light for him.
[450]

As when a shepherd easily carries the fleece of a ram
in one hand, and its weight sits but lightly on him,
so Hector picked up the boulder and made straight
for the planks that made up the tall double gates,
close-fitted and strong; two bars held them on the inside,
[455]

crossing over from each side, and one bolt kept them shut.
He came up and stood close, and putting his weight behind
it

and with legs planted well apart, to give the rock extra
force,

he flung it at the gate's middle and smashed it out of both
pivots;

the rock's weight carried it inside, and the gates groaned
loudly, [460]

and the crossbars could not hold, and the planks were
shattered

in all directions under the stone's impact. Illustrious Hector

sprang in, his face like swift night, shining in the terrible
bronze armour that he wore on his body, gripping two
spears

in his hands. No one but a god could have faced and held
him back [465]

when he leapt inside the gates; and his eyes blazed with
fire.

Whirling round towards the soldiery he called to the Trojans
to climb over the wall, and they obeyed his command;
at once some scaled the wall, while others streamed in
through

the well-made gate itself. The Danaans scattered in panic
[470]

among their hollow ships, and the clamour rose unceasing.

BOOK THIRTEEN

Now when Zeus had brought the Trojans and Hector to the ships,
he left the fighters beside them to endure toil and misery
without ceasing, while he himself turned his shining eyes
away,
looking far off to the land of the horse-breeding Thracians,
and
the Mysians, hand-to-hand fighters, and the splendid
Hippemolgi, [5]
drinkers of mares' milk, and the Abii, most upright of men.*
But towards Troy he did not turn his shining eyes at all,
since he did not expect in his heart that any immortal
would come to the help of either Trojans or Danaans.

But the lord earthshaker was not keeping blind watch:
[10]
he was sitting, gazing with awe at the war and strife,
high on the topmost peak of wooded Samothrace,*
from where the whole of Ida's mountain could be seen,
and the city of Priam and the ships of the Achaeans.
He had gone up there from the sea, and sat pitying the
Achaeans, [15]
beaten down by the Trojans; and he was mightily angry
with Zeus.

Straightaway he came down from the rugged mountain,
striding on swift feet; and the high mountains and woods
trembled under the immortal feet of Poseidon as he came.
Three strides he made, and with the fourth reached his goal
— [20]
Aegae,* where his famous palace is built in the depths

of the sea, golden and gleaming, imperishable for ever.
There he went, and yoked his bronze-hoofed horses to his chariot,

swift-flying horses, their manes flowing with gold,
and armed himself in gold, and picked up his whip, [25]
golden and finely made, and mounted the chariot and
drove off

over the waves. Everywhere sea-monsters rose from their lairs

and sported as he came, for they recognized their lord,
and the sea was split apart in joy. The horses flew lightly
on,

and the bronze axle beneath the chariot was not wetted;
[30]

and the springing horses carried him to the Achaean ships.

There is a wide cavern at the bottom of the deep sea,*
halfway between Tenedos and rugged Imbros, and
there Poseidon the earthshaker reined in his horses and
unyoked them, and threw immortal fodder before them,
[35]

for them to eat; around their hoofs he fastened golden
tethers,

that could not be slipped or broken, so that they would wait
there

securely for their lord's return. Then he made for the
Achaean camp.

Now the Trojans were following Hector, Priam's son, in a
mass,

like flame or a storm-wind, raging without cease and [40]
shouting and yelling loudly, hoping to capture the ships
of the Achaeans, and to kill all their best men beside them.
But Poseidon, the shaker and encircler of the earth,
rose from the depths of the salt sea and urged on the
Argives,

taking the shape and tireless voice of Calchas. First he

addressed [45]

the two called Ajax, who were themselves raging to fight:
'You two named Ajax, it is for you now to save the Achaean
people, turning your minds to courage and not to chilling
panic.

Elsewhere I do not fear the invincible hands of the Trojans—
they have climbed over our great wall in their masses, [50]
but the well-greaved Achaeans will hold them all in check—
yet here I am terrified that we shall suffer some grim
disaster,

here where that madman is leading them like a flame—
Hector, who boasts that he is the son of all-powerful Zeus.
May some god plant it in the minds of you both to stand
[55]

resolutely here yourselves, and urge others to do the same,
and

then you might drive him back from the swift-travelling
ships

despite his onslaught, even if the Olympian himself drives
him on.'

So the shaker and encircler of the earth spoke, and
struck

both men with his rod and filled them with mighty fury, [60]
and made their limbs quick, both their legs and their arms
above.

Then, like a swift-winged hawk that springs up in flight
and hovers high up close to a beetling rock-face, and
then swoops to chase some other bird across the plain,
so Poseidon the earthshaker shot swiftly away from them.
[65]

Ajax, Oïleus' swift son, was the first to recognize the god,
and at once addressed Ajax, the son of Telamon:

'Ajax, this is one of the gods who live on Olympus, taking
the form of the seer and telling us to fight beside the ships;
it was certainly not Calchas, prophet and observer of birds;

[70]

I easily knew him from behind by the signs of his feet and legs as he left—gods are recognizable, though they are gods.

And for my part, my own heart in my dear breast now rouses me all the more to fight and do battle, and my legs beneath and my hands above are raging to begin.’ [75]

Then in answer Ajax, son of Telamon, addressed him: ‘So too my invincible hands are raging as I grip my spear, and fury rises up in me, and I am swept along by my legs beneath me. Hector, Priam’s son, may rage without ceasing, but I am full of fervour to fight him, even all alone.’ [80]

While they spoke one to another in this way, delighting in the battle-joy which the god had thrust into their heart, the earth-encircler roused the Achaeans behind them who were trying to refresh their spirits beside the swift ships.

Their limbs were slackened by cruel weariness, and [85] grief filled their hearts when they saw the Trojans, who had climbed over the high wall in great numbers; as they looked at them their eyes began to shed tears, since

they did not think they would escape disaster; but the earthshaker

moved easily among them and urged on the strong companies. [90]

First he came to Teucer and roused him, and Leïtus and the hero Peneleos, and Thoas and Deïpyrus, Meriones and Antilochus, raisers of the battle-cry.

Urging these men on he addressed them in winged words:

‘Shame, Argives, young fighters! It is in you that [95] I had trusted to keep our ships safe by your fighting;

if you are now holding back from war's misery, the day
has surely dawned for us to be beaten down by the Trojans.
This is indeed a great marvel for my eyes to see,
a terrible thing, which I never thought would come to pass:
[100]

the Trojans advancing on our ships, those men who before
were like frightened does, that are the food of jackals
and leopards and wolves in the woods, aimlessly
wandering without spirit, and there is no battle-joy in them.
So the Trojans before now were unwilling to stand and face
[105]

the hands and fury of the Achaeans, even for a little while;
but now they are fighting by our hollow ships, far from their
city,
because of our leader's bungling and the people's
negligence,
who are at loggerheads with him and have no desire to
defend
their swift ships; and now they are being killed beside
them. [110]

If it really is the whole truth that the cause of this
is the hero son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon,
because he did not honour the swift-footed son of Peleus,
still there is no cause at all for us to hold back from the war.
No, let us quickly heal ourselves; good men's minds can be
healed. [115]

It is not good for you to give up your surging courage now,
you who are the best men in the camp. I myself would not
pick a fight with a man who held back from the battle
if he was a sorry creature, but with you I am angry in my
heart.

My friends, your heedlessness will surely soon make this
[120]

calamity worse; come, set shame and men's censure in
your hearts,
every one of you. A great conflict has arisen: you can see

that
powerful Hector, master of the war-cry, has broken down
the gates
and their long crossbar, and is fighting beside our ships.'

So the earth-encircler called to the Achaeans and urged
them on. [125]

Around the two called Ajax powerful companies took their
stand,
men whom Ares would not treat with scorn if he met them,
nor

would Athena, who drives the people on; the pick of their
best men were ready to face the Trojans and glorious
Hector,

spear on spear fencing them in, and shield overlapping
shield. [130]

Shield pressed on shield, helmet on helmet, man on man,
and the horsehair crests on their bright helmet-plates
touched

as they moved their heads, so close to each other did they
stand.

Spears shaken by bold hands formed an interwoven mass,
and they faced straight ahead, raging to join the battle.
[135]

Now the Trojans charged in a body, and Hector led
them,
raging straight ahead, like a boulder rolling down a cliff
that a river in winter flood has dislodged from its peak,
loosening the ruthless rock's footing with its huge flood;
it bounds high, flying onward, and the woods crash beneath
it, [140]

but still it keeps running on, uncurbed, until it reaches
the level plain and stops rolling, for all its eager haste.
Just so Hector threatened for a while to pass with ease
through the huts and ships of the Achaeans as far as the
sea,

killing as he went; but when he met the close-packed
companies [145]
he came to a stop, right up against them; and the
Achaeans' sons
facing him lunged with their swords and double-edged
spears,
and drove him back, and he was sent reeling and gave
ground.
Then he shouted to the Trojans in a far-carrying voice:
'Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters,
[150]
stand by me! The Achaeans will not fend me off for long,
even
though they have ranged themselves in close order like a
wall.
No, I think they will give way before my spear, if indeed it
was
the chief of the gods who drove me on, Hera's loud-
thundering husband.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each
man. [155]
And among them Deïphobus, Priam's son, came striding on,
in high confidence, holding his perfectly balanced shield
before him,
stepping lightly and advancing foot by foot under the
shield's cover.
Meriones aimed at him with his shining spear, and did not
miss; he hit him on his perfectly balanced shield, which was
[160]
made of oxhide, but did not pierce it, for long before it
could
the long spear snapped at its socket. Deïphobus held
the oxhide shield away from him, fearing in his heart
the spear of war-minded Meriones; but that hero turned
back into the mass of his companions, bitterly angry [165]

at losing his victory and the spear that he had broken.
He set off for the huts and ships of the Achaeans, meaning
to fetch the long spear which he had left behind in his hut.

The rest fought on furiously, and an unquenchable
clamour arose.

Teucer, son of Telamon, was the first to kill a man, [170]
the spearman Imbrius, son of Mentor rich in horses;
he used to live in Pedaeon* before the sons of the
Achaeans came,
and had as wife Medesicaste, a bastard daughter of Priam;
but when the well-balanced ships of the Danaans came
he went back to Ilium, and excelled among the Trojans, and
[175]

lived with Priam, who honoured him like his own children.

This was the man Telamon's son stabbed with his long
spear,

below the ear; he wrenched the spear out, and Imbrius
toppled

like an ash tree that is felled by the bronze on a far-seen
mountain peak and brings its tender leaves down to the
ground. [180]

So Imbrius fell, and his intricate bronze-work armour rang
about him.

Teucer sprang forward, in a rage to strip the armour from
him,

and as he sprang Hector let fly his shining spear at him; but
Teucer was looking ahead, and avoided the bronze-tipped
spear

by just a little, and Hector hit Amphimachus, son of
Cteatus, [185]

who was Actor's son, in the chest with the spear as he
returned

to the battle; he fell with a thud, and his armour clattered
about him.

Hector leapt forward to tear from the head of great-hearted

Amphimachus the helmet which fitted close to his temples;
Ajax thrust at him with his shining spear as he came on,
[190]

but no part of his body was exposed, for he was completely
covered in terrifying bronze. Ajax pierced the shield's boss,
and using his huge strength forced him back; Hector
retreated

behind the two bodies, and the Achaeans dragged them
away.

Glorious Stichius and Menestheus, captains of the
Athenians, [195]

carried Amphimachus back to the Achaean people, while
the pair

called Ajax, raging with surging courage, seized Imbrius.
As two lions that have seized a goat from sharp-toothed
dogs and carry it away through dense undergrowth,
holding it in their jaws high above the earth, [200]

so the two commanders called Ajax held Imbrius aloft
and stripped the armour from him. Oïleus' son, angry at
Amphimachus' death, cut the head from Imbrius' delicate
neck,

and with a swing of his arm flung it like a ball through the
soldiery;

and it came to rest in the dust in front of Hector's feet.
[205]

Then indeed Poseidon was angry in his heart, because
Amphimachus,* his grandson, had fallen in the grim
conflict,

and he set off along the huts and ships of the Achaeans,
to urge the Danaans on; and he was devising misery for the
Trojans.

He was met by Idomeneus, famed with the spear, on his
way [210]

from tending a companion who had just retired from the
fighting

and had been wounded by the sharp bronze behind his knee.

His companions had carried him back, and Idomeneus had given

the healers orders and was going to his hut, for he was still raging

to face the fighting, when the lord earthshaker addressed him, [215]

likening his voice to that of Thoas, son of Andraemon, who was ruler over the Aetolians in all Pleuron and in steep Calydon,* and was honoured by the people like a god:

‘Idomeneus, counsellor of the Cretans, where now are the threats

that the sons of the Achaeans used to utter against the Trojans?’ [220]

Then in answer Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, spoke to him:

‘Thoas, there is no one man who is to blame now, at least as far as I know; we are all skilled in the craft of warfare, and no one has lost heart, gripped by fear, or has given way

to cowardice and is holding back from the dreadful fighting. No, [225]

it must somehow be pleasing to the all-powerful son of Cronus that

the Achaeans should die here, their names forgotten, far from Argos.

Come, Thoas, you have always been a man to face the enemy,

and to urge on another when you see him giving up;

so do not stop now, but keep encouraging every man.’

[230]

Then in answer Poseidon the earthshaker addressed him:

‘Idomeneus, let the man who on this day deliberately shirks the battle never return to his home from Troy, but let him remain here and become the plaything of dogs. Come now, fetch your armour and go with me; we must deal with [235]

this matter together, if, though only two, we are to be of any help; when men combine even poor fighters can show courage—and we two have the skill to fight even with the best.’

So the god spoke, and went back into the struggle of men.

And Idomeneus, as soon as he reached his well-built hut, [240]

put his fine armour on about his body, picked up two spears,

and set off, looking like the lightning that the son of Cronus takes in his hand and hurls from bright Olympus, to show mortals a sign; and its flash is seen far and wide.

Just so the bronze flashed about Idomeneus’ breast as he ran. [245]

When he was still close to his hut his attendant valiant Meriones met him—he was on his way to fetch a bronze-tipped spear—and mighty Idomeneus addressed him:

‘Meriones, Molus’ son, swift-footed, dearest of my companions,

why have you left the fighting and conflict to come here? [250]

Are you wounded somewhere? Is a spear-point troubling you?

Or are you coming to look for me with some message? I for one

have no desire to sit idle in my hut, but am impatient to fight.’

Then in turn Meriones, a sagacious man, spoke to him:

‘Idomeneus, counsellor of the bronze-shirted Cretans, [255]
I have come to fetch a spear, to see if there is one left
in your hut, since I shattered the one I was carrying before
when I threw it at the shield of arrogant Deïphobus.’*

Then in turn Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, spoke to him:

‘If it is spears you want, you will find one, or even twenty,
[260]

standing against the shining outer wall of my hut,
Trojan spears that I took from men I killed. It is not my way
to stand at a distance in order to fight my enemies,
and that is why I have spears and shields with bosses,
and helmets and gleaming polished corslets.’ [265]

Then in turn Meriones, a sagacious man, spoke to him:
‘I too have many spoils in my hut, taken from the Trojans,
and in my black ship, but they are not nearby for me to
fetch.

And indeed I too can claim not to have forgotten my
fighting spirit;

I take my stand among the front-fighters in the battle [270]
where men win glory, whenever war’s conflict arises.

It may be that some other bronze-shirted Achaean is
unaware

of my fighting prowess, but you, I think, know it for
yourself.’

Then in turn Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, spoke to him:

‘I know what your courage is like; what need to rehearse it?
[275]

If all our best men were now to be chosen by the ships
for an ambush, where men’s courage can best be
discerned,

and both the coward and the brave man reveal themselves
—

for the coward’s skin keeps changing colour, and

his spirit cannot be restrained to sit quietly within him,
[280]

but he changes position, shifting his weight from one leg
to another, and the heart within his breast throbs noisily
as he imagines death's spectres, and his teeth begin to
chatter;

but the brave man's skin does not alter, and he is not
greatly

afraid, when once he has taken his place in the ambush of
men, [285]

but prays to enter into the grim conflict as soon as he can—
even there, no man would disparage your fury and hands'
strength.

If you were to be hit from afar or in close fight in battle's
toil

the weapon would not fall from behind on to your neck or
back,

but would meet you in the breast or belly as you press
forward [290]

to take your place in the courtship of front-fighters.

But come, let us not stand here and talk of these things
like little boys, or people may become extremely angry;
go to my hut and choose a massive spear for yourself.'

So he spoke, and Meriones, the equal of swift Ares,
[295]

quickly picked out a bronze-tipped spear from the hut
and went to join Idomeneus, full of longing for the battle.

Just as Ares, doom of mortals, goes into battle, and
with him goes his dear son Panic,* mighty and fearless,
who drives even the stout-hearted fighter to run in terror;
[300]

and these two leave Thrace and arm themselves to join the
Ephyri or the great-hearted Phlegyans,* though they pay no
heed to the prayers of both, but give glory to one side or
other;

so like them Meriones and Idomeneus, leaders of men,
marched out to war helmeted in gleaming bronze. [305]

Meriones was the first to address the other man:

‘Son of Deucalion, where are you eager to join the soldiery?
On the right wing of the whole army, or in the centre,
or on the left wing, where more than anywhere I think
the flowing-haired Achaeans will prove unequal to the
fight?’ [310]

Then in turn Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, spoke to
him:

‘In the centre of the ships there are others to defend them

—

the two called Ajax, and Teucer, the best among the
Achaeans

at archery, and a good man too in standing close combat.

These will compel Hector, Priam’s son, to tire of the war,
[315]

however ardent he is, and even though he is mightily
strong.

It will be a very hard thing for him, raging though he is to
fight,

to overcome their fury and their invincible hands
and to fire the ships, unless the son of Cronus himself
should hurl a blazing firebrand into the swift ships. [320]

Huge Ajax, son of Telamon, will never yield to any man
who is mortal and who eats the grain of Demeter,
and who can be broken by bronze or by huge stones.

Not even to Achilles, breaker of ranks, would he give way in
standing close combat, though no one can rival him in
running. [325]

Let us make for the army’s left, so that we may quickly
learn

whether we are to give the glory to others, or they to us.’

So he spoke, and Meriones, swift Ares’ equal, led the
way, until

they reached the army at the place where Idomeneus had advised him.

When the Trojans saw Idomeneus, his courage like a flame, [330]
and his attendant with him, in their finely crafted armour,
they shouted along the soldiery and all made towards him;
and a massed battle began at the sterns of the ships.
As when blasts of air blow furiously, driven by shrill winds,
on a day when the dust lies thickest on the roads, [335]
and the winds raise a great turbulent cloud of dust;
so they crashed together in battle, raging in their hearts
to kill each other in the turmoil with the sharp bronze.
The battle that brings death to mortals bristled with the
long
flesh-slicing spears that they flourished, and the brazen
gleam [340]
from glittering helmets and newly polished corslets and
shining shields blinded men's eyes as they charged
together
in the mêlée; it would indeed be a hard-hearted man
who took pleasure in seeing this toil, and did not feel grief.

So the two mighty sons of Cronus,* their wills opposed,
[345]
brought about cruel anguish for the warrior heroes.
Zeus willed victory for the Trojans and for Hector,
to give honour to swift-footed Achilles; he did not want
the Achaean people to perish utterly before Troy, but
was bringing glory to Thetis and her strong-spirited son.
[350]

And Poseidon rose up from the grey sea and went secretly
among the Argives, urging them on; he was grieved to see
them
beaten down by the Trojans, and was mightily angry with
Zeus.

Both were indeed of the same ancestry and parentage, but

Zeus was the elder by birth, and had the greater knowledge; [355]

and for that reason Poseidon avoided giving help openly, and kept rousing them in the camp in the likeness of a man. These two, one after the other, stretched tight the rope of cruel strife and equal-balanced warfare over both sides; it was unbreakable, not to be untied, and it loosened many men's knees. [360]

Then Idomeneus, for all his grizzled hair, urged the Danaans on, and leaping at the Trojans spread panic among them. He killed Othryoneus from Cabeus, who now lived in Troy; he had recently come there, drawn by news of the war, and had asked for the most beautiful of Priam's daughters, [365]

Cassandra, without bride-gifts, promising instead a mighty deed—

to drive the Achaeans' sons from Troy, resist though they might.

The old man Priam had agreed, and had promised to give him

the girl; and it was trusting in these promises that he was fighting.*

Idomeneus aimed at him with a cast of his shining spear, [370]

and hit him as he strutted forward; the bronze body-armour he wore was not strong enough, and the spear lodged in mid-belly.

He fell with a thud, and Idomeneus spoke triumphantly over him:

'Othryoneus, I must compliment you above all mortal men, if indeed you are going to fulfil all that you promised to [375]

Dardanus' son Priam, who pledged you his daughter;

we too could certainly make such a promise, and fulfil it—
we could give you the loveliest of the daughters of Atreus’
son,

bringing her here from Argos, for you to marry, if only
you would help us sack Ilium, that well-populated city. So
come [380]

with us to our sea-traversing ships, so that we can agree
marriage

terms; you will not find us hard dealers over a bride-price.’

So the hero Idomeneus spoke, and dragged him by the
foot

through the harsh conflict, but Asius came up to protect
him;

he was on foot in front of his horses, held ready by his
charioteer, [385]

and could feel their breath on his shoulders. He longed in
his heart

to strike Idomeneus, but the other got in first with a spear
in the throat under his chin, and drove the bronze clean
through.

Asius toppled as an oak topples, or a poplar, or a soaring
pine that woodsmen have cut down on a mountain [390]

with their newly whetted axes, to become ship-timber;

so Asius lay sprawled in front of his chariot and horses,
roaring, and scrabbling at the blood-soaked dust.

His charioteer, unexpectedly stunned out of his wits,
was not bold enough to wheel his horses and so escape
[395]

the hands of his enemies, and Antilochus, steadfast in
battle,

struck him with his spear, pinning him through the middle;
the bronze corslet that he always wore was no help to him,
and the spear stuck fast in mid-belly. Gasping, he fell from
the

well-made chariot, and Antilochus, great-spirited Nestor’s

son, [400]

drove his horses from the Trojans to join the well-greaved Achaeans.

Then Deïphobus, grieving at Asius' death, came up very close

to Idomeneus, and let fly with his shining spear, but he was looking ahead, and avoided the bronze-tipped spear; he was protected behind his perfectly balanced shield, [405]

the shield that he always carried, faced with oxhide and gleaming bronze; and it was fitted with two cross-grips. Behind this he crouched, quite hidden, and the bronze-tipped spear

flew over him, and as it grazed the shield it made a grating sound; but it did not fly in vain from Deïphobus' heavy hand, [410]

but hit Hypsenor, the son of Hippasus, shepherd of the people,

in the liver below his midriff, and at once loosened his knees.

Deïphobus gave a great shout, and boasted terribly over him:

'Now, surely, Asius does not lie unavenged! I think that even

as he travels to the house of Hades, the mighty gate-guardian, [415]

he will rejoice in his heart, because I have sent him an escort.'

So he spoke, and grief came over the Argives at his boasting,

and most of all he stirred war-minded Antilochus' heart, who, grieved though he was, did not desert his companion, and ran up and stood over him and sheltered him with his shield. [420]

Then two trusty companions, Mecisteus, the son of Echius,

and

glorious Alastor, lifted Hypsenor on to their shoulders and carried him, groaning deeply, back to the hollow ships.

Idomeneus did not slacken his great fury, but strove all the time

either to wrap some man of the Trojans in black night or to
[425]

crash to the ground himself, keeping ruin away from the Achaeans.

Next he killed the hero Alcatous, the dear son of Aesyetes, nurtured by Zeus; he was the son-in-law of Anchises, and had married the eldest of his daughters, Hippodameia,*
loved by her father and revered mother with all their hearts
[430]

in their halls, since she excelled all girls of her age in beauty, in handiwork, and in good sense; and so it was the best man in broad Troy who had gained her in marriage. He it was whom Poseidon beat down by Idomeneus' hand, bewitching his shining eyes and shackling his bright limbs;
[435]

he was unable either to run back or to swerve aside, but stood motionless like a grave-pillar or a high-leaved tree, while the hero Idomeneus stabbed him with his spear in the middle of his chest, and broke through the bronze tunic

that had up to then kept death away from his body; but
[440]

this time the spear tore through it with a loud grating noise. He fell with a thud, and the spear stuck fast in his heart, whose beating caused the spear to quiver, even to its butt-end;

but then towering Ares took away the heart's fury, and Idomeneus gave a great shout, and boasted terribly over him: [445]

'Deïphobus, do we judge it fair that three men have been

killed

in exchange for your one? That indeed was how you liked to boast.

You are possessed! Now you too should stand up against me, so that

you can see what kind of a visitor I, Zeus' offspring, am to your land. In the beginning Zeus fathered Minos, Crete's guardian, [450]

then Minos in his turn fathered a son, blameless Deucalion, and Deucalion fathered me, to be lord over many men in broad Crete; and now my ships have brought me here, to be an affliction to you and your father and the other Trojans.'*

So he spoke, and Deïphobus' mind was divided in two, [455]

whether to draw back and find some companion among the great-spirited Trojans, or to make trial of Idomeneus alone.

And as he pondered it seemed to him the better course to go

in search of Aeneas. He found him at the very rear of the soldiery,

standing idle; he was all the time angry with glorious Priam, [460]

because he paid him no honour, though he was a fine man among men.

Standing close, Deïphobus addressed him with winged words:

'Aeneas, counsellor of the Trojans, now surely is the time for you

to help your brother-in-law, if indeed grief for him touches you.

So come, let us go and save Alcathous; he was your sister's husband, [465]

and used to look after you in his house, when you were but

a child;

look, spear-famed Idomeneus has stripped his armour from him.'

So he spoke, and quickened the spirit in Aeneas' breast, who made straight for Idomeneus, full of longing for battle. But Idomeneus was not seized by panic, like some little boy; [470]

he stood firm, like a wild boar that trusts in its strength and stands firm against a great rabble of men attacking it in a lonely place in the mountains; the bristles stick up along its back, its eyes flash with fire, and it whets its tusks, raging to defend itself against both men and dogs.

[475]

So spear-famed Idomeneus stood firm and would not give ground

to Aeneas as he came up to challenge him. He called out to his companions, looking to Ascalaphus and Aphareus and Deïpyrus,

and Meriones and Antilochus, raisers of the battle-cry; trying to rouse them, he addressed them in winged words:

[480]

'This way, friends, and help me—I am alone! I am terribly afraid

of the assault of swift-footed Aeneas, who is coming after me,

and who is a mighty man at killing men in battle, and is in the flower of youth, when the strength of a man is greatest.

If we were matched in age, our spirit is such that he [485] would soon win a great victory, or it would be mine.'

So he spoke, and they all had one purpose in their hearts, and

came and stood by him, resting their shields on their shoulders.

And on the other side Aeneas called out to his companions,

looking especially to Deïphobus and Paris and glorious
Agenor, [490]
who were with him leaders of the Trojans; and the people
followed them as sheep follow a ram from the pasture
to a drinking-place, and the shepherd is glad in his heart.
Just so the heart in the breast of Aeneas was glad,
when he saw that the mass of men were following him.
[495]

So they rushed forward to fight with their long spears
over
Alcathous, man to man, and on their chests the bronze
armour
rang terribly as they aimed their weapons at each other
in the mêlée; and two warlike men above the rest,
Aeneas and Idomeneus, both the equal of Ares, were [500]
straining to slash the other's flesh with the pitiless bronze.
The first to throw his spear was Aeneas, but Idomeneus
was looking ahead and avoided the bronze-tipped spear,
and Aeneas' point passed by and stuck quivering
in the earth, flying to no effect from his massive hand.
[505]

Then Idomeneus hit Oenomaus in the middle of his belly,
breaking through his corslet's plate, and his innards gushed
out
round the bronze; he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with
his hand.

Idomeneus tore his far-shadowing spear from the dead
man,
but was not then able to strip the rest of the fine armour
[510]
from his shoulders, for he was pressed hard by missiles;
his feet were not steady enough to support him in a charge,
or to dart forward after his own weapon or to avoid
another's.

So in standing combat he kept the pitiless day from himself,

since

his feet could no longer carry him in swift flight from the battle. [515]

As he retreated, step by step, Deïphobus threw his shining spear

at him, for he harboured a constant, enduring grudge against him.

But once again he missed, and hit Ascalaphus, Enyalius' son,*

with his spear; the massive spear passed through his shoulder,

and he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with his hand.

[520]

Towering Ares of the mighty voice had not yet found out that his own son had fallen in the fierce crush of battle; he was sitting on a peak of Olympus, under golden clouds, confined by the will of Zeus to the place where the other immortal gods also were sitting, banned from the war. [525]

Now men rushed to fight over Ascalaphus, man to man; Deïphobus tore the shining helmet from him, but Meriones, the equal of swift Ares, leapt at him and struck him with his spear on the arm, and the vizored helmet dropped from his hand clanging to the ground.

[530]

Meriones leapt at Deïphobus a second time, like a vulture, and wrenched the massive spear from his upper arm, and then retreated into the mass of his companions.

Polites,

Deïphobus' full brother, put his arms around his waist and led him away from war's hideous clamour, until he reached [535]

his swift horses, which were waiting for him behind the battle,

together with their charioteer and finely worked chariot.

These carried him towards the city, in pain and groaning deeply; and the blood poured from his newly wounded arm.

But the rest fought on, and the clamour rose unquenchable. [540]

Next, Aeneas sprang at Aphareus, son of Caletor, who had turned to face him, and hit him in the throat with a sharp spear;

his head tilted backwards, and his shield and helmet fell in on him, and life-breaking death poured over him.

Antilochus was watching Thoön closely, and as he turned away [545]

leapt and stabbed him, and completely sheared away the vein

which runs all the way up the back until it reaches the neck;*

this he sheared away completely, and Thoön fell on his back

in the dust, stretching out both hands to his dear companions.

Antilochus sprang forward, and began to strip the armour [550]

from his shoulders, looking keenly about him; the Trojans massed around him and lunged at his bright-gleaming shield,

but could not get past it, even to graze Antilochus' soft flesh

with the pitiless bronze, for Poseidon the earthshaker was protecting Nestor's son, even under the hail of spears. [555]

He was never clear of enemies, but kept twisting about to face them; nor was his spear ever at rest, but all the time

shook as he flourished it, and kept aiming, determined either to hurl it at an enemy or to attack him at close range.

As he kept aiming at the soldiery he was seen by
Adamas, [560]
Asius' son, who, charging at him from close quarters,
stabbed at
the middle of his shield with the sharp bronze; but Poseidon
of
the dark-blue hair disabled his spear and denied him
Antiochus' life;
half of it stuck where it was in Antiochus' shield like a
charred stake, while the other half dragged on the ground,
[565]
and Adamas retreated into the mass of his companions,
avoiding
death's spectres; but as he went Meriones pursued and hit
him
with his spear between the genitals and navel, in the place
where battle-death comes most painfully to wretched
mortals.
There he planted the spear, and Adamas fell forward,
impaled [570]
on it, writhing like a bull that herdsmen on the mountains
bind with a rope of withies and forcibly drag it, resisting,
away;
so the wounded man writhed—for a short time, not for very
long,
until the hero Meriones came up close to him and wrenched
the spear from his flesh; and darkness covered his eyes.
[575]

Helenus drew close to Deïpyrus and struck him on the
temple
with his huge Thracian sword, shattering his helmet, which,
knocked from his head, lay on the ground, and one of
the Achaean fighters picked it up as it rolled between his
feet.

As for Deïpyrus, black night dropped down and covered his eyes. [580]

Then grief seized Atreus' son, Menelaus, master of the war-cry,
and he made menacingly for the hero, lord Helenus,
shaking his sharp spear; Helenus drew his bow, pulling
the string back to the grip, and so both at once prepared to
let fly,
one with a sharp spear, the other with an arrow from the
bowstring. [585]

The son of Priam hit Menelaus on the chest with his arrow,
on a plate of his corslet, but the bitter shaft sprang back
from it;

as when on a great threshing-floor black-skinned beans
or chickpeas fly off a wide-bladed grain-shovel,
propelled by a shrill wind and the winnower's swing,* [590]
so the bitter shaft flew far off from the corslet of
famed Menelaus, deflected a long way from its course.

Then Atreus' son, Menelaus, master of the war-cry, struck
Helenus' hand where he was holding the polished bow, and
the bronze-tipped spear drove clean through his hand into
the bow.

He retreated into the mass of his companions, avoiding
death's spectres, [595]

his hand hanging at his side, trailing the ash spear after
him.

Great-spirited Agenor, shepherd of the people, pulled it
out of his hand, and bound the hand up in a well-twisted
strip of sheep's wool, a sling, which his attendant was
holding. [600]

Then Peisander made straight for renowned Menelaus;
but his evil allotted portion led him on to death's end,
to be beaten down by you, Menelaus, in the grim conflict.
When they had advanced to within close range of each
other

Atreus' son missed his mark, and his spear was turned aside, [605]

while Peisander jabbed at renowned Menelaus' shield, but could not drive the bronze straight through it; the wide shield stopped it, and the spear snapped at its socket, though Peisander was glad in his heart, and hoped for victory.

Then Atreus' son drew his sword with the silver rivets [610] and leapt at Peisander, who raised from behind his shield a fine axe of good bronze, fitted on to an olive-wood shaft, long and well-polished; and they set upon each other.

Peisander struck the plate of the other's horsehair-crested helmet,

at the base of the plume itself, but as he attacked Menelaus [615]

hit him on the brow, above the base of his nose; the bones cracked,

and his eyes, awash with blood, fell in the dust before his feet.

He collapsed and fell, and Menelaus set his heel on his chest

and stripped the armour from him, and boasting spoke to him:

'This is how you will retreat from the swift-horsed Danaans' ships, [620]

you arrogant Trojans, still greedy for war's terrible clamour!

You are not slow to inflict insult and disgrace on others—

as you insulted me, you foul dogs, and had no fear in your hearts of the harsh anger of Zeus the loud thunderer, god of hosts and guests, who will one day destroy your steep city. [625]

You carried away my wedded wife and many possessions, unprovoked, after you had been warmly welcomed by her, and now you are resolved to throw deadly fire into our sea-traversing ships, and to kill the Achaean heroes.

One day you will be stopped, despite your desire for Ares' war. [630]

Father Zeus, they say that you surpass all others in wisdom,

both men and gods; yet it is from you that all this comes, your favour towards these wantonly violent men, these Trojans, whose fury is intolerable, who cannot ever get their fill of the fighting in equal-balanced warfare! [635] In all things there is a fullness, even of sleep and of love and of sweet singing and pleasurable dancing; all these are things where a man will want to have his fill, though not in war; but these Trojans cannot get enough of fighting.'

So spoke blameless Menelaus, and stripped the bloody armour [640]

from Peisander's body and gave it to his companions; then he himself turned back again and joined the front-fighters.

Next Harpalion, son of the king Pylaemenes,* sprang at Menelaus; this man had followed his dear father to Troy to join the war, but did not return again to his native land. [645]

He jabbed at the middle of Atreus' son's shield with his spear, from close quarters, but could not drive the bronze straight through, and retreated into the mass of his companions, avoiding death's spectres, looking keenly about him, in case anyone's bronze should find his flesh.

As he retreated Meriones let fly a bronze-tipped arrow at him, [650]

and hit him in the right buttock; the arrow passed clean through his bladder and came out under the pubic bone.

Harpalion collapsed on the spot and breathed out his spirit in the arms of his companions, lying stretched out on the

earth

like a worm; and the dark blood flowed out, and soaked the ground. [655]

The great-hearted Paphlagonians* busied themselves about him,

and setting him in a chariot carried him to sacred Ilium, grieving, and with them went his father, weeping tears. There was no compensation for the death of his son.

Paris was greatly angry in his heart at Harpalion's death, [660]

for among the many Paphlagonians he had been his guest-friend;

enraged on his account, he let fly a bronze-tipped arrow.

Now there was a man called Euchenor, son of Polyidus the seer,

a rich man of noble birth, whose home was in Corinth. He had

boarded his ship knowing well that it would be his ruin and death, [665]

because the old man, noble Polyidus, had often told him that he would either waste away in his halls from a painful sickness

or go with the Achaean ships and be beaten down by the Trojans.

So he chose to go, avoiding both the Achaeans' heavy warfare* and a hateful sickness, and the agony his heart would

suffer. [670]

Paris hit him under the jaw, by his ear, and swiftly his life's breath

abandoned his limbs, and hateful darkness seized him.

So all the rest fought on in the likeness of blazing fire; but Hector, loved by Zeus, had neither heard nor knew that on the left of the ships his people were being overcome [675]

by the Argives; and soon the glory would have gone to the Achaeans, so strongly did the encircler and shaker of the earth

urge on the Argives, and also defended them with his strength.

So Hector held on where he had at first leapt inside the wall and the gate, and broken the close-packed ranks of shield-bearing [680]

Danaans, in the place where the ships of Ajax and Protesilaus were,

drawn up on the shore of the grey sea. The wall protecting these

had been built very low, and it was there that the Achaeans were fighting at their fiercest, both they and their horses.

There were the Boeotians and Ionians with their trailing tunics, [685]

and the Locrians and Phthians and splendid Epeians, but they

were hard put to resist glorious Hector's assault on their ships,

nor could they drive him back; he was like a flame.

Picked men of the Athenians were there, and among them their leader was Menestheus, Peteus' son, and with him came [690]

Pheidas and Stichius and valiant Bias. The Epeians' leaders were Meges, son of Phyleus, and Amphion and Draceus, and the Phthians' were Medon and Podarces, steadfast in war.

Now this Medon was a bastard son of godlike Oïleus, and so half-brother to Ajax; but his home was in Phylace, [695]

far from his native land, because he had killed a man,* a brother of his stepmother Eriopis, wife of Oïleus; and the other, Podarces, was the son of Iphicles, Phylacus' son. These then were armed at the head of the great-spirited

Phthians,
defending the ships and fighting alongside the Boeotians.
[700]

Ajax, the swift son of Oïleus, would never take his stand
far from Ajax, Telamon's son, not even for a short time;
just as a pair of dark-faced oxen on fallow land strain
with matched spirit at the close-jointed plough, and
around the base of their horns quantities of sweat spring
up; [705]

and only the well-polished yoke keeps them apart as they
toil

along the furrow, and the plough reaches the field's
headland;

so these two fighters stood close to each other, side by
side.

The son of Telamon was accompanied by many excellent
companions from his people, who would take his shield
[710]

from him whenever weariness and sweat came over his
limbs;

but Oïleus' great-hearted son had no Locrians with him,
since their hearts were not stalwart enough for standing
combat;

they did not own bronze horsehair-crested helmets,
nor did they possess round shields and ash spears, but
[715]

they had come with him to Troy trusting in bows and slings
of twisted sheep's wool, with which they shot at the Trojans,
thick and fast, and broke down their companies.

So the former, in their finely worked armour, fought in front
against the Trojans and Hector of the bronze helmet, while
the [720]

Locrians, hidden, kept shooting from behind; and the
Trojans

forgot their battle-lust, for the arrows bewildered them.

Then the Trojans would have retreated in a sorry state from the ships and the huts towards windswept Troy, had not Polydamas stood next to bold Hector and spoken to him: [725]

‘Hector, you are a hard man to persuade with words of advice.

A god has given you prowess in war beyond other men, and therefore you want to excel others in counsel too; but you cannot choose to have everything as you want it. A god gives prowess in war to one man, and to another [730]

skill in the dance, and to a third the lyre and song, and in another’s breast wide-thundering Zeus sets an excellent

understanding, and many men derive benefit from it; he is the salvation of many, and he himself knows this best.

Even so, I shall speak as it seems best to me, [735]

seeing that the circlet of war is blazing all around you.

The great-spirited Trojans have crossed the wall, but some of them are standing idle with their arms, while others

are fighting, few against many, scattered among the ships.

So come, withdraw, and summon all the best men to us, [740]

and after that we shall carefully consider every plan, whether we should fall on their many-benched ships, in the hope that a god will want to give us the victory, or if instead we should fall back from them unharmed. As for me,

I am afraid that the Achaeans will repay yesterday’s debt, [745]

since by their ships there waits a man insatiable in war, and I do not think he will hold back from the battle for ever.’

So spoke Polydamas, and his prudent advice pleased Hector,

and at once he leapt, fully armed, from his chariot to the ground,
and addressed Polydamas, speaking with winged words:
[750]

‘Polydamas, hold back all the best men here, and
I will go over there and take charge of the fighting;
I shall then return quickly, when I have given them clear orders.’

So he spoke, and set off, looking like a snow-clad mountain;
shouting orders he flew through the lines of Trojans and their allies; [755]
and they all rushed up to join the hospitable Polydamas, the son of Panthous, when they had heard Hector’s voice. But Hector went up and down the front-fighters, looking for Deïphobus and mighty lord Helenus, and Adamas, Asius’ son,
and Asius, Hyrtacus’ son, in the hope of finding them. [760]
He found them, but they had not all escaped injury or death:

some were lying by the sterns of the Achaeans’ ships, having lost their life’s breath at the hands of the Argives, while
others were back inside the city walls, wounded by cast or thrust.

But one he soon found, on the left of the battle, bringer of tears, [765]

glorious Alexander, the husband of lovely-haired Helen, encouraging his companions and urging them on to fight. Standing next to him he addressed him in shaming words: ‘Paris, Disaster-Paris, superbly beautiful, woman-crazed seducer!

Tell me, where are Deïphobus and mighty lord Helenus,
[770]

Adamas, Asius’ son, and Asius, the son of Hyrtacus?

And where is Othryoneus? Now steep Ilium must be utterly ruined, from top to bottom; this is surely the bitter end for you.'

Then Alexander who looked like a god answered him: 'Hector, your mind is always to blame one who is blameless; [775]

at other times I may well have held back from the war, but my mother did not bear me to be a complete coward: ever since you roused your companions to fight by the ships*

we have been here, engaging the Danaans without ceasing. The companions you ask after have been killed, [780]

and only Deïphobus and the mighty lord Helenus* have left the battlefield, both wounded in the hand by long spears, though the son of Cronus kept death from them.

But now lead on, to wherever your heart and spirit tell you, and we will go with you, raging for the fight; I do not think [785]

we shall lack courage, as far as there is strength left in us—and beyond his strength no man can fight, however spirited he is.'

So the hero spoke, and won over his brother's heart. They set off for where the battle and conflict were fiercest, around Cebriones and blameless Polydamas, and around Phalces and Orthaeus and godlike Polyphetes, and Palmys, and Ascanius and Morys, the two sons of Hippotion, who had come as reliefs from Ascanië* of the rich soil on the morning before; and now Zeus urged them to fight. These came on like a squall of violent winds that [795] sweeps to earth, driven by the thunder of father Zeus, and with a stupendous noise dives into the salt sea, and in the loud-roaring sea countless waves swell up and crash,

arched over and white with foam, rank succeeding rank;
just so the Trojans came on in battle array, rank succeeding
rank, [800]

gleaming in bronze and following behind their leaders.

Hector, son of Priam, the equal of Ares, doom of mortals,
led them, holding in front of him his perfectly balanced
shield,

deftly crafted with hides and covered with a thick layer of
bronze;

and about his temples his shining helmet waved to and fro.
[805]

Edging forward, he tested the enemy companies from
every side,

to see if they would yield to him as he moved up behind his
shield;

but he could not weaken the spirit in the Achaeans' breasts.

Ajax strode hugely up, and was the first to challenge him:

'You are possessed! Come closer; why try to frighten the
Argives [810]

in this way? We are by no means unused to war, and it is
only by Zeus' vicious lash that we Achaeans are beaten
down.

No doubt your heart is hoping to destroy our ships utterly,
but we too have hands ready to defend them in a moment.

Long before that happens, your well-populated city [815]
will be captured and sacked by our hands.

But for you, I say that the time is near at hand when in
flight

you will pray to father Zeus and the other immortals

to make your fine-maned horses swifter than hawks

as they carry you to your city, kicking up the dust on the
plain.' [820]

And for him, as he spoke, a bird flew over from right to
left,

a high-soaring eagle, and the Achaean army yelled for joy,

encouraged by the omen; but illustrious Hector answered:
'Ajax, you incoherent, oafish ox, what nonsense is this?
I wish I could be for all my days as surely a son of Zeus,
[825]

wearer of the aegis, and lady Hera could be my mother,
and I was held in the same honour as Athena and Apollo,
as certainly as this day will bring utter ruin on the Argives,
every one of them; and you will be killed with them, if you
dare
to resist my long spear, which is going to tear your delicate
skin. [830]
You will fall by the Achaeans' ships, and you will glut
the dogs and vultures of the Trojans with your flesh and
fat.'

So he spoke, and took the lead, and the rest followed
with
a stupendous clamour, and the people were yelling behind
him.

The Argives on their side yelled in response, and did not
forget [835]
their courage, but held out as the best of the Trojans
attacked.

From both sides the clamour reached the upper air, even to
the rays of Zeus.

BOOK FOURTEEN

Now though Nestor was drinking in his hut he heard the shouting,
and he addressed the son of Asclepius with winged words:
'Consider, glorious Machaon, what is to be done now, for
the shouts of the strong young men by the ships are
growing louder.

You must sit here and continue to drink gleaming wine, [5]
until Hecamede of the lovely hair has heated water for a
warm bath and washed away the clotted blood, and I shall
go to a lookout place, and quickly find out what is
happening.'

So speaking he picked up the well-made shield of his
son,
horse-breaking Thrasymedes, which was lying in the hut,
[10]
made of brightly shining bronze; for the son had his father's
shield.

And he took up a stout spear, with a point of sharp bronze,
and stood outside the hut; and at once he saw an ugly sight
—

the Achaeans in disorder, and the high-hearted Trojans
behind
driving them into confusion; and the Achaean wall had
fallen. [15]

As when the great open sea heaves with a soundless swell,
foreboding the rushing onslaught of shrill-sounding winds,
and the waves cannot break, or roll on one way or another,
until some decisive wind comes down from Zeus;
so the old man pondered, his mind torn this way and that,
[20]

whether to go and join the soldiery of swift-horsed Danaans
or to make for Atreus' son Agamemnon, shepherd of the
people.

And as he pondered it seemed to him the better course to
look

for Atreus' son. Meanwhile the rest of them kept up the
battle,

killing each other, and the relentless bronze rang about
their bodies [25]

as they jabbed at each other with swords and double-edged
spears.

As Nestor went, those Zeus-nurtured kings who had
been wounded

by the bronze—the son of Tydeus and Odysseus and Atreus'
son

Agamemnon—fell in with him on their way up from the
ships.

Their ships had been drawn up a long way from the
fighting, [30]

on the shore of the grey sea, for the first ships had been
hauled up

on to the plain, and the Achaeans had built a wall around
their sterns.

But the beach, wide though it was, did not have space for
all the ships, and the people were cramped for room; and
for that reason they had drawn them up in rows, and had
filled [35]

all the space between the headlands along the coastline's
wide bay.*

These men were coming up together, leaning on their
spears,

wishing to see the battle and its clamour, and the hearts in
their

breasts were grieving. When the old man Nestor met them,
the hearts in the breasts of these Achaeans were struck

[40]

with alarm, and lord Agamemnon spoke, and addressed him:

‘Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, why have you left the man-destroying war and come here? I am fearful that towering Hector will fulfil the threat he once made when speaking in the Trojan assembly, [45] that he would not turn back to Ilium from the ships until he had set them ablaze and killed the men as well. That was what he declared, and now it is all being fulfilled. This is a disaster! The other well-greaved Achaeans must also harbour bitterness against me in their hearts, as Achilles does, [50] if they are now refusing to fight beside the sterns of their ships.’

Then the Gerenian horseman Nestor answered him: ‘Indeed these things have been fulfilled, and not even Zeus the high-thunderer himself could order them differently. Certainly the wall has been destroyed, the wall that we trusted [55]

would be an indestructible barrier for our ships and ourselves, and our men by the swift ships are engaged in unceasing and relentless battle. Nor could you tell, however hard you looked, from which direction the Achaeans are being driven in disorder, so confused is the killing; and the clamour reaches the high sky. [60]

But let us consider what is to be done here, if thought can achieve anything—I do not advise us to enter the battle, since there is no way that a wounded man can fight.’

Then in turn Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed him:

‘Nestor, our men are now fighting by the sterns of their ships, [65]
and neither the wall that we built has proved of use, nor the ditch
over which the Danaans toiled so hard, hoping in their hearts
that it would be an indestructible barrier for the ships and themselves;
so, I suppose, it must be pleasing to all-powerful Zeus, that the
Achaean should die here, their names forgotten, far from Argos. [70]
I knew it in the past when he willingly helped the Danaans,
and I know it now when he exalts the Trojans to the height
of the blessed gods, and has tied down our hands and our fury.
Come then, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:
let us drag down the ships that were drawn up first, near [75]
the sea, and let us launch them all into the bright salt sea,
mooring them far out with anchor-stones, until the immortal
night comes—if the Trojans will leave off fighting even then;
and after that we may haul down all the rest of the ships.
There can be no blame in fleeing from ruin, even at night;
[80]
it is better for a man to flee and escape ruin than to be
captured.’

Much-scheming Odysseus looked at him darkly and
addressed him:
‘Son of Atreus, what words are these that cross your teeth’s
barrier?
Accursed man, I wish you commanded some other,
spiritless,
army and did not rule over us, to whom Zeus has seemingly
[85]

given the charge of winding the thread of cruel wars from youth

right up to old age, until we perish, each and every one of us.

Can it really be that you are raging to abandon the city of Troy

with its wide streets, over which we have endured such misery?

Be silent, or some other of the Achaeans may hear your words, [90]

words which no other man would even let pass through his mouth—

one, that is, who knew in his mind how to speak to good purpose,

and was a staff-holding king, and had as many people subservient to him as the Argives over whom you rule.

From what you say, I think you have completely lost your wits, [95]

when you tell us, surrounded as we are by war and clamour,

to drag our well-benched ships down to the sea; this will answer

still more of the Trojans' prayers—though even now they have

the mastery—and sheer destruction's scales will tip against us.

The Achaeans will not keep up the fight if the ships are dragged [100]

seaward, but will keep looking about them, and lose their battle-lust.

And then, marshal of the people, your plan will end in disaster!'

Then Agamemnon, lord of men, answered him:
'Odysseus, your harsh rebuke has gone straight to my heart.

I agree: I shall not order the sons of the Achaeans to drag
[105]

their well-benched ships down to the sea against their will.
Now, if there is someone who has better advice than this,
young or old, let him give it; and I would welcome it.'

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke out
among them:

'That man is nearby, and we shall not have long to seek
him— [110]

if you are willing to listen to me, and none of you feels
indignant
or resentful because I am the youngest in years among
you.

Yet I too can boast that my birth was from a good father,
Tydeus, whom a heaped mound of earth now covers in
Thebes.

Portheus had three blameless sons born to him, and [115]
they lived in Pleuron and in steep Calydon: they were
Agrius and Melas, and the third was the horseman Oeneus,
father of my father, and he surpassed them all in courage.
Oeneus stayed there, but my father wandered away and
settled

in Argos; such, it seems, was the will of Zeus and the other
gods.* [120]

There he married a daughter of Adrestus, and he lived
in a house of great wealth, and had abundant corn-bearing
ploughland, and many enclosures of trees round about,
and flocks in plenty; and he excelled all the Achaeans in
spear-craft. You will have heard all this, and know if it is
true. [125]

You cannot then say that I am a coward and a weakling by
descent,

and so reject the advice I put before you, if it is good.

Let us go to the battlefield, wounded as we are—we are
forced to—

and there let us keep ourselves away from the fighting, out of

missiles' range, so that no one receives wound upon wound; [130]

but we shall rouse and send the rest into battle, those who before

were loyal in heart but now hang back and refuse to fight.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he said;

and they set off, and Agamemnon lord of men led them.

But the renowned earthshaker was not keeping blind watch,

and went to meet them in the likeness of an old man, and grasped Atreus' son Agamemnon by the right hand, and addressed him, speaking with winged words:

'Son of Atreus, the deadly heart of Achilles must surely now be glad in his breast, as he looks on the slaughter and rout [140]

of the Achaeans; there is no sense in him, not even a little.

May he die, then; may a god cripple his strength.

But against you the blessed gods are not yet completely hostile;

the Trojan leaders and rulers will some day raise the dust across the wide plain, and you yourself will see them [145] fleeing towards their city, away from the ships and huts.'

So he spoke, and sped away over the plain with a great shout,

as loud as the shouts of nine- or ten-thousand men as they grapple with each other on a battlefield in Ares' strife;

so loud was the cry which the lord earthshaker let fly [150] from his chest, and he cast great strength into the heart of every Achaean, to go to war and fight without ceasing.

Now Hera of the golden throne saw this happening before her eyes

from where she stood on a peak of Olympus; and at once

she recognized her brother and husband's brother bustling about [155]

the battle where men win glory, and she was glad in her heart;

but then she saw Zeus sitting on the topmost crest of Ida with its many springs, and he was hateful to her heart.

Then ox-eyed lady Hera deliberated as to how she might deceive the mind of Zeus who wears the aegis; [160]

and this seemed to her in her heart to be the best plan:

to make herself exceptionally beautiful and to go down to Ida,

in the hope that he would feel the desire to sleep beside her and make love to her, and she would pour a soft, forgetful sleep over his eyelids and his crafty mind. [165]

She set off for the chamber that her dear son Hephaestus had made for her, and had set the close-fitting doors on their posts

and made them fast with a secret bolt, that no other god could pull back;

and there she went in and closed the shining doors.

First she washed every smudge from her desirable body [170]

with deathless balm, and anointed her clothing* richly with deathless olive oil; this was her perfumed garment, and it only had to be shaken in the bronze-floored house of Zeus for its fragrance to be spread over the earth and the high sky.

She smoothed this oil also over her beautiful body and hair, [175]

and with her hands plaited the shining hair that fell in its undying beauty from her immortal head.

Then she put on the deathless dress, which Athena had woven

for her to a smooth finish and had embroidered with many designs,

and pinned it over her breast with golden clasps. [180]

Round her waist she fastened a girdle with a hundred tassels,
and set earrings with three drops like mulberries in the pierced lobes of her ears, and they shone with great allure. Then the bright goddess covered her hair with a veil, beautiful and not yet worn, and it was as bright as the sun; [185]

and under her gleaming feet she bound fine sandals. When she had adorned her body with all her finery she made her way from the chamber and called Aphrodite aside from the other gods and addressed her:
'Tell me, dear child—will you do something for me that I ask, [190]

or will you refuse, holding a grudge in your heart because I help the Danaans and you help the Trojans?'

Then in answer Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, said:
'Hera, elder goddess, daughter of great Cronus, say what is in your mind; my heart tells me to fulfil it, [195] if I am able, and it is something that may be accomplished.'

Lady Hera addressed her, with guile in her heart:
'Give me now that love and desire, with which you overcome everyone, both immortals and mortal men. I am going to the limits of the earth that feeds many, to visit [200]

Oceanus, first father of the gods, and their mother Tethys, who raised me kindly and brought me up in their own house

when they received me from Rhea, when wide-thundering Zeus

imprisoned Cronus under the earth and the unresting sea. These I am going to visit, and I shall dispel their unresolved strife; [205]

for a long time now, since anger invaded their hearts, they have

kept apart from each other, from love and from the

marriage-bed.

If I could win both their hearts round with my words
and bring them back to loving union in the marriage-bed,
I should earn their friendship and respect for ever.* [210]

Then Aphrodite who loves to smile answered her:
'It is not possible for me to refuse your request, nor is it
right,
since you sleep in the arms of Zeus, highest of the gods.'
So she spoke, and untied from her breasts a stitched and
embroidered band, on which all her enchantments were
crafted;* [215]

on it was love, on it was desire, and on it was seductive
dalliance, which steals away the wits even of men of good
sense.

This she thrust into Hera's hands and spoke to her, saying:
'There! Take this embroidered band, and tie it to your
breast; all things are crafted on it, and I do not think [220]
you will come back without achieving your heart's desire.'

So she spoke, and the lady ox-eyed Hera smiled,
and smiling tied the band to her breast.

So Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, went to her house,
and Hera darted away, leaving the peak of Olympus, [225]
and alighted on Pieria and lovely Emathia; she sped on
to the snowy mountains of the Thracian horse-breeders,
over their highest peaks, and her feet did not touch the
ground;

from Athos she continued over the swelling open sea,
and came to Lemnos, the city of godlike Thoas.* [230]
There she fell in with Sleep, the brother of Death,
and grasping his hand in hers she spoke to him, saying:
'Sleep, you who are lord over all gods and all men,
as you have listened to my requests before, so now again
do as I say; and I shall be grateful to you for ever. [235]
Lull Zeus' shining eyes to sleep under his brows for me,
as soon as I have lain down in love next to him, and

I shall give you as gifts a fine throne, imperishable for ever,
made of gold; my son, bow-legged Hephaestus, will make it
with his craft, and will set below it a stool for your feet,
[240]

where you may rest your gleaming feet when you are
feasting.'

Then in answer sweet Sleep addressed her:
'Hera, elder goddess, daughter of great Cronus,
any other of the gods who live for ever I might
lightly lull to sleep, even the waters of Ocean [245]
himself, who is the first father of all the immortals.
But as for Zeus, Cronus' son, I would not approach him,
nor would I lull him to sleep, unless he himself ordered it.
I have learnt wisdom from a task you set me once before,
on the day when Heracles, that arrogant son of Zeus, [250]
sailed from Ilium, after he had sacked the Trojans' city.
Then indeed I stilled the mind of Zeus, wearer of the aegis,
softly pouring myself around him; and you devised ruin
against Heracles in your heart, rousing blasts of violent
winds
over the sea, and carried him off to well-populated Cos,
[255]
far from all his friends. When Zeus awoke he became angry
and
began to fling gods about his house, and looked especially
for me;
and he would have hurled me from the high sky into the
sea,
into oblivion, had not Night, who subdues gods and men,
saved me;
I had fled to her as a suppliant, and though Zeus was angry
he
stopped, [260]
for he was in awe of doing anything displeasing to swift
Night.

Now, once again, you are telling me to do something impossible.’*

Then the goddess ox-eyed lady Hera addressed him: ‘Sleep, why do you brood on these things in your mind? Do you think wide-thundering Zeus will be as angry when he [265]

helps the Trojans as he was on behalf of his own son Heracles?

Come now, agree and I will give you one of the younger Graces for you to marry, so that she shall be called your wife—

[Pasithee, whom you will desire for all your days.']*

So she spoke, and Sleep was gladdened, and said in answer: [270]

‘Come then, and swear to me by the inviolable water of Styx,*

and with one hand take hold of the earth that nourishes many,

and with the other the glittering sea, so that all the gods who are below the earth with Cronus may be our witnesses, that you will on oath give me one of the younger Graces— [275]

I mean Pasithee, whom I myself have desired all my days.’

So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not disobey him,

and she swore as he had ordered her, naming all the gods who are under Tartarus, and are called Titans.*

When she had sworn and brought her oath to an end, [280] they left the cities of Lemnos and Imbros behind and continued,

clothed in mist, and quickly passed on their journey.

They reached Ida with its many springs, mother of wild beasts,

at Lectoria; here they first left the sea, and went on above the

dry land, and the tops of the trees shook under their feet.*
[285]

There Sleep halted before the eyes of Zeus could see him,
and climbed up into a tall fir tree, the loftiest then growing
on Ida, which stretched up through the mist into the high
sky.

On this he sat, hidden by the branches of the fir tree,
in the likeness of a shrill-voiced mountain bird that [290]
the gods call 'chalcis' and men call the hawk-owl.*

But Hera went quickly on to Gargarus, the summit
of lofty Ida, and Zeus who gathers the clouds saw her.
The moment he saw her, desire enveloped his crafty mind,
just as it used to when they would first go to their bed and
[295]

make love together, without their dear parents' knowledge.
Zeus stood in front of her and spoke to her, saying:
'Hera, what has driven you to come down here from
Olympus?

And where are the horses and chariot that you ride in?'

Then with guile in her heart lady Hera addressed him:
[300]

'I am going to visit the limits of the earth that feeds many,
to see Ocean, first father of the gods, and their mother
Tethys,
who raised me kindly and brought me up in their own
house.

I shall visit them, and dispel their never-ending strife:
for a long time now, since anger invaded their hearts, they
have [305]

kept apart from each other, from love and from the
marriage-bed.

My horses are standing at the foot of Ida of the many
springs,

my horses that will carry me over the dry land and water;
but I have come down here now from Olympus because of

you,
in case you become angry with me afterwards, if I go off
[310]
to the house of deep-flowing Ocean without telling you.'

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed
her:

'Hera, you can set out for that place at any time in future;
but now, let us go to bed and turn our thoughts to love.
Never before has desire for a goddess or for a woman [315]
so flooded around and subdued the heart in my breast,
not even when I fell in love with the wife of Ixion,
who bore me Peirithous, equal of the gods in counsel,
nor with Danaë of the lovely ankles, Acrisius' daughter,
who bore me Perseus, renowned among all men, [320]
nor when I desired the daughter of far-famed Phoenix,
who bore me Minos and godlike Rhadamanthys,
nor when I desired Semele or Alcmene in Thebes—
Alcmene gave birth to Heracles, a child of mighty spirit,
while Semele bore me Dionysus, the joy of mortals— [325]
nor when I desired lady Demeter of the lovely hair,
nor when I desired splendid Leto, nor you yourself—
never has such desire for you or sweet longing seized me.'

Then with guile in her heart lady Hera addressed him:
'Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said?
[330]

If you are longing now to lie with me and make love
on the peaks of Ida, where everything can easily be seen,
how would it be if one of the gods who live for ever
were to see us two sleeping, and then go and report it to
all the other gods? I could not then rise from this bed and
[335]

go back to your house; it would be a most shameful thing.
But if this is what you really want, and your heart is set on
it,
you have a chamber that your dear son Hephaestus built

for you, and made fast the close-fitting doors on their posts;
let us go there and lie down, since bed is your desire.' [340]

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed her:

'Hera, do not be afraid on that account, that some god or man

will see us; I shall wrap a golden cloud around us, such that not even the Sun could see us through it, he whose light gives him the keenest sight of all.' [354]

So the son of Cronus spoke, and clasped his wife in his arms;

and beneath them the bright earth put forth fresh-growing grass

and dew-drenched clover and crocus and hyacinth, thick and soft, which kept them raised above the ground.

On this the two of them lay, wrapped in a beautiful [350] golden cloud; and from it fell drops of glistening dew.

So the father slept, motionless on the height of Gargarus,

overcome by sleep and love, clasping his wife in his arms; but sweet Sleep set off at a run for the ships of the Achaeans,

to carry his message to the shaker and encircler of the earth, [355]

and standing next to him he addressed him with winged words:

'Poseidon, you may now put your heart into helping the Danaans

and giving them the glory—for a short time only, while Zeus

is still asleep, for I have wrapped soft slumber about him; Hera beguiled him into going to bed to make love.' [360]

So he spoke, and left to join the renowned tribes of men,

setting Poseidon free to help the Danaans even further; and he,

with a great leap forward among the front-fighters, called out:

‘Argives, are we once again going to yield the victory to Hector

Priam’s son, for him to capture our ships and win glory?
[365]

That is what he says and boasts he will do, because Achilles is staying idle by the hollow ships, his heart full of bitterness;

but we will not miss him overmuch, if only the rest of us can bestir ourselves to come to each other’s help.

So come, let us all be agreed, and do as I say: [370]

let us arm ourselves with the best and biggest shields there are in the camp, and cover our heads with blazing-bright

helmets, and take the longest spears in our hands, and march out. I shall lead the way, and I do not think that Hector,

Priam’s son, will yet resist us, for all his great frenzy. [375]

And let every man who is resolute in battle, and shoulders a small shield, give it to a lesser man and arm himself with a larger.’

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he said;

and even the kings, wounded though they were, armed themselves—

Tydeus’ son and Odysseus and Atreus’ son Agamemnon.
[380]

They went through the soldiery exchanging weapons of war:

the good man put on good armour, and gave worse to the worse.

When they had equipped themselves in gleaming bronze,

they made ready to go, and Poseidon the earthshaker led them,
gripping in his brawny hand his terrible long-bladed sword,
[385]
which is like a lightning-flash; no one may engage
with him in cruel warfare, but fear holds men back.

On the other side illustrious Hector was marshalling the Trojans.

Then indeed the grim contest of war was stretched tight
by Poseidon of the dark-blue hair and glorious Hector, [390]
one fighting on the Argives' side, the other on the Trojans'.
As the two sides crashed together with a mighty clamour
the sea surged up to the huts and ships of the Argives; but
neither the sea's waves thundering on to the land, when
they

are stirred up from the deep by the North Wind's fierce
blast, [395]

nor the roaring of a blazing fire that springs up in the
clearings of a mountain, ready to burn down the forest,
nor the howling of the wind in high-leaved oak trees
when its bellowing rage is at its very loudest,
are as loud as were the shouts of Trojans and Achaeans,
[400]

when with terrifying yells they rushed upon each other.

First illustrious Hector let fly his spear at Ajax,
who had turned to face him directly, and he did not miss,
but hit him where two straps were stretched across his
chest,

one supporting his shield and the other his silver-riveted
sword, [405]

and these two protected his soft flesh. Hector was enraged
that his swift weapon had flown from his hand in vain,
and he fell back among the band of his companions,
avoiding

the death-spectre. As he retreated, huge Ajax, Telamon's

son,
picked up a stone, one of many that served as props for
[410]
the swift ships, and which were rolling about the fighters'
feet,
and hit Hector on the chest, above his shield-rim and near
his neck,
sending him spinning like a top with the blow, staggering
this way and that. As when an oak tree falls, uprooted by a
strike
from father Zeus, and a fearful stench of sulphur rises from
it, [415]
and courage deserts those who come close to look at it,
because the thunderbolt of Zeus is a hard thing to endure;
so Hector's fury quickly collapsed to the ground in the dust.
The spear dropped from his hand, and his shield and
helmet fell in
on him, and his armour, intricately worked with bronze,
clattered
about him. [420]
The sons of the Achaeans gave a loud shout and ran up,
hoping to drag him away, and began to hurl their spears,
thick and fast, but no one could stab or hit the shepherd of
the
people; before they could, chieftains came and stood over
him,
Polydamas and Aeneas and glorious Agenor and [425]
Sarpedon, captain of the Lycians, and blameless Glaucus.
And none of the rest deserted him, but held their round
shields
in front of him; and his companions lifted him in their arms
and carried him from the battle's toil to his swift horses,
which were standing waiting for him at the rear of the
battle [430]
and the fighting, with their charioteer and finely crafted

chariot.

They set off to carry him, groaning heavily, towards the city.

But when they came to the crossing of the clear-flowing river,

swirling Xanthus, whose father was immortal Zeus, there they lifted him from the chariot to the ground, and splashed [435]

water over him; and he revived and looked upwards, and getting to his knees spewed up a cloud of dark blood. Then he sank back on to the ground, and black night covered his eyes, for the blow was still crushing his spirit.

When the Argives saw Hector withdrawing, they sprang [440]

the more eagerly at the Trojans, and called up their battle-lust.

Well before all the rest swift Ajax, son of Oïleus, leapt at Satnius, Enops' son, and wounded him with his sharp spear —

Satnius, whom a blameless water-nymph had borne to Enops as he tended his cattle by the banks of Satnioeis.

[445]

He it was that Oïleus' son, famed with the spear, came up to

and stabbed in the side; he fell on to his back, and over him Trojans and Danaans grappled in the fierce crush of battle.

Polydamas, son of Panthous, wielder of the spear, came up to protect him, and hit Prothoënor, the son of Areïlycus,

[450]

on the right shoulder, and the massive spear drove through his shoulder, and he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with his hand.

Polydamas gave a great shout, and boasted loudly over him:

'Once again, I reckon, a spear has not leapt aimlessly from the massive hand of Panthous' great-spirited son!

[455]

An Argive has given it a home in his flesh, and I think he will use it as a staff when he goes down into the house of Hades.'

So he spoke, and grief entered the Argives at his boast; most of all he stung the heart of Telamon's war-minded son Ajax to anger, because Prothoënor had fallen very near him. [460]

As Polydamas retreated he threw a shining spear at him, but Polydamas avoided the black death-spectre with a sideways leap, and the man who received it was Antenor's son

Archelochus, for the gods had planned that he should die. The spear hit him at the joining-point of head and neck, [465]

on the topmost vertebra, and sheared through both tendons;

and as he fell his head and his mouth and nose hit the ground long before his legs and knees.

Ajax in his turn shouted to blameless Polydamas:

'Think on this, Polydamas, and give me a true answer:

[470]

is it not fair that this man was killed in exchange for Prothoënor? He does not seem a low-born man to me, nor of

low-born stock—more like horse-breaking Antenor's brother,

or his son; there is a close family likeness about him.'

He said this knowing the truth; and grief seized the Trojans' hearts. [475]

Then, standing over his brother, Acamas stabbed Promachus,

a Boeotian, with his spear, as he tried to drag the dead

man off by his feet.

Acamas gave a great shout, boasting loudly over him:

‘Argive braggarts—you can never have your fill of making threats!

I tell you, we are not the only ones to whom hardship and misery [480]

will come, but one day you too will be cut down like this man.

See there how your companion Promachus sleeps, beaten down

by my spear; repayment for my brother’s death has not been

slow in coming. This is why a man will pray to leave a kinsman behind in his halls—someone to ward off harm.’

[485]

So he spoke, and grief came over the Argives at his boast;

but most of all he stung war-minded Peneleos’ heart;

he leapt at Acamas, and Acamas could not withstand the onslaught of lord Peneleos. Next he stabbed Ilioneus, son of Phorbas, rich in flocks, whom Hermes loved [490]

most of all the Trojans, and had given him riches; and Ilioneus was the only son his mother bore to Phorbas.

Peneleos

stabbed him below the brow, at the eye’s base,

and forced out his eyeball; the spear passed straight through

the eye-socket and the tendons of his neck, and he collapsed, [495]

stretching out both hands. Peneleos drew his sharp sword and drove it at the middle of his neck, and struck off his head,

helmet and all, and it fell to the ground. The massive spear stayed

stuck in his eye; Peneleos lifted up the head, like a poppy-

head

on its stem, and displayed it to the Trojans, and spoke
boastingly: [500]

‘Trojans, take my words and tell the dear father and mother
of splendid Ilioneus to set up lamentation in their halls; nor
will

the wife of Promachus, son of Alegenor, have any joy
at the return of her beloved husband, whenever it is that
we sons of the Achaeans sail with our ships from Troy.’

[505]

So he spoke, and trembling stole into all their limbs,
and
each man looked about to find some escape from sheer
ruin.

Tell me now, Muses, who have your homes on Olympus,
who was the first of the Achaeans to take the bloody spoils
from a man killed, after the famed earthshaker turned the
battle. [510]

It was Ajax first, the son of Telamon, who stabbed Hyrtius,
son of Gyrtias, captain of the stout-hearted Mysians.*

Antilochus stripped the spoils from Phalces and Mermerus,
and Meriones killed Morys and Hippotion,
and Teucer slew Prothoön and Periphetes. [515]

Atreus’ son then stabbed Hyperenor, shepherd of the
people,

in the side, and the bronze tore into him and let out
a stream of innards; his life rushed hastily through the
gaping wound, and darkness covered his eyes.

But it was Ajax, Oïleus’ swift son, who killed the most; [520]

no one was his equal at pursuing on foot when men fled
in panic, after Zeus had stirred up the rout among them.

BOOK FIFTEEN

Now when the retreating Trojans had crossed the stakes
and the
ditch, and many had been beaten down at the Danaans'
hands,
they came to a stand beside their chariots and waited
there,
pale with fear and thrown into confusion; and Zeus awoke
on the peaks of Ida at the side of Hera of the golden throne,
[5]
and sprang up and stood there, and saw the Trojans and
Achaeans—
the Trojans in disorder and the Argives driving them on
from behind, and among them was the lord Poseidon.
He saw Hector lying on the plain, and around him were
sitting
his companions; he was gasping painfully, dazed, and [10]
vomiting blood, for it was not the feeblest of the Achaeans
who had felled him. As he watched, the father of gods and
men
felt pity for him, and looking darkly at Hera addressed her:
'Hera, you are impossible to control! It is surely your evil
plotting
that has taken glorious Hector from the battle and routed
his people. [15]
I wonder: shall I take the lash to you, and will you once
again
be the first to reap the benefit of your mischievous
scheming?
Or do you not remember when you were hung on high, and
I tied

two anvils on your feet, and twisted a golden, unbreakable
chain
around your hands? You hung there in the upper air, in
among [20]
the clouds, and the gods on high Olympus stood around
you
distraught, but could not release you; whoever I came upon
I would seize and hurl from the threshold, and when they
reached
the earth there was little life in them.* Even so, my
ceaseless
anguish for godlike Heracles would not let my heart rest;
[25]
you had won over the North Wind's storm-blasts, and he
helped you
in your wicked scheme to send Heracles over the unresting
sea,
and then you brought him to Cos, that well-populated
island.*
But I rescued him from there, and brought him back to
horse-rearing Argos, after he had suffered many hardships.
[30]
I will remind you of this to force you to give up your
trickery,
so that you may know if your love-making in bed will profit
you—
this abandoning the gods and lying with and deceiving me.'

So he spoke, and the lady ox-eyed Hera shuddered,
and addressed him, speaking with winged words:
'May my witnesses be earth and the wide high sky above,
and the water of Styx that flows downwards,* which is
the greatest and most terrible oath among the blessed
gods,
and also your sacred head and our shared bridal bed,
a thing by which I would never swear falsely: [40]

it is not through my desire that Poseidon the earthshaker is afflicting the Trojans and Hector, and aiding their enemies.

It must be that his own heart urges and commands him, for he pitied the Achaeans when he saw them hard pressed by their ships. But I would certainly advise him too to follow [45]

wherever you, lord of the dark cloud, may lead him.'

So she spoke, and the father of gods and men smiled, and he answered her, speaking with winged words:

'Lady ox-eyed Hera, if in future you were truly to be of the same mind as me when you sit with the immortal gods, [50]

then Poseidon would quickly change his mind and follow your and my wishes, however much he wanted his own way.

However, if what you are saying really is the exact truth, go now to the assembly of the gods and summon Iris and Apollo, renowned with the bow, to come here: [55]

Iris must go among the people of bronze-shirted Achaeans and instruct the lord Poseidon to abandon the fighting and return to his own house, and Phoebus Apollo

must stir Hector up to enter the battle, and breathe fury into him again, to make him forget [60]

the pain that now oppresses his heart; he must instil a spiritless panic in the Achaeans and drive them back again, so that they fall back in flight on the many-benched ships of Peleus' son Achilles. He will then send his companion Patroclus

into battle. Illustrious Hector will kill him with his spear [65] in front of Ilium, after Patroclus has slain many young men, and among them my own son, glorious Sarpedon.* In bitter rage at his death, glorious Achilles will then kill Hector.

From that time on I shall bring about a counter-attack

from the ships, keeping it up unremittingly, until the
Achaeans [70]
capture steep Ilium, through the designs of Athena.
But until then I shall not give up my anger, nor shall I allow
any other of the immortals to help the Danaans down
there,
until I bring to fulfilment the plea of Peleus' son, just as
I promised him at the beginning, and nodded my head in
assent, [75]
on the day that the goddess Thetis clasped my knees,
entreating me to give honour to Achilles, sacker of cities.'

So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not
disobey him,
but set off from the mountains of Ida for high Olympus.
As swiftly as the astute mind of a man who has travelled
[80]
through many lands darts among the many thoughts he
keeps,
saying to himself, 'I wish I was in this place, or in that
place,'
so speedily did the lady Hera fly away in urgent haste;
and she reached steep Olympus and joined the gathering
of the immortal gods in Zeus' house, and when they saw
her [85]
they all rose quickly and held out their cups in welcome.
She ignored the others, but accepted a cup from Themis*
of the lovely cheeks; she was the first to meet Hera,
and addressed her, speaking with winged words:
'Hera, what brings you here? You seem distraught; it must
be [90]
that the son of Cronus, your husband, has made you
afraid.'

Then in answer the white-armed goddess Hera
addressed her:
'Goddess Themis, do not ask me about that; you yourself

know

how overbearing and unbending his spirit is. Now
make the fairly apportioned feast ready in the gods' house,
[95]

and you will hear, in company with all the other immortals,
what dreadful deeds Zeus is about to reveal; and in case
some are
hoping to enjoy the feast, I do not think that they will all be
glad in their hearts to hear the news, neither mortals nor
gods.'

So the lady Hera spoke and took her seat, and [100]
the gods in the house of Zeus were troubled; she smiled
with her lips, but the forehead above her dark brows
showed no softening. Angrily she addressed them all:
'What fools we are to rage witlessly against Zeus!
We are still determined to approach him and stop his
schemes [105]

by argument or by force, but he sits apart and pays no
attention,
and has no regard for us; he says that his power and
strength
make him beyond doubt supreme among the immortal
gods.

So you must each accept whatever troubles he sends you—
as now, I believe, suffering has been laid up for Ares: [110]
his son has been killed in the fighting—Ascalaphus,
dearest of men, whom huge Ares acknowledges his own.'*

So she spoke, and Ares struck his powerful thighs
with the flat of his hands, and spoke in sorrow:
'Do not now blame me, you who have your homes on
Olympus, [115]
if I go to the Achaeans' ships and avenge my son's
slaughter,
even if it is my destiny too to be struck down by Zeus'

thunderbolt

and to lie among the dead men, in the blood and dust.'

So he spoke, and ordered Terror and Panic to yoke his horses, and himself put on his brightly shining armour.

[120]

Then an even greater, more painful bitterness and anger would have arisen between Zeus and the immortal gods, had not Athena, terrified on all the gods' behalf, leapt up from

the throne where she was seated and run through the doorway, and

pulled the helmet from his head and the shield from his shoulders, [125]

and seized the bronze spear from his massive hand and set it aside. She rounded on impetuous Ares with these words:

'Madman, your wits are wandering! You are ruined! Your ears hear,

but to no avail; your mind and your sense of shame have gone!

Did you not hear what the goddess white-armed Hera said — [130]

she who only now has come from Olympian Zeus?

Do you really want to take your full measure of punishment, and then be forced to come back, chastened, to Olympus, and sow the seeds of great suffering for the rest of us?

Because Zeus will quickly abandon the high-hearted Trojans and [135]

Achaean, and will make for us on Olympus with violence in mind,

and will lay hands on us, one after another, guilty and innocent alike.

So I tell you now to give up your bitterness over your son; many a man, better than him in his hands' strength, has been killed

before now, and will be killed again. It would be a hard

thing [140]

to keep safe the children and offspring of every mortal man there is.'

So she spoke, and made impetuous Ares sit back on his throne.

Then Hera summoned Apollo to come out of the house, and Iris, she who carries messages between the gods, and addressed them, speaking with winged words: [145] 'Zeus orders you both to go to him on Ida as quickly as you can;

when you have arrived and looked upon the face of Zeus, you must do whatever he orders and instructs you.'

So the lady Hera spoke, and went back into the house and

sat down on her throne; and the two gods darted off in flight, [150]

and came to Ida of the many springs, mother of wild beasts,

and found wide-thundering Zeus sitting on the height of Gargarus, and a fragrant cloud encircled him like a crown.

The two gods came and stood before Zeus who gathers the clouds;

and when he saw them he was not angry in his heart, [155] because they had quickly obeyed the words of his dear wife.

He addressed Iris first, speaking with winged words:

'Away now, swift Iris, and go to the lord Poseidon, and report to him all that I say, and do not be a false messenger:

tell him to leave the battle and the fighting alone and to [160]

join the assembly of gods, or else to go back into the bright sea.

If he does not obey my orders, and makes light of them, then let him reflect in his mind and in his heart that,

mighty though he is, he may not have the endurance to resist my onset, since I reckon myself much stronger than him, [165]

and older by birth; but his heart does not baulk at thinking himself

my equal, even though the other gods live in dread of me.'

So he spoke, and wind-footed swift Iris did not disobey him,

but dived down from the mountains of Ida to sacred Ilium.

As when snow or freezing hail drops from the clouds at the onset [170]

of a blast from the North Wind, whose birth is in the upper air,

so rapidly swift Iris dropped down, impatient to be off,

and standing nearby addressed the famed shaker of the earth:

'Dark-haired encircler of the earth, I have come here bringing a message to you from Zeus who wears the aegis. [175]

He orders you to leave the battle and the fighting alone and to

join the assembly of gods, or else to go back into the bright sea.

If you do not obey his orders, and make light of them,

he threatens to come here in person and fight you,

matching

strength to strength; he warns you to keep out of the reach

[180]

of his hands, since he reckons himself much stronger than you,

and older by birth; but your heart does not baulk at

thinking

yourself his equal, even though the other gods live in dread of him.'

Then, deeply angered, the renowned earthshaker

answered:

'This is too much! Great though he is, he has spoken arrogantly, [185]

if he wants to restrain me by force against my will, when I am

his equal in honour. We are three brothers, borne by Rhea to Cronus,

Zeus and myself, and the third is Hades, who rules over the dead.

The world was divided into three, and each was given his portion:

when the lots were shaken I was awarded the grey salt sea, [190]

to live in it for ever; Hades drew the murky darkness, and Zeus the wide high sky, among the clouds and upper air, but the earth and high Olympus were left common to all three.*

So I shall not live according to Zeus' will, not at all. Let him live at his ease in his third portion, powerful though he is, [195]

and let him not try to frighten me with his hands' strength, as if I were some abject coward; it would be better for him to

use his violent threats on his sons and daughters, his own children,

who are under compulsion to listen to the orders that he gives.'

Then in answer wind-footed swift Iris spoke to him: [200]

'Dark-haired encircler of the earth, is this then the grim and unyielding message that I am to take back to Zeus? Will you not

change your mind, just a little? Good men's minds can be swayed.

You know how the Furies always side with the firstborn.*

Then in answer Poseidon the earthshaker addressed her: [205]

‘Goddess Iris, what you say is surely according to due measure;

and it is an excellent thing when a messenger is right-thinking.

But this is a bitter grief that comes over my heart and spirit,

when Zeus is minded to rebuke with harsh words one who has an equal share, and has been allotted a like portion.

[210]

Still, though I am indignant, I will give way for now; but I will tell you another thing, and it is a threat straight from my heart:

if against my will, and the will of Athena who gathers the spoil,

and against the will of Hera and Hermes and lord Hephaestus—

if he spares steep Ilium and is unwilling to sack it, and [215] refuses to give a great victory to the Argives, he should know that the bitterness between us will be without remedy.’

So speaking the shaker of the earth left the Achaean army

and dived into the sea; and the Achaean heroes felt his absence.

Then Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed Apollo: [220]

‘Go now, dear Phoebus, and look for bronze-helmeted Hector;

the encircler and shaker of the earth has by now

gone away into the sacred sea, avoiding my sheer anger— or else others too would certainly have heard of our quarrel,

even the gods who live with Cronus below the earth.* [225]

But this course was a far better thing for me and for him,

that

though he was angry before he should avoid my hands,
since the matter would not have been settled without
sweat.

Come now, take the tasselled aegis* in your hands and
shake it fiercely to put the Achaean heroes to flight, and,
[230]

shooter from afar, let illustrious Hector be your special
care:

stir up great fury in him until such time as the Achaeans
in their flight come to their ships and the Hellespont;
from that moment on I myself will plan in word and deed
how the Achaeans may in turn gain a breathing-space from
their toil.' [235]

So he spoke, and Apollo was not deaf to his father's
words,

but set off down from Ida's mountains like a hawk,
a swift killer of doves, the fastest of all flying creatures.

He found glorious Hector, wise Priam's son, no longer lying
down, but sitting up; he had just recovered his senses, and
could now [240]

recognize his companions around him. His gasping and
sweating

ceased, once the mind of Zeus the aegis-wearer had roused
him.

Standing close, Apollo who shoots from afar addressed him:

'Hector, son of Priam, why do you sit here apart from the
rest,

with little life in you? Has some disaster overtaken you?'
[245]

Exhausted, Hector of the glittering helmet answered
him:

'Which of the gods are you, lord, who ask me this, face to
face?

Did you not hear how, as I was killing his companions

by the sterns of the Achaean ships, Ajax, master of the war-cry,

hit me in the chest with a rock, and stopped my surging courage? [250]

Indeed, I had thought that on this day I would breathe out my dear life and pass down to the dead and the house of Hades.'

Then in answer lord Apollo who shoots from afar addressed him:

'Take courage now; such is the helper whom the son of Cronus

has sent to you from Ida, to stand by and defend you— [255]

I, Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, am protecting you as I have done before, both you yourself and your steep citadel.

So come now, command your many charioteers to drive their swift horses up against the hollow ships; I shall go ahead of them and make the whole way smooth [260]

for the horses; and I shall put the Achaean heroes to flight.'

So he spoke and breathed great fury into the shepherd of the people.

As when a horse that is kept in a stall and fed full with barley

breaks its tether and gallops exultantly, hoofs drumming, over the plain, since its habit is to bathe in the waters [265] of a sweet-flowing river; it holds its head high, and its mane flows about its shoulders, and confident in its splendour its legs carry it easily to the haunts and pastures of horses; so swiftly did Hector move his knees and legs, and urge on his charioteers, when he had heard the voice of the god. [270]

As when men who live in the country set out with their dogs in swift pursuit of a horned stag or a wild goat,

but it is saved by a sheer rock-face and a shady wood,
and it was not after all their due destiny to catch it;
but hearing the shouts a bearded lion appears in their way,
[275]

and at once sends them running back, despite their
resolve;
so the Danaans for a while kept up the pursuit in a body,
jabbing at the enemy with swords and double-edged
spears;
but when they saw Hector ranging up and down the ranks
of men
they were all terrified, and their spirits dropped beside their
feet. [280]

Then Thoas, the son of Andraemon, spoke among them;
he was
by far the best of the Aetolians, both skilled in spear-
throwing and
a fine man in standing combat, and few Achaeans could
defeat him
in the assembly, whenever the young men competed in
debate.

With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them:
[285]

'This is indeed a great marvel that I see before my eyes!
Here he is once again, escaping death's spectres and rising
up—

Hector I mean! The heart of each one of us surely hoped
that he had died at the hands of Ajax, son of Telamon;
but now some god has rescued him and kept him alive,
[290]

Hector, who has indeed loosened the knees of many
Danaans,
and will, I think, do so again—for it is not without the will
of loud-thundering Zeus that he stands raging in the front
ranks.

So come, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:
let us order the mass of soldiery to turn back to the ships,
[295]
while those of us who claim to be the best fighters in the
army
make a stand with spears held before us, in the hope that
we can
meet and hold off his first assault; I think that he, for all his
heart's raging, will be afraid to plunge into the mass of
Danaans.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he
said. [300]

And those who were led by Ajax and lord Idomeneus,
and by Teucer and Meriones, and by Meges, the equal of
Ares,
called on the best men and formed a close-set battle-line,
intending to face Hector and the Trojans; and behind them
the mass of soldiery retreated towards the Achaeans' ships.
[305]

Now the Trojans pressed forward in a body, and Hector
led them
with long strides; and in front of him went Phoebus Apollo,
his shoulders wrapped in a cloud, and holding the surging
aegis,
terrible with its shaggy fringe, and shining brightly, that
Hephaestus
the bronze-smith had given to Zeus to carry, to make men
flee in terror; [310]
holding this in his hands Apollo led the people forward.

The Argives massed and resisted them, and a piercing
clamour
arose from both sides. Arrows sprang from bowstrings,
and spears in great numbers flew from bold hands;
some pierced the bodies of young men, swift in the fight,
[315]

but many fell in the middle ground before reaching white
flesh
and stuck in the earth, longing to glut themselves on flesh.
As long as Phoebus Apollo held the aegis steady in his
hands,
both sides' missiles struck home, and the people kept
falling;
but when he looked full in the faces of the swift-horsed
Danaans [320]
and shook it, and himself gave a great loud shout, he
stupefied
the hearts in their breasts, and they forgot their surging
courage.
As two wild beasts drive a herd of cattle or a great flock of
sheep
into turmoil, coming on them suddenly in the depth of
black night, when there is no herdsman at hand, so the
[325]
Achaeans fled in terror, spiritless; for Apollo let confusion
loose among them, and gave the glory to Hector and the
Trojans.

Then, when they had broken the battle-front, man killed
man.

Hector slew Stichius and Arcesilaus,
one the leader of the bronze-shirted Boeotians, and [330]
the other the trusty companion of great-spirited
Menestheus,
and Aeneas killed and stripped Medon and Iasus.
Now Medon was the bastard son of godlike Oïleus
and so half-brother to Ajax, but his home was in Phylace,*
far from his native land, because he had killed a man,*
[335]

the brother of his stepmother Eriopis, wife of Oïleus;
and Iasus was one of the captains of the Athenians,
and was called the son of Sphelus, who was Boucolus' son.

Polydamas slew Mecisteus, and Polites killed Echius
in the battle's forefront, and glorious Agenor killed Clonius.
[340]

As Deïochus fled with the front-fighters Paris hit him at
the base of his shoulder, and drove the bronze clean
through.

While the Trojans were stripping these men's armour,
the Achaeans
rushed frantically this way and that, entangled in the stakes
and
ditch that they had dug, and were forced to fall back behind
the wall. [345]

Then Hector called out to the Trojans with a great shout:
'Leave these bloodstained spoils, and press on to the ships!
If I see anyone going to any other place, and not to the
ships,
I shall make sure he dies there on the spot, and the men
and
women of his family will not give him the due rite of
burning, [350]
but dogs will tear him to pieces in front of our city.'

So he spoke, and with a downward swing of his
shoulders whipped
his horses, and called out along the Trojan ranks; and they
all went
with him, raising a stupendous clamour, driving their
chariot-hauling
horses onward. And in front of them Phoebus Apollo [355]
kicked down the banks of the deep ditch with ease,
making a heap out of them in its midst, and built up
a long, broad causeway, as wide as the cast of a spear
when a man throws it to make trial of his strength.
Over this the Trojans poured in massed order, and in front
[360]

Apollo held out the precious aegis; and with great ease

he broke down the Achaean wall, just as a boy builds sandcastles on the seashore, in the way that children have, and then delights in knocking them over again with hands and feet.

So you, lord Apollo, shattered the immense toil and labour [365] of the Achaeans, and provoked them to panic-stricken flight.

So the Achaeans halted beside the ships and stopped there, calling out to each other and holding up their hands to all the gods, and praying fervently, each and every man; and Nestor the Gerenian, protector of the Achaeans, prayed [370]

hardest of all, lifting his hands up to the starry high sky: 'Father Zeus, if ever one of us back in Argos, rich in wheat, burnt for you the thigh-bones of ox or sheep, wrapped in fat, and prayed for his return, and you assented and promised it, remember that now, Olympian, and keep the pitiless day from us, [375] and do not let the Trojans beat the Achaeans down in this way.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus the counsellor thundered loudly, when he heard the prayers of the old man, son of Neleus.

But when the Trojans heard the thunder of Zeus the aegis-wearer they called up their battle-lust and charged harder at the Argives. [380]

Just as when on the wide ways of the sea a huge wave, driven on by the wind's violence—for this is what chiefly causes the waves to swell—sweeps over the gunwales of a

ship,
so the Trojans swept over the wall with a loud yell,
driving their chariots on, and began a close-combat fight
[385]
by the sterns: the Trojans from chariots, with double-edged
spears,
and the Achaeans, after climbing high on to their black
ships,
with the long jointed pikes that they had lying in the ships
for fighting at sea, * clothed at their point in bronze.

Now Patroclus, as long as the Achaeans and Trojans
were [390]
fighting around the wall, some way from the swift ships,
was sitting in the hut of kindly Eurypylus, and
cheering him with talk, and spreading ointments
over his aching wound to soothe his black pains; *
but when he saw that the Trojans were charging at the wall,
[395]
and that shouting and panic were spreading among the
Danaans,
he groaned aloud, and striking both thighs with the flat
of his hands spoke in lamentation to Eurypylus:
'Eurypylus, I can no longer stay here with you, however
much you need me, for a great conflict has now arisen.
[400]

Let your attendant look after you now, and I shall
go quickly to Achilles, to persuade him into the fighting.
Who knows if, with some god's help, I may arouse his spirit
by my persuasion? A friend's persuasion is a potent thing.'

So he spoke, and left on quick feet. Meanwhile the
Achaeans [405]
were stoutly holding off the Trojans' attack, but they could
not
drive them from the ships, though they were fewer in
number;

nor could the Trojans ever break the companies of the Danaans,
and so make their way in among their huts and ships.
As a carpenter's cord in the hands of a skilful craftsman,
[410]
a man who is proficient in every kind of craft through Athena's guidance, makes a straight line along a ship's timber,
so the fierce fighting was stretched taut between them.
Some were fighting round one ship, and some round another;
but Hector made straight for splendid Ajax, to engage him,
[415]
and the pair of them toiled in battle around a single ship;
but
neither could Hector drive Ajax away and hurl fire into the ship,
nor could Ajax force him back, since a god was urging him on.
Then glorious Ajax hit Caletor, the son of Clytius, in the chest
with a spear as he was bringing fire up to the ship, and
[420]
he fell with a thud, and the torch dropped from his hand.
When Hector saw that his cousin had fallen in the dust before his eyes, in front of the black ship,
he called out to the Trojans and Lycians with a great shout:
'Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters,
[425]
do not back away from the battle in this narrow space,
but rescue Clytius' son, so that the Achaeans do not strip his armour, now that he has fallen in the assembly of the ships.'

So Hector spoke, and let fly a shining spear at Ajax,
but missed him, and hit Lycophron, son of Mastor, [430]

an attendant of Ajax from Cythera, who lived with him because he had killed a man in sacred Cythera; the sharp bronze struck him on the head above his ear as he stood next to Ajax, and he fell from the ship's stern on to his back in the dust, and his limbs were loosened.

[435]

Ajax shuddered, and addressed his brother:

'Dear Teucer, look, our trusty companion has been killed—Mastor's son from Cythera, whom we honoured at home in our halls as much as we did our own dear parents.

Great-spirited Hector has killed him; where now are your swift [440]

death-bearing arrows, and the bow that Phoebus Apollo gave you?'

So he spoke, and Teucer understood, and ran up to stand beside him,

carrying in his hand his curved bow and the quiver that held

his arrows, and at once began to shoot his arrows at the Trojans.

And he hit Cleitus, the splendid son of Peisenor, the companion [445]

of Polydamas, who was the splendid son of Panthous, as he held the reins in his hands, for he was busy with his horses,

driving them to where the companies' confusion was thickest,

hoping to please Hector and the Trojans; but disaster soon overtook him, and no one could ward it off, though they longed to. [450]

The grief-bearing arrow lodged in the back of his neck, and he toppled from the chariot, and his horses shied away, making the empty chariot rattle. Lord Polydamas quickly saw

this, and came up before anyone else to head the horses

off;

he then gave them to Astynous, son of Protiaon, urging him
[455]

strongly to keep him in sight and hold them nearby.

Then he himself went back and joined the front-fighters.

Next, Teucer aimed another arrow at bronze-helmeted
Hector,

and he would have ended the battle by the Achaean ships
if he had hit him and taken away his life in his time of
triumph; [460]

but he did not catch the crafty mind of Zeus unawares, who
was protecting Hector, and even as Teucer drew the well-
twisted

string on his blameless bow at Hector, Zeus broke it, and
robbed

Telamon's son of his glory; the bronze-weighted shaft
swerved off its target, and the bow dropped from his hand.
[465]

At this Teucer shuddered, and addressed his brother:

'Some divine being must be cutting all our battle-plans
short!

He has knocked the bow from my hand, and broken
the newly twisted string that I tied this morning,
so that it would stand up to the volleys of my leaping
arrows.' [470]

Then in answer huge Ajax, son of Telamon, spoke:

'Dear brother, leave your bow and quick-flying arrows to lie
here; some god has a grudge against the Danaans and has
made them useless. Take a long spear in your hand and a
shield

on your shoulder, and do battle with the Trojans, and stir up
the rest [475]

of the people. Even if they defeat us, let them not capture
our

well-benched ships without a struggle; let us call up our battle-lust!’

So he spoke, and Teucer laid his bow down in his hut, and slung about his shoulders a shield with four hide layers, and set on his mighty head a well-made helmet with a [480]

horsehair crest; and the plume nodded terribly above it. He picked up a stout spear, tipped with sharp bronze, and set off running quickly, and took his stand by Ajax’s side.

Now when Hector saw that Teucer’s weapons were useless, he called out to the Trojans and Lycians with a great shout: [485]

‘Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters, now be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage, here by the hollow ships; I have seen with my own eyes how Zeus has ruined one of their best men’s weapons. Courage that comes from Zeus can easily be discerned by men, [490]

both by those to whom he pledges the glory of victory, and by those whom he makes weak and has no wish to defend—

just as now he is weakening the Argives’ fury, and helping us.

So mass together and fight by the ships, and if any of you meets his due death, whether struck from afar or in close fight, [495]

let him die, for it is no ugly thing if a man dies fighting for his country; his wife and children will be safe in the future, and his house and plot of land will be unharmed, if one day the Achaeans sail away in their ships to their dear native land.’

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in every man. [500]

On the other side, Ajax called out to his companions:
'Shame, Argives! It is now certain that we shall either die,
or be saved and drive this danger away from our ships.
Do you really think that, if Hector of the glittering helmet
takes
the ships, you can all get back to your native land on foot?
[505]

Can you not hear Hector urging on all his people?
You can see how great his rage is to set the ships on fire;
it is not a dance he is inviting you to, but a fight.
For us, there can be no better plan or stratagem than
to match hands and fury with them in close combat; [510]
better to decide things once and for all, to die or to survive,
than to be slowly crushed like this in a grim struggle
beside the ships, at the hands of men worse than us.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in every
man.

Then Hector killed Schedius, the son of Perimedes, [515]
a captain of the Phocians, and Ajax killed Laodamas,
Antenor's splendid son, a leader of foot-soldiers.
Polydamas slew Otus, a man from Cyllene, companion
of Phyleus' son Meges, captain of the great-spirited
Epeians.

When Meges saw this he leapt at him, but Polydamas
swayed [520]
out of his reach, and Meges missed him—Apollo would not
let Panthous' son be beaten down in the front-fighters—
and stabbed Croesmus in the middle of his chest with his
spear.

Croesmus fell with a thud, and Meges began to strip the
gear
from his shoulders, but as he did so Dolops sprang at him—
[525]

an expert spearman, who was Laomedon's grandson, and
the mightiest of Lampus' sons, well skilled in surging

courage;

he now closed with Meges and leapt at him, jabbing his spear

at the middle of his shield, but the close-set corslet he wore protected him with its fitted plates. Meges' father Phyleus [530]

had once brought this from Ephyre,* from the river Selleïs; a guest-friend there, Euphetes, lord of men, had given it to him

to wear in war as a defence against men of the enemy, and now it kept destruction away from his son's flesh.

Meges thrust with his ash spear at the topmost plate [535] of Dolops' bronze helmet with its horsehair plume, and broke off the plume of horsehair, and it fell in one piece, bright with fresh sea-purple dye, to the dusty ground.

For a time Dolops stood his ground and fought, hoping for victory,

but then warlike Menelaus came up to help Meges, [540] and stood with a spear at his side, unnoticed, and hit Dolops

in the shoulder from behind; the eager spear, speeding forward,

came out through his chest, and he crumpled and fell headlong.

Meges and Menelaus came up to strip the bronze armour from his shoulders, but Hector called out to his kinsmen, [545]

every one of them, and the first he rebuked was Hicetaon's son,

mighty Melanippus. For a while, before the enemy came, this man used to pasture his shambling cattle in Percote,* but when the well-balanced ships of the Danaans arrived he returned to Ilium, and excelled among the Trojans, [550] and lived near Priam, who honoured him like his own children.

It was he whom Hector rebuked; he spoke, calling him by

name:

‘Melanippus, are we to give up like this? Is your dear heart not moved at all at your cousin’s killing? Can you not see how they are busying themselves with stripping Dolops’ gear? [555]

Come with me; we can no longer stand off from the Argives,

but must fight with them until either we kill them, or they destroy steep Ilium from top to bottom, and slaughter her citizens.’

So he spoke, and led the way, and the godlike man went with him.

But huge Ajax, son of Telamon, urged on the Argives: [560]

‘Be men, my friends, and put shame in your hearts, and in the harsh crush of battle have regard for what other men think;

when men fear disgrace in others’ sight, more escape than are killed,

but there can be no strength or glory in panic-stricken flight.’

So he spoke, and they too raged to drive the enemy back, [565]

and lodged his words in their hearts, and fenced the ships with a wall of bronze; and Zeus roused the Trojans against them.

Then Menelaus, master of the war-cry, prompted

Antilochus:

‘Antilochus, there is no one among the young Achaeans who is swifter of foot or braver than you in the fight; [570]

see if you can leap out and strike down some man of the Trojans.’

So he spoke, and hurried back; he had roused Antilochus,

who leapt forward from among the front-fighters, looked keenly

around him, and threw his shining spear. As he let the spear go

the Trojans gave ground, and the weapon did not fly in vain, [575]

but hit Hicetaon's son, the arrogant Melanippus, on the breast next to his nipple as he entered the battle; he fell with a thud, and darkness covered his eyes.

Antilochus sprang at him like a hound pouncing on a wounded fawn that a hunter shoots at and hits [580]

as it leaps up from its den, and unlooses its limbs; so Antilochus, steadfast in battle, leapt on you, Melannipus, intent on stripping your armour. But glorious Hector saw him,

and came running up through the fighting to meet him.

Antilochus, swift fighter though he was, could not withstand him, [585]

and fled like a wild beast that has done some hideous thing,

killing either a dog or a herdsman tending his cattle,

and flees before a body of men can be assembled;

so the son of Nestor fled, and the Trojans and Hector showered him with whirring missiles, making an astonishing noise; [590]

he reached the mass of his companions, and turned and stood.

Now the Trojans, in the likeness of flesh-eating lions, kept charging at the ships, fulfilling the commands of Zeus, who all the time woke great fury in them, but beguiled the hearts

of the Argives and took away their glory, and roused the Trojans; [595]

in his heart he wished to give the glory to Hector, son of Priam, so that he might hurl awesome, unwearying fire on to the curved ships, and so fulfil all of the immoderate prayer of Thetis. And so Zeus the counsellor was waiting

for his eyes to catch sight of the glare of a ship on fire,
[600]

since he intended the Trojans from that very moment to be
driven back from the ships, and to give glory to the
Danaans.

With this in mind, he was urging Hector, Priam's son, to
attack

the hollow ships, though Hector himself was now raging to
do so;

he was mad like Ares, wielder of the spear, or like deadly
fire [605]

that rages over mountains, in the thickets of a deep wood;
there was foam around his mouth, and his eyes
flashed beneath his fierce brows, and about his temples
the helmet shook terrifyingly as Hector fought—

for Zeus himself in the high sky was his ally, [610]

Zeus who gave him honour and glory, choosing him to be
one man out of a great many, since he was to be short-
lived;

and already Pallas Athena was bringing on the day of
his due destiny, at the hands of the violent son of Peleus.

And indeed he was longing to test the ranks of men and
break them, [615]

wherever he saw the greatest numbers and the finest
armour;

but even so he could not break them, raging wildly though
he was,

since they stood tower-like in close formation, like a
huge sheer cliff that stands on the edge of the grey sea,
and holds out against the shrill winds' scurrying paths [620]
and the waves that roll in and break against it.

So the Danaans stubbornly withstood the Trojans, and did
not run.

But Hector, blazing all around like fire, leapt into their
mass,

falling upon them like a violent wave, wind-nurtured

by storm-clouds, that crashes on to a swift ship; it is covered [625]

all over in foam, and the wind's fearful blast roars in its sail, and the sailors tremble in their hearts in terror, only just being carried out of the way of death; just so the spirits in the Achaeans' breasts were torn apart. But Hector came on like a murderous lion falling on cattle [630]

that are grazing in the low-lying land of a great water-meadow

in their thousands, and the herdsman with them does not know

how to fight off a beast from the carcass of a crook-horned cow,

and so all the time walks alongside the cattle at the front or at the rear; and the lion leaps into the middle of the herd and [635]

devours a cow, and all the rest cower in fear. So then the Achaeans

were panicked into amazing flight by Hector and father Zeus,

all of them; but Hector killed only one man, Periphetes from Mycenae, the dear son of Copreus, who used to carry messages from lord Eurystheus to the mighty hero Heracles. [640]

This inferior man had fathered a son much better than him in every kind of excellence, in speed of foot and in fighting, who was in understanding among the finest in Mycenae.

It was he who now bestowed greater glory on Hector: as he turned to retreat he tripped on the rim of the shield that [645]

he carried, one that reached to his feet, a rampart against spears;

stumbling against this he fell on his back, and as he fell to the ground his helmet rang mightily about his temples. Hector was quick to see him, and ran up and stood close

by,
and planted a spear in his chest, killing him in front of his
[650]
dear companions; despite their distress they could not help
their
companion, for they themselves were terrified of glorious
Hector.

The Argives were now in amongst their ships, and the
topmost
line that had been hauled up first was protecting them; but
the
Trojans poured in after them, and they were forced to
retreat [655]
from the nearer ships, and rallied by the huts in close
formation,
and did not scatter throughout the camp, for shame and
fear
restrained them; and they kept shouting encouragement to
each other.

Now Nestor the Gerenian, protector of the Achaeans, more
than

anyone entreated them and appealed to each in his
parents' name: [660]

'Be men, my friends, and put shame in your hearts, shame
before other men; and each one of you must call to mind
his wife and children, his possessions and his parents,
whether his parents are living or dead; though they
are not here, it is on their account that I beg you to [665]
stand your ground resolutely, and not to be turned to
flight.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each
man.

And Athena drove an amazing cloud of mist from their
eyes,*

and the bright light of day shone out for them on both

sides,
both from the ships and from the equally balanced
battlefield, and [670]
they could make out Hector, master of the war-cry, and his
companions,
both those who were holding back in the rear and not
fighting,
and those who were fighting in the battle by the swift ships.

Now great-hearted Ajax was not content in spirit to take
his stand
in the place where the other sons of the Achaeans had
retreated, [675]
but kept ranging up and down the ships' half-decks* with
huge strides,
wielding in his hands a huge pike that was used for sea-
fighting,
firmly jointed with dowels, and twenty-two cubits long.
As a man well skilled in horsemanship, who from many
horses
has harnessed together four and drives them at speed
[680]
from the plain towards a great city, along the public way,
and many people marvel at him, both men and women,
as he leaps from horse to horse, changing his stance but
all the time keeping secure on his feet, while the horses fly
along;*
so Ajax kept ranging from deck to deck of the swift ships,
[685]
taking huge strides, and his voice reached the high sky
in constant terrible shouts, as he called to the Danaans
to defend their ships and huts. Nor did Hector
stay behind among the mass of close-armoured Trojans,
but just as a tawny eagle swoops down on a flock [690]
of winged birds that are feeding beside a river—
geese or cranes, or swans with long necks—

so Hector made straight for a dark-prowed ship,
dashing right up to it; and from behind Zeus pushed him
with his huge hand, and urged his people to go with him.
[695]

Now once again bitter fighting broke out beside the
ships;
you would think that the men felt no weariness or fatigue
as they grappled with each other, so fiercely did they fight.
And as they struggled these were the thoughts of each
side:

the Achaeans did not think they could avoid disaster, but
[700]

would die, while the heart in the breast of each Trojan
hoped

to set the ships on fire and to kill the Achaean heroes;
these were

the thoughts in their minds as they stood up to face each
other.

Then Hector laid hold of the stern of a sea-traversing ship,
a fine ship, swift over the sea, which had brought
Protesilaus [705]

to Troy, but did not take him back again to his native land.*

It was around his ship that the Achaeans and Trojans
were now cutting each other down, hand to hand; no longer
did they wait at a distance for volleys of arrows or spears,
but stood up at close quarters, both sides being of one
mind, [710]

and fought with sharpened axes and hatchets,

and with great swords and double-edged spears.

Many fine swords with black hilts fell to the ground,
some from hands, some cut from the shoulders of
men as they fought; and the earth ran dark with blood.

[715]

Once Hector had laid hold of the stern he did not let it go,
but

gripping the sternpost with his hands called out to the Trojans:

‘Bring fire! Mass all together, and renew the battle!

Now Zeus has given us a day to make up for all the rest—a chance to capture the ships that came here against the gods’ will, [720]

and caused us great suffering, through the cowardice of old men,

who though I was eager to fight by the ships’ sterns persisted in holding me back and restraining my men.

But if wide-thundering Zeus was then wrecking our wits, now he is himself encouraging and directing us onward.’ [725]

So he spoke, and they charged more fiercely at the Argives.

Ajax, overwhelmed by missiles, could no longer withstand them;

thinking he was about to die, he fell back a little way, leaving

the well-balanced ship’s decks, on to a seven-foot thwart.

There he stood, alert, constantly thrusting the Trojans back from [730]

the ships with his pike, whenever one brought up unwearying fire;

and all the time he called out orders to the Danaans, shouting terribly:

‘Friends, heroes of the Danaans, attendants of Ares—

now be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage!

Do we suppose that there are men behind to help us, or that [735]

there is a better wall, one that can keep ruin away from men?

There is certainly no tower-surrounded city nearby, where we could

find a force to turn the battle’s tide and so save ourselves.

No, we are here on the plain of the close-armoured Trojans,
with our backs to the sea and far from our native land;

[740]

salvation lies in our arms, not in some slackening of war!’

So he spoke, and dashed forward, raging with his sharp
spear;

and whenever any Trojan rushed up to the hollow ships
with blazing fire, in obedience to Hector’s commands,

Ajax was waiting with his long spear and jabbed at him;

[745]

twelve men he wounded, at close quarters in front of the
ships.

BOOK SIXTEEN

So they continued fighting around the well-benched ship; but Patroclus stood beside Achilles, shepherd of the people, weeping warm tears, like a spring of black water that pours its dark stream down a sheer rock-face.

Swift-footed glorious Achilles felt pity when he saw him, [5] and addressed him, speaking with winged words: ‘

Patroclus, why are you weeping like a little girl who runs at her mother’s side and demands to be carried, clutching at her dress, tugging her back as she tries to hurry,

and tearfully looking up at her until she is picked up? [10]

That is what you are like, Patroclus, weeping soft tears.

Have you something to say to the Myrmidons, or to me, or have you heard some message from Phthia, touching you alone?

Yet men say that Menoetius, son of Actor, is still living, and Peleus, son of Aeacus, still lives among the Myrmidons — [15]

these are two whose death we would be grieved to hear about.

Or perhaps you are weeping for the way that the Argives are dying by the hollow ships, as a result of their own arrogance?

Tell me, do not hide it in your heart, so that we may both know.’

Then, charioteer Patroclus, you groaned heavily and addressed him: [20]

‘Achilles, son of Peleus, by far the greatest of the Achaeans, do not be angry. Yes, great distress has crushed the

Achaean:

all those who before this were the best of us are lying
in their ships, wounded by thrown or stabbing weapons.

Diomedes, the mighty son of Tydeus, has been hit,

Odysseus [25]

the renowned spearman and Agamemnon have been
stabbed,

and Eurypylus has been hit by an arrow in the thigh.

Healers skilled in medicines are now busy about these men,
treating their wounds—but you, Achilles, cannot be moved.

O valiant man! May bitterness such as you store inside
yourself [30]

never grip me; how will you benefit men yet unborn

if you do not now protect the Argives from ugly ruin?

You are without pity—your father was not the horseman

Peleus,

nor Thetis your mother, but it was the grey sea and sheer
cliffs

that bore you, so unbending is your spirit. If in your heart

[35]

you are seeking to avoid some divine pronouncement, and

your revered mother has brought you a message from

Zeus,

at least send me out, and send the rest of the Myrmidon
people

with me, and perhaps I shall prove the salvation of the

Danaans.

Give me your armour to wear around my shoulders, and

[40]

then the Trojans may mistake me for you, and hold back

from the fighting, and the Achaeans' warlike sons will

breathe again

in their weariness; there is little enough breathing-space in
war.

Those who are unwearied may easily drive men exhausted

in the conflict away from the ships and huts, back to their city.' [45]

So he spoke, entreating, great fool that he was, for it was to be his own dreadful death and its spectre that he was praying for.

Deeply angered, swift-footed Achilles addressed him: 'O Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, what are you saying? I know of no divine pronouncement that should concern me, [50]

nor has my revered mother brought me a message from Zeus;

no, this is a bitter grief that has come over my heart and spirit,

when a man is ready to dispossess his equal and to take back a prize, because he is the greater in power; that is my bitter grief, after all the pains my heart has endured. [55]

The girl whom the sons of the Achaeans chose as a prize for me,

whom I won with my spear when I sacked a strongly walled city—

lord Agamemnon, Atreus' son, has taken her back from my hands,

as if I were some wandering migrant who has lost his rights. Still, all that is past and done; we should let it go. It is after all [60]

impossible to keep bitterness alive in one's heart for ever, though I did think that I would not give up my anger until war and its clamour reached as far as my ships.

Here, put my famous armour around your shoulders and lead the Myrmidons who love war into the battle, [65] now that a dark menacing cloud of Trojans is surrounding our ships, and the Argives are hemmed in on the shore of the sea, and hold on to only a narrow strip of land,

and the whole Trojan city has come out against them, full of daring, because they cannot see my helmet's frontal [70] gleaming close to them. They would soon flee and fill up the watercourses with their dead, if only lord Agamemnon had

used me kindly; as it is, they are fighting all around our camp.

The spear of Diomedes, Tydeus' son, rages no more in his hands to keep destruction away from the Danaans, [75]

nor have I yet heard the voice of Atreus' son shouting from his hated mouth; it is man-slaying Hector's voice that bursts around us as he urges on the Trojans, while they fill the whole plain with their war-shout and defeat us in the battle.

Despite all this, Patroclus, you must attack them with vigour [80]

and keep destruction from the ships, so that they do not burn them with blazing fire, and rob us of our longed-for return.

Now listen, and I shall put the purpose of my instructions in your mind:

you must win great honour and glory for me in the sight of all the Danaans, so that they will send the beautiful girl [85] back to me, and give me splendid gifts in addition. When you have driven the Trojans from the ships, come back; and if

Hera's loud-thundering husband grants you the winning of glory,

do not set your heart on fighting against the war-loving Trojans without me, because then you will diminish my honour [90]

. And do not, as you take delight in the war and conflict, killing Trojans as you go, lead your troops on to Ilium, in case one of the ever-living gods of Olympus enters the battle

against you; Apollo who shoots from afar loves them dearly.
Instead, turn back again once you have brought salvation's
[95]

light to the ships, and leave the others to fight on the plain.
O father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, how I wish that
of all the Trojans there are, none could escape death, nor
any of the Argives, and that we two could avoid
destruction,
so that we alone could tear down the sacred headdress of
Troy!' * [100]

So they spoke, one to another, in this way; but Ajax,
overwhelmed
by flying weapons, could no longer stand his ground—
both the will of Zeus and the splendid Trojans' spear-casts
were beating him down, and his shining helmet rang
terribly

about his temples as it was struck, battered again and
again [105]

on its well-made cheek-plates. His left shoulder was tiring
from constantly holding his glittering shield steady; but
though

they kept throwing at him they could not knock it from his
grasp.

All the time he was gripped by a painful gasping, and sweat
was running down in streams from all his limbs, and he had
no [110]

chance to draw breath; everywhere disaster was piled on
disaster.

Tell me now, Muses who have your homes on Olympus,
how fire first fell upon the ships of the Achaeans.

Hector drew close to Ajax and struck his ash pike with
his great sword, hitting it at the socket below the point,
[115]

and sheared the tip clean away; Telamon's son Ajax kept
shaking the docked pole in his hand, uselessly, and far

away

from him the bronze head fell with a clang to the ground.
Ajax shuddered, realizing in his blameless heart that this
was the work of gods, that Zeus the high-thunderer was
[120]

cutting their plans short, and plotting victory for the
Trojans.

He gave way before the missiles, and the Trojans threw
unwearying

fire on to the swift ship, and unquenchable flames quickly
spread

over it. So fire swirled round the stern; but Achilles
struck both his thighs and addressed Patroclus: ' [125]
Up with you Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, driver of horses!
I can see the blaze of destructive fire, there, by the ships;
I am afraid they will take our ships, and then there will be
no way

to escape; so put your armour on, quickly, while I gather
the people.'

So he spoke, and Patroclus began to arm himself in
flashing bronze. [130]

First he fastened greaves around his legs,
fine ones, fitted with silver ankle-clasps;
next he put on round his chest the elaborately crafted,
star-decorated corslet of swift-footed Aeacus' grandson.
Over his shoulders he threw a silver-riveted sword, [135]
made of bronze, and after that a huge, massive shield.
On his powerful head he set a well-fashioned helmet
with a horse-tail crest; and the plume nodded terribly above
him.

Then he chose two stout spears, which fitted his grasp.
The only weapon of Aeacus' blameless grandson he did not
take [140]

was his spear, heavy, thick, and massive; none of the
Achaeans

could brandish it, but only Achilles knew how to handle it—the

Pelian ash spear, which Cheiron had long ago given to his dear father,

cut from a peak on Pelion,* to be the death of heroes.

Patroclus ordered Automedon to yoke the horses without delay, [145]

Automedon, whom he honoured most after Achilles, breaker

of ranks, and could trust most of all to wait for his call in battle.

So Automedon led the swift horses under the yoke for him

—

Xanthus and Balius, a pair who flew with the winds' blast, whom Podarge the storm-mare had borne to the West Wind [150]

as she grazed in a meadow beside the waters of Ocean.

In the trace-reins he harnessed the blameless Pedasus, the horse that Achilles carried off when he took Eëtion's city;

though it was mortal, it could keep up with immortal horses. *

Meanwhile Achilles went up and down his huts and armed [155]

all the Myrmidons in their gear; and they were like wolves, eaters

of raw flesh, whose hearts are full of unbelievable strength, and who have killed a great horned stag on the mountains and now tear it apart, and all their jowls are red with blood; and they go in a pack to lap with their thin tongues [160]

at the surface of the dark water of some murky spring, belching forth clots of blood; and the spirit in their breasts is without fear, and their bellies are crammed full.

Such were the chieftains and captains of the Myrmidons, swarming to join the noble attendant of swift-footed

Aeacus' [165]

grandson; and in their midst stood warlike Achilles,
urging on the horses and the shield-bearing men.

There were fifty swift ships* that Achilles, loved by
Zeus,
had brought to Troy, and in each of them there were
fifty men, his companions, seated at the benches; [170]
he had appointed five captains, whom he trusted to
give orders, while he himself had high command over
them.

The first line was led by Menesthius of the glittering corslet;
he was the son of Spercheius, a river fed by rain from Zeus,
and beautiful Polydore, daughter of Peleus, had borne him
[175]

to unwearying Spercheius, a woman sleeping with a god,
though in name he was the son of Borus, Perieres' son,
who publicly married her, after giving a huge bride-price.
In charge of the second line was warlike Eudorus,
born out of wedlock to Polymele, beautiful in the dance,
[180]

daughter of Phylas. The mighty slayer of Argus fell in love
with her when his eyes fell on her among singing girls,
in the chorus who danced for Artemis of the golden distaff,
goddess of the hunting-cry. At once Hermes the kindly god
went up into her chamber and lay with her in secret, and
gave her [185]

a glorious son, Eudorus, a peerless swift runner and fighter.
When Eileithyia, the goddess who attends painful birth,
had brought him into the light, and he saw the sun's rays,
then Echeclus, Actor's son, a man of mighty strength, took
her

as wife to his home, after giving an immense bride-price;
[190]

but the old man Phylas raised him kindly and brought him
up,

showing him affection as if he had been his own son.
In charge of the third line was warlike Peisander,
the son of Maemalus, who was the best of all the
Myrmidons
at fighting with the spear, after the companion of Peleus'
son. [195]

The fourth line was led by the old horse-driver Phoenix,
and the fifth by Alcimedon, the blameless son of Laerces.
When Achilles had drawn them all up in order and posted
them

with their leaders, he laid a harsh command on them: '
Myrmidons, let me not find any of you forgetful of the
threats [200]

that you used to make against the Trojans beside the swift
ships,

in all the time of my anger. Each one would blame me,
saying: "

Hard son of Peleus, we see now that your mother raised
you on bile—

pitiless man, holding your unwilling companions back by
the ships.

Let us go back again in our sea-traversing ships to our
homes, [205]

since it is clear that ruinous bile has entered your heart."

That is what you often said against me when you met
together; but now

you are faced with a great work of war, such as you desired
before;

so let every man keep a brave heart, and fight against the
Trojans.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each
man; [210]

and when they heard their king their lines closed more
tightly.

As when a man fits together close-set stones to build the

wall

of a tall house, as protection against the winds' violence,
so their helmets and bossed shields fitted tight together,
shield pressing on shield, helmet on helmet, man on man;
[215]

helmets with their horsehair crests and bright plates
touched

when they moved their heads, so close they stood to each
other.

And in front of everyone two men stood in their armour,
Patroclus and Automedon, with one intention in their minds,
to enter the battle in front of the Myrmidons. But Achilles
[220]

set off for his hut, and raised the lid of a chest,
fine and intricately worked, which silver-footed Thetis
had put on his ship to take with him, filling it full with tunics
and cloaks and woollen rugs, to protect him against the
wind.

In it he had a finely worked cup; no other man ever [225]
drank the gleaming wine from it, nor did Achilles ever
pour libations from it to any god except to father Zeus.

Taking this cup from the chest he first purified it with
sulphur,* and then rinsed it in a stream of clear water,
and washed his hands, and drew off some gleaming wine.
[230]

Then, standing in mid-court, he prayed and poured out the
wine,

looking up to the high sky; and thunder-delighting Zeus
heard him: ‘

Lord Zeus, god of Dodona, Pelasgian, you who live far
away,

ruling over wintry Dodona; and around you live your
interpreters

the Selli, who sleep on the ground and whose feet are
unwashed; * [235]

when I prayed to you in the past you heard my words, and

gave me honour, and dealt the Achaean people a heavy blow,
so this time also fulfil this plea for me:
I myself shall remain here in the ships' gathering-place,
but I am sending out my companion with many Myrmidons,
[240]
to do battle; grant him glory, wide-thundering Zeus,
and embolden the heart within him, so that Hector
may come to know whether my attendant has the skill
to fight on his own, or whether his hands rage irresistibly
only when I go into the grind of Ares' warfare. [245]
But when he has driven the clamorous fighting from the
ships,
let him come back unharmed to me by the swift ships, with
all his gear, and with his hand-to-hand-fighting
companions.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus the counsellor heard
him,
and the father granted him one request, but refused the
other: [250]
he granted that Patroclus should drive war and fighting
from the ships,
but refused him a safe and sound return from the battle.
So when Achilles had poured a libation and prayed to father
Zeus
he went back into his hut, and put the cup back in the
chest,
and went out and stood in front of the hut; still he wished
in his heart to see the terrible conflict of Trojans and
Achaeans. [255]

Meanwhile the men who had armed with great-hearted
Patroclus
marched onward until with high thoughts they charged at
the Trojans.
They came pouring out like wasps at a road's side,

whom boys love to provoke, forever in their childish folly
[260]

tormenting them in their nests beside the way;
and so they make a common nuisance for many people,
and if some traveller passing that way unwittingly
stirs them up, they fly out with courage in their hearts,
one and all, and do battle on their young ones' behalf.

[265]

With hearts and spirits like theirs the Myrmidons then
poured out from the ships, and an unquenchable shout rose
up.

Patroclus called out to his companions with a great shout: '
Myrmidons, companions of Achilles son of Peleus!

Be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage, to
honour [270]

Peleus' son, who is far the best of the Argives by the ships,
and whose close-fighting attendants are also the best; so
that

Atreus' son, wide-ruling Agamemnon, may come to know
his delusion, in that he did not honour the best of the
Achaeans.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each
man, [275]

and they fell in a mass upon the Trojans; and about them
the ships echoed terrifyingly to the shouts of the Achaeans.

When the Trojans saw the stalwart son of Menoetius,
the man himself and his attendant, gleaming in their
armour,

all their hearts were perturbed, and their ranks wavered,
[280]

since they supposed that the swift-footed son of Peleus
had thrown off his anger and had chosen reconciliation; and
each man looked about for escape from sheer destruction.

Patroclus was the first to let fly with a shining spear,
right into the midst, where the confusion of men was

thickest, [285]

beside the stern of the ship of great-spirited Protesilaus, *
and he hit Pyraechmes, who had brought his horse-
marshalling

Paeonians from Amydon, from the broad-flowing Axios; *
he struck him on the right shoulder, and he fell on his back
in the dust, groaning, and his Paeonian companions around
him [290]

were panic-stricken, for Patroclus had let loose terror
among them all

by killing their leader, who was always their champion in
battle.

Then he drove them away from the ships, and doused the
blazing fire;

the half-burnt ship was left there, and the Trojans fled in
terror

with an astounding clamour, and the Danaans poured out
[295]

between the hollow ships, and the shouts rose without
ceasing.

As when Zeus who gathers the lightning drives a dense
cloud

away from the lofty pinnacle of a huge mountain, and
all the crags and jutting peaks and mountain glens stand
out,

and boundless bright air breaks down from the high sky;
[300]

so the Danaans drove the ravening fire from their ships and
breathed briefly again—though there was no pause in the
fighting,

for the Trojans had not yet been forced back in headlong
flight

from the black ships by the Achaeans, dear to Ares, but still
held out, retreating from the ships only in the face of
greater force. [305]

Then as the fighting spread further man killed man
among
the chieftains. First, the stalwart son of Menoetius hit
Areïlycus
in the thigh with his sharp spear just at the moment when
he was turning to run, and drove the bronze clean through;
his spear shattered the bone, and Areïlycus fell headlong
[310]

on the earth. Then warlike Menelaus stabbed Thoas in the
chest
where it was unprotected next to his shield, and loosened
his limbs.

Phyleus' son Meges watched Amphiclus as he charged at
him,
and was too quick for him, lunging at the top of his leg
where a man's muscle is thickest; the tendons were ripped
apart [315]

around the point of the spear, and darkness covered his
eyes.

Of Nestor's two sons, Antilochus stabbed Atymnius with his
sharp spear; the bronze-tipped spear went clean through
his side,

and he toppled forward. Maris, incensed on his brother's
behalf,

sprang at Antilochus from close quarters, and took his
stand [320]

over the dead man; but godlike Thrasymedes was too quick
for him, and before Maris could wound him lunged at his
shoulder, and did not miss; the spear's point tore the base
of

his arm away from the muscles, and split it as far as the
bone.

He fell with a thud, and darkness came down over his eyes.
[325]

So these two were beaten down by the two brothers and
went down to Erebus; they were noble companions of

Sarpedon,
spear-throwing sons of Amisodarus, who had reared
the ferocious Chimaera that brought ruin to many men.
Ajax, son of Oïleus, sprang at Cleobulus and took him [330]
alive, entangled in the confusion; there and then he struck
him

in the neck with his hilted sword and loosened his fury—
the whole sword grew warm with his blood, and purple
death

and his cruel destiny came down and fastened on to his
eyes.

Peneleos and Lycon charged at each other, for they had
missed [335]

with their spears; both throws had been in vain, and so
they

ran at each other with their swords. Lycon swung at the
plate of the other's horsehair-crested helmet, but his
sword shattered at the hilt; then Peneleos struck him in the
neck

below his ear, and the blade sank right in; only the skin
held [340]

his head, and it slumped to one side, and his limbs were
loosened.

Meriones overtook Acamas on swift feet and stabbed him
on the right shoulder as he was about to mount his chariot;
he toppled from the chariot,

and a mist spread over his eyes.

Idomeneus stabbed Erymas in the mouth with the pitiless
[345]

bronze, and the bronze-tipped spear passed clean through,
underneath his brain, and smashed the white bones;
his teeth were shaken out, and both eyes were filled
with blood; gaping, he blew blood up through his mouth
and nostrils, and a black cloud of death enveloped him.

[350]

And so these Danaan leaders each killed his man.
As ravening wolves fall on lambs or kids, taking them
from herds that have become separated on the mountains
through their herdsman's folly, and the wolves see this,
and quickly carry the beasts off, since they have a timid
spirit; [355]

so the Danaans fell on the Trojans, whose minds turned to
clamorous flight, and they forgot their surging courage.

Now huge Ajax was forever impatient to throw his spear
at

Hector of the bronze helmet, but he in his battle-knowledge
kept his broad shoulders concealed behind his oxhide
shield, [360]

watching out for the whistle of arrows and the thud of
spears.

He knew well that the battle had turned through his
enemies' valour,
but still he stood his ground, trying to save his trusty
companions.

As when, after clear bright air, a cloud breaks into the
high sky

from Olympus, when Zeus is unfurling a tempest [365]
so from the ships there arose shouting and the sounds of
rout,

as the Trojans crossed the ditch again, but not in good
order. Hector

was carried off by his swift-footed horses, arms and all, and
abandoned

the Trojan people who were trapped, involuntarily, by the
deep ditch;

and in the ditch many swift chariot-hauling horses [370]
broke their pole at its end and left their lords' chariots
behind.

Patroclus pursued them, incessantly urging on the
Danaans,

with ruin in his mind for the Trojans, now that they were scattered,
and filling all the ways with shouts and the noise of rout;
high above,
a dust storm spread up to the clouds as the single-hoofed horses [375]
strained to escape from the ships and huts back to the city.
Patroclus, shouting, aimed straight for wherever he saw that
the people were in the greatest confusion; men fell headlong from
chariots under his axles, and their chariots turned upside-down.
The immortal swift horses that the gods had given to Peleus
* [380]
as a glorious gift pressed onward and cleared the ditch with one
bound; Patroclus' heart called to him to go after Hector, and he longed to fell him, but Hector's swift horses carried him away.
As when the whole of the black land is oppressed by a storm
on a day in autumn, when Zeus pours down great torrents of rain; [385]
he is full of rancour towards men and is furious with them, because they give violent, crooked judgements in their assembly,
and drive out justice, with no concern for the gods' gaze, and all the rivers in their land are flowing in full spate, and everywhere torrents are tearing the hillsides away, [390]
rushing with a mighty roar down from the mountains headlong into the purple sea, sweeping away the works of men—
So great was the roar of the Trojan chariots as they fled.

When Patroclus had cut off the nearest companies he drove them back again, penning them by the ships, and would not let them [395] make for the city, for all their striving, but charged in among them between the ships, the river, and the high wall, and began the killing, exacting payment for the deaths of many men.

First he hit Pronous with his shining spear, where his chest was unprotected next to his shield, and loosened his limbs, [400]

and he fell with a thud. Next, Patroclus leapt at Thestor, the son of Enops; he had been knocked out of his senses, and

was sitting hunched in his well-polished chariot, and the reins

had slipped from his hands; Patroclus stood close and stabbed him

with his spear on his jaw's right side, driving it through his teeth, [405]

then hoisted him with the spear, and dragged him over the chariot-rail,

like a man who sits on a jutting rock and drags a sacred fish out

of the sea with line and glittering bronze hook. So Patroclus dragged Thestor, gaping, from his chariot on his shining spear,

and thrust him down on his face; and his life left him where he fell. [410]

Next, as Erylaus charged at him, he struck him with a rock on the middle of his head, and split it completely in two inside his heavy helmet; and the man fell face-forward to the ground, and life-breaking death poured round him. Next he brought down Erymas and Amphoterus and

Epalmes, [415]

Tlepolemus, the son of Damastor, and Echeus and Pyris,
Ipheus and Euippus and Polymelus, son of Argeas, all of
them,
one after another, down to the earth that nourishes many.

When Sarpedon saw his companions with unbelted
shirts

being beaten down at the hands of Menoetius' son

Patroclus, [420]

he called out in reproach to the godlike Lycians: '

Shame, Lycians! Where are you running? Be quick now!

I am going out to confront this man, to find out who it is
that prevails here, and has indeed inflicted great hurt on
the Trojans, unloosing the limbs of many noble men.' [425]

So he spoke, and leapt fully armed to the ground from
his chariot.

And on the other side Patroclus, when he saw him, jumped
down

from his chariot. Like hook-taloned vultures with curved
beaks

that fight, shrieking loudly, on some lofty peak,

so these two charged screaming against each other. [430]

When the son of crooked-scheming Cronus saw them

he pitied them, and spoke to Hera, his sister and wife: '

This is a great sorrow for me, that it is the fate of Sarpedon,
dearest of men, to be beaten down by Patroclus, Menoetius'
son.

As I ponder in my mind my heart is divided two ways, [435]

whether I should pluck him up alive out of the battle,

bringer of tears, and set him down in the rich land of Lycia,

*

or if I should now beat him down at the hands of Menoetius'
son.'

Then in answer the lady ox-eyed Hera said: '

Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said?

[440]

This is a mortal man, whose due destiny was fixed long ago;

is it really your desire to release him from death's gloomy lament?

Go, do it; but all we other gods will not approve it.

And I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your mind:

if you send Sarpedon back to his own home, alive, [445]
consider whether in the future some other god also will want

to send his own dear son away from the harsh crush of battle.

There are many sons of immortals fighting around the great city

of Priam, and you will cause terrible resentment among them.

No; if he really is dear to you, and your heart mourns for him, [450]

allow him to be beaten down in the harsh crush of battle at the hands of Patroclus, son of Menoetius;

but when his breath and life have gone from him,

send Death and sweet Sleep to carry him away

until they come to the land of broad Lycia, and there [455]

his brothers and kinsmen will give him proper funeral rites, with grave-mound and pillar, which is the privilege of the dead.'

So she spoke, and the father of gods and men did not disobey her,

but began to rain a shower of bloody raindrops upon the earth, *

honouring his own dear son, whom Patroclus was about [460]

to kill in rich-soiled Troy, far from his native land.

When they had advanced to within close range of each

other,
then Patroclus hit far-famed Thrasymelus,
who was the valiant attendant of lord Sarpedon,
in the base of his belly and loosened his limbs. [465]
Sarpedon threw second at him with his shining spear and
missed Patroclus, but hit the horse Pedasus with the spear
on its right shoulder; it screamed as it gasped its life away,
and fell bellowing in the dust, and the life flew from it.
The other horses sprang sideways, the yoke creaked, and
the reins [470]
became tangled in them, since their trace-horse lay in the
dust,
but Automedon, famed with the spear, found a remedy for
that:
drawing his long-bladed sword from beside his sturdy thigh,
he lunged forward and skilfully cut the trace-horse free.
The other two straightened themselves and pulled at the
reins, [475]
and the two men came together again in heart-devouring
war.

Then Sarpedon missed again with his shining spear,
and its point passed over Patroclus' left shoulder,
and did not strike him; Patroclus in turn aimed his
bronze-tipped spear, and it did not fly from his hand in vain,
[480]
but hit Sarpedon where the midriff closes round the beating
heart.
He toppled as an oak tree topples, or a poplar, or a
soaring pine that woodsmen have cut down on the
mountains with their newly whetted axes, to be ship-
timber;
so Sarpedon lay sprawled in front of his horses and chariot,
[485]
roaring, and scrabbling at the blood-soaked dust.
As when a lion gets in among a herd and kills a bull,

a great-spirited, gleaming beast among shambling cattle,
and it dies bellowing under the lion's jaws,
so the captain of the shield-bearing Lycians [490]
died raging, and called out to his dear companion: 'Glaucus, my friend, fighter among men, now you must more than ever be a spearman and a daring fighter; now, if you are swift, let ruinous war be your desire. First, go everywhere up and down those who are leaders [495]

of the Lycians and exhort them to do battle over Sarpedon; and after that fight yourself with the bronze for my sake; I shall in future time be a disgrace and a reproach to you, for ever, for all your days, if the Achaeans strip me of my armour, here where I fell at the gathering of the ships. [500]

So be strong and hold firm, and urge on the people.'

As Sarpedon spoke, the end of death covered his eyes and nostrils; Patroclus planted his foot on his chest, and wrenched the spear from his flesh, and the midriff came with it—

he had pulled out the spear's point and Sarpedon's life together. [505]

There the Myrmidons held on to his snorting horses, anxious to take flight, now that they were free of their lords' chariot.

Terrible grief came over Glaucus when he heard Sarpedon's voice; his heart was in turmoil, because he could not come to his aid.

With his hand he gripped his arm and squeezed it, for he was hurt [510]

by the wound that Teucer, staving off ruin from his companions, had caused with an arrow when Glaucus charged at the high wall. *

He spoke in prayer to Apollo who shoots from afar: ‘
Hear me, lord, you who are somewhere in the rich land
of Lycia, or in Troy! Wherever you are, you are able to hear
[515]

a man in torment, as now torment has come over me;
this wound I have is severe, and my whole arm is shot
through with piercing agony, and my blood will not dry,
and my shoulder is numb and useless because of it;
I cannot hold my spear firmly, nor am I able to go [520]
into battle against the enemy. The best of men is dead,
Sarpedon, the son of Zeus—who will not help even his own
son.

Lord, I beg you, heal this grave wound for me,
soothe the agony, and give me strength, so that I can
call out to my Lycian companions and urge them into
battle, [525]

and can myself fight over the body of the dead man.’

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him,
and immediately stopped the pain, and dried the dark
blood

in his agonizing wound, and cast fury into his heart.

Glaucus knew in his heart what had happened, and was glad
[530]

that the great god had listened to him when he prayed.

First he went everywhere among the leaders of the Lycians
and exhorted them to do battle over Sarpedon, and then
made his way with great strides among the Trojans,
to Polydamas, son of Panthous, and to glorious Agenor,
[535]

and then went to find Aeneas and bronze-helmeted Hector;
standing nearby he addressed them in winged words: ‘

Hector, you must now have completely forgotten your
allies,

who for your sake are wasting their lives away far from
their friends and native land, while you refuse to help them.

[540]

Sarpedon, captain of the shield-bearing Lycians, lies dead,
who used to defend Lycia with his judgements and his
strength;

brazen Ares has beaten him down under Patroclus' spear.

Come, my friends, take your stand beside me, and set
anger

in your hearts, so that the Myrmidons do not strip his arms

[545]

and mutilate the dead man, being angry for all the Danaans
who have died, killed with our spears beside their swift
ships.'

So he spoke, and overwhelming grief took hold of the
Trojans,

uncontrollable and not to be endured, for Sarpedon was
always

a rampart of their city, though from a foreign land; a great
army [550]

had come with him, and among them he was always their
finest fighter.

They made straight for the Danaans, full of passion, and
Hector

led them, enraged for Sarpedon's sake. But the Achaeans
were stirred up by the shaggy heart of Menoetius' son
Patroclus;

first he addressed the two called Ajax, who were already
raging to fight: [555]

'You two called Ajax, now it must be your desire to defend
yourselves,

to be as you have been before among men, or even better.

The man lying dead was the first to leap on to the Achaean
wall *—

Sarpedon; let us see if we can capture and mutilate him,
and strip the armour from his shoulders, and beat down

with [560]

the pitiless bronze any of his companions who defend him.'

So he spoke, and they themselves were raging to aid him in the fight.

On both sides then the armies strengthened their companies,

Trojans and Lycians, and Myrmidons and Achaeans,
and they crashed together, to fight over the dead man,
[565]

shouting terrifyingly; and the men's armour rang out loud.
Zeus spread a deadly darkness over the fierce crush of battle,

so that there should be deadly toil of battle over his dear son.

At first the Trojans drove the darting-eyed Achaeans back;

by no means the worst man of the Myrmidons was struck down, [570]

glorious Epeigeus, the son of great-spirited Agacles,
who used to rule over Boudeion, a well-populated city,
in former times; but he had killed a noble kinsman, and
came as a suppliant to Peleus and silver-footed Thetis, and
they had sent him to accompany Achilles, breaker of ranks,
[575]

to Ilium rich in horses, in order to fight against the Trojans.

*

As this man laid hands on the dead Sarpedon, illustrious Hector

hit him on the head with a rock, and split it completely in two

inside his heavy helmet, and the man fell face-forward
over the body, and life-breaking death poured round him.
[580]

Grief came over Patroclus at the death of his companion,
and he charged straight through the front-fighters like a

swift

hawk, which causes panic among doves and starlings;
just so, Patroclus, driver of chariots, you rushed straight for
the Lycians and Trojans, angry in your heart for your
companion. [585]

Next he hit Sthenelaus, the dear son of Ithaemenes,
on his neck with a rock, and tore the sinews away from it.
The front-fighters retreated before him, and illustrious
Hector

with them; as far as is the carry of a long, light javelin
thrown by a man trying his strength in a competition or
[590]

in war, when he is hard pressed by life-breaking enemies,
so far the Trojans retreated, and the Achaeans drove them
back.

The first to turn and face them was Glaucus, captain of the
shield-bearing Lycians, and he killed great-spirited
Bathycles,

the dear son of Chalcon, whose home was in Hellas, and he
was [595]

conspicuous among the Myrmidons for wealth and
prosperity.

As Bathycles pursued and was about to catch him, Glaucus
suddenly

turned and stabbed him with his spear in the middle of his
chest;

he fell with a thud, and thick grief seized the Achaeans,
because a fine man had fallen. The Trojans were hugely
exultant, [600]

and came up and stood round Glaucus in a mass; but the
Achaeans

did not forget their valour, and their fury carried them
straight at him.

There in his turn Meriones killed a helmeted man of the
Trojans—

Laogonus, the daring son of Onetor, who was a priest of

Idaean Zeus, and was honoured by the people like a god.
[605]

Meriones hit him under his jaw and ear, and the life quickly
deserted his limbs, and hateful darkness took hold of him.
Aeneas let fly a bronze-tipped spear at Meriones,
hoping to hit him under the shield as he advanced; but
Meriones looked ahead, and avoided the bronze-tipped
spear— [610]

he crouched forward, and behind him the long spear
stuck fast in the ground, making its butt-end quiver,
and then towering Ares took the fury away from it.
[Aeneas' spear passed quivering into the earth,
since it had flown in vain from his powerful hand. * [615]
Aeneas grew angry in his heart, and spoke to him: '
Meriones, you may well be a good dancer, but my spear
would
soon have stopped you once and for all, if only I had hit
you.'

Then in turn Meriones, famed with the spear, addressed
him: '

Aeneas, it is hard for you, strong though you are, to [620]
quench the fury of every man who comes face to face
with you in the fighting. You too were born a mortal, and
if I were to throw and hit you in the belly with the sharp
bronze,
though mighty and confident in your hands you would soon
give
the glory to me, and your shade to Hades, master of
famous horses.' [625]

So he spoke, but the stalwart son of Menoetius rebuked
him: '

Meriones, you are a fine man; but why use words like this?
My friend, insulting words will not make the Trojans turn
back
from the dead man; the earth will hold many a man before

that.

War's outcome hangs on the work of hands; the place for talk is the council. It is not our task to heap words on words, but to fight.' [630]

So he spoke, and led off, and Meriones, a godlike man, followed.

As when the crashing caused by woodcutters rises up from the clearings of a mountain, and the sound is heard far away,

so there rose up from the earth of wide ways the thudding [635]

of bronze and of leather and of well-made oxhide shields, as men jabbed at each other with swords and double-edged spears.

And now not even an observant man would have recognized glorious

Sarpedon, since he was covered by spears and blood and dust

from his head right down to the toes of his feet. And all [640]

the time men were swarming over the dead man, like flies in a farmyard that buzz around overflowing pails,

in the spring season when buckets are awash with milk; just so they swarmed over the dead man, and Zeus never turned his shining eyes from the harsh crush of battle, but all [645]

the time kept looking down at them and musing in his heart,

debating at great length about the death of Patroclus, whether illustrious Hector should now cut him down as well with the bronze, there and then in the harsh crush of battle over godlike Sarpedon, and strip the armour from his shoulders, [650]

or if he should pile up war's arduous toil for even more

men. And as he pondered this seemed to him to be the better course,
that the valiant attendant of Achilles, son of Peleus,
should drive the Trojans and bronze-helmeted Hector
back again to the city, and should rob many of their lives.
[655]

First of all he put a spiritless temper into Hector, who
mounted his chariot and turned in flight, and called to
the other Trojans to flee, for he saw the work of Zeus'
sacred scales.

Then not even the powerful Lycians stood firm, but they all
fled in terror when they saw their king struck in the heart,
[660]

lying in a heap of dead men—for many men had fallen over
him

after the son of Cronus had prolonged the fierce strife.
The Achaeans stripped his gleaming bronze armour from
Sarpedon's shoulders, and the stalwart son of Menoetius
gave it to his companions to take to the hollow ships. [665]
Then Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed Apollo: '
Come now, dear Phoebus; go and take Sarpedon out of
the spears' range, and wash away his dark blood, and then
carry him far away and bathe him in a river's waters and
anoint him with ambrosia and clothe him in immortal
garments; [670]

send him to be carried away by swift escorts,
the twin brothers Sleep and Death, who will quickly
set him down in the rich land of broad Lycia, where
his brothers and kinsmen will give him proper funeral rites,
with grave-mound and pillar, which is the privilege of the
dead.' [675]

So he spoke, and Apollo did not fail to listen to his
father.
He set off down from the mountain of Ida to the grim
conflict,

and quickly lifted glorious Sarpedon out of the spears'
range and
carried him far away and bathed him in a river's waters and
anointed him with ambrosia and clothed him in immortal
garments; [680]
then he sent him to be carried away by swift escorts,
the twin brothers Sleep and Death, who quickly
set him down in the rich land of broad Lycia.

Now Patroclus shouted instructions to Automedon in his
chariot
and went in pursuit of the Trojans and Lycians, and he was
[685]
mightily deluded, fool that he was. Had he marked the
words of Peleus' son
he would surely have escaped the evil spectre of black
death,
but the mind of Zeus is always more powerful than that of
men:
he turns even the brave man to flight and takes away his
victory,
easily, and yet at another time can himself rouse men to
fight, [690]
as now he caused resolve to enter the breast of Patroclus.

Then who was it you first slew, Patroclus, and who last,
when the gods had summoned you to your death?
Adrestus was the first, and Autonous and Echeclus,
and Perimus, the son of Megas, and Epistor and
Melanippus, [695]
and after them Elasmus and Muliuss and Pylartes.
These he killed, and all the rest turned their minds to flight.

Then the sons of the Achaeans would have taken high-
gated Troy
at the hands of Patroclus, for he was storming ahead with
his spear,
had not Phoebus Apollo taken his stand on the well-built

wall [700]

with thoughts of death for Patroclus, and minded to help the Trojans.

Three times Patroclus climbed a corner of the high wall, and three times Apollo smashed him back, shoving the shining shield away with his immortal hands; but when he launched himself for the fourth time, like a god, [705]

Apollo gave a terrible shout and spoke winged words to him: ‘

Go back, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus! It is not your destiny that the city of the lordly Trojans should be sacked by your spear, nor at the hands of Achilles, who is a far better man than you.’

So he spoke, and Patroclus fell back a long way, [710] avoiding the anger of Apollo who shoots from afar.

Meanwhile Hector was holding back his single-hoofed horses

by the Scaean gates, unsure whether to drive into the mêlée again

and fight, or to call out to the people to gather by the wall. As he was musing on this Phoebus Apollo came and stood by him, [715]

in the likeness of a vigorous and strong young man, Asius, who was horse-breaking Hector’s uncle on his mother’s

side, a full brother of Hecuba, and the son of Dymas, whose home was in Phrygia by the waters of Sangarius; taking his likeness, Apollo, son of Zeus, addressed him: ‘ [720]

Hector, why have you stopped fighting? You should not do so.

I wish I were as much stronger than you as you are than me

—

you would soon find it painful to withdraw from the fighting.
Come now, drive your strong-hoofed horses at Patroclus
to see if you can kill him, and if Apollo will give you glory.'
[725]

So he spoke, and went away, a god joining the toil of
men;
and illustrious Hector ordered war-minded Cebriones
to lash the horses into the fighting. Apollo left them
and joined the mass of men, and let loose ruinous
confusion
among the Argives, but gave glory to the Trojans and
Hector. [730]

Hector left the other Danaans alone, killing none of them,
but drove his strong-hoofed horses towards Patroclus;
Patroclus on the other side leapt to the ground from his
chariot,
holding a spear in his left hand and in his right he held a
stone,
jagged and shining, and his hand covered it completely.
[735]

He flung it with his weight behind it; the sharp stone did not
miss its man, nor fly in vain, but hit Hector's charioteer,
Cebriones, a bastard son of splendid Priam,
on the forehead as he was holding the reins.
The rock crushed both his brows together, and the bone
[740]

could not hold, and his eyes fell to the ground in the dust,
there before his feet; he dropped like a diver from
the well-made chariot, and the life left his bones.

Then, charioteer Patroclus, you addressed him jeeringly: '
Well, this is a very nimble fellow, and an agile diver! [745]
Doubtless if he were on the fish-rich sea this man
could leap from a ship and satisfy the hunger of many
by looking for oysters, even in very stormy weather—
so agilely does he now dive from his chariot on to the plain.

So, it seems, there are acrobats even among the Trojans!’
[750]

So speaking he made for the hero Cebriones with the
spring
of a lion, that while causing a shambles in cattle-folds
is hit in the chest, and is killed by its own courage;
just so, Patroclus, you sprang at Cebriones, full of rage.
On the other side Hector jumped to the ground from his
chariot, [755]
and the two of them struggled over Cebriones like lions
on mountain peaks fighting with fearless spirits,
both of them hungry, over a hind that has been killed;
so these two raisers of the battle-cry, Patroclus, Menoetius’
son,
and illustrious Hector, strained over Cebriones to [760]
hack at each other’s flesh with the pitiless bronze.
Hector seized him by the head, and would not let go, while
Patroclus on his side caught him by the foot; and the rest of
the Trojans and Danaans joined in the fierce crush of battle.

As when the East and South Winds struggle with each
other [765]

in the clearings of a mountain to make a deep wood shake
—

beech, ash, and smooth-barked oak tree, which dash their
long branches against each other with an astounding
clamour—

and the noise of their cracking goes up as they break,
so the Trojans and the Achaeans leapt upon each other,
[770]

cutting men down, and neither side thought of fatal flight.
Around Cebriones many sharp spears were driven home,
and winged arrows too, springing from bowstrings, and
many great rocks were smashed into men’s shields as they
struggled over him. And all this time he was lying in the
whirling [775]

dust, mightily in his might, his chariot-skill all forgotten.
As long as the sun bestrode the midpoint of the high sky
both sides' missiles struck home, and the men kept falling;
but when the sun sloped towards the time when oxen are
unyoked,

then the Achaeans proved stronger, beyond what was
fated. [780]

They dragged the hero Cebriones out of the missiles' range,
away

from the Trojans' shouts, and stripped the armour from his
shoulders,

and Patroclus sprang at the Trojans with destruction in his
heart.

Three times he leapt forward, the equal of swift Ares,
yelling

terribly, and three times he killed nine men. But when he
was [785]

about to charge for the fourth time like some divine being,
then, Patroclus, the end of your life became clear to see;
in the fierce crush of battle Phoebus came to oppose you,
terrible god. Patroclus did not see him coming through the
mêlée,

because he came to confront him concealed in a thick mist;
[790]

he stood behind Patroclus and struck his back and broad
shoulders with the flat of his hand, and his eyes whirled
round.

Then Phoebus Apollo struck the helmet from his head,
and the vizored helmet rolled clanging away

under the feet of the horses, its plumes defiled [795]

with blood and dust. Before this it had not been allowed
for this horsehair-crested helmet to be defiled with dust,
when it protected the head and handsome face of the
godlike man, Achilles; but this time Zeus gave it to Hector
to wear on his head—though his own death was near at
hand. [800]

Patroclus' long-shadowing spear, heavy, thick, and massive
and
bronze-pointed, shattered completely in his hands, and his
fringed
shield fell from his shoulders to the ground, together with
its strap,
and lord Apollo, the son of Zeus, unfastened his corslet;
fatal delusion seized his wits, his glorious limbs were
unloosed, [805]
and he stood there in a daze. Then a Dardanian hit him
from close
behind with his sharp spear, in the back, between the
shoulders;
this was Euphorbus, the son of Panthous, who excelled all
men
of his age in spear-throwing and chariot-skill and speed of
foot,
and had already brought down twenty men from their
chariots, [810]
though it was the first time he had come in his chariot to
learn about war;
it was this man who first threw a spear at you, charioteer
Patroclus,
but he did not kill you; after pulling the ash spear from your
flesh
he ran back and mingled with the soldiery, and would not
wait
to face Patroclus in the battle, unarmed though he was.
[815]
He, beaten down by the god's blow and by the spear,
began
to retreat to his companions' people, avoiding the death-
spectre;
but when Hector saw that great-spirited Patroclus had been
wounded with the sharp bronze and was falling back,
he came up along the ranks and from close by thrust his

spear [820]

into the base of his belly, and drove the bronze clean through.

He fell with a thud, and brought great grief to the Achaean army.

As when a lion overpowers a tireless boar in battle—the two of them fighting with fearless spirits on some mountain's peaks over a little spring, where both want to drink— [825]

and the lion violently beats it down as it struggles for breath;

so, after Menoetius' stalwart son had killed many men, Hector,

Priam's son, came close and with a spear robbed him of his life,

and boasting over him he addressed him with winged words: '

Patroclus, doubtless you thought you would sack our city, [830]

and would rob the Trojan women of their day of freedom, and would carry them off in ships to your dear native land.

Fool! To protect them, the horses of Hector were straining on swift feet to join the fighting, and here am I, the finest spear-fighter of the war-loving Trojans, to defend them from [835]

the day of necessity. As for you, vultures will devour you here.

Poor wretch, not even Achilles, for all his greatness, could help you;

when you left and he stayed he doubtless said to you many times: "

Patroclus, driver of horses, do not come back to me here at the hollow ships, until you have slashed the shirt of Hector, [840]

slayer of men, around his chest, and covered it with his blood."

So, I think, he spoke to you, and persuaded your witless wits.'*

Then, charioteer Patroclus, with little strength left you addressed him: ‘

Boast loudly while you can, Hector; Cronus’ son Zeus and Apollo have given you the victory, they who have beaten me down [845]

easily—for it was they who stripped the armour from my shoulders.

But if twenty men such as you are had come to confront me they would have died here and now, beaten down by my spear.

No, it was my fatal destiny and Leto’s son that killed me, and among men, Euphorbus; and you are the third to slay me. [850]

But I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your mind:

you yourself have not long to live, and already death and your own harsh destiny are standing close to you, beaten down by the hands of Aeacus’ grandson, blameless Achilles.’

As he said this the end of death enveloped him, and his shade [855]

winged its way from his limbs and went down to Hades, lamenting its doom and leaving behind its manliness and youth.

Then illustrious Hector addressed him, though he was now dead: ‘

Patroclus, why do you prophesy a grim death for me? Who knows if Achilles, the son of Thetis of the lovely hair, [860]

may yet be struck down by my spear and lose his life before I do?’

So speaking he set his foot on Patroclus and pulled the

bronze-tipped spear
from the wound, and kicked him away from it to lie on his
back;
then with his spear he immediately went in pursuit of
Automedon,
the godlike attendant of swift-footed Achilles, since he was
eager [865]
to strike him down; but the swift-footed horses were
carrying him off,
the immortal horses that the gods had given Peleus as a
splendid gift.

BOOK SEVENTEEN

ATREUS' son Menelaus, dear to Ares, was not unaware that Patroclus had been beaten down by the Trojans in the fighting.

He set off through the front-fighters, helmeted in gleaming bronze,

and stood over him, as a mother-cow that before this has not given birth stands lowing over her firstborn calf; [5] just so fair-haired Menelaus stood over Patroclus.

In front of him he held his spear and perfectly balanced shield,

raging to kill any man who came up to confront him.

Nor did the fall of excellent Patroclus pass unnoticed by Panthous' son Euphorbus of the blameless ash spear; he took [10]

his stand close to warlike Menelaus and addressed him:

'Menelaus, Atreus' son, marshal of the people, nurtured by Zeus—

get back, leave the dead man, and let the bloodstained spoils lie;

no man of the Trojans or of their famous allies struck Patroclus with his spear in the harsh battle-crush before I did; [15]

so leave me alone to win splendid glory among the Trojans, before I strike you down and rob you of your honey-sweet life.'

Deeply angered, fair-haired Menelaus addressed him: 'Father Zeus, it is not a good thing to boast so insolently! Not the fury of the panther, nor the fury of the lion, [20] Not the fury of the deadly wild boar, whose spirit in its breast

is the greatest of all as it glories in its might, is seemingly
as great
as is the proud fury of Panthous' sons of the fine ash spear.
Yet the mighty Hyperenor, breaker of horses, did not go on
to take delight in his youth once he had faced and [25]
insulted me.* He said I was the most contemptible fighter
among the Danaans; but I do not think it was on his own
feet that
he returned, to bring happiness to his dear wife and wise
parents.
So it is with you; if you challenge me I shall assuredly undo
your fury. I tell you: give way and go back into the mass
[30]
of men, and do not take your stand against me, or some
calamity may befall you; even a fool understands after the
event.'

So he spoke, but did not persuade Euphorbus, who
answered him:
'Now, Menelaus, nurtured by Zeus, you will surely pay for
my brother whom you killed and spoke boastfully over, and
[35]
made his wife a widow, deep in her new marriage-chamber,
and brought unspeakable grief and lamentation to his
parents.
I could bring some respite to these wretched people's
lamenting
if I could take your head and your armour to them and
lay them in the hands of Panthous and bright Phrontis. [40]
But now—our business must not remain longer without test
or fighting, whether it ends in victory or in flight.'

So speaking he jabbed at Menelaus' perfectly balanced
shield,
but the bronze did not break through it, and the spear-point
was bent back in the tough shield. Then Atreus' son
Menelaus [45]

stood up holding his bronze spear, and prayed to father Zeus,
and as Euphorbus fell back he stabbed him in the base of his throat, throwing his weight behind his brawny hand's thrust;
the point passed clean through Euphorbus' tender neck, and he fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him.
[50]

His hair that was lovely as the Graces', his curls twisted and pinned with silver and gold, were drenched with blood.
As when a man grows the healthy shoot of an olive tree in a lonely place, a fine, flourishing shoot that has been soaked by abundant water; light winds from every quarter
[55]

set it trembling, and it bursts into white blossom, but then a wind suddenly arises and with a great gust uproots it from its trench and lays it flat on the earth; so lay Panthous' son, Euphorbus of the fine ash spear, when
Menelaus, Atreus' son, killed him and stripped his armour.
[60]

As when some mountain-nurtured lion, trusting in its valour,
seizes on the cow that is the best in a herd at pasture, and first takes the neck in its powerful jaws and breaks it, and then greedily gulps down its blood and all its entrails, tearing it apart; and around the lion dogs and shepherds
[65]

clamour loud and long, but from a distance, and are unwilling
to come up and confront it, because pale fear grips them; so no Trojan's heart in his breast had the courage to come up and confront splendid Menelaus.
Then Atreus' son would easily have stolen the famous armour [70]

of Panthous' son, had not Phoebus Apollo grudged it him,
and roused Hector, the equal of swift Ares, against him,
likening himself to a man, Mentès, leader of the Cicones; *
and he addressed Hector, speaking with winged words:
'Hector, you are now running after what you cannot reach,
[75]

pursuing the horses of Aeacus' war-minded grandson;
they are troublesome for mortal men to subdue and drive,
except for Achilles, and he was born to an immortal
mother. *

Meanwhile here is Menelaus, the warlike son of Atreus,
standing over Patroclus; and he has killed the best of the
Trojans, [80]

Euphorbus, Panthous' son, putting an end to his surging
valour.'

So the god spoke and went back into the toil of men,
and bitter grief flooded into Hector's dark inner heart;
he looked keenly along the ranks, and immediately saw
one man stripping the famous armour, and the other lying
[85]

on the ground; and blood was flowing around the stab-
wound.

He set off through the front-fighters, helmeted in gleaming
bronze,

with a piercing shout, in the likeness of the unquenchable
flame

of Hephaestus. Atreus' son was not unaware of his piercing
cry,

and, deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit:
[90]

'What is to be done? If I leave the fine armour behind me,
with Patroclus, who lies here because he tried to avenge
me,

I am afraid that any Danaan who sees it will be angry with
me.

But if I confront Hector and the Trojans alone, and so avoid disgrace, I fear that they will surround me, many against one; [95]

Hector of the glittering helmet is bringing all the Trojans here.

But why does my dear heart debate with me in this way? When a man aspires, against a god's will, to fight with another

whom the gods love, great suffering soon floods over him. No man of the Danaans, then, will be angry with me, if he sees [100]

me giving way before Hector, who fights with the help of the gods.

If only I could somewhere find Ajax, master of the war-cry, then we could go together and call up our battle-lust, even against a god's will, to see if we could drag the dead man away,

for Peleus' son Achilles; that would be the least bad of our troubles.' [105]

While Menelaus was pondering all this in his heart and spirit,

the Trojan ranks advanced, and Hector led them.

Menelaus left the dead man, and gave way and retreated, continually twisting round like a thick-maned lion

that dogs and men are chasing away from a farmyard [110]

with spears and shouts; a chill invades the stalwart heart within it and it retreats from the yard only with reluctance; just so fair-haired Menelaus retreated from Patroclus.

When he reached the band of his companions he turned and

stood, looking about him keenly for huge Ajax, Telamon's son; [115]

and very soon he saw him, on the left of the whole battle, cheering on his companions and encouraging them to fight, for Phoebus Apollo had cast astonishing terror into them.

Menelaus ran up towards him, and stood by him and said:
'Ajax, my friend, come this way! Patroclus is dead—let us
hurry, [120]
and we may at least be able to carry his body back to
Achilles,
stripped though it is; Hector of the glittering helmet has his
armour.'

So he spoke, and roused the spirit in war-minded Ajax,
who strode
through the front-fighters, and with him went fair-haired
Menelaus.
Now when Hector had stripped Patroclus' famous armour,
he began[125]
to pull at him, meaning to cut the head from his shoulders
with the
sharp bronze, and to drag the body away and give it to the
Trojan dogs.
But Ajax drew near, carrying his great shield that was like a
tower,
and Hector gave ground, back into the mass of his
companions,
and jumped into his chariot; and he gave the famous
armour [130]
to the Trojans to carry into the city, to be a great glory for
him.
Then Ajax covered Menelaus with his broad shield, and
stood there, like some lioness standing in front of its young
cubs;
it has led them through a forest and it falls in with some
men
who are hunting and, exulting in its strength, it hoods its
eyes, [135]
drawing down the folds of skin that cover its brows.
In the same way Ajax stood over the hero Patroclus;

and on the other side of him Atreus' son, warlike Menelaus, stood firm, while great grief swelled in his breast.

Then Glaucus, Hippolochus' son, captain of the men of Lycia,[140]

looked darkly at Hector and rebuked him with rough words: 'Hector, you are handsome to look at, but you are unequal to the

fight; now we know that your fine reputation hides a cowardly girl.

Think now how you may save your town and its citadel on your own, with only those warriors who were born in Ilium, [145]

because not one of the Lycians will go out to fight the Danaans

on the city's behalf, since I now see that doing battle with the

enemy fighters, on and on without respite, earns no gratitude.

How could you ever rescue a lesser man among your massed troops,

hard man, now you have abandoned Sarpedon, your guest-friend [150]

and companion, to the Argives, to be their prey and prize*
—

Sarpedon, who served you loyally, both you and the city, while he

lived? Yet now you are not brave enough to save him from the dogs.

So now, if any of the men of Lycia will listen to me, we shall go home, and sheer ruin will surely fall upon Troy. [155]

If now the Trojans had dauntless, indomitable fury in them, such as comes into men who for their native land's sake will undergo toil and armed conflict with their enemies,

then we could quickly drag Patroclus back into Ilium;
and if we were to haul him out of the battle, and he came,
[160]

a dead man, into the great city of lord Priam, the Argives
would at once give up Sarpedon's fine armour, and we
could bring Sarpedon himself into Ilium.* Such is the man
whose attendant has been killed, by far the best of the
Argives

among their ships, both he himself and his close-fighting
followers. [165]

But you had not the courage to stand and face great-
spirited Ajax,
looking him in the eyes amidst the shouts of the enemy,
nor
to charge straight at him, because he is a better man than
you.'

Then Hector of the glittering helmet looked darkly at
him, and said:

'Glaucus, how can a man such as you speak so haughtily?
[170]

I am amazed; I had thought that you were the wisest man
among all those who live in Lycia of the fertile soil;
but now I scorn your wisdom utterly, as I hear you speak,
telling me that I could not stand up against towering Ajax.
I tell you, I am not one to shudder at battle or the din of
chariots; [175]

but the mind of Zeus the aegis-wearer always prevails, he
who

turns even the brave man to flight, and takes away his
victory,

easily, and yet at another time can himself rouse men to
fight.

No, my friend; come here, stand by me and watch my
handiwork,

and see if I shall show myself a coward all day long, as you

say, [180]
or whether I shall stop some Danaan, however great his
desire
for brave deeds, from fighting to defend the dead
Patroclus.'

So he spoke, and gave a great shout and called out to
the Trojans:

'Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters!
Be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage,
[185]

until I put on the fine armour of blameless Achilles,
which I stripped from mighty Patroclus after I killed him.'

So Hector of the glittering helmet spoke, and left the
deadly

warfare, and set off at a run, pursuing his companions on
swift

feet, and quickly overtook them, for they were not yet far
off, [190]

carrying the famous armour of Peleus' son towards the city.
Standing apart from the tear-laden battle he changed his
armour;

he gave his own gear to the Trojans who delight in war to
carry to sacred Ilium, while he put on the immortal armour
of Achilles, son of Peleus, which the gods of the high sky
[195]

had given to his father,* and he had presented it to his son
when

he grew old; but the son did not grow old in his father's
armour.

When Zeus who gathers the clouds saw from afar
Hector

arraying himself in the armour of the son of Peleus,
he shook his head and spoke to his own heart: [200]

'Wretched man! There is no thought of death in your heart,
yet it is close to you; you are putting on the immortal

armour

of one who is the best of men, before whom other men
quail.

It was his companion you killed, a gentle and mighty man,
and

you were wrong to strip the armour from his head and
shoulders; [205]

but as compensation I will now put great power into your
hands,

because you will not return from the battle, and

Andromache

will not receive the famous armour of Peleus' son from you.'

So Cronus' son spoke, and nodded assent with his dark
brows.

The armour fitted Hector's body, and Ares, the terrible
[210]

Enyalios, entered him, and his limbs were filled with
courage and strength. With a great yell he set off, looking
for his famed allies, and appeared before all of them
resplendent in the armour of Peleus' great-spirited son.

Going up and down the ranks he spoke to and roused each
man: [215]

Mesthles and Glaucus and Medon and Thersilochus,

Asteropaeus and Deisenor and Hippothous,

Phorcys and Chromius and Ennomus the bird-seer;

all these he encouraged, addressing them with winged
words:

'Listen to me, you countless tribes of allies who live around
us! [220]

It was not because I was seeking or desiring a huge army
that I assembled each of you here from your cities, but
that you might of your own free will defend the Trojans'
wives

and infant children for me against the war-loving Achaeans.

That is my purpose when I wear my people out, demanding

gifts [225]

and food for you—to make strong the spirit in each one of you.

Therefore let everyone turn and charge straight for the enemy,

either to die or to live; for that is the courtship of war.

And whoever makes Ajax give way to him, and drags Patroclus,

dead man though he is, in among the horse-breaking Trojans, [230]

I shall award him half of the spoils, and half I shall keep for myself; and so his glory will be as great as mine.'

So he spoke, and they lifted their spears and threw their weight

behind the charge, straight at the Danaans, for their hearts yearned

to drag the dead man from under Ajax, the son of Telamon — [235]

fools, for he robbed many of their lives fighting over Patroclus.

Then indeed Ajax spoke to Menelaus, master of the war-cry:

'My friend, Menelaus, nurtured by Zeus, I do not now think that even we two will return home from the war.

My great fear is not so much that the dead Patroclus [240] will soon glut the dogs and vultures of the Trojans, rather that

I am much afraid that some calamity will fall on my life, and yours, since there is a cloud of war—Hector—enveloping everything around us, and sheer destruction appears clear before us.

Come now, call out to the Danaans' chieftains; someone may hear.' [245]

So he spoke, and Menelaus, master of the war-cry, did not

disobey him, and shouted to the Danaans with a piercing

cry:

'My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives—those who drink at the public cost with Atreus' sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus, and who each have a share in commanding the people, [250]

and their honour and glory is bestowed on them by Zeus!

It is a hard matter for me to tell each of the leaders apart when the strife of war blazes so fiercely round us, so let each

advance without being named, and feel outrage in his heart that Patroclus should become a plaything for the dogs of Troy!' [255]

So he spoke, and Ajax, the swift son of Oïleus, heard him clearly,

and was the first to come running through the fighting to meet him,

and after him came Idomeneus, and Idomeneus' attendant Meriones, the equal of Enyalios, killer of men;

as for the rest, what man could recall and tell the names [260]

of all those who after them roused the Achaeans to battle?

Now the Trojans pressed forward in a mass, and Hector led them.

As when, at the outpouring mouth of a river that is fed by Zeus,

a great wave roars against the current, and the seashore's headlands round about bellow as the salt water washes back, [265]

so loud were the Trojans' shouts as they came on. But the Achaeans

stood firm around Menoetius' son, with one purpose in their hearts,

fenced in as they were by their bronze shields; and over their

bright helmets the son of Cronus poured a thick mist,*

because even before this he had not hated Menoetius' son,
[270]

while he was alive and was the attendant of Aeacus'
grandson.

He shrank from letting him become the prey of his
enemies' dogs

in Troy, and so he roused his companions to fight over him.

At first the Trojans drove the darting-eyed Achaeans
back, and

they abandoned the dead man and fled in fear; the
arrogant [275]

Trojans did not kill any with their spears, though they
longed to,

but they did begin to drag the dead man away. But the
Achaeans

were not likely to stay away for long; Ajax quickly rallied
them,

Ajax, who after the blameless son of Peleus surpassed all
the other Danaans both in handsomeness and in deeds of
hand. [280]

He charged straight through the front-fighters, in courage
like a wild boar that on the mountains easily scatters dogs
and vigorous young men as it twists and turns through the
glens;

just so glorious Ajax, the son of splendid Telamon,
rushed in among and easily scattered the Trojan companies
[285]

who were standing astride Patroclus with high hopes of
dragging him away to their city and so winning glory.

Hippothous, the illustrious son of Lethus the Pelasgian,*
had tied his sword-belt around the tendons of Patroclus'
ankle

and was dragging him by the foot through the fierce crush
of battle, [290]

to ingratiate himself with Hector and the Trojans; but ruin

quickly
came upon him, and none of his companions could save
him, though
they longed to. Telamon's son sprang at him through the
soldiery
and struck him at close quarters through his bronze-
cheeked helmet;
the helmet of horsehair plumes split about the spear's
point, [295]
smashed by the great spear and Ajax's brawny hand, and
his brain, drenched in blood, spurted out of the wound
along
the spear's socket, and there his fury was loosened; he let
great-hearted Patroclus' foot fall from his hands to the
ground,
to lie there, and he fell beside it, on his face over the dead
man, [300]
a long way from Larisa of the rich soil; he could not repay
his dear parents for his upbringing, for his life-span was
brief,
beaten down as he was by the spear of great-spirited Ajax.

Hector in his turn let fly at Ajax with his shining spear,
but
Ajax was looking ahead and avoided the bronze-tipped
spear, [305]
narrowly; and Schedius, the son of great-spirited Iphitus,
by far the best of the Phocians, who had his home in
splendid
Panopeus, and who ruled over many men, was the man
whom
Hector hit, under the middle of his collarbone; the bronze
spear-point passed right through and came out under his
shoulder, [310]
and he fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him.

Ajax in his turn hit Phorcys, the war-minded son of

Phaenops,
in the middle of his belly while he was standing over
Hippothous,
breaking through the plate of his corslet; the bronze let out
a stream
of innards, and he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with his
hand. [315]
The front-fighters gave ground, as did illustrious Hector,
and
the Argives gave a loud shout, and dragged the dead men
back,
Phorcys and Hippothous, and peeled the armour from their
shoulders.

Then the Trojans would once again have retreated
before the Achaeans,
dear to Ares, and gone up into Ilium, beaten down by their
lack of spirit, [320]
and the Argives would by their strength and power have
won glory
even beyond their destiny allotted by Zeus; but Apollo in
person
roused Aeneas, taking on the form of the herald Periphas,
son of Epytus, who had grown old with Aeneas' aged father,
practising his herald's craft, and was well disposed towards
him; [325]
it was in his likeness that Zeus' son Apollo addressed
Aeneas:
'Aeneas, how could your people save steep Ilium if it is
against
the will of a god? I have indeed seen other men save their
cities,
trusting only in their strength and power, and in their
courage
and numbers, even though their people were very few; but
now [330]

Zeus wills the victory for us, far more than for the Danaans, and yet you are all in an amazing panic, and will not fight.'

So he spoke; and Aeneas recognized Apollo who shoots from afar

when he looked him full in the face, and shouted loudly to Hector:

'Hector, and all you other captains of Trojans and allies, this is [335]

now a cause of shame for us, to retreat before the Achaeans,

dear to Ares, and to go up into Ilium beaten down by our lack of spirit!

Even now one of the gods came and stood beside me, saying

that Zeus, the all-powerful schemer, is on our side in the battle.

So let us go straight at the Danaans, so that they do not find it [340]

an effortless task to take the dead Patroclus back to their ships.'

So he spoke, and sprang far beyond the front-fighters and stood there;

and the Trojans rallied and took their stand facing the Achaeans.

Then Aeneas with his spear wounded Leiocritus, who was the son of Arisbas, the excellent companion of Lycomedes; [345]

as he fell Lycomedes, dear to Ares, took pity on him, and went and stood very close to him, and threw his bright spear,

and hit Apisaön, shepherd of the peoples, son of Hippasus, in the liver below his midriff, and at once loosened his knees;

Apisaön had come from Paeonia where the soil is rich, [350] and after Asteropaeus was their best man in the fighting.

As he fell, warlike Asteropaeus took pity on him, and
rushed straight forward, eager to grapple with the
Danaans;
but he could not now do so, since they stood around
Patroclus,
fenced on all sides by their shields, holding their spears
before them. [355]
Ajax ranged back and forth among them all, continually
directing them,
ordering that none of them should fall back from the dead
man,
nor should anyone fight far in front of the other Achaeans,
but they
should all stand very close to Patroclus and fight hand to
hand.
So towering Ajax gave his orders, and the earth was
drenched [360]
with crimson blood; dead men fell one on top of another,
Trojans and their allies who were filled with fury and
Danaans
all together—for they too did not fight without shedding
blood,
though far fewer of them perished, since all the time they
were
mindful to keep sheer death from each other in the mass of
men. [365]

So these men fought like fire, and you could not have
said
whether the sun and the moon were still in their place,
since they were enveloped in mist, all the champions
who took their stand around the dead son of Menoetius.
All the rest of the Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans [370]
were fighting untroubled under a clear sky; the sun's vivid
brightness was spread about them, and over all the earth
and the mountains there was no cloud to be seen. They

fought
in bursts, standing far back and avoiding each other's
whirring
missiles; but all the champions in the middle ground, [375]
worn down by the pitiless bronze, were suffering terribly
from both the mist and the fighting.* Two splendid men,
Thrasymedes and Antilochus, had not yet discovered
that blameless Patroclus was dead; they thought he was
still
alive, and fighting the Trojans in the forward clash of men.
[380]
These two, watching anxiously for their companions' death
or flight,
were fighting apart from the rest, as Nestor had instructed
them
when he roused them to leave the black ships and enter
the battle.

So all day long the huge struggle of their grim strife
went on;
and all the while every man's knees and legs and feet [385]
beneath him, and their arms and eyes, were soaking wet
with unremitting sweat and weariness, as they fought over
the noble attendant of Aeacus' swift-footed grandson.
As when a man gives the hide of a great ox, a bull,
one that has been soaked in fat, to his people to stretch
out, and [390]
they take it, and, standing round it in a circle, begin to
stretch it,
and the moisture goes out of it and the fat sinks in while
many men pull, and the whole hide is stretched right
through;*
so both sides kept pulling the dead man this way and that
in this narrow space, for their hearts had great hopes of
[395]
dragging him away, the Trojans to Ilium, and the Achaeans

to their hollow ships. So a savage struggle arose over him,
and neither Ares who drives the soldiery on nor Athena
could have made light of it as they watched, not even if
they

were deeply angry, such was the ruinous toil of men and
horses [400]

that Zeus extended over Patroclus on that day. But glorious
Achilles did not yet know that Patroclus was dead,
because they were fighting a long way from the swift ships,
under the Trojans' walls; and so he never imagined in his
heart

that he was dead, but thought he would go right up to the
gates [405]

and then return alive. He had no thought at all that
Patroclus

would storm the citadel without him, nor even with him—
many times he had heard his mother telling him this would
not be,

secretly, for she used to report the intentions of great Zeus
to him.

But this time his mother had not told him of the great
disaster [410]

that had happened, that the companion he loved the most
was dead.

Meanwhile the others, wielding sharp spears in their
hands,

were fighting unceasingly, hand to hand, over the dead
man, killing

each other. And this is what one of the bronze-shirted
Achaeans

would say: 'My friends, it will bring us no glory to go back to
[415]

the hollow ships; rather let the black earth gape open here
before us all, which would surely be a far better thing for us
if we are going to allow the Trojans, breakers of horses, to

drag

this man back to their city and so win glory for themselves.'

And this is what one of the great-spirited Trojans would say: [420]

'My friends, if it is our destiny to be beaten down near this man,

all of us together, let no man draw back from the fighting.'

This is what they were saying, seeking to quicken each man's fury.

So they fought on, and the clangour of iron rose up to the brazen high sky, through the echoing upper air. [425]

But the horses of Aeacus' grandson,* far from the battle, had been weeping ever since they heard that their charioteer

had fallen in the dust at the hands of man-slaughtering Hector.

Automedon, the stalwart son of Dioreas, kept lashing them with repeated blows of the swift whip, and many times [430]

he spoke to them with soft words, and many times with threats;

but they had no wish either to go back to the ships by the broad

Hellespont, or to join the Achaeans in the fighting, but as a grave-pillar that stands over the burial-mound of a dead man or woman stays in place, firmly fixed, [435] so they stayed motionless, harnessed to the beautiful chariot,

their heads drooping to the earth; and hot tears flowed from their eyes to the ground, as they mourned in longing for their charioteer; and their thick manes were soiled,

hanging from the yoke-pad along both sides of the yoke. [440]

As they mourned, the son of Cronus noticed and took

pity on them,
and shaking his head he addressed his own heart:
'Poor wretches! Why did we give you two to lord Peleus,
a mortal man, you who are both ageless and immortal?
Was it so that you might suffer pain along with luckless
men? [445]

Truly, among all things that breathe and creep over the
earth

there is nowhere anything more pitiable than man.

But it cannot be that Hector, son of Priam, will ride in the
intricately made chariot behind you; I shall not permit it.
Is it not enough that he holds the armour and boasts idly
over it? [450]

No, I shall thrust fury into your knees and your hearts, so
that

you can at any rate bring Automedon safe out of the
fighting

to the hollow ships, for still I shall give the Trojans glory,
to keep killing until they reach the well-benched ships,
and the sun goes down and sacred darkness comes on.'
[455]

So speaking he breathed valiant fury into the horses,
and

they shook the dust from their manes to the ground, and
lightly carried the swift chariot in among the Trojans and
Achaean.

Behind them Automedon fought on, though he grieved for
his

companion, swooping down in the chariot like a vulture
after geese; [460]

with ease he would elude the Trojans' noisy mêlée, and
then

with ease swoop down, pursuing them through the crowded
soldiery.

But as he sped along in pursuit he did not kill anyone,

because being alone in the sacred chariot he was not able both to strike with his spear and to hold back his swift horses. [465]

At last one of his companions caught sight of him—
Alcimedon, the son of Laerces, who was Haemon's son;
he stood behind the chariot and addressed Automedon:
'Automedon, which of the gods has put this profitless
notion

into your heart, and has taken away your excellent wits?
[470]

You fight against the Trojans in the forefront of the soldiery,
alone, and yet your companion has been killed, and Hector
is
preening himself, wearing Achilles' armour on his own
shoulders.'

Then in turn Automedon, son of Diores, addressed him:
'Alcimedon, what other Achaean man could control these
[475]

immortal horses as well as you and hold back their fury,
except for Patroclus, the equal of the gods in counsel, while
he lived? But now death and his destiny have overtaken
him.

Come, take the whip and shining reins for yourself, and
I will dismount from the chariot and join the fighting.' [480]

So he spoke, and Alcimedon leapt into the chariot, swift
to

the rescue; quickly he took the whip and reins into his
hands,

and Automedon jumped down. Illustrious Hector noticed
him,

and immediately addressed Aeneas, who was standing
nearby:

'Aeneas, counsellor of the bronze-shirted Trojans, [485]
look there; I see the horses of Aeacus' swift-footed
grandson

coming plainly out to battle, driven by feeble charioteers.
Now I could hope to capture them—if, that is, you are
willing
in your heart to help—since they would not be strong
enough
to stand and match their battle-strength against the two of
us.’ [490]

So he spoke, and the valiant son of Anchises did not
disobey him;
and they advanced together, their shoulders protected by
shields
of dried and toughened oxhide, covered with a thick layer
of bronze.

Together with them went Chromius and godlike Aretus,
and both in their hearts hoped fervently to kill [495]
the two men and to drive off the strong-necked horses—
fools that they were, for they would not make their way
back

from Automedon without bloodshed. He was praying to
father Zeus,

and his dark inner heart was filled with courage and
strength,

and straightaway he addressed Alcimedon, his loyal
companion: [500]

‘Alcimedon, do not, I beg you, hold the horses far from me,
but keep them breathing close on my back, for I do not
think

that Hector, son of Priam, will cease from his fury until
he has killed the two of us and mounted behind Achilles’
fine-maned horses, and has put the ranks of the Argive
men [505]

to flight, or else has himself been killed among the front-
fighters.’

So speaking he called out to the two called Ajax and to
Menelaus:

‘You two called Ajax, leaders of the Argives, and Menelaus!
As for the dead man, entrust him to the best men that
there are,
to stand resolutely over him and fend off the enemy ranks;
[510]
but we here are alive—come, keep the pitiless day from us
both,
for here in the tear-laden warfare Hector and Aeneas,
the best men among the Trojans, are pressing us hard.
Still, all this lies on the knees of the gods; I shall
throw my spear, and the rest will be Zeus’ concern.’ [515]

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and
threw it,
and hit the perfectly balanced shield of Aretus, which could
not
keep the spear out, and the bronze passed clean through,
and drove through the man’s belt into the base of his belly.
As when a strong man takes a sharpened axe, and [520]
striking behind the horns of an ox from the fields cuts
clean through the tendon, and it starts forward and
collapses,
so Aretus started forward and then fell on his back; the
sharp
spear stuck quivering in his belly, and loosened his limbs.
Then Hector let fly at Automedon with his shining spear,
but [525]
he was looking ahead and avoided the bronze-tipped spear;
he crouched forward, and the long spear stuck fast
in the ground behind him, making its butt-end quiver,
and then towering Ares took the fury away from it.
Then they would have gone at each other with swords,
hand to hand, [530]
had not the two called Ajax, who had come up through the
soldiery
at their companion’s call, separated them, raging though

they were;
struck with terror at the sight of them, Hector and Aeneas
and Chromius who looked like a god fell back once again,
and left Aretus where he was, his life torn out, [535]
lying there. Automedon, the equal of swift Ares,
stripped him of his armour and spoke boastfully over him:
'Truly, I have relieved my heart a little of its grief at the
death
of Menoetius' son, though it is a lesser man that I have
killed.'

So speaking he picked up the bloodstained spoils and
laid them [540]
in the chariot, and mounted himself, his feet and hands
covered in gore like a lion that has devoured a bull.

Once again the grim struggle, cruel and tear-laden, was
extended
over Patroclus; Athena had come down from the high sky
and
wakened the strife, for Zeus the wide-thunderer had sent
her [545]
to stir up the Danaans, since now his mind had changed.
As when Zeus extends a dark-shimmering rainbow over
mortals
in the high sky, to be a portent to them either of war or
to foretell a wintry storm, and it causes men to cease from
their labours on the land, and it is a vexation to flocks,
[550]
so Athena, wrapping herself closely in a dark-shimmering
cloud,
descended on the Achaean people, and stirred up every
man.
The first she addressed, urging him on, was Atreus' son,
mighty Menelaus—for he was standing close to her—
taking on the likeness of Phoenix, in form and tireless voice:
[555]

‘Menelaus, it will surely be a disgrace and a reproach to you if under the wall of the Trojans swift dogs tear apart the loyal companion of splendid Achilles. So be strong and steadfast, and urge on the whole army.’

Then in answer Menelaus, master of the war-cry, addressed her: [560]

‘Phoenix, venerable father, long in years; how I wish that Athena could grant me strength and fend off the spears’ onrush,

and then I would be willing to stand by Patroclus and defend him, for his death has touched my heart closely. But Hector has the terrible fury of fire, and does not cease from [565]

cutting men down with the bronze, for Zeus is granting him glory.’

So he spoke, and the goddess owl-eyed Athena was glad, because he had prayed to her before all the other gods. She put force into his shoulders and into his knees, and into his breast she implanted the daring of a fly, [570] that, however often it is brushed away from a man’s skin, persists in biting him, so delicious does it find human blood; with daring like this the goddess filled his dark inner heart, and he went and stood over Patroclus, and threw his shining spear.

Now there was among the Trojans a certain Podes, son of Eëtion, [575]

a rich and noble man, and Hector honoured him above all the people, since he was a friend and shared his feasts.

As this man darted back in flight, fair-haired Menelaus hit him

on the belt, and drove the bronze right through; he fell with a thud, and Atreus’ son Menelaus dragged him, dead, [580]

away from the Trojans' side and back into his companions' band.

But now Apollo came and stood next to Hector and stirred him on, taking on the likeness of Phaenops, son of Asius, who of all his guest-friends was dearest to him, and his home was in Abydos;

in his likeness Apollo who shoots from afar addressed Hector: [585]

'Hector, what other man of the Achaeans will now fear you, if you tremble like this at Menelaus, who in former times was but a soft spearman? Now he has gone off, carrying on his own

a dead man from the Trojans' side; he has killed Podes, Eëtion's

son, your loyal companion, and a fine man in the front-fighters.' [590]

So he spoke, and a black cloud of grief enveloped Hector, and he set off through the front-fighters, helmeted in gleaming bronze.

Then indeed the son of Cronus took up the tasselled, shining aegis, and concealed Ida in clouds, and sent forth a lightning-flash and a loud thunderclap, and shook the aegis, [595]

and gave victory to the Trojans, causing panic among the Achaeans.

The first man to flee in panic was Peneleos, a Boeotian, struck on the shoulder by a spear, as he kept his body facing

the enemy; it was a surface scratch, but Polydamas' spear grazed the bone, since it had been thrown from close quarters. [600]

Then Hector closed with Leïtus, son of great-spirited

Alectryon,
and wounded him on the wrist, putting an end to his battle-
lust;
he gazed around him and trembled, since he no longer
thought
he could hold a spear in his hand and fight against the
Trojans.

As Hector launched himself after Leïtus, Idomeneus [605]
hit him on the corslet covering his chest, next to the nipple;
the long spear snapped at the socket, and the Trojans
shouted.

Hector then aimed his spear at Idomeneus, Deucalion's
son,

as he stood in his chariot, and missed him by only a little,
but hit Coeranus, Meriones' attendant and charioteer, who
had [610]

come with him from Lyctus, a well-built city. Idomeneus
had earlier come up on foot after leaving the well-balanced
ships, and he would have handed a great victory to the
Trojans,

had not Coeranus quickly driven up his swift-footed horses;
so

he proved to be Idomeneus' salvation, fending off the
pitiless day, [615]

but himself lost his life at the hands of man-slaying Hector.

He it was whom Hector hit under the jaw and ear, and the
spear

tore his teeth out by the roots and cut his tongue in half.

He toppled from the chariot, letting the reins drop from his
hands,

but Meriones stooped and picked them up from the ground
[620]

in his own hands, and addressed Idomeneus:

'Come, lash the horses now until you reach the swift ships;
you know yourself that the Achaeans are no longer
victorious.'

So he spoke, and Idomeneus lashed the fine-maned horses towards the hollow ships, for panic had fallen upon his heart. [625]

Great-hearted Ajax and Menelaus were not unaware that Zeus was handing victory in their turn to the Trojans. The first of them to speak was huge Ajax, Telamon's son: 'What are we to do? Even a man who is a great fool can see that father Zeus himself is helping the Trojans. [630]

Every one of them who lets fly a spear, good fighter or bad, hits his mark, since Zeus guides them all alike; but all of ours fall to the ground, useless and ineffectual. Come, let us devise the best plan we can on our own, both how we may drag the body back, and also bring delight [635]

to our dear companions by returning home ourselves; doubtless they are looking this way full of grief, and do not think

that the fury and irresistible hands of man-slaying Hector can yet be contained, but that they will fall upon our black ships.

I wish there were some companion to take a message quickly [640]

back to Peleus' son, since I do not think he has even heard the cruel news that his dear companion has been killed; but I cannot see such a man anywhere among the Achaeans,

for they themselves and their horses are alike covered in mist.

Father Zeus, rescue the sons of the Achaeans from the mist, [645]

I beg you, make the sky clear, give our eyes power to see! Kill us in broad daylight if you wish, since this is your pleasure!'

So he spoke, and the father took pity on him as he wept;
immediately he scattered the darkness and drove the mist away,
and the sun burst out, and the battle was all made plain.*
[650]

Then indeed Ajax spoke to Menelaus, master of the war-cry:
'Look now, Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, to see if you can find
if Antilochus, the son of great-spirited Nestor, is still alive,
and urge him to go quickly to war-minded Achilles, and
tell him that the companion he loves beyond others is
dead.' [655]

So he spoke, and Menelaus, master of the war-cry, did not
disobey him, but set off like a lion that leaves a farmyard
when it has tired of plaguing the dogs and men
that keep watch all night and will not let it take a
fat beast from the cattle; it is desperate for meat, [660]
and keeps coming at them, but without success, for spears
and burning bundles of sticks fly thick from bold hands
against it, and terrify it for all its impatience,
and at daybreak it goes away, troubled at heart.
Just so Menelaus, master of the war-cry, left Patroclus,
[665]

much against his will, for he was sorely afraid that the
Achaeans
would flee in panic and abandon him as prey to the enemy.
He gave full instructions to Meriones and the two called
Ajax:
'You two called Ajax, leaders of the Argives, and you,
Meriones,
now is the time for men to call to mind the gentleness of
[670]
luckless Patroclus; it was his way to show kindness to all

while he lived, and now death and his destiny have overtaken him.'

So speaking fair-haired Menelaus went on his way, looking keenly around him like an eagle, which men say has the sharpest sight of all winged creatures under the high sky; [675] even when it hovers on high it can detect the swift-footed hare

cowering under a thick-leaved bush, and swoops down on it, quickly seizes it, and robs it of its life.

Just so, Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, your shining eyes whirled everywhere among the numerous company of your companions, [680]

to see if the son of Nestor was anywhere still alive.

Very quickly he noticed him on the left of the whole battle, putting heart into his companions and urging them to fight; standing close by, fair-haired Menelaus addressed him:

'Zeus-nurtured Antilochus, come here and learn the [685] cruel news—but how I wish it had never happened!

I think that you have already seen for yourself, and know that

a god is rolling affliction on to the Danaans, and that victory lies with the Trojans. The best of the Achaeans has been killed,

Patroclus, and a great loss has come to pass for the Danaans. [690]

You must run at once to Achilles by the Achaeans' ships and tell him,

to see if he can quickly bring the dead man back safe to his ship—

though stripped, since Hector of the glittering helmet has the armour.'

So he spoke, and hearing him Antilochus was struck with horror;

for a long time speechlessness gripped him, and his eyes

[695]

filled with tears, and his hearty voice was choked; but he did not ignore the command of Menelaus, and set off at a run, having given his armour to his blameless companion, Laodocus, who was wheeling his single-hoofed horses round nearby.

So Antilochus' feet carried him, weeping, from the battlefield, [700]

on his way to bring a painful message to Peleus' son Achilles.

But your heart, Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, had no wish to help the hard-pressed Pylian companions whom Antilochus had left behind him, though they greatly missed him.

Menelaus put glorious Thrasymedes in charge over them, [705]

and himself went to stand again over the hero Patroclus. He ran

and stood by the two called Ajax, and at once addressed them:

'I have sent the man you spoke of back to the swift ships, to go to Achilles of the swift feet; but I do not think he will come now, hugely angry though he is with glorious Hector, [710]

since he cannot fight against the Trojans without armour.

No, let us devise the best plan we can on our own, both how we can drag the dead man back, and also ourselves

escape death and its spectres, away from the Trojans' war-clamour.'

Then huge Ajax, son of Telamon, answered him: [715]
'Far-famed Menelaus, all that you say is according to due measure.

Now go, you and Meriones, and quickly lift the dead man on to your shoulders, and carry him out of the conflict,

while we two
stay and carry on the fight against the Trojans and glorious
Hector—
one in name and one in spirit as we are, who in times past
also [720]
have taken our stand side by side and faced violent Ares.'

So he spoke, and with a tremendous heave they raised
the dead man

in their arms and held him high. Behind them the Trojan
army

gave a yell when they saw the Achaeans hoisting the dead
man,

and they made straight for them like dogs that speed after
[725]

a wounded wild boar, running in front of young huntsmen;

for a while they race along, raging to tear it to pieces, but

when, trusting in its courage, it wheels round on them,

they back away and scatter in flight, this way and that.

So the Trojans, massed together, for a while kept pursuing,
[730]

jabbing at them with their swords and double-edged
spears;

but when the two called Ajax wheeled round and took their
stand

against them, their skin changed colour, and no one dared
dart forward and fight for possession of the dead man.

So those two, raging, carried the dead man from the
battlefield, [735]

towards the hollow ships, and round them the battle
spread,

fierce as fire that suddenly bursts into a blaze and sweeps
through a city of men, and their houses are destroyed

in a great conflagration, fanned by a mighty roaring wind.

Just so the incessant uproar of horses and spear-carrying
men [740]

followed Menelaus and Meriones as they went on their way.
Like mules that devote their mighty fury to dragging a
beam or some huge ship-timber down from a mountain
along a rocky path, and the spirit in them is worn down
by weariness and sweat alike as they strain at their task;
[745]

so they with fierce energy carried the dead man; and
behind them
the two called Ajax kept the enemy back, as a wooded
ridge,
stretching in a continuous line across a plain, holds back a
flood,
withstanding even the ravaging torrents of mighty rivers
and
diverting all their waters so that they spread over the plain,
[750]

and the torrents' strength is not enough to break through;
so the two called Ajax kept fending off the Trojans'
onslaught
behind them. But the Trojans continued the pursuit, two
men

above all, Aeneas, the son of Anchises, and illustrious
Hector.

As a flock of starlings or jackdaws flies in screaming turmoil
[755]

when they see a hawk coming after them, because it is a
bringer of death to their small fledglings, so the young men
of the Achaeans, pursued by Aeneas and Hector, fell back
in screaming turmoil and forgot their battle-lust.

Splendid gear fell in quantities about and around the ditch
as [760]

the Danaans fled in panic; and there was no stay in the
fighting.

BOOK EIGHTEEN

So they fought on in the likeness of blazing fire, and Antilochus, swift-footed messenger, came to Achilles, and found him in front of his ships with their tall sterns, brooding in his heart on the things that were indeed being fulfilled.

Deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit: [5]
'This is bad! Why are the flowing-haired Achaeans again being driven in confusion and panic over the plain to the ships?

May it not be that the gods have brought about the painful grief for my heart that my mother once foretold to me, saying

that while I still lived the best of the Myrmidons would [10]
leave the sun's light, overpowered by Trojan hands.*

It must be that the stalwart son of Menoetius is dead—
stubborn man! I told him to drive the enemy's fire away
and

to return to the ships, and not to pit his strength against
Hector's.*

While he was pondering this in his mind and in his heart
[15]

Antilochus, the son of splendid Nestor, came up close to
him,

weeping warm tears, and gave him the cruel message:

'Ah, son of war-minded Peleus, this is most painful news
for you to hear; how I wish it had never happened!

Patroclus lies dead, and they are even now fighting over his
[20]

stripped body; Hector of the glittering helmet has the
armour.'

So he spoke, and a black cloud of grief covered Achilles; with both hands he gathered up the sooty dust and poured it over his head, disfiguring his handsome face, and the black ashes settled all over his fragrant tunic. [25] Mightily in his might, he lay stretched out in the dust, and with his own hands tore and disfigured his hair. The maidservants captured by Achilles and Patroclus cried aloud in agony of heart and all rushed out of doors to stand around war-minded Achilles, and with their hands [30]

they beat their breasts, and each one's limbs were loosened.

On his other side Antilochus grieved, weeping tears and holding Achilles' hands and groaning in his noble heart, terrified that he might cut his throat with the iron.

Achilles gave a terrible cry, and his revered mother heard him, [35]

sitting in the depths of the salt sea near her father the ancient,

and in turn screamed in grief, and the goddesses gathered round,

all the daughters of Nereus who lived in the deeps of the sea.

Around her gathered Glauce and Thaleia and Cymodoce, Nesaeë and Speio and Thoë and ox-eyed Halië, [40]

Cymothoë and Actaeë and Limnoreia,

Melite and Iaera and Amphithoë and Agauë,

Doto and Proto and Pherousa and Dynamene,

Dexamene and Amphinome and Callianeira,

Doris and Panope and far-famed Galateia, [45]

Nemertes and Apseudes and Callianassa,

and there too were Clymene and Ianeira and Ianassa,

Maera and Oreithyia and Amatheia of the lovely hair, and

the other daughters of Nereus who lived in the deeps of the sea.

The shining white cave was filled with these nymphs, and they all [50]

together beat their breasts, and the keening was led by Thetis:

‘Listen to me sisters, daughters of Nereus, that you may all hear and know well the great grief that is in my heart.

How wretched I am, unhappy in bearing the best of men!

I gave birth to a son who is blameless and mighty, [55]

supreme among heroes. He shot up tall like a sapling,

and I nursed him like a young tree in a hill-orchard,

and I sent him away in his curved ships to Ilium,

to fight against the Trojans; but I shall never again

welcome him back home to the house of Peleus. [60]

I know that while he is alive and looks on the sun’s light

he is deeply troubled, and that going to him will bring no help.

But go I will, to see my dear child and to hear of the sorrow that has come over him while he keeps away from the war.’

So she spoke and left the cave, and the nymphs went with her, [65]

weeping, and around them the waves of the sea were

split apart. When they reached rich-soiled Troy they came

ashore one by one, on the beach where the Myrmidons’ ships

were drawn up close to each other around swift-footed

Achilles.

He groaned heavily, and his revered mother stood next to him, [70]

and with a shrill cry of grief took her son’s head in her hands,

and in lamentation addressed him with winged words:

‘My child, why do you weep? What grief has come over your heart?

Tell me, do not hide it. You can see that Zeus has fulfilled what you prayed for before, when you held up your hands to him— [75]

that the sons of the Achaeans should all be penned in by their ships,
feeling the want of you, and should suffer shameful treatment.'

With a heavy groan, swift-footed Achilles addressed her:

'Mother, the Olympian has indeed fulfilled that prayer for me;

but what pleasure can it bring me when my dear companion is dead, [80]

Patroclus, whom I honoured above all my companions, as much as my own life? I have killed him; Hector has cut him down and stripped the huge armour from him, that fine armour, a wonder to see, which the gods gave as a splendid gift

to Peleus on the day that they laid you in the bed of a mortal man. [85]

How I wish that you had stayed with the immortal sea-goddesses,

and that Peleus had brought a mortal woman to his house as wife!

But as it is, you too must suffer countless sorrows in your heart:

your son will die, and you will never again welcome him as he returns home, because my own heart tells me to [90]

abandon the company of men and live no more—unless Hector

is first struck by my spear and gives up his life, and pays the blood-price for the death of Patroclus, Menoetius' son.'

Then in answer Thetis addressed him, weeping tears:

'Then, my child, from what you say, you are indeed short-lived, [95]

since straight after Hector's death your own is soon to come.'

Then, deeply troubled, swift-footed Achilles addressed

her:

'Let me then die immediately, since it is clear I was not meant

to come to my companion's rescue at his killing; he died far from

his country, when he needed me to defend him from harm.

[100]

But now, since I shall not return to my dear native land, and since I proved to be no saviour to Patroclus or to my other companions, beaten down in numbers by glorious Hector, while I sit here by the ships, a useless burden on the earth, a man whose war-skill is beyond that of all the bronze-shirted [105]

Achaean—though there are others better in the assembly

—

I wish that strife itself could perish from among gods and men,

and bitterness too, which causes even the wisest to become angry

and which spreads far sweeter than the dripping of honey and swells like smoke in the breasts of men—even as [110]

Agamemnon, lord of men, lately provoked me to anger.

Still, that is past and done; we must let it go, grieved though we are,

and must keep the spirit in our breast subdued by necessity.

Now I shall go out, to track down Hector, the destroyer of that

dear life, and after that I shall accept the death-spectre, whenever [115]

Zeus and the other immortal gods wish to bring it on.

Not even the mighty Heracles could escape the death-spectre,

he who was loved above all by lord Zeus, the son of Cronus, but his due destiny and Hera's cruel anger beat him down;*

and I too, if indeed a destiny like his has been shaped for

me, [120]
will one day lie in death. But for now, let me win splendid
glory,
let me force some Trojan woman or deep-bosomed
daughter
of Dardanus to wail in lamentation as with both hands she
wipes
the flooding tears from her tender cheeks;* let them know
that
I have stayed too long away from the warfare. Though you
love me, [125]
do not hold me back from the battle; you will not persuade
me.'

Then the goddess Thetis of the silver feet answered
him:
'All this is good and true, my child: it is no bad thing to
save one's hard-pressed companions from sheer
destruction.
But your splendid gleaming armour of bronze is held by
[130]
the Trojans, and Hector himself of the glittering helmet
wears it triumphantly on his shoulders—though I do not
think
he will glory in it for long, since death is close to him.
So do not go down yet into the dour struggle of Ares,
not until you see with your own eyes that I have returned;
[135]
because in the morning, at the rising of the sun, I shall
come,
bringing you handsome armour from lord Hephaestus.'

So she spoke, and turned away from her son and left
him,
and moving to face her sisters of the sea she addressed
them:
'You must now go down into the broad gulf of the sea, [140]

to visit the ancient of the sea and our father's house,
and tell him everything; I am going to high Olympus,
to find Hephaestus the renowned smith, to see if he is
willing
to give me famous and far-shining armour for my son.'

So she spoke, and at once they dived below the sea's
waves, [145]

while she, the goddess Thetis of the silver feet, made her
way

to Olympus, to fetch famous armour for her dear son.

So her feet carried her towards Olympus; meanwhile
the Achaeans,

with inhuman shrieks, were fleeing in panic before man-
slaying

Hector, and had reached the ships and the Hellespont. Nor
could [150]

the well-greaved Achaeans manage to drag the body of
Patroclus,

Achilles' attendant, out of range of their missiles, for
once again the Trojans in their chariots caught up with it,
and

with them was Hector, son of Priam, his courage like a
flame.

Three times illustrious Hector caught hold of his feet from
behind, [155]

raging to drag him away, and calling loudly on the Trojans,
and

three times the two called Ajax, clothed in impetuous
courage,

smashed him back from the dead man; but Hector, trusting
resolutely

in his fighting spirit, would now dash into the mêlée, and
now

stand firm, yelling loudly; and not one step did he retreat.
[160]

As shepherds in open country are unable drive a tawny lion
that is racked by hunger away from a beast's carcass,
so the two fighters called Ajax could not frighten
Hector, son of Priam, away from the dead man.
And he would have dragged it away and won immense
glory, [165]

had not wind-footed swift Iris come running from Olympus
with a message to the son of Peleus to arm himself, without
the knowledge of Zeus and the other gods, for Hera had
sent her.

Standing next to him she addressed him with winged
words:

'Up with you, son of Peleus, most outrageous of men! [170]
Go to Patroclus' help, for whose sake grim conflict has
broken out in front of the ships; men are killing each other,
some trying to keep harm from the dead man's body
while others, the Trojans, are straining to drag him towards
windswept Ilium—and more than anyone illustrious Hector
[175]

is raging to haul him away, for his heart is telling him to cut
the head from his soft neck and set it on the wall's
palisade.

Get up—do not stay lying there! Put respect into your heart,
do not let Patroclus become a plaything for the dogs of Troy.
It will be your disgrace if he goes disfigured down to the
dead.' [180]

Then glorious swift-footed Achilles answered her:
'Goddess Iris, which of the gods sent you as a messenger to
me?'

Then in turn wind-footed swift Iris addressed him:
'It was Hera, the honoured wife of Zeus, who sent me.
Cronus' son on his lofty seat does not know I have come,
nor [185]
any of the other immortals who live on snow-swept
Olympus.'

Then swift-footed Achilles spoke to her in answer:
'How am I to go into the fighting? The Trojans have my
armour,
and my dear mother has said that I must not arm myself
until I see with my own eyes that she has come back here,
[190]

for she promised to bring me splendid armour from
Hephaestus.

I do not know of any man whose armour I could put on,
unless it were the shield of Ajax, son of Telamon; but
he, I suppose, is now in the thick of the front-fighters,
causing havoc with his spear over the dead Patroclus.'
[195]

Then in turn wind-footed swift Iris addressed him:
'We too know well that your splendid armour is held over
there;
but go to the ditch as you are, and show yourself to the
Trojans,
and perhaps they will be frightened at the sight and hold
back
from the fighting, and the Achaeans' warlike sons will
breathe [200]
again in their weariness; there is little breathing-space in
war.'

So swift-footed Iris spoke and departed from him;
and Achilles, loved by Zeus, arose, and around his
powerful shoulders Athena threw the tasselled aegis, and
around his head the bright goddess set a crown, a cloud of
[205]

gold, and from it she made a bright shining flame blaze out.
As when smoke rises from a city and reaches the upper air,
on some far distant island that enemies are besieging, and
all day long the defenders contest the issue from their city
in hateful Ares' war—but at the setting of the sun [210]
beacons blaze out one after another, and their brightness

leaps aloft for those who live around to see, and the
citizens
hope that these men will come to the rescue in their ships;
so the gleaming flash from Achilles' head reached the
upper air.

He went out and stood in front of the wall, but did not join
[215]

the Achaeans, since he respected his mother's wise
warning.

There he stood and shouted, and far away Pallas Athena
gave voice, and roused unspeakable confusion in the
Trojans.

As loud as the sound that rings out from a trumpet
when a city is surrounded by life-breaking enemies, [220]
so loud then rang out the shout of Aeacus' grandson.

When the Trojans heard Achilles' brazen voice, the hearts
of all were confused, and their fine-maned horses began
to wheel the chariots round, for their hearts sensed pain to
come;

and when they saw the terrible, unwearying fire that the
goddess [225]

grey-eyed Athena had kindled blazing above the head of
Peleus' great-hearted son, the charioteers were stunned.

Three times glorious Achilles shouted loud across the ditch,
and

three times the Trojans and their far-famed allies were
thrown

into turmoil; then and there twelve of their best men
perished, [230]

entangled in their own chariots and spears. The Achaeans
were delighted, and dragged Patroclus out of missiles'
range and

laid him on a litter, and his dear companions stood around
him,

weeping; and swift-footed Achilles went with them,
letting fall hot tears, when he saw his faithful companion

[235]

lying on a bier, disfigured by the sharp bronze—
the man he had sent out to the battle with his horses
and chariot, but never welcomed him home again.

And now the lady ox-eyed Hera sent the unwearied
sun to return, unwillingly, into the streams of Ocean; [240]
and the sun went down, and the glorious Achaeans
rested from the cruel conflict and the equally balanced war.

On their side, the Trojans retreated from the harsh
crush
of battle, and unyoked their swift horses from the chariots
and, before thinking of their supper, gathered in an
assembly. [245]

They held this assembly standing on their feet, and no one
dared

sit, for trembling had gripped them all, because Achilles
had
appeared after a long time away from the painful fighting.
Among them the sagacious Polydamas was the first to
speak,

Panthous' son, who alone of them could see the future and
the past; [250]

he was Hector's companion, and they were born in the
same night,
though one was far better with words, and the other with
the spear.

With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them:
'Think hard on both sides, my friends. For my part, I advise
you

to go now to the city, and not to wait for the bright dawn
[255]

on the plain beside the ships; we are a long way from our
wall.

As long as this man raged against glorious Agamemnon,
so long it was easier for us to fight against the Achaeans,

and

I for one was happy to camp at night by the swift ships,
in the hope that we would capture their well-balanced
ships. [260]

But now I am terribly afraid of the swift-footed son of
Peleus;

so over-violent is his spirit that he will not be content
to remain on the plain, where Trojans and Achaeans
share Ares' fury between them in the middle ground,
but he will fight to possess our city and its women. [265]
Let us then return to the city; believe me, this is how it will
be:

for now, immortal night has restrained the swift-footed
son of Peleus, but if tomorrow he charges out fully armed
and finds us here still, everyone will recognize him; and
the man who runs from him will be glad to reach sacred
Ilium, [270]

and many will be the Trojans who are devoured by dogs and
vultures—though may my words be as if they had not been
said!

If, despite our misgivings, we are persuaded by my words,
we shall keep our forces safe tonight in the assembly-place,
and the towers and high gateways, and the tall polished
doors [275]

that are set close-fitting into them, will protect the city.
And tomorrow, at break of day, we shall put on our armour
and take our stand on the walls; and it will be the worse for
anyone

who tries to come up from his ships and fight us round our
walls;

he will be off back to his ships, when he has given his
strong-necked [280]

horses their fill of aimless running up and down below the
city.

As for breaking into it, however great his anger he will not
succeed,

nor will he ever sack it; before that happens, swift dogs will eat him.'

Then Hector of the glittering helmet looked at him darkly, and said:
'Polydamas, what you say does not now please me—telling me [285]

that we should go back and shut ourselves up in the city. Have you not yet had your fill of being caged behind towers?

In times gone by all mortal men would tell tales of the city of

Priam, how it was rich in gold and rich in bronze; but now these fine treasures have been spent and have left its houses, [290]

and most of its wealth has gone as payment to Phrygia and lovely Maeonia,* ever since great Zeus became angry with us.

Now, when the son of crooked-scheming Cronus has granted me

to win glory by the ships, and to pen the Achaeans in by the sea,

do not, foolish man, put thoughts like these in front of the people. [295]

None of the Trojans will listen to you; I shall not allow it.

So come, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:

take your supper now in your ranks throughout the camp, and be sure to set sentries, and let each man be vigilant; and if any Trojan is troubled overmuch about his possessions, [300]

let him collect them and give them to the people to devour as

commonly held goods, for it is better that they and not the Achaeans

should enjoy them. Then tomorrow, at daybreak, let us put on

our armour, and wake violent Ares beside the hollow ships.
If glorious Achilles really has risen up beside the ships,
[305]

it will be the worse for him, if that is what he wants; I shall
not
run from war's hideous clamour, but will stand fast and face
him,
and we shall see if it is he or I who wins the great victory.
Enyalios is an impartial god, and often kills the would-be
killer.'

So Hector spoke, and the Trojans shouted their
approval, [310]
fools that they were, for Pallas Athena had taken away their
wits;
they gave their approval to Hector's disastrous counsel,
and not to Polydamas, who had framed excellent advice.
Then they ate their supper throughout the camp, while the
Achaeans all night long wailed in mourning for Patroclus.
[315]

Among them the son of Peleus began the unbroken lament,
laying his man-slaying hands on his companion's chest,
groaning loud and long like some thickly bearded lion
whose cubs a hunter of deer has secretly stolen away
in a dense wood; it returns too late and is struck by grief,
[320]

and ranges up and down the glens, tracking the man's trail,
hoping to find him, because bitter anger has gripped it—
so Achilles, groaning heavily, addressed the Myrmidons:
'Ah, truly it was a vain word that I spoke on that day
when I tried to reassure the hero Menoetius in his halls!
[325]

I said I would bring his son back to Opos, famed for his
sack of Ilium and bringing his fair share of the spoils.
But Zeus does not bring all men's schemes to fulfilment:
it is our destiny that we two will make the same earth red

here in Troy, since I too will not return home, and my father,
[330]

the aged horse-driver Peleus, will not welcome me in his
halls,

nor Thetis my mother, but the earth will cover me here.

So now, Patroclus, since I am to follow you below the
ground,

I shall not hold your burial rites until I have brought here
the armour and head of Hector, your great-spirited killer;

[335]

and in front of your pyre I shall cut the throats of twelve
noble sons of the Trojans,* because of my anger at your
death.

Until then, you shall lie as you are beside my curved ships,
and around you deep-bosomed Trojan women and
daughters

of Dardanus will mourn for you, day and night weeping
tears, [340]

women whom we toiled to capture by force and the long
spear,

when we two sacked the prosperous cities of mortal men.'

So glorious Achilles spoke, and called to his companions
to set a huge tripod over the fire, so that they might quickly
wash away the bloody gore from Patroclus. So they set a
[345]

three-legged cauldron for bath-water over the blazing fire,
and poured water into it and put wood beneath it for
burning;

the fire began to spread round the cauldron's belly, and the
water

grew hot, and when it was boiling in the flashing bronze
they washed Patroclus and anointed him richly with oil,

[350]

and filled his wounds with oil that was nine years old.

Then they laid him on a bier, and covered him with a linen cloth
from head to foot, and over this they spread a white robe.
Then, all night long, the Myrmidons gathered round Achilles
the swift-footed, and lamented and mourned for Patroclus.
[355]

Then Zeus addressed Hera, his wife and sister:
'So, ox-eyed lady Hera, you have succeeded again,
and aroused swift-footed Achilles. It would seem that
the flowing-haired Achaeans must be your own children.'

Then the lady ox-eyed Hera answered him, saying:
[360]
'Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said?
Any man who is mortal and does not possess wisdom like
ours
is allowed, I suppose, to do what he can for another man;
how then should I, who claim to be the best of goddesses,
in two ways, by my birth, and because I am famed as [365]
your wife, and you are lord of all the immortals—how
should I not in my anger stitch together trouble for the
Trojans?'

So they spoke, one to another, in this way; meanwhile
Thetis of the silver feet came to Hephaestus' house, a
house
imperishable, starry, and conspicuous among the gods'
homes; [370]
it was made of bronze, and the crook-footed god had built it
himself.
She found him bustling about, sweating, and busying
himself
with his bellows, for he was forging tripods, twenty in all,
that were to stand around the wall of his well-built hall;
under the base of each one he had fixed wheels of gold,
[375]
so that of their own accord they could enter the gods'

assembly
and then return again to his house—a wonder to look upon.
They were nearly finished, but he had not yet added their
craftily
worked ear-handles, and he was fitting these, and
hammering in
their rivets. While he was working at this with his cunning
skill, [380]
the goddess silver-footed Thetis came and stood nearby,
and
Charis* of the shining headdress saw her and came
forward,
lovely Charis whom the far-famed bow-legged god had
married;
she gripped her hand firmly in hers, and spoke, addressing
her:
‘Thetis of the long robe, what can bring you to our house?
You are [385]
respected and a friend, but before this you have not come
often.
Come in with me, that I may put gifts of hospitality before
you.’

So the bright goddess spoke and led her inside, and
seated her on a fine, intricately worked throne with
rivets of silver, and there was a footstool under her feet.
[390]

Charis called to Hephaestus the renowned smith and spoke
to him:

‘Hephaestus, come in here! Thetis has need of you.’

Then the far-famed bow-legged god answered her: ‘Well!
I have an awe-inspiring and venerable goddess in my
house:

it was Thetis who saved me when I was in agony after [395]
my long fall, caused by my mother’s will, bitch that she is—
she wished to hide me because I was lame, and I would

have suffered
agonies in my heart had not Eurynome, daughter of Ocean
that flows into itself, and Thetis welcomed me to their
bosom.

Nine years I spent with them, shaping much cunning
bronze-work— [400]

brooches and curved pins, earrings and necklaces—in their
hollow cave; and around it the streams of Ocean flowed
without ceasing, roaring with foam. No one knew of this,
not any one of the gods nor any one of mortal men,
except that Thetis and Eurynome knew, they who saved
me.* [405]

And now you have come to my house; so there is a great
need on me

to do my best to pay back lovely-haired Thetis for rescuing
me.

Charis, offer her good things, fit for a guest; set them in
front of her

now, until I have stowed away my bellows and all my tools.'

So he spoke, and stood up from the anvil-block, a
monster puffing [410]

and limping, though his slender legs moved nimbly beneath
him.

He shifted the bellows away from the fire, and collected
all the tools with which he worked into a silver chest;
with a sponge he wiped his face on both sides, and both
his hands, and also his powerful neck and hairy chest, and
[415]

put on a tunic, and took up a stout staff, and came to the
door,

limping. Women servants moved nimbly to support their
lord;

these were made of gold, and resembled living young
women.

They have in them wits and understanding, and also a

voice and
strength, for they have learnt their skills from the immortal
gods. [420]

These bustled about, supporting their lord, who moved
unsteadily

near to where Thetis was, and sat down on a shining
throne;

he gripped her hand firmly in his and spoke, calling her by
name;

‘Thetis of the long robe, what can bring you to our house?

You are

respected and a friend, but before this you have not come
often. [425]

Tell me what is in your mind; my heart urges me to
accomplish it—

if, that is, I can accomplish it and such a thing is possible.’

Then Thetis answered him, weeping tears:

‘Hephaestus, is there any goddess of all those on Olympus
who has had to endure in her heart as many bitter sorrows
[430]

as those that Cronus’ son Zeus has given me, above all
others?

Choosing me from all the other sea-dwellers he made me
subject

to a man, Peleus, Aeacus’ son, and I had to endure a man’s
bed,*

though it was greatly against my will; he now lies in his
halls,

worn out with cruel old age, but I have other sorrows—
[435]

he gave me a son for me to bear and raise, one supreme
among other heroes; he shot up tall like a sapling,

and I nursed him like a young tree in a hill-orchard,

and I sent him away in his curved ships to Ilium,

to fight against the Trojans; but I shall never again [440]

welcome him back home to the house of Peleus.

I know that while he is alive and looks on the sun's light
he is deeply troubled, and yet my going to him will bring no
help.

And the girl whom the sons of the Achaeans chose as his
prize—

lord Agamemnon took her back, out of his hands, and [445]
in grief for her his heart wasted away. Then the Trojans
penned the Achaeans by their ships, preventing them from
breaking out, and the elders of the Argives entreated him,
naming the many splendid gifts that they were offering,
but he refused to keep destruction from them at that time;
[450]

but he did put his own armour on Patroclus, and sent him
out

to the fight, and gave him a great force to go with him.

All day long they fought around the Scaean gates, and
indeed they would have sacked the city on that day, if
Apollo

had not killed Menoetius' stalwart son after he had caused
[455]

great ruin among the front-fighters, and given the glory to
Hector.

It is for this reason that I come to entreat you at your
knees,

in the hope that you will agree to give my short-lived son a
shield and a helmet, and fine greaves fitted with ankle-
pieces,

and a corslet; his loyal companion, beaten down by the
Trojans, has lost [460]

the armour he had, and Achilles lies on the ground, his
heart full of grief.'

Then the far-famed bow-legged god answered her:
'Do not despair, and do not let these things trouble your
heart.

I wish I could hide him far away from death's gloomy
lament,
at the time when his terrible due destiny comes to him,
[465]
as easily as I shall equip him with fine armour, such as
all men will wonder at in time to come, when they see it.'

So he spoke, and left her there, and went to fetch his
bellows,
and turned them on to his fire, and told them to set to
work;
and the bellows, twenty in all, began to blow on his
crucibles, [470]
giving out well-moderated blasts from all directions, to
help Hephaestus as he hurried to this place and to that,
according as he wished and as the work went on. Into
the fire he threw bronze that does not wear away, and tin
and precious gold, and silver; then he positioned a [475]
great anvil on its anvil-block, and in one hand took up
a powerful hammer, and in the other took up some tongs.

First of all he made a huge, heavy shield,* decorating it
intricately all over, and round its edge fixed a triple rim,
bright and gleaming, and hanging from it a silver sword-
belt. [480]

There were five rings on the shield itself, and on them,
with skilful craft, he created many cunning works of art.

On it he fashioned the earth and the high sky and the
sea,

the sun that does not tire, and the waxing moon, and
all the constellations that are a crown for the high sky—
[485]

the Pleiades and the Hyades and mighty Orion, and
the Bear that men also call the Wain, which turns
always in the same place and keeps careful watch on Orion,
and alone has no share in the baths of Ocean.*

On it he fashioned two cities of mortal men, fine ones.

[490]

In one there were weddings and feasts, and people were escorting brides from their chambers through the city with bright-shining torches, and the loud marriage-song rose up.

Young men were whirling in the dance, and accompanying them

flutes and lutes kept up their sound, and the women [495] stood and marvelled at it, each one by her own porch.

In the meeting-place a crowd of citizens had formed; a dispute had arisen there, and two men were quarrelling over the blood-money of a man who had been killed.*

One claimed he had paid it in full, appealing to the people, [500]

while the other said he had received nothing; both were anxious

to go to an arbitrator for judgement. The people took sides, shouting support for both; heralds were holding them back, while the elders sat on polished stones in a sacred circle, holding in their hands the loud-voiced heralds' staffs. [505]

The disputants rushed up to these men, and they gave their judgements

in turn; two talents of gold lay before them, to be given to the judge who should deliver to them the straightest verdict.

Around the other city two armies of men were encamped,

glittering in their armour. Two counsels found favour among them, [510]

either to sack the city utterly, or to divide with the inhabitants

all the wealth that the beautiful city held within it.

But the defenders were not ready to yield, and were secretly

arming for an ambush; and on the wall stood their dear

wives

and children, ready to defend it, and with them men in the grip [515]

of old age. The rest marched out; Ares and Pallas Athena led them—

both were made of gold, and clothed in garments of gold, handsome and huge in their armour, and, as befits gods, standing

clearly out; but the people below them were much smaller. When the men came to a place where there was space for an ambush, [520]

in a riverbed where there was a watering-place for all kinds of beasts,

there they settled down, armed in their flashing bronze.

Two scouts from the people were posted some way off, on the alert

for when they should catch sight of sheep and crook-horned cattle;

soon enough they appeared, and two herdsmen with them, [525]

amusing themselves on their pipes, for they did not suspect a trap.

When those in hiding saw the beasts they ran out, and quickly rounded up the herds of cattle and the fine flocks of white sheep, and killed the herdsmen with them.

When the besiegers, sitting in their meeting-place, heard a loud [530]

clamour coming from the cattle, they instantly mounted behind

their high-stepping horses and went in pursuit, and quickly found them.

Both sides formed up and began a battle along the riverbanks,

each hurling their bronze-tipped spears at the other side.

Strife was among them, and Confusion, and the lethal Death-Spectre, [535]

holding one freshly wounded man, still alive, and another
unwounded,
and dragging another who was dead by his feet through the
mêlée;
and the garment over her shoulders was red with the blood
of men.
These figures grappled and fought like living mortals,
and each dragged away the dead belonging to the other's
side. [540]

On it he set a wide field of rich ploughland, three times
turned over after lying fallow, and on it many ploughmen
were wheeling their teams, driving them up and down;
whenever they reached the field's headland and turned
round,
a man would come up to them and put into their hands a
cup [545]
of honey-sweet wine, and they would turn back along the
furrows,
eager to reach the next headland in the deep-soiled field.
Behind them the field grew dark, just as a ploughed field
looks,
though it was made of gold; it was indeed a great marvel of
art.

On it he set a king's estate, where hired labourers were
[550]
reaping with sharp sickles in their hands; some sheaves
were
falling to the ground, one after the other, along the reapers'
swaths,
while sheaf-binders were tying up others with ropes.
Three sheaf-binders stood over the work, and behind them
boys picked up the sheaves and carried them in their arms,
[555]
constantly handing them to the binders; and the king stood
silently

among them next to the swath, staff in hand, gladdened in his heart.

Some way off heralds were preparing a feast under an oak tree,

busying themselves with a great ox they had sacrificed, and women

were mixing plentiful white barley for the labourers' supper. [560]

On it he set a vineyard, beautifully made of gold, heavily

laden with grapes; the grape-clusters along it were black, and the vines throughout were propped on silver poles.

Round it he made a ditch in blue enamel, and outside this he worked a fence of tin; there was a single track to the vineyard, [565]

by which pickers would go to gather in the vintage.

Unmarried girls and youths, with lightness in their hearts, were carrying away the honey-sweet fruit in woven baskets, and in their midst a boy played beguilingly on a clear-voiced lyre, and sang the Linus-song* to its accompaniment, [570]

in a beautiful, light voice; and they kept time with him, singing and shouting, and followed him on dancing feet.

On it he made a herd of cattle with upright horns; the cows were fashioned from gold and tin, and were hurrying from the farmyard's dung to pasture [575] beside a murmuring river, next to a waving reedbed.

Herdsmen made of gold were going along with the cattle, four of them, and nine swift-footed dogs went with them; two terrible lions had fallen on the first of the cattle and were seizing a bellowing bull, that roared loudly as it [580]

was dragged away, and the dogs and young men pursued it.

But the lions had torn open the hide of the huge ox and

were

gulping down its entrails and black blood, and in vain
did the herdsman urge the swift dogs, driving them on;
but they hung back from the lions, afraid to bite them,
[585]

and stood close by, barking and keeping out of their way.

On it the far-famed bow-legged god made a pasture
in a beautiful valley, a great pasture of white sheep,
with farmyards, and roofed shelters, and sheepfolds.

On it the far-famed bow-legged god worked a dancing-
place, [590]

just like the one which Daedalus had fashioned in time past
in spacious Cnossos for Ariadne of the beautiful hair.* On it
young men and girls who would earn marriage-gifts of
oxen were dancing, holding each other at the wrist.
The girls wore light linen clothes, while the boys were
dressed [595]

in well-woven tunics, gleaming faintly with a sheen of oil;
the girls had beautiful garlands, and the boys had
daggers of gold, hanging from silver sword-belts.

At one time they would dance in a circle on skilful feet,
very lightly, as when a potter sits at the wheel that [600]
fits his hands and tries it to see if it will run, and at
another they would run up in lines towards each other.
A great crowd was standing around the lovely dance,
watching with delight, [and among them a divine singer
sang and played the lyre]* and in their company whirled
[605]

two tumblers, taking the lead in the song and dance.

On it he set the mighty power of the river Ocean,
running
round the outermost rim of the cunningly worked shield.

When he had finished making the huge, heavy shield,
he forged
for him a corslet, shining brighter than the gleam of fire,

and [610]
fashioned for him a strong helmet, fitting close to his
temples,
a fine helmet, intricately worked, and on it he set a golden
crest;
and he fashioned for Achilles greaves of pliant tin.

When the far-famed bow-legged god had finished all
the armour,
he lifted it up and laid it before the mother of Achilles; [615]
and she gathered up the gleaming arms from Hephaestus
and
like a hawk came swooping down from snow-clad Olympus.

BOOK NINETEEN

Now saffron-robed Dawn rose up from Ocean's waters,
to bring light to immortals and to mortals, and Thetis
came to the ships, carrying the gifts from the god.
She found her dear son lying with his arms about Patroclus,
weeping loudly; and round him many of his companions
were [5]

lamenting. Thetis, bright among goddesses, stood beside
him in
their midst, and gripped his hand firmly in hers and spoke
to him:

'My child, grieved though we are, we should let this man
lie,
since it was from the start by the gods' will that he was
beaten down; but take now this glorious, splendid armour
[10]

from Hephaestus, such as no man has ever worn on his
shoulders.'

So the goddess spoke, and laid the armour in front of
Achilles; and it rang out loud in all its intricately worked
glory.

Trembling seized all the Myrmidons, and no one dared look
directly at it, and they drew back in fear. But the more
Achilles [15]

looked at it the more bitterness came over him, and the
eyes

in him flashed out fearfully below their lids, like a flame;
and

he was glad as he held the splendid gifts of the god in his
hands.

But when he had had his heart's fill of gazing at the

intricate work,
he straightaway addressed his mother with winged words:
[20]

‘Mother, this god’s gift of armour is indeed such as we
would
suppose immortals to have made, and not the work of
mortal men.

So now I shall arm myself in it; but I am terribly afraid
that while we delay flies will settle on the wounds of
Menoetius’ stalwart son, slashed in him by the bronze, and
[25]

will breed worms in them, and defile his body, now that
the life has gone from him; and all his flesh will rot.’

Then the goddess Thetis of the silver feet answered
him:

‘My child, do not let this be a concern in your heart;
I shall set myself to keep those cruel tribes from him, [30]
the flies that eat away at men who have been killed in
battle.

Even if he were to lie for the whole of a circling year,
his flesh will remain undecayed, or even firmer than now.

But now you must summon the Achaean heroes to
assembly,

and renounce your anger at Agamemnon, shepherd of the
people, [35]

and at once arm for war and clothe yourself in courage.’

So she spoke, and filled him with a fury that was full of
daring,

and through Patroclus’ nostrils she dripped ambrosia
and red nectar, so that his flesh should remain undecayed.*

Then glorious Achilles made his way along the
seashore, [40]

yelling fearfully, and roused the heroes of the Achaeans.
And men who before used to stay in the ships’ gathering-
place,

those who were steersmen and looked after the steering-oars,
and were stewards in the ships and used to distribute the food,
even they now went to the assembly-place, because Achilles [45]
had appeared, after long absence from the painful fighting.
The two attendants of Ares came up limping—Diomedes,
Tydeus' son, steadfast in war, and glorious Odysseus,
both leaning on spears, since their wounds still pained them;
and they came and sat down in the front of the assembly.
[50]

Last of all to come was Agamemnon, lord of men,
carrying the wound that Coön, son of Antenor, had dealt him
with his bronze-tipped spear in the fierce crush of battle.
When all the Achaeans were gathered together,
swift-footed Achilles stood up and addressed them: [55]

'Son of Atreus, was it really a good thing for both of us,
for you and me, to rage grieved in heart at each other
in life-devouring strife, all for the sake of a girl?
If only Artemis had killed her with an arrow by the ships*
on the day that I chose her after I had sacked Lyrnessus,*
[60]

then so many Achaeans would not have bitten the vast
earth,
crushed by their enemies' hands, while I stayed away in my
anger.

Only Hector and the Trojans profited from this; the
Achaeans,
I think, will long remember the strife between you and me.
Still, that is past and done; we must let it go, grieved
though we are, [65]
and must keep the spirit in our breast subdued by

necessity.

Here and now I abandon my anger; there is no need for me to rage so unrelentingly. Come then, quickly stir up the Achaeans with their flowing hair to fight, so that I can go to meet the Trojans face to face and make trial of them, [70]

to see if they are still minded to camp out by our ships. I think

that any of them who manage to escape my spear out of the

savage conflict will be glad enough to rest their knees.'

So he spoke, and the well-greaved Achaeans were glad that great-spirited Peleus' son had abandoned his anger. [75]

Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke among them from the place where he had been sitting, not standing in their midst:

'My friends, Danaan heroes, attendants of Ares, it is a good thing to listen to a man on his feet, and it is not right

to interrupt him—for that is hard, even for a skilled speaker; [80]

how can anyone listen, or speak, when men are making a great

uproar? Even a clear-voiced orator can be thrown off balance.

It is to Peleus' son that I shall declare myself—but each one of you other Argives should take notice, and mark my words.

Many times have the Achaeans spoken to me about this matter, [85]

and they have reproached me; yet it is not I who was to blame,

but Zeus and my destiny and the Fury who walks in darkness,

who drove a cruel delusion into my mind at the assembly,
on the day that I took away Achilles' prize with my own
hand.

What could I do? It is a god who brings all things to
fulfilment: [90]

she is Zeus' eldest daughter Delusion, an accursed thing*
that

deludes and drives astray the minds of all; her feet are
tender,

and she does not touch the ground, but passes over men's
heads,

bringing harm to mankind—and she has shackled others
before me.

Indeed, even Zeus was once driven mad by Delusion, he
who [95]

men say is supreme among gods and men: even he
was beguiled by Hera's womanly deceitfulness,

on the day that Alcmene was due to give birth to mighty
Heracles in Thebes, that city crowned with strong walls.

Zeus, full of boasting, spoke in the presence of all the gods:
[100]

"Listen to me, all you gods and all you goddesses,
and I will say what the heart in my breast is telling me:
today Eileithyia, she who attends painful birth, will bring
into the light a man who, born of a line that shares in my
blood, will rule over all those who live round about him."

[105]

Then the lady Hera, with guile in her heart, addressed him:

"You will be proved a liar, and you will not bring your words
to

fulfilment. Come now, Olympian, swear a strong oath to me
that the man who on this day will fall between a woman's
feet,

and who is born of those men who are of your blood's line,

[110]

will surely rule over all those who live round about him."

So she spoke, and Zeus did not perceive her deceit,
but swore a great oath, and so was mightily deluded.
Hera left the peak of Olympus, and swooping down
quickly came to Achaean Argos, where she well knew lived
[115]

the noble wife of Sthenelus, who was Perseus' son.
She was pregnant with her son, and the seventh month had
begun,
and Hera brought him into the light before his due month;
but she delayed Alcmene's childbirth, and held back
Eileithyia.

Then she brought the news in person to Cronus' son Zeus,
saying: [120]

"Father Zeus of the bright thunderbolt, I will put a word in
your

mind: today a noble man is born, who will rule over the
Argives—

Eurystheus, son of Sthenelus who was Perseus' son, of your
line; so it is no shameful thing for him to rule over the
Argives."

So she spoke, and sharp grief pierced Zeus to his heart's
depths; [125]

at once, full of anger in his heart, he seized Delusion
by her head of sleek hair, and swore a mighty oath that
she, Delusion, who drives madness into everyone, would
never again come to Olympus and the starry high sky.
So he spoke, and whirling her round in his hand hurled her
[130]

out of the starry high sky, and she quickly reached the
works of men;

but Zeus would always groan at her, whenever he saw his
dear son

performing a shameful task in the labours set him by
Eurystheus.

So it is with me.* While great Hector of the glittering helmet
was slaughtering Argives by the ships' sterns, I could not

forget [135]

Delusion, who when this all began drove madness into my mind.

Still, since I was deluded, and Zeus took away my wits, I am now willing to make amends, and to pay a boundless ransom.

So come, rouse yourself for the battle, and rouse the rest of the people;

as for the gifts, I am ready here to offer you everything that glorious [140]

Odysseus promised you yesterday when he came to your huts.

Or if you wish, wait, even though you hanker after Ares' battle,

and my attendants will take the gifts from my ship and bring them

to you, so that you can see how I will satisfy your desire.'

Then in answer Achilles of the swift feet addressed him: [145]

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men; as for

the gifts, you may wish to offer them, as is right and proper, or to

keep them; it is your choice. But now, let us call up our battle-lust,

immediately, since this is no time to stay here, talking to no purpose,

or to delay; there is still great work that must be done, [150]

so that men may once again see Achilles in the front-fighters,

slaying companies of the Trojans with his bronze-tipped spear.

Let every man of you be mindful of this as he faces his opponent.'

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed him:

‘Godlike Achilles, great chieftain though you are, do not urge [155]

the sons of the Achaeans on to Ilium to fight with the Trojans

when they are hungry; this battle will not last a short time, when once the companies of men engage with the enemy and a god has breathed fury into both sides.

No, give orders for the Achaeans to take food and wine [160]

beside the swift ships, for that is their fury and courage.

No man will be able to fight hand to hand all day long until the setting of the sun if he has not taken food; even if in his heart he is full of rage to fight, heaviness creeps into his limbs unawares, and thirst and hunger [165] catch up with him, and his knees give way as he moves.

But the man who has taken his fill of wine and food will do battle all day long against his enemies; the heart within him is full of daring, and his limbs will not tire until everyone has withdrawn from the battle. [170]

So come, disperse the people, and give orders for supper to be prepared; and as for the gifts, let Agamemnon, lord of men,

bring them into the midst of the assembly, so that all the Achaeans

can see them with their own eyes; and your heart may be softened.

And let him stand up among the Argives and swear an oath [175]

that he has never gone up to the girl’s bed or lain with her, as is the usual way, lord, between men and women; and for you too, let the heart within you be ready to forgive. Let Agamemnon make a rich feast in his huts and seek reconciliation

with you, so that you will not fall short of your due in any way. [180]

Son of Atreus, in future you will act more properly towards others

as well; no one can be justly angry with a king if he makes amends

to a man when he has been the first to commit an outrage.'

Then in turn Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed him: 'Son of Laertes, I am glad to hear your speech; everything [185]

that you said in your full account was according to due measure.

I am indeed ready to swear an oath—my heart tells me so—and I will not swear falsely before a god. Let Achilles wait here for a while, even though he hankers after Ares' battle,

and let all the rest wait together, until the gifts come from my hut [190]

and until we make a solemn truce and pledge friendship.

To you, Odysseus, I give this order and instruction:

choose the best young men out of all the Achaeans

to bring the gifts from my ship, all that yesterday we promised

to give to Achilles, and let them bring the women too. [195]

And in the broad camp of the Achaeans let Talthylus quickly prepare a boar for me, to sacrifice to Zeus and the Sun.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, there will be another time when you should attend to this, [200]

whenever there is some lull in the fighting, and

when the fury in my breast is not so strong;

but now there are men out there lying disfigured, whom Hector, Priam's son, beat down when Zeus gave him the

glory—

and you two are urging us to eat! For my part, I would order
[205]

the sons of the Achaeans to enter the conflict now, though
hungry and unfed, and then, at the setting of the sun,
to make a great meal, when we have avenged this insult.
Until then, my desire is that nothing should pass my throat,
neither food nor drink, because my companion is dead,
[210]

and he is lying there in my hut, disfigured by the sharp
spear,

with his feet towards the door,* and around him our
companions

mourn. I have no interest in my heart in food and drink, but
only in slaughter and blood and the anguished groans of
men.'

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed
him: [215]

'Achilles, son of Peleus, by far the greatest of the Achaeans,
you are stronger than I am, and not a little better than me
with the spear, but I might surpass you by a long way
in judgement, since I am older than you and know more;
so let your heart submit in patience and listen to my words.
[220]

Men very quickly have their fill of fighting; the bronze
scatters the straw of fighting in abundance on the ground
and yet the harvest is scantiest when Zeus, who is the
dispenser of war to mankind, has tilted his scales.*

The Achaeans cannot mourn a dead man by starving; [225]
day after day men fall in great numbers, one after another,
so when could a man ever gain some respite from his toil?
No, we have to bury all those who have been killed,
hardening our hearts, and weeping only enough for one
day.

All those who have survived the hateful conflict must [230]

turn their minds to food and drink, so that we can fight
all the better against our enemies, on and on without
ceasing,
clothing our bodies in tireless bronze. So let none of the
people
hang back, waiting for some other summons to action;
this is the call, now, and it will be the worse for anyone who
is [235]
left behind by the Argives' ships. Let us all march out
together,
and stir up bitter Ares against the Trojans, breakers of
horses.'

So he spoke, and took to go with him glorious Nestor's
sons,
and Meges, son of Phyleus, and Thoas and Meriones,
and Lycomedes, the son of Creontes, and Melanippus; and
[240]
they made their way to the hut of Atreus' son Agamemnon.
No sooner was the word spoken than the deed was done:
they brought out of the hut the seven tripods he had
promised
to Achilles, and twenty gleaming cauldrons, and twelve
horses;
they quickly led out the women, skilled in fine handiwork,
[245]
seven of them, and the eighth was Briseïs of the lovely
cheeks.
Then Odysseus weighed out fully ten talents of gold and led
the
way back, and with him the Achaean young men carried
the gifts.
These they placed in the middle of the assembly-place;
Agamemnon
stood up, and beside the shepherd of the people stood
Talthybius, [250]

a man whose voice was like a god's, his hands holding a boar.

With his hand the son of Atreus drew out the knife that always hung beside his sword's great scabbard and began the offering by cutting hairs from the boar's head, and prayed, lifting up his hands to Zeus; and all the Argives [255]

sat in proper silence in their places, listening to their king. Looking up to the broad high sky, he spoke in prayer: 'Let Zeus, the highest and best, be my witness first, and after him Earth and Sun and the Furies, who below the earth

exact repayment from men who have broken their oaths— [260]

that I have never laid hand on the girl, Briseus' daughter, either because I desired her in bed, or for any other reason, but she has lived in my huts all this time, untouched.

If anything I have sworn is false, may the gods send me all the sufferings they give to those whose false oaths offend them.' [265]

So he spoke, and cut the boar's throat with the pitiless bronze.

Talthybius swung the body round and flung it into the great expanse of the grey salt sea, to be food for fishes; * and then

Achilles stood up and spoke among the Argives, lovers of war:

'Father Zeus, how utterly you drive men out of their minds! [270]

Never would the son of Atreus have stirred the heart in my breast to its depths, nor in his stubbornness have taken the girl away against my will, had not Zeus somehow wished

that death should come to great numbers of the Achaeans.

Now go and make your meal, that we may soon join in Ares' war.' [275]

So he spoke, and quickly broke up the assembly.
So all the rest scattered, each man to his own ship, but the great-hearted Myrmidons busied themselves with the gifts, and carried them away to the ship of godlike Achilles; they set the gifts down in his huts, and settled the women there, [280]

and excellent attendants drove the horses to join his herd.

When Briseus' daughter, who resembled golden Aphrodite,
saw Patroclus lying there, disfigured by the sharp bronze, she threw herself on him and let out a shrill lament, and tore

her breast and soft neck and beautiful face with her hands; [285]

then she, a woman like the goddesses, spoke through tears:

'Patroclus, chief delight of my heart, how wretched I am! When I went from this hut you were still living, but now, marshal of the people, I come back to find you dead; how one evil always follows another for me! [290]

I saw the man to whom my father and revered mother gave me disfigured with the sharp bronze in front of my city,

and my three brothers, born to the same mother as I was, all of them very dear to me, meeting their day of death.

Even so, when swift Achilles killed my husband and sacked [295]

the city of godlike Mynes, you would not let me weep, but declared that you would make me godlike Achilles' lawful wedded wife, and would take me in your ships to Phthia,

and would hold a marriage feast among the Myrmidons;*

so now I mourn you inconsolably; you were always kind to me.' [300]

So she spoke, weeping, and the women lamented with her,
outwardly for Patroclus, but each for her own sorrows.
The elders of the Achaeans gathered around Achilles and
begged him to eat; but he refused them with a groan:
'I beg you, my dear companions, if any will listen to me,
[305]
do not order me to satisfy my dear heart yet with food
or drink, because bitter grief has come upon me; I am
resolved
to endure, and will stay here until the setting of the sun.'

So he spoke, and sent the other kings away; but Atreus'
two sons and glorious Odysseus stayed behind, and Nestor
[310]

and Idomeneus, and Phoenix the old horseman, trying to
comfort him in his incessant grief; but he would not be
comforted

in his heart until he had gone into the bloody jaws of war.
Remembering Patroclus, he fetched up a deep sigh, and
said:

'There was a time when you too, ill-fated man, dearest of
my [315]

companions, would yourself set out a pleasant meal in this
hut,

quickly and deftly, when the Achaeans were in haste to
wage tear-laden war against the horse-breaking Trojans;
but now you lie there, disfigured, and my heart wants no
part

of food and drink, though they are here in the hut, because
of [320]

my longing for you. I could not suffer anything worse than
this,

not even if I were to hear of the death of my father,

who now, I suppose, is shedding soft tears in Phthia
for the loss of his dear son, while I make war on the Trojans
in a foreign land, for the sake of Helen, that calamitous
woman; [325]

nor if it were my dear son, being raised for me in Skyros—
if indeed godlike Neoptolemus is still alive somewhere.*
Up to this time the heart in my breast had hoped that
I alone would perish far from Argos, rearer of horses,
here in Troy, and that you, Patroclus, would return to [330]
Phthia, and then you could fetch the boy from Skyros
for me in your swift ship and show him everything:
my possessions, maidservants, and great high-roofed
house.

Peleus, I think, must already be dead and gone,
or he is somehow clinging to a miserable life in [335]
wretched old age, all the time expecting to hear
the cruel news about me, that I have been killed.'

So he spoke, weeping, and the elders mourned with
him,
each one calling to mind what he had left behind in his
halls.

As they lamented, Cronus' son saw and took pity on them,
[340]

and at once addressed Athena with winged words:
'My child, I see you have completely deserted your man;
have you no longer any concern in your heart for Achilles?
He is sitting in front of the ships with their tall sterns,
weeping for his dear companion; all the others have gone
[345]

to seek their supper, but he is fasting, and does not eat.
Go now, and distil nectar and delectable ambrosia
into his breast, so that hunger does not come upon him.'

So he spoke, and roused Athena, who was already
eager to go,
and she swooped down from the high sky through the clear

air, [350]

in the likeness of a long-winged, shrill-voiced falcon. While the Achaeans were arming themselves throughout the camp

she distilled nectar and delectable ambrosia into his breast,*

so that aching hunger should not weaken his knees, and then returned to her mighty father's strongly built house.

[355]

The Achaeans began to pour forth, from among their swift ships;

as when snowflakes flutter down thick and fast from Zeus' sky,

frozen, and driven by blasts of the North Wind whose birth is in the upper air, so then their brightly glittering helmets and bossed shields and strongly plated corslets and [360] ash spears streamed thick and fast from the ships.

Their gleam reached the high sky, and all around the earth smiled at the flashing bronze, and the noise rose up under the feet of men. In their midst glorious Achilles began to arm;

his teeth ground noisily together, and his eyes blazed [365] like the flashing of fire, and unbearable grieving entered his heart. Full of rage at the men of Troy, he put on the gifts of the god, which Hephaestus by his craft had made for him:

first he fastened the greaves around his legs, fine ones, fitted with silver ankle-clasps, and [370] next he put the corslet on around his chest.

Over his shoulders he threw the silver-riveted sword, made of bronze, and after that lifted up the great, massive shield, whose far-reaching gleam was like the moon's.

As when the gleam of a burning fire appears to sailors [375] on the open sea, blazing in a lonely sheepfold, high on some mountain, while they are being driven helplessly by storms over the fish-rich sea, far from those they love;

so the gleam from Achilles' splendid, intricately worked shield rose up into the clear sky. He lifted the strong helmet [380]

and set it on his head, and the horsehair-crested helmet shone out like a star, and the golden plumes that Hephaestus

had fastened thickly about the crest were set waving. Then glorious Achilles tested himself in his armour, to see if it fitted him and if his bright limbs moved freely; [385]

it became like wings to him, and it lifted up the shepherd of the people. Then from its case he took out his father's spear,

heavy, thick, and massive; no other man of the Achaeans could lift it, but only Achilles had the skill to lift it—the Pelian ash spear that Cheiron had given his dear father, [390]

cut from a peak of Pelion, to be the death of heroes.

Automedon and Alcimus busied themselves with yoking the horses, setting the fine yoke-strap on them and fitting the bits in their jaws, and pulling the reins behind them on to the well-jointed chariot. Automedon picked up a bright [395]

whip that fitted his hand and leapt up behind the horses, and behind him Achilles mounted, in full armour,

shining brightly in his weaponry like Hyperion the Sun,

and he called to his father's horses with a terrible cry:

'Xanthus and Balius, far-famed children of Podarge!_* [400]

This time take more care to bring your charioteer back to the Danaans' soldiery when we have had enough of fighting,

and do not leave him there dead, as you did Patroclus.'

Then from under the yoke the glancing-footed horse Xanthus

spoke to him; it had bent its head down, and all its mane

[405]

was drooping to the ground from the yoke-pad beside the yoke,

and the goddess Hera of the white arms had given it speech:

‘We shall surely bring you back safe this time, huge Achilles;

but the day of your death is near at hand, and it is not we who

will be its cause, but a great god and your powerful destiny.* [410]

It was not through our sloth or carelessness that the Trojans stripped the armour from the shoulders of Patroclus, but it was

the best of the gods, he whom lovely-haired Leto bore, who killed him among the front-fighters and gave the glory to Hector.

We two could run with the speed of the West Wind, [415] which men say is the fastest of all things; but it is your fate to be beaten down by the might of a god and of a man.’

When it had spoken in this way the Furies silenced its voice;

and swift-footed Achilles, deeply angered, addressed it:

‘Xanthus, why do you prophesy my death? There is no need. [420]

I know very well myself that it is my destiny to die here, far from my dear father and mother; but for all that I shall not

hold back until I have driven the Trojans to eat their fill of war.’

He spoke, and with a yell to the leaders drove out his single-hoofed horses.

BOOK TWENTY

So the Achaeans armed themselves by their curved ships,
around you, son of Peleus, who could never have your fill of
battle;

and on their side the Trojans armed, on the plain's rising
ground.

Meanwhile, from the peak of many-valleyed Olympus,
Zeus ordered Themis* to call the gods to an assembly; and
she [5]

ranged back and forth and ordered them to come to Zeus'
house. Not

one of the rivers stayed away, except Ocean,
nor any of the nymphs who haunt beautiful groves and
springs of rivers and grassy water-meadows, but they all
came to the house of Zeus who gathers the clouds, [10]
and took their seats in the polished stone porticoes that
Hephaestus had built for father Zeus with his cunning skill.*

So they assembled in Zeus' house; nor did the
earthshaker
neglect the goddess's summons, but rose from the sea to
join

the rest, and sat in their midst, and questioned Zeus'
purpose: [15]

'Wielder of the bright thunderbolt, why do you call the gods
again

to an assembly? Are you anxious about the Trojans and
Achaeans,
because war and fighting are very close to blazing out
between them?'

Then Zeus who gathers the clouds answered and

addressed him:

‘Earthshaker, you know the purpose in my breast, why I have [20]

gathered you here; I am concerned for them, dying as they are.

As for me, I shall remain here, seated in a valley of Olympus,

from where I can gladden my heart with watching; but you others

may go and mingle with the Trojans and Achaeans, and may bring help to either side, wherever you have a mind, since [25]

if Achilles fights the Trojans without your help they will not be able to resist Peleus’ swift-footed son, even for a short time;

even before this they would shake with fear when they saw him,

and now that he is terribly angry in his heart for his companion,

I am afraid that he will overstep his destiny and storm the wall.’ [30]

So the son of Cronus spoke, and stirred up relentless warfare.

The gods made their way to the fighting, divided in their purposes:

Hera made for the gathering of the ships with Pallas Athena and with Poseidon the earth-encircler, and Hermes the swift runner, celebrated for his wise understanding; and Hephaestus [35]

too went with them, exulting in his strength, and limping, though his slender legs moved nimbly beneath him. But to the Trojan side went Ares of the glittering helmet, and with him

was Apollo of the unshorn hair, and Artemis, shooter of arrows,

and Leto and Xanthus and Aphrodite who loves to smile.
[40]

For as long as the gods kept themselves apart from the
mortals

the Achaeans were mightily triumphant, because Achilles
had appeared after long absence from the painful fighting;
a fearful trembling stole over the limbs of every Trojan, and
they were afraid when they saw Peleus' swift-footed son,
[45]

the equal of Ares, doom of mortals, shining brightly in his
armour.

But when the Olympians came down and joined the mass of
men,

then mighty Strife who drives the people on rose up, and
Athena

roared, now standing outside the wall, beside the hollowed
ditch,

and now shouting loudly down the deep-thundering
seashore; and [50]

on the other side Ares, looking like a black storm-cloud,
roared,

urging the Trojans on with his piercing cries, now from the
city's heights,

and now running along Simoeis' banks, over the hill
Callicolone.*

So the blessed gods drove both sides on to crash
together,

and caused wearisome strife to break out among
themselves. [55]

High above, the father of gods and men thundered
terribly, and below Poseidon caused the boundless earth
and the steep crags on the mountains to tremble; on Ida
of the many springs all its foothills and peaks began to
shake,

and the Trojans' city and the Achaeans' ships trembled too.

[60]

In the depths, Aïdoneus,* lord of the dead below, was struck

with horror, and leapt yelling from his throne, terrified that Poseidon the earthshaker would split apart the earth above him,

and that his dank and dreadful dwellings, which even the gods abhor, would be laid bare to mortals and immortals; [65]

so huge was the crash that rose up when the gods clashed in strife. Face to face against lord Poseidon, Phoebus Apollo took his stand, his winged arrows in his hand, and opposite Enyalios stood the goddess grey-eyed Athena; against Hera stood Artemis of the golden distaff, goddess of the [70]

hunting-cry and arrow-shower, sister of him who shoots from afar.

Against Leto stood mighty Hermes the swift runner, and opposite Hephaestus stood the great deep-eddying river whom the gods call Xanthus, but men call Scamander. *

So they opposed each other, god against god; but Achilles [75]

was longing above everything to enter the mass of men and face

Hector, Priam's son—it was with his blood more than others'

that his heart impelled him to glut Ares the shield-bearing warrior.

But Apollo who drives the soldiery on made straight for Aeneas

and roused him to face Peleus' son, filling him with daring fury; [80]

he made his voice sound like that of Lycaon, Priam's son, and in this likeness Apollo, the son of Zeus, addressed him: 'Aeneas, counsellor of the Trojans, where now are those

boasts

that you used to make to the Trojans' kings over your wine,
promising to match your strength against Peleus' son
Achilles?' [85]

Then in answer Aeneas addressed him:

'Son of Priam, why are you telling me to do this, to face
Peleus' arrogant son in combat, when I have no desire for
it?

This will not be the first time that I stand up against swift-
footed

Achilles; once before this he drove me with his spear in
flight [90]

from Ida, at the time when he descended upon our cattle
and

sacked Lyrnessus and Pedasus;* but Zeus stirred up fury
in me, and made my knees nimble and came to my rescue

—

otherwise I would have been beaten down under Achilles'
hands,

and Athena's, who went before him, bringing success, and
told him [95]

to slaughter the Leleges and Trojans with his bronze-tipped
spear.

So it is not possible for a man to fight Achilles in single
combat,

since there is always one of the gods beside him, to ward
off ruin;

moreover, his spear always flies straight, and does not give
up

until it has passed through a man's flesh. But if some god
were to [100]

stretch war's outcome equally between us, he would not
easily

overcome me, not even if he claims to be made entirely of
bronze.'

Then in turn lord Apollo, son of Zeus, addressed him:
'Come now, hero, pray to the immortal gods yourself!
They say that your birth was divine—from Aphrodite, [105]
daughter of Zeus, while Achilles is the son of a lesser deity:
one is Zeus' daughter, and the other a child of the ancient
of the sea.

Come, then, and make straight for him with the untiring
bronze,
and do not let him turn you aside with bitter words or
threats.'

So he spoke, and breathed great fury into the shepherd
of the people, [110]
and went on through the front-fighters, helmeted in
gleaming bronze.

But Anchises' son did not go unnoticed by white-armed
Hera

as he strode through the mass of men to meet the son of
Peleus;

she brought all the gods together and spoke among them:
'Poseidon and Athena, it is you two who must deliberate
[115]

in your minds how these things will come to pass:
here is Aeneas, helmeted in gleaming bronze, going out
to meet the son of Peleus, and Apollo has sent him.

Come, let it be our charge to turn him straight back,
or let one of us go out and stand next to Achilles, and [120]
bestow great power on him; and let him not lack courage,
so that he may know that it is the best of the immortals
who love him, and that those who in the past kept war and
conflict away from the Trojans now have no power at all.

We all came down from Olympus to take part in this battle
[125]

so that Achilles should not suffer harm at the Trojans'
hands,

today—as for the future, he must suffer whatever Fate spun

for him with her thread at his birth, when his mother bore him.*

If Achilles does not hear this by means of the gods' utterance,

he will be afraid when some god comes to match strength with him [130]

in battle; and gods are hard to face when they appear undisguised.'

Then Poseidon, shaker of the earth, answered her: 'Hera, do not be angry beyond reason; there is no need. For my part, I have no wish to drive the gods together in strife,

us against the rest, since we are much stronger than they are. [135]

No, let us now leave this well-trodden field and take our seats

on some high watching-place, and leave the war to men.

But if Ares or Phoebus Apollo sets hostilities going again, or if they hold Achilles back and keep him from the fight, they will have a fighting quarrel on their hands with us too; [140]

and then I think that they will very quickly break off the battle

and go back to Olympus, to the company of the other gods, beaten down by the overwhelming force of our hands.'

So the god of the dark-blue hair spoke, and led them away to

the heaped-up stronghold of Heracles, descended from a god, [145]

the high wall built for him by the Trojans and Pallas Athena, so that he might escape the sea-monster and be safe whenever it pursued him from the seashore to the plain.*

On this Poseidon and the other gods took their seats, and covered their shoulders with an impenetrable cloud; and [150]

the gods on the other side sat on the brows of Callicolone,
gathered around you, lord Phoebus, and Ares, sacker of
cities.

So they sat on their different sides, devising their
schemes,
but both parties shrank from starting the grim fighting,
though Zeus who sits on high had instructed them to do so.
[155]

The whole plain was filled with men and horses, and
blazed
with bronze, and the earth rang to the beat of men's feet
as they charged at one another. Two men, by far the best,
met in the ground between the two sides, raging to fight—
Aeneas, the son of Anchises, and glorious Achilles. [160]
Aeneas was the first to stride forward, full of threats,
his strong helmet nodding; in front of his chest he held
his shield of battle, and he shook a bronze-tipped spear.
On the other side Peleus' son ran to meet him, like a lion
bent on slaughter that a whole village's resolute men have
[165]

gathered together to kill; at first it pays them no attention
and
continues on its way, but when some war-swift young man
hits it with his spear it crouches, jaws gaping, and foam
gathers around its teeth, and the brave spirit in its heart
groans, and with its tail it lashes its ribs and flanks on [170]
both sides, and drives itself on to fight; staring-eyed,
its fury carries it straight at the men, hoping either to kill
one of them or to die itself in the forefront of the conflict.
In just this way his fury and noble spirit drove Achilles on
to come face to face with great-hearted Aeneas. [175]
When they had advanced to within close range of each
other,
swift-footed glorious Achilles was the first to speak:
'Aeneas, why have you come out so far in front of the mass

to take your stand? Does your heart direct you to fight
with me because you hope to rule over the horse-breaking
[180]

Trojans, Priam's realm? But even if you kill me, Priam
will not for that reason put this prize in your hands;
he still has other sons, and his mind is strong, and not
infirm.

Or have the Trojans cut out an estate for you, better than
all others—

fine orchards and ploughland, for you to cultivate [185]
if you kill me? I reckon you will find that hard to do, for
I think I have once before put you to flight with my spear;
do you not remember when I found you alone with your
cattle

and chased you away, to run in swift-footed haste down
Ida's mountain slopes, fleeing without a backward glance?
[190]

From there you got away to Lyrnessus, but I made an
expedition
against it and sacked it, with the help of Athena and father
Zeus,
and led its women away as booty, robbing them of their
day
of freedom.* Zeus and the other gods protected you then,
but I do not think they will protect you this time, as you
[195]

imagine in your heart. So I advise you to go back into
the mass of men, and not to stand up against me, in case
some calamity befalls you; even a fool understands after
the event.'

Then in turn Aeneas answered him and said:

'Son of Peleus, do not think you can frighten me with words,
[200]

as if I were a child; I myself also know well how to
taunt and to fling unseemly abuse at another man.

We know of each other's ancestry, and each other's
parents,
for we have heard of their fame through mortal men's
words;
but you have never yet set eyes on my parents, nor I on
yours. [205]

They say that you are the offspring of blameless Peleus,
and your mother is the sea-goddess Thetis of the lovely
hair;

but for my part, I can boast that I am the son born to
great-hearted Anchises, and that my mother is Aphrodite.
Of these parents, one couple will today weep for their [210]
dear son, because I do not think it is with childish words
such as these that we shall settle this affair and leave the
battle.

But perhaps you wish to learn of my ancestry, to
know it well; many men know about my family already.
In the beginning, Zeus the cloud-gatherer fathered
Dardanus, [215]

and founded Dardania—for sacred Ilium, city of
mortal men, had not yet been built on the plain, and
people lived on the foothills of Ida of the many springs.
Dardanus in his turn fathered a son, King Erichthonius,
who became the richest of all mortal men; he had [220]
three thousand mares of his own grazing in meadows on
marshland, delighting in their tender young foals; and while
they were at pasture the North Wind was seized by desire
for

them, and lay with them in the likeness of a dark-maned
horse,

and they conceived and gave birth to twelve foals. [225]
Now whenever these gambolled over the grain-giving earth
they would run on the very tops of corn-ears and not break
them,

and whenever they skipped over the sea's broad back
they would run on the very wave-crests of the grey salt sea.

Erichthonius fathered Tros, born to be king over the Trojans,
[230]

and after this there were born to Tros three blameless sons,
Ilus and Assaracus and godlike Ganymedes, who
as you know was the most beautiful of mortal men, and
who, because of his beauty, was stolen away by the gods
to be the cupbearer of Zeus and to live among the
immortals. [235]

Ilus in his turn fathered a son, blameless Laomedon,
and Laomedon was the father of Tithonus and Priam
and Lampus and Clytius and Hicetaon, a shoot of Ares.
Assaracus had a son, Capys, and his son was Anchises;
Anchises is my father, and Priam's son is glorious Hector.
[240]

This, then, is the ancestry and bloodline that I boast is
mine;*

but as for bravery, it is Zeus who increases or diminishes it,
according as he wishes, for he is the mightiest of all.
So come, let us no longer bandy words in this way like
children,

standing as we do in the middle ground of harsh war; [245]
we can both fling insults at the other in such numbers
that not even a hundred-benched ship could bear their
weight.

Man's tongue is a pliant thing, and in it there are many
words of
different kinds, and the bounds of his speech spread far
and wide;
any words you utter you are likely to hear coming back to
you. [250]

What compulsion makes us quarrel and wrangle face to
face,
squabbling and bickering with each other like women who
become angry because of some heart-devouring dispute
and
go out into the middle of the street and argue with each

other,
with true and untrue words—for anger also makes them lie?
[255]

I am on fire for this trial of courage, and you will not deflect
me
from it with words—not before we have fought with the
bronze,
face to face. So come, let us taste each other's bronze-
tipped spears.'

So he spoke, and hurled his massive spear at the
other's terrible,
awe-inspiring shield, and the shield rang aloud under the
spear's point. [260]

Peleus' son held the shield away from him in his brawny
hand;
he was terrified, because he thought that the far-shadowing
spear

of great-hearted Aeneas would pass through it with ease,
fool that he was, who did not understand in his heart and
mind

that the splendid gifts of the gods are not lightly [265]
beaten down by mortal men, nor will easily yield to them.
And so this time the massive spear of war-minded Aeneas
did not break through the shield, for the god's gift stopped
it.

He drove it through two layers, but there were three more,
for the crook-footed god had bonded five layers on to it,
[270]

two of bronze, two of tin on the shield's inner side,
and one of gold, which was where the ash spear stopped.

Then Achilles in turn hurled his far-shadowing spear,
and hit the perfectly balanced shield of Aeneas on the
outside of its rim, where the bronze ran thinnest, and [275]
thinnest too was the oxhide on top; the Pelian ash spear
tore clean through it, and the shield gave a loud crack.

Aeneas crouched low, and held his shield away from him,
in fear, and the eager spear split both circles of his body-
protecting
shield and flew over his back and fixed itself in the ground.
[280]

Aeneas, now that he had avoided the long spear, stood
there,
terrified because the spear had stuck fast so near to him,
and a huge wave of grief flooded down over his eyes.
Then Achilles drew his sharp sword and sprang at him
raging,
giving a terrifying yell; but Aeneas picked up a rock in his
[285]

hand—a mighty feat—which not even two men such as
mortals
now are could lift, but he easily raised it on his own.
He would have hit Achilles with this rock as he charged,
either on
the helmet or the shield that had already saved him from
miserable
death, and then Peleus' son would have come close and
robbed him
of his life with the sword, had not Poseidon the earthshaker
been [290]

quick to see it, and at once spoken out to the immortal
gods:

'This cannot be! Grief comes over me for great-hearted
Aeneas,
who will quickly go down to Hades' house, beaten down by
Peleus' son, because he listened to the words of Apollo the
far- [295]

shooter, the fool—Apollo will not save him from miserable
death.

Why does this innocent man* now suffer such pointless
agonies

for the sake of others' troubles, when he has always

given pleasing gifts to the gods who live in the broad high sky?

Come, let us lead him ourselves out of the way of death;
[300]

even the son of Cronus may become angry if Achilles kills Aeneas, because it is his destiny to escape, so that the race of Dardanus shall not perish without issue and unremembered—Dardanus, whom Cronus' son loved above all the children borne to him by mortal women, [305] though now the son of Cronus hates the race of Priam.* And so mighty Aeneas will rule over the Trojans, he and his children's children, those who are born in time to come.'

Then the lady goddess ox-eyed Hera answered him: 'Earthshaker, you must decide in your own mind [310] about Aeneas, whether to save him, or allow him to be beaten down by Peleus' son Achilles, fine man though he is. We two have sworn many oaths among the immortal gods, I and Pallas Athena, that we shall never keep the day of ruin away from the Trojans, not even when the whole of [315] Troy is ablaze, burning in the ravaging fire, and the warlike sons of the Achaeans have put it to the torch.'

When Poseidon the earthshaker heard her words he made his way through the battle and the spears' turmoil,
and came to where Aeneas and renowned Achilles were.
[320]

Then straightaway he poured a mist over the eyes of Peleus' son Achilles, and pulled the spear with its sharp bronze point from the shield of great-hearted Aeneas; this he laid before the feet of Achilles, and lifting Aeneas up swept him away, high above the ground. [325] Over many ranks of heroes and over ranks of horses Aeneas vaulted, sped on by the hand of the god, and came down at the edge of the violent battlefield, where the Caucones were arming themselves for war.

Poseidon the earthshaker came very close to him [330]
and addressed him, speaking with winged words:
'Aeneas, which of the gods is telling you to fight so
recklessly,
hand to hand with the high-hearted son of Peleus,
who is both stronger than you and dearer to the immortals?
Stop; and if ever you are thrown in his path, fall back [335]
so that you do not reach the house of Hades before your
time;
but when Achilles has met his death and his doom, then
you may take courage and fight among the foremost,
for no other man of the Achaeans is meant to kill you.'

So he spoke, and left him there, when he had explained
all this. [340]

Quickly he scattered the divinely sent mist from
Achilles' sight, who at once saw clearly with his eyes;
deeply disquieted, he addressed his great-hearted spirit:
'Oh, this is indeed a great marvel that I see before my
eyes!

Here is my spear lying on the ground, but I cannot see
[345]

the man against whom I threw it in my rage to kill him.
It seems that Aeneas was after all loved by the gods,
even though I thought his boasting was vain and empty.
Well, to hell with him; this time he was glad to escape
death,
and he will not have the stomach to make trial of me again.
[350]

Come! I will give instructions to the war-loving Danaans,
and go to face the other Trojans, and put them to the test.'

So he spoke, and sprang into the ranks, and urged on
each man:

'Glorious Achaeans, do not any longer stand back from the
Trojans,
but let each go forward, man against man, raging to do

battle. [355]

It is hard for me, powerful as I am, to go in pursuit of so many men and to engage all of them in battle; not even Ares, who is an immortal god, nor Athena would have the endurance to go and face the jaws of such a great conflict. But whatever my hands and feet and strength can achieve, [360]

that I will do, and I shall not give way, not even a little, but will press on right through their ranks, and I do not think any Trojan will be glad when he comes within range of my spear.'

So he spoke, urging them on; and illustrious Hector shouted encouragement to the Trojans, promising to go out and face Achilles: [365]

'High-hearted Trojans, do not be afraid of Peleus' son; I too could fight with words, even against the immortals, though with the spear it would be harder, since they are much stronger.

Nor will Achilles fulfil all that his many words promise; some things he accomplishes, some he cuts off half-done. [370]

I shall go out and face him, even if his hands are like fire—indeed, even if his hands are like fire, and his fury like gleaming iron.'

So he spoke, urging them on, and the Trojans raised their spears at the enemy; both sides' fury crashed together, and the battle-cry rose up. Then Phoebus Apollo stood near Hector and said: [375]

'Hector, do not on any account go forward to challenge Achilles, but wait for him in the mass of men and the battle's roar;

otherwise he
may hit you with a spear or wound you from close by with
his sword.'

So he spoke, and Hector once again entered the mass
of men,

alarmed when he heard the sound of a god's voice. [380]

But Achilles, his heart clothed in courage, sprang at the
Trojans

with a frightening yell, and the first he felled was Iphition,
the fine son of Otrynteus, commander of a great force,
whom a Naiad nymph* bore to Otrynteus, sacker of cities,
below snow-clad Tmolus, in the rich land of Hyde. As he
came [385]

straight at him, raging, glorious Achilles hit him with a
spear

on the middle of his head, and it was completely split in
two;

he fell with a thud, and glorious Achilles boasted over him:

'Lie there, son of Otrynteus, most outrageous of men!

Your death is here, though your birth was by the lake [390]

of Gygaea,* where your father's estate is, next to

Hyllus, rich in fish, and the swirling waters of Hermus.'

So he spoke, boasting, and darkness covered Iphition's
eyes.

The Achaeans' horses cut him to pieces with their wheel-
tyres

in the battle forefront, and over him Achilles stabbed
Demoleon, [395]

son of Antenor and a fine man at fending off the battle,

in the temple, right through his helmet's bronze cheek-
pieces;

the bronze helmet could not stop the spear-point, which
flew right through and shattered the bone, and his brain
inside was all turned to pulp; so he was beaten down,
raging. [400]

Next, when Hippodamas had leapt quickly down from his chariot

and was fleeing before him, Achilles pierced him in the back with his spear; he gasped out his life, bellowing like a bull when it is dragged by young men around the shrine of the Heliconian,* while the earthshaker delights in them. [405]

Just so Hippodamas bellowed as his noble life left his bones. Then Achilles went after godlike Polydorus, Priam's son, with his spear. His father had always forbidden him to fight, because he was the youngest by birth among his sons, and dearest to him; and he surpassed everyone in speed of foot. [410]

This time he was showing off his prowess in childish display,

storming through the front-fighters, until he lost his dear life.

Glorious swift-footed Achilles hit him with a spear in the middle

of his back as he rushed past, in the place where his belt's golden buckles were fastened, and the halves of his corslet met. [415]

The spear's point went right through and came out by his navel,

and he fell on to his knees with a scream, and a dark cloud covered him, and he sank down, clutching his guts in his hands.

When Hector saw his brother Polydorus clutching his guts in his hands and sinking down to the ground, a mist [420]

flooded over his eyes; he could bear no longer to go back and forth at a distance, but made straight to face Achilles,

shaking his sharp spear and looking like flame. As soon as Achilles saw him he sprang up, and spoke exultingly:

'Now here at hand is the man who has vexed my heart

most of all, [425]

the one who killed my honoured companion; now we shall cower no longer away from each other along the battle-lines of war.'

So he spoke, and looking darkly at brilliant Hector addressed him:

'Come closer, so you will sooner be caught in the snares of death.'

Then Hector of the glittering helmet addressed him fearlessly: [430]

'Son of Peleus, do not think you can frighten me with words as if I was a child; I myself also know well how to taunt and to fling unseemly abuse at another man.

I know that you are great, and that I am much inferior; but the outcome of all this lies on the knees of the gods, whether [435]

I, though a lesser man, will rob you of your life with a cast of my

spear; my weapon too has been proved sharp enough in the past.'

So he spoke, and poised his spear and let it fly; but Athena,

with the lightest of breaths, turned it aside from splendid Achilles, and it flew back to glorious Hector [440] and fell there, in front of his feet. Then Achilles,

in a rage to kill Hector, sprang on him full of frenzy, with a frightening yell; but Apollo snatched him away with great ease, as a god can, wrapped in a dense mist. Three times swift-footed glorious Achilles charged at him with [445]

his bronze-tipped spear, and three times he struck the thick mist;

but when for the fourth time he rushed at him like some divine being,

he gave a terrible shout and addressed him in winged

words:

'You dog, once again you have escaped death, though
disaster
came close to you; this time Phoebus Apollo has saved you,
[450]

the god you doubtless pray to when you enter the thudding
of spears.

When I meet you again I shall surely put an end to your life,
if I can find some god somewhere who will help me as well.
But now I shall go after the rest, and hope to overtake
them.'

So he spoke, and speared Dryops in the middle of his
neck; [455]

he fell in front of Achilles' feet, who left him there, and
threw

a spear at Demuchus, Philetor's son, a valiant and mighty
man,

and halted him with a spear-strike to the knee. Achilles then
slashed at him with his great sword and took away his life.

Next he leapt at Laogonus and Dardanus, two sons of Bias,
[460]

and forced them both out of their chariot, one with a cast of
his

spear, and the other with a sword-blow at close quarters.

Then Tros, Alastor's son—he had come up to grasp his
knees,

hoping that Achilles would take him prisoner and let him go
alive,

sparing him death out of pity because he was of a similar
age— [465]

fool that he was, and did not know that he would not
persuade him,

for this was a man with no softness in his heart, nor any
gentleness,

but full of rage. As in anxious entreaty Tros tried to touch

Achilles'

knees with his hands, he struck him in the liver with his sword,

and the liver slid out of his body, and the dark blood from it [470]

filled his lap; he lost hold of his life and darkness covered his eyes.

Achilles next closed with Mulius, and stabbed him in the ear with his spear, and the bronze tip passed clean through, and came out of the other ear. Next he struck Echeclus, Agenor's son, on the middle of his head with his hilted sword, [475]

and the whole sword grew warm with his blood, and purple death

and his cruel destiny came down and fastened on his eyes.

Next he hit Deucalion where the sinews join on to the elbow,

and pierced his arm there with his bronze-tipped spear.

Deucalion stood waiting for him, his arm drooping heavily, [480]

staring at death before his face; Achilles struck at his neck with

his sword, and sent head and helmet flying together; the marrow

burst out of his backbone, and he lay sprawled on the ground.

Then he set off in search of the blameless son of Peirous, Rhigmus, who had come from rich-soiled Thrace, and hit him [485]

in the midriff with his spear, and the bronze stuck in his lung,

and he tumbled from his chariot. As Rhigmus' attendant Areithous

turned his horses round Achilles struck him in the back with his spear

and thrust him from the chariot; and the horses were panic-stricken.

Just as awesome fire rages through the deep valleys of
a [490]

parched mountain, and the deep woods keep burning,
and the driving wind sets the flames rolling everywhere,
so Achilles stormed everywhere with his spear like some
divine being,

pursuing and killing, and the black earth ran with blood.
As when a man yokes together broad-browed bulls,
intending [495]

to crush white barley on a well-built threshing floor, and
it is quickly shelled under the feet of the loud-bellowing
bulls,

so under great-hearted Achilles' chariot the single-hoofed
horses

trampled down dead men and shields alike. The axle
beneath

and the rails running round the platform were splashed all
over [500]

with blood that was thrown up in showers by the horses'
hoofs

and by the wheel-tyres. And he, Peleus' son, kept pressing
on

to win glory, spattering his unconquerable hands with gore.

BOOK TWENTY-ONE

BUT when they reached the crossing of the clear-flowing river,*
swirling Xanthus, whose father was immortal Zeus, there Achilles
cut the Trojan forces into two. Some he pursued across the plain
towards the city, where the Achaeans had fled in confusion on the day before, when illustrious Hector was full of rage,
[5]
and here the Trojans streamed away in panic, and Hera spread
a dense mist in front to hamper them. The rest were
penned in against the deep-flowing, silver-swirling river,
and they fell into it with a great noise, and the deep waters
roared,
and the banks on both sides threw back the loud echo;
yelling, [10]
they swam this way and that, whirled about by the eddies.
As when locusts rise fluttering and flee towards a river,
driven by a blast of untiring fire that has suddenly leapt up
in a blaze, and then huddle together in the water,*
so at Achilles' onslaught the stream of deep-swirling
Xanthus [15]
was filled with a confused clamour of horses and men.

Achilles, sprung from Zeus, left his spear there on the bank,
leaning against a tamarisk bush, and jumped into the river like a
divine being, with only his sword, intent on terrible deeds,
and began

to strike, whirling this way and that; and shameful groans
arose [20]

from men slashed by his sword, and the water grew red
with blood.

As when fish flee the onslaught of a monstrous dolphin, and
cowering in fear crowd into the secret places of a harbour
of

good anchorage, and the dolphin gobbles up all those it can
catch,

so the Trojans huddled beneath the overhangs along the
terrible[25]

river's waters. When Achilles had tired his arms with
slaughter

he chose twelve young men who were still alive from the
river

to be payment for the death of Patroclus, son of Menoetius.

These he drove, stunned like fawns, on to the land and
tied their hands behind them with the well-cut leather belts
[30]

that they wore around their closely woven tunics, and
handed

them over to his companions to take back to the hollow
ships.*

Then he sprang back, raging to continue the fighting.

There he fell in with a son of Priam, descendant of
Dardanus,

as he was escaping from the river—Lycaon, whom once
before in a [35]

night raid he had captured in his father's orchard and
brought back,

struggling; Lycaon had been cutting the young branches of
a

wild fig tree with the sharp bronze to make into chariot-
rails,

and glorious Achilles came on him as an unexpected

calamity.

At that time Achilles carried him off in his ships and sold him[40]

into well-built Lemnos, and Euneus, Jason's son, bought him.

From there his guest-friend Eëtion of Imbros ransomed him for a great price and sent him away to bright Arisbe, but he escaped secretly from there and came to his father's house.

For eleven days after he returned from Lemnos he gladdened [45]

his heart among his friends; but on the twelfth day a god thrust him once again into the hands of Achilles, who would now send him unwillingly on a journey to the house of Hades.

When swift-footed glorious Achilles caught sight of him unarmed, without helmet or shield, with no spear in his hand, [50]

because he had thrown them all to the ground—for he was weary

and sweating as he climbed from the river, and fatigue sapped his

knees' strength—he was angry and spoke to his great-hearted spirit:

'Well now, here is indeed a great wonder I see before my eyes!

It seems that all the great-hearted Trojans I have killed [55] will rise once again from the murky darkness below, seeing how this man has escaped the pitiless day, after he was

sold into lovely Lemnos. Not even the grey sea's expanse could hold him back, though it restrains many against their will.

But now he will taste the point of my spear, so that I can see [60]

and know for sure in my mind if he will return in the same

way

even from there, or if the earth that gives life to all will hold him down, as it holds down even the strong man.'

So he pondered and paused; and Lycaon, bewildered, drew close, desperate to grasp him by the knees, for he had a great desire [65]

to escape miserable death and its black spectre.

Glorious Achilles lifted up his long spear, raging to stab him, but

Lycaon ducked under it and ran up stooping to grasp his knees,

and the spear flew over his back and stuck in the ground, longing to glut itself on human flesh. With one hand [70]

Lycaon held on to Achilles' knees, entreating him, and with the other gripped the sharpened spear and would not let it go.

Then he spoke, addressing Achilles with winged words:

'Achilles, I entreat you! Show me respect and have pity on me.

Zeus-nurtured man, I come to you as a suppliant, worthy of respect;

you were the first man with whom I ate Demeter's grain on the day[76]

that you captured me in our well-ordered orchard and carried me far away from father and friends and sold me into

lovely Lemnos. I earned you the worth of a hundred oxen, but then I was ransomed for three times as much;[80]

and this is the twelfth day since I came back to Ilium, after much hardship, and my malignant destiny has placed me

again in your hands. I suppose I must be hated by father Zeus,

who has delivered me up to you a second time. It was a

short life

I was born to by my mother Laothoë, daughter of old Altes,
[85]

ruler over the Leleges whose delight is warfare, who
has his home in steep Pedasus beside the river Satnioeis.*

Priam took his daughter as wife, though he had many
others,

and she bore two sons, and now you will have butchered us
both: one you beat down in the front rank of foot-fighters,
[90]

godlike Polydorus, felling him with your sharp spear,* and
now here you will be my destruction too, for I do not think
I will escape your hands, since some god has brought us
together.

But I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your
mind:

do not kill me, because I am not from the same womb as
Hector, [95]

the one who slew your gentle and mighty companion.'

So the illustrious son of Priam addressed him,
entreating

him with his words; but he received an implacable reply:
'Fool, do not make speeches to me or talk of ransom.

In the time before Patroclus met the day of his destiny[100]

I was in some way prepared in my heart to spare the men
of Troy, and I took many alive and sent them over the sea;

but now there is no man who can escape death, once a god
thrusts him into my hands in front of Ilium—not one man
of all the Trojans, and above all the sons of Priam.[105]

So, my friend, you too must die; why lament like this?

Even Patroclus is dead, who was a far better man than you.
Can you not see what kind of a man I am, how handsome
and great?

I am the son of a well-born man, and the mother who bore
me was

a goddess, and yet over me too hangs death and my harsh destiny.[110]

There will be a dawn or an afternoon or the middle of a day when some man will take the life from me too in Ares' war, with a cast of his spear or an arrow sped from the bowstring.'

So he spoke, and Lycaon's knees and dear heart were loosened;

he let go of the spear and crouched there, spreading both arms [115]

wide. Achilles drew his sharp sword and struck him on the neck next to his collarbone, and the two-edged sword sank right in, and Lycaon fell forward on to the earth and lay there

sprawled, and his dark blood flowed out and wetted the ground.

Achilles seized him by the foot and flung him into the river[120]

to be carried away, and boasting over him spoke winged words:

'Lie there now among the fish, who will lick away the blood from your wound without a thought for you; nor will your mother

lay you on a bier and lament over you, but instead swirling Scamander will carry you into the wide gulf of the salt sea, [125]

and fish will dart up through the waves' dark rippling surface and will feed on the white fat of Lycaon.

Die, all of you, until we reach the citadel of sacred Ilium, you fleeing and I dealing out slaughter in pursuit.

Not even this clear-flowing, silver-swirling river will help you,[130]

this river to whom you have for many years sacrificed bulls in plenty, and hurled single-hoofed horses alive into its eddies.

No—die, every one of you, a miserable death, until you have paid the price for Patroclus' death and for the slaughter of the Achaeans you killed beside the swift ships while I stayed away.[135]'

So he spoke, and the river grew very angry in his heart, and pondered in his mind how he might put an end to glorious Achilles' battle-work, and keep destruction away from the Trojans.

Meanwhile the son of Peleus, holding up his far-shadowing spear, sprang at Asteropaeus, the son of Pelegon, raging to kill him.[140]

Pelegon was the son of broad-flowing Axius and Periboea,* who was the eldest of the daughters of Aecessamenus, and the deep-swirling river Axius lay with her. It was at Pelegon's son that Achilles sprang as he stood in the river facing him, holding two spears; Xanthus had put fury[145] in his heart, angry at the slaughter of the young fighters Achilles had cut down in his waters, showing them no pity. When they had advanced to within close range of each other

swift-footed glorious Achilles was the first to speak: 'Who are you, and where are you from, that you dare to face me?[150]

Unhappy are the parents whose sons oppose my fury!'

Then in turn the illustrious son of Pelegon addressed him:

'Great-spirited son of Peleus, why do you ask about my ancestry?

I come from Paeonia of the rich soil, far from this place, and I command the men of Paeonia with their long spears, [155]

and this is now the eleventh day since I came to Ilium.
My birth-line goes back to Axius the broad-flowing,
Axius who pours forth the loveliest waters over the earth;
he fathered Pelegon, famed with the spear, whom they say
was my father. Now, illustrious Achilles, let us fight!'[160]

So he spoke, full of threats, and glorious Achilles raised
the Pelian ash spear. The hero Asteropaeus was
ambidextrous,

and threw spears from both his hands at the same time;
with one spear he hit Achilles' shield, but it did not break
through, since the gold, the gift of a god, kept it out.[165]

With the other he hit Achilles on the right forearm,
grazing it, and a dark cloud of blood spurted out, but
the spear passed beyond him and stuck fast in the ground,
longing to taste flesh. Throwing second, in a rage to kill
him,

Achilles let fly his straight-flying ash spear at Asteropaeus,
[170]

but he missed his mark, and the ash spear hit the high
riverbank and stuck there in the bank up to its mid-point.
Then Peleus' son drew his sharp sword from beside his
thigh

and leapt raging at Asteropaeus, who was trying in vain to
wrench

Achilles' ash spear from the bank with his brawny hand;
[175]

three times in his rage to pull it out he made it quiver, and
three times he gave up the struggle. The fourth time he
tried to

bend and break the ash spear of Aeacus' grandson, but too
soon

Achilles closed with him and robbed him of his life with the
sword,

hitting him in the belly next to the navel, and all his
guts[180]

spilled out on to the ground and he breathed out his life,
and darkness covered his eyes. Achilles jumped on to his
chest

and stripped him of his armour, and spoke boastfully over
him:

‘Lie there, and learn how hard it is, though born from a
river,

to pit yourself against the descendants of Cronus’ mighty
son.*[185]

You said you were descended from a broad-flowing river,
but I can claim a blood-line running from great Zeus:

the man who fathered me rules over the numerous
Myrmidons,

Peleus, the son of Aeacus; and Aeacus was a son of Zeus.
Zeus is more powerful than rivers that flow into the sea,
and[190]

therefore the lineage of Zeus is more powerful than a
river’s.

And here is a great river flowing beside you, who might
help you; but no one can fight with Zeus, the son of Cronus.

Not even lord Achelous can match himself against him,
nor even the immensely strong deep-flowing Ocean,* [195]

from whom every river and the sea in its entirety
and all springs and deep wells draw their flow.

Even he is in fear of the lightning-bolt of great Zeus and
his terrible thunder, when it crashes from the high sky.’

So he spoke, and wrenched the bronze-tipped spear
from the

bank, [200]

and left Asteropaeus there, after robbing him of his dear
life,

lying where he was on the sands; and the dark water
soaked

into him and eels and fishes busied themselves about him,
gnawing at his kidneys and tearing the fat around them.

Then Achilles set off after the horsehair-crested Paeonians,
[205]

who had been thrown into turmoil along the swirling river
when they saw their champion beaten down in the harsh
conflict by the hands of Peleus' son and the might of his
sword.

He now killed Thersilochus and Mydon and Astypylus,
and Mnesus and Thrasius and Aenius and Ophelestes; [210]
and swift Achilles would have slain even more Paeonians
had not the deep-swirling river grown angry and addressed
him,

speaking from a deep whirlpool in the likeness of a man:
'Achilles, your strength and the violence of your deeds
are beyond all men; the gods are always protecting you.
[215]

If the son of Cronus has granted it to you to kill all the
Trojans,
at least drive them out of me on to the plain and do your
worst there;
you can see that my lovely streams are crammed full of
dead men,
and there is no way that I can pour my waters into the
bright sea,
clogged as I am with dead men, while you continue your
brutal
killing. [220]

Come now, let me be! Astonishment grips me, captain of
the people.'

Then swift-footed Achilles addressed him in answer:
'Very well, Scamander, nurtured by Zeus, it will be as you
say—
but I shall not give up slaughtering the arrogant Trojans
until
I have penned them inside their city, and have tested
Hector, [225]

matching our strength; either he will beat me down, or I him.'

So he spoke, and hurled himself at the Trojans like some divine being.

Then the deep-swirling river addressed Apollo:

'God of the silver bow, this is hard! You have not respected the plans of Cronus' son, he who repeatedly instructed you to [230]

stand by the Trojans and to defend them until the evening comes

and the sun goes down at last, shadowing the rich-soiled ploughland.'

So he spoke, and Achilles, famed with the spear, leapt from the bank

into the middle of the river, who rushed at him in a seething mass,

boiling up all its waters to a crest, and stirring the many dead men [235]

killed by Achilles who were lying in him in great numbers; roaring like a bull he flung them out on to the dry land, but keeping those who were alive safe along his lovely waters, hiding them in the vast depths of his swirling stream.

The wave reared up terribly, seething around Achilles, [240] and its watery mass fell on his shield and smashed him back;

he could not find a firm stance for his feet, and he seized a tall,

well-grown elm tree in his hands; but it came away from its roots

and tore the whole bank down with it, and blocked the fine stream

with its thick-growing branches, and as it fell made a barrier [245]

right across it. Achilles heaved himself out of the swirling river and dashed away, flying over the plain on swift feet,

terrified. The great god did not pause, but rose up
menacingly

to a dark crest, seeking to put an end to the battle-work of
glorious Achilles and to keep destruction from the Trojans.

[250]

Peleus's son sprang back from him as far as a spear-cast,
swooping away like the black eagle, the hunting bird, that
is

both the strongest and the swiftest of winged creatures;
in this likeness he bounded on, and on his chest the bronze
armour clattered terribly. So he fled, crouching under the
river's [255]

onslaught, but Xanthus with a mighty roar flowed on in
pursuit.

As when a man, a digger of channels, guides a stream's
flow

from a spring of dark water through plants in his garden,
and,

mattock in hand, clears obstructions away from the
channel;

as the water flows onwards it sweeps all the pebbles out of
[260]

its way, and with a gurgling sound glides quickly down
the land's gentle slope, too fast even for the man digging.

Just so the wave of the river kept catching up with Achilles,
swift though he was, for gods are stronger than men.

As often as swift-footed glorious Achilles strove to make a
[265]

stand and match his strength with the river, hoping to find
if

all the immortal gods who inhabit the high sky were
pursuing him,

so often the great wave of the Zeus-fed river would crash
on to his shoulders from above. Anguished in spirit, he kept
trying to leap clear of it, but the river rushed violently
beneath him, [270]

weakening his knees and sucking the dirt from under his feet.

The son of Peleus looked up to the wide high sky and groaned:

‘Father Zeus, to think that none of the gods has promised to save me

from the river, pitiful as I am! After this, I could face any ordeal.

But none of the dwellers in the high sky is as much to blame [275]

as my own mother, who beguiled me with lying words, saying that I would die under the walls of the armoured Trojans, struck down by the swift arrows of Apollo.*

How I wish that Hector, the best man bred here, had killed me;

a champion would have been the slayer, and a champion the slain. [280]

But the truth is that I am fated to die a wretched death, trapped in a great river like a boy, some swineherd, who is swept away by a torrent as he tries to cross it in winter.’

So he spoke, and at once Poseidon and Athena came and stood close to him in the likeness of men, and [285] taking him by the hand spoke encouraging words to him. The first of them to speak was Poseidon, shaker of the earth:

‘Son of Peleus, you must not be greatly alarmed or fearful, seeing that two gods like us are here to support you, I and Pallas Athena—and we have come with Zeus’ consent.

[290]

Be sure that it is not your destiny to be beaten down by a river;

this one will soon give up, and you will see it for yourself.

Now I will give you some shrewd advice, and perhaps you will listen:

do not rest your hands from equally balanced warfare until

you have penned all the Trojan people who escape you
inside [295]
the splendid walls of Ilium. Then, when you have robbed
Hector of his life, go back to the ships; this glory we grant
you.'

So they spoke, and went away to join the immortals,
and Achilles,
greatly cheered by the gods' advice, made his way to the
plain.
It was entirely flooded by the overflowing mass of water,
and [300]
much fine weaponry and the bodies of young fighters slain
in
battle were floating there. Achilles' high-stepping, nimble
knees
carried him straight upstream against the current, and the
broad-flowing
river could not stop him, for Athena had thrust great
strength into him.
Even so Scamander would not abate his fury, but became
[305]
yet more angry at the son of Peleus, and reared his waters
high to a crest, and called out in a shout to Simoeis:
'Dear brother, let us together hold back this man's
strength,
or he will very soon sack the great city of lord Priam, and
the Trojans will not be able to withstand the heat of battle.
[310]
Come quickly, help me, and fill up your channels with
water from your springs, and stir all your streams into
spate.
Raise a huge wave and stir up a great crashing of tree-
trunks
and rocks, so that we can restrain this wild man,
who now stands supreme and rages like the gods. [315]

I tell you, neither his violence will help him nor his beauty, nor that splendid armour, which will lie somewhere deep in my waters, covered in slime. I shall wrap him in sand and heap up a huge pile of shingle over him, and the Achaeans will not know where to find his bones in order [320]

to assemble them, so deep will be the silt I shall hide him in.

That will be his tomb, and there will be no need to raise a grave-mound when the Achaeans perform his funeral rites.'

So he spoke, and rearing up in a seething mass rushed at Achilles

in a roaring tumult of foam and blood and dead men. [325]

The dark wave of the river fed by Zeus rose high, looming over the son of Peleus, and was about to overwhelm him;

but Hera gave a great shout, terrified on his behalf

that the great deep-swirling river would sweep him away.

Straightaway she addressed Hephaestus, her dear son:

[330]

'Up with you, my crook-footed son! You are the one who we thought could be a fit opponent for swirling Xanthus.

Come quickly now and help me: make a great flame flash out,

and I will go and rouse a violent storm from the salt sea,

blown by the West Wind and the clearing South Wind; [335]

it will bring with it a destructive blast that will consume the Trojans' armour and their dead men. Burn the trees along Xanthus' banks, and fill him with fire; let him not on any account turn you back with beguiling words or threats,

and do not cease from your fury until such time as I shout out [340]

to you—only then must you hold back your tireless fire.'

So she spoke, and Hephaestus made ready awesome fire.

First of all the fire burnt on the plain, searing the many dead men who lay there in great numbers, killed by Achilles.

The whole plain was scorched, and the bright water was checked. [345]

As when in autumn the North Wind quickly dries up a newly watered orchard, and the man who tills it is glad, so the whole plain was scorched dry, and the dead men were consumed. Then Hephaestus turned his dazzling flame on

the river, and the elms and willows and tamarisks burned, [350]

and the clover and rushes and galingale that grew in abundance around the lovely waters of the river burned too.

All along its eddies the eels and fishes were afflicted, leaping like acrobats this way and that in the lovely waters, tormented by the blast of much-scheming Hephaestus. [355]

The mighty river himself was on fire, and addressed him by name:

‘Hephaestus, no one of the gods can stand up against you, and I cannot fight you when you blaze with fire like this.

Leave off

this strife, and let glorious Achilles drive the Trojans at once from

their city. What is this quarrel to me? Why should I take sides?’ [360]

So he spoke, burnt by the fire, and his lovely waters were boiling.

As a cauldron is heated by a great fire made of dry wood that crackles beneath it, and as it seethes inside renders down

the fat of a richly fed hog which bubbles up all around, so the river’s lovely streams blazed in the fire, and his

water boiled. [365]

He stopped still and had no desire to flow onward; the blast of mighty Hephaestus of many schemes tormented him.

Pouring out entreaties he spoke to Hera with winged words: 'Hera, why has your son attacked my streams, making me suffer

above others? It is not I who am to blame as much as [370]

all the other gods who are helping the Trojans. Very well,

I am ready to stop, if this is what you command—only let Achilles give up as well. And I will swear an oath in addition, that I shall never keep the day of destruction from the Trojans,

not even when the whole of Troy is ablaze, burning in the ravaging [375]

fire, when the warlike sons of the Achaeans have put it to the torch.'

When the goddess Hera of the white arms heard this she straightaway addressed her dear son Hephaestus:

'Hephaestus, my far-famed son, restrain yourself! It is not right

to batter an immortal god like this for the sake of mortals.' [380]

So she spoke, and Hephaestus quenched his awesome fire,

and the wave rolled back along the river's lovely streams.

When the fury of Xanthus had been beaten down both fighters

stopped, because Hera held them back, angry though she was;

but then a painful, weighty conflict descended on the other gods, [385]

and the spirit in their hearts was blown in contrary directions.

They collided with a great crash, and the broad earth groaned,

and the great high sky sounded its trumpet; Zeus heard it as he sat on Olympus, and laughed with delight in his dear heart when he saw the gods clashing in strife. [390] No longer did they stand apart from each other: Ares the shield-piercer began the fighting, and charged at Athena with his bronze-tipped spear, and spoke insultingly to her: 'Dog-fly, what is this wild daring? Why are you once again driving the gods against each other, urged on by your great spirit? [395]

Do you not recall when you provoked Tydeus' son Diomedes to wound me, and you yourself took up a spear, for all to see, and thrust it straight at me and tore my handsome flesh?*_ I think that you will now pay me back for what you did then.'

So bloodthirsty Ares spoke, and lunged with a stab [400]

of his long spear at the terrible, tassel-decorated aegis that not even the thunderbolt of Zeus can overcome.

Athena fell back and picked up a rock in her brawny hand, a black boulder that was lying on the plain, jagged and huge,

which men of former times had put there to be a field-boundary; [405]

with this she struck impetuous Ares in the neck, and loosened his limbs.

Ares fell, with a clatter of armour about him, covering seven

acres, and fouling his hair in the dust; Pallas Athena laughed,

and boasting over him addressed him with winged words:

'Fool, why do you match your strength against mine? [410] Have you not yet learned how much better than you I claim to be?

This way you will pay the full price to your mother's Furies;*_

she is angry, and plans mischief against you because you have abandoned the Achaeans and offer help to the arrogant Trojans.'

So she spoke, and turned her shining eyes away from him, [415]

and Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, took his hand and led him away, groaning deeply; he had scarcely recovered his breath.

When the goddess Hera of the white arms saw Aphrodite she immediately spoke to Athena with winged words:

'Daughter of Zeus the aegis-wearer, Atrytone,* this will not do! [420]

Here is that dog-fly again, leading Ares, doom of mortals, through the mêlée out of the deadly battle. Quick, after her!'

So she spoke, and Athena sped off in pursuit, glad in her heart,

and closing with Aphrodite hit her on the breast with her brawny

hand; and then and there her knees and her dear heart gave way. [425]

So both Ares and Aphrodite lay on the earth that feeds many;

Athena boasted over them and addressed them with winged words:

'Let this be the treatment of all those who help the Trojans whenever they fight against the armoured Achaeans, and let them be as daring and unflinching as Aphrodite was [430]

when she came to the help of Ares and faced my fury, and then we would long ago have finished with this war, and would have sacked the well-built citadel of Ilium.'

So she spoke, and the goddess Hera of the white arms

smiled.

But the lord who shakes the earth addressed Apollo: [435]

‘Phoebus, why do we two keep our distance? It is not right when

the others have begun hostilities, and will be even more shameful if

we return to Zeus’ bronze-floored house on Olympus without a fight.

You go first; you are younger by birth, and it would not be proper for me to start, since I am older and wiser than you.

[440]

Fool, what a thoughtless heart you have! Do you not remember the many hardships we endured around Ilium, we two alone of the gods, when we were sent by Zeus and served arrogant Laomedon for a year for a fixed wage, and he gave us our orders and told us what to do?

[445]

It was my task to build a wall round the city for the Trojans, a broad, splendid wall, so that the city should be impregnable,

while you, Phoebus, were herdsman to shambling, crook-horned

cattle in the glens of wooded Ida with its many valleys.

But when the joyful seasons brought round the due time for

[450]

payment, then the appalling Laomedon violently refused us the whole of our wage and sent us away with menaces, even threatening to tie our hands and feet together and to send us off to be sold in some far-distant islands;

he also declared he would lop our ears off with the bronze.

[455]

So we returned home with resentment in our hearts, deprived of the payment he had promised but did not fulfil.*

And now it is his people you show favour to, and make no effort to ensure with us that the overbearing Trojans perish

utterly
and wretchedly, along with their children and honoured
wives.' [460]

Then in reply the lord Apollo the far-shooter addressed
him:

'Shaker of the earth, you would not say I was possessed of
a

a sound mind if I were to fight with you for the sake of
mortals—

wretched creatures, who like leaves at one time flourish in
a

blaze of glory, feeding on the fruits of the tilled earth, and
[465]

at another wither spiritlessly away. No, let us leave the
battle

immediately, and let the mortals fight on by themselves.'

So he spoke, and turned away, because he felt awe at
the

thought of exchanging blows with his father's brother.

But his sister Artemis, haunter of the wild, queen of beasts,
[470]

reproved him bitterly and spoke to him in words of censure:
'So, shooter from afar, you are running away, handing the
victory

entirely to Poseidon, giving him a chance to boast—for
nothing.

You fool, what is the point of carrying that futile, useless
bow?

Let me not hear you boasting again in the halls of our
father, [475]

as you have done before among the immortal gods, that
you

would match your strength with Poseidon's, face to face.'

So she spoke, and Apollo the far-shooter gave her no
answer;

but Hera, honoured wife of Zeus, was angry with her and rebuked the shooter of arrows in words of censure: [480] 'Reckless bitch, how can you now have the daring to stand up against me? It will be hard for you to oppose my fury, even though you carry a bow and Zeus has made you a lioness against women, and has allowed you to kill those whom you choose.*

I tell you, you would do better to slaughter wild beasts and [485]

deer on the mountains than to fight with those who are stronger.

But if you are minded to learn about war, so be it; you will soon

find out how much stronger I am, when you oppose my fury.'

So she spoke, and with her left hand seized both Artemis' wrists, and with her right hand pulled the bow and quiver from her shoulder, [490]

and began to beat her about the ears with her own weapons, smiling

as the other twisted and turned; and the swift arrows fell from the quiver.

Then the goddess Artemis fled cowering and weeping, like a pigeon

that flies from a hawk's pursuit into the hollow of a rock, a deep cleft, because it was not its destiny to be caught; just so [495]

Artemis fled weeping, leaving her bow and arrows where they were.

Then Hermes the guide, slayer of Argus, addressed Leto:

'Leto, there is no way I can fight with you; it is a painful thing

to exchange blows with the consorts of Zeus the cloud-gatherer.

No, you may quite freely boast among the immortal gods
[500]

that you overcame me by your own strength and might.'

So he spoke; and Leto gathered up the curved bow and its arrows

that had fallen out here and there in the whirling dust, and when she had picked up her daughter's weapons she withdrew.

Meanwhile the maiden goddess had arrived at the bronze-floored [505]

house of Zeus on Olympus, and sat weeping on her father's lap,

and her immortal robe shivered about her. Her father, Cronus' son,

took her to him, and laughing gently began to question her: 'My dear child, which of the Uranian gods has done this to you

so thoughtlessly, as if you had committed some public mischief?' [510]

Then in answer the fair-crowned leader of the noisy chase said:

'It was your wife who thrashed me, father, white-armed Hera;

because of her, strife and quarrelling have now gripped the immortals.'

So they spoke, one to another, in this way; and meanwhile

Phoebus Apollo had made his way into sacred Ilium— [515]
he was concerned for the wall of the well-built city, fearing that the Achaeans would sack it on that day, before its due time.

But the other gods who live for ever went off to Olympus, some of them angry, and some mightily triumphant, and

sat down beside the father, god of the dark cloud, while
Achilles [520]
continued to slaughter the Trojans and their single-hoofed
horses;
as when smoke rises from a city that has been fired and
reaches
up to the wide high sky, for the gods have unleashed their
anger
against it and have sent toil to all and unleashed grief on
many,
just so Achilles let loose toil and grief upon the Trojans.
[525]

Now the old man Priam was standing on the sacred
tower,
and he saw towering Achilles, and how the Trojans were
fleeing in confused panic before him, and there was no
courage
in them. With a cry he made his way down from the tower
and roused the splendid gate-guards along the wall: [530]
'Set your hands to the gates and keep them open, until the
people in their panic flight reach the city. Look, there is
Achilles
close behind, driving them on, and I think disaster is near.
When they are safe inside the wall and can catch their
breath,
then shut the close-fitting doors again in their places; [535]
I am afraid that murderous man may leap inside our wall.'

So he spoke, and they knocked back the crossbars and
opened
the gates; thrown wide open they offered safety. Then
Apollo
sprang out to meet the Trojans, meaning to keep ruin from
them,
and they made straight in flight for the city and the high
wall, [540]

covered in dust from the plain, their throats rough from thirst;
but Achilles pursued them relentlessly with his spear, and all the time
violent madness had hold of his heart, and he raged to win glory.

Then the Achaeans would have taken Troy of the high gates
had not Phoebus Apollo roused glorious Agenor into action,
[545]

the worthy, blameless, and mighty son of Antenor.
Into his heart he thrust daring, and he himself stood beside him, leaning against an oak tree and hidden in a thick mist, to keep the heavy spectres of death from him.
When Agenor saw Achilles, sacker of cities, he stood [550]
motionless, and as he waited his heart was in great turmoil;
deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit:

‘How hard this is! If I flee before mighty Achilles to where the rest have been driven in panic-stricken tumult, he will still overtake me and cut my defenceless throat;
[555]

but if I leave these others to be driven in confusion by Achilles, son of Peleus, and if my feet take me by another way

in flight from the wall to the plain of Ilium, and bring me to the spurs of Ida where I can hide in its undergrowth—then in the evening I could wash myself in the river [560]
and dry the sweat from my body and get back to Ilium.

But why does my dear heart speak with me in this way?
I am afraid Achilles will see me leaving the city for the plain and will come after me on his swift feet and overtake me.
Then I shall no longer be able to escape death and its spectres, [565]

for he is surpassingly mighty, far beyond all mankind.
But what if I were to go out to face him in front of the city?

It must be that his flesh too can be wounded by the sharp bronze,
and there is but one life in him, and men say that he is mortal, even though Cronus' son Zeus is giving him the glory.' [570]

So he spoke, and gathering himself waited for Achilles, his
brave heart within him urging him to enter the battle and fight.

Just as a leopard emerges from her lair in a deep wood to confront the man who is hunting her, and has no fear or terror in her heart when she hears the baying of his hounds, [575]

and though the huntsman might get in first with a stab or a thrown

weapon, she will not slacken her courage, even if skewered by a spear, until she either closes with him or is beaten down;

just so splendid Agenor, the son of noble Antenor, had no thought of flight before he put Achilles to the test, [580]

but held his perfectly balanced shield steadily before him, and aimed his spear at him, shouting in a loud voice:

'Illustrious Achilles, doubtless you hoped in your mind to sack the city of the proud Trojans on this day. You are a fool! There is yet much anguish to be suffered over it. [585]

There are many of us, men of courage, inside the city, we who keep Ilium safe before the eyes of our dear wives and children. As for you, you will meet your death here, however terrifying and daring a fighter you may be.'

So he spoke, and let fly the sharp spear from his heavy hand. [590]

He did not miss Achilles, but hit him on the leg below his knee,

and on his shin the greave of newly forged tin clattered terribly, and the bronze-tipped spear sprang back after it struck, and did not pierce him, for the god's gift protected him.

Then in turn the son of Peleus leapt at godlike Agenor,
[595]

but this time Apollo did not allow him to win glory;
he snatched Agenor away and covered him in a thick mist,
and sent him to make his way quietly from the fighting.
Then the god who shoots from afar separated Achilles from
the people by a trick: he likened himself in every way to
Agenor, [600]

and stood before Achilles' feet, who rushed to pursue him
and chased him over the wheat-bearing plain, working him
towards the river, deep-swirling Scamander; but Apollo kept
running a little way in front of him, beguiling him with his
trickery, for Achilles always hoped to catch him as he ran.
[605]

Meanwhile the other Trojans were fleeing in a panic-stricken
rout,

and gladly reached the city, and filled it with their
crowding.

They had not the courage to wait any longer for each other
outside the city and to find out which of them had escaped
and which were dead in the fighting, but streamed in haste
[610]

into the city, as their feet and knees were able to save
them.

BOOK TWENTY-TWO

So the Trojans ran into the city like terrified fawns, and there dried the sweat from their bodies and drank to slake their thirst, leaning against the fine battlements; and the Achaeans drew closer to the wall, shields held in front of their shoulders.

But Hector's deadly destiny shackled him, making him wait [5]

where he was, in front of Ilium and the Scaean gates.

Then Phoebus Apollo addressed the son of Peleus: 'Son of Peleus,

why are you pursuing me on swift feet, you a mortal and I an immortal god? You have not even recognized me as a god, such is your ceaseless raging. [10] You shirk your battle-work with the Trojans you have put to flight,

and now they huddle in the city while you have strayed out here.

But you will not kill me, for you know I am not the one fated to die.'*

Then swift-footed Achilles, deeply angered, addressed him:

'You have thwarted me, far-shooter, most deadly of gods, [15]

by turning me away from the wall; if you had not, many men

would have clamped their teeth on the earth before reaching Ilium.

Now you have robbed me of great glory by easily saving

these men, because you have no fear of future retribution—but I would make you pay for this, if only I had the power.'

So he spoke, and made for the city with fearless spirit, speeding along like some prize-winning horse that races with its chariot, galloping effortlessly over the plain; so swiftly did Achilles stir his knees and legs into movement.

The old man Priam was the first to catch sight of him, [25]

shining brightly like a star as he sped over the plain—the star that rises in autumn, and its rays shine out blazing among all the other stars in the depths of night, and men give it the name of Orion's dog; it is indeed the brightest star, but it is a sign of suffering, [30]

and brings with it much fever for wretched mortals.*

Just so the bronze on Achilles' chest blazed as he ran.

The old man let out a groan, and raising his hands high beat his head, and called out with a great cry, appealing to his dear son; but Hector had already taken his stand [35] in front of the gates, raging relentlessly to fight with Achilles.

The old man stretched out his hands to him and spoke piteously:

'Hector my dear son, do not, I beg you, wait for this man, alone, without any others; you will soon meet your death, beaten down by Peleus's son, for he is far stronger than you, [40]

and merciless. How I wish he was loved by the gods as much

as he is by me! Then he would soon lie out there, eaten by dogs and vultures, and bitter grief would leave my heart—this man who has bereaved me of so many fine sons, both killing them and selling them to far-distant islands.

[45]

And indeed there are now two of my sons that I cannot see among the Trojans crowded into the city, Lycaon and Polydorus,*

who were borne to me by Laöthoë, a princess among women.

If they are somewhere in the enemy's camp, alive, I can surely

ransom them with bronze and gold, for there is much within; [50]

the aged Altes, a far-famed man, gave his daughter a huge dowry.

But if they are now dead and in the halls of Hades, then it is an agony for their parents' hearts, for me and for their mother,

though for the rest of the people the pain will last a shorter time,

as long as you too do not die, beaten down by Achilles. [55]

Come back inside the wall, my son, and protect

the men and the women of Troy; do not present great glory to Peleus' son by letting your own dear life be cut short.

Have pity on me, too, while I still have understanding, unhappy and ill-fated man, whom the father, Cronus' son, [60]

will destroy at the threshold of old age, in a cruel fate; I will be

forced to witness appalling sights—my sons slaughtered, my daughters raped, their bedchambers ravaged, little children

flung to the ground in the cruel fighting, and my sons' wives

dragged away by the Achaeans' murderous hands. [65]

And I myself will be the last to go; my own dogs, gone wild, will tear me apart at the entrance to my house, after some man

has taken the breath from my limbs with a stab or a spear-cast—

the very dogs I reared in my halls to be by my table and
guard
my doors will drink my blood as they lie about my porch,
[70]
driven mad in their hearts. A young man is a seemly sight
when he lies slain on the battlefield, torn by the sharp
bronze;
whatever his appearance, everything about him is
beautiful,
even in death. But when an old man is killed and his dogs
defile his grey head and grey beard and genitals, it is [75]
surely the most pitiable thing that can befall wretched
mortals.'

So the old man spoke, and seizing his grey hairs in his
hands
pulled them from his head; but he could not move Hector's
heart.

Then in turn his mother began to lament, weeping tears,
unloosing

the fold of her dress and with the other hand holding her
breast; [80]

weeping tears, she addressed Hector with winged words:

'Hector my child, have respect for this, and show me pity,
if ever I held my breast to your lips to make you forget your
cares.

Think on this, dear child, and save us from this deadly man,
but

from inside the wall; do not go out and oppose him one
against one. [85]

Cruel man! If he kills you I shall never mourn you on a
funeral bier, dear child of our line, neither I who bore you
nor your richly dowered wife, but far away from us
swift dogs will devour you beside the ships of the Argives.'

So the two of them wept and addressed many prayers
to [90]

their dear son, but they could not persuade Hector's heart, and he waited there for monstrous Achilles to come near him.

As when a snake in the mountains waits for a man by its lair,

a snake that has swallowed lethal poisons, and is full of bitter

anger, and glares terrifyingly at him as it writhes over its lair, [95]

so Hector, unquenchable fury in him, would not give ground,

and leant his shining shield against the projecting tower.

Deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-spirited heart:

'What shall I do? If I go back through the gates in the wall Polydamas will be the first to heap reproaches on me, [100] because he urged me at the start of this last deadly night, when glorious Achilles rose up, to lead the Trojans into the city.*

I would not listen to him—but it would have been much better.

But now, since I have ruined the people by my recklessness,

I feel shame before the Trojan men and the Trojan women with their [105]

trailing robes, in case some man of low rank may say of me:

"Hector trusted in his own might and so ruined his people."

That is what they will say; and then it would be far better to go and meet Achilles face to face and either kill him and return,

or die at his hands, full of glory, in front of the city. [110]

And yet, suppose I lay down my bossed shield and

strong helmet and lean my spear against the wall, and

go out by myself to meet blameless Achilles, and

promise to give back Helen and her possessions with her,

every single thing that Alexander brought to Troy in his.

[115]

hollow ships—which was the beginning of this quarrel—for the sons of Atreus to take away, and we could also share

with the Achaeans everything else that this city keeps hidden?

Then I could make the Trojan elders swear a solemn oath not to conceal anything but to divide everything in two,

[120]

all the treasure that the splendid city holds within itself;

but why does my dear heart speak with me in this way?

I am afraid that if I go out and meet him he will have no pity

and will show me no respect but will kill me there and then defenceless, like a woman, since I will have taken off my armour. [125]

There is surely no way that I can flirt with him

“from a rock or an oak tree”* like a girl with a young man, in the way that girls and young men flirt together.

No, it must be better to join battle with him as soon as possible,

and then we shall see to which of us the Olympian grants glory.’ [130]

So he waited, pondering, and Achilles came up close to him,

looking like Enyalios, the fighter with the glittering helmet, and brandishing the terrible Pelian ash spear above his right

shoulder; and about him his bronze armour shone like the brightness of blazing fire or of the sun at its rising.

[135]

When Hector saw him he was gripped by trembling; he could

no longer hold his ground, but left the gates and fled in fear.

Peleus' son sprang after him, trusting to his swift feet;
like a hawk in the mountains, the swiftest of winged
creatures,
that swoops with ease in pursuit of a timid dove, but she
[140]
flies away from under it, and from close behind it darts at
her
again and again, screaming shrilly, its heart urging it on to
kill—

so Achilles flew raging straight for Hector, and he ran
terrified
along under the Trojans' wall, driving his knees into swift
action.

So they raced ever onwards, past the lookout place and the
wind- [145]

blown fig tree, along the wagon track, away from under the
wall,

and came to the clear-flowing springs where two fountains
gush up from eddying Scamander. One of these flows
with warm water, and all around it there is steam
rising, as if it were smoke going up from a blazing fire;
[150]

and the other sends out a stream in summer like hail
or freezing snow or water that has formed into ice.

Beside these, close by, there are fine wide washing-pools
built of stone, where the Trojans' wives and their lovely
daughters used to wash their shining clothes in former
times, [155]

in the days of peace before the sons of the Achaeans came.
Past this place they ran, Hector fleeing and Achilles
pursuing;

the one fleeing was a fine man, but the swift pursuer was
far better. It was not for a sacrificial beast or a bull's hide
that

they competed, such as are the prizes for men in foot-
races, [160]

but they ran for the life of Hector, breaker of horses.
As when single-hoofed prizewinning horses effortlessly
round
the turning-point, in a race in honour of a man who has
died,
where the prize is great, either a tripod or a woman,
so these two ran circling three times round the city of Priam
[165]
on their swift feet. And all the gods were watching them,
and
the first to speak among them was the father of gods and
men:
'This is a wretched thing! Before my eyes I see a man I love
being pursued around the wall; my heart grieves for
Hector, who has burnt the thigh-bones of many oxen in my
[170]
honour on the peaks of many-valleyed Ida, and at other
times
on the city's heights,* and now here is glorious Achilles
pursuing him on swift feet around the city of Priam.
Come now, gods, share your counsel with me and advise
me:
should we save him from death or should we beat him
down, [175]
noble man though he is, at the hands of Peleus' son
Achilles?'

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena
addressed him:
'Father, god of the bright thunderbolt and the dark cloud—
what have
you said! This is a mortal man, whose own fate was fixed
long ago;
is it really your desire to release him from death's gloomy
lament? [180]
Go, do it; but all we other gods will not approve it.'

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed her:

‘Be comforted, my dear child, Tritogeneia;* I do not speak with serious intent; and towards you I am minded to be gentle.

Go where your mind leads you, and hold back no longer.’
[185]

So he spoke, and encouraged Athena, who was already eager to act,
and she went swooping down from the peaks of Olympus.

Meanwhile swift Achilles drove on unremittingly at Hector.

As when on the mountains a hound starts a deer’s fawn from its covert and hunts it through glens and clearings,
[190]

and even if the fawn deceives it by cowering under a bush the hound noses it out and keeps running until it finds it, so Hector could not shake off Peleus’ swift-footed son.

As many times as he gathered himself to dash under cover of the well-built bastions by the Dardanian gates,
[195]

in the hope that those above might protect him with missiles,

so many times Achilles would get in front and, flying along between him and the city, would turn him towards the plain.

As in a dream a man cannot catch another who runs from him—

the quarry cannot escape, nor can the pursuer catch him—
[200]

so Achilles could not run Hector down nor Hector escape Achilles.

How then could Hector have escaped the spectres of death, if Apollo had not come to meet him for one last time and stood close and stirred up fury in him and made his knees

swift?

Glorious Achilles signed with his head to his people, telling them [205]

not to hurl bitter weapons at Hector, in case someone felled him and so won the glory, and he came second.

But when they had reached the fountains for the fourth time,

then indeed the father held up his golden scales and placed in them two spectres of death that brings long misery,

[210]

one for Achilles and another for Hector, breaker of horses.

Taking the bar by the centre he held it up, and Hector's fated day

sank down; his way lay to Hades, and Phoebus Apollo left him.*

Then the goddess grey-eyed Athena came up to the son of Peleus

and standing nearby addressed him with winged words:

[215]

'Illustrious Achilles, dear to Zeus, now I can hope that we two

will carry off great glory to the ships for the Achaeans,

when we slay Hector, insatiable for battle though he is.

It is no longer possible for him to escape from us to safety,

not even if Apollo who shoots from afar were to submit to

every [220]

indignity and grovel before father Zeus who wears the aegis.

Now, stand here and catch your breath, and I will go and persuade Hector to fight with you, matching strength to strength.'

So Athena spoke, and he followed her orders, glad at heart,

and stood there, leaning on his bronze-pointed ash spear.

[225]

She left him there, and caught up with glorious Hector,
likening herself in form and unwearying voice to Deïphobus.
She stood close to him and addressed him with winged
words:

‘Brother, I can see that swift Achilles is tormenting you
sorely,
pursuing you round the city of Priam on his flying feet.
[230]

Come, let us make a stand here, and defend ourselves
together.’

Then in turn great Hector of the glittering helmet
addressed him:

‘Deïphobus, you were always by far the dearest to me of
my
brothers, all those who are the sons of Hecuba and Priam;
and now I think I shall value you all the more, because
[235]

when you caught sight of me you had the courage to come
out
beyond the wall for my sake, while all the rest stayed
inside.’

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena
addressed him:

‘Dear brother, our father and revered mother and my
companions
around me clasped my knees and begged me at length,
one after [240]

another, to stay behind, so greatly do they all tremble at
Achilles;

but the heart within me was worn down by painful anxiety
for you.

So now let us go straight for him, raging, and let there be
no sparing of spears, and we shall then know if Achilles will
kill us both and carry off our bloodstained armour as spoils
[245]

to the hollow ships, or if he will be beaten down by your spear.'

So he spoke; and Athena by her trickery led Hector on. When they had advanced to within close range of each other

the first to speak was great Hector of the glittering helmet: 'No longer, son of Peleus, shall I run from you, as before I fled [250]

three times around Priam's great city, and I did not have the

courage to wait for your attack. Now my heart tells me to take my stand against you; and I shall be killed, or else kill you.

So, come on! Let us offer each other our gods; they are the best

witnesses and overseers of agreements, and will be such for us: [255]

I shall commit no shameful outrage on you, if Zeus grants me

the endurance to win and I take your life from you; when I have stripped you of your fine armour, Achilles, I shall give you back, dead, to the Achaeans. You must do the same.'

Then swift-footed Achilles looked at him darkly and said: [260]

'Hector, accursed man, do not speak to me of agreements!

There are no binding oaths between lions and men, and wolves and lambs are never of the same mind, but all their lives harbour hostile thoughts against each other;

so friendship between you and me is not possible, and [265]

there will be no oaths between us, until one or the other dies and gluts Ares, the shield-bearing warrior, with his blood.

Summon up all the valour you can; now more than ever

you must show yourself a spearman and a daring fighter.
There is no longer any escape; Pallas Athena will quickly
beat [270]

you down with my spear, and now you will pay me in full for
all

the sufferings of my companions you killed in your spear-
frenzy.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and
threw it;

but illustrious Hector was looking ahead and avoided it;
he saw it and crouched, and the bronze-tipped spear flew
over him [275]

and stuck in the earth. But Pallas Athena caught it up and
returned it to Achilles, unseen by Hector, shepherd of the
people.

Then Hector addressed the blameless son of Peleus:

'You missed! It seems after all, godlike Achilles, that
you do not yet know from Zeus when I shall die, though you
[280]

thought you did; you are a glib man, cunning with words,
saying that fear would make me forget my courage and
fury.

But you will not fix your spear in my back as I run from you;
no, drive it straight through my chest as I come raging at
you,

if a god gives you the chance. Now in your turn try to avoid
my [285]

bronze -tipped spear. May you catch it fully in your flesh;
then the war would be easier for the Trojans to bear,
if you were dead, since you are their greatest affliction.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and
threw it,

and did not miss but hit the middle of Peleus' son's shield;
[290]

but the spear rebounded far from the shield, and Hector

was angry
that his swift weapon had flown uselessly from his hand,
and
he stood there downcast, since he had no other ash spear.
He called out with a great shout to Deïphobus of the white
shield,
and demanded a long spear from him; but he was nowhere
near. [295]

Then Hector knew the truth in his heart, and spoke:
'This is the end; the gods are surely calling me to my death.
I was certain that the hero Deïphobus was near at hand,
but he is inside the wall, and Athena has deceived me.
Now indeed a miserable death is close, no longer far off,
[300]

and there is no escape. So, after all, this is what Zeus and
his son
who shoots from afar have long wanted, they who before
this
were glad to protect me. Now my destiny has overtaken
me.

Let me at least not die without a struggle and without glory,
but only after doing some great deed for future men to
hear.' [305]

So he spoke, and drew out the sharp sword that hung,
huge and massive, down at his side, and gathering himself
swooped like an eagle that flies high in the sky and
stoops down to the plain through murky clouds,
meaning to seize a tender lamb or a cowering hare. [310]

So Hector swooped down, brandishing his sharp sword.
And Achilles charged too, his heart filled with wild fury,
holding his fine, intricately worked shield in front of his
chest

to cover himself; and his shining helmet with its four plates
nodded above, and the fine golden plumes that Hephaestus
[315]

had fastened thickly about the crest were set waving.
Like the star that moves among others in the darkness of
night,
Hesperus, the loveliest star that is set in the high sky,
so light flashed from the tip of the sharp spear that Achilles
brandished in his right hand, with deadly thoughts for
glorious [320]

Hector, as he eyed his fine flesh for the least-protected
place.

Now most of Hector's flesh was covered by the fine bronze
armour

that he had stripped from mighty Patroclus when he killed
him,*

but the place where the collarbones hold the shoulders
from the

neck was visible—the gullet, where death comes quickest—
and [325]

at this, as Hector charged at him, glorious Achilles drove his
spear,

and the point passed clean through his soft neck. But the
ash spear,

heavy with its bronze, did not shear through his windpipe,
and he could still address words to Achilles by way of
answer.

He toppled over in the dust, and glorious Achilles boasted
over him:

'Hector, doubtless you thought when you stripped Patroclus
that

you would be safe, and you did not heed me, for I was far
away.

You fool—he who was left far behind by the hollow ships
was a

much better man than Patroclus, and would avenge him. I
am he,

and now I have loosened your knees; dogs and vultures will
[335]

tear you shamefully, but the Achaeans will bury him with due rites.'

Then Hector, with little life now left in him, addressed Achilles:

'I beg you, by your life and your knees and by your parents' name,

do not let the dogs of the Achaeans devour me by their ships!

Take for yourself bronze and gold as much as you want,
[340]

gifts that my father and my revered mother will give you, and return my body to its home, so that in death the

Trojans

and their wives may grant me the due rite of fire.'

Swift-footed Achilles looked at him darkly and addressed him:

'Dog—do not entreat me by my knees or my parents' name! [345]

I wish there was a way that my heart's fury could give me leave

to carve and eat your raw flesh, to pay for your terrible deeds,

as surely as there is no one who can keep the dogs from your head,

not even if your people bring a ransom here and weigh it out,

ten or twenty times your offer, and if they promise more besides, [350]

nor even if Dardanus' descendant Priam orders them to hand over

your weight in gold—not even then will your revered mother,

the one who bore you, lay you on a bier and lament over you;

no, the dogs and vultures will share you out and devour you utterly.'

Then, dying, Hector of the glittering helmet spoke to him: [355]

'I know you well as I look at you, and I was never going to persuade you. Truly, you have an iron heart in your breast.

But think on this; it may be that my death will provoke the gods'

anger against you, on the day that Paris and Phoebus Apollo

slay you, fine man though you are, beside the Scaean gates.'* [360]

As he said this the end of death enveloped him, and his shade

winged its way from his limbs and went down to Hades, lamenting its doom and leaving behind its manliness and youth.

Glorious Achilles addressed him, even now he was dead:

'Die now: as for my death-spectre, I will accept it whenever [365]

Zeus and the other immortal gods are minded to bring it on.'

So he spoke, and wrenched his bronze-tipped spear from the dead man

and laid it aside, and then stripped the armour from his shoulders,

all bloodstained; and other sons of the Achaeans ran up and stood

around him, gazing in wonder at the stature and amazing beauty [370]

of Hector; not one of the bystanders failed to wound him, and

this is what they would say, each man looking at his neighbour:

‘Look at this! Hector is certainly a softer man to deal with now than when he set our ships ablaze with burning fire.’

So they spoke, standing around Hector and stabbing him. [375]

When glorious swift-footed Achilles had stripped the dead man

he stood in the midst of the Achaeans and spoke winged words:

‘My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives,
since the gods have granted me to beat this man down,
who caused more suffering to us than all the rest together,
[380]

come, let us make a circuit round the city under arms and test

the Trojans, to see if we can discover what their intentions are:

will they abandon their citadel now that this man has fallen,
or

are they determined to stay inside, even though Hector is dead?

But why does my dear heart speak to me in this way? [385]

There is a dead man lying by the ships, unlamented and unburied—

Patroclus, whom I shall never forget, so long as I am in the world of the living and my knees have power to move.

And though in Hades the dead may forget the dead, yet even there I shall always remember my dear companion.

[390]

Come now, young men of the Achaeans, let us go to the hollow ships, carrying this man, and strike up a victory song.

We have won great glory: we have killed glorious Hector, who

the Trojans would pray to throughout their city as if he were a god.’

So he spoke, and devised shameful treatment for
glorious
Hector: [395]
at the back of the feet he made holes by the tendons, from
heel
to ankle, and threaded straps of oxhide through them, and
tied
them to his chariot, leaving the head to drag behind.
Then he lifted the famous armour into his chariot and
mounted,
and whipped his horses to make them go, and they flew
willingly on. [400]
As Hector was dragged along a cloud of dust arose, and his
dark hair streamed out on both sides, and his head that
before was
so handsome was tumbled in the dust, for now Zeus had
handed
him over to his enemies to treat shamefully, in his own
fatherland.

And so Hector's head was completely fouled in the
dust. When [405]
she saw her son his mother began to tear her hair, and
flung her
bright headdress far from her and raised a loud, mourning
wail.
And his dear father cried piteously too, and all about them
through the city the people gave way to wailing and
lamenting.
It was as if the whole of jutting Ilium was now smouldering
[410]
with fire all the way from its top to its bottom.
Only with difficulty did the people hold back the aged man
in his raging desire to go out beyond the Dardanian gates;
he rolled round in the dung and implored all of them,
calling on them and addressing each man by his name:

[415]

'Hold back, my friends! Though you care for me, give me leave to go from the city to the ships of the Achaeans, alone, to entreat this man, this violent doer of monstrous deeds,

to see if he will have respect for my age and take pity on my years. He too has a father of the same age as I am—

[420]

Peleus, who gave him life and raised him to be an affliction to the Trojans; but to me beyond all others has he brought pain,

for he has killed so many sons of mine in the prime of their life.

Yet despite my misery I do not mourn for them all as much as

I do for one, bitter grief for whom will carry me off to Hades — [425]

Hector. How I wish that he had died in my arms, for then we could have had our fill of weeping and mourning, his mother who bore him, ill-fated woman, and I myself.'

So he spoke, weeping, and the citizens joined their groans to his.

And among the Trojan women Hecuba began the unbroken dirge: [430]

'My child, how wretched I am! Why should I live in cruel suffering now that you are dead—you who were night and day my boast throughout the town, and a source of strength

to the Trojan men and women all over the city, and they greeted you like a god. You were indeed a great glory for them [435]

while you lived, but now death and your destiny have overtaken you.'

So she spoke, weeping. Now Hector's wife had not yet learnt

what had happened, for no trustworthy messenger had
come
to tell her that her husband had stayed outside the gates.
She was at her loom in the tall house's innermost part,
weaving [440]
a red double cloak, and working a pattern of flowers into it.
She called out through the house to her lovely-haired
servants
to set a great tripod over the fire, so that Hector might
have
a warm bath when he returned from the fighting—poor
innocent that she was, and did not know that grey-eyed
Athena [445]
had beaten him down at Achilles' hands, far away from
baths.*
She heard the wailing and lamentation coming from the
tower,
and her limbs shook and she dropped the shuttle to the
ground.
Immediately she called out to her lovely-haired maids:
'Come here, two of you, and follow me; I want to see what
has [450]
happened. I heard the voice of my husband's respected
mother,
and the heart in my breast leapt into my mouth, and my
knees
locked together; some disaster must be near for Priam's
children.
May my words be as if unsaid! But I am terribly afraid
that glorious Achilles may have cut off my bold Hecto. [455]
from the city on his own and pursued him towards the
plain,
and indeed has put an end to that dangerous valour that
has always
possessed him; for he would never hang back in the mass
of men,

but would always run far ahead, yielding to no one in his fury.'

So she spoke, and rushed through the hall like a maenad,* [460]

her heart beating wildly; and her women servants went with her.

When she reached the tower and the massed gathering of men

she stood on the wall, looking all about her, and saw him being dragged along in front of the city, swift horses hauling him heedlessly towards the Achaeans' hollow ships. [465]

Black night came down and enveloped her eyes, and she fell backwards and gasped out her life-breath, flinging far from her head her shining headdress with its headband, its kerchief, and its plaited binding, and the headscarf that golden Aphrodite had given her on the day [470]

that Hector of the glittering helmet had brought her from Eëtion's house, after giving him countless bride-gifts.

Her husband's sisters and his brothers' wives crowded round her,

holding her up in their midst, distraught to the point of death.

When she regained her breath and the spirit was gathered into [475]

her breast, sobbing deeply she spoke among the Trojan women:

'Hector, how wretched I am! So we were born with the same fate,

both of us: you in Troy in the house of Priam, and I in Thebe under wooded Placus, in the house of Eëtion, who raised me

from a baby—unhappily fated father of a child who was [480]

born to a cruel destiny; how I wish he had never given me life!

Now you are going to the house of Hades, deep in the depths of the earth, and you are leaving me in hateful mourning, a widow in your halls; and our son, whom you and I, ill-fated parents, gave life to is still but an infant. But you are dead, [485]

Hector, and will bring no delight to him, nor he to you: even if he escapes tear-laden war with the Achaeans struggle and hardship will always be his, because other men will fix their boundary-stones on his land. The day that orphans a child parts him utterly from his fellows: [490]

his head for ever bowed down, and his cheeks wet with tears,

he approaches his father's companions full of need, tugging at the cloak of one man and the tunic of another; some take pity, and one man briefly offers him a cup, enough to wet his lips but not to moisten his palate. [495]

Then a boy with both parents living shoves him away from the feast, beating him with his fists and shouting abuse at him:

"Get out of here! Your father does not share in our feast!"

Then the boy goes back in tears to his widowed mother—Astyanax, who in former times, sitting on his father's knees, [500]

would eat only marrow and the rich fat of sheep, and when he had finished his playing and sleep took him he would sleep in his bed in the arms of his nurse, on soft bedding, his heart filled with contentment.*

But now he has lost his beloved father he will suffer terribly — [505]

Astyanax, 'Lord of the City', as the Trojans have called him —

because you alone used to defend their gates and long

walls.

And now beside the curved ships, far from your parents,
squirming worms will eat you as you lie naked when the
dogs have had their fill; yet there are clothes lying ready
[510]

for you in your halls, delicate and beautiful, woven by
women's hands. I shall burn them all in a blazing fire;
they will be no use to you, because you will never lie in
them,
but they will be your glory in the sight of Trojan men and
women.'

So she spoke, weeping, and her women lamented with
her. [515]

BOOK TWENTY-THREE

So the Trojans lamented throughout the city; meanwhile the Achaeans returned to their ships and the Hellespont, and most of them dispersed, each man to his own ship, but Achilles would not allow the Myrmidons to disperse, and he addressed his warfare-loving companions: [5]
'Swift-horsed Myrmidons, my trusty companions, let us not unyoke our single-hoofed horses yet from the chariots, but let us drive our horses and chariots close to Patroclus and mourn him, for that is the privilege of the dead. And when we have had our hearts' fill of cruel lamentation [10]
we shall all set our horses loose and make our supper here.'

So he spoke, and they mourned loudly together, and Achilles led them;
three times they drove their fine-maned horses round the dead man,
lamenting; and among them Thetis stirred up the desire to weep.
The sands were wet with the men's tears, and their gear was wet [15]
with tears, such was the man they had lost, a deviser of panic rout
. Among them the son of Peleus began the unbroken lament,
laying his man-slaying hands on his companion's chest:
'Hail and farewell, Patroclus, even in the halls of Hades!
All that I promised you before this I am now fulfilling: [20]
I have dragged Hector here, to give him, raw, to the dogs to eat,
and I shall cut the throats of twelve noble sons of the

Trojans

in front of your pyre; so great is my anger at your death.'*

So he spoke, and devised shameful treatment for glorious Hector, laying him sprawled on his face in the dust beside the bier of [25]

Menoetius' son. Then each man of the Myrmidons put off his

gleaming bronze armour and untied his loud-neighing horses, and

they sat down beside the ship of Aeacus' swift-footed grandson

in their thousands, and he gave them a funeral feast to satisfy

their hearts: many sleek oxen slumped to the ground, slaughtered [30]

with the iron knife, and many sheep too and bleating goats, and many white-tusked hogs, rich with fat, were stretched out over Hephaestus' fire to be singed; and all around the dead man the blood flowed in cupfuls.

Now the Achaean kings were taking the swift-footed lord, Peleus' [35]

son, to the hut of glorious Agamemnon, having persuaded him

with difficulty, for he was still angry at heart for his companion.

When their journey brought them to Agamemnon's hut they straightaway gave orders to the clear-voiced heralds to set a great tripod over the fire, hoping to persuad [40]

the son of Peleus to wash the bloody gore from himself; but he stubbornly refused, and moreover swore an oath:

'By Zeus, who is the highest and best of the gods, I will not! It is not lawful to let water come near my head until I have set Patroclus on his pyre and heaped up a grave-mound and [45]

shorn my hair,* since as long as I remain among the living
grief such as this will never come to my heart again.
Still, let us agree for the moment to eat, hateful though
that is;
and in the morning, Agamemnon, lord of men, rouse the
people
to gather wood and make ready everything that is proper
for a [50]
dead man to have when he goes to the murky darkness
below,
so that unwearying fire may quickly burn this man away
from our sight, and that the people may turn again to their
work.'

So he spoke, and they listened intently and did as he
said.
They hurried to prepare their supper, and then feasted in
separate [55]
companies, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the
meal.
When they had put from themselves the desire for food and
drink
all the rest went to prepare for sleep, each man to his own
hut,
but the son of Peleus lay down on the shore of the loud-
roaring
sea, groaning deeply, surrounded by his many Myrmidons,
[60]
in an open place where the waves broke on to the
seashore.
When sleep took hold of him, sweet slumber pouring over
him
and relieving the cares of his heart—for his glorious limbs
were weary with chasing Hector towards windswept Ilium—
there came to him the shade of unhappy Patroclus, [65]
exactly resembling him in his stature and lovely eyes and

voice, and his body was clad in the same clothes as before. He stood over Achilles' head and addressed him in these words:*

'You sleep, Achilles, and you have forgotten me; when I lived you did not neglect me, but you do now that I am dead. [70]

Bury me as quickly as you can, and let me pass Hades' gates;

the shades there, images of the dead, are keeping me out, and will not yet allow me to cross the river and join them, and

I wander aimlessly by the house of Hades of the wide gates.*

Give me your hand, I beg you; I will not come again [75] from Hades, once you have granted me the due rite of fire. Never again in life shall we two sit apart from our companions

and make our plans together, for over me gapes the hateful death -spectre which was appointed me right from my birth. [80]

And for you too, godlike Achilles, your destiny is fixed, to meet your death below the walls of the noble Trojans.

And I say another thing to you, a request, if you will agree: do not lay my bones in a different place from yours, Achilles,

but together, just as we were brought up in your house, after Menoetius had brought me as a child from Opous [85] to your house because of a calamitous slaying of a man, on the day that I killed the son of Amphidamas in childish folly,

not with intent, but being angry over a game of knucklebones;*

and then the horseman Peleus welcomed me into his house and raised me with kindness and named me your attendant.[90]

So may one and the same vessel hide the bones of us

both,*

the golden, two-handled jar that your revered mother gave you.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
'Dear brother, why have you come here to me, and why do you give me all these instructions? I will surely fulfil [95] everything that you tell me to do, and will do as you say. But come, stand closer to me, and for this brief moment at least let us embrace and enjoy our fill of cruel lamentation.'

So he spoke, and held his arms out to Patroclus, but he could not grasp him, and like smoke the shade slipped [100]

squeaking away below the earth. Achilles jumped up, amazed, and beat his hands together and his words were full of sorrow:

'So it is true after all: there is a shade and image of the dead

in the house of Hades, but there is no real substance to it; all this night a shade of unhappy Patroclus has been [105] standing over me, wailing and lamenting, and giving me exact instructions; and it looked marvellously like him.'

So he spoke, and aroused in them all the desire to weep; and they were still mourning over the piteous dead man when

Dawn with her rosy fingers appeared. Then lord Agamemnon [110]

gave orders for mules and men to go from all the huts to fetch wood; and in charge of them was a noble man, Meriones, who was the attendant of courteous Idomeneus. So they went off, holding in their hands wood-cutting axes and well-twisted ropes, and the mules walked in front of them.[115]

Uphill and downhill they went, along and aslant the hills,
and when they came to the spurs of Ida with its many
springs
they at once busied themselves with felling high-leaved
oaks
with their sharp-bladed bronze, and the trees crashed
noisily
as they fell. The Achaeans then split the trunks and tied
them [120]
behind the mules, and their hoofs cut furrows in the ground
as they passed through the dense thickets, eager to reach
the plain.
All the woodcutters too were carrying logs, for these were
the orders of Meriones, attendant of courteous Idomeneus.
They threw these down in a row on the shore, where
Achilles [125]
had planned a great grave-mound for Patroclus and for
himself.

When they had piled up vast quantities of wood
everywhere
they sat down and waited all together. At once Achilles
ordered the Myrmidons, lovers of warfare, to put on their
bronze armour and every man to yoke the horses to his
[130]
chariot, and they arose and clothed themselves in armour
and
mounted their chariots, fighting-men and charioteers alike,
men in chariots in front and a cloud of foot-soldiers
following,
numberless; and in their midst his companions carried
Patroclus,
covering all his body with their hair that they had cut off
and [135]
heaped on him. Behind them glorious Achilles held
Patroclus' head,

grieving, for he was sending his blameless companion to Hades.

When they came to the place that Achilles had described to them they laid Patroclus down, and quickly raised an ample pile of wood.

Then swift-footed glorious Achilles had one more thought: [140]

he stood some way from the pyre and cut off a lock of his fair hair

that he had been growing long to offer to the river Spercheius;

deeply moved, he looked out over the wine-faced sea and spoke:

‘Spercheius, my father prayed to you in vain, when he promised that when I returned home to my dear native land [145]

I would cut off my hair for you and offer you a holy hecatomb,

sacrificing fifty uncastrated rams there and then into the springs where you have your precinct and smoking altar.

So the aged man prayed, but you have not fulfilled his intent.

So now, since it seems I am not to return to my dear native land, [150]

may I give this lock to the hero Patroclus to take with him instead.’*

So he spoke, and placed the lock in the hands of his dear

companion, and roused in all of them the desire to weep.

And indeed the sun’s light would have set on their lamentation

had not Achilles quickly stood by Agamemnon and spoken to him: [155]

‘Son of Atreus, you are the man whose words the Achaean

people
follow above all; men may indeed have their fill of
mourning,
but disperse them for now from the fire and tell them to
prepare
their meal. We, who are closest to the dead man, will
occupy
ourselves with all this; but let the leaders stay with us.'
[160]

When Agamemnon, lord of men, heard Achilles' words
he at once dispersed the people to their well-balanced
ships,
but the mourners stayed where they were and heaped up
the wood
and built a pyre of a hundred feet each way, and on top of
the pyre, grieving in their hearts, they laid the dead man.
[165]

In front of the pyre they flayed many strong sheep and
shambling,
crook-horned cattle, and prepared them, and from all of
them
great-spirited Achilles took the fat and covered the dead
man
from his head to his feet, and piled the flayed bodies
around him.

On the pyre he laid two-handled jars of honey and oil, [170]
leaning them against the bier. Then, with loud groans,
he hurriedly flung four strong-necked horses on to the pyre.
Lord Patroclus had kept nine dogs by his table, and Achilles
cut the throats of two of these and threw them on to the
pyre,
and with the bronze slew twelve noble sons of the great-
spirited [175]

Trojans, for that had been the cruel plan he had in his
heart.*

Then he let loose the iron fury of fire to feed on the pyre.
With a lamenting cry he called out the name of his dear companion:

‘Hail and farewell, Patroclus, even in the halls of Hades!
Everything that I promised before this I now fulfil for you:
[180]

here are twelve noble sons of the great-spirited Trojans, all
of
whom the fire will consume with you. As for Hector, Priam’s
son,
I shall not give him to the fire, but to the dogs to tear
apart.’

So he spoke, threatening; but the dogs never busied
themselves
around Hector, since Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, kept
them away [185]
day and night, and anointed him with deathless oil of roses
so that
Achilles should not tear the skin from him as he dragged
him along.
And Phoebus Apollo brought a dark cloud down from
the high sky to the plain and covered all the place where
the dead man lay, so that the sun’s fury should not too
soon [190]
shrivel the flesh that lay all around his sinews and limbs.*

But the pyre of the dead Patroclus would not catch fire.
Then swift-footed glorious Achilles had one more thought:
standing some way from the pyre he prayed to the two
winds,
the North and West, and promised them splendid offerings;
[195]
pouring liberal libations from a golden cup he begged them
to come, so that the wood might quickly be kindled and
the corpses make haste to blaze in the fire. At once Iris
heard

his prayer and set off to carry the news to the winds.
They were together in the house of the stormy West Wind,
[200]

enjoying a feast; Iris came running and stood there on the
stone threshold, and when they saw her before their eyes
they all leapt to their feet and each one invited her in
to join them, but she refused to sit down and said:

‘No chair for me; I am on my way back to the streams of
Ocean, [205]

to the Ethiopians’ land,* where they are offering hecatombs
to the

immortal gods, so that I too may have a share in the sacred
feast.

But Achilles is praying to the North and the roaring West
Wind

to come to him, and is promising you splendid offerings;
hoping that you will set ablaze the pyre on which Patroclus
[210]

is lying, the man for whom all the Achaeans groan aloud.’

So she spoke, and went away, and they arose with an
astounding noise, driving the clouds headlong before them.
Quickly they reached the open sea and blew on it, making
the

waves rear under their shrill blast, and arrived at rich-soiled
Troy [215]

and fell upon the pyre, and the awesome fire gave a great
roar.

All night long they beat the flames of the pyre together,
blowing shrilly; and all night long swift Achilles, holding a
two-handled cup, drew wine off from a golden mixing-bowl
and poured it on to the ground and soaked the earth, [220]
calling on the shade of Patroclus, that unhappy man. As a
father mourns, burning the bones of his newly married son
who in dying has brought grief to his unhappy parents,
so Achilles mourned as he burnt his companion’s bones,

dragging his steps around the pyre with frequent groans.
[225]

At the time when the Morning Star rises to proclaim
light over
the earth, and saffron-robed Dawn follows, spreading over
the sea,
then the burning pyre began to sink and the flames abated,
and the winds set off to make their way home over the
Thracian sea, making its waters roar and heave into a swell.
[230]

Then the son of Peleus turned from the pyre to another
place
and lay down exhausted, and sweet sleep overtook him;
but Atreus' son and those with him gathered together,
and as they came near the noise and clamour awoke
Achilles.

He started up and addressed them with these words: [235]
'Son of Atreus and you other chieftains of all the Achaeans,
first you must quench the burning pyre with gleaming wine,
all of it, as far as the fire's fury has reached, and after that
let us gather together the bones of Patroclus, Menoetius'
son,
separating them properly; they are easy to recognize, for
[240]

he was lying in the middle of the pyre, while the others
burnt
far from him, horses and men jumbled together at its
edges.

Let us place these bones in a golden jar, in a double layer
of fat, until such time as I myself lie hidden in Hades.
As for the grave-mound, I order you not to toil at building it
[245]

up high, but make it a fair size; and later the Achaeans may
make it broad and tall, those of you who will be left behind
here in your ships with many benches, after I have gone.'*

So he spoke, and they did as swift-footed Peleus' son said.

First they quenched the burning pyre with gleaming wine,
[250]

as far as the flames still had hold and the ash had settled deep;

then, weeping, they gathered the bones of their gentle companion

and placed them in a golden jar inside a double layer of fat, and then wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid it in his hut.

To make his grave-mound they marked a circle round the pyre [255]

and set stones on it as a base. Then they quickly heaped earth

over it, and when they had raised the mound they made to go away;

but Achilles held the people back and made them sit in a wide assembly, and brought prizes from his ships,*
cauldrons

and tripods and horses and mules and mighty oxen, [260]
and women who wore fine girdles, and grey iron.

First, for the swift horsemen, he put before them splendid prizes—

a blameless woman, skilled in crafts, and a two-eared tripod

that held twenty-two measures, as a reward for the winner.

For the man coming second he put up a six-year-old mare,
[265]

unbroken and carrying a mule-foal in her womb.

For the third he put up a cauldron as yet untouched by fire, a fine one, holding four measures and still bright as new.

To the fourth he offered two talents of gold, and for the fifth he put up a jar with two handles that was untouched by fire. [270]

He stood straight up and spoke to the Argives in these

words:

‘Son of Atreus and you other well-greaved Achaeans,
these are the prizes that wait for the horsemen in this
contest.

If we Achaeans were now competing in honour of some
other man

then I myself would win first prize and carry it off to my
tent, [275]

for you know how far my horses surpass others in
excellence,

because they are immortal, and Poseidon gave them to
my father Peleus, who then handed them on to me.*

But I and my single-hoofed horses will stay where we are,
such is the splendid fame of the charioteer they have lost—
[280]

a kindly man, who would often pour smooth olive oil over
their manes after he had washed them down in bright
water.

So they both mourn for him as they stand there, and their
manes

are drooping to the ground as they stand with grieving
hearts.

So bestir yourselves throughout the camp, all you Achaeans
[285]

who are confident in your horses and your close-jointed
chariots.’

So the son of Peleus spoke, and the charioteers quickly
assembled.

The very first to rise to his feet was Eumelus, lord of men,
the dear son of Admetus, a man supreme in horsemanship.
After him there rose the son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes,
[290]

and he led under his yoke the horses of Tros that he had
taken

from Aeneas some time before, though Apollo saved their

master.*

Next after him there rose Atreus' son, fair-haired Menelaus, sprung from Zeus, and he led his swift horses under the yoke,

Agamemnon's mare Aethe and his own horse Podargus.

[295]

Echepolus, son of Anchises, had given Aethe to

Agamemnon

as payment to avoid going with him to windswept Ilium, so that

he could stay at home and live at ease; Zeus had given him great

wealth, and he lived in Sicyon of the wide dancing-places, and it was

this mare, impatient for the race, that Menelaus led under the yoke. [300]

The fourth to harness his fine-maned horses was

Antilochus,

the splendid son of high-hearted lord Nestor, who was the son of

Neleus, and the swift-footed horses that drew his chariot were

bred in Pylos. His father stood near him and with generous intention gave him advice—though Antilochus was shrewd enough: [305]

'Antilochus, even though you are still young, Zeus and

Poseidon

show you favour and have taught you all the many arts of charioteering, and so there is no great need to instruct you; you know well how to wheel round the turning-post, but your horses

are the slowest runners, and so I fear it will turn out badly for you. [310]

These others' horses are swifter than yours, but their drivers

are no more skilled than you at planning what to do.

So come, my dear son, fill your heart full of cunning,
so that negligence does not cause you to lose the prize.
It is by cunning, not by brute force, that the woodcutter
excels, [315]

it is by cunning that the helmsman steers his swift ship
on the wine-faced sea when it is tossed by the winds, and
it is by cunning that one charioteer can outwit another.
Another man, even if he trusts in his horses and his chariot,
may in his carelessness take a wildly circling line, so that
[320]

his horses wander over the course and he cannot control
them;

but he who though driving an inferior team has useful skill
always keeps the post in sight and turns close to it, and
knows

how to strain his horses to the limit with the oxhide reins,
keeping his team out of danger and watching the man in
front. [325]

Now I will tell you of a sure sign, which you are bound to
see:

there is a stump of dry wood, standing a fathom above the
ground,

of oak or pine; it never rots away in the rain, and two white
stones are set against it, one on either side, where the
course

bends back and there is smooth ground to drive on both
sides. [330]

It is either a memorial to some mortal man, long since
dead, or

it served as the race's turning-point in the time of former
men;

and now swift-footed Achilles has made it the halfway
mark.

As you drive your chariot and horses hold closely to this,
and lean a little way yourself to the left in your well-woven
[335]

chariot-body, whipping on and calling out to your right-hand horse, giving it free rein with your hands; let your left-hand horse run very close to the turning-post, so that the nave on your well-made wheel seems to graze its edge—but take care not to touch the stone, or you may [340]

damage the horses or shatter the chariot entirely, which would be a joy to all the rest and a reproach to you yourself.

So, my dear son, be prudent and stay on your guard; if at the turning-point you come up and overtake the rest there will be no one who can catch or pass you, [345] not even if he comes from behind driving glorious Arion, Adrestus' swift horse, who was descended from the gods, or the horses of Laomedon, who are the finest bred here.'

So Nestor, son of Neleus, spoke, and sat down again in his place when he had told his son how to handle each part of the race. [350]

The fifth man to harness his fine-maned horses was Meriones;

and then they all mounted their chariots and cast lots. Achilles shook the lots, and out jumped the lot of Antilochus*

Nestor's son; and after him lord Eumelus drew his starting-place,

and after him Menelaus, son of Atreus, famed with the spear, [355]

drew his starting-place, and after him Meriones, and the last

to draw was Tydeus' son Diomedes, by far the best of them.

They stood in line abreast, and Achilles pointed out the turning-

post, far away on the level plain; he had stationed an umpire

beside it, godlike Phoenix, the attendant of his father, [360]
to watch the running and to bring back a true account of it.

So they all at the same time lifted their whips over the
horses

and flicked them with the reins, and shouted commands to
make them run, and the horses quickly galloped over the
plain,

leaving the ships far behind; under their chests the dust
[365]

rose and hung in the air like a cloud or a whirlwind, and
their manes streamed behind them, blown by the wind's
gusts.

The chariots at one time bent low to the earth that nurtures
many

and at another bounded high in the air; their drivers stood
in their chariots, and each man's heart was beating hard
[370]

in his desire for victory, and each man was calling out to
his horses, as they flew across the plain in clouds of dust.

When the swift horses were finishing the last part of the
course

and turning back towards the grey sea, then as the horses
ran

at full stretch each man's prowess became clear; soon the
swift [375]

mares of Pheres' grandson Eumelus broke into the lead,
and

keeping pace with them came the stallions of Diomedes,
the horses of Tros. They were not far behind, but very close,
seeming always on the point of mounting Eumelus' chariot
and

blowing with their warm breath on his back and broad
shoulders, [380]

for they were holding their heads right over him as they
flew along.

And indeed Diomedes would have driven past him or made the

race a dead-heat, had not Phoebus Apollo been enraged with

Tydeus' son and struck the shining whip from his hands.

Tears of rage flowed from Diomedes' eyes; he could see

[385]

Eumelus' mares drawing further and further ahead, while his own horses were thwarted, since they ran without the whip.

But Apollo's cheating of Tydeus' son did not escape

Athena's

notice, and she quickly chased after the shepherd of the people

and gave him back his whip and filled his horses with fury.

[390]

Then she strode angrily after Admetus' son Eumelus and—

as a goddess can—smashed his chariot's yoke, and the

mares

ran off the track and the pole dropped to the ground.

Eumelus himself was tossed out of the chariot beside the

wheel;

the skin was torn from his elbows and mouth and nose,

[395]

and his forehead above his brows was bruised, and his eyes

filled with tears, and his hearty voice was choked.

Tydeus' son pulled his single-hoofed horses sideways and,

holding them straight, got well clear of the others, for

Athena

had filled them with fury and had put glory into himself.

[400]

Next after him came Atreus' son, fair-haired Menelaus,

and then Antilochus, who called out to his father's horses:

'Press on, the pair of you; now for an all-out effort!

I am not urging you to compete with those there, the

horses

of Tydeus' war-minded son, on whom Athena has [405]
just now bestowed speed and has put glory into Diomedes.
Faster now, try to catch the horses of Atreus' son! Do not
fall
behind, and do not let Aethe, who is only a mare, pour
scorn
over the pair of you. Why are you lagging, my champions?
I tell you this plainly, and it will surely be fulfilled: [410]
you will get no more care from Nestor, shepherd of
the people, but he will kill you at once with the sharp
bronze
if your slipshod ways mean that we win a lesser prize.
So off you go after them, run as fast as you can!
My part will be to fashion and devise some stratagem [415]
to slip past them in a narrow place; I shall not miss the
chance.'

So he spoke, and they, trembling at their lord's loud
rebuke,
ran faster for a while. Soon afterwards Antilochus, steadfast
in
battle, saw a place where the track became narrow and
hollowed;
there was a gully in the ground where water had collected
in winter [420]
and broken part of the track, scooping out all the ground,
and
along this Menelaus drove, making it hard for chariot
wheels to run
side by side. Antilochus pulled his single-hoofed horses
sideways
off the track and held them straight, pursuing him a little to
one
side. Atreus' son was alarmed, and shouted to Antilochus:
[425]
'Antilochus, you are driving like a madman! Keep your

horses back!

The track is narrow, but it will soon get wider, and you can pass;

do not risk crashing into my chariot and wrecking us both.'

So he spoke, but Antilochus drove even harder, urging his

horses on with the whip, and it was as if he had not heard.
[430]

As far as the length of a discus-cast that a fit man throws, swinging from the shoulder as he tries the strength of his youth,

so far they ran on together; but then the mares of Atreus' son

fell back, and he himself was glad to give up driving them, for fear that the single-hoofed horses should crash together on [435]

the track and overturn the well-woven chariot-bodies, and that they

themselves should tumble in the dust in their haste for victory.

Then fair-haired Menelaus shouted abusively to Antilochus: 'Antilochus, there is no mortal more destructive than you; to hell with you! We Achaeans were wrong to think you had any [440]

sense; but you won't win a prize without a challenge on oath.'

So he spoke, and called out to his horses, saying: 'Come on now, do not hold back! Do not stand there grieving

in your hearts! Their hoofs and knees will become tired before yours do, because they are both well past their youth.' [445]

So he spoke, and they, trembling at their lord's loud rebuke, ran on faster, and quickly closed on Antilochus' team.

Now the Argives were sitting in assembly and watching the horses as they flew over the plain, raising clouds of dust.

The first to catch sight of them was Idomeneus, captain of the [450]

Cretans, sitting as he was outside the assembly on a high place;

and when he heard a man shouting to his team, though far away

he knew who it was, and he recognized the horse in front, which was marked by being chestnut overall except that it had white blaze on its forehead, circular like the moon.

[455]

He stood straight up and spoke to the Argives in these words:

‘My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, is it only I who can see the horses, or can you too? It seems to me that the horses in front of the others are not the same,

and a different charioteer is coming into sight. The mares that [460]

up to now were winning must have been impeded out there on the plain; I saw them rounding the turning-post first but I cannot now make them out, though my eyes are scanning everywhere on the Trojan plain as I look out for them.

Perhaps the reins dropped from the driver’s hands, and he failed [465]

to hold his course round the post, and came to grief on the turn.

I think he would then have fallen out and smashed his chariot,

and his mares would have swerved, their hearts gripped by fury.

Come, stand up and look for yourselves; I cannot make him out clearly, but I think the man in front is [470]

Aetolian by birth, one who rules among the Argives—it is the son of Tydeus the horse-breaker, mighty Diomedes.'

Then swift Ajax, son of Oïleus, rebuked him with shameful words:

'Idomeneus, why are you always ranting on like this? Those high-stepping mares are still far off, flying over the wide plain. [475]

You are by no means the youngest among the Argives, nor are the eyes in your head the sharpest-sighted, yet you are always flinging words about when there is no need

for this kind of crass talk; there are others here better than you.

Those in front are still the same mares as led before, Eumelus' [480]

horses, and he is standing in the chariot, holding their reins.'

At this the captain of Cretans spoke angrily in reply: 'Ajax, you dolt, you are a master of abuse, but in all else you are

inferior to the Argives, because you have a stubborn disposition.

Come, let us two make a wager—a tripod or a cauldron— [485]

as to which horses are leading, and let us appoint Atreus' son

Agamemnon as referee; you will find out who it is when you pay.'

So he spoke; and swift Ajax, the son of Oïleus, leapt angrily

to his feet, ready to answer him with bitter words; and indeed the quarrel between them would have gone further [490]

had not Achilles himself stood up and spoken to them:

'No more flinging harsh and bitter words at each other,

Ajax and Idomeneus; it is not the proper thing to do. Indeed, you would both be angry with anyone else who did this.

No, take your seats in the assembly and watch out for [495] the horses; they will soon be here, straining after victory, and then each one among you all will know which of the Argives' teams is coming in first and which is second.'

So he spoke; and now Tydeus' son was driving very near them, repeatedly swinging his whip from the shoulder, and his horses [500] were stepping high as they skimmed swiftly over the plain. Showers of dust fell continually on their charioteer, and the chariot, covered all over with gold and tin, ran on behind the swift-footed horses; and there was scarcely a wheel-mark left behind them by the tyres [505] in the powdery dust as the two horses flew eagerly on. Diomedes drew up in the midst of the assembly, and abundant sweat dripped to the ground from his horses' necks and chests.

He himself leapt to the ground from his shining chariot and propped his whip against its yoke, and mighty Sthenelus without [510]

waiting rushed up to receive the prize; he gave the woman to his high-hearted companions to lead away and the two-eared tripod for them to carry off. Then he unyoked the horses.

After him Antilochus, Neleus' grandson, drove up his horses, having outstripped Menelaus not by speed but by trickery. [515]

Even so Menelaus held his swift horses close behind him; as wide as is the gap between wheel and horse as it strains hard to pull its lord in his chariot over a plain, and

the hairs at the tip of its tail keep touching the wheel's tyre,
and there is no great space between them as the wheel
keeps [520]

running close to the horse on its career over the wide plain

—

by such a distance did Menelaus trail blameless Antilochus.
Though at first he was left behind by the length of a discus-
cast,

he had caught up very quickly, because the strong fury of
Aethe, Agamemnon's fine-maned mare, was always
increasing, [525]

and if both had had to run still further he would have
passed

Antilochus and there would have been no dispute at the
end.

Next came Meriones, the valiant attendant of Idomeneus,
lagging behind splendid Menelaus by a spear-cast;
his fine-maned horses were the slowest in the race, and
[530]

he himself was the weakest at driving in a chariot-race.

Last of them all came Eumelus, son of Admetus, dragging
his fine chariot himself and driving his horses in front.

When glorious swift-footed Achilles saw him he felt pity,
and standing among the Argives he spoke in winged words:
[535]

'The last man to drive up his single-hoofed horses is the
best!

Come, let us give him a prize, for that is the proper thing to
do—

the second prize, for Tydeus' son must carry off the first.'

So he spoke, and they all approved of his proposal; and
he would have given Eumelus the mare, since the
Achaeans had [540]

agreed, if Antilochus, great-hearted Nestor's son, had not
stood up and answered Peleus' son Achilles with an

objection:

‘Achilles, I shall be very angry with you if you carry out what

you have said; you are minded to rob me of my prize because

Eumelus’ chariot and swift horses were wrecked, just as
[545]

he was, fine man though he is. He should have prayed to the

immortals, and then he would not have lagged and come in last.

If you feel pity for him and he is dear to your heart, there is in your hut much gold and bronze and many sheep, and you also have maidservants and single-hoofed horses;
[550]

choose from these and give him an even greater prize later, or do it here and now, and the Achaeans will applaud you.

But as for the mare, I will not give her up; anyone who feels inclined may test me by fighting for her with his fists.’

So he spoke, and swift-footed glorious Achilles smiled,
[555]

pleased with Antilochus, who was his dear companion, and in answer addressed him with winged words:

‘Antilochus, if you are telling me to give some further prize from my hut’s store to Eumelus, I will certainly do this:

I will give him the corslet that I took from Asteropaeus,*
[560]

made of bronze, and there is a layer of shining tin worked around it; and it will be worth a great deal to him.’

So he spoke, and ordered his dear companion Automedon

to bring it from his hut, and he went and brought it for him, and laid it in the hands of Eumelus, who received it with delight. [565]

Then Menelaus stood up among them grieving in his

heart,
unrelenting in his anger at Antilochus; a herald put the
staff in his hand and ordered the Argives to be silent, and
then the man who was like a god addressed him:

‘Antilochus,
you used to be a man of good sense; but see what you
have done! [570]

By fouling my horses and driving yours ahead—though they
are far inferior—you have brought shame on my manhood.
Come now, you leaders and rulers of the Argives,
judge impartially between us both, without favour to either,
so that no man of the bronze-shirted Achaeans can say,
[575]

“Menelaus forced a win over Antilochus by lying, and
went off with the mare; his horses were far inferior, but
he himself was his superior in manhood and in strength.”
Or rather, I myself will propose a solution, and I think
no Danaan will find fault with me, for the case will be just.
[580]

Come, Zeus-nurtured Antilochus, and as is right and proper
stand in front of your horses and chariot; hold the pliant
whip with which you drove just now in your hands, and
touching your horses swear by the holder and shaker of the
earth that you did not mean to impede my chariot by
cheating.’ [585]

Then in turn Antilochus, a man of good judgement,
answered him:

‘One moment! I am a long way younger than you, lord
Menelaus, and you are an older and a better man than me.
You know how a young man’s rash acts come about;
his mind may be quicker but his judgement is a flimsy
thing. [590]

So let your heart bear with me; I will freely give you
the mare that I won, and if you were to ask for anything
better from my house I would willingly give it to you

here and now rather than fall out of favour with you,
Zeus-nurtured man, and become a wrongdoer in the gods'
sight.' [595]

So the son of great-spirited Nestor spoke, and led the
mare
up to Menelaus and handed her over to him; and Menelaus'
heart was softened, as when the dew falls on ears of corn in
the season when the ploughland is bristling with a growing
crop.

So, Menelaus, the heart in your breast was softened, [600]
and you addressed Antilochus, speaking with winged
words:

'Antilochus, I will now give way and leave off my anger
against you; you were never wild or thoughtless before this,
though this time youthful spirits overcame your judgement;
another time be careful to avoid deceiving your betters.

[605]

No other man of the Achaeans could easily have won me
over,

but you have endured much and struggled hard on my
behalf, you and your noble father and your brother;
and so I will listen to your entreaties, and will give you back
the mare, even though she is mine, so that these men also

[610]

may know that my heart is never arrogant or unbending.'

So he spoke, and gave the mare to Antilochus'
companion Noëmon
to lead away, and took for himself the brightly shining
cauldron.

Meriones took away the two talents of gold, since he had
come in fourth. The fifth prize, the jar with two handles,
was [615]

left over, and Achilles carried it through the assembly of the
Achaeans and presented it to Nestor; standing next to him
he said:

‘Here now, aged man, this is for you, a keepsake to remind you
of the burial of Patroclus, for you will not see the man again
among the Argives; I give you this prize without a contest,
[620]
since you will certainly not fight with fists again, nor
wrestle,
nor will you ever enter for a spear-contest or a running
race,
because now burdensome old age presses hard upon you.’

So he spoke, and laid the jar in Nestor’s hands, and he
was
delighted to receive it, and addressed Achilles in winged
words: [625]

‘All that you have said, my son, is according to due
measure:
no longer are my limbs steady, my friend, nor my feet, nor
do my arms swing easily from both my shoulders.
I wish I was in my prime again and my strength was as
sound

as when the Epeians made a burial for lord Amarynceus
[630]
at Buprasium, and his sons held games in honour of the
king.

Then there was no man who was my equal, not of the
Epeians
nor of the Pylians themselves nor of the great-spirited
Aetolians.

In the boxing I overcame Clytomedes, the son of Enops,
and
in the wrestling Ancaeus of Pleuron, who stood up against
me. [635]

In the foot-race I overtook Iphiclus, fine man though he
was,
and in the spear-cast I threw further than Phyles and

Polydorus.

It was only in the chariot-race that Actor's two sons beat me;
they got in front by force of numbers, begrudging me the victory
because the greatest prizes were reserved for this contest.
[640]

These men were twins; one of them held steadfastly to the reins,
and while he held them the other urged the team on with the whip.

Well, that is what I was once; it is now the turn of younger men
to take part in such things, while I must give in to wretched old age—but then I was someone of distinction among heroes.* [645]

Go now and honour your companion with funeral games;
I accept this gift with pleasure, and my heart is glad because
you always remember me as a friend, and you do not forget the honour that is my rightful due among the Achaeans.
May the gods reward you bountifully for this act of yours.'
[650]

So he spoke; and Peleus' son went back through the great gathering of Achaeans when he had heard the son of Neleus' generous praise.

Next he set up the prizes for the painful business of a boxing match:
he brought into the assembly and tethered there a hard-working mule,
a female six years old and unbroken, the kind that is hardest to control; [655]

and for the man who would lose he presented a two-

handled cup.

He stood straight up and spoke to the Argives in these words:

‘Son of Atreus and you other well-greaved Achaeans, to compete for these prizes we summon the two men who are best

at putting up their fists and landing blows. The man to whom [660]

Apollo grants endurance, and is judged so by all the Achaeans,

may take this hard-working mule and go back with her to his tent,

while the one who loses will take this cup with two handles.’

So he spoke, and at once there rose to his feet a valiant and

mighty man, skilled at boxing, Epeius, the son of Panopeus, [665]

who laid his hand on the hard-working mule and spoke:

‘Let the man approach who will carry off the two-handled cup;

as for the mule, I say that no man of the Achaeans will beat me at boxing and take it away, since I say I am the greatest.

You say, and well you may, that I am a poorer soldier than the rest; [670]

but there is no way that a man can be expert in everything.

I tell you this plainly, and it will surely be fulfilled:

I shall split his skin with a straight blow and smash his bones

to pieces; let those who care for him wait here all together, to carry him away when my hands have broken him.’ [675]

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still.

The only man to rise was Euryalus, a man like the gods, the son of lord Mecisteus, whose father was Talaus; this Mecisteus had long ago come to Thebes when Oedipus fell,

for his funeral games, and there overcame all the
Cadmeians.* [680]

The spear-famed son of Tydeus acted as Euryalus' second,
and
rallied him with his words, since he greatly wished him to
win.

First he laid his loincloth by him on the ground, and then
gave

him the well-cut thongs made from the hide of a field-ox.*

So the two boxers put on their loincloths and strode into
[685]

the midst of the assembly, and putting up their powerful
hands

they fell upon each other, and began to trade heavy blows.

A dreadful cracking of jawbones ensued, and sweat flowed
from

all their limbs; then glorious Epeius advanced, and as

Euryalus

looked for an opening he caught him on his cheek; there his

[690]

bright limbs failed him, and he could no longer stand

upright.

As when the sea is roughened by the North Wind and a fish
arches up

from weed-strewn shallows and then disappears again in
the dark water,

so Euryalus arched at the blow; but great-spirited Epeius
put his arms

around him and set him upright, and his companions stood
round him [695]

and led him through the assembly, his feet dragging behind
him,

spitting gouts of blood and drooping his head to one side.

They took him and sat him down in their midst, still
stupefied,

and themselves went up and collected the two-handled cup.

Then Peleus' son quickly set up the prizes for the third contest, [700]

which were for a pain-laden wrestling match, and displayed them

to the Danaans: for the winner a great tripod, made to stand over

a fire, that the Achaeans valued among themselves at twelve oxen,

and for the man defeated he brought into their midst a woman

who was skilled in many crafts, and they valued her at four oxen. [705]

He stood straight up and spoke to the Argives with these words:

'Stand up, any two who wish to try themselves in this contest!'

So he spoke, and there stood up huge Ajax, Telamon's son, and then much-scheming wily Odysseus rose to his feet.

They both put on their loincloths and strode into the midst [710]

of the assembly, and grasped each other's arms with their powerful hands, like crossing rafters that a renowned carpenter

has fitted in the roof of a high house to keep off the wind's violence.

Their backs creaked under the force of their sturdy arms' unremitting grip, and the sweat ran off them in streams, [715]

and weal after weal, red with blood, kept starting up along their sides and shoulders, while all the time they struggled to win the prize of the well-made tripod. But neither could Odysseus trip Ajax and throw him to the ground

nor could Ajax Odysseus, since his mighty strength held firm. [720]

But when the well-greaved Achaeans began to grow restive, then huge Ajax, son of Telamon, addressed Odysseus: 'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many schemes, either lift me or I will lift you; all the rest can be left to Zeus.'

So he spoke, and lifted Odysseus, who did not forget his usual guile [725]

but caught and struck the back of Ajax's knee and loosened his limbs,

and threw him on to his back; Odysseus dropped on to his chest, and the people were astonished as they watched. Then in turn much-enduring glorious Odysseus tried to lift Ajax;

he moved him a little way off the ground, but could not raise him, [730]

and so hooked his knee round the other's, and they fell to the

ground side by side, and were both begrimed in the dust.

Then they would have leapt up and begun to wrestle a third time

had not Achilles himself risen to his feet and stopped them: 'No more struggling—do not wear yourselves out with your efforts; [735]

both of you have won; share the prizes equally and go,*
so that other Achaeans can take part in the contests.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he said,

and when they had wiped off the dust they put on their tunics.

Then Peleus' son quickly put up other prizes for speed of foot. [740]

a finely worked silver mixing-bowl that held six measures,

and in beauty was by far the best in the whole world,
for the Sidonians who are skilled in many crafts had
fashioned it,
and men of Phoenicia had ferried it across the misty sea
and had put in to harbour and given it as a gift to Thoas.
[745]

Euneus, who was Jason's son, had given it to the hero
Patroclus as a ransom for Lycaon, the son of Priam; and
now

Achilles presented it as a prize in honour of his companion,
to the man who should prove to be fastest in the swift foot-
race.*

For the man who came second he offered a great ox, rich
with fat, [750]

and for the last runner he offered a half-talent of gold.

He stood straight up and spoke to the Achaeans in these
words:

'Stand forward, any who wish to test themselves in this
contest!'

So he spoke, and at once there stood up swift Ajax Oïleus'
son,

and also Odysseus of many schemes, and after him
Nestor's son [755]

Antilochus, who always beat the young men in the foot-
race.

They stood in line abreast, and Achilles pointed out the
turning

post, and right from the starting-line they ran at full stretch;
soon

Oïleus' son took the lead, and after him came glorious
Odysseus,

running very close, as close as the weaving-rod of a fine-
girdled [760]

woman is to her breast as she deftly draws it tight with her
hands,

pulling the spool along the warp, and holding it close to her breast; so close was Odysseus as he ran behind Ajax, his feet

pounding in his tracks before the dust could settle into them;

and as glorious Odysseus kept up his swift running his breath [765]

kept drifting about Ajax's head. All the Achaeans cheered on

his desire for victory, and applauded his mighty efforts.

When they were completing the last part of the course Odysseus quickly prayed in his heart to grey-eyed Athena: 'Hear me, goddess; be good to me and come to help my running!' [770]

So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard him and made his limbs light, both his legs and his arms. But when they were on the point of dashing up for the prize Ajax slipped as he ran—for Athena had caused him to stumble—

in the place where dung was spread from the slaughter of the loud- [775]

bellowing oxen that swift-footed Achilles had killed for Patroclus.

His mouth and nostrils were crammed full with ox-dung, and

much-enduring glorious Odysseus carried off the mixing-bowl,

because he had come in first. Illustrious Ajax took the ox, and stood there, holding in his hands a horn of the field-ox [780]

and spitting out dung, and spoke out among the Argives: 'That was unfair! It was the goddess who tripped me! She has

before this stood by Odysseus like a mother and helped him.'

So he spoke, and they all laughed happily at his distress.

Then Antilochus carried off the last prize with a smile, [785] and spoke among the Argives with these words:

‘My friends, you all know what I am going to say to you—that even now the gods honour men who are older born. Ajax is a little older than I am, but Odysseus here is from an earlier generation and from men of past times; [790]

men say he is on the verge of old age, but it is hard for the Achaeans to compete with him on foot, except for Achilles.’

So he spoke, flattering the swift-footed son of Peleus, and Achilles answered him, addressing him in these words: ‘Antilochus, your words of praise will not go for nothing; [795]

here, I give you a half-talent of gold, in addition to your prize.’

So he spoke, and put it in his hands, and Antilochus was glad

to receive it. Then Peleus’ son took a far-shadowing spear and laid it down in the gathering, and also a shield and helmet—

the arms of Sarpedon, that Patroclus had taken from him.* [800]

He stood straight up and spoke to the Achaeans in these words:

‘To compete for these arms we order two men, the best, to put on their armour and take up the flesh-splitting bronze

and to test each other in front of the gathered soldiery. Whichever of them first makes a hit on the other’s handsome flesh [805]

and gets through to his innards past armour and black blood,

to him I shall give this sword here with its silver rivets,

a fine sword from Thrace, which I took from Asteropaeus;*
as for the armour, let both take and hold it in common,
and we shall put before them a splendid feast in the huts.'
[810]

So he spoke, and huge Ajax, the son of Telamon, rose
up,
and the son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes, also stood up.
When they had armed themselves on either side of the
soldiery
they both advanced into the middle ground, raging to fight
and glaring terribly; and amazement gripped all the
Achaeans. [815]

When they had advanced to within close range of each
other,
three times they charged and three times lunged from
close quarters.
Then Ajax stabbed at Diomedes' perfectly balanced shield,
but
did not pierce his flesh, because the corslet behind it saved
him.

Then Tydeus' son all the time kept threatening to strike at
[820]

Ajax's neck over his great shield with the bright spear's
point,
so much so that the Achaeans feared greatly for Ajax
and called on them to stop fighting and take equal prizes.
And so Achilles gave the great sword to the hero Tydeus'
son, and
handed it to him with its scabbard and belt of skilfully cut
leather. [825]

Next the son of Peleus laid before them a mass of iron,
formed in
the melting-furnace, that the mighty Eëtion used to throw;
but swift-footed glorious Achilles had killed him, and had
brought this lump in his ships, together with his other

treasures.*

He stood straight up and spoke to the Achaeans in these words: [830]

‘Stand up, anyone who wishes to try for this prize too; even if the rich lands of the man who wins it are very remote its usefulness will last him for five circling years, and none of his shepherds or ploughmen will be forced to go to the city for want of iron, but it will be there for them.’* [835]

So he spoke, and Polypoetes, steadfast in war, rose to his feet, and also mighty Leonteus, a man like the gods, and also Ajax, son of Telamon, and glorious Epeius. They stood in a line, and glorious Epeius picked up the weight and whirling round threw it, but the Achaeans all laughed at him. [840]

The second to take his turn and throw was Leonteus, a shoot of Ares, and the third to let fly from his powerful hand was huge Ajax, son of Telamon, and he passed all the others’ marks.

But when Polypoetes, steadfast in war, lifted up the weight he hurled it as far as an oxherd flings a throwing-stick, and [845]

it flies whirling through his cattle in the fields; so far did Polypoetes hurl it beyond all the competitors, and everyone shouted, and the mighty man’s companions stood up and carried their king’s prize off to their hollow ships.

Then for the archers Achilles put up a prize of dark iron. [850]

He set up a row of ten double axes and ten single axes, and fixed the mast of a blue-prowed ship far off in the sand, and tied a timid dove to it by the foot

with a thin cord, and ordered them to shoot at it:
'Let the man who succeeds in hitting the timid dove [855]
take the double axes as his prize and carry them home;
and if he hits the cord but misses the bird he will take
away the single axes, since he is less of a marksman.'

So he spoke, and there rose to his feet mighty lord
Teucer,

and after him Meriones, the valiant attendant of
Idomeneus. [860]

They took two lots and shook them in a bronze helmet,
and Teucer's lot won first place; straightaway he let fly
an arrow with great force, but did not promise to sacrifice
a splendid hecatomb of firstborn lambs to the archer lord.
Because Apollo grudged him this success he missed the
bird [865]

and hit the cord by which it was tied at its foot, and
the bitter arrow sliced the cord clean away; the bird
at once soared up to the high sky, and the cord hung down
towards the earth, and the Achaeans shouted in approval.
But Meriones rushed up and tore the bow from Teucer's
[870]

hand—he had been holding an arrow while the other aimed
—

and straightaway promised to sacrifice a splendid
hecatomb

of firstborn lambs to Apollo who shoots from afar.

He could see the timid dove high up under the clouds,
and as it circled in flight he hit it in the breast under [875]
its wing, and the arrow passed clean through and fell back
and stuck in the earth before Meriones' feet; but the bird
was caught on the mast of the blue-prowed ship, its neck
hanging limp and its fast-beating feathers drooping.

Quickly the breath flew from its limbs, and it fell all the way
down. [880]

from the mast; and the people were astonished as they

watched.

Meriones took as his prize all ten double-axes and
Teucer carried off the single-axes to his hollow ships.

Next the son of Peleus brought a far-shadowing spear
and a cauldron
untouched by fire, embossed with flowers and worth an ox,
and [885]

set them down before the assembly. Up rose the javelin-
throwers,

and up rose the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon,
and up rose Meriones, the valiant attendant of Idomeneus.

But swift-footed glorious Achilles spoke among them:

'Son of Atreus, we know how far you outstrip all others,
[890]

and how much you are the best in the strength of your
throw;

so take this prize and go back to your hollow ships, and
let us give the spear to the hero Meriones, if you too
wish it in your heart, for it is I who urge you to do this.'

So he spoke, and Agamemnon, lord of men, did not
dissent; [895]

the hero gave the bronze-tipped spear to Meriones, but to
his herald Talthybius he presented his own magnificent
prize.

BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

So the assembly broke up and the people dispersed, each company to its swift ships, and all their thoughts were of food and the pleasure of sweet sleep; but Achilles wept ceaselessly as he remembered his dear companion, and sleep that subdues all took no hold of him. He tossed and turned, thinking with [5] longing of Patroclus, of his manhood and his valiant strength, of all that he had accomplished with him and the trials he had endured, of wars of men undergone and the arduous crossing of seas. As he called all this to mind he let fall huge tears, lying at one time on his side and at another on his back, [10] and then again on his face; then he would rise to his feet and wander distraught by the shore of the salt sea, and would never fail to see the Dawn as she appeared over the sea and its shores. Then he would harness the swift horses to his chariot and lash Hector to it, to be dragged along behind it; [15] three times he would haul him round the burial-mound of Menoetius' dead son, and then he would rest in his hut and leave Hector sprawled face-down in the dust. But Apollo

protected
his flesh from shameful disfigurement, feeling pity for the
man,
even in death, and covered him all over with his golden
aegis, [20]
so that Achilles would not tear his flesh as he dragged him
along.

So Achilles in his rage kept trying to disfigure glorious
Hector;
but when the blessed gods saw this they took pity on him,
and
continually urged the keen-eyed slayer of Argus to steal
him away.
All the other gods were pleased with this plan, but it would
never [25]
find favour with Hera or Poseidon or the grey-eyed maiden,
who stuck to the hatred they had felt from the beginning
for
sacred Ilium and Priam and his people, because of
Alexander's
deluded folly: he had insulted the goddesses when they
came to
his sheepfold, choosing the one who rewarded him with
fatal lust.* [30]
But when the twelfth dawn after Hector's death appeared
then Phoebus Apollo spoke out among the immortals:
'You are unbending, you gods, and cruel! Did Hector never
burn
the thigh-bones of cattle and flawless goats as offerings to
you?
And yet now you could not bring yourselves to rescue him,
even [35]
in death, for his wife and for his mother and his son to see,
and for his father Priam and his people to burn him in
the fire and carry out the funeral rites that are his due.

No, you gods, you prefer to stand by deadly Achilles, even though his wits are not in their rightful place and the mind [40]

in his breast is not easily bent. He has a cruel nature, like a lion that gives in to its great strength and proud heart when it

wants to feed, and attacks the sheep-flocks of mortal men. Just so Achilles has killed pity, and there is no respect in him,

respect that both greatly harms and also benefits men. [45]

Any man, I suppose, is likely to have lost someone even dearer

to him than this, a brother born of the same mother, or even a son,

but in the end he gives up his weeping and lamentation, because the Fates have placed in men a heart that endures; but

this Achilles first robs glorious Hector of his life and then ties him [50]

behind his chariot and drags him round the burial-mound of his

dear companion. Yet he should know that there is nothing fine

or good about this; let him beware of our anger, great man though he is, because in his fury he is outraging mute earth.'

Then in anger Hera of the white arms addressed him: [55]

'Lord of the silver bow, your words would be reasonable if all of you mean to give equal honour to Achilles and to Hector.

But Hector is a mortal, and sucked at a woman's breast, while Achilles was born of a goddess, one whom I myself raised and nurtured,* and I gave her as wife to a mortal,

[60]

Peleus, who was dearest of all men to the immortals' hearts.

All of you gods were at the wedding, and you, Apollo, feasted among them, lyre in hand—you ever-devilous friend of the wicked.'

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed her:

'Hera, do not take your anger with the gods to excess; [65] the honour given to these men will not be the same. Even so,

Hector was always the dearest to the gods of mortals in Ilium—

certainly to me, for he never failed to offer me pleasing gifts.

Never has my altar lacked a fair share of the feast, of drink offerings and the savour of burnt flesh, which is our privilege. [70]

But as for stealing bold Hector away, let us say no more of it—

this is not possible without Achilles' knowing, and his mother

is all the time by his side, in the day and in the night.

No, let some god go and summon Thetis to my side, and I will give her carefully considered advice, how Achilles may [75]

receive gifts from the hands of Priam and so ransom Hector.'

So he spoke, and storm-footed Iris rose to take the message,

and dived into the dark expanse of the sea between Samothrace

and rocky Imbros; and the waters groaned as she entered them.

She dropped to the depths of the sea like a lead weight,

[80]

mounted on horn from an ox that is kept in the field,
which as it sinks brings death to ravenous fishes.

She found Thetis in a hollow cavern, and around her the
other

sea-goddesses were seated, gathered together, while she in
their

midst was weeping over the fate of her blameless son, who
was to [85]

die, taken from her, in rich-soiled Troy, far from his native
land.

Standing next to Thetis swift-footed Iris addressed her:

‘Up with you, Thetis! Zeus whose plans are immortal
summons you.’

Then in answer the goddess Thetis of the silver feet said:

‘Why does that great god send me orders? I feel shame at
[90]

joining the gods, for the grief I have in my heart is never-
ending.

Still, I will go, and his words will not be in vain, whatever he
says.’

So she, bright among goddesses, spoke, and took up
her

deep-blue veil—there is no darker garment than this—

and set off on her way, and wind-footed swift Iris went first

[95]

and guided her; and the waves of the sea opened around
them.

They came out on the seashore and sprang up to the high
sky,

and found Zeus the wide-thunderer, and around him all the
other

blessed gods who live for ever were sitting gathered
together.

Athena gave up her place and Thetis sat next to father

Zeus, [100]

and Hera put a beautiful golden cup in her hand and spoke words of welcome; and Thetis drank and handed back the cup.

Then the father of gods and men began to speak among them:

‘So you have come to Olympus, goddess Thetis, despite your sorrow;

you have grief in your heart that you cannot forget—I too know this, [105]

but even so I will tell you why I have summoned you here. For nine days a quarrel has arisen among the immortals concerning Achilles, sacker of cities, and the body of Hector.

They want the keen-sighted slayer of Argus to steal it away; but I will tell you of the glory that I intend to grant Achilles, [110]

and so keep your respect and friendship in time to come.

Go quickly now to the camp and give your son my orders: tell him that the gods are displeased with him, and that I above

all the immortals am angry because in his frenzied heart he keeps Hector by his curved ships and has not released him; [115]

and in this way he may come to fear me, and ransom Hector.

Then I shall send Iris to great-hearted Priam, telling him to go to the ships of the Achaeans and ransom his dear son, taking with him gifts for Achilles such as will gladden his heart.’

So he spoke, and the goddess silver-footed Thetis did not disobey him, [120]

and she went swooping down from the peaks of Olympus

and came to the hut of her son. She found him there,

weeping

without respite, and around him his dear companions were bustling about their tasks and preparing their early meal; they had sacrificed a great fleecy sheep for themselves in the hut. [125]

His revered mother sat down very close to Achilles, and stroked him with her hand and spoke to him, saying:

‘My child, how long will you eat your heart out with grieving and lamentation, giving no thought to food or to bed? It is indeed a good thing to lie with a woman, [130] since your life will not be long and I shall lose you, and already death and your harsh destiny stand beside you. Come now, listen to me; I come to you as Zeus’ messenger. He says that the gods are displeased with you, and that he above

all the immortals is angry because in your frenzied heart you [135]

keep Hector beside your curved ships and have not released him.

So come, let him go, and accept a ransom in return for the body.’

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed her:

‘Let it be so; may he who brings the ransom also take away the body,

if indeed the Olympian himself commands me with all his heart.’ [140]

So mother and son spoke to each other in the gathering-place

of the ships, exchanging many winged words.

Then the son of Cronus roused Iris to go to sacred Ilium:

‘Go now, swift Iris; leave the seat of Olympus and go to Ilium and announce to great-hearted Priam that he must go to [145]

the ships of the Achaeans and ransom his dear son, taking with him gifts for Achilles such as will gladden his heart;

but he must be alone, and no other Trojan must go with him.

Let some older man, a herald, follow him, to guide the mules and the well-wheeled wagon, and to bring back [150]

to the city the dead man whom glorious Achilles has killed. And let him have no concern or fear about death in his heart,

since I shall provide him with a worthy guide, the Argus-slayer,

who will lead him on his way until he reaches Achilles.

When Hermes has conducted him into his hut Achilles [155] will not kill him, and will keep all the others away from him; he is neither witless nor heedless, nor is he wicked, but will treat a man who is his suppliant with kindness, and spare him.'

So he spoke, and storm-footed Iris rose to take the message.

She arrived at Priam's house and found there crying and wailing; [160]

in the courtyard his sons were sitting around their father, soaking their clothes with tears, and the old man was in their midst, tightly wrapped in his cloak, and his head and neck were covered with the quantities of dung that he had gathered up in his hands as he grovelled on the ground.* [165]

In the house his daughters and wives of his sons were weeping,

remembering the many noble men who were lying dead, those who had lost their lives at the hands of the Argives.

The messenger of Zeus stood beside Priam and addressed him,

speaking in a low voice; but even so trembling seized his limbs: [170]

'Do not despair in your heart, Priam of Dardanus' line, nor

be afraid;
it is not to foretell calamity that I come to this place, but
with
good intentions towards you. I am indeed the messenger of
Zeus, who though he is far off cares greatly and pities you.
The Olympian commands you to ransom glorious Hector,
[175]
taking with you gifts for Achilles such as will gladden his
heart;
but you must be alone, and no other Trojan must go with
you.
Let there be some older man, a herald, to follow you, to
guide
the mules and the well-wheeled wagon, and to bring back
to the city the dead man whom glorious Achilles has killed.
[180]
Do not have any concern or fear about death in your heart,
since a worthy guide will accompany you, the slayer of
Argus,
who will lead you on your way until you reach Achilles.
When Hermes has conducted you into his hut Achilles
will not kill you, and will keep all the others away from you;
[185]
he is neither witless nor heedless, nor is he wicked, but will
treat a man who is his suppliant with kindness, and spare
him.'

So swift-footed Iris spoke, and departed from him;
and Priam ordered his sons to make ready a well-wheeled
wagon, drawn by mules, and to fasten a wicker basket on
top. [190]
He himself went down into a sweet-smelling, high-roofed
chamber, built of cedarwood and containing many precious
things;
then he called to his wife Hecuba and addressed her:
'Dear wife, an Olympian messenger has come to me from

Zeus,
telling me to go to the Achaeans' ships and ransom my
dear son, [195]
and to take with me gifts for Achilles, such as may gladden
his heart.
Come, tell me, how does this seem to you in your heart?
As for me, the fervour in my heart urges me strongly to go
down there to their ships, into the wide camp of the
Achaeans.'

So he spoke, and his wife shrieked and answered him:
[200]

'You are mad! Where has that good sense gone that you
were
famous for among foreigners and among the people you
rule?

How can you want to go alone to the ships of the Achaeans,
into the sight of the man who has slaughtered so many of
your noble sons? Your heart must be made of iron. [205]

If he sets eyes on you and makes you his captive, that
treacherous eater of raw flesh will show you neither pity
nor the smallest respect. No, let us instead sit here in our
halls,

far from him, and lament; this was how his harsh destiny
once

spun the thread for Hector at his birth, at the time I bore
him, [210]

that he should glut swift-footed dogs far from his parents,
by a violent man's side; how I wish I could fasten my teeth
deep into his liver and devour it—and then there would be
vengeance done for my son! He was no coward when
Achilles

killed him, but was standing firm to defend the Trojan men
and [215]

their deep-bosomed women, thinking neither of flight nor
shelter.'

Then in his turn the old man, godlike Priam, addressed her:

'Do not try to hold me back; I am determined to go. And do not

be a bird of ill-omen in our halls, for you will not persuade me.

If it were someone else, a mortal, who was ordering me, [220]

one of our prophets or diviners from sacrifice or priests, we would say the message was false and would take no notice;

but as it is I have heard the goddess' voice myself and seen her

face to face, and I shall go, and her words will not be empty. If it

is my fate to die beside the ships of the bronze-shirted Achaeans, [225]

that is what I want. Let Achilles kill me quickly as I hold my son

in my arms, after I have put from myself the desire for weeping.'

So he spoke, and opened the handsome lids of the coffers,

and lifted out of them twelve robes of great beauty, and twelve simple cloaks and as many blankets, and as many [230]

white mantles, and as many tunics to go with them.

He weighed and brought out a total of ten talents of gold, and lifted out two gleaming tripods and four cauldrons, and lifted out a cup of great beauty which men of Thrace had

given him when he went on an embassy, a great treasure; but the [235]

old man did not spare even this in his halls, for he wished fervently

in his heart to ransom his dear son. Next he drove all the
Trojans
out of his portico, rebuking them with words of abuse:
'Get out, you worthless things, bringers of shame! Have
you no
lamentation at home, that you come here to cause me
misery? [240]
Do you think it nothing that Zeus, Cronus' son, has given
me the pain
of losing the best of my sons? You will learn soon enough
for
yourselves, when you prove to be easier for the Achaeans
to
slaughter now that Hector is dead. But as for me, may it
happen
that I go down to the house of Hades before I see my city
[245]
plundered and laid waste before my very eyes.'

So he spoke, and chased the men away with his staff,
and they
retreated before the old man's outburst. Then he shouted
to his
sons, rebuking them: to Helenus and Paris and glorious
Agathon,
to Pammon and Antiphonus and Polites, master of the war-
cry, [250]
to Deïphobus and Hippothous and to splendid Dius, nine
in all that the old man shouted his harsh orders to:
'Go quickly, you wretched children, bringers of disgrace,
who
should all have been killed by the swift ships instead of
Hector!
Oh what a miserable destiny is mine! I fathered the best
sons [255]
in broad Troy, but now I cannot say that any of them is left:

Mestor who was like a god, and Troilus the charioteer,
and Hector, who was a god among men, and seemed
to be the son not of a mortal man but of a god. But Ares
has
killed them, and all those who are left bring disgrace on me
— [260]

tellers of lies, dance-experts, masters of fancy footwork,
robbers in your own country of other people's lambs and
kids!

Go, make ready a wagon for me as quickly as you can, and
load all these things on to it, so that we can be on our way.'

So he spoke, and they were terrified at their father's
loud rebuke, [265]

and brought out a wagon with fine wheels, drawn by mules,
a splendid one, newly built, and they lashed a basket on
top of it;

from its peg they lifted down a mule-yoke made of
boxwood,

complete with its boss and well fitted with guide-rings, and
with it they brought out a yoke-strap nine cubits long. [270]

The yoke they fitted carefully on to the well-polished shaft
at its front end, and put the ring over its peg and wound
the strap three times over each side of the boss; then they
lashed this repeatedly round the shaft and tucked in its
end.

From the store-chamber they brought out the boundless
ransom [275]

for Hector's body and piled it on the well-polished wagon,
which

they then yoked to strong-hoofed mules that worked in
harness,

which the Mysians had once presented to Priam as a
splendid gift.

Then to Priam's chariot they yoked some horses which the
old man

kept for himself and reared at their well-polished manger.
[280]

So these two had their teams yoked in the lofty palace,
the herald and Priam, with many thoughts in their minds;
and Hecuba came and stood next to them, troubled at
heart,
holding in her right hand mind-cheering wine in a golden
cup, for them to make a drink-offering before they went.
[285]

Standing in front of the chariot she spoke to them in these
words:

‘Here, make a drink-offering to father Zeus, and pray that
you will
return home in safety from among your enemies; it is your
heart
that is driving you to approach their ships, and I do not wish
it.

So come, pray to Cronus’ son, the lord of the dark clouds,
[290]

he who has his seat on Ida and from there watches all Troy,
and ask for a bird-omen—the swift messenger, which of all
birds is the dearest to him and whose strength is the
greatest—

to appear on the right hand, so that you see it with your
own eyes

and trust in it as you go to the ships of the swift-horsed
Danaans. [295]

But if Zeus the wide-thunderer refuses to send you his
messenger

then I would certainly not urge you to go to the ships
of the Argives, however strongly you desire to do so.’

Then in answer godlike Priam addressed her:

‘Wife, I will certainly not disregard this advice of yours; it is
[300]

a good thing to raise hands to Zeus, to see if he will have pity.'

So the old man spoke, and ordered his housekeeper servant
to pour clean water over his hands, and she stood
beside him holding a jug and a basin in her hands.
When he had washed he took the cup that his wife offered
[305]

and stood in the middle of the courtyard and poured out
some wine, looking up to the high sky, and spoke these
words:

'Father Zeus, greatest and most glorious, ruling from Mount
Ida,*

grant that I may find friendship and pity in Achilles' hut.
Send me a bird-omen—your swift messenger, which of all.
[310]

birds is the dearest to you and whose strength is the
greatest—

to appear on the right hand, so that I see it with my own
eyes

and trust in it as I go to the ships of the swift-horsed
Danaans.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus the counsellor heard
him,

and at once sent an eagle, the most prophetic of winged
creatures, [315]

the dark hunter, the one that men call the dusky eagle.

As wide as is the door of a high-roofed chamber that has
been

built for a rich man, a door that fits tightly when it is shut,
so wide did its wings extend on both sides; and it appeared
to them

on the right hand, sweeping over the city. And they rejoiced
[320]

when they saw it, and the heart in all of them was gladdened.

Then the old man made haste and mounted his chariot and drove it through the outer gate, out of the echoing portico. In front of him the mules drew the four-wheeled wagon which keen-minded Idaeus was driving; behind came the [325]

horses that the old man was urging swiftly through the city* as he wielded his whip, and all his family kept up with him, full of lamentation, just as though he was going to his death.

When they had gone down through the city and reached the plain,

his sons and sons-in-law turned back towards Ilium; [330] but Priam and Idaeus did not escape the notice of Zeus as they emerged on to the plain, and when he saw the old man

he felt pity for him and quickly spoke to Hermes, his dear son:

‘Hermes, it is your special pleasure to be men’s companion, and you always listen to those to whom you are partial; [335]

go now and escort Priam to the hollow ships of the Achaeans

in such a way that no one of the Danaans sees or is aware of him until you have reached the hut of Peleus’ son.’

So he spoke, and the guide, the slayer of Argus, did not disobey him.

Immediately he bound under his feet his beautiful sandals, [340]

golden and deathless, that carried him over the watery sea and the boundless earth with the speed of the wind; then he picked up the wand with which he charms the eyes of those he chooses, and rouses others from their sleep.

Holding this in his hands the mighty slayer of Argus flew down [345]
and quickly arrived at Troy and the Hellespont, and set off on his way in the likeness of a young prince, one whose beard is beginning to show, which is the most charming time of youth.

Now when the two men had driven past the great burial-mound of Ilus they pulled up the mules and horses for them to drink [350]
in the river, since now darkness had come over the earth. Then, when Hermes was close at hand, the herald looked up and saw him, and spoke to Priam with these words: 'Priam of Dardanus' line, take care! There is something here that calls for care. I see a man, and I think we shall soon be cut to pieces; [355]
Quick, let us make our escape in the chariot—or let us catch him by the knees and beg for mercy; he may take pity on us.'

So he spoke, and the old man's mind was confused, and he was terribly afraid, and the hairs on his bent limbs stood up, and he stood there in bewilderment; but the swift runner came and stood by him, [360]
and taking the old man's hand questioned and addressed him: 'Father, where are you driving these horses and mules through the deathless night, while other mortals are asleep?
Are you not afraid of the Achaeans who breathe fury, your ruthless enemies, who are camped close by you?

[365]

If any of these were to see you bringing all these precious things

through the swift black night, what could you think of doing?

You are not a young man yourself, and this man attending you

is too old to defend you against any man who picks a fight.

But I shall do you no harm, and I will protect you from anyone [370]

who may attack you; you have the look of my own father.'

Then in answer the old man, godlike Priam, addressed him:

'Everything that you say, dear child, is close to the truth.

It seems that some god is still stretching his hand over me, in that he has sent such a traveller to fall in with me, a

bearer of [375]

good fortune; your stature and beauty are to be wondered at,

and you are shrewd in mind—your parents are indeed blessed.'

Then in turn the guide, the slayer of Argus, addressed him:

'Old man, all that you have said is according to due measure.

But come, tell me this, and give me an exact account: [380]

are you sending all these splendid treasures away somewhere,

to men in some foreign land, where they can wait for you

in safety, or are you all now abandoning sacred Ilium in

terror because a man is dead, the best among you, your

son, who was never found wanting in battle with the

Achaean?' [385]

Then in answer the old man, godlike Priam, addressed him:

‘Who are you, lord, and who are your parents, you who speak so unerringly about the fate of my unlucky son?’

Then in turn the guide, the slayer of Argus, addressed him:

‘You are testing me, old man, asking me about glorious Hector: [390]

many times I have seen him before my eyes in the battle where

men win glory, especially when he was killing the Argives he had

driven against their ships, butchering them with the sharp bronze.

We stood in amazement, not moving, because Achilles would not let us fight, being full of bitterness at Atreus’ son. [395]

I am his attendant, and one well-made ship brought us here.

I am one of the Myrmidons, and my father is Polyctor, who is a wealthy man, and an aged man like you; he has six other sons, and I am the seventh. I cast lots with the other sons, and it fell to me to accompany Achilles here. Now [400]

I am on my way from the ships to the plain, because at dawn

the darting-eyed Achaeans will set the battle going around the city;

sitting idle makes them chafe, and the kings of the Achaeans

cannot hold them back, impatient as they are for battle.’

Then in answer the old man, godlike Priam, addressed him: [405]

‘If you really are an attendant of Peleus’ son Achilles, then come, tell me the whole truth—is my son still lying beside the ships, or has Achilles by now chopped him up and thrown him limb by limb to his dogs?’

Then in turn the guide, the slayer of Argus, addressed him: [410]

‘Aged man, the dogs and vultures have not devoured him and he is still there, lying in Achilles’ hut beside his ship, just as he was; and this is the twelfth day that he has been lying there, and his flesh has not decayed, and he has not been eaten by the worms that feed on men killed in war.

[415]

To be sure, whenever the bright dawn appears Achilles drags him

ruthlessly round the burial-mound of his dear companion, but he causes him no shameful injury; if you went up to him you would be amazed how he lies as fresh as dew, and the blood is

washed away, and there is no defilement. The wounds where he was [420]

stabbed are all closed up, even though many men drove the bronze

into him. It seems that the blessed gods care for your son, even in death, since he was dear to their hearts.’

So he spoke, and the old man was gladdened and answered:

‘My child, it is indeed a good thing to give the immortals [425]

their proper offerings. Never did my son—if ever I had one —

forget in his halls the gods who dwell on Olympus. And so they have repaid the favour, if only after his destined death.

But come, accept this handsome cup from me and protect me and

be my escort—together with the gods— [430]

and help me to come to the hut of the son of Peleus.’

Then in turn the guide, the slayer of Argus, addressed him:

‘You are testing me, aged man, a younger man than you,
telling
me to accept your gift without Achilles’ knowledge. You will
not
persuade me; I am afraid of him, and would feel shame in
my heart [435]
at robbing him, in case something bad comes my way in
future.
Still, I am ready to be your escort, even as far as famous
Argos,
accompanying you in a swift ship or on foot, as is right;
no one will attack you out of contempt for your guide.’

So the swift runner spoke, and leapt into the chariot
behind the [440]
horses and quickly took the whip and reins into his hands,
and breathed great fury into the horses and the mules.
When they reached the ditch and the wall protecting the
ships,
the sentries had just begun to busy themselves with their
meal;
and the guide, the slayer of Argus, poured sleep over them
all [445]
and at once thrust back the bars and opened the gates,
and
conducted Priam inside with the wagonload of splendid
gifts.
When they arrived at the hut of the son of Peleus,
the tall hut that the Myrmidons had built for their king—
they had felled pine trunks and then covered it with a roof
[450]
of rough thatch that they had gathered in the meadows,
and
after that had built for their king a large courtyard,
surrounded
with close-set stakes, and it had a door with one bar

made of pine; it took three of the other Achaeans to ram the great locking-bar shut and three to pull it back to open it, [455]

but Achilles could ram it shut, even on his own—there Hermes the swift runner opened the gate for the old man and brought in the splendid gifts for Priam's swift-footed son,

and then got down to the ground from the chariot and spoke:

'Aged man, it is indeed an immortal god who has come to you; [460]

I am Hermes, and my father sent me to be your escort. But now I must go back again, and will not appear before the eyes of Achilles; it would attract blame if an immortal god was entertained face to face by mortals in this way. But as for you, you must go in and grasp the knees of Peleus' son [465]

and entreat him in the name of his father and his lovely-haired

mother and his child, in the hope that you will move his heart.'

So Hermes spoke, and went back to high Olympus, and Priam leapt to the ground from the chariot and left Idaeus where he was, to wait and look after the [470] horses and the mules. The old man went straight into the dwelling where Achilles, dear to Zeus, usually sat, and he

found him; his companions were sitting some way apart, and

only two, the hero Automedon and Alcimus, a shoot of Ares, were busy attending him. He had just finished eating and [475]

drinking at his meal, and the table still stood beside him. Great Priam entered, undetected by the two men, and

stood
close to Achilles and took his knees in his arms and kissed
the
terrible man-slaughtering hands that had killed so many of
his sons.

As when delusion* takes tight hold of someone who has
killed a [480]

man in his own country, and he comes to another people,
to the

house of a rich man, and amazement seizes the onlookers,
so Achilles was amazed when he saw godlike Priam; and
the others too were amazed, and looked at one another.

Priam spoke to Achilles, entreating him with these words:
[485]

‘Achilles, man like the gods, think now of your own father,
a man of my years, on the grim threshold of old age;
it may be that his neighbours round about are vexing him,
and there is no one to protect him from damage and
destruction, but when he hears that you are still living he
[490]

rejoices in his heart, and day after day he hopes to
see his dear son returning home from Troy. As for me,
I am most ill-fated of all men, for I fathered the finest sons
in broad Troy, and yet cannot say that any one of them is
left.

Fifty I had when the sons of the Achaeans came; [495]

nineteen of them were born to me from one womb,
and other women bore the rest to me in my halls.

Impetuous Ares loosed the knees of most of them; but
the one left to me, who protected the city and its citizens—
you killed him not long ago as he was defending his
country. [500]

He was Hector; and for his sake I now come to the ships of
the

Achaeans, to redeem him from you, bringing a boundless
ransom.

Come, Achilles, respect the gods, and have pity on me,
remembering your own father; yet I am more worthy of
your pity,
for I have endured to do what no other mortal on earth has
done: [505]
to raise to my mouth the hand of the man who killed my
son.'

So he spoke, and aroused in Achilles a desire to weep
for his father.

Taking hold of the old man's hand he gently pushed him
away;*

they both remembered their own, Priam crouched at
Achilles'

feet and weeping without ceasing for man-slaying Hector,
[510]

while Achilles wept for his own father, and then again for
Patroclus; and their groaning went up, spreading through
the hut.

Now when glorious Achilles had had his fill of lamentation
and the desire for it had gone from his mind and his limbs,
he rose at once from his seat and with his hand raised the
old man, [515]

because he felt pity for his grey head and his grey beard,
and addressed him, speaking with winged words:

'Ah, poor man, you have endured much misery in your
heart!

How could you bring yourself to come alone to the
Achaeans'

ships, into the sight of a man who has killed so many fine
sons [520]

of yours? Surely your heart must be made of iron.

But come, sit here on this chair, and let us leave our pain
to lie at rest in our hearts, grieved though we are.

There is nothing to be gained from chill lamentation; that is
how the gods have woven the threads for wretched

mortals, [525]

to live with grief, while they themselves are without sorrow.
There are two jars standing on Zeus' threshold, full of the
gifts that he dispenses, one of bad things and the other of
good.

When Zeus who delights in the thunder gives a man a
mixture,

he meets at one time with ill fortune and at another with
good, but [530]

when he gives only from the store of bad things he makes a
man

despised; cruel hunger drives him over the bright earth,
and

he wanders up and down honoured by neither gods nor
mortals.*
_

So it was that the gods also gave Peleus splendid gifts
from the time of his birth: he stood out above all men in
[535]

prosperity and in wealth, and ruled over the Myrmidons,
and

though he was a mortal the gods gave him a goddess for
wife.

But even to him the gods brought misery, in that he had
no offspring of princely sons born to him in his halls, but
fathered only one, and him doomed to an early death; I
cannot [540]

care for him as he grows old because I sit here idly in Troy,
far from my native land, bringing sorrow to you and your
children.

And we hear tell that you too, aged man, were once
prosperous:

all that is bounded out to sea by Lesbos, seat of Macar, and
up-country by Phrygia, and by the vast Hellespont—in all
[545]

these lands, they say, you were supreme in wealth and in
sons.*
_

And yet the dwellers in the high sky have now brought this affliction
on you—constant battles and killings of men round about your city.
You must endure, and not mourn unceasingly in your heart; there is nothing to be gained by grieving for your son, since you will [550]
not bring him back to life; you will sooner suffer another sorrow.'

Then the old man, godlike Priam, answered him:
'Zeus-nurtured man, do not make me sit down as long as Hector is lying uncared-for in your huts, but release him to me
at once, so that I can see him with my eyes; then you may accept [555]
the huge ransom that we bring you. May you have pleasure in it
and so return to your native land, because you have allowed me to live and to gaze on the light of the sun.'

Then swift-footed Achilles looked at him darkly and said:
'Do not provoke me too far, aged man. I myself am minded to [560]
release Hector to you, for a messenger came to me from Zeus—
my mother who bore me, daughter of the ancient of the sea.
Furthermore, Priam, you do not deceive me: I know that one of
the gods has conducted you to the swift ships of the Achaeans.
No mortal would dare to come here into the camp, not even one [565]
in the prime of youth; he would not be able to pass the sentries

unnoticed, nor could he easily push back the bars of our gates.

So do not rouse the pain in my heart any further, aged man,
in case I break the ordinances of Zeus and forget to spare you,
even you, while you are a suppliant here in my hut.' [570]

So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and did as he said.

Then the son of Peleus leapt out through the door like a lion,
not alone, but there were his two attendants with him,
the hero Automedon and Alcimus, the two whom Achilles
valued most of all his companions after the dead Patroclus.
[575]

These now freed the horses and mules from under their yokes
and led in the herald, the old man's summoner, and
sat him down on a chair; and from the well-polished wagon
they took the boundless ransom for the body of Hector.
They laid apart two cloaks and a skilfully woven tunic for
[580]

Achilles to wrap him in when he gave him to be carried home.

Then Achilles called his maidservants and told them to take Hector

aside so that Priam should not see his son, and to wash and anoint him,

for he was afraid that in the grief of his heart Priam would not restrain

his anger when he saw his son, and that his own heart would be [585]

disturbed so that he killed Priam, and broke the ordinances of Zeus.

When the maidservants had washed and anointed Hector

with

olive oil they wrapped him in the fine cloak and the tunic,
and

Achilles himself lifted him up and laid him on a bier, and his
companions hoisted him on to the well-polished wagon.

[590]

Then Achilles cried out and called on his dear companion by
name:

‘Do not bear me rancour, Patroclus, if you come to hear,
even in

the house of Hades, that I have released glorious Hector to
his

dear father because he has brought me a not-unfitting
ransom.

I shall in time hand over to you the share in this that is your
due.’ [595]

So glorious Achilles spoke, and went back into his hut,
and sat

again on the intricately worked chair from which he had
risen,

which was set against the opposite wall. Then he spoke to
Priam:

‘There, aged man, your son is released to you, as you
asked,

and is lying on a bier. As soon as dawn appears you will see
him, [600]

and may take him away; but now let us turn our thoughts
to eating.

You must know that even lovely-haired Niobe thought of
food*

after her twelve children had been killed in her halls—

six daughters she had, and six sons in the prime of youth.

Apollo killed the sons with arrows from his silver bow, being
[605]

angry with Niobe, and Artemis the shooter of arrows slew

the girls,
because Niobe had compared herself with Leto of the lovely
cheeks,
saying that Leto had borne only two while she had borne
many;
and so the gods, though they were only two, killed all
Niobe's children.
For nine days they lay in their gore, and there was no one
to [610]
bury them, for the son of Cronus had turned the people to
stone;
but on the tenth day the gods who dwell in the high sky
buried them.
Then it was that Niobe, worn out with weeping,
remembered food;
and now today, somewhere among the rocks on some
lonely mountain,
on Sipylus, where men say that the goddess nymphs who
leap [615]
in the dance about Achelous* have their resting-places,
there,
though now a stone, she broods on the sorrows sent her by
the gods.
Come then, aged and glorious man, let us two turn our
minds to
food, and afterwards you may mourn your dear son, when
you have
taken him back to Ilium; and he will surely bring forth many
tears.' [620]

So swift-footed Achilles spoke, then leapt up and
slaughtered a
white sheep, and his companions flayed and prepared it
expertly,
and chopped the meat skilfully and threaded it on to
skewers,

and cooked it with great care and then drew it off.
Automedon fetched bread and set it out on the table [625]
in fine baskets; but Achilles apportioned the meat.
They reached out for the good things lying ready before
them, and
when they had put from themselves the desire for food and
drink
then Priam of Dardanus' line looked in amazement at
Achilles,
seeing how huge and handsome he was, for he seemed like
the gods; [630]
and Achilles too was amazed at Priam of the line of
Dardanus,
seeing his noble appearance and hearing him speak.
When they had taken their pleasure from looking at each
other
the first to speak was godlike Priam, who said:
'Quick now, Zeus-nurtured man, give me a place to lie, so
that [635]
we may take the pleasure of being lulled by sweet sleep;
my eyes beneath my eyebrows have not closed
since the time my son lost his life at your hands, and
all this time I have groaned and brooded on my thousands
of
sorrows, rolling in the dung in the stalls of my courtyard.*
[640]
Now at last I have tasted bread and poured gleaming wine
down my throat; but before this time I could eat nothing.'
So he spoke, and Achilles told his companions and
maidservants
to lay out a bed underneath the colonnade and to throw
fine red rugs on top of it and to spread coverlets over them,
[645]
and to set out fleecy woollen cloaks to be a covering over
all.

The maids went out of the hall with torches in their hands and quickly set about laying beds for the two of them. Then in a bantering tone* swift-footed Achilles addressed Priam:

‘Lie outside there, aged man, in case any of the Achaean
[650]

counsellors comes this way, one of those who from time to time

sit here and make plans with me, as is the proper custom. If one of these were to see you through the swift black night

he would at once report it to Agamemnon, shepherd of the people,

and then there would be a delay in releasing the body.

So come, tell me and give me an exact account of how many

days you are minded to conduct glorious Hector’s funeral rites,

so that I myself can cease for that time and also restrain the people.’

Then the old man, godlike Priam, answered him:

‘If you really wish me to give glorious Hector a proper burial, [660]

then it would be a kindness to me if you do what I shall ask.

You know how we are penned close in the city, and it is a long way

to fetch wood from the mountain, and the Trojans are terrified;

give us leave to lament over Hector in our halls for nine days,

and on the tenth we will bury him and the people will feast,
[665]

and on the eleventh day we will build a burial-mound over him

and on the twelfth we will fight again, if fight we must.’

Then in answer swift-footed glorious Achilles addressed him:

‘Very well, aged Priam; it will all be as you ask it:
I shall hold back the fighting for the time that you tell me.’
[670]

So he spoke, and took the old man by the wrist of his right hand so that he should have no fear in his heart. And so those two, the herald and Priam, lay down to rest there in the forecourt of the building, with many thoughts in their minds;

but Achilles slept in the inmost part of his well-built hut,
[675]

and beside him lay Briseus’ daughter of the lovely cheeks.

Now all other beings, gods and horse-marshalling men, slept the whole night long, overcome by soft sleep, but sleep did not take hold of Hermes the swift runner as he pondered in his heart how he should escort Priam the king
[680]

away from the ships unnoticed by the devoted gate-guards; he stood over Priam’s head* and spoke to him in these words:

‘Aged man, you have no thought of danger, sleeping soundly like this

among men who are your enemies, since Achilles has spared you.

Now you have paid a great price to redeem your dear son,
[685]

but in return for your life your sons who are left at home would

give a ransom of three or four times as much, if

Agamemnon,

son of Atreus, and all the Achaeans found out you were here.’

So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and roused

the herald.

Hermes yoked the horses and mules for them, and himself
[690]

drove them swiftly through the camp, and no one saw
them.

But when they came to the crossing of the clear-flowing
river,

swirling Xanthus, who was fathered by immortal Zeus,
Hermes immediately went away to high Olympus, and
Dawn

in her saffron robes was spread over the whole earth; and
[695]

Priam and the herald drove the horses with groans and
lamentation

towards the city, while the mules brought the dead man. No
one

from among men or women with their lovely girdles saw
them

except Cassandra, she who resembled golden Aphrodite;
she had gone up on to Pergamus and recognized her dear
father [700]

as he stood in the chariot, and the herald, the town-crier,
with him.

And she saw him too, Hector, lying on a bier in the mule-
wagon,

and shrieked aloud and her shout went through all the city:

‘Men and women of Troy, if ever you were glad to see
Hector

returning from the battle when he was alive—for he was a
great joy [705]

to the city and all its people—come and gaze on him now.’

So she spoke, and soon there was no man or woman
left in

the city, for unendurable sorrow had come upon them all.

They met Priam near the gate as he brought back the body,

and
first to them were Hector's wife and his revered mother,
tearing their [710]
hair for him and throwing themselves at the well-wheeled
wagon and
touching his head; and the mass of people stood weeping
round them.
And indeed, as they shed their tears before the gates, they
would have
mourned Hector the whole day long until the setting of the
sun,
had not the old man spoken to the people from his chariot:
[715]
'Give way there, let the mules pass through! After that you
may
have your fill of weeping, when I have taken him to his
home.'

So he spoke, and they stood aside and let the wagon
pass.
When they had brought Hector into his famous house they
laid him on a fretted bed and caused bards to sit beside
him [720]
to begin the lament; and these sang a song of mourning
while the women moaned in answer to their lamentation.
Among the women white-armed Andromache began her
dirge,
holding the head of man-slaying Hector in her hands:
'Husband, you are dead, gone from life too young, leaving
me a [725]
widow in our halls! Our son, whom you and I, ill-fated
parents,
gave life to, is still but an infant, and I do not think he will
reach manhood. Before that happens this city will be
sacked
from top to bottom, because you, its guardian, are dead,

you who

always protected it and kept its devoted wives and little children [730]

safe; but they will very soon be carried off in hollow ships, and

I among them, and you, my child, will either accompany me to a place where you will work at tasks that bring shame on you, labouring for a pitiless master, or else some Achaean will seize and hurl you from the walls* to a cruel death, [735]

angry because Hector may have killed his brother or his father or even his son, for great numbers of Achaeans have fastened their teeth on the vast earth at Hector's hands;

your father was never gentle in the savage warfare, and that is why the people lament him throughout the city. [740]

Hector, you have brought cursed wailing and grief to your parents, but for me especially there will be left cruel anguish;

you did not hold out your arms to me from our bed as you died,

or speak a memorable word to me, something that I could remember through the nights and days as I weep tears for you.' [745]

So she spoke, weeping, and the women answered her with their moans.

Then in turn Hecuba began her unbroken lament among them:

'Hector, by far the dearest to my heart of all my sons!

I know for certain that you were dear to the gods in life, and now

it is clear that they care for you even in your fated death.

[750]

All the other sons of mine whom swift-footed Achilles

captured

he would sell for ransom over the resounding sea, to Samos
or to Imbros or to Lemnos that is surrounded in mist; but
when he had taken away your life with the sharp-bladed
bronze

he dragged you many times round the tomb of his
companion [755]

Patroclus, whom you killed—yet he did not bring him back
to life.

But now I see you lying dewy-fresh and unsullied in your
halls, like someone whom Apollo, lord of the silver bow,
has gone after and put to death with his kindly shafts.'

So she spoke, weeping, and aroused ceaseless
lamentation. [760]

Then after her Helen was the third to begin her lament:

'Hector, by far the dearest to me of my husband's brothers!
My husband is indeed Alexander who looks like the gods,
who brought me to Troy—and I wish I had died before
that happened! But this is now the twentieth year* since
[765]

I came from Sparta and deserted my father's country,
and I have never yet heard an unkind or reproachful word
from you. If someone else spoke harshly to me in the halls,
one of your brothers or sisters or a brother's fine-robed
wife, or

your mother—your father is always as gentle as if he was
my own—[770]

you would always calm and restrain them with your words,
by your tenderness of spirit and your gentle speech.

And so, grieved at heart, I weep for you and for myself,
luckless

as I am; there is no one left in broad Troy who could show
me such kindness or friendship, but everyone shudders at
me.' [775]

So she spoke, weeping, and the vast crowd echoed her

groans.

Then the old man Priam spoke out among the people,
saying:

‘Bring wood into the city, men of Troy, and do not be afraid
in your hearts of any crafty ambush laid by the Argives;
Achilles promised when he sent me from the black ships
[780]

that he would do us no injury until the twelfth dawn comes.’

So he spoke, and they harnessed oxen and mules to the
yokes

of carts and straightaway gathered in front of the city.
For nine days they kept bringing in wood in vast quantities,
and when the tenth dawn that brings light to mortals
appeared [785]

then at last, pouring forth tears, they carried out daring
Hector

and laid the dead man on a lofty pyre and set fire to it.

Then, when early-born Dawn with her rosy fingers
appeared

the people all collected around the pyre of famous Hector,
and when they had assembled and were gathered together
[790]

first they quenched the burning pyre with gleaming wine,
all of it as far as the fire’s fury still had hold, and then
his brothers and companions collected his white bones,
lamenting, and huge tears kept flowing down their cheeks.
When they had assembled the bones they placed them in a
[795]

golden coffin, covering them with soft red robes; this they
quickly laid in a hollow grave, and over it they spread a
layer of great stones, closely set together. Then they swiftly
heaped up an earthen burial-mound, and set lookouts all
around it,

in case the well-greaved Achaeans should attack before the
due time. [800]

When they had heaped up the mound they went back to the city
and duly assembled and took part in a magnificent feast
in the house of Priam, the king nurtured by Zeus.

So they conducted the funeral rites for Hector, breaker
of horses.

THE ILIAD

without line numbers

BOOK ONE

SING, goddess, the anger* of Achilles, Peleus' son,
the accursed anger which brought the Achaeans countless
agonies and hurled many mighty shades of heroes into
Hades,*
causing them to become the prey of dogs and
all kinds of birds; and the plan of Zeus was fulfilled.
Sing from the time the two men were first divided in strife—
Atreus' son,* lord of men, and glorious Achilles.
Which of the gods was it who set them to quarrel and fight?
The son of Zeus and Leto,* for he was bitter against the
king, and
roused an evil plague through the camp, and the people
went on
dying,
because the son of Atreus had dishonoured his priest
Chryses.
This man had come to the swift ships of the Achaeans to
redeem his daughter, bringing a boundless ransom and
holding
in his hands the woollen bands of Apollo who shoots from
afar,*
fixed to a golden staff. He entreated all the Achaeans, but
especially the two sons of Atreus, marshals of the people:
'You sons of Atreus, and you other well-greaved Achaeans,
may the gods who have their homes on Olympus grant
that you sack the city of Priam and return safely home.
Only release my dear child, and accept this ransom, and
show reverence to Zeus' son Apollo who shoots from afar.'
Then all the rest of the Achaeans shouted their
approval, that

they should be in awe of the priest and accept the splendid ransom,
but this found no favour in the heart of Atreus' son Agamemnon;
he sent Chryses roughly away, and added a harsh command:

‘Let me not discover you, old man, beside our hollow ships,
either dawdling here now or returning again later,
in case your staff and the god's bands prove no help to you.
I will not let the girl go; before I do, old age will find her
in my house in Argos, far from her fatherland, going
back and forth at the loom and serving me in my bed.
Go, do not provoke me; this way you will return unharmed.’

So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and did as he said,
and silently made his way along the shore of the loud-roaring sea.

Then, going some way apart, the old man prayed at length to lord Apollo, whom Leto of the beautiful hair bore:

‘Hear me, lord of the silver bow, you who stand guard over Chryse and sacred Cilla, and govern Tenedos* with your power,

Smintheus;* if ever I built a temple that pleased you
or if I ever burnt for you the fat-wrapped thigh-bones *
of bulls or goats, I beg you to fulfil this plea for me:
may the Danaans pay for my tears with your arrows.’

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him,
and came down from Olympus' heights furious in his heart,
his bow and lidded quiver hanging from his shoulders.
The arrows clattered against the angry god's shoulder
as he moved; and he came on like nightfall.

Then, sitting apart from the ships, he let fly an arrow,
and his silver bow sang out with a terrible noise.

First he went after the mules and the swift dogs, and then

loosed
piercing arrows at the men themselves, shooting without
cease;
and all the time the corpse-pyres burnt, crowded together.

For nine days the god's shafts ranged throughout the
camp,
and on the tenth Achilles summoned the people to an
assembly;
the goddess Hera of the white arms had put this into his
mind,
since she cared for the Danaans, because she saw them
dying.
So when they had assembled and were gathered together,
swift-footed Achilles rose and spoke among them:
'Son of Atreus, I think we shall now be turned back from
here
to wander home again—if, that is, we can avoid death—
if the Achaeans are to be beaten down by plague as well as
war.

Come, let us interrogate some prophet or priest
or interpreter of dreams, for dreams too come from Zeus,
who may tell us why Phoebus Apollo is so bitter against us,
whether he finds fault with us over some vow or
hecatomb,*
to see if he will accept the savour of lambs and
unblemished
goats, and so be willing to turn the plague away from us.'

So he spoke and took his seat again, and among them
rose
Calchas, the son of Thestor, by far the best of bird-
interpreters,
who understood the present, the future, and the past,
and had guided the ships of the Achaeans to Ilium
by the prophetic skill which Phoebus Apollo had given him.
With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them:

‘Achilles, dear to Zeus, you command me to explain the anger of Apollo, the lord who shoots from afar. Well, I shall speak, but you must mark my words and swear to come to my help willingly in both word and deed, because I think I shall infuriate a man who has supreme authority over the Argives, and whom the Achaeans obey. A king is the more powerful when he is angry with a lesser man, because even if he stifles his anger there and then he feeds the resentment afterwards in his breast until he brings it to fulfilment. Now tell me if you will protect me.’

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him: ‘Take courage, and speak out whatever divine truth you know.

I swear by Apollo, dear to Zeus, to whom you, Calchas, pray when you expound divine revelations to the Danaans, that while I live on earth and have the power of sight no one will lay heavy hands on you by the hollow ships, no man of all the Danaans, not even if you mean Agamemnon, who now boasts that he is by far the best of all the Achaeans.’

Then the blameless prophet took courage and spoke: ‘It is not over a vow or hecatomb that he finds us at fault, but because of his priest, whom Agamemnon dishonoured and did not accept the ransom and release his daughter; that is why the shooter from afar* torments us, and will do so again.

Nor will he drive the ugly, shameful plague from the Danaans until the girl with darting eyes is returned to her father, without ransom and without payment, and a holy hecatomb is taken to Chryse; only then might we appease and persuade him.’

So he spoke and took his seat again, and among them
rose
the hero son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon,
full of distress; his dark heart was filled to the brim
with fury, and his two eyes were like flashing fire.
First of all he addressed Calchas, with a look of hate:
'Prophet of evil, never yet have you told me anything good;
it is always dear to your heart to prophesy calamities,
and you have never given us good news or brought it to
fulfilment.
And so now you prophesy and speak publicly to the
Danaans,
claiming that the one who shoots from afar is tormenting us
because I was not willing to accept the splendid ransom
for the girl, Chryses' daughter, even though it is my desire
to keep her in my house; and indeed I prefer her to
Clytemnestra
my wedded wife, since she is in no way inferior to her in
stature or in beauty, nor in understanding or
accomplishments.
Even so, I am prepared to give her back, if that is the better
course;
I would wish the people to survive rather than to perish.
But you must at once get ready another prize for me, so
that I
alone of the Argives am not without one, since that cannot
be right;
you can all see that my prize is going elsewhere.'

Then in answer glorious swift-footed Achilles addressed
him:
'Most illustrious son of Atreus, rapacious beyond all other
men,
how can the great-spirited Achaeans give you a prize?
We know of no great common store of possessions
anywhere;

everything that we sacked from cities has been distributed, and it is not fitting that the people should collect it together again.

No; you must now give the girl up to the god, and the Achaeans

will compensate you three- and fourfold, if ever Zeus grants that we tear apart the strongly walled city of Troy.'

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him:

'Godlike Achilles, great man though you may be, do not try to

deceive me in this, since you will not outwit nor get the better of me.

Are you telling me to give the girl back and to sit here meekly

with no reward, simply so that you may keep your prize?

Well, if the great-spirited Achaeans award me a prize, suiting it to my desire, equal in status to the other, I will accept it;

but if they will not, then I shall myself come and take one, either yours, or the prize belonging to Ajax or Odysseus, and carry it away; and the man to whom I come will be angry.

However, we shall give thought to this at a later time; as for now, come, let us drag a black ship down to the bright sea,

and gather some oarsmen for the purpose, and put on board

a hecatomb, and embark Chryses' fair-cheeked daughter herself. And let there be one man, a counsellor, as captain, either Ajax or Idomeneus or glorious Odysseus, or you, son of Peleus, most outrageous of men, so that you may make offerings and appease the far-worker* for us.'

Looking at him darkly swift-footed Achilles addressed him:

‘You wear shamelessness like a garment, and your mind is full of greed!

How can any of the Achaeans readily obey your orders, to join an expedition or to try their strength with men in battle?

For my part, I did not come here to fight because of the Trojan

spearman, since they have done me no wrong at all: they have never driven off my cattle or my horses, nor have they ever destroyed my crops in rich-soiled Phthia,*

nurturer of men, since between us lies a very great distance, of shadowy mountains and the roaring sea.

It was you we followed, shameless brute, to please you, to win

honour for Menelaus and for you, you dog, from the Trojans. But you care nothing for this, and pay it no heed.

And now you threaten to take my prize from me in person, for

which I laboured hard, and the sons of the Achaeans gave it to me.

I never receive a prize equal to yours whenever the Achaeans

sack some well-populated citadel of the Trojans;

it is always my hands that sustain the greater part of the violent conflict, but when there is a sharing-out of booty your prize is by far the greater, and I go back to my ships with

some small thing, yet dear to me, exhausted by the fighting.

So now I shall return to Phthia, since it is far and away better

to go home on my curved ships; I am not minded to stay here,

without honour, heaping up riches and wealth for you.’

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed him:

'Run away, then, if your heart so urges you. I shall not beg you

to stay on my account, since there are many others near me

to give me honour, and especially Zeus the counsellor.

Of all the Zeus-nurtured kings you are the most hateful to me,

for strife and war and battles are always dear to your heart; and even if you are very strong, that must be a gift from some god.

Go home with your ships and your companions and lord it over the Myrmidons; I care nothing about you, and your anger does not trouble me. But this is my threat to you:

Phoebus Apollo is taking Chryses' daughter from me, and I shall send her back on my ship with my companions; but I shall come myself to your hut and take away Briseus' lovely-cheeked daughter, your prize, so that you may know well

how much more powerful I am than you, and so that others too

may fear to speak to me as an equal and match me face to face.'

So he spoke, and grief rose up in the son of Peleus, and the heart

in his hairy chest was divided in two as he deliberated whether to draw his sharp sword from beside his thigh and drive the others away, and kill the son of Atreus, or to suppress his bitter anger and subdue his heart.

He was pondering this in his heart and in his mind, and was drawing his great sword from its scabbard, when Athena came

from the high sky; the goddess white-armed Hera had sent

her,
since she loved and cared equally for both men in her heart.
She stood behind Peleus' son and grasped him by his fair hair,
appearing to him alone, and none of the others saw her.
Achilles was amazed, and turned round, and at once recognized
Pallas Athena, for her eyes shone with a terrible light;
and he addressed her, speaking with winged words: *
'What are you doing here, daughter of aegis-wearing Zeus?

*
Is it to mark these arrogant insults from Atreus' son Agamemnon?
I tell you this plainly, and I believe it will be fulfilled:
one day soon his high-handedness will cause him to lose his life.'

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena addressed him:
'I have come from the high sky to stop your fury, hoping that
you will obey me. The goddess Hera of the white arms sent me,
for she loves and cares equally for both of you in her heart.
Come, leave off your strife and take your hand from your sword,
though you may abuse him in words, and tell him how things will be.
For I tell you this plainly, and indeed it will be fulfilled:
one day you will have three times as many splendid gifts to pay for these insults. Restrain yourself now, and do as we say.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed her:
'Goddess, a man must respect the words of you both, however great the anger in his heart; for it is better this

way.

If a man obeys the gods, they are more ready to listen to him.'

So he spoke, and set his heavy hand on the silver hilt, and

thrust the great sword back into its scabbard, and did not disobey

the word of Athena; and she went away towards Olympus, to the house of Zeus, wearer of the aegis, to join the rest of the gods.

Then the son of Peleus once again addressed the son of Atreus

with wounding words, and was not yet ready to give up his anger:

'Wine-sodden man, with the eyes of a dog and the heart of a deer!

Never yet have you been brave enough to arm with the people for war,

or to set out for an ambush with the best of the Achaeans, for that course seems to you to be as dangerous as death.

No, it is much better to skulk in the broad camp of the Achaeans

and to take away the gifts of any man who speaks out against you.

You are a people-devouring king, for you rule over nonentities;

otherwise, son of Atreus, this would be the last outrage you caused.

But I tell you this plainly, and I swear a great oath with it: by this staff, which will never again grow leaves and shoots since it first left the trunk where it was cut in the mountains,

nor will it sprout again, for the bronze axe has stripped away

the leaves and bark all around it, and now in turn the

judgment-
giving sons of the Achaeans hold it in their hands,
upholding
the ordinances of Zeus; and this will be a mighty oath to
you:
one day longing for Achilles will come upon the sons of the
Achaeans,
every one of them; and then, for all your grief, you will
have no power
to help them, when many fall and die at the hands of man-
slaying
Hector; and you will tear apart the heart within you in
anger,
because you denied all honour to the best of the
Achaeans.'

So the son of Peleus spoke and flung the staff, studded
with golden nails, to the ground, and sat down himself.
On the other side Atreus' son still raged; but among them
Nestor
of the sweet words leapt up, the clear-voiced orator of the
Pylians,*
from whose tongue flowed a voice sweeter than honey.
In his lifetime two generations of mortal men had already
died, those who had been raised with him and those born
afterwards in holy Pylos, and he was now ruling over the
third.
With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them:
'Surely great distress is coming to the land of Achaea!
How Priam and the sons of Priam would be overjoyed,
and all the rest of the Trojans would be glad in their hearts,
if they were to hear of all this fighting between the pair of
you,
you who excel among the Danaans in both counsel and
battle.
Come, listen to me. You are both younger than me,

and I have in times past kept company with better men than you, and never did they treat me with disdain.

I have never seen, nor shall I ever see, such men as Peirithous and Dryas, shepherd of his people, and Caeneus and Exadius and godlike Polyphemus,*
[and Theseus, son of Aegeus, who resembled the immortals.]*

They were the mightiest of all men on earth in their rearing; they were the mightiest, and they fought with the mightiest,

with mountain-dwelling beasts, and they dealt them an appalling death.

These were my companions when I came from Pylos, from a far distant land, because they had summoned me. I gave a good account of myself in the fighting; and against them

no one of mortals who now live upon the earth could fight. Moreover, they listened to my advice and obeyed my words.

So you too both should listen to me, since it is better to listen.

You, great man though you are, must not take the girl from this man, but let her be, since the Achaeans' sons first gave him her as a prize.

As for you, son of Peleus, do not seek to rival a king by force,

since a staff-holding king to whom Zeus grants glory enjoys a greater portion of honour than other men do.

Even if you are stronger, it is because your mother is a goddess;

but he is the greater, because he rules over more people.

Son of Atreus, give up your anger; it is I who entreat you to renounce your bitterness against Achilles, who is a mighty bulwark for all the Achaeans in ruinous war.'

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him:
'Very well, old man; all that you say is according to due measure.

But this man desires to be above all other men,
desires to rule over all men, to lord it over everyone,
to give orders to all, though I think some will not obey him.
Even if the gods who live for ever have made him a
spearman,
is this a reason for insulting words to burst from his
mouth?'

Breaking in on him, glorious Achilles answered:
'I should certainly be called a coward and a man of no
account
if I were to give way to you in everything you say.
Go and give these orders to others, but do not instruct me,
because I have no mind to listen to you any further.
But I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your
mind:
I shall not fight you with my bare hands for the girl's sake,
not you
or anyone else; you all gave her to me, and then you took
her away.
But as for the rest of the possessions that I keep in my
black ship,
you will not take any of them and carry them off against my
will.
Come on now, put me to the test, so that these here also
may see,
and quickly your black blood will gush out over my spear.'

So these two fought with violent words, one against the
other,
and stood up, and broke up the assembly beside the
Achaeans' ships.
Peleus' son went away to his huts and well-balanced ships
with the son of Menoetius* and his own companions,

and Atreus' son dragged a swift ship down to the sea, and
picked out twenty rowers to go in it, and loaded on to it a
hecatomb
for the god, and brought Chryses' lovely-cheeked daughter
and
set her on it; and much-scheming Odysseus went aboard as
captain.

So they embarked and sailed along the watery
pathways, and
the son of Atreus commanded the people to purify
themselves.
When they had purified themselves and thrown the
defilement
into the sea,* they sacrificed to Apollo unblemished
hecatombs
of bulls and goats, beside the shore of the unresting sea,
and
the savour reached the high sky, caught up in the whirling
smoke.

So they busied themselves throughout the camp; but
Agamemnon
did not give up the quarrel and the threat he had made to
Achilles
before this, but spoke to Talthybius and Eurybates,
the two who were his heralds and diligent attendants:
'Go to the hut of Achilles, son of Peleus, and take Briseus'
lovely-cheeked daughter by the hand and bring her here.
If he does not give her to you, then I shall come in person
and get her, and with more men; and that will be the worse
for him.'

So he spoke, and sent them away, and laid a harsh
command on them.
Reluctantly they made their way along the shore of the
unresting sea,
and came to the huts and ships of the Myrmidons.

They found Achilles beside his hut and his black ship,
sitting inactive; and when he saw them he was not glad.
The two men were terrified, and stood there, in awe of
the king, and did not address a word to him or ask him
questions;
but he understood in his heart and spoke to them:
'Welcome, heralds, messengers of Zeus and of men.
Come closer; it is not you I blame, but Agamemnon,
who is sending you here for the girl, Briseus' daughter.
Come, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus,* bring the girl out and
give her to these men to take away. Let them be witnesses
in the sight of the blessed gods and of mortal men,
and of him, that ruthless king, if ever in future
a need arises for me to turn ugly destruction away
from the rest. His mind is surely hurtling towards ruin,
and he has not the sense to look before him and behind, to
ensure that the Achaeans survive, fighting beside their
ships.'

So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear companion,
and
brought Briseus' lovely-cheeked daughter out of the hut
and
gave her to them to take away. They returned to the
Achaeans' ships,
and the woman went with them, reluctantly. But Achilles
wept,
and at once took himself apart from his companions and
sat on
the shore of the grey sea, gazing out over the boundless
expanse.
Stretching out his arms he prayed at length to his dear
mother:
'Mother, you gave me birth to live for only a short while, so
surely
the Olympian, Zeus the high-thunderer, ought to have

bestowed
some honour on me; but as it is he has given me none, not
even
a little. Atreus' son, wide-ruling Agamemnon, has
dishonoured
me. He has taken away my prize in person, and keeps it for
himself.'

So he spoke, shedding tears, and his revered mother
heard him
as she sat in the depths of the sea next to her aged father.
Quickly she rose up from the grey sea like a mist,
and took her seat in front of him as he wept his tears,
and stroking him with her hand she spoke to him, saying:
'Child, why are you weeping? What sorrow has entered your
heart?
Tell me, do not hide it in your mind, so that we both may
know.'

With a heavy groan, swift-footed Achilles addressed
her:
'You do know. Why should I tell you all this when you know
it?

We went to Thebe, the sacred city of Eëtion,* and
sacked it and brought all the plunder here. This the
sons of the Achaeans distributed properly among
themselves,
and picked out for Atreus' son Chryses' lovely-cheeked
daughter.
But then Chryses, the priest of Apollo who shoots from afar,
came to the swift ships of the bronze-shirted Achaeans,
intending
to redeem his daughter, bringing a boundless ransom, and
holding in his hands the woollen bands of Apollo the far-
shooter,
fixed to a golden staff, and he entreated all the Achaeans,
but especially the two sons of Atreus, marshals of the

people.

Then all the rest of the Achaeans shouted their approval,
that they should be in awe of the priest and accept the
splendid ransom,

but this found no favour in the heart of Atreus' son
Agamemnon,
and he sent him roughly away, and added a harsh
command.

The old man went back in anger; and Apollo heard him
when he prayed, because he was very dear to him,
and let loose deadly shafts against the Argives; and the
people

kept dying, one after another, and the god's arrows ranged
everywhere throughout the Achaeans' broad camp. Our
prophet,

with sure knowledge, explained the far-worker's divine will
to us,

and it was I who first urged that we should at once appease
the god;

but at this anger took hold of Atreus' son, and instantly he
rose

and made threats against me, which have indeed been
fulfilled.

Now the darting-eyed Achaeans are sending the girl,
Chryses' child,

with a swift ship to Chryse, and are taking gifts for the lord
Apollo,

while heralds have lately come and taken from my hut that
other girl,

Briseus' daughter, whom the sons of the Achaeans gave to
me.

I beg you, if it is in your power, have care for your son;
go to Olympus and entreat Zeus, reminding him of any
service of word or deed that you have done to Zeus' heart.
Indeed, I often heard you boasting in the halls of my father,
when you said that you alone among the immortals

averted ugly destruction from Cronus' son of the dark clouds,
at the time when other Olympians, Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athena, were wishing to tie him down. But you, goddess, came and released him from his bonds, quickly summoning to high Olympus the hundred-handed one called Briareus by the gods, but all men call him Aegaeon;* and he is mightier than his father. He took his seat next to the son of Cronus, exulting in his triumph, and the blessed gods cowered in fright and did not try to bind him. Sit beside Zeus now and take hold of his knees* and remind him of this, to see if he will agree to help the Trojans by penning the Achaeans in by their ships' sterns along the seashore and killing them; so that they all may take delight in their king, and that the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, may come to know his delusion, in that he did not honour the best of the Achaeans.'

Then Thetis answered him, shedding tears:
'Ah, my child, why did I bear you, giving birth to such suffering ?
If only you could sit at ease by your ships without tears and grief,
since your portion of life is but short, and not at all long. But you are doomed to a swift death, to be wretched beyond all men; it was indeed to a cruel destiny that I bore you in my halls.
Still, I shall say these words for you to Zeus who delights in the

thunderbolt, going to snow-covered Olympus, to see if he will listen;

and as for you, sit now beside your swift-travelling ships and

rage against the Achaeans, and hold back altogether from the war.

Zeus went yesterday to Ocean to join the blameless Ethiopians*

and to take part in a feast, and all the other gods went with him;

on the twelfth day he will come again to Olympus, and then I shall go to Zeus' house with its bronze floor and I shall entreat him; and I believe I shall persuade him.'

So she spoke and went away, leaving him there, bitterly angry in his heart because of the well-girdled woman,

whom they were taking from him by force, against his will.

Now Odysseus was nearing Chryse with the holy hecatomb, and

when they had sailed into the harbour with its many deep bays

they furled the sail and stowed it in the black ship, and then quickly slackened the forestays and laid the mast in its crutch, and with oars rowed the ship on to an anchorage.

Out they threw the anchor-stones, and made the stern-cables fast,

out they themselves landed on to the shore of the sea,

out they brought the hecatomb for Apollo who shoots from afar,

out stepped Chryses' daughter from the sea-traversing ship.

Then much-scheming Odysseus escorted her to the altar and gave her into her father's arms and said to him:

'Chryses, Agamemnon, lord of men, has sent me to

bring you your daughter and to offer a holy hecatomb to
Phoebus on the Danaans' behalf, that we may appease the
lord
who has been bringing grief and lamentation on to the
Argives.'

So he spoke, and gave her into his arms, and with joy
he received
his dear child. Quickly the others set out the holy hecatomb
for the god in due order around the well-built altar;
then they washed their hands and lifted up the barley
grains.

And among them Chryses prayed in a loud voice, lifting up
his

hands:

'Hear me, god of the silver bow, you who stand guard over
Chryse

and sacred Cilla, and rule over Tenedos with your power:
you listened to me when I prayed to you before, and
gave me honour, and bore heavily on the Achaean people;
so this time also bring this plea to fulfilment for me:
now turn aside the ugly plague from the Danaans.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him.
When they had prayed and sprinkled the barley grains,
they first

pulled back the beasts' heads, then slit their throats and
flayed them,

then cut away the thigh-bones and wrapped them in fat,
covering

them above and below, and laid raw hunks of meat upon
them.

These the old man burnt on billets of wood, and poured
gleaming wine

over them; and young men held five-pronged forks in their
hands.

When the thigh-bones were burnt up and they had tasted

the entrails,
they chopped the rest of the meat small and threaded it on skewers,
and cooked it with great care, and then drew it all off.
When they had finished their work and made the meal ready
they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the meal.*
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When they had put from themselves the desire for food and drink,
young men filled mixing-jars to the brim with drink and distributed it to all, after first pouring libations into the cups.
So all day long the young men of the Achaeans set about appeasing the god with songs, chanting a beautiful paeon,*
_ singing of the far-worker; and he heard it and was glad in his heart.

When the sun went down and darkness came over them,
they lay down to sleep beside the ship's stern-cables;
but when early-born Dawn with her rosy fingers appeared,
then they put out to sea for the broad camp of the Achaeans,
and Apollo who shoots from afar sent them a following wind.

The men set up the mast and spread the white sail aloft,
and the wind blew into the belly of the sail, and a dark wave sang out loudly about the stem as the ship sailed on,
speeding over the waves and keeping close to its course.
When they reached the broad camp of the Achaeans
they dragged the black ship up on to the land,
high on the sands, and positioned long props under it,
and themselves dispersed to their huts and their ships.

But still he raged, sitting idle beside his swift-travelling ships,

the son of Peleus, sprung from Zeus,* swift-footed Achilles.
No longer did he frequent the assembly where men win
glory,
nor ever go to the war, but wasted his dear heart away,
staying
where he was, but yearning for the battle-cry and the
fighting.

But when the twelfth dawn from that day appeared,
the gods who live for ever did indeed return to Olympus,
all together, and Zeus led the way. Thetis did not forget
her son's requests, but rose up through the waves of the
sea,
and early in the morning flew up to the vast high sky and
Olympus.
She found Cronus' wide-thundering son sitting apart from
the rest
on the topmost peak of Olympus, mountain of many ridges.
Sitting in front of him, she caught him by the knees with
her
left hand and with her right reached up and grasped his
chin,*
and addressed Zeus, the son of Cronus, entreating him:
'Father Zeus, if ever I was of service to you among the
immortals
in word or in deed, then bring this plea to fulfilment for me:
honour my son; he is fated to have the briefest life of all
men,
and now Agamemnon, lord of men, has dishonoured him—
he has taken away his prize in person, and keeps it for
himself.
I beg you, Olympian Zeus, counsellor, to honour him;
give victory to the Trojans, until such time as the Achaeans
make amends to my son and increase his honour.'

So she spoke; and Zeus the cloud-gatherer gave her no
answer,

but sat for a long time in silence. Thetis had grasped his knees,
and kept tight hold of them, and asked him a second time:
'Promise me without fail, and nod your head in assent, or else
deny me (for you have nothing to fear), and so I will know well
how much I am the least honoured among all the gods.'

Then, deeply angered, Zeus the cloud-gatherer addressed her:
'This will surely prove a bad business; you will cause me to quarrel with Hera, and she will provoke and abuse me. Even as it is, she is always arguing with me among the immortal gods, saying that I take the Trojans' side in the fighting. Go away now, in case Hera finds out that you are here. I shall see to this matter, and bring it to fulfilment; look, I shall nod my head in assent to you, so that you will trust me,
for this is the most important sign that comes from me to the
immortals; no word of mine can be revoked or beguiled or denied, when once I have nodded my head in assent.'

So the son of Cronus spoke, and nodded his dark brows in assent,
and the locks of the lord's deathless hair swung forward on his immortal head, and he made great Olympus tremble.

So these two left their plotting and went their separate ways;
Thetis leapt from shining Olympus into the deep sea, and Zeus went to his house. All the gods stood up together from their seats in the presence of their father, and no one dared
to stay seated as he approached, but they all stood facing him.

There he seated himself on his throne; but Hera knew well when she saw him that Thetis had been scheming with him, Thetis the silver-footed, daughter of the ancient of the sea.*
At once she addressed Zeus, the son of Cronus, in jeering words:

‘Crafty schemer, which of the gods has been plotting with you now?

It is always your delight to keep away from me and ponder in secret before deciding something. Never yet have you brought yourself to tell me openly what you are brooding on.’

Then the father of gods and men answered her:
‘Hera, do not expect to know about all my thoughts; they will turn out hard for you, even though you are my wife.

As for those that it is fitting for you to hear, no one will know before you, either of gods or men; but when I am minded to muse on something apart from the gods, you must not seek to know it or to question me closely.’

Then the ox-eyed lady Hera answered him:
‘Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said? In the past I have not questioned you closely or sought to know, but you have devised whatever you wished in complete peace; but now I am terribly afraid in my mind that silver-footed Thetis, daughter of the ancient of the sea, has contrived to beguile you. Early in the morning she sat beside you and grasped your knees, and I fancy you have nodded your head in assent, saying you will honour Achilles, and kill many of the Achaeans beside their ships.’

Then Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed her in answer:

‘You are possessed,* and always fancying things; I cannot elude you.

Even so you will achieve nothing, and this will take you further from my heart, and that will be the worse for you. If this is how things are, it must be that I wish them to be so.

You should sit in silence and abide by my words; if not, all the gods who are on Olympus will be unable to help you when I come near and lay my irresistible hands upon you.’

So he spoke, and the lady ox-eyed Hera was afraid, and sat in silence, bending her heart to submission, and in Zeus’ house the gods of the high sky were troubled; but among them Hephaestus the famed craftsman began to speak, out of concern for his dear mother, Hera of the white arms: ‘Well, this will indeed be a bad business, and not to be borne, if you two give rise to strife in this way because of mortals, and provoke brawling among the gods. There will be no pleasure at all in the splendid feast, since ill feeling will prevail. To my mother I give this advice, though she knows it herself:

to give in to our dear father Zeus, so that he will not again reprimand her, and so throw our feast into disarray. What if the Olympian god of the lightning had a mind to hurl us bodily from our seats? He is much the most powerful here.

No, you must approach him with words that are gentle, and then straightaway the Olympian will be merciful to us.’

So he spoke, and leaping up he placed a two-handled cup in his dear mother’s hand, and addressed her:

'Be patient, my mother, and endure, troubled though you are,
or else I may see you, dear as you are to me, beaten
before my eyes; and then, though grieved, I would not be
able
to help you, since it is a hard thing to defy the Olympian.
Indeed, once before when I was eager to come to your help
he seized me by the foot and flung me from the divine
threshold:
all day long I dropped through the air, and with the sun's
setting
fell upon Lemnos,* and there was little life left in me;
but straight after my fall the Sintian men* took care of me.'

So he spoke, and the goddess Hera of the white arms
smiled,
and as she smiled took the cup from her son in her hand.
Then he, moving from left to right, poured out sweet nectar
for all the other gods, drawing it off from the mixing-bowl;
and unquenchable laughter broke out among the blessed
gods,
when they saw Hephaestus shuffling* about the house.

And so the whole day long until the setting of the sun
they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the
feast,
nor were they denied the beautiful lyre which Apollo held,
nor the Muses, who sang antiphonally with their lovely
voices.

But when the bright light of the sun had gone down
they went to prepare for sleep, each to their own house,
to where the far-famed bow-legged god Hephaestus
had in his cunning skill built a house for each of them.
And Zeus, the Olympian god of the lightning, went to his
bed,
where he always rested when sweet sleep came upon him;
there

he went up and slept, and beside him was Hera of the golden throne.

BOOK TWO

Now all other beings, gods and horse-marshalling men,
slept the night long, but sweet sleep did not keep hold of
Zeus;

he was pondering in his mind how he might give honour to
Achilles, and kill many men beside the Achaeans' ships.
And this seemed to him in his heart to be the best plan,
to send a destructive Dream to Agamemnon, son of
Atreus.

Addressing the Dream, he spoke with winged words:

'Away now, destructive Dream, to the Achaeans' swift
ships;

go into the hut of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and
repeat everything to him exactly as I instruct you.

Command him to arm the flowing-haired Achaeans with
all speed, because now he may take the Trojans' city with
its

wide streets; the immortals dwelling on Olympus are no
longer

divided in their purpose, for Hera has bent the wills of
them all

by her pleading, and affliction has laid hold of the Trojans.'

So he spoke, and when it had heard his words the
Dream departed,

and came without delay to the swift ships of the Achaeans.

It made for Atreus' son Agamemnon, and found him
asleep in his hut, and deathless slumber was poured over
him.

It stood above his head* in the likeness of Neleus' son
Nestor, whom Agamemnon valued most of the elders;
assuming this likeness, the god-sent Dream addressed

him:

'You sleep, son of Atreus, war-minded breaker of horses;
but a man of counsel should not sleep the whole night
through,

one to whom the people are entrusted and who has so
many cares.

Now listen quickly to me; I am a messenger to you from
Zeus,

who though far away is deeply concerned for you and
pities you.

He commands you to arm the flowing-haired Achaeans
speedily, because now you may take the Trojans' city with
its

wide streets. The immortals dwelling on Olympus are no
longer

divided in their purpose, for Hera has bent the wills of
them all

by her pleading, and affliction sent from Zeus has laid hold
of

the Trojans. Store this then in your heart; do not let
forgetfulness

possess you, when once mind-cheering sleep has released
you.'

So it spoke and departed, and left him there,
pondering

these things in his heart, which would not be fulfilled;
he thought he would take the city of Priam on that same
day,

fool that he was, and did not know what deeds Zeus was
planning,

who was about to inflict even more anguish and
lamentation on

both Trojans and Danaans in the course of the harsh
conflict.

He woke from his sleep, and the divine voice was poured

over him;
he started up, then stood and clothed himself in his soft
tunic,
beautiful and not yet worn, and threw over it his great
cloak.
Under his shining feet he bound his fine sandals,
and from his shoulders he slung his silver-riveted sword.
He picked up his ancestral, never-decaying staff, and
holding it
made his way along the ships of the bronze-shirted
Achaean.

Now the goddess Dawn had reached high Olympus,
to announce the daylight to Zeus and the other immortals,
when Agamemnon commanded the clear-voiced heralds
to summon the flowing-haired Achaeans to an assembly.
So they made the summons, and the men gathered with
great speed.

But first he held a council of the great-spirited elders
beside the ship of Nestor, the king who was born in Pylos.
When he had called them together he framed a subtle
plan:

‘Listen to me, friends. A god-sent Dream came to me in
my sleep
through the deathless night, and it most closely resembled
glorious Nestor in appearance and stature and form.
It stood above my head and spoke these words to me:
“You sleep, son of Atreus, war-minded breaker of horses;
but a man of counsel should not sleep the whole night
through,
one to whom the people are entrusted and who has so
many cares.
Now listen quickly to me; I am a messenger to you from
Zeus,
who though far away is deeply concerned for you and
pities you.

He commands you to arm the flowing-haired Achaeans speedily, because now you may take the Trojans' city with its wide streets. The immortals dwelling on Olympus are no longer divided in their purpose, for Hera has bent the wills of them all by her pleading, and affliction sent from Zeus has laid hold of the Trojans. Store this in your heart." So it spoke, and flew away from my sight, and sweet sleep released me. So come, let us see if we can arm the sons of the Achaeans for battle. But first I shall test them with words, as is right, and I shall urge them to flee in their many-benched ships, and you must go among them and try to hold them back with words.'

So he spoke and took his seat again, and among them arose Nestor, who was king in sandy Pylos. With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them: 'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives, if anyone else of the Achaeans had told us of this dream we would say it was false, and would turn our backs on it; but the man who saw it claims to be the best of the Achaeans. So come, let us try to arm the sons of the Achaeans for battle.'

So he spoke, and was the first to leave the assembly, and the rest, all the staff-holding kings, stood up after him and obeyed the shepherd of the people; and the people rushed to meet them. As when troops of swarming bees stream out from a hollow rock in bursts, one after another, and settle in clusters on springtime flowers, and

then, massing together, fly off in different directions;
so the numerous tribes streamed out by companies
from their ships and huts along the wide sea shore
to the assembly place. And among them blazed Rumour,
Zeus' messenger, urging them ever onwards; and so they
gathered.

And the assembly was in turmoil, and the earth groaned
under the men as they sat down, and there was an uproar.

Nine

heralds set about holding them back, shouting, hoping to
stop

their clamour and make them listen to the Zeus-nurtured
kings.

So the people hastily sat down, and kept to their seats,
and stopped their shouting. Then lord Agamemnon arose,
holding the staff which Hephaestus had made by his craft.
Hephaestus had given it to lord Zeus, the son of Cronus,
and then Zeus had given it to the guide, slayer of Argus;*
lord Hermes gave it to Pelops, whipper of horses, and
Pelops in his turn gave it to Atreus, shepherd of the
people.

Atreus as he died left it to Thyestes, rich in flocks,
and Thyestes in his turn left it to Agamemnon to wield,
to rule over many islands and the whole of Argos.*

Leaning on this staff, Agamemnon addressed the Argives:
'Friends, Danaan heroes, ministers of Ares! Zeus, the son
of

Cronus, has mightily snared me in a cruel delusion,
hard god that he is, who once promised and assured me
that I

should return home only after sacking strongly walled
Ilium;

but now he has planned an evil deception, and tells me to
return to Argos without glory, after losing many of my
people.

This must I suppose be pleasing to Zeus the all-powerful,

who has indeed destroyed the crowns of many cities,
and will do so again; for his might is the greatest of all.
But this will be a shameful thing for future men to hear,
that so fine and numerous a host of Achaeans fought
a vain and futile war, fighting against men who were
fewer in number, with no success to be shown at its end.
If we were minded, both Achaeans and Trojans, to make
a solemn truce and both sides to reckon their numbers,
the Trojans to count up those who have houses in the city,
and we Achaeans to arrange ourselves in groups of ten;
and if each group were to choose a Trojan to pour their
wine,

then there would be many tens who lacked a wine-pourer
—

so greatly, I say, do the sons of the Achaeans outnumber
the Trojans who dwell in the city. But they have allies
from many cities on their side, men who wield the spear,
who thwart me mightily and prevent me from sacking
Ilium,

that well-populated city, for all my desire to do so.

Already nine years from great Zeus have passed, and, as
we see,

the ships' timbers have rotted and their rigging has gone
slack;

and our wives and our infant children must be sitting
in our halls longing for our return, while our enterprise,
the cause of our coming here, remains quite
unaccomplished.

Come then, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:

let us go away in our ships to our dear native land,
because we shall never capture Troy of the wide streets.'

So he spoke, and roused the spirit in the breasts
of all those in the army who did not know his purpose.
The assembly was stirred like the tall waves of the sea,
the open sea by Icaria,* when the East and South Winds

churn it up, swooping down from the clouds of father Zeus.

As when the West Wind moves over a deep cornfield and stirs it, and the ears of corn bend before its violent onset,
so the whole assembly was stirred, and the men rushed shouting towards the ships, and underneath their feet the dust rose and hung suspended in the air. They called to each other to lay hold of the ships and drag them down to the bright sea, and they began to rake out the slipways and pulled the props from under the ships; in their longing for home their shouts reached the sky.

Then the Argives would have returned home, against their

destiny,
if Hera had not spoken to Athena with these words:
'Daughter of aegis-wearing Zeus, Atrytone,* this will not do!

It seems that the Argives are about to flee home to their dear native land, over the broad back of the sea. If they do,

they will leave to Priam and the Trojans a reason to boast —

I mean Argive Helen, on whose account many of the Achaeans

have died at Troy, far from their dear native land.

Go now among the people of bronze-shirted Achaeans and with coaxing words try to hold back every man, and do not let them drag their well-balanced ships down to the sea.'

So she spoke, and the goddess grey-eyed Athena did

not disobey her,
but went swooping down from the peaks of Olympus,
and quickly came to the swift ships of the Achaeans.
There she found Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in scheming,
standing idle; he had not laid hold of his well-benched
black ship,
because sadness had entered his heart and his spirit.
Standing nearby the goddess grey-eyed Athena addressed
him:

‘Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many
schemes,
are you really about to fall into your many-benched ships,
all of you, and to run home like this, to your dear native
land?
If so, you will leave to Priam and the Trojans a reason to
boast—
I mean Argive Helen, on whose account many of the
Achaeans
have died at Troy, far from their dear native land.
Come now, do not delay, but go among the people of the
Achaeans,
and with coaxing words try to hold back every man, and
do not let them drag their well-balanced ships down to the
sea.’

So she spoke, and he knew he had heard a goddess’s
voice,
and set off at a run, throwing away his cloak, which was
retrieved
by the herald Eurybates, who came from Ithaca and
served him.
He himself went to meet Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and
received from him the ancestral, never-decaying staff,
and holding it made his way along the ships of the bronze-
shirted Achaeans.

Whenever he came across a king or man of eminence,

he would stand beside him and try to restrain him with coaxing words:

‘You are possessed! It is not right to threaten you as if you were a coward; go, sit down again and make all your people sit as well.

You do not yet know clearly what the son of Atreus intends;

he is testing the Achaeans’ sons now, but soon he will hit them hard.

Did we not all hear what he said in the council? I am afraid that in his bitterness he may punish the sons of the Achaeans.

Great is the temper of kings who are nurtured by Zeus; their honour comes from Zeus, and Zeus the counsellor loves them.’

But whenever he saw a man of the common people yelling out,

he would belabour him with the staff and shout at him:

‘You are possessed! Sit down quietly and listen to the words of others

who are better fighters than you; you are feeble and unwarlike,

not someone to be reckoned with either in war or in counsel.

There is no way that we Achaeans can all be kings here.

Many rulers are an evil thing; let there be a single commander,

one king, to whom the son of crooked-scheming Cronus has given

[a staff and the power to judge, to decide for his people].’

So by his authority he brought them under control, and they streamed

back again from their ships and huts to the assembly place,

with the noise of a wave of the loud-bellowing sea when it

crashes on to a great beach, and the wide sea echoes its roar.

So they all settled down and kept to their seats, except for one man, Thersites, who kept whining on; his talk was full of chaos, and he had a mind crammed with words, numerous and disorderly, though he used them in a wild and unruly way, to argue with the kings; and he would say what he thought would be amusing to the Argives. He was the ugliest man who had come to besiege Ilium: he was bandy-legged, and lame in one foot, and his shoulders were hunched together, narrowing on to his chest, and his head grew to a point, and sprouted a scanty crop of hair. He was especially hated by Achilles and Odysseus, for it was his way to provoke them; but now against glorious Agamemnon he began to shout abuse, yelling and screaming. The Achaeans were outraged in their hearts, and grew violently angry with him; but still he harangued Agamemnon, shouting at the top of his voice: 'What is your complaint this time, Atreus' son? What more do you want? Your huts are crammed full of bronze, and there are many women in your huts, expressly chosen, whom the Achaeans give to you before anyone else whenever we capture a city.

Is it more gold you hanker after, gold such as one of the horse-breaking Trojans may bring from Ilium as ransom for his son, whom I or another Achaean have captured and delivered here?

Or is it a young woman you want, to couple with in love, and to keep her apart for yourself? It is not right for one who is their leader to make trouble for the sons of the Achaeans.

Weak fools, wretched fools, women of Achaea, no longer men!

Let us make our way home in our ships and leave this one here at Troy to brood on his winnings; he will soon find out whether the rest of us will come to his help or not. And now

he has even dishonoured Achilles, a much better man than him, taking his prize away in person and keeping it for himself. But there is no rage in Achilles' heart, and he is slow to act —

otherwise, son of Atreus, this would be your last outrage.'

So Thersites spoke, provoking Agamemnon, shepherd of the people.

But glorious Odysseus quickly came up and stood beside him,

and looking at him darkly rebuked him with hard words: 'Thersites, you may be a clear-voiced speaker, but your words are wild.

Restrain yourself; do not hope to be the one man who argues with kings.

I do not believe there is any mortal less warlike than you, out of all those who came with the sons of Atreus to besiege Ilium.

So—let's have no more bawling out the names of your

kings,
trying to make sure of a voyage home by flinging abuse at
them.

We do not yet know for sure how these things will be,
whether
we sons of Achaeans will return home in triumph or in
defeat;
yet here you sit and behave insolently towards
Agamemnon,
shepherd of the people, because the Danaan heroes give
him
a great many gifts; your speech is nothing but jeering
abuse.

But I tell you this plainly, and it will certainly be fulfilled:
if ever I find you playing the fool again as you are now,
may the head of Odysseus no longer sit on his shoulders,
and may I no longer be called the father of Telemachus,
if I do not lay hands on you and strip you of your
garments,
your cloak and your tunic, which cover up your shame,
and send you away weeping to the swift ships, when I
have
thrashed you out of the assembly with shameful blows.'

So he spoke, and with the staff beat Thersites on his
back
and shoulders; he doubled up, and a huge tear fell from
his eyes,
and on his back a bloody weal swelled up, raised by
the blows of the golden staff. He sat down again, terrified
and in pain, and with a helpless look wiped the tear away.
But the rest, vexed though they were, laughed happily to
see it,
and this is what they would say, each man looking at his
neighbour:

'Well, we know that Odysseus has done countless fine

things,
both leading us with good counsel and deploying us in
battle,
but this is by far the best thing he has done among the
Argives,
stopping this blustering and intemperate man speaking in
the

assembly.

I do not think Thersites' proud spirit will ever again urge
him

to use such insulting words to pick fights with the kings.'

So spoke the mass of men; and now Odysseus, sacker
of cities,

stood up, holding the staff, and by his side grey-eyed
Athena

in the likeness of a herald commanded the people to be
silent,

so that the nearest and the furthest of the sons of the
Achaeans

might hear what he said and reflect on his advice.

With generous intent he spoke out among them:

'Son of Atreus, lord, it seems now that the Achaeans are
minded

to make you thoroughly disgraced among mortal men, and
they will not fulfil the promise that they made to you

on their voyage here from Argos,* rearer of horses: that
you

would return home only after sacking Ilium of the strong
walls.

They are behaving like young children or widowed women,
when they start wailing to each other about their return
home—

clearly the battle-toil discourages them, and so they want
to go back.

Even a man who spends one month apart from his

wife will brood impatiently beside his many-benched ship,
which
winter storms and swelling seas keep confined to the
shore;
but in our case this is now the ninth circling year that we
have
remained here inactive. I do not therefore blame the
Achaeans
for their brooding impatience beside the curved ships; yet
it is
surely a shameful thing to wait so long and return empty-
handed.
Be patient, my friends, and hold out for a time, and we will
learn
whether Calchas prophesies truly to us or not. What I shall
now say we remember well in our minds, and you are all
witnesses, those whom the spectres of death have not
carried off:
it seems like yesterday or the day before that the
Achaeans' ships
assembled at Aulis,* bringing ruin to Priam and to the
Trojans,
and we on sacred altars that surrounded a spring were
sacrificing unblemished hecatombs to the immortals,
under a beautiful plane tree from which bright water
flowed,
when a momentous sign appeared: a snake with a blood-
red back,
hideous, that the Olympian himself had dispatched into
the light,
slithered out from under the altar and made for the plane-
tree.
Now in this were some sparrow's fledglings, infant
children,
on the topmost branch, cowering under the leaves,
eight of them, and the mother who bore them made nine.

The snake swallowed them down, all squeaking piteously,
and
their mother fluttered about them, lamenting her dear
brood,
and as she cried over them it coiled itself up and caught
her by the wing.
But when it had devoured the sparrow's children and their
mother,
the god who had caused it to appear made it into a clear
sign:
the son of crooked-scheming Cronus turned it to stone,
and we stood there in amazement at what had happened.
When this dreadful prodigy had interrupted the
gods' hecatombs,
Calchas straightaway interpreted it for us, and spoke out:
"Why have you fallen silent, flowing-haired Achaeans?
It is for us that Zeus the counsellor has revealed this great
sign—
late appearing, and late in fulfilment, but its fame will
never die.
As this creature has devoured the children and the
sparrow herself,
eight of them, and the mother who bore them made nine,
so shall we make war at Troy for that number of years,
and in the tenth we shall take the city with its wide
streets."
So he spoke out, and all this has now been fulfilled.
So come, stand firm where you are, all you well-greaved
Achaeans, until such time as we take the great city of
Priam.'

So he spoke, and the Argives gave a great yell, and
the ships
resounded loudly around to the shouts of the Achaeans,
as they acclaimed the speech of godlike Odysseus.
Then among them the horseman Gerenian* Nestor spoke

up:

‘Come, come! Truly, your speeches are like children’s, infants, who know nothing of the business of war.

What is now to become of our oaths, and the agreements we made?

We may as well throw into the fire all men’s counsels and stratagems,

those libations of unmixed wine, and the right hands we trusted in;

we are fighting with words, but to no purpose, and we cannot

find a remedy, even though we have been here for a long time.

Son of Atreus, you must hold your purpose unshaken, as before,

and command the Argives in the harsh conflict, and

leave these others to die, the one or two of the Achaeans who are plotting in secret—though it will all come to nothing—

to go back to Argos before they find out about the promise of Zeus who wears the aegis, whether it is false or not.

I believe that the son of Cronus, the all-powerful, nodded assent

to us on the day that the Argives boarded their swift-travelling

ships, bringing bloodshed and doom to the Trojans, when he

flashed lightning on our right, showing us an auspicious sign.

So let no one hurry to sail away towards his home

until each man of you has slept with the wife of a Trojan, and has exacted vengeance for Helen’s struggles and groans.

But if anyone has an overwhelming desire to leave for home,

let him merely touch his well-benched black ship, and

in the sight of all he will meet death and destruction.
Come, lord, consider well and listen to the advice of
another;
whatever I say to you, you should not cast it aside.
Separate the army by tribes and by clans, Agamemnon,
so that clan may support clan and tribe may support tribe.
If you do this, and if the Achaeans follow your orders,
you will find out the cowards among the leaders and
people,
and the brave men, because they will fight in their own
companies.
You will find, too, if it is by divine will that you fail to
destroy the city,
or because of men's cowardice and their ignorance of
warfare.'

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him:
'Once again, old man, you far surpass the Achaeans' sons
in debate.

Father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, how I wish that
I had ten counsellors such as this man among the
Achaeans!

Then the city of lord Priam would soon reel before us,
when it has been captured and devastated by our hands.
But Zeus, Cronus' aegis-wearing son, has brought me
anguish,
pitching me into disputes and quarrels that cannot be
resolved.

We fought, I and Achilles, for the sake of a girl,
matching violent words, and I was the first to become
angry;
but if ever we can agree on one course of action, no
longer
will the Trojans' evil day be put off, not even for a short
time.

So go now and make your meal, and prepare for Ares'

warfare;
let each man take care to sharpen his spear and fettle his shield,
let each man take care to give their meal to his swift-footed horses,
let each man take care to inspect his chariot well and prepare for war,
so that all day long we may join in the judgement of hateful Ares.

There will certainly be no intervening respite, not even a little,
until the coming of night brings men's fury to judgement. Sweat will cover the strap across his chest of each man's body-protecting shield, and the hand on his spear will grow weary, and sweat will cover each man's horse as it strains at the polished chariot.

And if I chance to see anyone attempting to hang back from the battle by the beaked ships, there will be no sure way for him thereafter to escape the dogs and vultures.'

So he spoke, and the Argives gave a great roar, like a wave churned up by the South Wind's onset, falling on to a steep shore against a jutting rock that the breakers, driven by winds from every quarter, never leave, but come at it from every side.

They rose quickly to their feet and scattered to their ships, and lit fires, everyone in his own hut, and ate their meal. Each man sacrificed to one of the gods who live for ever, praying that he would escape death and the grind of Ares' warfare.

But Agamemnon, lord of men, sacrificed a bull,
a fat five-year-old, to the all-powerful son of Cronus, and
summoned the elders, chieftains of the whole Achaean
force:

Nestor came first of all, and the lord Idomeneus,
then the pair called Ajax and the son of Tydeus,
then sixth came Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in scheming.
Uninvited came Menelaus, master of the war-cry,
for he knew in his heart how troubled his brother was.
They stood around the bull, and lifted up the barley grains,
and among them lord Agamemnon spoke in prayer:
' Mightiest, most glorious Zeus of the dark cloud, dwelling
in the

upper air, grant that before the sun sets and darkness
comes

I shall hurl the palace of Priam down headlong,
blackened in smoke, and burn its doors with ravaging fire,
and that I shall rip Hector's tunic into tatters on his chest,
slashed by the bronze; and may great numbers of his
companions
fall face-forward on the earth, biting the ground with their
teeth.'

So he spoke, but the son of Cronus did not yet fulfil his
prayer;
he accepted the sacrifice, but prolonged their miserable
toil.

Now when they had prayed and sprinkled the barley
grains,
first they pulled back the bull's head, slit its throat and
flayed it,
then cut away the thigh-bones and wrapped them in fat,
covering
them above and below, and laid raw hunks of meat on
them.

These they laid on to billets of dead wood and burnt them,

then spitted the entrails and held them over Hephaestus' fire.

When the thigh-bones were burnt up, and they had tasted the entrails,

they chopped the rest of the meat small and threaded it on skewers,

and cooked it with great care and then drew it all off.

When they had finished their work, and made the meal ready,

they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the meal.

But once they had put from themselves the desire for food and drink,

among them the horseman Gerenian Nestor began to speak:

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon lord of men,

let us not spend more time conversing, nor any longer postpone the work which a god is putting into our hands.

Come now, let the heralds of the bronze-shirted Achaeans make a proclamation and assemble the people by ships,

and let us go together as we are throughout the broad camp

of the Achaeans, so that we may quickly stir up bitter Ares.'

So he spoke, and Agamemnon lord of men did not disobey him.

Immediately he ordered the clear-voiced heralds to make a proclamation, calling the flowing-haired Achaeans to war;

so they made their proclamation, and the men gathered very quickly.

Then Atreus' son and with him the kings, nurtured by Zeus,

busily mustered the army, and in their midst was grey-eyed Athena,

holding the precious aegis, ageless and immortal,
from which fluttered a hundred tassels,
all golden, all of them skilfully woven, each worth a
hundred oxen.

Holding this she darted swiftly in and out of the Achaean
people,
provoking them to action, and in each man she stirred up
strength

in his heart to engage in the war and fight without
ceasing;

and so then war became sweeter to them than a return
in their hollow ships to their dear native land.

As when devastating fire blazes through an enormous
forest

on a mountain peak, and its glare is seen from afar,
so as they marched the glitter from the stupendous mass
of bronze

flashed all around through the upper air and reached the
high sky.

As the numerous companies of winged birds,
geese or cranes or swans with their long necks, gather
on the Asian water-meadow, by the streams of Caÿster,*
and soar this way and that, exulting in their wings, and
settle with a clamour, and the meadow resounds with their
cries,

so the army's numerous companies poured out from ships
and huts on to the plain of Scamander;* and the ground
under

the feet of men and horses gave back a terrifying sound.
They took their stand on the flowery plain of Scamander,
numberless as the leaves and flowers that appear in
spring.

As many as the numerous companies of swarming
flies
that swarm about the sheepfold of a herdsman

in the season of spring, when pails brim with milk,
so many were the flowing-haired Achaeans facing the
Trojans
and taking their stand on the plain, raging to break them
utterly.

And just as goatherds easily separate their far-
wandering
flocks of goats, when they have become mixed up in the
pasture,
so the commanders mustered their men on this side and
on that,
ready for the conflict; and in their midst was lord
Agamemnon,
his gaze and head like Zeus who delights in the
thunderbolt,
in girth like Ares, and with the chest of Poseidon.
Just like an ox which far surpasses all the rest of a herd,
a bull, which stands out among the cattle gathered round
it,
even so Zeus made the son of Atreus on that day,
conspicuous in the soldiery, pre-eminent among the
heroes.

Tell me now, Muses who have your homes on Olympus
—
for you are goddesses, and are present, and know
everything,
while we hear only rumour, and know nothing—
who were the commanders and princes of the Danaans.
As for the soldiery, I could not describe or name them,
not even if I had ten tongues and ten mouths,
an indestructible voice, and a bronze heart within me,
unless the Muses of Olympus, daughters of aegis-wearing
Zeus, were to recount all those who came to besiege
Ilium.

So I shall relate the ships' captains and the number of their ships.*

Of the Boeotians, Peneleos and Leïtus were their captains,
and Arcesilaus and Prothoënor and Clonius;
these were the men who lived in Hyria and rocky Aulis,
Schoenus and Scolus and Eteonus with its many peaks,
Thespeia, Graea, and Mycalessus of the wide dancing-places,
and who occupied Harma and Eilesium and Erythrae,
and those who possessed Eleon and Hyle and Peteon,
Ocalea and the well-built fortress of Medeon,
Copae, Eutresis, and Thisbe rich in doves, and
those who lived around Coronea and grassy Haliartus,
those who inhabited Plataea and who lived in Glisas,
those who possessed Lower Thebes,* that well-built fortress,
and sacred Onchestus, Poseidon's splendid grove,
and who inhabited Arne, rich in vines, and who held Mideia
and sacred Nisa and Anthedon on the far borders.
Of these people, fifty ships had come, and in each
one hundred and twenty young Boeotians had embarked.

Those who lived in Aspledon and Minyan Orchomenus
were led by Ascalaphus and Ialmenus, sons of Ares,
whom Astyoche bore in the house of Actor, Azeus' son,
to mighty Ares; a modest virgin, she went up to her
chamber
and there the powerful god lay with her in secret.
Under these was marshalled a fleet of thirty hollow ships.

The captains of the Phocians were Schedius and
Epistrophus,
sons of Iphitus, the great-hearted son of Naubolus.
These were the men who held Cyparissus and rocky Pytho,
sacred Crisa and Daulis and Panopeus,
and those who occupied Anemoreia and Hyampolis,

and those whose homes were by the bright river Cephissus,
and those who inhabited Lilaea next to the springs of
Cephissus.

They were accompanied by forty black ships.

Their captains ordered the ranks of the Phocians and
stationed them on the left flank, close to the Boeotians.

The Locrians were commanded by Oïleus' son, swift
Ajax,
the lesser one, not as huge as Ajax, son of Telamon, but
much smaller. He was of slight build, and wore a linen
jerkin,
but he far excelled all the Hellenes and Achaeans with the
spear.

These were the men who lived in Cynus and Opous
and Calliarus, in Bessa and Scarphe and lovely Augeiae,
Tarphe and Thronion, and the land around
Boagrius' waters.

Accompanying Ajax came forty black ships
of the Locrians who live opposite sacred Euboea.

As for the fury-breathing Abantes, who held Euboea,
Chalcis and Eiretria and Histiaea, rich in vines,
Cerinthus next to the sea and the steep fortress of Dius,
those who inhabited Carystus and those who lived in Styra

—
these in their turn were commanded by Elephenor, a shoot
of Ares,*

son of Chalcodon, captain of the great-hearted Abantes.
With him came the swift Abantes, their hair streaming
behind them,

spearmen raging with their out-thrust ash shafts
to tear through the corslets on their enemies' chests.
Accompanying Elephenor came forty black ships.

Then there were those who lived in Athens, a well-built
city,
the people of great-hearted Erechtheus, whom long ago

Athena

Zeus' daughter nurtured, after the grain-giving earth had borne him,

and established him in Athens, in her own rich temple;
and there with an offering of bulls and rams the young men

of the Athenians appease him in each year's wheeling course.

These in their turn were commanded by Menestheus, Peteus' son.

No man had yet been born upon earth who was his equal in the deployment of chariots and shield-bearing men; only Nestor could rival him, since he was from an older time.

Accompanying Menestheus came fifty black ships.

Ajax brought twelve ships from Salamis, and stationed them where the Athenians' troops were deployed.

As for those who inhabited Argos and fortified Tiryns, Hermione and Asine which lie on the deep gulf, Troezen and Eionae, and vine-bearing Epidaurus, and those young Achaean men who held Aegina and Mases,

they in their turn were led by Diomedes, master of the war-cry,

and Sthenelus, dear son of far-famed Capaneus.

Third with them came Euryalus, a man resembling the gods,

son of Mecisteus the king, who was the son of Talaus.

Diomedes, master of the war-cry, commanded the whole force,

and accompanying them came eighty black ships.

As for those who inhabited the well-built city of Mycenae,

wealthy Corinth and well-built Cleonae,

and who lived in Orneiae and lovely Araethyrea,
and Sicyon, where Adrestus was the first king,
and those who inhabited Hyperesie and steep Gonoëssa
and Pellene, and had their home in Aegion
and all the coastal strip of Aegialus, and broad Helice—
the captain of their hundred ships was Agamemnon,
son of Atreus, and with him came by far the most
numerous
and best men. He stood in their midst, armed in flashing
bronze,
exulting, conspicuous among all the heroes because
he was the best, and brought by far the largest army.

As for those who lived in low-lying Lacedaemon, riven
by
gorges, in Pharis and Sparta and Messe rich in doves,
and who lived in Bryseiae and lovely Augeiae,
and those who held Amyclae and the maritime fortress of
Helus,
and who possessed Laas and lived around Oetylus,
these and their sixty ships were commanded by his
brother,
Menelaus, master of the war-cry. They were stationed
apart,
and he moved among them, drawing strength from his
passion,
urging them on to battle; most of all he desired in his
heart
to exact vengeance for Helen's struggles and groans.

As for those who lived in Pylos and lovely Arene,
Thryon where Alpheus is forded, and well-built Aepy,
and whose home was Cyparesseis and Amphigeneia,
Pteleus and Helus and Dorion, where the Muses
met Thamyris the Thracian on his way from Oechalia,
from the house of Eurytus the Oechalian, and ended his
singing,

because he boasted that he would win the prize, even if
the
Muses themselves, daughters of aegis-wearing Zeus, were
to sing;
in their anger they mutilated him, and took away his
marvellous
gift of singing, and made him forget his lyre-playing art.
Of these the commander was the horseman, Gerenian
Nestor,
and with him were mustered ninety hollow ships.

As for those who held Arcadia, under Cyllene's steep
mountain,
near the tomb of Aepytus, where men fight hand to hand,
and those who lived in Pheneus and Orchomenus, rich in
flocks,
Rhipse and Stratiö and Enispe, swept by winds,
and those who possessed Tegea and lovely Mantinea,
and those who possessed Stymphelus, and who lived in
Parrhasiö, these were commanded by the son of Ancaeus,
lord Agapenor, with sixty ships; and in each ship
many men of Arcadia skilled in warfare had embarked.
Atreus' son Agamemnon, lord of men, had himself given
them
well-benched ships to cross the wine-faced open sea,
since they had no knowledge of seafaring matters.

As for those who lived in Buprasium and glorious Elis,
all the land that Hyrmene and Myrsinus on the far borders
and the rock of Olenus and Alesion enclose between them,
of these there were four captains, and each man was
accompanied
by ten swift ships, and many Epeians had embarked on
them.
Some were commanded by Amphimachus and Thalpius,
one a son of Cteatus and the other of Eurytus, both of
Actor's family.

Diores, the mighty son of Amarynceus, was captain of the third,

and godlike Polyxeinus was captain of the fourth division, the son of king Agasthenes, who was the son of Augeas.

As for those from Dulichium* and the sacred Echinean Islands, who live across the sea opposite Elis, these were commanded by Meges, the equal of Ares, Phyleus' son, whom the horseman Phyleus, dear to Zeus, fathered;

he had long ago quarrelled with his father and migrated to Dulichium. Accompanying him came forty black ships.

Odysseus led the great-spirited Cephallenians, who held Ithaca and Neritum with its trembling leaves, and lived in Crocyleia and rugged Aegilips, and those who possessed Zakynthos and inhabited Samos, and those who possessed the mainland and the coast opposite.

Of these the captain was Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in scheming.

Accompanying him came twelve ships with red-painted prows.

Thoas, son of Andraemon, commanded the Aetolians who occupied Pleuron and Olenus and Pylene, Chalcis that lies on the coast, and rocky Calydon; the sons of great-hearted Oeneus were no longer alive, nor Oeneus himself, and fair-haired Meleager was dead,* to whom all power had been entrusted to rule over the Aetolians.

Accompanying him came forty black ships.

The Cretans' commander was Idomeneus, famed with the spear.

They possessed Cnossus and fortified Gortyn, Lyctus and Miletus, and Lycastus with its chalk cliffs, and Phaestus and Rhytion, well-populated cities; and there were other men, who lived in Crete of the hundred

cities.

Of all these Idomeneus, famed with the spear, was commander,
and with him Meriones, the equal of Enyalios, killer of men.

Accompanying them came eighty black ships.

Tlepolemus, the valiant and mighty son of Heracles, brought from Rhodes nine ships of proud Rhodians, who lived on Rhodes in three separate settlements, Lindos and Ialysos and Cameiros with its chalk cliffs. Their commander was Tlepolemus, famed with the spear, whom Astyocheia bore to mighty Heracles, when he had carried her off from Ephyra, from the river Selleis, after sacking many cities of strong young men, nurtured by Zeus.

Now when Tlepolemus had grown up in their well-built house

he soon afterwards killed his father's maternal uncle, Lycimachus, a shoot of Ares, who was now an old man.

At once he built some ships, and assembling a great company

fled away across the sea, because the other sons and grandsons of mighty Heracles had threatened him.

After many wanderings and hardships he came to Rhodes, and his men settled there by tribes in a threefold division, and were loved by Zeus, who rules over both gods and men,

and the son of Cronus showered them with astounding wealth.

Nireus brought three well-balanced ships from Syme, Nireus, the son of Aglaea and lord Charopos, Nireus, who was the handsomest man of all the Danaans who

came to besiege Ilium, excepting the blameless son of

Peleus;

but he was a feeble man, and few people came with him.

As for those who possessed Nisyros, Crapathos, and Casos, and Cos, city of Eurypylus, and the Calydnian Islands, these men were commanded by Pheidippus and Antiphus, the two sons of King Thessalus, the son of Heracles, and with them were mustered thirty hollow ships.

Now all those whose home was Pelasgian Argos, and those who lived in Alus and Alope, and those from Trachis, and those who possessed Phthia and Hellas of beautiful women, and were called Myrmidons and Hellenes and Achaeans, the captain of their fifty ships was Achilles. But they had no thought for war's hideous clamour, because there was no one to lead them in the battle line; glorious swift-footed Achilles was lying among the ships, angry over the girl, Briseus' daughter of the beautiful hair, whom he had chosen from Lyrnessus' spoils after much labour, when he had sacked Lyrnessus and the walls of Thebe, and had struck down Mynes and Epistrophus, famous spearmen, who were the sons of King Euenus, son of Selepus. And so he lay there, grieving for her; but he was soon to rise again.

As for those who possessed Phylace and flowery Pyrasus, the precinct of Demeter, and Iton mother of flocks, Antron by the sea and Pteleus with its beds of grass, these were commanded by warlike Protesilaus while he was alive, but now the black earth held him below.

His wife was left behind in Phylace, tearing her cheeks in grief,
in a half-built house. One of Dardanus' people killed him
as he leapt from his ship, the very first of the Achaeans.
Even so
they were not leaderless, though they yearned for their
captain;
Podarces, a shoot of Ares, was their marshal, Iphicles'
son, who was himself the son of Phylacus rich in flocks,
and he was full brother to great-hearted Protesilaus,
and older than him in years; but the hero warlike
Protesilaus
was the better man, and more skilled in war. His people
did not lack a leader, though they longed for this fine man.
Accompanying Podarces came forty black ships.

As for those who lived around Pherae beside Lake
Boebaïs,
in Boebe and Glaphyrae and well-built Iolcus,
the captain of their eleven ships was Admetus' dear son,
Eumelus, borne to him by Alcestis, bright among women,
the most beautiful of the daughters of Pelias.

As for those who lived in Methone and Thaumacië
and possessed Meliboea and rugged Olizon,
their captain was the skilled archer Philoctetes,
in charge of seven ships; in each of them fifty rowers
had embarked, well skilled in fighting strongly with their
bows.

But he was lying on an island, enduring cruel agonies,
on sacred Lemnos, where the Achaeans' sons had left him,
suffering from the foul wound of a deadly water-snake.
There he lay in torment; but the Argives would soon
turn their minds to lord Philoctetes beside their ships.*

Even so
his men were not leaderless, though they longed for their
captain;

Medon, the bastard son of Oileus, was their marshal,
he whom Rhene had borne to Oileus, sacker of cities.

As for those who possessed Tricce and craggy Ithome,
and those who held Oechalia, city of Oechalian Eurytus,
these men were commanded by the two sons of Asclepius,
excellent healers both, Podaleirius and Machaon;
and with them were mustered thirty hollow ships.

Those who possessed Ormenion and the spring
Hypereia,
and those who possessed Asterion and Titanus' white
peaks
were led by Eurypylus the splendid son of Euaemon.
Accompanying him came forty black ships.

As for those who possessed Argissa and lived in
Gyrtone,
in Orthe, and the city of Elone and white Oloösson,
they were commanded by Polypoetes, steadfast in war,
the son of Peirithous, who was fathered by immortal Zeus;
renowned Hippodameia had borne him to Peirithous
on the day that he took his revenge on the hairy
Centaurs*
and expelled them from Pelion as far as the Aethices' land;
he was not alone, but with him came Leonteus, a shoot of
Ares,
son of high-hearted Coronus, himself the son of Caeneus.
Accompanying them came forty black ships.

Gouneus brought twenty-two ships from Cyphus.
Following him were the Enienes and the Peraebi, steadfast
in war,
who made their homes around Dodona, where winters are
harsh,
and by those who worked the land around lovely
Titaressus,
which pours out its beautiful waters into the Peneius,
though it does not mingle with silver-eddy Peneius,

but flows along on its surface like olive oil; it is a branch of the waters of Styx, dreadful river of oaths.*

Prothous, son of Tenthredon, was captain of the Magnetes, who lived around Peneius and Pelion with its quivering leaves. The swift Prothous was their commander, and accompanying him came forty black ships.

These then were the leaders and commanders of the Danaans.

Now tell me, Muse, who was the most outstanding of those who followed Atreus' sons, both themselves and their horses.

The finest horses belonged to the son of Pheres, now driven by Eumelus; they were swift as birds, and were alike in coats and age, their backs dead level measured by the rule.

Apollo of the silver bow had raised them in Pereia, both mares, and they carried in them the terror of Ares. Of men, by far the best was Ajax, Telamon's son, so long as

Achilles kept up his anger; but Achilles was much the strongest,

as were the horses which carried Peleus' blameless son; but he was lying beside his curved sea-traversing ships, full of anger against Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, the son of Atreus; and his people were amusing themselves

on the seashore by throwing the discus and javelin, and shooting with the bow; and each man's horses stood beside

his chariot, cropping clover and wild, marsh-growing parsley,

doing nothing. The chieftains' chariots stood well covered near

their huts, while the men, yearning for their captain, loved by Ares, wandered up and down through the camp and did not fight.

So the Achaeans marched on as if the whole earth were grazed by fire, and the ground under their feet groaned as if thunder-delighting Zeus was angry, as when he lashes the earth around Typhoeus in the land of the Arimi, where men say is Typhoeus' bed. * Just so the earth groaned loudly under their feet as they marched; and very quickly they crossed the plain.

Now to the Trojans a messenger came, wind-footed swift Iris, with a message for them, full of pain from aegis-wearing Zeus.

They were holding an assembly at Priam's gates, all gathered together, both the young and the old; and swift-footed Iris stood close to Priam and addressed him, likening her voice to that of Priam's son Polites, who was the Trojans' lookout, and, trusting in his feet's speed, used to sit

on top of the burial-mound of ancient Aesyetes,* watching for when the Achaeans would attack from their ships.

Assuming this man's likeness, swift-footed Iris addressed Priam:

'Old man, it is always your way to delight in endless speeches, just as before in times of peace; but now relentless war has arisen.

I tell you, I have taken part in many battles of men, but never before have I seen such a host, nor one so numerous.

More than anything, they are like leaves or grains of sand

as they march, ready to fight, over the plain towards the city.

Hector, to you especially I give this command, and you must carry it out:

there are many allies throughout the great city of Priam, speaking

different tongues, for they come from peoples spread over the earth;

let each one of these give orders to those he rules over, and let him marshal his countrymen and then lead them out.'

So she spoke, and Hector did not fail to recognize a goddess' voice,

and quickly broke up the assembly. The Trojans rushed to arms,

all the gates were opened, and the peoples streamed out, on foot and in chariots, and a great clamour arose.

There is in front of the city a steep mound, set at some distance from it on the plain, with clear space around it, to which men give the name of Batieia, but the immortals call it the burial-mound of the dancer Myrine.*

There now the Trojans and their allies marshalled themselves.*

The Trojans' commander was great Hector of the glittering helmet,

Priam's son; and with him were armed by far the best and most numerous people, raging to fight with their spears.

The captain of Dardanus' people was the valiant son of Anchises,

Aeneas, whom the goddess Aphrodite bore to Anchises, a goddess lying with a mortal on the slopes of Ida.

He was not alone, but with him were the two sons of Antenor,

Archelochus and Acamas, well skilled in all the arts of battle.

Those who inhabited Zeleia, under the lowest shoulder of Ida,
wealthy men, who drank the black waters of Aesepus,
called Troes—these were led by the splendid son of Lycaon,
Pandarus, to whom Apollo himself had given his bow.

As for those who held Adresteia and the land of Apaesus,
and possessed Pityeia and the steep mountain of Tereia,
their captains were Adrestus and Amphius of the linen jerkin,
the two sons of Merops from Percote, who above all men was skilled in seercraft; he tried to prevent his sons from going to man-destroying war, but they would not listen
to him, for the spectres of black death were leading them on.

As for those who occupied Percote and Practius,
and possessed Sestus and Abydus and bright Arisbe,
their captain was Asius, son of Hyrtacus, marshal of the army—
Asius, son of Hyrtacus, whom huge gleaming horses had brought from Arisbe, which is near the river Selleïs.

Hippothous led the tribes of Pelasgians, famous spearmen,
who had their home in Larisa of the rich soil.
Their captains were Hippothous and Pylaeus, shoots of Ares,
two sons of Pelasgian Lethus, who was himself the son of Teutamus.

Acamas and the hero Peirous were leaders of the Thracians,

all those whose lands the strong-flowing Hellespont encloses.

Captain of the Ciconian spearmen was Euphemus, son of Troezenus, who was himself the son of Ceas, nurtured by Zeus.

Pyraechmes led the Paeonians with their curved bows from far-off Amydon, by the broad-flowing Axios, whose water is the most beautiful that flows over the earth.

The Paphlagonians were led by hairy-chested Pylaemenes, from the land of the Eneti, home of a strain of wild mules; they possessed Cytorus and inhabited Sesamon, living in splendid houses around the river Parthenius and Cromne and Aegialus and lofty Erythini.

The Halizones' captains were Odius and Epistrophus from far-off Alybe, which is the birthplace of silver.

The Mysians' leaders were Chromis, and Ennomus the bird-seer—though bird-lore could not save him from black doom; he was beaten down by the hands of Aeacus' swift-footed grandson in the river, along with the other Trojans he cut down there.

Phorcys and godlike Ascanius were leaders of the Phrygians from far off Ascanië; and they were raging to fight in the crush of battle.

The Maeonians were commanded by Mesthles and Antiphus, two sons of Talaemenes, whom the lake Gygaea bore; they led the Maeonians, whose homeland was under Tmolus.

Nastes commanded the Carians, who spoke a foreign tongue;
they held Miletus and the thickly wooded Mount Phthires,
and the waters of Maeander and Mycale's steep peaks.
Their leaders were Amphimachus and Nastes,
Nastes and Amphimachus, splendid sons of Nomion.
Amphimachus came to the war wearing gold ornaments,
like a girl,
the fool; they gave him no protection against miserable death
when beaten down by the hands of Aeacus' swift-footed grandson,
in the river; and war-minded Achilles carried off his gold.

Sarpedon and blameless Glaucus were captains of the Lycians,
who came from far-off Lycia, beside the rolling Xanthus.

BOOK THREE

Now when both sides had been marshalled with their leaders,
the Trojans advanced, screeching and shouting like birds;
as when the screech of cranes is heard in the high sky,
when they have fled from winter's onset and prodigious rain,
and screaming fly towards the streams of Ocean,*
bringing death and destruction to the Pygmy men,*
challenging them through the air to deadly conflict.
But the Achaeans went on in silence, breathing fury,
raging in their hearts to fight on each other's behalf.

As when the South Wind sheds a mist over mountain peaks—
no friend to shepherds but for the thief better than night—
when a man can see only as far as he can throw a stone,
so under their feet a dense cloud of dust arose from the men
as they marched; and very quickly they crossed the plain.

When they had advanced to within close range of each other,
from the Trojans Alexander,* handsome as a god, came out to fight,
wearing over his shoulder a leopard-skin and a curved bow and a sword; shaking his two spears, tipped with bronze, he issued a challenge to all the best men of the Argives to fight with him in grim conflict, matching strength to strength.

When Menelaus, dear to Ares,* caught sight of Alexander

advancing with great strides in front of the soldiery,
just as a lion exults when it lights upon a great corpse,
discovering an antlered stag or a wild goat—the lion is
starving, and devours it quickly, in case swift hounds
and strong young men are on its trail—so Menelaus
exulted when his eyes fell on Alexander, handsome as a
god,
and, thinking to avenge himself on the wrongdoer,
he quickly leapt fully armed from his chariot to the ground.

Now when Alexander, handsome as a god, saw him
appear
in the front ranks, his dear heart was shattered, and he
withdrew into his companions' ranks, to avoid the death-
spectre.

As when a man who has seen a snake in a mountain glen
starts back, and a trembling seizes hold of his legs,
and he jumps backwards and pallor grips his cheeks,
so Alexander, handsome as a god, shrank back into the
mass of proud Trojans, terrified by the son of Atreus.

But when Hector saw him he rebuked him with shaming
words:

'Paris, Disaster-Paris, superbly beautiful, woman-crazy
seducer!

I wish you had never been born, or had else died
unmarried.

Indeed I would have preferred this, and it would have been
far better

for you than to be thus mocked and despised by others.

How the flowing-haired Achaeans must laugh out loud,
thinking

that with us a chieftain becomes a champion only because
he is

handsome to look at, even if there is no strength or
courage in his heart.

Was this how you were when you sailed over the sea

in your sea-traversing ships with a band of trusty
companions,
and lived among foreigners and carried off a beautiful
woman
from a distant land, kin of spear-fighters as she was,
to be a great affliction to your father, the city, and all the
people,
but a delight to your enemies and a disgrace to yourself?
Can you really not stand up against Menelaus, dear to
Ares?
You would find out what kind of man he is whose lovely wife
you keep;
and then your lyre would be of no help to you, nor
Aphrodite's gifts,
nor your hair and beauty, when you roll in the dust's
embrace.
But the Trojans are great cowards; otherwise by now you
would be
wearing a stone garment,* in return for all the misery you
have caused.'

Then Alexander, handsome as a god, addressed him in
turn:

'Hector, you reproach me deservedly, and not beyond my
deserts—
always your heart is like an axe which keeps its edge, and
which cuts through a plank in the hands of a man who
shapes
ship-timber with his skill, and it adds power to his stroke;
just so is the never-wavering heart in your breast.
But do not throw the sensual gifts of golden Aphrodite in
my face;
indeed, men should never spurn the gods' splendid gifts,
that they alone can bestow, and no man can have them by
choice.
But now, if you want me to engage in the battle and fight,

make all the rest of the Trojans and Achaeans sit down, and set me in the middle ground against Menelaus, dear to Ares, to do battle for the sake of Helen and all her possessions; and whichever of us is victorious and proves the stronger, let him fairly take all the possessions and the woman, and carry them home. And let everyone else make a solemn truce and pledge friendship; so may you all live on in rich-soiled Troy, and may they return to horse-rearing Argos and Achaea, home of beautiful women.'

So he spoke, and hearing his words Hector was greatly pleased, and went into the middle ground and forced back the Trojans' companies, gripping his spear in the middle; and they all sat down. But the flowing-haired Achaeans began to shoot at him, making him their mark and trying to hit him with arrows and stones. Then the lord of men, Agamemnon, gave a great shout: 'Hold back, Argives; sons of the Achaeans, do not shoot! Hector of the glittering helmet is impatient to tell us something.'

So he spoke, and they held back from the fighting and quickly fell silent. Then Hector addressed both the armies: 'Listen to me, Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans, and hear the words of Alexander, on whose account this quarrel has arisen. His command is that all the rest of the Trojans and

Achaeans

should lay their fine armour on the earth that nourishes many,

and that he and Menelaus, dear to Ares, should fight alone in the middle ground for the sake of Helen and all her possessions.

Whichever of them is victorious and proves the stronger, let him

fairly take all the possessions and the woman and carry them home.

Let the rest of us make a solemn truce and pledge friendship.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still.

Then Menelaus, master of the war-cry, addressed them:

'Listen now to me too, for it is my heart that chiefly feels this pain; I am minded that today the Argives and Trojans should go their separate ways, since you have suffered much

because of my quarrel, and because of Alexander, who began it.

Whichever one of us has death and his destiny in store for him,

let him die, and the rest of you may quickly go your separate ways.

Now bring two lambs, one white and the other black, to be offered to Earth and Sun, and let us bring a third for Zeus.

Bring mighty Priam out here, so that he can make a solemn truce

in person; his sons are arrogant and unreliable, and he will make sure

no one oversteps the mark and so wrecks the oaths sworn by Zeus.

Young men's minds are for ever floating high in the air, but when an old man takes a hand he looks to the future

and the past,
and so the matter may be best concluded for both sides.'

So he spoke, and both Achaeans and Trojans were glad,
since they hoped to put an end to the miseries of war.
They held back their chariots in the ranks and jumped down
from them, and took off their armour and laid it on the
ground,
close to one another, and there was little space between
them.

Hector sent two heralds off to the city, with orders
to bring the lambs quickly and to summon Priam,
and lord Agamemnon sent Talthylus to go off to
the hollow ships, and ordered him to fetch two
lambs; and he did not disobey glorious Agamemnon.

Now Iris came with a message to white-armed Helen,
in the likeness of her husband's sister, the wife of Antenor's
son,
whom the lord Helicaon, the son of Antenor, had as his wife
—

Laodice, the most beautiful of the daughters of Priam.
She found Helen in her hall; she was weaving a great web,
a red double cloak, and on it she was working the struggles
of the horse-breaking Trojans and the bronze-shirted
Achaeans
that they were undergoing for her sake at the hands of
Ares.

Standing close to her swift-footed Iris addressed her:
'Come with me, dear bride, and witness the extraordinary
deeds
of the horse-breaking Trojans and the bronze-shirted
Achaeans:
those who before were waging tear-laden war on each
other
on the plain, and lusting after the deadly conflict,
are now, look, seated in silence, and the fighting has

stopped;
they are leaning on their shields, and their long spears are
stuck
in the ground beside them. Alexander and Menelaus, dear
to Ares,
are about to fight over you with their long spears, and
you will be famed as the dear wife of the one who wins.'

So the goddess spoke, and thrust into Helen's heart
sweet longing
for her former husband and her city and her parents.
At once she wrapped a white linen scarf round her head
and hurried from her chamber, shedding a soft tear,
not alone, but two women servants accompanied her:
Aethre daughter of Pittheus, and ox-eyed Clymene.
Quickly they reached the place where the Scaean gates*
were.

Those who attended Priam—Panthous and Thymoetes,
Lampus, Clytius and Hicetaon, shoot of Ares, and
Ucalegon and Antenor, both men of sound judgement, all
elders
of the people—these were sitting with him at the Scaean
gates.

Because of old age they had given up warfare, but they
were
excellent speakers, like cicadas which perch on trees
in a wood, singing away in their lily-like voices;
such were the leaders of the Trojans, as they sat on the
tower.

When they saw Helen making her way to the tower,
they spoke softly to one another, in winged words:

'It is not a matter of blame that the Trojans and well-
greaved

Achaean should suffer agonies for so long over such a
woman;

she is terribly like the immortal goddesses to look on.

But for all her beauty, it is better for her to go away in their ships,
and not stay here as a future affliction for us and our children.'

So they spoke, but Priam raised his voice and called to Helen:

'Come here, dear child, and sit beside me, so that you can see

your former husband, your kinsmen and your friends—you are not to blame in my eyes, but the gods are to blame,

who have stirred up tear-laden war for me with the Achaeans—

and so that you can give a name to that monstrous man, that valiant and mighty Achaean, and tell me who he is.

There are certainly others who are taller in stature, but I have never yet cast eyes on anyone as handsome as him, nor one so full of dignity. He looks like a kingly man.'

Then Helen, bright among women, answered him and said:

'Dear father-in-law, you deserve my respect and awe; evil death should have been my choice when I came here with your son, leaving my home and my family, my late-born daughter and the pleasant company of my friends.

But that is not how it happened, and so I waste away in tears.

Now I will tell you what you ask and question me about: that man is the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, both a noble king and a mighty spearman, and he was also my husband's brother, bitch-faced that I am—if this ever really happened.'

So she spoke, and the old man marvelled at him, and said:

‘Fortunate son of Atreus, child of good fortune, blessed by the gods,
you have indeed many sons of the Achaeans under your sway.

In time past I travelled to Phrygia, rich in vines, and there I saw a great many Phrygians, men with nimble horses, the peoples of Otreus and of godlike Mygdon,* who at that time were encamped along the banks of Sangarius.* I was their ally, you see, and was numbered among them on the day that the Amazons* came, who are a match for men.

But not even they were as many as the darting-eyed Achaeans.’

Next the old man’s eyes fell on Odysseus, and he asked her:

‘Come, tell me about this man too, dear child; who is he? He is shorter in stature than Agamemnon, son of Atreus, but broader in the shoulders and chest to look upon. His armour is lying on the earth that nourishes many, but he is prowling along the ranks of men like a ram; I would say he was like a thick-fleeced ram that roams in and out of a huge flock of white sheep.’

Then in answer Helen, daughter of Zeus, said to him: ‘Now that one is the son of Laertes, much-scheming Odysseus, who was reared in the land of Ithaca, rugged though it is, and who is skilled in all kinds of trickery and cunning schemes.’

Then in his turn sagacious Antenor addressed her: ‘Lady, what you have said is indeed quite true. Glorious Odysseus has been here before, some time ago with Menelaus, dear to Ares, on a mission concerning you.* I received them as guest-friends and welcomed them in my halls, and I came to know the appearance of both, and their

clever schemes.

When they mingled with the Trojans in their assembly and all were standing, broad-shouldered Menelaus was the taller,

and when both were sitting Odysseus was the more dignified.

But when they began to weave their cunning speeches before us all,

Menelaus for his part spoke with a rapid fluency, briefly but very clearly, not being a man of many words, nor stumbling in speech; and indeed he was the younger man.

But whenever much-scheming Odysseus leapt to his feet he would stand there and look down, eyes fixed on the ground,

not waving the staff backwards and forwards, but holding it stiffly, like a man who did not know what to do; you would take him for a surly person, a genuine fool.

But when he released his great voice from inside his chest, speaking words like flakes of snow falling in winter, then no other mortal could compete with Odysseus, and we were no longer so surprised at the sight of him.'

The third man whom the old man saw was Ajax, and he asked:

'Who is that other Achaean, a valiant and mighty man, whose head and broad shoulders stand out above the Argives?'

Then long-robed Helen, bright among women, answered:

'That is the massive Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans. And on the other side, among the Cretans, stands Idomeneus, like a god, and around him are gathered the Cretan captains.

Many times Menelaus, dear to Ares, entertained him

in our house, whenever Idomeneus came from Crete.
And now I can see all the other darting-eyed Achaeans,
whom I could easily recognize and name for you,
but there are two marshals of the peoples I cannot see:
horse-breaking Castor and Polydeuces the skilful boxer,
full brothers of mine, born to the same mother as me.
Either they did not accompany the army from lovely
Lacedaemon,
or they did come here in their sea-traversing ships
but are now reluctant to enter the battle of men, made
uneasy by my disgrace and the many insults against me.'

So she spoke; but the life-giving earth already held
them
back home in Lacedaemon, in their dear native land.

Now heralds were bringing offerings to the gods
throughout the city,
to ratify the treaty—two lambs and cheering wine, fruit of
the earth,
in a goatskin bag; and Idaeus the herald brought a
shining mixing-bowl and wine-cups, made of gold,
and standing next to the old man Priam he roused him,
saying:
'Up now, son of Laomedon;* the chieftains of the Trojan
horse-breakers and the bronze-shirted Achaeans are calling
you to go
down on to the plain, to make a solemn truce.
Alexander and Menelaus, dear to Ares, are about
to fight for the woman's sake with their long spears;
the woman and her possessions will go to the one who
wins,
and the rest of us will make a solemn truce and pledge
friendship—
we to live on in rich-soiled Troy, and they to return to
horse-rearing Argos and Achaea, home of beautiful
women.'

So he spoke, and the old man shuddered, and told his companions
to yoke the horses, and they quickly obeyed his order.
Priam mounted the chariot and pulled back on the reins,
and
Antenor climbed into the finely made chariot beside him,
and
they drove the swift horses through the Scaean gates on to
the plain.

When they reached the assembled Trojans and
Achaeans,
they got down from the chariot to the earth that nourishes
many
and strode to the middle ground between the Trojans and
Achaeans.

Immediately Agamemnon, lord of men, rose to his feet,
and with him much-scheming Odysseus. Excellent heralds
drove the solemn truce offerings together, and mixed wine
in a bowl, and poured water over the kings' hands.
Then the son of Atreus with his hand drew the knife
that always hung next to his sword's great scabbard,
and cut hairs from the lambs' heads, and the heralds
distributed these among the Trojan and Achaean chieftains.
Then Atreus' son prayed in a loud voice, holding up his
hands:

'Father Zeus, ruling from Mount Ida,* greatest and most
glorious,
and you, Sun, who sees all things and hears all things!
Rivers and Earth, and you two who below the earth punish
men who have died, if any have sworn false oaths*—
be witnesses, and see that these solemn oaths are kept.
If it should happen that Alexander kills Menelaus, then
let him keep Helen for himself, and all her possessions,
and let us return home in our sea-traversing ships.
But if fair-haired Menelaus should kill Alexander, then

the Trojans must give back Helen and all her possessions, and must pay the Argives the compensation that is proper and recognized as such, even by generations in time to come.

But if Priam and the sons of Priam are unwilling to pay me compensation when Alexander has fallen, then I shall fight on after that to secure reparation, and I shall stay here until I reach the end of the war.'

So he spoke, and slit the lambs' throats with the pitiless bronze.

He laid them on the ground, gasping as their life ebbed away, for the bronze had taken away their strength.

Then they drew the wine from the mixing-bowl into cups and poured it out, and prayed to the gods who live for ever.

And this is what one of the Trojans or Achaeans would say: 'Zeus, greatest and most glorious, and all you other gods; whichever side is the first to violate these oaths, may their brains be poured out on the ground as this wine is, theirs and

their children's; and may their wives be mastered by strangers.'

So they spoke, but the son of Cronus did not yet fulfil their prayers.

And among them Priam of the line of Dardanus spoke, saying:

'Listen to me, Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans; I am now going back to Troy that is swept by the winds, since I cannot bring myself to see my dear son doing battle before my eyes with Menelaus, dear to Ares. Zeus doubtless knows, as do the other immortal gods, for which of the two the end of death has been appointed.'

So the godlike man spoke, and laid the lambs in his chariot, then mounted himself, and pulled back on the reins, and Antenor climbed into the finely made chariot beside

him.

So the two of them went on their way, back towards Ilium;
but Hector, the son of Priam, and glorious Odysseus
first measured out the ground, and after that
took two lots and shook them in a bronze helmet,
to see which man should throw his bronze-tipped spear
first.

And the peoples prayed, and held up their hands to the
gods,
and this is what one of the Achaeans or Trojans would say:
'Father Zeus, ruling from Mount Ida, greatest and most
glorious;
whoever it was who brought these troubles on to both
sides,
grant that he may die and go below into the house of
Hades,
but grant too that we may enjoy friendship and a solemn
truce.'

So they spoke, and great Hector of the glittering helmet
shook
the lots, looking away; and the lot of Paris quickly leapt out.
Then they all sat down in ranks, in the place where each
one's
high-stepping horses and finely worked armour lay.
Then that man put his fine armour on over his shoulders—
glorious Alexander, husband of Helen of the beautiful hair.
First of all he fastened greaves around his shins,
splendid ones, fitted with silver ankle-pieces;
then over his chest he put on a corslet which belonged
to his brother Lycaon; and it fitted him equally as well.
Around his shoulders he threw his silver-riveted sword,
made of bronze, and after that his huge, massive shield.
On his powerful head he set a well-made helmet with a
horse-tail crest; and the plume nodded terribly above him.
Then he chose a stout spear, which fitted his grasp.

And in the same way Menelaus, dear to Ares, put on his armour.

So when they were armed among the soldiery on either side,
they strode into the middle ground between Trojans and Achaeans,
glaring grimly at each other; and amazement gripped the onlookers,
both horse-breaking Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans.
They took their stand near each other on the measured ground,
shaking their spears and full of rage at each other.
Alexander was the first to throw his far-shadowing spear,
and it hit the perfectly balanced shield of Atreus' son, but
the spear did not shatter it, for its bronze point was bent back

on the mighty shield. Then Menelaus, Atreus' son, stood up
ready to throw the bronze, and made a prayer to father Zeus:

'Lord Zeus, grant me revenge on the man who wronged me
at the start,
glorious Alexander, and beat him down under my hands,
so that among later generations too a man may shudder to
think of wronging the host who has offered him friendship.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and
threw it,
and it hit the perfectly balanced shield of Priam's son;
the massive spear passed through the shining shield
and drove through the intricately worked corslet,
going straight on to cut through the tunic next to his ribs;
but Paris leaned aside and avoided the black death-spectre.
Then the son of Atreus drew his silver-riveted sword and
swinging his arm high struck the other's helmet plate, but
there
the sword shattered into three or four pieces, and fell from

his hand.

Atreus' son gazed up at the broad high sky and cried out:
'Father Zeus, there is no one who causes more mischief
than you!

Truly, I thought I had taken revenge on Alexander for his
villainy,
but instead my sword has broken in my hands, and my
spear
sped uselessly from my hand, and I did not strike him
down.'

So he spoke, and sprang and seized Paris by the
horsehair-crested helmet,
and swinging him round began to drag him towards the
well-greaved Achaeans.
Paris was being choked by the embroidered strap at his soft
throat,
which was drawn tight under his chin to secure his helmet;
and
now Menelaus would have dragged him away, winning
immense glory,
had not Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, been sharp enough to
see it,
and broken the strap that was made from a slaughtered
ox's hide.

The helmet came away empty in Menelaus' brawny hand,
and the hero whirled it round his head and flung it among
the well-greaved Achaeans, and his trusty companions
retrieved it;
then he leapt back towards Paris, raging to kill him with his
bronze-tipped spear; but Aphrodite snatched Paris away
very easily, as a god will do, wrapping him in a dense mist,
and set him down in his fragrantly perfumed chamber.

She herself went off to summon Helen, and found her
on the
high tower, with a large group of Trojan women around her.

Grasping Helen's nectar-scented veil in her hand she pulled it

and spoke to her, likening herself to a woman of many years,

a wool-comber, who when Helen lived in Lacedaemon used to work fine wool; and Helen loved her very much.

In the likeness of this woman bright Aphrodite addressed her: '

Come with me; Alexander is calling for you to return home. There he is in his chamber, on the spiral-decorated bed, glowing in his beauty and clothing. You would not think he had come from fighting with someone, but was going to the dance, or had just returned and was sitting down to rest.'

So she spoke, and quickened Helen's heart within her breast;

and when she recognized the goddess's beautiful neck, her desirable breasts and her bright-sparkling eyes, she was amazed, and spoke to her, saying:

'Lady, why are you so anxious to lead me astray like this? Are you intending to take me away to some well-populated city,

to somewhere in Phrygia or lovely Maeonia, where there is perhaps some other mortal man who is dear to you?

Or is it because Menelaus has overcome glorious Alexander,

and wishes to take me, loathed woman, to his home, that you now stand beside me here with guile in your heart?

Well, go and sit beside him yourself, and forsake the path of the gods, and never set your feet again on Olympus, but all the time suffer on his behalf and wait on him, until such time as he makes you his wife, or even his slave. As for me, I will not go there to serve that man's bed,

for that would bring blame on me; all future Trojan women will despise me, and I already have grief enough in my heart.'

At this bright Aphrodite became enraged and addressed her:

'Do not provoke me, obstinate woman, or I may grow angry and

desert you, and come to hate you as violently as now I love you;

I may well plan some fatal enmity between the two sides, Trojans and Danaans, and then you will die a wretched death.'

So she spoke, and Helen, daughter of Zeus, was afraid, and went away, covering her face with her shining white veil,

in silence, and no Trojan woman saw her; a divinity guided her.

When they reached the splendid house of Alexander, the women servants at once turned to their tasks, while she,

bright among women, went to her high-roofed chamber.

Then the goddess Aphrodite who loves to smile brought a chair and placed it for her opposite Alexander; and

Helen, daughter of Zeus the aegis-wearer, took her seat on it,

and turning her eyes away from him spoke sharply to her husband;

'So you have returned from the fighting! I wish you had died there,

beaten down by the mighty man who was my husband before you.

There was a time when you would boast that you were a better man

than Menelaus, dear to Ares, in strength of arm and with the spear;

so go now, make your challenge to Menelaus, dear to Ares, to fight you once again, face to face. But no—I advise you to hold back, and not to match your strength recklessly with fair-haired Menelaus in battle or in the fighting, because you may be quickly beaten down by his spear.’

Then Paris answered and addressed her with these words:

‘Wife, do not attack my heart with these harsh taunts. Yes, this time Menelaus defeated me, with Athena’s help, but another time I shall defeat him; we too have gods on our side.

Come now, let us go to bed and find delight in love; never before has desire enveloped my senses like this, not even when I first stole you away from lovely Lacedaemon

and sailed away in my sea-traversing ships, and on the island

Cranaë* I took you to bed and made love to you—that is how

I now desire you, and sweet longing takes hold of me.’

So he spoke, and led the way to the bed, and his wife went with him.

And so the two of them lay together on the fretted bed; but Atreus’ son prowled among the soldiery like a wild beast,

hoping to catch sight of Alexander, handsome as a god.

But no man of the Trojans or of their far-famed allies could point Alexander out to Menelaus, dear to Ares; certainly

they would not have hidden him out of love, if anyone had seen him, since they all hated him like the black death-spectre.

Then Agamemnon lord of men spoke among them:

‘Listen to me, Trojans and Dardanians and allies: since the victory clearly belongs to Menelaus, dear to Ares,

you must give back Argive Helen, and her possessions along with her, and must pay the compensation that is proper and recognized as such, even by generations in time to come.'

So spoke Atreus' son, and the rest of the Achaeans applauded him.

BOOK FOUR

Now the gods were sitting beside Zeus, gathered in assembly on a golden floor, and in their midst lady Hebe served them with nectar, and they pledged each other in golden cups, looking out towards the city of the Trojans. Then the son of Cronus tried to provoke Hera with taunting words, speaking out with a hidden purpose: 'Menelaus has a pair of goddesses to support him, Hera of Argos and Athena of Alalcomenae;* and yet they are sitting here as onlookers, leaving him alone and enjoying the spectacle, while Aphrodite who loves to smile stands always beside Paris, keeping away death's spectres; and just now she saved him when he thought he would die. Even so, the victory clearly belongs to Menelaus, dear to Ares, so let us consider how these things should be done: whether we should again stir up destructive war and grim conflict, or bring both sides together in friendship. If this second way proves pleasing and welcome to all, then the city of lord Priam could continue to thrive, and Menelaus could take Argive Helen home again.'

So he spoke, and Athena and Hera muttered to each other; they were sitting close together, plotting misery for the Trojans.

Athena was silent, and did not say a word, feeling resentful towards father Zeus, and harsh bitterness gripped her; but Hera's breast could not contain her anger, and she addressed him:

'Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said? How can you expect my toil to count for nothing, unfulfilled

—

the sweat that I poured painfully out, and my horses' weariness

as I was gathering a force to bring misery to Priam and his sons?

Do as you will—but, I tell you, we other gods will not all approve.'

Then, deeply angered, Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her:

'You are possessed! How have Priam and the sons of Priam done you such great wrong that you rage so relentlessly to tear Ilium apart, that well-built city?

Only if you were to enter its gates and long walls yourself, and to eat the raw flesh of Priam and the sons of Priam and the rest of the Trojans, would you perhaps satisfy your anger.

Do as you will. I would not want this quarrel to become a great conflict between the two of us in time to come—but I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your mind:

whenever it is my passionate desire to destroy a city and I choose one inhabited by men who are dear to you, do not try to thwart my anger, but leave me to do as I will. I give way to you in this willingly, though with an unwilling heart,

because of all the cities under the sun and the starry high sky

that are inhabited by men who live on the earth, the most prized in my heart was always sacred Ilium, and Priam and the people of Priam of the fine ash spear. Never has my altar lacked a fair share of the feast, of drink-offerings and the savour of burnt flesh, which is our privilege.'

Then the lady ox-eyed Hera answered him:

'There are three cities which are by far the dearest to me,

Argos and Sparta and Mycenae of the wide streets, and these you may sack, whenever they incur your heart's hatred.

I shall certainly not stand in your way, nor grudge them to you,

for if I was resentful and stopped you destroying them I would gain nothing by it, since you are far stronger than me.

But you must not allow my labour to come to nothing, since I too am divine and my ancestry is the same as yours, and

I am the most honoured of crooked-scheming Cronus' children,

in two ways: through my birth, and because I am renowned as your wife, and you are lord of all the immortals.

So—let us give way to each other in this matter,

I to you and you to me; and the rest of the immortal gods will follow us. Command Athena immediately to enter the grim conflict between Trojans and Achaeans; tell her to try to ensure that the Trojans are the first to give offence to the far-famed Achaeans, by breaking their oaths.'

So she spoke, and the father of gods and men did not disobey her,

but immediately addressed Athena with winged words:

'Go as fast as you can to the Trojan and Achaean camps, and try to ensure that the Trojans are the first to give offence to the far-famed Achaeans, by breaking their oaths.'

So speaking he roused Athena, who was already eager to go,

and she went swooping down from the peaks of Olympus.

Just as a meteor that the son of crooked-scheming Cronus sends as a portent to sailors or to a people's broad encampment,

a bright star, and a shower of sparks shoots out from it;

so Pallas Athena swooped down to earth, and sprang into the middle ground; and amazement gripped the onlookers, horse-breaking Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans alike. And this is what they would say, each man looking at his neighbour:

‘Surely evil war and grim fighting will break out again, or else Zeus will bring about friendship between both sides, Zeus who is the dispenser of war to mankind.’

That is what the Trojans and Achaeans were saying; and Athena stole into the mass of Trojans in the likeness of a man,

Laodocus, the son of Antenor, the mighty spearman, and looked for godlike Pandarus, in the hope of finding him. And she found him, the blameless and mighty son of Lycaon,

standing idle, and around him were strong ranks of shield-bearing

men, who had come with him from the waters of Aesepus.*

Standing beside him she addressed him with winged words:

‘War-minded son of Lycaon, will you perhaps do as I tell you,

and have the courage to let fly a swift arrow at Menelaus, and so win gratitude and glory before all the Trojans, but most of all in the sight of the prince Alexander?

From him especially you would be sure to receive splendid gifts,

if he were to see Menelaus, the warlike son of Atreus, struck down by your shaft and laid on the painful pyre.

So come, shoot an arrow at splendid Menelaus,

and vow to sacrifice to Lycian-born Apollo,* renowned with the bow, a splendid hecatomb of first-born lambs when you return to your home in Zeleia, the sacred city.’

So Athena spoke, and swayed the thoughts of a thoughtless man.

At once he took out his well-polished bow, made from the

horns
of a full-grown wild goat that he himself had once shot in
the chest
as it emerged from a rocky place while he waited in a hide,
and he hit it in the chest; and it fell backwards on to the
rock.

On its head grew horns of sixteen palms' length, and
these a craftsman who worked in horn had fitted together,
smoothing the whole bow skilfully, and adding a tip of gold.
Pandarus braced the bow's point firmly against the ground,
and bent it back and strung it, and his excellent
companions held
their shields in front of him, in case the warlike sons of the
Achaeans
charged him before Menelaus, Atreus' warlike son, was shot
down.

Then he opened the lid of his quiver, and from it took an
arrow,
feathered, not yet released, and a bearer of black agony.
Quickly he fitted the bitter shaft to the bowstring and
vowed to sacrifice to Lycian-born Apollo, renowned
with the bow, a splendid hecatomb of first-born lambs
when he returned to his home in Zeleia, the sacred city.
Then, gripping the notches and ox-gut string together, he
pulled,
bringing the string back to his chest and the iron tip to the
bow.

When he had bent the great bow so that it made an arc
it sang out, the string gave a loud cry, and the sharp arrow
leapt forth, raging to fly into the enemy soldiery.

But, Menelaus, the blessed immortal gods had not
forgotten you,
and the first to your aid was Zeus' daughter who gathers
the spoils.*

She stood before you and fended off the sharp-pointed

arrow,
turning it away from your flesh just like a mother brushing
a fly from her child who is lying in sweet sleep, and with
her own hand she guided it instead to where its gold
buckles
held his belt together and overlapped the double corslet.
The bitter arrow struck the close-fitting belt, and driving
through the elaborately decorated belt forced its way
through the finely worked corslet and the loin-plate,
a defence against missiles, that he wore to shield his flesh;
this was his best protection, but the arrow flew straight
through it too, just grazing the surface of the hero's flesh;
and at once dark blood began to flow from the wound.

As when a woman stains ivory with purple dye,
a woman of Maeonia or Caria,* to be a cheek-piece for
horses;
it lies in the store chamber, and many horsemen pray
that their horse might wear it, but it lies there, a king's
delight,
both an adornment for his horse and a glory for his
charioteer;
just so, Menelaus, were your shapely thighs stained
with blood, and your shins and handsome ankles below.

At this Agamemnon, lord of men, shuddered,
when he saw the black blood flowing down from the wound,
and Menelaus himself, dear to Ares, shuddered too;
but when he saw that the barbs and binding were still
outside his flesh the spirit was gathered back into his
breast.

With a deep groan lord Agamemnon spoke to his
companions,
holding Menelaus by the hand, and they groaned with him:
'Dear brother, so it was for your death that I swore those
oaths,
setting you alone in front of the Achaeans to fight the

Trojans;
now they have shot you, and trampled on the solemn
oaths.
But an oath cannot count for nothing, nor the blood of
lambs,
nor unmixed wine libations, nor our right hands that
confirmed the pact.
Even if the Olympian does not bring fulfilment immediately,
he will do so in full, however late, and men will pay a high
price,
with their own lives and with their wives' and children's
lives as well:
for I know this very well in my mind and in my heart,
that there will come a day when sacred Troy will be
destroyed,
and Priam and the people of Priam of the fine ash spear,
and
Zeus, the son of Cronus, seated on high, dwelling in the
upper air,
will himself shake the dark aegis in the face of all men,
in anger at their oath-breaking. So this will not be
unfulfilled;
but terrible grief will come on me because of you,
Menelaus,
if you die here and complete your life's allotted portion.
And then I will return to thirsty Argos covered in contempt,
for the Achaeans will immediately think of their homeland,
and we will abandon Argive Helen* here, for Priam and the
Trojans to boast over; and the ploughland will rot your
bones
as you lie here in Troy with your mission unaccomplished.
And this is what one of the arrogant Trojans will say as he
leaps up and down on the grave-mound of splendid
Menelaus:
"This is how Agamemnon's anger should always turn out!
He brought an army of Achaeans here on a useless errand,

and look, he has gone back home to his dear native land with empty ships, leaving the brave Menelaus behind.” So they will say; and then I hope the wide earth will gape before me.’

Then fair-haired Menelaus spoke, minded to give him courage:

‘Do not despair, and do not alarm the people of the Achaeans; the sharp arrow did not lodge in a fatal place; before it could, my bright gleaming belt protected me, and underneath it my body-shield and the loin-plate that bronze-smiths forged.’

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him:

‘Dear Menelaus, I pray that it is as you say. But a healer will attend to your wound and will spread ointments on it to deliver you from your black pain.’

So he spoke, and addressed Talthybius, the godlike herald:

‘Talthybius, go as fast as you can and summon here Machaon, the worthy son of Asclepius* the excellent healer, so that he can examine Menelaus, Atreus’ warlike son, whom some man skilled in archery has shot at and wounded— some Trojan or Lycian, bringing glory to himself but grief to us.’

So he spoke, and the herald heard and did not disobey him,

but set off for the people of bronze-shirted Achaeans, looking out keenly for the hero Machaon. He found him standing idle, and around him were strong ranks of shield-bearing

men, who had come with him from horse-rearing Tricce. Standing close, he addressed him with winged words:

‘Quickly, son of Asclepius! Lord Agamemnon summons you to examine Menelaus, the warlike captain of the Achaeans, whom some man skilled in archery has shot at and wounded—
some Trojan or Lycian, bringing glory to himself but grief to us.’

So he spoke, and quickened the spirit in Machaon’s breast,
and they set off through the soldiery along the wide Achaean camp.
When they reached the place where fair-haired Menelaus lay wounded, and around him all the best men were gathered
in a circle, he went and stood in their midst, a man like a god,
and at once pulled the arrow out from the close-fitting belt;
and as it was pulled out the sharp barbs were broken backwards.
Then he loosened the gleaming belt, and underneath it the body-shield and loin-plate that bronze-smiths had forged.
When he saw the wound, where the bitter arrow had struck, he sucked the blood from it and skilfully applied soothing ointments
that Cheiron had long ago given his father as a token of friendship.

While they were attending to Menelaus, master of the war-cry,
the ranks of shield-bearing Trojans came on at them, and the Achaeans armed again, and called up their desire for battle.

Then you would not have seen glorious Agamemnon drowsing,
nor shrinking in fear, nor hanging back from the fighting, but fervently eager for the battle where men win glory.
He left his horses behind, and his chariot, inlaid with

bronze;
his attendant kept the snorting horses in reserve—he was
Eurymedon, the son of Ptolemaeus, who was Peiraeus' son
—

and gave him strict orders to hold them nearby until
weariness
should overtake his limbs while he marshalled his many
troops;
and so on foot he roamed up and down the ranks of men.
If he saw any of the swift-horsed Danaans busying
themselves
he would stand nearby and try to strengthen their courage:
'Argives, do not let your surging courage ebb away;
men who swear falsely will get no help from father Zeus,
and
those who were the first offenders, by breaking their oaths,
will have their tender flesh devoured by vultures, while
we in our turn will carry off their dear wives and infant
children in our ships, when we have sacked their city.'

But whenever he saw men holding back from hateful
war
he would rebuke them severely with angry words:
'Contemptible Argive braggarts, have you no shame?
Why are you standing there in a daze, just like fawns
that are exhausted after running a long way over a plain,
and stop still, and there is no courage in their hearts?
That is how you are standing, in a daze, and not fighting.
Are you waiting for the Trojans to reach the place where
your ships
with their fine sterns are drawn up on the shore of the grey
sea,
to see if the son of Cronus will hold his protecting hand
above you?'

So he ranged through the ranks of men as their
commander,

and as he went among the mass of men he came upon the Cretans,
who were arming themselves under war-minded Idomeneus.

Idomeneus was in the front rank, like a wild boar in his courage,

and Meriones was urging on the rearmost companies.

When he saw them Agamemnon lord of men was delighted,
and he immediately addressed Idomeneus with gentle words:

‘Idomeneus, I esteem you above all the swift-horsed Danaans,

whether it is in war or in any other kind of enterprise,
or in feasting, whenever the best men of the Argives mix gleaming wine in a bowl for a meeting of elders.

While the other flowing-haired Achaeans may drink up only their fixed portion, your cup always stands full,
just as mine does, for you to drink when the spirit moves you.

Up, then, for battle! Be the man you have always claimed to be!’

Then in answer to him Idomeneus, leader of Cretans, spoke:

‘Son of Atreus, I will surely be your faithful companion,
just as I promised and undertook at the outset of this war. But you must stir up all the other flowing-haired Achaeans,
to fight as soon as we may, because the Trojans have undone

their oaths. Now death and calamity are in store for them,
since they were the first to offend, by breaking their oaths.’

So he spoke, and the son of Atreus passed on, glad in his heart.

As he went through the mass of men he found the two called Ajax;

they were arming, and a cloud of foot-soldiers came with

them.

As when a goatherd on his lookout sees a cloud
approaching over the open sea, driven by the West Wind,
and because he is far away it seems to him blacker than
pitch
as it advances over the sea and brings a great whirlwind
with it,
and he shudders when he sees it, and drives his flock into a
cave;
so the close-packed companies of Zeus-nurtured strong
young men
advanced towards the deadly battle under the two called
Ajax,
dark-coloured, and bristling with shields and spears.
When he saw them the lord Agamemnon was delighted,
and he addressed them, speaking with winged words:
'You two named Ajax, commanders of bronze-shirted
Argives,
I give you no orders, since it is not fitting to urge you on,
and you yourselves are driving your people to fight with
vigour.
Father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, how I wish that
there was a spirit like this in the breasts of everyone!
Then the city of lord Priam would quickly reel before us,
captured and devastated by our hands.'

So he spoke and left them, and went on in search of
others.

Next he found Nestor, the clear-voiced speaker of the
Pylians,
preparing his companions and urging them on to fight,
and they were led by huge Pelagon, and Alastor and
Chromius,
and lord Haemon, and Bias, shepherd of the people. He had
deployed the charioteers in front, with their horses and
chariots,

and behind them large numbers of excellent foot-soldiers,
to be a bulwark in war. The weakest he drove into the
middle,
so that even the reluctant would be compelled to fight.
First he gave orders to the charioteers, instructing them to
hold their horses back and not to cause disorder among the
soldiery:

‘Let no one, relying on his own chariot-skill and bravery,
be in a rage to fight the Trojans alone, in front of the rest,
nor let him retreat, for this way you will be the less
effective.

But if a man in his chariot comes within reach of an
enemy’s,
let him thrust with his spear, since that is much the better
way.

This is how men in times past would storm cities and their
walls,

keeping this strategy and resolution firmly in their hearts.’

So the old man urged them on, for he knew the wars of
long ago;

and when he saw him lord Agamemnon was delighted,
and addressed him, speaking with winged words:

‘Old man, I could wish that your knees’ vigour was equal to
the spirit in your breast, and your strength was unimpaired;
but

old age that comes to all wears you down. How I wish that
another

man could take on your age, and you could join the
younger men!’

Then Nestor the Gerenian horseman answered him:

‘Son of Atreus, I too could fervently wish myself to be
the man I was when I killed glorious Ereuthalion.*

But the gods do not grant everything to men at once;
I was a young man then, but now old age presses hard on
me.

Nonetheless, I shall go with my charioteers and direct them with counsel and in words, for that is the privilege of old men.

The spear-fighting will be done by younger men, who are later-born than me, and have confidence in their strength.'

So he spoke, and Atreus' son passed on, glad in his heart.

He found the son of Peteos, Menestheus, whipper of horses, standing idle, and with him were Athenians, raisers of the war-cry.

Close by them stood much-scheming Odysseus, and around him the ranks of Cephallenians, no weaklings, were standing idle, for their people had not yet heard the war-cry,

since the companies of horse-breaking Trojans and Achaeans

had but recently roused themselves to action. So they waited,

standing there, waiting until another Achaean band should advance

and make an attack on the Trojans, and so begin the fighting.

When he saw them Agamemnon, lord of men, rebuked them,

and he addressed them, speaking with winged words:

'Son of Peteos, who was a king nurtured by Zeus—
and you too, you expert in low cunning, obsessed with gain
—

why are you cowering here out of the way, waiting for others?

You two ought to be taking your stand among the front ranks

and going to face the searing heat of the battle.

You are the first to be invited to any feast of mine,
whenever we Achaeans prepare a feast for the elders,

where it is your pleasure to eat roast meat and drink,
cups of honey-sweet wine for as long as you wish; but now
you would happily look on even if ten Achaean squadrons
were
fighting with the pitiless bronze, before you stirred
yourselves.'

Then much-scheming Odysseus looked at him darkly
and replied:
'Son of Atreus, what words are these that cross your teeth's
barrier?
How can you say that I hang back from the battle,
whenever
we Achaeans stir up bitter war against the horse-breaking
Trojans?
If this is your concern and your desire, you will soon see
Telemachus'
dear father fighting in the thick of the front ranks of horse-
breaking
Trojans. But as for you, your words are nothing but empty
wind.'

At this lord Agamemnon smiled, when he saw that
Odysseus
was angry, and taking back his words answered him:
'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many
schemes,
I have no great need to rebuke you, nor am I giving you
orders,
because I know that the spirit which you keep in your
breast
is kindly disposed; and your thoughts are my thoughts.
So come; if hard words have been spoken, we shall later
make things right—and may the gods throw all this to the
winds.'

So he spoke and left them, and went in search of
others.

He found the son of Tydeus, high-spirited Diomedes,
standing
inactive surrounded by his horses and close-jointed
chariots,
and next to him was standing Sthenelus, son of Capaneus.*
When he saw Diomedes lord Agamemnon rebuked him,
and addressed him, speaking with winged words:
'Son of war-minded Tydeus the horse-breaker, what is this?
Why are you cowering here, eyeing the battle-lines?
Tydeus would not have been content to skulk like this,
but would engage the enemy far in front of his companions;
that is what those who saw him in action used to say. I
myself
never met or saw him, but they say he excelled all other
men.
He did once come to Mycenae, not with hostile intent
but as a guest, with godlike Polyneices, trying to raise an
army;
they were planning a campaign against Thebes' sacred
walls,*
and earnestly begged my people to give them illustrious
allies—
and they were ready to give them, and agreed to their
request.
But Zeus sent us ill-omened signs, and dissuaded us;
and so when they had set out and were some way on the
road,
and had come to Asopus' grassy meadows, thick with
reeds,
the Achaeans appointed Tydeus to be their envoy.
So he set off, and came upon a large number of
Cadmeians*
holding a feast in the house of powerful Eteocles.
Though he came as a stranger, alone among many
Cadmeians,
the horse-driver Tydeus was not afraid, but challenged

them

to athletic contests, and beat them in every event, easily; that was the kind of support that Athena gave him.

At this the Cadmeians, whippers of horses, grew angry, and on his way back they laid a strong ambush, gathering fifty young men together; and there were two captains, Maeon, son of Haemon, a man resembling the immortals, and Autophonus' son Polyphontes, steadfast in war.*

On these men too Tydeus let loose an ugly death, for he killed them all, sending only one back to his home; it was Maeon he sent, persuaded by signs from the gods. Such a man was Tydeus the Aetolian; but he fathered a son inferior to him in battle, though one better at making speeches.'

So he spoke, and mighty Diomedes gave him no answer,

put to shame by the rebuke of his respected king; but the son of splendid Capaneus answered:

'Son of Atreus, do not tell lies when you know the truth. We can claim to be much better than our fathers, since we actually captured the city of seven-gated Thebes,* though we led a smaller force, and against stronger walls, trusting in signs from the gods and in the help from Zeus, while they perished as a result of their own recklessness. So do not rank our fathers' honour equal to ours.'

But mighty Diomedes looked at Sthenelus darkly and said:

'Friend, be silent, sit down and listen to what I say. I am not angry with Agamemnon, shepherd of the peoples, because he is urging the well-greaved Achaeans to fight; it is him that the glory will attach to if the Achaeans cut down the Trojans and capture sacred Ilium, and his will be the greater grief if the Achaeans are cut down. So come, let us two also call up our surging courage.'

So he spoke, and jumped from his chariot to the

ground, fully armed,
and the bronze rang out terribly on the lord's chest as he leapt; and then even the most steadfast would have felt some fear.

As when waves of the sea beat on an echoing shore, in quick succession under the West Wind's driving force; they first raise themselves up on the open sea, and then break with a great roar on the dry land, and, arching high, rear to a crest on both sides of headlands and spew salt spray;
so then the companies of Danaans moved in quick succession relentlessly towards the battle; each one's leader gave the orders, and the rest came on in silence, and you would not think that so large an army had a voice in their breasts as they followed, so silent they were, in fear of their leaders. Around them all gleamed the finely worked armour that they wore in their ranks.
But as for the Trojans, just like sheep who stand in great numbers in the courtyard of a wealthy man, waiting to yield their white milk, bleating incessantly because they can hear their lambs' cries, so a confused clamour arose throughout their broad camp; they did not all use the same speech or language, but their tongues were mixed, summoned as they were from many lands.
Ares urged them on, and grey-eyed Athena urged the Achaeans, and there were Terror and Panic, and endlessly raging Strife, sister and companion of man-slaughtering Ares,

who at first raises herself to only a lowly height but later, though she walks on the earth, rears her head to reach the high sky.

She now cast the poised conflict into the middle ground, striding through the soldiery and swelling the agonized cries of men.

When the sides had met in a single place and come to grips, then there was a clash of leather shields and spears and the fury of bronze-armoured warriors. Bossed shields smashed against each other, and a tremendous clamour arose, made up of the groans of dying men and the exultant cries of their killers; and the earth ran with blood. As when two torrents in winter sweep down from the mountains and, fed by great springs, unite their floods in spate at a place where watercourses meet in some deep ravine, and a shepherd far away in the mountains hears their roar; such was the uproar and commotion of the armies as they clashed.

Antilochus was the first to kill a Trojan chieftain, a fine man fighting in the front rank, Echepolus, Thalysius' son.

Throwing first, he hit the plate of his horsehair-crested helmet; the bronze spear-point struck him on the forehead and pierced

right through the bone, and darkness covered his eyes, and he toppled like a tower in the fierce conflict.

When he fell lord Elephenor seized him by the feet, Elephenor

Chalcodon's son, captain of the great-hearted Abantes, and dragged him out of missiles' way, eager to strip him quickly

of his armour; but his eagerness was short-lived, because
as he dragged the dead man away great-spirited Agenor
saw him,
and, as he stooped, stabbed him with his bronze-tipped
spear
in the side where his shield left him exposed, and loosened
his limbs.

So his breath left him, and over him a grim tussle began
as Trojans and Achaeans fought each other; like wolves
they leapt upon each other, and man struggled with man.

Next Ajax, son of Telamon, felled the son of Anthemion,
Simoeisius, a man in the prime of youth, whom his mother
had borne by the banks of Simoeis on her way down from
Ida,
when she had been there with her parents to inspect their
flocks.

And so they called him Simoeisius, but he did not repay
his dear parents for his upbringing; his life-span was brief,
for he was beaten down by the spear of great-spirited Ajax.
As he advanced among the front ranks, Ajax struck him
on the right nipple, and the bronze tip passed clean
through

the shoulder, and he fell to earth in the dust like a poplar
that has grown tall in a wide, low-lying water-meadow;
it is trimmed below, but from the very top branches sprout,
and then a chariot-maker fells it with the flashing iron,
meaning to bend it into a wheel-rim for a handsome
chariot,

and it lies drying beside the banks of a river.

Such was Simoeisius, son of Anthemion, slain by Ajax
sprung

from Zeus. Then Antiphus of the bright corslet, Priam's son,
threw his sharp spear at Ajax from among the soldiery.
He missed him, but hit Leucus, Odysseus' excellent
companion,

in the groin as he was dragging the dead man to one side, and he collapsed over it and the body dropped from his hand.

Odysseus' spirit was deeply angered at Leucus' death, and he strode through the front-fighters helmeted in gleaming bronze;

taking his stand very close to Leucus he looked keenly around

and then threw his shining spear. The Trojans retreated when they saw him throw, and he did not let it fly in vain, but hit Democoön, one of Priam's bastard sons, who had come from Abydos, where he kept swift mares.

Odysseus, enraged for his companion, hit him with his spear

on the temple, and the bronze spear-point passed through and out the other side; darkness covered his eyes, and he fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him. The front-fighters retreated, and glorious Hector with them, and the Argives gave a great yell, and dragged the dead men back,

and pressed on even further. But Apollo, looking down from Pergamus,* grew indignant and shouted to the Trojans:

'Up with you, horse-breaking Trojans—do not yield the battle

to the Argives! Their flesh is not made of stone or iron, able to withstand the flesh-tearing bronze when they are hit.

Moreover Achilles, lovely-haired Thetis' son, is not fighting, but is brooding over his heart-sore bitterness beside his ships.'

So spoke the terrible god from the city, while the daughter

of Zeus, splendid Tritogeneia,* urged on any of the Achaeans

she saw holding back as she went among the soldiery.

Next, his due destiny shackled Diores, son of Amarynceus:
he was struck by a jagged stone on the right leg,
close to his ankle; a captain of the Thracians threw it,
Peirous, the son of Imbrasus, who had come from Aenus.
The pitiless stone smashed the two tendons to nothing,
and his bones as well, and he fell backwards in the dust,
stretching out both hands towards his dear companions,
gasping out his life. Peirous, the man who threw the stone,
rushed up and thrust his spear in by the navel; Diores' bowels
all spilled out on to the ground, and darkness covered his eyes.

But as Peirous ran back Thoas the Aetolian hit him with his spear
in the chest above his nipple, and the bronze point stuck fast
in his lung. Thoas came up close and wrenched the massive spear
out of his chest; then, drawing his sharp sword, he drove it into the middle of Peirous' belly, and robbed him of his life.
Yet he did not strip his armour; Peirous' companions surrounded him,
Thracians with hair piled high, and with long spears in their hands,
and though Thoas was huge and powerful and splendid they drove him back; and he was shaken, and gave ground.
So the two warriors lay stretched in the dust next to each other,
one a Thracian and the other a man of the bronze-shirted Epeians,
both leaders; and around them many others were being killed.

Then no longer could any man have faulted their war-work as he

entered the action—anyone who, as yet uninjured and
unstabbed by
piercing bronze, was roaming in the thick of battle, with
Pallas Athena
taking him by the hand and holding off the missiles' onset;
for on that day many men of the Trojans and Achaeans
lay sprawled next to each other, face down in the dust.

BOOK FIVE

NEXT, to Diomedes, the son of Tydeus, Pallas Athena gave fury and daring, so that he might distinguish himself among all the Argives, and also win illustrious fame. From his helmet and shield she caused unwearied fire to blaze, like the star* that in late summer rises to shine with especial brightness after it has bathed in the waters of Ocean. Such was the fire she made blaze from his head and shoulders, and she thrust him into the battle's midst, where the turmoil was greatest.

There was among the Trojans a man called Dares, a blameless, rich man, a priest of Hephaestus. He had two sons, Phegeus and Idaeus, both skilled in every art of battle. These separated themselves from the rest and rushed out to face Diomedes from their chariot, while he was on the ground, on foot. When they had advanced to within close range of each other, Phegeus was the first to fling his far-shadowing spear, but the spear-point passed over the left shoulder of Tydeus' son and did not hit him. Then Tydeus' son threw his bronze-tipped spear, and the weapon did not fly in vain from his hand, but hit Phegeus in mid-chest, and toppled him from the chariot. Idaeus sprang back, leaving his beautifully made chariot, and did not have the courage to stand over his slain

brother;
nor indeed would he himself have escaped death's black
spectre,
had not Hephaestus rescued him, shrouding him in night,
unharméd,
so that his old priest might not be utterly overwhelmed by
grief.

The son of great-spirited Tydeus drove off their horses
and gave them to his companions to take back to the
hollow ships.

When the great-spirited Trojans saw the two sons of Dares,
that one had fled and the other was lying dead by his
chariot,

anger swelled up in them all; but grey-eyed Athena took
impetuous Ares by the hand and addressed him in these
words:

'Ares, doom of mortals Ares, bloodstained sacker of walled
cities,
shall we not leave the Trojans and Achaeans alone to
struggle
together, and see to which side father Zeus grants the
glory?

Let us withdraw, and in this way avoid the anger of Zeus.'

So she spoke, and led impetuous Ares away from the
battle,

and made him sit beside the high banks of Scamander,
and the Danaans began to drive the Trojans back. Each of
their leaders killed his man: first, Agamemnon, lord of men,
toppled huge Odios, captain of the Halizones, from his
chariot;

he was the first to turn away, and Agamemnon planted his
spear

in his back between the shoulders, and drove it out through
his chest.

He fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him.

Then Idomeneus killed Phaestus, the son of Borus, the Maeonian, who had come from rich-soiled Tarne. Spear-famed Idomeneus pierced him with his long lance in the right shoulder as he was about to climb into his chariot; he tumbled from the chariot, and hateful darkness took him.

Idomeneus' attendants stripped him of his armour, and then Menelaus, Atreus' son, with his sharp spear killed Scamandrius, the son of Strophius, a man skilled in the chase, a fine hunter, whom Artemis herself had taught to shoot down all kinds of wild beasts that live in mountain forests.

But this time Artemis shooter of arrows could not help him, nor could the marksmanship in which he formerly excelled, because Atreus' son Menelaus, famed with the spear, struck him with a spear in the back as he fled before him, between the shoulders, and drove it through his chest. He collapsed on to his face, and his armour clattered about him.

Meriones struck down Phereclus, son of Tecton who was Harmon's son, who had the skill in his hands to fashion all kinds

of intricate work, for Pallas Athena loved him above all others.

It was he who had built for Alexander the well-balanced ships

which began the trouble, and brought misery to all the Trojans

and to himself, since he knew nothing of the gods' ordinances.

Meriones went after him, and when he caught up with him struck him in the right buttock, and the spear-point passed clean through under the bone into his bladder.

Phereclus screamed and fell to his knees, and death enveloped him.

Meges killed Pedaeus, son of Antenor—a bastard son, but glorious Theano had brought him up with the same faithful care that she gave to her own dear children, out of regard for her husband.

The spear-famed son of Phyleus came close to him and struck with his sharp spear at the muscle in his neck; the bronze passed clean through his teeth, severing the tongue's root, and he collapsed in the dust, the cold bronze clenched in his teeth.

Eurypylus, son of Euaemon, killed glorious Hypsenor, the son of proud-spirited Dolopion, who was the priest of Scamander and was honoured by the people as if he were a god.

As he fled before him Eurypylus, Euaemon's splendid son, ran him down and lunging forward drove his sword through Hypsenor's shoulder, and sheared off his heavy arm. The bloody arm fell to the ground, and dark death and his cruel destiny came down and fastened on his eyes.

So they laboured on in the fierce conflict. As for the son of Tydeus, you could not tell whose side he was on, whether he was allied with the Trojans or with the Achaeans.*

He stormed over the plain like a river in spate, a winter torrent that quickly sweeps dykes away in its surging course; close-built embankments cannot hold it back, nor can walls raised to defend flourishing orchards resist its sudden onslaught, when the heavy rain from Zeus has fallen,

and far and wide destroys the fruits of strong men's toil.
So the close-packed ranks of Trojans were thrown by
Tydeus' son
into confusion, nor for all their numbers could they
withstand him.

Now when Pandarus, the splendid son of Lycaon, saw
him

storming over the plain, scattering the companies before
him,

he quickly aimed his curved bow at the son of Tydeus,
and hit him in the right shoulder as he charged forward,
on a plate of his corslet. The bitter arrow flew through it,
holding a straight course, and his corslet was spattered
with blood.

Then Lycaon's splendid son let out a great shout over him:

'Up with you, great-spirited Trojans, whippers of horses!

The best of the Achaeans has been wounded, and I do not
think

he will long hold out against my mighty arrow, if it truly was
the lord son of Zeus* who sent me here when I left Lycia.'

So he spoke, boasting, but the swift arrow did not fell
Diomedes,

and he turned back and stood in front of his horses and
chariot and spoke to Sthenelus, son of Capaneus:

'Quick, dear son of Capaneus, get down from the chariot,
so that you can pull the bitter arrow from my shoulder for
me.'

So he spoke, and Sthenelus jumped from the chariot to
the ground,

and standing by him pulled the swift arrow out from behind
his shoulder,

and the blood speared up through the closely woven tunic.

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke in prayer:

'Hear me, daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis, Atrytone:

if ever you stood beside my father with kindly intent
in deadly war, this time be a friend to me too, Athena.
Let me kill this man; grant that he may come within my
spear-cast,
this man who shot me before I saw him, and who claims
that
I do not have long to look upon the bright light of the sun.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard him,
and brought lightness to his legs and his arms again.
Standing nearby she addressed him with winged words:
'Take courage now, Diomedes, to fight against the Trojans;
I have thrust into your breast the fury of your father,
fearless fury, such as the shield-wielding horseman Tydeus
had.

And I have taken from your eyes the mist that was there
before,
so that you can easily distinguish between god and man.
So if some god now comes down here to test you,
you must not fight face to face with any of the immortal
gods—
except only that if Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, enters
the battle, you may wound her with the sharp bronze.'

So grey-eyed Athena spoke, and went away, and the
son
of Tydeus at once set off and joined the front-fighters.
Though even before he was raging in his heart to fight the
Trojans,
yet now three times that fury seized him, like a lion that a
shepherd watching over thick-fleeced sheep in open
country
has wounded but not killed when it leapt over his
sheepfold's fence;
he has provoked its strength, but he cannot then defend his
flock,
and the lion gets into the enclosures, and the helpless

sheep

run about in panic. They fall in heaps, piled one on another, and the lion, still raging, leaps away over the fold's high fence.

So did mighty Diomedes plunge raging in among the Trojans.

Next he killed Astynous and Hypeiron, shepherd of the people;

one he pierced above the nipple with his bronze-tipped spear,

and struck the other's collarbone with his great sword next to the shoulder, and sheared it away from his back and neck.

He left them where they were, and went after Abas and Polyidus,

the sons of Eurydamas, the aged expounder of dreams.

He had interpreted no dreams for them when they left for Troy,

and now mighty Diomedes stripped them of their armour.

Next he went after Xanthus and Thoön, two sons of Phaenops,

both late-born; their father was now worn out by grim old age,

and had fathered no other son to inherit his possessions.

Diomedes killed them, depriving them of their dear lives, both of them, and bequeathed lamentation and cruel grief to their father, since he could not welcome them back alive from the war. Distant cousins shared out his wealth.

Next he caught two sons of Priam of the line of Dardanus,

Echemmon and Chromius, as they rode out in one chariot.

As a lion springs on a herd of cattle and breaks the neck of a calf or cow as they graze in a wooded place,

so the son of Tydeus thrust them both brutally from their chariot,

though they resisted, and stripped them of their arms.
He gave the horses to his companions, to drive back to the ships.

While he was spreading havoc among the ranks of men,
Aeneas
saw him and set off through the battle and the confusion of spears,
seeking godlike Pandarus, in the hope of finding him.
And he came upon the blameless and mighty son of Lycaon,
and standing before him spoke directly to him:
'Pandarus, where now are your bow and your winged arrows,
and your fame? No man here can compete with you in archery,
nor does any man in Lycia boast that he is better than you.
Come now, lift your hands to Zeus and let fly an arrow at this man,
the one who stands supreme here, who is inflicting great hurt
on the Trojans, loosening the knees of many fine men—
unless he is some god who has a grudge against the Trojans,
being angry over a missed offering; a god's anger is hard to bear.'

Then in answer the splendid son of Lycaon addressed him:
'Aeneas, counsellor of the bronze-shirted Trojans,
this man seems to me exactly like Tydeus' war-minded son,
for I recognize him by his shield and his vizored helmet,
and the look of his horses; but I do not know for sure if it is a god.
If this is the man I think it is, Tydeus' war-minded son, this crazed assault cannot happen without a god, and some immortal

must be standing close to him, his shoulders shrouded in mist,
who has turned aside the swift arrow that was on course to hit him;

I have already let fly an arrow at him, and it hit his right shoulder, passing right through the plate of his corslet, and I believed that I was on the point of sending him to Hades, but

even so I did not fell him. So some resentful god must be here.

Here I do not have horses, or a chariot that I can mount; yet in Lycaon's halls you must know that I have eleven chariots,

fine ones, freshly built, brand new. Over them cloths are spread, and next to each of them pairs of horses stand, champing on white barley and emmer wheat.

And indeed as I left, my father, the old spear-fighter Lycaon, gave me much advice in his well-built house, telling me I should take my stand in a horse-drawn chariot and lead the Trojans into the harsh conflict of battle.

I did not listen to him—and it would have been much better if

I had—wanting to spare my horses, in case they ran short of fodder in

places where men are crowded together, and they used to plentiful food.

So I left them behind, and I came to Ilium on foot, relying on my bow, but that was to turn out no use to me: already I have let fly an arrow at two of their champions, the son of Tydeus and Atreus' son, and in both I have made the blood flow with a clear hit, but it only provoked them

the more. So it was for a miserable destiny that I took down my

curved bow from its peg, on the day that I came leading my Trojans to beautiful Ilium, doing a service to glorious Hector.

But if I ever go back home and cast eyes on my native land,
on my wife and on my great high-roofed house,
may some stranger cut off my head, there and then,
if I do not smash this bow with my hands and throw it
into the blazing fire; it was useless gear to bring with me.'

Then Aeneas, captain of the Trojans, answered him:
'Do not talk like that, I beg you! Nothing will change until
you and I go to meet this man with chariot and horses,
to match our strength and bring him to the test in full
armour.

So come, climb into my chariot, and you will see the
worth of the horses of Tros,* which have the skill to range
swiftly over all the plain, whether in pursuit or retreat.
They will carry us safely back to the city, if Zeus continues
to give the glory to Diomedes, the son of Tydeus.
Come now, take the whip and the shining reins, and
I will get down from the chariot, and enter the fighting—
or you can go to meet this man, while I take care of the
horses.'

Then the splendid son of Lycaon addressed him:
'Aeneas, you must take care of the reins and the horses
yourself;
they are more likely to pull the curved chariot under the
hands of
their accustomed driver, if we have to flee from Tydeus'
son.

I am afraid that if they cannot hear your voice they will
grow
restive and take fright, and refuse to carry us out of the
battle,
and then the son of great-spirited Tydeus could attack
and kill us and drive away your single-hoofed horses.
No, you must drive the chariot and horses yourself,
and I will face his onslaught with my sharp spear.'

So they spoke, and mounted the finely worked chariot,

and, raging, guided the swift horses towards Tydeus' son. Sthenelus, the splendid son of Capaneus, saw them coming, and quickly addressed Tydeus' son with winged words: 'Diomedes, son of Tydeus, delight of my heart, I can see two mighty men coming at you, raging for the fight, filled with immense strength; one is the skilled bowman, Pandarus, who boasts that he is the son of Lycaon, while the other boasts that he was born the son of blameless Anchises, and that his mother was Aphrodite. Come, let us retreat in our chariot, and do not, I beg you, storm like this through the front-fighters, or you may lose your dear life.'

But mighty Diomedes looked at him darkly and addressed him: 'Do not talk to me of flight; I do not think you will persuade me. I am not the kind of man to hang back from the fight, nor to cower in fear; my fury is still firmly fixed within me. But I am loath to mount my chariot, and will go to meet them just as I am; Pallas Athena does not allow me to be afraid. As for those two, their swift horses will not carry them home, away from me, even if one or the other of them escapes. And I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your mind: if Athena of many counsels grants me the glory of killing these two, you must leave these swift horses of ours here, tying their reins to the chariot-rail, and turn your mind to Aeneas' horses; make a dash for him and drive them from the Trojans to the well-greaved Achaeans. You must know, they are of the same stock that Zeus the

wide-

thunderer gave to Tros as compensation for his son

Ganymedes,

for they were the best of all horses under the dawn and the sun.

Anchises, lord of men, bred from this bloodstock by deceit, by putting mares to the stallions without Laomedon's knowledge.*

From them six foals were born in his halls, and of these he kept four for himself, and raised them at his manger, and he gave two, provokers of panic, to Aeneas.

If we were to capture these we would win glorious fame.'

As they were speaking to one another in this way, the other two quickly closed on them, driving their swift horses.

Then the splendid son of Lycaon was the first to speak:

'Steadfast-hearted, war-minded son of proud Tydeus!

So my swift shot, my bitter arrow, did not fell you; but this time

I will test you with my spear, and perhaps I will strike you down.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and threw it,

and hit the shield of Tydeus' son; and the bronze point flew clean through it and reached Diomedes' corslet.

At this Lycaon's splendid son gave a great shout:

'You are hit, deep in your side! I do not think you will hold out much longer; you have given me great glory.'

Fearlessly, mighty Diomedes addressed him:

'You missed—you did not hit me! I think that before you are finished with all this one or other of you will fall and with his blood glut Ares, the fighter with the oxhide shield.'

So he spoke and hurled his spear, and Athena guided it on to

Pandarus' nose by his eye, and it went through his white

teeth.

The relentless bronze cut his tongue away at the root,
and the point then came out underneath his chin.

He tumbled from the chariot, and his bright-glittering
armour

clattered about him, and the swift-footed horses
started in fear; and there his life and fury ebbed away.

Now Aeneas jumped down, holding his shield and long
spear,

fearing that the Achaeans would drag the dead man away
from him.

He stood astride him like a lion, trusting in his strength,
holding before him his spear and perfectly balanced shield,
raging to kill anyone who might come to challenge him,
and yelling terribly. But the son of Tydeus picked up a rock
in his hand, a mighty feat, which not even two men such as
mortals now are could hold up, but he easily lifted it on his
own.

With this he hit Aeneas on the hip-joint, where the thigh-
bone

revolves in the hip socket, and men call it the cup.

He smashed Aeneas' cup, and severed both sinews as well,
and the rough rock stripped away his skin. The hero sank to
his knees and stayed there, propping himself on the ground
with his brawny hand; and black night covered his eyes.

Then indeed Aeneas lord of men would have died,
had not Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, been quick to see him

—
his mother, who had borne him to Anchises, herdsman of
cattle.

Around her dear son she wrapped her white arms, and
held before him a concealing fold of her white dress as a
defence against missiles, in case any of the swift-horsed
Danaans

should hurl a spear into his chest and take away his life.

So she set about rescuing her dear son from the fighting by stealth; but the son of Capaneus did not forget the agreement that Diomedes, master of the war-cry, had made with him. He held back his own single-hoofed horses, keeping them from the battle's confusion, and tied their reins to the chariot-rail, and made a dash for the fine-maned horses of Aeneas, and drove them away from the Trojans to the well-greaved Achaeans. He gave them to Deipylus, his dear companion, whom he esteemed above all his peers, because their minds thought alike, telling him to drive them to the hollow ships. Then the hero mounted his own chariot and took up the shining reins, and at once drove the strong-hoofed horses towards Tydeus' son, raging. Diomedes was pursuing Cypris* with the pitiless bronze, knowing what an unwarlike goddess she was, and not one of those reckoned to take command when men are at war—she was certainly no Athena, nor Enyo,* sacker of cities. When the son of great-spirited Tydeus caught up with her, after pursuing her through the dense soldiery, he sprang forward and, lunging, stabbed her with his sharp spear on the wrist, where it was soft. The spear passed clean through the deathless garment which the Graces had woven for her, piercing the flesh above the palm's base, and the goddess' deathless blood flowed; this was ichor, the kind of blood that flows in the blessed gods, for they eat no bread, and do not drink gleaming wine,

and so are without blood, and men call them immortals.
She gave a loud scream, and let her son fall from her,
but Phoebus Apollo caught him up in his arms, protecting
him
in a dark cloud, in case any of the swift-horsed Danaans
should hurl a bronze spear into his chest and take away his
life.

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, shouted aloud over
her:

‘Daughter of Zeus, stay away from warfare and fighting!
Is it not enough that you lead feeble women astray?
If you keep joining the battle, I think you will come to be
terrified of war, even when you only hear others speak of
it.’

So he spoke, and she went away, distraught and in
great pain.

Wind-footed Iris lifted her up and led her out of the mass of
men,

exhausted with pain, and her lovely skin was darkening.

On the left of the battlefield she found impetuous Ares
sitting alone, his spear and swift horses resting against a
cloud.

Falling to her knees she urgently entreated her dear
brother,

begging him for his horses with their headbands of gold:

‘Dear brother, help me to escape. Give me your horses, so
that

I may reach Olympus, where the immortal gods have their
seat.

I am sorely troubled with a wound, which a mortal man
gave me—

Tydeus’ son, who would now fight even against father
Zeus.’

So she spoke, and Ares gave her the horses with golden
headbands,

and she mounted the chariot, suffering in her dear heart,
and Iris mounted beside her and took up the reins in her
hand,

and whipped the pair to make them go; and they flew
willingly on.

Soon they arrived at steep Olympus, seat of the gods,
and there swift wind-footed Iris pulled up the horses,
unyoked

them from the chariot, and threw immortal fodder before
them.

Bright Aphrodite collapsed on to the knees of Dione
her mother, who took her daughter in her arms, and
stroking her with her hand addressed her, saying:

‘Dear child, which of the Uranian* gods has done this to you
so thoughtlessly, as if you had committed some public
mischief?’

Then Aphrodite who loves to smile answered her:
‘It was the son of Tydeus, arrogant Diomedes, who
wounded me,
because I rescued my dear son from the fighting by stealth
—

Aeneas, who is by far the dearest of all men to me.
This grim conflict is no longer between Trojans and
Achaeans,
but now the Danaans are fighting against immortals as
well.’

Then Dione, bright among goddesses, answered her:
‘Endure, my child, and bear this, distressed though you are;
many of us who have our homes on Olympus have suffered
at men’s hands, when we tried to inflict harsh pain on each
other.

Ares for one suffered, when Otus and mighty Ephialtes,
the sons of Aloeus, bound him in strong chains;
for thirteen months he was imprisoned in a bronze jar,
and then even Ares, insatiable in war, would have died

had not their stepmother, the beautiful Eëriboea, taken the news to Hermes; he stole Ares out of the jar—and he was now in a weak state, for the cruel chains were wearing him down.*

Again, Hera suffered when the mighty son of Amphytryon* wounded her in her right breast with a three-barbed arrow, and incurable anguish seized hold of her.

Monstrous Hades suffered too with the rest,* hit by a swift arrow

when that same man, the son of Zeus who wears the aegis, shot him at Pylos among the dead men and gave him over to pain.

He went away to the house of Zeus on high Olympus, grieving

in his heart and pierced through with agony, for the arrow had driven into his massive shoulder, and was vexing his heart.

But Paeëon* spread pain-killing ointments on his wound and healed him, since he was not made to suffer death.

Heracles was a hard and violent man, not troubled by the outrages

he committed with his bow on the gods who hold Olympus.

As for you, the goddess grey-eyed Athena set this man against you,

fool that he is, since Tydeus' son does not know in his heart that the man who fights with immortals is not at all long-lived;

such a man has no homecoming from war and grim conflict*

to find his children crying 'Daddy' as they climb on to his knees.

So let the son of Tydeus, even if he is very mighty, now take care that no god more warlike than you fights against him;

or else Aegialeia, the prudent daughter of Adrestus

and the steadfast wife of Diomedes, breaker of horses, may one day rouse her household from sleep with mourning cries,
longing in vain for her wedded husband, the best of the Achaeans.'

So she spoke, and with her hands wiped away the ichor from

Aphrodite's wrist; it was healed, and the harsh pain was soothed.

Now the others had been watching this, Athena and Hera, and they began to tease Cronus' son Zeus with mocking words;

and the first to speak was the goddess grey-eyed Athena:

'Father Zeus, will you be angry at what I am going to say?

I do believe that Cypris has been persuading some Achaean woman

into following the Trojans, whom she now loves to excess,

and while she was caressing this lovely robed Achaean woman

she scratched her delicate hand on a golden pin.'

So she spoke, and the father of gods and men smiled, and calling golden Aphrodite to him spoke to her:

'Warfare's business, my child, is not for you; your task is to occupy yourself with matters of desire and marriage, leaving all this to be the concern of swift Ares and Athena.'

As they were talking to each other in this way, Diomedes, master of the war-cry, sprang forward at Aeneas.

He knew that Apollo himself had spread his arms over him, but even so he was not in awe of the great god, and kept rushing at

Aeneas, to kill him and to strip him of his famous armour.

Three times he sprang at him, raging for the kill, and

three times Apollo battered his shining shield back;

but when he charged for the fourth time, like some divine

being,

Apollo who shoots from afar gave a terrible shout and addressed him:

‘Think, son of Tydeus, and shrink back, and do not hope to match yourself with gods! The races of immortal gods and of men who walk upon the earth can never be the same.’

So he spoke, and Tydeus’ son drew back a little space, avoiding the anger of Apollo who shoots from afar.

As for Aeneas, Apollo set him apart from the mass of men in the holy shrine on Pergamus where his temple stood.*

There Leto and Artemis,* shooter of arrows,

nursed him in the spacious sanctuary and renewed his glory;

and Apollo of the silver bow fashioned a phantom in the exact likeness of Aeneas and with the same armour, and around this phantom the Trojans and glorious Achaeans hewed at each other’s oxhide shields, held before their chests,

both round shields and those made from stretched shaggy hides.

Then indeed Phoebus Apollo addressed impetuous Ares:

‘Ares, doom of mortals, bloodstained Ares, sacker of walled cities,

will you not go after this man and take him from the battle? I mean Tydeus’ son, who would now fight even against father Zeus.

First he grappled with Cypris and wounded her on the wrist, and after that he came at me like some divine being.’

So he spoke, and settled down on the heights of Pergamus,

while murderous Ares went among the Trojan ranks and urged them

on, in the likeness of Acamas, swift commander of the Thracians,

and gave instructions to the Zeus-nurtured sons of Priam:

‘You sons of Priam, a king nurtured by Zeus, how long will you allow your people to be killed by the Achaeans? Will you wait until they are fighting about your strongly made gates?

Lying there is a man whom we honour as much as glorious Hector—

Aeneas, the son of great-hearted Anchises. Come, let us rescue our fine companion from the roaring tumult of battle.’

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each man.

Then Sarpedon too rebuked glorious Hector with hard words:

‘Hector, tell me, where has that fury gone that you had before?

You used to say, I recall, that you could hold the city on your own,

without men or allies, just you and your brothers and brothers-in-law.

And yet I cannot see or make out a single one of them now, but they are cowering like hounds around a lion,

while we, who are only here as your allies, do the fighting.

I indeed have come a very great distance to be your ally:

Lycia is far away, beside the Xanthus with its swirling waters,

where I left my dear wife and my infant son, and

a great store of treasure, such as a poor man would envy;

but for all that I urge on the Lycians, and am myself raging to fight man to man, even though I have no possessions

here

that the Achaeans would want to plunder and carry off.

Meanwhile, you stand idle, and do not even order your people

to stand their ground and fight to protect their wives.

Take care that you are not caught in the all-embracing

meshes
of a corded net, and so become the prey and spoil of your
enemies,
because they will very soon sack your well-populated city.
And yet all this should be your concern day and night—
to entreat the captains of your far-famed allies to hold
unceasingly
to their task; this way you may shake off their harsh
rebuke.'

So Sarpedon spoke, and his words bit into Hector's
thoughts;
at once he leapt fully armed from his chariot to the ground,
and ranged through the whole camp, shaking two spears,
urging the Trojans to fight, and rousing up the grim conflict.
They turned and rallied, and stood facing the Achaeans,
but the Argives massed and stood their ground, and did not
run.

As when on a sacred threshing-floor a wind carries the chaff
away

when men are winnowing, at the time when fair-haired
Demeter*

separates grain and chaff under the hurrying winds, and
the heaps of chaff grow white; so then did the Achaeans
turn white under the fall of dust which the horses' hoofs
kicked up through their ranks, and sent up to the high
brazen sky,

as the men closed again in battle, and the charioteers kept
wheeling back.

So they drove their hands' fury forward; and impetuous
Ares,

roaming everywhere, drew a veil of night over the battle
to help the Trojans. He was carrying out the commands of
Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, who had ordered him
to wake the spirit of the Trojans, when he saw Pallas Athena
leaving the field; for she was the Danaans' champion.

Then he sent Aeneas out from his richly endowed sanctuary,
and thrust fury into the breast of the shepherd of the people.
Aeneas took his place among his companions, and they were glad
when they saw him coming back alive and restored to health,
and full of noble fury; but they did not question him at all,
for the toil
before them, stirred up by the god of the silver bow and by Ares,
doom of mortals, and by endlessly raging Strife, would not let them.

As for the Danaans, the two called Ajax, with Odysseus and Diomedes,
were driving them on to fight; but even without their urging the men had no fear of the Trojans' violent onslaught, but stood their ground like clouds that the son of Cronus holds motionless over the peaks of mountains on a windless day,
while the fury of the North Wind and of the other blustering winds which scatter the shadowing clouds with their shrill blasts is asleep; so the Danaans stood unmoved, waiting for the Trojans, and refused to turn in flight.
Atreus' son roamed through the ranks, with constant exhortations:

'My friends, be men, and put courage in your hearts, and feel shame before each other in the fierce crush of battle!

Men who feel shame are more often saved than killed, while those who run away find neither glory nor courage.'

So he spoke, and quickly threw his spear and hit a leading man,
a companion of great-spirited Aeneas, Deicoön, who was

the son of Pergasus, and whom the Trojans honoured as much as Priam's sons, since he was always quick to fight in the front ranks.

Lord Agamemnon hit him with his spear on the shield, which could not stop it, and the bronze flew right through, driving beyond the belt into the base of his belly. He fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him.

Then in his turn Aeneas killed two of the best men of the Danaans, Crethon and Orsilochus, the sons of Diocles, whose father's home was in well-built Pherae;* he was a man of great wealth, and was descended from a river, Alpheus, which flows in a broad stream through the Pylians' land, and he fathered Ortilochus to be king over many men. Ortilochus in turn was father to great-spirited Diocles, and to Diocles there were born two sons, twins, Crethon and Orsilochus, who were skilled in all battle's arts. When they reached youth's fullness they accompanied the Argives in their black ships to Ilium rich in horses, to win compensation for Atreus' sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus; but there the end of death covered them both. They were like a pair of lions raised by their mother in deep wooded thickets high in the mountains, lions that pillage the enclosures of men's farms, and carry off their cattle and sturdy sheep, until they in their turn fall into men's hands and are killed with the sharp bronze; just so were they overcome at the hands of Aeneas and crashed to the ground like lofty pine trees.

When they had fallen the warrior Menelaus felt pity for them, and strode through the front-fighters helmeted in gleaming bronze, shaking his spear. Ares stirred up the fury in him, intending

that he should be beaten down by the hands of Aeneas.
But Antilochus, great-spirited Nestor's son, saw him, and
strode up through the front-fighters; he was greatly afraid
that
the people's shepherd might be hurt and bring all their toil
to nothing.
The two men were poising their sharp spears ready in their
hands,
facing each other and in a frenzy to fight, when Antilochus
came
and stood very close to the shepherd of the people, and
Aeneas, swift fighter though he was, did not stand his
ground
when he saw the two men standing firm, side by side.
So these dragged the dead men back into the Achaean
people,
and laid the wretched pair in the arms of their companions,
and turned back and began to fight again in the front ranks.

There they killed Pylaemenes, who was the equal of
Ares,
captain of the great-spirited shield-bearing Paphlagonians.
He was standing still when Menelaus, son of Atreus, famed
with the spear, pierced him with his spear, hitting his
collarbone.
Antilochus struck down Mydon, his attendant and
charioteer,
Atymnius' fine son, as he wheeled his single-hoofed horses,
hitting him with a rock full on his elbow; and the reins with
their
white ivory decoration fell from his hands and dropped into
the dust.
Antilochus sprang at him and drove his sword into Mydon's
temples,
and he fell from the well-made chariot, gasping for breath,
head-first in the dust, buried up to his head and shoulders.

For some time he stuck there—for the sand was deep—until his horses kicked him and laid him flat on the dusty ground. Antilochus whipped them up, and drove them back to the Achaean camp.

But Hector noticed them across the ranks, and sprang after them with a yell; and companies of the Trojans followed him in all their strength. They were led by Ares and lady Enyo, she bringing with her Confusion, reckless in war, while Ares held a spear of prodigious size in his hands, roaming now in front of Hector and now behind him.

When he saw him Diomedes, master of the war-cry, shuddered. As when a man who is crossing a great plain stands helpless before a swift-moving river that flows towards the sea, and seeing it churned into foam runs back a little way; so then Tydeus' son drew back, and spoke to his people: 'My friends, in the past we have been filled with amazement at glorious Hector, as a spearman and a brave fighter, but there is always one of the gods at his side, to save him from ruin, as now Ares stands there next to him, in the likeness of a mortal. Come, keep your faces towards the Trojans, and retreat steadily, and do not rage to pit your strength in battle against gods.'

So he spoke, and the Trojans came up very close to them. Then Hector killed two men who were skilled in warfare, Menesthes and Anchialus, who were both in one chariot. When they fell huge Ajax, Telamon's son, felt pity for them; he went forward, and standing nearby let fly with his shining spear,

and hit Amphiüs, the son of Selagus, who lived in Paesus,
a man of much property and rich in corn-land; but his
destiny
had brought him to come to the help of Priam and his sons.
Ajax, son of Telamon, hit him on his belt, and
he far-shadowing spear lodged at the base of his belly,
and he fell with a thud. Illustrious Ajax ran up to strip him
of his armour, but the Trojans rained their spears on him,
sharp and gleaming, and he caught many of them on his
shield.
Setting his heel on the dead man he pulled the bronze-
tipped spear
out of him; but he could not then strip the fine armour
from Amphiüs' shoulders, since he was hard pressed by
missiles,
and was also frightened by the proud Trojans' steadfast
defence,
who confronted him bravely in numbers, grasping their
spears,
and who, for all his size and strength and splendour,
forced him back from them; and he was shaken and
withdrew.

So they laboured away in the fierce crush of battle.
Then Tlepolemus, the great and valiant son of Heracles,
was roused by his harsh destiny to attack godlike
Sarpedon.
When they had advanced to within close range of each
other,
one a son and the other a grandson of Zeus the cloud-
gatherer,
Tlepolemus was the first to speak to the other man:
'Sarpedon, counsellor of the Lycians, what compulsion
is forcing you, a man unskilled in fighting, to cower here?
Men lie when they say that you are the offspring of Zeus
who wears the aegis, since you fall far short of those men

who in former generations were fathered by Zeus—
such men as they say the mighty Heracles was.
He was my steadfast-spirited, lion-hearted father, and
long ago came here in search of the mares of Laomedon,*
with no more than six ships and a smaller force of men,
but he sacked the city of Ilium and made widows of its
streets.

But you have a coward's heart, and your people are dying.
I do not think that your coming here from Lycia will prove
to be a defence to the Trojans, not even if you are very
strong;
no, you will pass through Hades' gates, beaten down at my
hands.'

In answer to him Sarpedon, the captain of the Lycians,
said:

'Tlepolemus, Heracles did indeed destroy sacred Ilium,
but only through the folly of a man, splendid Laomedon,
who rewarded his good deeds with words of abuse and
refused him the mares, on whose account he had come so
far.

As for you, I say that you will here meet death and the
black
spectre at my hands; beaten down under my spear, you will
give the glory to me and your life to Hades, master of
famous horses.'

So spoke Sarpedon, and Tlepolemus lifted his ash
spear,
and both the long spears flew from their hands at the same
time. Sarpedon hit the other in the middle of his neck,
and the pain-loaded point passed clean through it,
and dark night came down and covered his eyes.
But Tlepolemus hit Sarpedon on the left thigh with his
long spear, and the point sped furiously through, grazing
the bone; but as yet his father kept destruction from him.

The glorious companions of godlike Sarpedon began

to carry him from the fighting; the long spear dragged and weighed him down, but in their haste no one noticed or thought to pull the ash spear from his thigh so that he could stand, such was the trouble they had in protecting him.

On the other side the well-greaved Achaeans began to carry

Tlepolemus from the fighting. Glorious Odysseus of the enduring

spirit saw him, and his dear heart within him was raging: he pondered then in his heart and in his spirit whether to pursue the son of loud-thundering Zeus further or to take away the lives of more of the Lycians.

But it was not great-hearted Odysseus' destiny to kill the mighty son of Zeus with the sharp bronze, and so Athena turned his thoughts towards the mass of Lycians.

He killed Coeranus and

Alastor and Chromius, Alcandrus and Halius and Noëmon and Prytanis; and then

glorious Odysseus would have slain yet more Lycians, had not great Hector of the glittering helmet been quick to notice.

He strode through the front-fighters, helmeted in gleaming bronze,

bringing terror to the Danaans; and at his coming

Sarpedon,

the son of Zeus, was glad, and addressed him plaintively:

'Son of Priam, do not let me lie here, to become the prey of the Danaans, but help me; and after this may my life leave me

in your city of Troy, since it seems I was not after all destined to return to my home in my dear native land, to bring gladness to my dear wife and my infant son.'

So he spoke, but Hector of the glittering helmet did not reply,

and rushed past him, impatient to thrust back the Argives as quickly as possible, and to take away the lives of many. Then his glorious companions made godlike Sarpedon sit beneath a handsome oak, sacred to Zeus who wears the aegis;

and the ash spear was wrenched out of his thigh by mighty Pelagon, who was his dear companion. His life's breath left him, and a mist spread over his eyes, but then he recovered, and a gust of the North Wind blew on him and revived his feebly breathing spirit.

Now the Argives, faced by Ares and bronze-helmeted Hector, at no time turned in flight towards the black ships nor made a counter-attack, but retreated steadily to the rear when they realized that Ares was helping the Trojans.

Who was the first, and who the last to be slaughtered by Hector, son of Priam, and by brazen Ares?

Teuthras first, and then Orestes, whipper of horses, Trechus the spearman from Aetolia, and Oenomaus, Helenus, son of Oenops, and Oresbius with his glittering loin-plate,

who lived in Hyle, carefully husbanding his wealth, on the shore of the Cephisian lake; and near him lived other Boeotians, possessors of a richly fertile land.

When the goddess white-armed Hera saw the Argives being slaughtered in the fierce crush of battle, she straightaway addressed Athena in winged words: 'Daughter of Zeus the aegis-wearer, Atrytone, this will not do!

Worthless indeed was the undertaking we gave to Menelaus

—
that he would sack strongly walled Ilium before returning home—

if we allow murderous Ares to rage in this way. Come now, let us two also call up our surging courage.'

So she spoke, and the goddess grey-eyed Athena did not disobey her.
Hera set about harnessing her horses with golden headbands,
Hera, elder goddess, daughter of great Cronus,
and Hebe quickly fitted the curved wheels to the chariot.
These are bronze, with eight spokes, on the ends of the iron axle;
their rims are made of gold, imperishable, and on them are fitted tyres of bronze, a wonder to look on, and the hubs are made of silver, revolving on both sides.
The car is woven of tightly plaited gold and silver straps, and there are double rails running right round it;
from it extends a silver pole, and on to its end Hera lashed a fine golden yoke, and to this she fastened the golden yoke-straps. Then she led her swift-footed horses
under the yoke, impatient for strife and the battle-cry.

And Athena, the daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis, let fall on to her father's threshold the soft embroidered robe which she herself had laboured over with her own hands,
and put on the tunic of Zeus who gathers the clouds, and clothed herself in armour for war, the bringer of tears.
Around her shoulders she threw the tasselled aegis, a terrifying sight, around which is set in a circle Panic, and with it Strife and Courage, and with it chilling Rout, and with it the head of the hideous monster Gorgon, terrifying and grim, a portent of Zeus who wears the aegis.
On her head she placed a twin-crested helmet with four plates,
golden, decorated with foot-soldiers from a hundred cities.
She stepped on to the brightly blazing chariot, and gripped the spear,
heavy, thick, and massive, with which she beats down

ranks of men,
of heroes with whom she, child of a mighty father, is
enraged.

Then Hera quickly lashed the horses with her whip, and
of their own accord the gates of the high sky groaned open,
gates held

by the Seasons,* who have charge of the great sky and
Olympus,

either to push aside the dense cloud or to close it up
together.

Through these gates they steered the horses, driven on by
the whip,

and they found the son of Cronus sitting apart from the
other gods on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus.

There the goddess white-armed Hera reined in the horses
and put a question to Zeus, the supreme son of Cronus,
saying:

‘Father Zeus, are you not angry with Ares for these cruel
deeds,

the great numbers of fine Achaean people he has killed,
pointlessly and recklessly—a cause of grief to me, while

Cypris

and Apollo of the silver bow take their ease, delighted to
have

unleashed this madman, who has no notion of divine order?

‘Father Zeus, will you be at all angry with me if I give Ares
a painful thrashing and drive him from the battlefield?’

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed
her:

‘I will not; stir up Athena who gathers the spoils against
him,

for she is the one most used to dealing out harsh pain to
him.’

So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not
disobey him,

and whipped the horses; and they flew willingly onward
between the earth and the high sky, set with stars.
As far as a man can see with his eyes into the misty
distance
as he sits on a lookout, gazing out over the wine-faced sea,
so far is the leap of the loud-whinnying horses of the gods.
When they came to Troy and the streams of the two rivers,
to the place where Simoeis and Scamander unite their
waters,*
there the goddess white-armed Hera reined in the horses
and
freed them from the chariot, and poured a thick mist
around them;
and Simoeis thrust up ambrosia for them to graze on.

But the two goddesses set out, stepping like wild
pigeons,
full of rage to come to the help of the Argives.
When they came to where the most numerous and the best
men
were standing, crowding around the mighty horse-breaker
Diomedes, in the likeness of flesh-devouring lions
or wild boars whose strength is in no way feeble, there
the goddess white-armed Hera stopped and cried aloud,
taking the appearance of great-hearted Stentor the brazen-
voiced,
whose shout was as loud as that of fifty other men:
'Shame, Argives, you things of disgrace, admired only for
your
handsome looks! As long as glorious Achilles came into the
battle
the Trojans never marched out in front of the Dardanian
gates,* because they were in terror of his massive spear.
But now they are fighting far from their city, by our hollow
ships.'

So speaking she quickened the fury and spirit in each

man.

Then the goddess grey-eyed Athena made quickly for the son

of Tydeus, and she found the lord beside his horses and chariot,

cooling the wound which Pandarus had dealt him with his arrow,

for sweat was causing the broad strap of his round shield to chafe it. It was troubling him, and his hand was growing weary as he held up the strap and wiped away the dark blood.

The goddess laid her hand on the horses' yoke and spoke to him:

'Truly Tydeus fathered a son who bears him little resemblance:

Tydeus was short in stature, but he was a fighter!

Even at the time when I would not allow him to fight or push himself forward—when alone of the Achaeans he came

as an envoy to Thebes,* alone among a crowd of Cadmeians,

and I told him to restrain himself as he feasted in their halls —

even then, with the same audacious spirit as in former times

he challenged the young Cadmeians and beat them in every event,

easily; that was the kind of supporter I was to him.

And now here I stand beside you and keep you from harm, and with all my heart urge you to do battle with the Trojans; but either weariness from your many assaults has sunk into your limbs,

or perhaps it is heart-sapping fear that has gripped you. If so,

you are no offspring of Tydeus, the son of war-minded Oeneus.'

Then in answer mighty Diomedes addressed her:
'I know you, goddess, daughter of Zeus who wears the
aegis;
so I shall speak openly and hide nothing from you.
It is not heart-sapping fear that grips me, nor irresolution;
I am still holding in my mind the commands that you gave
me:
you would not allow me to fight the blessed gods face to
face,
except only that if Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, should
enter
the battle I was allowed to wound her with the sharp
bronze.
For that reason I am now falling back, and I have ordered
all the rest of the Argives to gather around me here;
I can see that it is Ares who is lording it on the battlefield.'

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena
addressed him:
'Diomedes, son of Tydeus, delight of my heart,
you should not on this account be afraid of Ares or any
other
of the immortals; that is the kind of support I give to you.
So come now, direct your single-hoofed horses first against
Ares,
go close and strike him; do not be in awe of impetuous
Ares,
this crazed god, this shape formed of evil, this two-faced
scoundrel,
who not long ago spoke with Hera and me and undertook
to fight against the Trojans and bring aid to the Argives, but
now stands alongside the Trojans, and has forgotten his
promise.'

So speaking she pulled Sthenelus back with her hand
and shoved
him from the chariot towards the ground, and he quickly

leapt down.

She mounted the chariot and stood beside glorious Diomedes,

a raging goddess; and the oaken axle groaned aloud at its load, for it carried a fearsome goddess and the best of men.

Pallas Athena laid hold of the whip and reins, and at once directed the single-hoofed horses straight at Ares, who was stripping the armour from huge Periphas, Ochesius' illustrious son, by far the best man of the Aetolians.

Bloodstained Ares was busy stripping him, but Athena put on

the helmet of Hades, so that the towering god should not see her.

When Ares, doom of mortals, saw glorious Diomedes, he left monstrous Periphas to lie there, in the place where he had killed him and robbed him of his life, and made straight for Diomedes, breaker of horses. When they had advanced to within close range of each other,

Ares first lunged over the yoke and the horses' reins with his bronze-tipped spear, raging to take the life from him;

but the goddess grey-eyed Athena caught it with her hand and forced it up and out of the chariot, so that it flew aimlessly by.

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, lunged in his turn with his bronze-tipped spear, and Pallas Athena drove it at the base of Ares' belly, where his loin-plate was belted; here Diomedes hit and wounded him, biting through his fine flesh,

and pulled the spear out again; brazen Ares bellowed, as loud as the yells of nine- or ten-thousand men grappling with each other on a battlefield in the war-god's strife.

At this, fear and trembling seized both Achaeans and

Trojans,
so loud was the bellowing of Ares, insatiable in war.

Like a dark mass of air that appears out of the clouds
when a violent wind springs up after burning heat,
so brazen Ares appeared before Tydeus' son Diomedes,
rising with the clouds right up to the wide high sky.
Quickly he came to the seat of the gods, steep Olympus,
and took his seat next to Zeus, Cronus' son, grieving in his
heart,

and showed him the immortal blood flowing from the
wound;
full of complaint he addressed Zeus with winged words:
'Father Zeus, are you not angry when you see cruel deeds
like this?

We gods always have to endure the most appalling
sufferings
through each other's scheming when we do favours to
men.

We are all at war with you, because you fathered this
witless girl,
this cursed goddess, whose mind is always set on deeds of
malice.

All of the other gods who live on Olympus obey
your will, and we are each of us subject to you; but her
you do not reproach in word or deed, but let her run free,
just because you yourself are the father of this murderous
child.

Now she has let loose Tydeus' son, arrogant Diomedes,
in crazed assault against the immortal gods.

First he closed with Cypris and wounded her on the wrist,
then hurled himself at me, Ares himself, like some divine
being.

But my swift feet carried me away, or I would now be
suffering

long-lasting anguish there among the ghastly piles of dead, or would live on enfeebled by the blows of his bronze.'

Zeus who gathers the clouds looked at him darkly and said:

'You two-faced scoundrel, do not sit here and whine to me! Of all the gods who live on Olympus you are the most hateful to me:

strife and war and fighting are always dear to your heart. Your mother's spirit too is ungovernable, one that does not yield—

Hera, whom I find it hard to control with my words; so I think it is at her prompting that you are suffering like this.

Even so, I shall not allow you to be in pain any longer, for you are my offspring, and your mother bore you to me; but if any other god had fathered you, to cause such carnage, you would long ago have been lower than the offspring of Uranus.'

So he spoke, and summoned Paeëon to cure him, and Paeëon spread pain-killing ointments over his wound and healed it; for Ares was not made to suffer death. As when fig-juice thickens white milk when it is liquid but very quickly becomes clotted when a man stirs it,* so swiftly did Paeëon heal impetuous Ares. Then Hebe bathed him, and dressed him in fine clothes, and he took his seat beside Cronus' son Zeus, exulting in his glory.

Then the two goddesses returned to the house of great Zeus, Argive Hera and Athena of Alalcomenae, when they had halted the man-slaying exploits of Ares, doom of mortals.

BOOK SIX

So the grim fighting of Trojans and Achaeans was left to itself,
and the battle ranged widely, this way and that over the plain,
each side aiming their bronze-tipped spears at the other
in the ground between the waters of Simoeis and Xanthus.

Ajax, son of Telamon, bulwark of the Achaeans, was the first
to break through the Trojan line, bringing hope to his companions,
by striking down a man who was the best of the Thracians,
Acamas, son of Eussorus, a valiant and mighty man.
Throwing first, Ajax hit him on the ridge of his horsehair-crested
helmet, and the bronze point lodged in his forehead,
piercing
through to the bone; and darkness covered his eyes.

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, killed Axylus
the son of Teuthras, who lived in well-built Arisbe;
he was rich in possessions and hospitable towards men, for
his house was by the roadside, and he would entertain everyone.

But not one of these could now save him from miserable death
by standing before him to face his enemy; Diomedes
robbed
two men of their lives, Axylus and his attendant Calesius,
who was
his charioteer at this time, and both sank below the earth.

Euryalus killed first Dresus and then Opheltius, and went after Aesepus and Pedasus, whom long ago the river nymph Abarbareë had borne to blameless Bucolion;*

Bucolion was the son of splendid Laomedon, his first to be born, but his mother gave birth to him in secret. Bucolion lay in love with this nymph while tending his sheep, and she conceived and gave birth to twin sons; but Mecisteus' son loosened their fury and shining limbs, and he stripped the armour from their shoulders.

Next Polypoetes, steadfast in war, killed Astyalus, and Odysseus with his bronze-tipped spear slew Pidytes, who came from Percote, and Teucer killed brilliant Aretaon. Ablerus was killed by the shining spear of Antilochus, Nestor's son, and Agamemnon, lord of men, slew Elatus, who lived beside the banks of broad-flowing Satnioeis, in steep Pedasus.* The hero Leïtus overtook Phylacus as he was running away, and Eurypylus slew Melanthius.

Next Menelaus, master of the war-cry, captured Adrestus alive. His horses, bolting in panic over the plain, had tripped over a tamarisk branch and broken the pole away where it was joined to the curved chariot, and had run off by themselves towards the city, where the rest of the Trojans were fleeing in terror. Adrestus was whirled out of the chariot next to the wheel, head-first on to his face in the dust. Menelaus, Atreus' son, stood over him, holding his far-shadowing spear, and Adrestus grasped him by the knees, entreating him: 'Son of Atreus, take me alive, and accept a fitting ransom; there is much treasure stored up in my rich father's house, bronze and gold and elaborately worked iron, from which

my father would gladly give you a boundless ransom,
if he learnt that I was alive by the ships of the Achaeans.'

So he spoke, and would have persuaded the heart in
Menelaus' breast;

he was about to hand him over to his attendant to escort
to the swift ships of the Achaeans, but Agamemnon
ran up and stood before him, and berated him loudly: '
My dear brother Menelaus, why so concerned for other
men?

Can it be that you were so generously treated by Trojans
back in your own home?*_ Let not one of them escape sheer
ruin

at our hands, not even the man-child which a mother
carries in her womb, not even him, but let them all
be obliterated from Troy, to vanish unremembered.'

So speaking the hero turned his brother's purpose,
urging destiny's decree; and Menelaus thrust the hero
Adrestus from him with his hand, and lord Agamemnon
stabbed him in the side. Adrestus fell back, and Atreus' son
set his heel on his chest and pulled out the ash spear.

Next Nestor called out to the Argives with a great
shout:

'Friends, Danaan heroes, attendants of Ares,
let no one hang back here, greedy for spoils,
hoping to carry the biggest portion back to his ships!
Killing men is our task; afterwards you may take booty
when you will, stripping the bodies that lie about the plain.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each
man.

And then the Trojans, dear to Ares, would have been forced
back

into Ilium by the Achaeans, overcome by feebleness of
spirit,

had not a man stood next to Aeneas and Hector—Priam's
son

Helenus, by far the best of bird-interpreters, who said to them:

‘Aeneas and Hector! On you, above all Trojans and Lycians, rests the labour of war, since you are the best at both fighting and planning, whatever the enterprise.

Make a stand here, go up and down among the people and rally them in front of the gates before they run away and fall

into their women’s arms, and become a joy to our enemies. Then, when you have stirred all the companies to action, we shall make our stand here and fight with the Danaans, even though we are very weary; for necessity bears hard on us.

But you, Hector, must go into the city, and speak there to your mother and mine. Tell her to gather the matrons at the temple of grey-eyed Athena on the city’s heights, and to unlock the doors of the sacred house, and tell her to choose the robe which she judges to be the loveliest and largest in her hall, and which is most precious to her, and to lay it on the knees of Athena of the beautiful hair, and to promise to sacrifice twelve heifers in her temple, yearlings

untouched by the goad, in the hope that Athena will pity the city and the Trojans’ wives and their infant children.

So she may keep the son of Tydeus away from sacred Ilium, that savage spearman, ruthless deviser of panic rout, the one I reckon to be the mightiest of the Achaeans.

Not even Achilles, leader of men, caused us so much terror, and they say he is the son of a goddess. But this man’s rage

goes too far, and no man can match him in fury.’

So he spoke, and Hector did not disobey his brother. At once he leapt fully armed from his chariot to the ground, and ranged through the whole army, shaking his two sharp spears,

stirring them to fight and rousing up the grim conflict.
They rallied and took their stand facing the Achaeans;
and the Argives gave ground and left off the slaughter,
thinking some immortal had come from the starry high sky
to give help to the Trojans, seeing how they had rallied.
Then Hector gave a great shout and called out to the
Trojans:

‘High-hearted Trojans, and you allies of far renown!
Be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage,
while I go back into Ilium to talk to the elders, who are
our counsellors, and tell our wives to pray to the gods
and to promise to make them an offering of hecatombs.’

So Hector of the glittering helmet spoke, and went on
his way;
and the dark hide kept knocking at his ankles and neck,
the hide which ran as an outer rim around his bossed
shield.

Now Glaucus, Hippolochus’ son, and the son of Tydeus
came together in the ground between the sides, in a rage
to fight.

When they had advanced to within close range of each
other

Diomedes, master of the war-cry, was the first to speak:
‘Who among men doomed to die are you, my lord?

I have never seen you in the battle where men win glory
before; and yet now you have gone far beyond everyone
else

in daring, since you stand up against my far-shadowing
spear.

Unhappy are the parents whose sons oppose my fury!
But if you are some immortal, come down from the high
sky,

I am not the kind of man to fight against sky-dwelling gods.
Not even the son of Dryas, mighty Lycurgus,* not even he
lived for long after quarrelling with the gods of the high sky:

long ago he pursued the nurses of frenzied Dionysus
throughout the sacred land of Nysa;* they all threw their
Bacchic staffs to the ground, wounded by the ox-goad
of man-slaying Lycurgus, and Dionysus fled, plunging below
the sea's waves, and Thetis took him, terrified, to her
bosom,
for cruel trembling had seized him at the man's threats.
But then the gods who live at their ease were angry with
Lycurgus,
and Cronus' son blinded him; and indeed he did not have
long
to live, since he was hated by all the immortal gods.*
So I too am unwilling to fight against the blessed gods.
But if you are one of mortals who eat the fruit of the tilled
earth,
come closer, so that you may sooner be caught in the
snares of death.'

Then the illustrious son of Hippolochus addressed him:
'Great-spirited son of Tydeus, why do you ask about my
family?

As is the family of leaves, so it is also with men:
the wind scatters the leaves on the ground, but the forest
breaks
into bud and makes more when the spring season comes
round.

So with the family of men, one generation grows and
another ceases.

But if you really want to know for certain, to find out exactly
about my family, it is one which many people know.

There is a city, Ephyre,* in a corner of horse-rearing Argos,
and here lived Sisyphus, who more than any man loved
gain—

Sisyphus, son of Aeolus.* He fathered a son, Glaucus,
and Glaucus had a son, blameless Bellerophon,* to whom
the gods gave beauty and manhood fit to win lovers;

but Proetus* planned mischief for him in his heart, and since he was much stronger drove him out of the land of Argos—for Zeus had made him subject to Proetus' staff of power.

Proetus' wife, glorious Anteia, was mad with desire for him, and longed to make secret love with him, but she could not sway

sagacious Bellerophon, because he was a right-thinking man.

Accordingly the queen spoke deceitfully to Proetus:

"Proetus, you must kill Bellerophon, or else be killed yourself; he wanted to make love with me against my will."

So she spoke, and anger seized her lord at what he had heard,

but he held back from killing, for he felt awe at this in his heart;

instead he sent Bellerophon to Lycia, and gave him some deadly signs,

many life-destroying things, marked by him in a folded tablet,

and told him to show these to his father-in-law, so ensuring his death.

So Bellerophon set off for Lycia under the gods' blameless guidance;

but when he reached Lycia and the flowing Xanthus,

the king of broad Lycia treated him with honour and generosity:

for nine days he entertained him, and sacrificed nine oxen,

but when rosy-fingered Dawn appeared on the tenth day he questioned Bellerophon, and asked to see the message that he had brought for him from his son-in-law Proetus.

When he was given the deadly message from his son-in-law he first of all ordered Bellerophon to kill the ferocious Chimera;

this was a being sprung from the gods, not from men, a lion in front, a serpent behind, and in her middle a goat,

and she breathed out a terrible fury of blazing fire.
Bellerophon, guided by portents from the gods, killed her.
For his second task he fought with the far-famed Solymi,*
and this, he said, was the hardest battle with men he had
endured.

Then for his third task he slew the Amazons,* who are a
match for men.

But on his return the king wove another cunning plot
against him:

after choosing the best fighters from broad Lycia
he set them in an ambush; but they did not return home,
because blameless Bellerophon slaughtered them to a man.
When the king realized that he was of noble, divine
descent,

he kept him in Lycia, and offered him his own daughter,
and gave him half of all the honours of his kingship; and
the Lycians cut out for him an estate of their very best land,
fine country of vineyards and ploughland, for him to
cultivate.

War-minded Bellerophon's wife bore him three children,
Isandrus and Hippolochus and Laodameia.

Zeus the counsellor lay with Laodameia, and she gave
birth to godlike Sarpedon, whose helmet is made of bronze.

But even Bellerophon came to be hated by all the gods,
and he wandered on his own over the Aleian plain,*
gnawing at his spirit and avoiding the trodden ways of men.

His son Isandrus was killed by Ares, insatiable in war,
while fighting against the far-famed Solymi, and Artemis
of the golden reins became angry with Laodameia and
killed her.

Hippolochus was my father, and I declare myself his son;
he sent me to Troy, and would often give me instructions—
always to be the best and to stand out above other men,
and

not to bring disgrace on my father's family, who were
by far the most distinguished in Ephyre and in broad Lycia.

This, then, is the family and bloodline which I boast is mine.'

So he spoke, and Diomedes, master of the war-cry, was glad.

He planted his spear in the earth that nourishes many, and addressed the shepherd of the people in affectionate words:

'You must then be a guest-friend of my family from ancient times!

Long ago glorious Oeneus* entertained blameless Bellerophon

in his halls and kept him there for twenty days, and they gave each other fine gifts of guest-friendship:

Oeneus gave Bellerophon a belt, shining with purple dye, and Bellerophon gave Oeneus a gold two-handled cup, which I left behind in my palace when I came here.

Tydeus I do not remember, as I was still small when he left me, at the time when the Achaean force perished at Thebes.

Therefore I am your dear guest-friend in the heart of Argos, and you are mine in Lycia whenever I go to that land.

Let us then avoid each other's spears, even in the thick of battle;

there are many Trojans and their far-famed allies for me to kill, whoever a god sends me and my legs can overtake, and

there are many Achaeans from whom you may slay those you can.

Let us exchange our armour, so that these men too may know

that we claim to be guest-friends from our grandfathers' time.'

So they spoke together, and jumped down from their chariots,

and clasped each other's hands and made their friendship

firm.

But then Zeus the son of Cronus took away Glaucus' wits, since he exchanged armour with Diomedes, Tydeus' son, gold in return for bronze, a hundred oxen's worth for nine.

Now when Hector had reached the Scaean gates and the oak tree, the Trojans' wives and daughters ran up and surrounded him, asking about their sons and brothers and relations and husbands. But he told them all to pray to the gods, each in turn; for misery was already in store for many of them.

When he arrived at Priam's splendid house, which was constructed with polished stone porticoes—in it there were fifty chambers made of polished stone, built so as to be close to each other; and there the sons of Priam used to sleep next to their wedded wives; and opposite, for his daughters, opening off the courtyard, there were twelve roofed chambers made of polished stone,

built so as to be close to each other, and there the sons-in-law

of Priam used to sleep next to their respected wives—there his mother, the gently dowered lady, came to meet him,

bringing with her Laodice, the most beautiful of her daughters.

She gripped his hand tightly in hers, and addressed him, saying:

'My child, why ever have you left the daring battle, to come here?

The sons of the Achaeans—evil name!—must be pressing hard on

you as they wage war around the city; and your heart has sent you

to come here and hold your hands up to Zeus from the city's height.

Wait, I beg you, so that I can bring you honey-sweet wine, for you to pour libations to father Zeus and the other immortals

first; and after that you may enjoy it, if you will drink.

When a man is weary, wine greatly increases his fury, even as you are weary, fighting to defend your kinsmen.'

Then in answer to her Hector of the glittering helmet spoke:

'My revered mother, do not offer me mind-cheering wine, for fear that you sap my limbs' fury, and I forget my courage.

And awe restrains me from pouring gleaming wine to Zeus with unwashed hands; nor is it right to pray to Cronus' son of the dark clouds when one is spattered with blood and gore.

No; you must go to the temple of Athena who gathers the spoils,

with offerings, once you have gathered the matrons together;

then choose the robe which you judge to be the loveliest and largest in your hall, and which is most precious to you, and place it on the knees of Athena of the beautiful hair, and promise that you will sacrifice twelve heifers in her temple,

yearlings, untouched by the goad, if only she will pity the city and the Trojans' wives and infant children.

So may she keep the son of Tydeus away from sacred Ilium, that savage spearman, ruthless deviser of panic rout.

Go now to the temple of Athena who gathers the spoils, and I shall go in search of Paris, to summon him, to see if he is willing to listen to my words. How I wish that the earth would gape beneath him! The Olympian raised him

to be a sore affliction to the Trojans and to great-hearted Priam and his sons. If I could see him going down to Hades' house I could say that my heart had forgotten its joyless grief.'

So he spoke, and she went away into her house and summoned her servants, and they went through the city to gather the matrons.

She herself went down into a sweet-smelling chamber where her robes were stored: richly embroidered work of Sidonian women whom Alexander himself, who looked like a god,

had brought from Sidon, when he sailed over the wide sea on the voyage which brought well-born Helen to his home. Lifting out one of these Hecuba took it as a gift for Athena, the one that was the most intricately worked, and the largest,

and it shone like a star, and lay stored under all the rest. Then she set off, and many matrons hurried after her.

When they reached the temple of Athena on the city's heights

Theano of the beautiful cheeks opened the doors for them —

Theano, Cisseus' daughter, wife of Antenor, breaker of horses,

whom the Trojans had made the priestess of Athena.

Then they all with loud cries held up their hands to Athena, and Theano of the beautiful cheeks took the robe

and laid it on the knees of Athena of the lovely hair,

and called out in prayer to the daughter of great Zeus:

'Lady Athena, city's defender, bright among goddesses, shatter the spear of Diomedes, and grant that he may fall face-down in front of the Scaean gates, and we will straightaway sacrifice twelve heifers to you in your temple,

yearlings untouched by the goad, if only you will pity the city and the Trojans' wives and their infant children.'

So she spoke in prayer, but Pallas Athena lifted her head in denial.

Now while they were praying in this way to great Zeus' daughter,

Hector had set off for the splendid house of Alexander, which Paris himself had built with the help of those who then were the finest craftsmen in rich-soiled Troy; they had made for him a chamber and a hall and a courtyard

next to the houses of Priam and Hector, on the city's heights.

There Hector, loved by Zeus, went in, and in his hand was a spear eleven cubits long; the shaft's bronze point gleamed before him, and round it ran a golden neck-ring.

He found Paris in his chamber, looking after his magnificent armour,

his shield and corslet, and turning his curved bow over in his hands.

Argive Helen was sitting there with her serving-women, instructing her maidservants over their far-famed handiwork.

Seeing him Hector rebuked him with shaming words:

'You are possessed! It is not good to nurse this anger in your heart.

Our peoples are dying, fighting around the city and its steep walls,

and it is on your account that war and the battle-cry blaze about this city; and you would be quick to quarrel with anyone else you saw holding back in the face of hateful war.

So get to your feet, or the city will soon be destroyed by deadly fire.'

Then in answer Alexander who looked like a god

addressed him:

‘Hector, you rebuke me rightly, and not beyond the proper limit,

so I shall answer likewise, and you must listen and mark my words.

It is not so much through anger or resentment at the Trojans

that I sit in my chamber, but wanting to give way to my misery.

But now my wife has persuaded me with beguiling words, urging me to return to battle; and I too think that this would be

the better course, since victory shifts from one man to another.

But come, wait here a while, and let me put on Ares’ armour—

or else go first, and I shall follow; I think I shall overtake you.’

So he spoke; and Hector of the glittering helmet did not answer;

but Helen addressed him with honey-sweet words:

‘Brother-in-law, I am a bitch and a cold-hearted mischief-maker;

I wish that on that first day when my mother bore me an evil storm-wind had carried me away to some mountain or into the surge of the loud-roaring sea, where the waves would have swept me away, before these things could happen.

But since the gods have ordained that these dire things shall be,

then I wish that I was the wife of a better man, one who knew

the meaning of disgrace, and the outrage that men can feel.

As for this man, his wits are not firmly fixed, nor will they

ever

be so; and I think he will receive his reward for that.

But come, enter, and sit down on this chair, brother-in-law,
since it is your mind that war's toil especially besets,
because

of me, bitch that I am, and because of Alexander's
delusion.

Zeus has given us a wretched portion, so that in time
hereafter

we may become a theme for the songs of generations yet
to come.'

Then in answer great Hector of the glittering helmet
said:

'Do not make me sit, Helen; loving as you are, you will not
win me

over, for my heart is already urging me to go to the Trojans'
help,

since they long for me while I stay away from them.

Your task is to rouse this man—and he should stir himself to
action,

and so be able to catch me up while I am still in the city.

Now I will go to my own house, in order to see the people
of my house and my dear wife and my infant son,

since I do not know if I shall ever come back to them again,
or if the gods will soon beat me down under the Achaeans'
hands.'

So Hector of the glittering helmet spoke and departed,
and quickly came to his well-appointed house,

but he did not find white-armed Andromache in his halls;

she had left with their son and a finely robed woman
servant,

and was standing on the tower, crying and lamenting.

When Hector could not find his blameless wife at home

he went and stood at the threshold and said to the serving-
women:

‘Come, serving-women, and tell me this truthfully:
where has white-armed Andromache gone from the hall?
To my sisters’ houses, or those of my brothers’ finely robed
wives?

Or has she gone to Athena’s temple, where all the other
lovely-haired

Trojan women are seeking to appease the dread goddess?’

Then in answer his trustworthy housekeeper addressed
him:

‘Hector, you order me to speak the truth; she has not gone
to your sisters’ houses or those of your brothers’ finely
robed wives,

nor has she gone to Athena’s temple, where all the other
lovely-haired

Trojan women are seeking to appease the dread goddess,
but

she has gone to the great tower of Ilium, because she has
heard

that the Trojans are hard pressed, and the Achaeans are
triumphant.

She went in a great hurry, making towards the wall,
like a frenzied woman; and a nurse has taken the child with
her.’

So the housekeeper spoke, and Hector hurried from the
house,

back by the way he had come, along the well-built streets.

When he had passed through the great city, and had
reached

the Scaean gates, from where he would go out on to the
plain,

his richly dowered wife came rushing to meet him,

Andromache, the daughter of great-hearted Eëtion*—

Eëtion, who had lived under wooded Placus, in Thebe

under Placus,* and had ruled over the Cilician people;

and his daughter was married to bronze-helmeted Hector.

She came now to meet him, and the nurse came with her, carrying at her breast the child of tender mind, only a baby, Hector's cherished son, who resembled a beautiful star, and whom he called Scamandrius, but all the rest called Astyanax, because Hector on his own defended Ilium.*

When he saw the child Hector smiled without speaking, but Andromache wept tears as she stood beside him, and gripping his hand tightly in hers she spoke to him:

'Man possessed, your fury will destroy you! You have no pity

for your infant son or for me, ill-fated woman, I who will soon be your widow; for soon the Achaeans will all set on you

and kill you. And when I lose you, it will be better for me to sink down below the earth, because when you have gone to meet your death there will be no comfort for me,

but only misery. I have no father or revered mother—

my father was killed by glorious Achilles when

he sacked the well-populated city of the Cilicians, Thebe of the high gates; though he killed Eëtion, he did not strip him

of his armour, for he was held back by awe in his heart, but cremated him with his finely worked armour and heaped up a burial-mound over him. And the mountain nymphs, daughters of Zeus the aegis-wearer, planted elm trees round it.

And as for the seven brothers who lived with me in my halls,

they all went down on the same day to the house of Hades; swift-footed glorious Achilles slew them, every one, as they tended their shambling oxen and white-fleeced sheep.

As for my mother, who was queen under wooded Placus, he carried her off here with the rest of the plunder, but then set her free in return for a boundless ransom, and Artemis the arrow-shooter shot her down in her father's

halls.

Hector, you are my father and my revered mother
and my brother, and you are my tender husband;
come, show me pity, and stay here on this tower, and
do not make your son an orphan and your wife a widow.
Station the people beside the fig tree, where the city
is most easily scaled and the wall is open to assault—
three times their best men have made an attempt there,
under the two called Ajax and far-famed Idomeneus,
and under the sons of Atreus and Tydeus' stalwart son; perhaps
perhaps some man skilled in divine revelations has told
them,
or it is their own hearts that instruct them, and urge them
on.'

Then in answer great Hector of the glittering helmet
addressed
her:

'Wife, all this concerns me too; but I would feel terrible
shame
before the Trojans and the Trojan women with their trailing
robes
if I were to hang back from the battle, like a coward.
Nor does my heart order me to do this, since I have learnt
always to be brave and to fight among the foremost
Trojans,
winning great glory for my father and for myself.
For I know full well in my mind and in my heart
that the day will come when sacred Troy will be destroyed,
and Priam and the people of Priam of the fine ash spear.
Yet I am not as troubled by the Trojans' future pain,
or by what Hecuba herself will endure, or lord Priam,
or my brothers, the many and brave men who will
fall in the dust, overcome by our enemies, as much as
by your pain, when some bronze-shirted Achaean
leads you weeping away, robbing you of the day of

freedom;
to be in Argos, weaving at the loom at another woman's
command,
and carrying water from the spring Messeïs or Hypereia,*
much against your will; and a harsh necessity will lie upon
you.

And some man when he sees you shedding a tear will say:
"That is the wife of Hector, who was always the greatest
of the horse-breaking Trojans, when they fought around
Ilium."

That is what they will say; and it will be a fresh grief for
you,
widowed of a man who might have saved you from the day
of slavery.

May I be dead, and hidden under a mound of the heaped
earth,
before I hear your cries as you are dragged captive away.'

So speaking illustrious Hector stretched out his arms to
his son;

but the boy shrank back crying into the bosom of his
finely girdled nurse, terrified at the sight of his dear father
and frightened by the bronze and the horsehair crest,
seeing how it nodded on top of his helmet, a terrifying
thing.

His dear father and his revered mother laughed out loud,
and at once illustrious Hector took the helmet from his
head

and laid it, gleaming brightly, on the ground.

He kissed his dear son and dandled him in his arms,
and spoke in prayer to Zeus and all the other gods:

'Zeus, and all you other gods, grant that this son of mine
may be marked out above the Trojans, as I am, and be
strong and brave as me, and may he rule Ilium by might;
and may men one day say as he returns from battle, "This
man

is far better than his father.” May he kill his enemy and bring home bloody spoils, and may his mother’s heart be glad.’

So he spoke, and laid his son in his dear wife’s arms, and she took him to her sweet-smelling bosom, laughing through her tears. Seeing this, her husband pitied her,

and stroked her with his hand, and spoke to her, saying: ‘Woman possessed! Do not grieve too much for me in your heart.

No man is going to dispatch me to Hades before my due time;

and as for that time, no man, I say, can ever escape it, whether coward or brave, when once he has been born. Go back to the house and take charge of your own tasks, the loom and the distaff, and tell your women servants to go about their work. War must be the concern of men, of all those who were born in Ilium, and mine more than any.’

So speaking illustrious Hector picked up his helmet with its horsehair crest, and his dear wife set off for home, often turning round to look at him, and weeping huge tears. Very soon she came to the well-appointed house of man-slaying Hector, and inside it she found many women servants, and roused up lamentation in them all. So they wept for Hector in his house while he was still alive, for they did not believe he would come back again from the war, escaping the fury and hands of the Achaeans.

Nor had Paris delayed long in his lofty house, but when he had put on his fine armour, intricately worked with bronze, he hurried through the city, confident in his swift feet. As when a horse that is kept at the manger and fed full with barley breaks its tether and gallops exultantly, hoofs drumming,

over the plain, since its habit is to bathe in the waters
of a sweet-flowing river; it holds its head high, and its mane
flows about its shoulders, and confident in its splendour
its legs carry it easily to the haunts and pastures of horses;
so Paris, Priam's son, strode down from high Pergamus,
shining brightly in his armour like the beaming sun, and
laughing

aloud as his swift feet carried him along. Very soon he
caught up with his brother, glorious Hector, as he was
about

to turn away from the private conversation with his wife.
Then Alexander who looked like a god was the first to
speak:

'Dear brother, surely I have detained you in your haste,
by dawdling and not coming at the right time, as you told
me.'

Then in answer Hector of the glittering helmet
addressed him:

'You are possessed! No one whose judgement is rightly
ordered

could deny your battle-work its due, since you are a
stalwart man;

but you hang back wilfully and refuse to fight, and at that
the heart in my breast is pained, when I hear shameful
reports

about you from the Trojans, who endure great toil on your
behalf.

Still, let us go on. Later we shall set all this right, if ever
Zeus

allows us to set up the wine-bowl of freedom in our halls,
in honour of the gods of the high sky, who live for ever,
after we have driven the well-greaved Achaeans out of
Troy.'

BOOK SEVEN

So illustrious Hector spoke, and rushed out of the gates, and with him went his brother Alexander, both raging in their hearts to join the battle and the fighting. As when a god sends a breeze to eager sailors, when they are weary from sweeping the sea with their oars of polished pine, and exhaustion has loosened their limbs, so these two appeared before the desperate Trojans.

Then they began the killing. Paris slew King Areïthous' son, Menesthus who lived in Arne,* and he was the son of Areïthous the club-wielder and ox-eyed Phylomedusa. Hector struck Eïoneus in the neck with his sharp spear, underneath his fine bronze helmet, and loosened his limbs. Glaucus son of Hippolochus, captain of the Lycians, hit Iphinous, Dexius' son, in the shoulder with his spear in the crush of battle as he leapt up behind his swift mares, and he fell from his chariot to the ground, his limbs slackened.

When the goddess grey-eyed Athena saw that these two were cutting down the Argives in the crush of battle, she set off and swept down from the heights of Olympus to sacred Ilium. Apollo, looking down from Pergamus, came to meet her, since he was plotting victory for the Trojans.

These two encountered each other by the oak tree,* and lord Apollo, son of Zeus, addressed her first: 'Daughter of great Zeus, why have you come yet again raging from Olympus, urged on by your great heart?

Is it to grant the battle's victory in turn to the Danaans,
because you have no pity for the Trojans as they die?
Come now, listen to me, and it will be much better for us:
let us now put an end to the fighting and the conflict,
for this day; and after this they will fight again, until they
reach
their goal in Ilium, since it is the desire of you immortal
goddesses that this city should be utterly destroyed.'

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena
addressed him:

'Let it be so, shooter from afar; indeed I too had this in
mind

when I came from Olympus to join the Trojans and
Achaean.

So tell me, how do you mean to put an end to this war of
men?'

Then in answer lord Apollo, son of Zeus, addressed her:

'Let us arouse savage fury in Hector, breaker of horses,
to challenge one of the Danaans to fight, man against man,
matching strength to strength in the grim conflict;
then perhaps the bronze-greaved Achaeans will be
alarmed,
and will send someone out to fight alone against glorious
Hector.'

So he spoke, and the goddess grey-eyed Athena did not
disobey him.

Now Helenus, Priam's dear son, understood in his heart
the plan which the designing gods had decided upon;
he went and stood next to Hector, and spoke to him:

'Hector, son of Priam, the equal of Zeus in scheming,
I beg you to listen to me, since I am your brother:
make all the other Trojans and Achaeans sit down, but
yourself challenge whoever is the best of the Achaeans
to fight with you in grim conflict, matching strength to
strength.

I do not think it is your destiny yet to die and meet death—that is how I hear the voice of the gods who live for ever.’

So he spoke, and Hector was mightily glad when he heard his words, and strode into the middle ground, grasping the middle of his spear, and held back the Trojan companies; and they all settled down.

And Agamemnon made the well-greaved Achaeans sit down too, and Athena and Apollo of the silver bow settled themselves too, taking on the likeness of vultures, and perching on a tall oak tree that was sacred to father Zeus who wears the aegis, taking pleasure in the sight of the men, whose ranks sat close-packed, bristling with shields and helmets and spears. As when the West Wind suddenly springs up, and ripples unfurl over the open sea, and the sea grows black beneath it,

so were the ranks of Achaeans and Trojans as they settled on the plain. Then Hector spoke out to both sides: ‘Listen to me, Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans, and I will tell you what the spirit in my breast urges me. Cronus’ son who sits on high has left our oaths unfulfilled, and has misery in mind for both of us in his plans, until the day that you take Troy with its fine fortifications or are yourselves beaten down beside your sea-traversing ships.

In your midst are the champions of all the Achaeans; if the spirit of any one of them impels him to fight with me, let him come before all as a champion against glorious Hector.

This I declare, and may Zeus be a witness for us: if this man should take me down with the sharp-bladed

bronze,
let him strip my armour and carry it off to his hollow ships;
but he should return my body to its home, so that in death
the Trojans and their wives may grant me the due rite of
fire.

But if I overcome him, and Apollo grants me my prayer,
I shall strip his armour and take it back to sacred Ilium,
and hang it in the temple of Apollo who shoots from afar,
but him I shall return after death to his well-benched ships,
so that the flowing-haired Achaeans may bury him and
heap up a grave-mound for him beside the broad
Hellespont.*

And one day a man may say, even one of generations to
come,
as he sails past in his many-benched ship over the wine-
faced sea:

“That is the burial-mound of a man who died long ago;
he fought as a champion once, and illustrious Hector killed
him.”

This is what someone will say; and my fame will never die.’

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still;
they were ashamed to refuse his challenge, yet afraid to
accept it.

Finally Menelaus stood up and spoke out among them,
rebuking them bitterly, and groaning deeply in his heart:
‘Oh, you are full of brave words—Achaean women, no
longer men!

This will indeed bring contempt on us, beyond endurance,
if not a single Danaan man will go to meet Hector.

May you all turn into water and earth, each one of you,
sitting here bereft of spirit, utterly lacking desire for glory;
I myself will put on armour to fight this man; as for the
snares

of victory, they are held above us by the immortal gods.’

So he spoke, and put on his splendid armour.

Then, Menelaus, the end of your life would have come at the hands of Hector, for he was by far the stronger man, had not the kings of the Achaeans leapt up and seized you, and if Atreus' son himself, wide-ruling Agamemnon, had not gripped you by the right hand and spoken directly to you, saying:

'Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, you are out of your mind! There is no need for this madness. Restrain yourself, troubled though you are, and do not out of rivalry hope to fight a better man than you—

Hector, son of Priam, whom other men shrink to face. Even Achilles shuddered to confront him on the battlefield where men win glory, and he is a far better man than you. No, go now and sit with the band of your companions, and the Achaeans will put forward another champion against this man.

Hector may be without fear and unable to get his fill of fighting, but I think that even he will gladly bend his knee in rest, if he can escape from the fierce fighting and the grim conflict.'

So speaking the hero turned his brother's thoughts aside, urging what destiny had decreed, and Menelaus was persuaded.

His attendants then gladly took the armour from his shoulders;

but Nestor rose to his feet and spoke out among the Argives:

'This is not good! Great sorrow is coming to the land of Achaea!

Surely Peleus, the aged driver of horses, would groan aloud —

Peleus, that excellent counsellor and speaker of the
Myrmidons,
who once took great delight in questioning me in his
house,*
asking me about the ancestry and birth of all the Argives.
If he now heard that they were all cowering before Hector
he would raise his hands repeatedly to the immortal gods,
praying for his life to leave his body and go down to Hades'
house.

Father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, if only I were as young
as I was when men fought beside the fast-flowing Celadon
—

men of Pylos gathered together against spear-wielding
Arcadians
by the walls of Pheia, along the waters of Iardanus.*
Among them Ereuthalion* stood up as a champion, a man
like a god,
wearing on his shoulders the armour of lord Areïthous—
glorious Areïthous, to whom men and fine-girdled women
gave the name of Club-Wielder, because he used to fight
not with the bow and arrows nor with the long spear,
but would smash enemy companies down with an iron
club.*

Lycurgus killed him by cunning, not by force, on a narrow
road, where his iron club could not save him from death;
before he could use it Lycurgus skewered him through the
middle

with his spear, and he sprawled on his back on the ground.
He stripped Areïthous of the armour that brazen Ares had
given him

and from this time forward always wore it in the grind of
Ares' war;

but when Lycurgus was growing old in his halls
he gave it to his dear attendant Ereuthalion to wear, and
he was wearing it when he challenged all our best men.
They began to tremble, and were terrified, and no one

dared stand;
but my much-enduring spirit released in me the courage
to enter the battle—and I was the youngest-born of them
all.

So I fought with him, and Athena fulfilled my boast,
and he was the tallest and mightiest man that I ever killed,
and there he lay, his bulk spreadeagled this way and that.
If only I were as young again, with my strength unimpaired!
Then Hector of the glittering helmet would soon meet his
match.

But not one of you, who are champions of all the Achaeans,
has the desire and passion to meet Hector face to face.'

So the old man provoked them, and nine men in all
stood up.

Easily the first to rise was Agamemnon, lord of men,
and next after him rose mighty Diomedes, Tydeus' son,
and after them the pair called Ajax, clothed in impetuous
courage,

and after them Idomeneus and Idomeneus' attendant
Meriones, who was the equal of man-slaying Enyalios,*
and after them Eurypylus, the splendid son of Euaemon,
and then rose Thoas, Andraemon's son, and glorious
Odysseus,

all of them eager to do battle with glorious Hector.

Then among them Nestor, the Gerenian horseman, spoke
again:

'Now shake lots thoroughly, to see who will be chosen;
that man will surely gladden the well-greaved Achaeans,
and will himself be gladdened in his heart, if only he can
escape from the fierce fighting and the grim conflict.'

So he spoke, and they marked their lots, each man his
own,

and threw them into the helmet of Atreus' son
Agamemnon.

And the people prayed, holding their hands up to the gods,

and this is what they would say, each looking up to the wide high sky:

‘Father Zeus, let it be the lot of Ajax, or that of Tydeus’ son, or even that of the king himself of Mycenae, rich in gold.’

So they spoke; Nestor, the Gerenian horseman, shook the helmet,

and out leapt the lot that they had indeed wished for, that of Ajax. A herald carried it round the whole group from left to right, showing it to all the Achaean champions, and each man disclaimed it when he did not see his own mark.

But when, carrying it round the whole group, he came to the man

who had marked and thrown it into the helmet, illustrious Ajax

held out his hand, and the herald stood by him and handed it to him,

and Ajax saw and recognized his mark, and was glad in his heart;

he threw the lot on to the ground at his feet, and spoke:

‘My friends, this is indeed my lot! And I am glad

in my heart, because I think I shall defeat glorious Hector.

So come; while I am putting on my armour for the battle,

you must pray to the lord Zeus, son of Cronus, silently

to yourselves, so that the Trojans do not overhear you—

or no, pray out loud, since we have no fear of any man;

no one can pit his will against mine and force me back

by force or by craft, since I do not think I was born

and bred on Salamis to be so utterly lacking in skill.’

So he spoke, and they prayed to lord Zeus, son of Cronus,

and this is what they would say, each looking up to the wide high sky:

‘Father Zeus, you who rule from Ida,* mightiest and most glorious,

grant that Ajax may be victorious and win bright glory;
but if Hector also is dear to you, and you care for him,
give both men equal strength, and make their glory equal.'

So they spoke, and Ajax began to arm himself in
flashing bronze.

When he had put all his armour about his body he then
strode out, looking like monstrous Ares advancing
when he goes to war and looks for men whom Cronus' son
has brought together to fight in the fury of life-devouring
strife.

Just so Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans, rose up towering,
with a smile on his terrible face, his legs beneath him
making great strides while he shook his far-shadowing
spear.

The Argives were glad when they saw him, but
a dreadful trembling stole over the limbs of every Trojan,
and even Hector's heart began to knock against his chest;
but he could not retreat or turn back into the mass of
people,

since it was through his own battle-lust that he had
challenged Ajax.

Ajax drew close to him, carrying his tower-like shield,
bronze

with seven oxhide layers, made for him by the craftsman
Tychius,

by far the best of leather-workers, whose home was in
Hyle;*

he had made the flashing seven-oxhide shield for Ajax from
well-nourished bulls, and had laid on top an eighth layer of
bronze.

Holding this in front of his chest, Ajax son of Telamon
stood very close to Hector, and threateningly addressed
him:

'Now, Hector, you will find out for certain, one
against one, what kind of champions the Danaans also

have among them,
even apart from Achilles the lion-hearted breaker of ranks.
He is now lying by his curved sea-traversing ships,
deeply angry against Agamemnon, shepherd of the people;
but we have the kind of men who can stand up against you,
and there are many of us; so begin the battle and the
fighting.'

Then in answer great Hector of the glittering helmet
spoke:

'Ajax son of Telamon, sprung from Zeus, ruler of the people;
do not put me to the test as if I were some feeble child,
or a woman who knows nothing of war's business.
No, I know well enough about battles and the killing of men;
I know how to handle my toughened shield to the right
and the left—which for me is what real shield-work means.
I know how to storm into the battle of swift chariots, and
I know in close combat how to step to deadly Ares' dance.
Prepare! I have no wish to look for a chance to catch a man
like you
unawares with my cast; I will throw openly, to see if I can
hit you.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and
threw it,
and hit the terrible seven-oxhide shield of Ajax on its
outer covering of bronze, which was the eighth layer upon
it.

The relentless bronze tore its way through six folds,
but was stopped by the seventh hide. Then in his turn
Ajax, sprung from Zeus, let fly his far-shadowing spear
and hit the perfectly balanced shield of Priam's son.
The massive spear passed through the shining shield,
and forced its way through his intricately worked corslet;
it cut clean through Hector's tunic, next to his ribs,
but he leaned to one side and avoided death's black
spectre.

Then both together grasped their spears and pulled them out
and fell upon each other like flesh-devouring lions,
or like wild boars whose strength is far from feeble.
Priam's son jabbed his spear at the middle of Ajax's shield,
but the bronze did not break through, and its tip was bent back.

Ajax sprang at Hector and pierced his shield; straight through
went the spear, and smashed back his raging advance;
driving on, it cut his neck, and the black blood spurted out.
Even so Hector of the glittering helmet did not stop fighting,

but fell back, and in his brawny hand picked up a rock
which was lying on the plain, black, jagged, and huge.
Hurling this he hit Ajax's terrible shield of seven hides
on its centre, on the boss, and the bronze rang out all around;

but Ajax in his turn picked up a much bigger stone and
whirling round flung it, forcing enormous strength into it,
and the millstone-like rock smashed the shield inwards,
and Hector's knees crumpled, and he fell on to his back,
splayed out, crushed under his shield; but Apollo soon set him upright.

Then they surely would have hewed at each other with swords

at close quarters, had not the heralds, messengers of Zeus and men,

come forward, one a Trojan and the other a bronze-shirted Achaean,

Talthybius and Idaeus, both men of good judgement,
and held up their staffs in the middle ground between both;
and Idaeus the herald, a man skilled in wise counsel, spoke out:

'Dear sons, put an end to this battle and do not fight any

more;

Zeus who gathers the clouds holds you both dear,
and you are both excellent spearmen; this we all know.
But now night is upon us, and it is good to give way to
night.'

Then in answer Ajax, son of Telamon, addressed him:
'Idaeus, you two must tell Hector to say these words; it was
through his own battle-lust that he challenged all our
champions.
Let him be the first to stop, and I will certainly follow his
lead.'

Then in answer to him huge Hector of the glittering
helmet said:

'Ajax, some god has given you stature and might and
sound
judgement, and you are by far the best Achaean spear-
fighter;
so let us now put an end to fighting and conflict,
for today. After this we shall fight again, until some deity
decides between us, and gives the victory to one or the
other.

But now night is upon us, and it is good to give way to
night,
and then you will bring joy to all the Achaeans beside their
ships,
and especially whatever kinsmen and companions you
have.

I for my part shall go through the great city of lord Priam,
and
gladden the Trojans and the Trojan women with their trailing
robes,
who are about to go into the sacred assembly to pray on
my account.
But come, let us give each other gifts that bring glory with
them,

so that men from among Achaeans and Trojans may say:
“Truly these two fought each other in heart-devouring
strife,
but then they parted and were joined in friendship.”

So speaking he fetched a silver-riveted sword and gave
it

to Ajax, together with its scabbard and skilfully cut belt,
while Ajax gave him a sword-belt, bright with purple dye.
So they parted; one went back to the Achaean host
and the other left for the gathering of Trojans; and these
were glad when they saw him coming, alive and unharmed,
having escaped the fury and irresistible hands of Ajax;
they escorted him to the city, scarcely believing he was
safe.

And on the other side the well-greaved Achaeans escorted
Ajax, exulting in his victory, to glorious Agamemnon.

When they reached the huts of lord Agamemnon,
the son of Atreus sacrificed an ox on their behalf,
a male beast, five years old, to the all-powerful son of
Cronus.

This they flayed and prepared, and divided into joints,
and chopped the meat skilfully and threaded it on to
skewers,

and cooked it with great care and then drew it all off.

When they had finished their work and made the meal
ready

they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the
meal;

and the hero son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon,
honoured Ajax with the whole length of the chine.

When they had put from themselves the desire for food and
drink,

then first of all the old man began to weave a scheme—
Nestor, whose counsel even before this had proved to be
the best.

With generous intent he spoke and addressed them:
'Son of Atreus, and you other champions of all the
Achaeans!
Seeing that many flowing-haired Achaeans have been
killed,
and violent Ares has now spilled their dark blood along
Scamander's
clear waters, and their shades have gone down to Hades,
at dawn you must hold the Achaeans back from fighting.
Let us assemble then and bring the dead men back here on
wagons
hauled by oxen and mules. After that let us burn them
a little way from the ships, so that each may take a man's
bones
home to his children, when we return to our native land.*
Let us then pile up one single grave-mound around the
pyre,
throwing it up in a heap from the ground, and up against it
let us
quickly build a high-towered wall,* to protect both ships
and men.
In this wall let us construct some well-fitting gates,
so that there shall be a way through them to drive chariots;
and close to it on the outside let us dig a deep ditch,
which with its circuit may protect chariots and men, in case
we should one day be pressed hard by the proud Trojans'
onslaught.'

So he spoke, and all the kings gave their approval.
The Trojans also held an assembly on Ilium's city heights,
next to Priam's gates;* they were full of fear and confusion,
and among them sagacious Antenor was the first to speak:
'Listen to me, Trojans and Dardanians* and allies,
and I shall tell you what the heart in my breast urges.
Come now—let us give Argive Helen and her possessions
with her

back to Atreus' sons to carry away. We are fighting now because we have broken our solemn oaths; I do not therefore suppose that any advantage will come to us, unless we do as I say.'

So speaking he sat down again; and among them there stood up glorious Alexander, husband of Helen of the lovely hair,

who answered and addressed winged words to him: 'Antenor, what you now advise does not please me; you know

that you could have thought of some better speech than this.

But if you really are in earnest when you say this openly, then surely the gods themselves must have destroyed your wits.

So I shall speak out among the Trojans, breakers of horses: I declare outright that I will not give the woman back, though

as for the possessions that I brought from Argos to my house, I am

willing to give them all back, and to add more from my own store.'

So speaking he sat down again; and among them there stood up

Priam of Dardanus' line, the equal of the gods in counsel, who with generous intent spoke and addressed them:

'Listen to me, Trojans and Dardanians and allies, and I shall tell you what the heart in my breast urges.

Prepare and eat your supper now throughout the city, as always,

and be sure to set sentries, and let each man be vigilant.

And when dawn comes, let Idaeus go to the hollow ships

and report to Atreus' sons, Agamemnon and Menelaus,

the words of Alexander, on whose account this quarrel has

arisen.

And let him add this shrewd proposal: ask if they are willing to hold back from war's hideous clamour until we burn our dead. After this we will fight again, until some deity decides between us, and gives the victory to one side or the other.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he said.

Then they ate their supper in ranks throughout the army, and when dawn came Idaeus made his way to the hollow ships;

there he found the Danaans, attendants of Ares, at assembly,

beside the stern of Agamemnon's ship. Taking his stand in their midst the loud-voiced herald addressed them:

'Sons of Atreus and you other princes of all the Achaeans, Priam and the other splendid Trojans instruct me to report to you—

in the hope that it may be acceptable and pleasing to you—the words of Alexander, on whose account this quarrel has arisen:

as for the possessions which Alexander brought to Troy in his

hollow ships—if only he had died before he did—all these he is willing to give back, and to add more from his own store;

but as for the wedded wife of glorious Menelaus, he says he will not give her up, though the Trojans strongly urge him to.

Furthermore they told me to invite you, if you are willing, to hold back from war's hideous clamour until we have burnt our dead; and after that we shall fight again until some deity

decides between us, and gives the victory to one side or the other.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still;
but at last Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke among
them:

‘Let no man now accept the possessions of Alexander,
nor Helen; even a very foolish man can see that the snares
of death are already fastened tight around the Trojans.’
So he spoke, and all the sons of the Achaeans shouted their
approval, amazed at the words of Diomedes, breaker of
horses.

Then lord Agamemnon addressed Idaeus:

‘Idaeus, you have yourself heard the Achaeans’ words,
how they answer you; and I too am pleased with what they
say.

But as for burning your dead, I do not at all begrudge it
you;

when there are dead men there can be no reason to hold
back

from appeasing them swiftly with fire, now that they have
died.

May Zeus, Hera’s loud-thundering husband, witness these
oaths.’

So speaking he held his staff up in the sight of all the
gods,

and Idaeus went back towards sacred Ilium.

Now the Trojans and Dardanians were sitting in assembly,
all gathered together, waiting for when Idaeus should
come.

And he came, and standing in their midst reported
his message. Then with great haste they busied themselves
with two tasks, some to collect the dead and others to look
for wood.

And on their side the Argives hurried from their well-
benched ships,

some to collect the dead and others to look for wood.

The sun was rising through the high sky from the deep

waters of peacefully flowing Ocean, its light beginning to strike the tilled land, when the two sides met. It was a hard matter to distinguish one dead man from another, but when they had washed the bloody gore from them with water,

weeping warm tears, they lifted them on to wagons.

Great Priam forbade them to cry out,* and so they piled their dead on to a pyre in silence, grieving in their hearts; then after burning them in the fire they returned to sacred Ilium.

In the same way, the well-greaved Achaeans on their side piled their dead on to a pyre, grieving in their hearts; and after burning them in the fire they set off for the hollow ships.

When it was not yet dawn, but still the night that is half-light,

a troop of Achaeans, specially chosen, gathered around the pyre

and piled up a single grave-mound around it, throwing it up in a heap from the ground, and up against it they built a wall with high towers, to protect both ships and men.

In this wall they constructed well-fitting gates, so that there should be a way through them to drive chariots, and close to it on the outside they dug a deep ditch, great and wide, and inside it they planted stakes.

The flowing-haired Achaeans were busying themselves with this

and the gods, sitting with Zeus the lightning-sender in their midst,

marvelled at the great work of the bronze-shirted Achaeans.

Among them Poseidon the earthshaker was the first to speak:

‘Father Zeus, is there any mortal left on the boundless earth

who will tell the immortals of his thoughts and purposes?
Can you not see? Here are the flowing-haired Achaeans
again—
they have built a wall in front of their ships, and have
driven a ditch
around it, but they have not offered splendid hecatombs to
the gods.
Doubtless its fame will extend as far as the dawn spreads
its light,
and then men will forget the wall which Phoebus Apollo and
I
once laboured hard together to build for the hero
Laomedon.’*

Then, deeply angered, Zeus who gathers the clouds
addressed him:
‘Come, come, earthshaker of wide power—what a thing to
say!
Some other god might well shudder at this invention, one
who
was far inferior to you in his hand’s strength and his fury,
but your fame will surely extend as far as the dawn spreads
its light.
Consider now; when the flowing-haired Achaeans have after
this
gone away with their ships to their dear native land,
you may tear this wall down and scatter it all over the salt
sea;
you may cover the great seashore once again with sand,
and so,
you may be sure, the Achaeans’ great wall will be blotted
out.’

So they spoke, one to another, in this way. And the sun
went down, and the Achaeans’ work was finished, and
they slaughtered oxen, hut by hut, and ate their supper.
Some ships had arrived from Lemnos, carrying wine,

many of them, sent by Euneus who was the son of Jason, he whom Hypsipyle had borne to Jason, * shepherd of the people;

and as a special gift to Atreus' sons Agamemnon and Menelaus

Jason's son gave them a cargo of sweet wine, a thousand measures.

From these ships the flowing-haired Achaeans bought their wine,

some in exchange for bronze, some in exchange for flashing iron,

some in exchange for hides, some in exchange for living cattle,

and some in exchange for slaves; and they prepared a splendid feast.

Then all night long the flowing-haired Achaeans feasted,

and in the city the Trojans and their allies did the same;

but all night long Zeus the counsellor planned misery for the Achaeans,

and kept up a terrifying thunder. Pale fear began to grip them,

and they spilled the wine from their cups on to the ground, and no one

dared drink until he had made a libation to Cronus' all-powerful son.

Then they lay down to rest, and received the gift of sleep.

BOOK EIGHT

Now saffron-robed Dawn was spreading over the whole earth,
and Zeus who delights in thunder called an assembly of gods
on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus.
He himself addressed them, and the gods all listened with care:

‘Hear me, all you gods and goddesses, and I shall tell you what the heart in my breast commands me; and let no one, whether female divinity or male, try to frustrate my plan; you must all approve it here so that I may quickly bring these matters to an end. If I see anyone turning his back on the other gods and wanting to go and help the Trojans or to the Danaans, he will be struck down and have a painful return to Olympus; or else I shall seize and hurl him into murky Tartarus, far, far away, where there is the deepest pit under the earth, and there are gates of iron and a threshold of bronze, as far below Hades as the high sky is above the earth.*
Then he will learn how far I am the strongest of all the gods.

So come now, gods, and test me, so that you all may find out:

let down a rope of gold from the high sky,* and all of you, gods and goddesses, take hold of it; even so, however hard you toil at it, you will not be able to drag me, Zeus the supreme counsellor, from the high sky down to earth.

But if ever I were to turn my mind to hauling on the rope,
I could pull you up, and the earth and the sea with you;
and then I would fasten the rope around a crag of Olympus,
and everything would then be left hanging, high in the air.
That is how much stronger I am than both gods and men.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still,
amazed at his words, for he had spoken with great force.
At last the goddess grey-eyed Athena spoke among them:
'Our father, son of Cronus, supreme among rulers,
we do know well that your strength is irresistible;
but for all that we feel pity towards the Danaan spearmen,
who will surely bring their lives to a miserable end, and
perish.

Still, we shall hold back from the warfare, as you command,
and will offer to the Argives such counsel as will benefit
them,
so that they do not all perish as a result of your anger.'

Then Zeus who gathers the clouds smiled at her and
said:

'Be comforted, my dear child, Tritogeneia; I did not speak
with serious intent; and towards you I am minded to be
gentle.'

So he spoke, and harnessed under the yoke his two
horses,
brazen-footed swift flyers who had flowing manes of gold,
and himself put on clothes of gold, and took up his whip,
golden and skilfully made, and mounted his chariot.
Then he whipped the horses into motion, and they eagerly
flew on between the earth and the starry high sky.
He came to Ida with its many springs, mother of wild
beasts,
to Gargarus, where he has a precinct and a smoking altar.
There the father of gods and men reined in his horses and
untied them from the chariot, and poured a thick mist
about them.

He himself sat down on the mountain peaks, exulting in his glory,
watching the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Achaeans.

Now the long-haired Achaeans took their meal in haste, each in his own hut, and at once began to arm themselves, and

on their side, in the city, the Trojans too were arming themselves—

fewer in number, but still raging to join the battle's mêlée, through

hard necessity, since they were fighting for their wives and children.

All the gates were opened, and the people streamed out, soldiers on foot and in chariots; and a huge clamour went up.

When the ranks had met in one place and come to grips,

then there was a clash of leather shields and spears and the fury of bronze-armoured warriors. Bossed shields smashed against each other, and a tremendous clamour arose,

made up of the groans of dying men and the exultant cries of their killers; and the earth ran with blood.

Now as long as it was still morning and the sacred day was growing,

both sides' missiles struck home, and the people kept falling;

but when the sun stood astride the midpoint of the high sky,

then indeed father Zeus held up his golden scales,* and in them

he put two spectres of death, the bringer of long misery, one for

the horse-breaking Trojans and one for the bronze-shirted

Achaeans.

Taking the bar by the centre he lifted it up, and the
Achaeans'

destined day sank down; their spectres settled on the earth
that

nourishes many, while the Trojans' leapt up to the broad
high sky.

Zeus himself thundered loudly from Ida, and let fly
a blazing flash into the Achaean host; and when they saw it
they were stunned, and pale fear took hold of them all.

Then neither Idomeneus nor Agamemnon had the will
to stand firm,

nor did the two called Ajax, attendants of Ares, stand firm.

Only Gerenian Nestor, protector of the Achaeans, stood his
ground—

not that he willed it, but his horse was exhausted, hit by an
arrow

from glorious Alexander, the husband of lovely-haired
Helen;

it was hit on the top of its head, where a horse's mane
starts

to grow upon its skull, and it is a most vulnerable point.

The arrow sank into its brain, and it reared up at the pain,
and reeling from the bronze it stampeded the other horses.

While the old man was trying to cut the horse's trace-reins,
slashing at them with his sword, Hector's swift horses

came up through the mêlée, carrying their daring
charioteer

Hector; and then the old man would have lost his life,

had not Diomedes, master of the war-cry, been quick to
notice.

He gave a terrible cry, and urged Odysseus to help him:

'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many
schemes,

where are you running, turning back into the crowd like a

coward?

Take care! Someone may plant a spear in your back as you flee;
stand firm, and let us drive this cruel warrior away from the old man.'

So he spoke, but much-enduring glorious Odysseus did not
hear him, and ran past to the hollow ships of the Achaeans.
Tydeus' son, though on his own, plunged into the front-
fighters
and took his stand in front of the chariot of the old man,
Neleus' son, and addressed him, speaking with winged
words:

'Old man, it seems that the young fighters are wearing you
down;
your power has gone to nothing, painful old age presses
hard on you,
your attendant is exhausted, and your horses are slowing
down.

Come now, get up on to my chariot, and you will see
what the horses of Tros can do in pursuit and retreat,
galloping this way and that across the plain, these
inspirers of panic rout, that I captured from Aeneas.*
Let our two attendants see to your horses, and let us steer
mine
straight at the horse-breaking Trojans, so that Hector may
know whether the spear in my hands too is full of rage.'

So he spoke, and Nestor the Gerenian horseman did not
disobey him.

Then the two powerful attendants, Sthenelus and
courteous Eurymedon, saw to Nestor's horses, and
the two others got up into the chariot of Diomedes.
Then Nestor took the shining reins into his hands,
and lashed the horses, and they quickly drew close to
Hector,

who charged straight at them, raging; Tydeus' son threw his spear,
but missed Hector, and hit his attendant and charioteer,
who was Eniopeus, the son of arrogant Thebaeus,
on his chest next to the nipple, as he held the horses' reins.
He toppled from the chariot, and his swift-footed horses
started back; and there his life and fury were loosened.
Bitter grief for his charioteer crowded thick into Hector's
heart,
but he left him, distressed though he was for his
companion,
to lie there, and went in search of another bold charioteer;
and
not for long did his horses lack a master, since he quickly
found
daring Archeptolemus, Iphitus' son, and made him mount
behind his swift-footed horses, and gave the reins into his
hands.

Then dreadful deeds, impossible to bear, would have
been done,
and they would have been penned inside Troy like lambs,
had not the father of gods and men been quick to notice.
He thundered terribly, and launched a shining bolt, and
made it fall to the ground in front of Diomedes' horses;
a terrifying flame of burning sulphur shot up from it,
and the horses took fright and cowered under the chariot;
the shining reins slipped from Nestor's hands, and
he was afraid in his heart and spoke to Diomedes:
'Quick, Tydeus' son, turn your single-hoofed horses back in
flight;
can you not see that there is no courage to be had from
Zeus?
Now Zeus, the son of Cronus, is granting glory to Hector—
for today, though tomorrow it will be our turn, if he so
wishes.

There is no man, however powerful, who can thrust aside the will of Zeus, since Zeus is much stronger than we are.'

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, answered him: 'Old man, all that you have said is according to due measure; but this is a bitter grief that comes over my heart and spirit, because one day Hector will speak among the Trojans and say, "Tydeus' son ran before me and went back to his ships." So one day he will taunt me; then may the wide earth gape before me.'

Then Nestor, the Gerenian horseman, answered him and said:

'Ah, son of war-minded Tydeus, what a thing to say! Even if Hector calls you a coward and a weakling, the Trojans and Dardanians will not believe him, nor the wives of the great-spirited Trojan shield-bearers, when you have hurled their tender bedfellows into the dust.'

So he spoke, and wheeled the single-hoofed horses round in flight, back through the mêlée, and the Trojans and Hector gave an astonishing shout and showered them with whirring missiles.

Great Hector of the glittering helmet shouted loudly after Diomedes:

'Son of Tydeus, the swift-horsed Danaans used to honour you above others, with the best place, the best meat and full cups of wine, but now they will despise you; you have turned out to be a woman.

Well, away with you, feeble doll! It will not be because of

my yielding that you will climb our walls, or carry off our women
in your ships; before that happens I shall give you your destiny.'

So he spoke, and Tydeus' son's mind was divided,
whether
to wheel his horses round and fight, matching strength to strength. Three times he pondered in his mind and in his heart, and
three times Zeus the counsellor thundered from Mount Ida, sending the Trojans a sign that the battle was veering to one side.

Then Hector gave a loud shout and called out to the Trojans:

'Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters, be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage!

I see that the son of Cronus favours us, and promises victory

and great glory to me, but affliction for the Danaans—those fools, who have devised the fortifications you can see,

feeble and futile as they are. They will not hold back my fury;

horses can easily jump across the ditch that they have dug.

As soon as I find myself among their hollow ships,

then let men turn their thoughts to destructive fire, so that I can set their ships ablaze with flames, and kill the Argives next to their ships, panic-stricken amidst the smoke.'

So he spoke, and summoned his horses, and said to them:

'Xanthus and you, Podargus, Aethon and bright Lampus, now is the time when you must repay me for the lavish care that Andromache, daughter of great-hearted Eëtion, gave you, serving you mind-cheering wheat, and mixing it with wine, to drink when the spirit urged you, before she

served me, I who am proud to be her tender husband.
So come, press on as fast as you can, and we shall seize
the shield of Nestor, whose fame reaches the high sky—
they say it is all made of gold, both itself and its cross-
struts—

and strip from the shoulders of horse-breaking Diomedes
his finely worked corslet, which Hephaestus laboured to
make.

If we can capture these two things, I could hope that
the Achaeans will this very night embark on their swift
ships.'

So he spoke, boastfully, and lady Hera was angry with
him,
and stirred on her throne, and caused high Olympus to
shake.

She spoke to the huge god Poseidon, face to face:
'Do you see this, earthshaker of far-reaching power?
Not even the heart in your breast has pity for the Danaans
as they die—yet they bring you many pleasing offerings to
Helice
and Aegae,* and you have always desired them to be
victorious.

Suppose that we who side with the Danaans were minded
to beat the Trojans back, and so frustrate wide-thundering
Zeus,
he would surely feel distressed, sitting there alone on Ida.'

At this the lord earthshaker was deeply angered and
answered her:

'Hera, your words are reckless; what a thing to say!
I certainly would not wish the rest of us to fight against
Zeus
the son of Cronus, since he is very much stronger than we
are.'

So they spoke, one to another, in this way. Meanwhile
the space beyond the ships that was bounded by wall and

ditch

was filled with both horses and shield-bearing men, close packed together; it was Hector, Priam's son, equal of swift Ares,

who penned them in, since Zeus had given him the glory. And he would have burnt the well-balanced ships with blazing fire,

had not the lady Hera put it into Agamemnon's mind to take it

on himself to set about urging the Achaeans to swift action.

He made his way along the huts and ships of the Achaeans holding his great purple cloak in his brawny hand,

and stopped by the deep-bellied black ship of Odysseus, which was in the middle, so that a shout could carry both ways,

both towards the huts of Ajax, Telamon's son, and towards Achilles';

for these had dragged up their well-balanced ships at the furthest points,

trusting in their courage and in the strength of their hands.

Agamemnon called out to the Danaans in a far-carrying shout:

'Shame, Argives, you things of disgrace, admired only for your

handsome looks! We claim to be the best men—but where are our

boasts now, those empty, loud boasts that you made on Lemnos*

as you ate your fill of the meat of straight-horned oxen

and drank from bowls that brimmed with wine? You claimed that each man could stand up to one- or two-hundred

Trojans

in battle; yet now we are not even good enough to face one man,

Hector, who will soon burn our ships with destructive fire.

Father Zeus, did you ever ruin a powerful king like this before,
driving delusion into him and robbing him of great glory?
And yet I say that I never passed by any splendid altar of yours
on my unlucky voyage here in my many-benched ship
without burning on all of them the fat and thigh-bones of oxen,
impatient as I was to sack the strongly walled city of Troy.
So, Zeus, I beg you, fulfil this plea at least for me:
grant that we may get away safely and escape, and do not allow
the Achaeans to be beaten down like this by the Trojans.'

So he spoke, and the father pitied him as he wept tears, and
nodded his assent that his people should survive and not perish.
Straightaway he sent an eagle, the best omen among winged things,
holding in its claws a fawn, the offspring of a swift hind;
it dropped the fawn beside the splendid altar of Zeus, where
the Achaeans used to sacrifice to Zeus, source of all omens.
And when they saw that the bird had come from Zeus, they sprang
more vigorously at the Trojans, and called up their battle-lust.

Then no man of the Danaans, numerous though they were,
could boast that he drove his swift horses in front of Tydeus' son,
urging them across the ditch, matching his strength in the close fight.

Diomedes was easily the first to kill a Trojan chieftain, Agelaus, son of Phradmon; he had wheeled his horses in

flight,
and as he turned Diomedes skewered him in the back with
his spear,
right between the shoulders, and drove it through his chest.
Agelaus fell from his chariot, and his armour clattered
about him.

After him came the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and
Menelaus,
and behind them the two called Ajax, clothed in impetuous
courage,
and after him Idomeneus, accompanied by his attendant
Meriones, the equal of Enyalios, slayer of men,
and after them came Eurypylos, Euaemon's splendid son.
The ninth to come was Teucer, tensing his curved bow,
and he took his stand behind the shield of Ajax, Telamon's
son.

Ajax would lift the shield a little way, and then Teucer
would peer out and let fly an arrow, shooting someone
down
in the mêlée; and the man would fall there and give up his
life,
and Teucer would turn and shelter with Ajax, like a child
running
to its mother, and Ajax would cover him with his shining
shield.

Which man of the Trojans did blameless Teucer first kill?
The first were Orsilochus and Ormenus and Ophelistes,
Daetor and Chromius and godlike Lycophontes,
and Amopaon the son of Polyxaemon, and Melanippus;
all of these he laid in quick succession on the all-nourishing
earth.

Agamemnon, lord of men, was glad to see him slaying
whole companies of the Trojans with his powerful bow,
and he came and stood beside him and addressed him:
'Teucer, dear man, son of Telamon, captain of the people,

shoot on like this, and perhaps you will prove to be the Danaans' salvation, and Telamon's, who nurtured you as a child and cared for you in his house, though you were his bastard; now bring him closer to glory, even though he is far away. And I tell you this plainly, and it will surely be fulfilled: if ever Zeus who wears the aegis and Athena grant that I may tear Ilium apart, that well-built city, it will be in your hands—after myself—that I shall first place the prize of honour, either a tripod, or a pair of horses with their chariot, or a woman, who will go up to your bed and share it with you.'

Then in answer blameless Teucer addressed him: 'Atreus' glorious son, why do you urge me on when I am eager on my own account? Be sure that while the strength is in me I will not stop; ever since we forced them back towards Ilium I have been looking for a chance to kill men with my bow. Eight arrows with long barbs I have let fly, and they have all stuck fast in the flesh of war-swift strong young men; but this maddened dog I am not able to strike down.'

So he spoke, and let fly another arrow from his bowstring, straight at Hector, and his heart longed to shoot him down. But he missed Hector, and with his arrow struck blameless Gorgythion, Priam's brave son, in the chest; his mother had come in marriage from Aesyme,* beautiful Castianeira, who was in stature like a goddess. As when in a garden a poppy droops its head to one side, heavy with the weight of its seed and with spring showers,

so his head, weighed down by his helmet, slumped to one side.

Then Teucer let fly another arrow from his bowstring, straight at Hector, and his heart longed to shoot him down. But he failed a second time, for Apollo made him miss his mark,

and he hit Archeptolemus, Hector's daring charioteer, in his chest next to the nipple as he launched himself into battle. He toppled from the chariot, and his swift-footed horses started back, and there his life and fury were loosened. Bitter grief for his charioteer crowded thick into Hector's heart,

but he left him there, grieved though he was for his companion,

and called to his brother Cebriones, who happened to be nearby,

to pick up the horses' reins; and Cebriones heard and obeyed him.

Hector himself jumped to the ground from the gleaming chariot,

with a terrible yell; he picked up a large rock in his hand and made

straight for Teucer, his heart driving him on to knock him down.

Teucer had pulled a bitter arrow from his quiver and fitted it to the bowstring; as he drew the string back to his shoulder,

raging to shoot at him, Hector of the glittering helmet hit him

with the jagged rock at the point where the collarbone marks off

the neck and chest, and it is a most vulnerable spot, and broke his bowstring. Teucer's hand went numb at the wrist and

he sank to his knees, motionless, and the bow fell from his

hand.

Ajax did not desert his brother when he fell, but ran up and stood over him and sheltered him with his shield.

Then two trusty companions lifted him on to their shoulders,

Mecisteus, the son of Echius, and glorious Alastor, and carried him, groaning deeply, back to the hollow ships.

Then once again the Olympian stirred up fury in the Trojans,

and they drove the Achaeans straight back towards the deep ditch;

Hector strode among the front-fighters, exulting in his strength:

as when a hound snaps at a wild boar or a lion from behind, biting its flanks and hindquarters and running it down

on swift feet, and keenly watches the lion's twists and turns,

so Hector pressed hard on the flowing-haired Achaeans, all the time killing the hindmost; and they turned in flight.

When they had passed the stakes and crossed the ditch in their flight, and many had been beaten down by Trojan hands,

they halted beside the ships and made a stand there,

calling out to each other and holding up their hands,

each man praying in a loud voice to all the gods, while

Hector was wheeling his fine-maned horses this way and that,

glaring with the eyes of Gorgo* or of Ares, doom of mortals.

When the goddess white-armed Hera saw them she felt pity,

and straightaway she addressed Athena with winged words:

'Daughter of Zeus the aegis-wearer, look at this! Shall we two

give up caring about the Danaans as they die? It is our last

chance.

They will surely bring their lives to a miserable end, dying under the onslaught of one man, Hector, Priam's son; his fury is now irresistible—you can see what terrible things he has done.'

Then in answer to her the goddess grey-eyed Athena said:

'If only this man could utterly lose his fury and his life, slain in his native land at the hands of the Argives! But my father is crazed, and his mind is set on no good—hard god, always opposing me and frustrating my schemes. He has not the smallest memory of the many times I saved his son, when exhausted by the labours that Eurystheus set him.

Heracles had only to cry out to the high sky, and Zeus would send me down from the high sky to bring him help. Had I been shrewd enough to know all this in my mind when

he was sent down to the house of Hades the gate-guardian, to bring the hound of hateful Hades back from Erebus, he would not have escaped over the fast-flowing streams of Styx.*

But now Zeus hates me, and has carried out Thetis' designs,

that one who kissed his knees and took his chin in her hand, and entreated him to honour Achilles, sacker of cities; but the day will come when he calls me his dear grey-eyes again.

Now, you must harness your single-hoofed horses for us, while I go into the palace of Zeus who wears the aegis and clothe myself in armour for war, to see whether Hector of the glittering helmet, Priam's son, will be glad when we two show ourselves along the battle-lines of war,

or whether the Trojans too will glut the dogs and vultures with their fat and flesh, when they fall beside the Achaeans' ships.'

So she spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not disobey her;
she set about harnessing her horses with their golden headbands—

Hera, elder goddess, daughter of great Cronus.
But Athena, daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis,
let fall on to her father's threshold the soft embroidered robe which she herself had laboured over with her own hands,
and put on the tunic of Zeus the gatherer of clouds,
and clothed herself in armour for war, the bringer of tears.
She stepped on to the brightly blazing chariot and gripped the spear,
heavy, thick, and massive, with which she beats down ranks of men,
of heroes with whom she, child of a mighty father, is enraged.

Then Hera quickly lashed the horses with her whip; and of their own accord the gates of the high sky groaned open,
gates
held by the Seasons,* who have charge of the great sky and Olympus,
either to push aside the dense cloud or to close it up together.
Through these gates they steered their horses, driven on by the whip.

But when father Zeus saw them from Ida he was terribly angry,
and dispatched Iris the golden-winged with a message:
'Away now, swift Iris, and turn them back, and do not let them
come up against me; it is not good that we should meet in

battle.

For I tell you this plainly, and it will surely be fulfilled:
I shall lame these swift horses in their harness, and I shall
fling them both out of the chariot and shatter it to pieces.
And not even in the circle of ten returning years will they be
healed
of the wounds which my thunderbolt will inflict on them;
so the grey-eyed one may learn what it is to fight with her
father.

With Hera I am not so much angry or so incensed,
since it is always her custom to thwart me in everything I
say.'

So he spoke, and storm-footed Iris arose to take her
message,
and set off from the mountains of Ida for far Olympus.
Just outside the gates of many-valleyed Olympus she met
the pair
and tried to stop them, and reported Zeus' words to them:
'Where is your fury taking you? Why does the heart in you
rage so?

The son of Cronus will not allow you to help the Argives.
The son of Cronus has threatened—and it will be fulfilled—
to lame these swift horses of yours in their harness, and to
fling you both out of the chariot and shatter it to pieces,
and not even in the circle of ten returning years will you be
healed
of the wounds which his thunderbolt will inflict on you;
so you may learn, grey-eyed one, what it is to fight with
your father.

With Hera he is not so much angry or so incensed,
since it is always her custom to thwart him in everything he
says.

But you are indeed most wretched, and a shameless bitch,
if you are really bold enough to raise your huge spear
against Zeus.'

So Iris of the swift feet spoke, and departed from them,
and then Hera addressed Athena with these words:
'Daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis, I can no longer
agree to our fighting against Zeus just for mortals' sake!
Let some of them die and let the others live, as chance has
it,
and let Zeus make judgements on the Trojans and the
Danaans
according to the thoughts in his heart, as is right.'

So she spoke, and turned the single-hoofed horses
back;
and the Seasons unyoked the fine-maned horses
and tethered them at their immortal mangers, and
leaned the chariot body against the shining courtyard wall.
Then the goddesses took their seats on golden chairs
among the rest of the gods, troubled in their hearts.

Now father Zeus had driven his fine-wheeled chariot
and horses
from Ida to Olympus, and had come to the seat of the gods.
The renowned earthshaker unyoked his horses for him, and
set the chariot body on its base, and spread a cloth over it.
Wide-thundering Zeus took his seat on a golden throne,
and great Olympus trembled underneath his feet.
Only Athena and Hera took their seats apart from Zeus,
and said nothing to him nor asked him any questions;
but he understood in his mind and addressed them:
'Athena and Hera, why are you so troubled?
Surely you are not weary from the battle where men win
glory,
from slaying Trojans, for whom you have a terrible hatred?
It is not possible, such is my fury and my invincible hands,
for all the gods on Olympus to turn me from my purpose;
but as for you two, trembling seized your bright limbs
before you even saw war and the cruel deeds of war.
I tell you this plainly, and it would surely have been fulfilled:

if my thunderbolt had struck you, you would never have returned
in your chariot to Olympus, where the immortals have their seat.'

So he spoke, and Athena and Hera muttered to each other,
sitting close together and planning misery for the Trojans.
Athena was silent, saying not a word, being full of resentment

towards father Zeus, and savage bitterness gripped her;
but Hera could not contain the anger in her breast, and said:

'Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said?
We know very well that your strength is not negligible,
but for all that we feel pity for the Danaan spearmen,
who will surely bring their lives to a wretched end, and die.
Still, we will certainly hold back from war, if you command us,
and will offer to the Argives such counsel as will benefit them,
so that they do not all perish as a result of your anger.'

Then in answer to her Zeus who gathers the clouds said:

'In the morning, ox-eyed lady Hera, if you wish it,
you will see the son of Cronus in even greater fury,
destroying great numbers of the Argive spearmen's army;
for towering Hector will not cease from the fighting
until swift-footed Achilles is roused up beside his ship,
on the day when they will fight by their ships' sterns
in a dreadful narrow space, for the sake of the dead Patroclus;

so it is ordained. As for your anger, it does not concern me,
not even if you roam as far as the lowest limits of
the earth and the sea, where Iapetus and Cronus sit,*
taking no delight in the rays of Hyperion the sun or in

the winds, and deep Tartarus surrounds them. Even if your wanderings take you there, your ill-temper will not concern me; there is no more shameless a bitch than you.'

So he spoke, and white-armed Hera made no reply. Now the bright light of the sun dropped into Ocean, drawing black night over the grain-giving earth. The Trojans were not glad when the light sank down, but for the Achaeans dark night's coming was welcome, an answer to many prayers.

Now illustrious Hector led the Trojans away from the ships, and held an assembly, beside the swirling river, in an open place where the ground was clear of dead men. They jumped to the ground from their chariots and began to listen

to the speech which Hector, dear to Zeus, made. In his hand

he held a spear eleven cubits long, and the shaft's bronze point

gleamed before him, and round it ran a golden neck-ring.

Leaning on this he made his speech to the Trojans:

'Listen to me, Trojans, Dardanians and allies; I had thought that we would destroy all the Achaeans and their ships, and would then make our way back to windswept Ilium, but darkness has come and prevented us, and that above all

has saved the Argives and their ships along the seashore.

So let us now give way to black night's persuasion,

and prepare our supper; unyoke your fine-maned horses from their chariots, and throw fodder before them;

bring oxen and sturdy sheep from the city, quickly,

and supply yourselves with mind-cheering wine and

bread from your halls, and collect a great quantity of wood,

so that all night long until early-born dawn we may keep

many fires alight, and their brightness may reach the high sky,
in case during the night the flowing-haired Achaeans stir themselves to escape over the broad back of the sea. They must not board their ships when they wish, without a fight;
no, when they reach home, many of them must have a wound to tend, one inflicted by an arrow or a sharp spear as they leapt on to their ships, so that others too may hesitate before waging tear-laden war against the horse-breaking Trojans. Let the heralds, dear to Zeus, proclaim throughout the city that boys in their early youth and grey-haired old men should bivouac on the god-built walls around the city, and that the womenfolk should each light a great fire in their halls; and let there be a trustworthy guard set, so that no enemy band may enter the city while its people are absent. Let this be done, great-hearted Trojans, as I declare. Let these sound orders of mine suffice for the present, and I shall make announcements tomorrow to the horse-breaking Trojans:
I pray in hope to Zeus and all the other gods that I shall drive these dogs, brought here by death-spectres, away from here,
[those whom the spectres carry upon their black ships.] So for this night we must keep watch at our stations, and tomorrow, at break of day, let us put on our armour and wake fierce Ares beside the hollow ships, and then I shall know if mighty Diomedes, Tydeus' son, will drive me back from the ships towards the wall, or if I will cut him down with the bronze and carry off his bloody arms.

Tomorrow he will discover if he has the courage to
withstand
the onslaught of my spear; but I rather think that when the
sun
rises for tomorrow he will lie, speared through, in the front
ranks,
and many of his companions around him. If only I
could be immortal and ageless for all my days,
and honoured as Athena and Apollo are honoured,
as surely as this coming day will bring ruin to the Argives!'

So Hector spoke, and the Trojans shouted their
approval.
They set free their sweating horses from the yoke,
and tethered them with leather thongs, each beside his
chariot;
and from the city they brought oxen and sturdy sheep,
quickly, and they supplied themselves with mind-cheering
wine
and bread from their halls, and collected a great quantity of
wood;
[and they sacrificed perfect hecatombs for the immortals,]*
and the winds carried the savour from the plain up to the
high sky.
[But sweet though it was the blessed gods did not feast on
it,
and had no wish to, for sacred Ilium was deeply hateful to
them,
and Priam and the people of Priam of the fine ash spear.]

So they sat for the whole night, along the battle-lines of
war,
with great thoughts in mind, and their fires burnt in great
numbers.
As when in the high sky stars shine out in their brilliance
around the shining moon, when the upper air is windless,
and every crag and jutting peak and mountain glen is clear

to see; boundless bright air breaks down from the high sky,
and all the stars are visible, and the shepherd is glad in his
heart;

so many were the fires that the Trojans kindled in front of
Ilium,

shining out between the ships and the streams of Xanthus.

A thousand fires were burning on the plain, and beside
each

sat fifty men in the brightness of the blazing fire.

Their horses stood champing on white barley and emmer
wheat

beside their chariots, waiting for Dawn on her lovely throne.

BOOK NINE

So the Trojans kept their watch; but the Achaeans were gripped by awesome Rout, the companion of chilling Panic, and all their best men were struck down by unbearable grief. As when two winds churn up the fish-rich sea, the North Wind and the West, blowing from Thrace; suddenly they start up, and the dark waves mass and rise to a crest, and spew out heaps of seaweed along the shore; so were the hearts of the Achaeans torn in their breasts.

The son of Atreus was struck to his heart with huge grief, and went among the clear-voiced heralds, ordering them to summon each man to an assembly, calling him by name, but not to shout aloud; and he was busy himself with the foremost.

They took their seats in the assembly, in despair; and Agamemnon stood up, weeping tears like a spring of black water which pours its dark stream down over a sheer cliff; so Agamemnon addressed the Argives, groaning deeply: 'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives! Zeus the son of Cronus has snared me in a cruel delusion, hard god that he is, who before this promised and assured me that I should return home only after sacking strongly walled Ilium; but now he has planned an evil deception, and orders me to go back to Argos without glory, after losing many people. This must I suppose be pleasing to Zeus the all-powerful, who has indeed destroyed the crowns of many cities, and will do so again; for his might is the greatest of all.

But come, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:
let us flee with our ships, back to our dear native land,
because we shall never take Troy with its wide streets.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still.
For a long time the Achaeans' sons were speechless with
despair,
but at last Diomedes of the mighty voice spoke among
them:

'Son of Atreus, I will begin by challenging your folly, here,
lord, in the assembly, where it is proper; so do not be angry.
You have already insulted my courage in front of the
Danaans,*

saying that I was no fighter, and a coward; and all this
is known to the Argives, both young men and old.

The son of crooked-scheming Cronus gave you gifts by
halves:

along with your staff he granted you honour beyond all
men,

but courage, which confers most authority, he did not give
you.

Man possessed, do you really think the sons of the
Achaeans

are no fighters and cowards, as you tell us they are?

If your own heart especially is urging you to go home,
then go. The way lies before you, and your ships are stood
to

by the sea, the many ships that came with you from
Mycenae;

but the rest of the flowing-haired Achaeans will stay here
until such time as we sack Troy—or no, rather let them also
take flight in their ships to their dear native land, and
we two, I and Sthenelus, will fight on until we reach
our goal in Ilium; for it was with a god that we came here.'

So he spoke, and the sons of the Achaeans all shouted
in approval,

amazed at the words of horse-breaking Diomedes.
Then the horseman Nestor stood up and spoke among
them:

‘Son of Tydeus, in warfare your might is beyond others’,
and in counsel you are the best of all men of your age.

No one of the Achaeans could treat your words with
contempt,

or argue against them, but your speech did not reach its
end—

but then, you are a young man, and you could be my son,
my latest-born. Still, there was good sense in your words
to the Argive kings, since you spoke according to due
measure.

But come; because I declare proudly that I am senior to
you,

let me speak out and make everything plain, and no one
will treat my words with scorn, not even lord Agamemnon;
since shut out from brotherhood, from law and from hearth
is the man who falls in love with bitter civil discord.

Now, for the moment, let us surrender to black night and
prepare our meal, and let sentries be posted outside the
wall,

along the ditch we have dug, each in their place.

These are the orders I give to the younger men; after that,
Atreus’ son, you must take the lead, for you are the most
kingly.

Give your elders a feast—the right thing to do, causing you
no shame,

since your huts are full of wine, which the Achaeans’ ships
bring in every day from Thrace over the broad open sea.

All hospitality is your duty, for you rule over many people.
When many are gathered together you must listen to the
man

who offers the best advice; the Achaeans are all in urgent
need

of good and shrewd advice, because our enemies are

lighting

many fires near the ships, and what man could be glad at that?

This night will either break the army in pieces or save it.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he said.

Out hurried the sentries wearing their armour,
led by Thrasymedes, Nestor's son, shepherd of the people,
and by Ascalaphus and Ialmenus, sons of Ares,
and by Meriones and Aphareus and Deïpyrus,
and by glorious Lycomedes, the son of Creion.

There were seven captains of the guards, and with each went

one hundred young men, holding long spears in their hands.

They filed out and took their posts between the ditch and the wall,

and there they lit fires, and each man prepared his meal.

Then Atreus' son gathered the elders of the Achaeans together

in his hut, and set before them a feast to satisfy their hearts.

They reached out for the food that lay ready before them, and when they had put away the desire for eating and drinking,

the very first to begin weaving his counsel was the old man Nestor, whose advice in time past too had proved to be the best.

With generous intent he spoke and addressed them:

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, with you I shall begin, and with you I shall end, because you are lord over many peoples, and Zeus has entrusted to you

a staff and ordinances, for you to give counsel on their behalf.

Therefore you must above all men give and take advice,
and must carry out another's proposal, if his heart urges
him

to speak for the good; he will depend on you, whatever he
begins.

Now I shall speak as it seems to me to be best,
because there is no one who will think of a better plan
than that which I have long held in my mind, and still hold,
since the time when, Zeus-born, you went to Achilles' hut
and took away the girl, Briseus' daughter, despite his
anger,

entirely against our judgement; and indeed I did my utmost
to dissuade you, but you gave in to your great-hearted
spirit

and dishonoured a mighty man, whom even the immortals
have honoured—you took his prize and kept it. Still, let us
even now consider how we may appease and persuade him
with acceptable gifts and with flattering words.'

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed
him:

'Old man, you are not wrong when you describe my
delusion.

I was deluded, and I myself do not deny it. The man whom
Zeus loves in his heart is worth many people—as he has
now

honoured that man, and has beaten down the Achaean
people.

But because I was deluded and yielded to base feelings
I am willing to make amends, and to pay him a boundless
ransom.

In the presence of you all let me name the splendid gifts:
seven tripods untouched by fire, and ten talents of gold,
twenty gleaming cauldrons, and twelve powerful horses,
race-victors, prize-winners with the speed of their feet.

The man who came to own all that my single-hoofed horses

have brought me in prizes would not be lacking in booty,
nor would he be without possession of precious gold.
And I will give him seven women, skilled in fine handiwork,
Lesbians, whom I chose when he himself took Lesbos,
the well-built city, and they surpassed all womankind in
beauty.

These I will give him, and with them the one I then took
away,

Briseus' daughter; and moreover I will swear a great oath
that I have never gone up to her bed nor lain with her,
as is the usual way of mankind between men and women.
All these will be put before him immediately; but if some
day

the gods grant us to sack the great city of Priam, let him
enter it

at the time when we Achaeans are sharing out the booty
and pile his ship high with gold and bronze, all that he
wants,

and let him choose for himself twenty Trojan women,
those who are the most beautiful after Argive Helen.

And if we reach Achaean Argos, that most fertile of lands,
he can be my son-in-law, and I will treat him like Orestes,*
my last-born, who is raised amidst great abundance.

And I have three daughters in my well-constructed hall,
Chrysothemis and Laodice and Iphianassa;* of these he
may

take the one he chooses to be his own, without bride-gifts,*
to Peleus' house. And I will give him dowry-gifts as well,
in plenty, such as no man has ever given with his daughter:

I will give him seven well-populated cities,

Cardamyle and Enope and Hire with its grassy pastures,
sacred Pherae, and Antheia with its deep meadows,
beautiful Aepeia, and Pedasus, country of vines.*

All these are near the sea, on the borders of sandy Pylos,
and in them live men who are rich in sheep and rich in
cattle,

and they will honour him with gifts, as if he were a god,
and under his staff's rule they will live in obedient
prosperity.

All this will I do for him, if only he gives up his anger.
Let him give way—only Hades is implacable and inflexible,
and that is why of all gods he is the most hated by mortals

—

and let him take his place below me, since I am the more
kingly,
and because I declare that I am older than him by birth.'

Then the Gerenian horseman Nestor answered him, and
said:

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men,
the gifts that you now offer lord Achilles are not to be
despised;

so come, let us select men and dispatch them to go
without delay to the hut of Achilles, son of Peleus.

Come now, let those on whom my eye falls accept this
duty:

first of all Phoenix, dear to Zeus, should be the leader,
and with him should go huge Ajax and glorious Odysseus,
and of the heralds let Odius and Eurybates accompany
them.

Bring water for our hands, and command holy silence,
for us to pray to Cronus' son Zeus, to see if he will pity us.'

So he spoke, and his words were pleasing to them all.
Straightaway heralds poured water over their hands,
and young men filled mixing-jars to the brim with wine
and distributed it to all, after first pouring libations into the
cups.

When they had made libations and drunk to their hearts'
desire,

they set out from the hut of Atreus' son Agamemnon;
and the horseman Gerenian Nestor kept giving them
instructions,

looking sharply at each man, but especially at Odysseus, as to how they should try to persuade Peleus' blameless son.

So they* went along the shore of the loud-roaring sea, praying earnestly to the earth-holder, shaker of the earth, that they would easily persuade the great heart of Aeacus' grandson.*

And so they came to the huts and ships of the Myrmidons, and they found him delighting his heart with a clear-voiced lyre,

fine and intricately worked, and on it was a silver cross-piece;

he had chosen it from the spoils when he sacked Eëtion's city.*

With this he was delighting his heart, singing the glorious deeds of men,

and only Patroclus was with him, sitting opposite him in silence,

watching for the time when Achilles should end his singing.

So they came forward, and glorious Odysseus led them, and stopped in front of him. Achilles leapt up in amazement,

still holding his lyre, and left the seat where he had been sitting;

and likewise Patroclus, when he saw the men, stood up.

Swift-footed Achilles greeted and addressed them:

'Welcome, my true friends! Some pressing need must bring you here, the Achaeans I love the most, even in my anger.'

So speaking glorious Achilles led them into his hut, and sat them down on seats spread with bright purple cloths,

and at once spoke to Patroclus, who was standing nearby:

'Son of Menoetius, quick, bring out a larger mixing-bowl and make the mixture stronger, and set out a cup for each man;

these men who have come under my roof are my dearest friends.'

So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear companion. In the light of the fire he set down a great butcher's block, and laid on it the backs of a sheep and a fat goat, and also the chine of a full-grown hog, rich with fat. Automedon held them for him, while glorious Achilles jointed them.

He chopped the meat carefully and threaded it on to skewers, and Menoetius' son, a man equal to the gods, built up the fire.

When the fire had burned down and the flame had faded he spread the embers out and laid the skewers above them,

resting them on props, and sprinkled sacred salt over them. Then, when he had cooked the meat and piled it on to platters,

Patroclus fetched bread and set it out on the table in fine baskets; but Achilles apportioned the meat.

He then took his seat facing godlike Odysseus, against the opposite wall, and ordered his companion Patroclus to sacrifice to the gods; and he threw the first pieces into the fire.

They reached out for the good things that lay ready before them,

and when they had put from themselves the desire for food and drink

Ajax nodded to Phoenix. But glorious Odysseus noticed this, and filling a cup with wine he drank a toast to Achilles:

'Greetings, Achilles! We have not lacked our fair share in the feasting, either in the hut of Agamemnon, Atreus' son,

or indeed here now, for there is much food here to satisfy our hearts. But pleasant feasts are not now our concern,

Zeus-nurtured man; we see great suffering, too great, and we are afraid. It is in the balance whether we save or lose our well-benched ships—unless you put on courage's garment.

The high-hearted Trojans and their far-famed allies have pitched their camp up against the wall and the ships, and have lit many fires throughout their camp, and they think

they will no longer be held back, but will fall on our black ships.

Zeus, the son of Cronus, reveals signs favourable to them by his

lightning on the right; and Hector exults greatly in his strength,

raging prodigiously, trusting in Zeus, and respecting neither men nor gods; a cruel frenzy has entered him.

He prays for the bright Dawn to appear as soon as possible, and

vows that he will hack the tops of the stern-posts from our ships,

and burn the ships themselves with ravaging fire, and cut down

the Achaeans beside them, panic-stricken amidst the smoke.

And I have a terrible fear in my heart that the gods will fulfil his threatening words, that it will indeed be our fate to perish here at Troy, far from Argos, rearer of horses.

Up, then, if you are determined, late though it is, to rescue the weary Achaeans' sons from the Trojans' war-clamour.

You will certainly suffer if you delay, for once evil is done there is no cure to be found; long before that happens, consider

how you may keep the day of disaster away from the Danaans.

My dear friend, your father Peleus, surely impressed this on you

on the day that he sent you from Phthia to join
Agamemnon:

“My son, as for strength, Athena and Hera will give it to you
if they so wish it; but you must curb the great-hearted spirit
in

your breast, since it is a better thing to preserve good
fellowship.

Avoid the strife that leads to destruction, and the Argives,
both young and old, will show you the more respect.”

That is what the old man told you, but you are forgetting it.
Give way, even now, and leave off your heart-sore
bitterness;

if you quit your anger Agamemnon will give you worthy
gifts.

Come now, listen to me, and I shall describe to you all the
gifts which Agamemnon has promised to you from his huts:
seven tripods untouched by fire, and ten talents of gold,
twenty gleaming cauldrons, and twelve powerful horses,
race-victors, prize-winners with the speed of their feet.

The man who came to own all that his single-hoofed horses
have brought him in prizes would not be lacking in booty,
nor would he be without possession of precious gold.

He will give you seven women, skilled in fine handiwork,
Lesbians, whom he chose when you yourself took Lesbos,
the well-built city, and they surpassed all womankind in
beauty.

These he will give you, and with them the one he then took
away,

Briseus' daughter; and moreover he will swear a great oath
that he has never gone up to her bed nor lain with her,
as is the usual way of mankind between men and women.

All these will be put before you immediately; but if some
day

the gods grant us to sack the great city of Priam, you may
go into it when we Achaeans are sharing out the booty,
and pile your ship high with gold and bronze, all that you

want,
and you may choose for yourself twenty Trojan women,
those who are the most beautiful after Argive Helen.
And if we reach Achaean Argos, that most fertile of lands,
you can be his son-in-law, and he will treat you like Orestes,
his last-born, who is raised amidst great abundance.
And he has three daughters in his well-constructed hall,
Chrysothemis and Laodice and Iphianassa; of these you
may
take the one you choose to be your own, without bride-
gifts,
to Peleus' house. And he will give you dowry-gifts in
addition,
in plenty, such as no man has ever given with his daughter:
he will give you seven well-populated cities,
Cardamyle and Enope and Hire with its grassy pastures,
sacred Pherae, and Antheia with its deep meadows,
beautiful Aepeia, and Pedasus, country of vines.
All these are near the sea, on the borders of sandy Pylos,
and in them live men who are rich in sheep and rich in
cattle,
and they will honour you with gifts as if you were a god,
and under your staff's rule they will live in obedient
prosperity.
All this will he do for you, if only you give up your
bitterness.
But if the hatred in your heart for Atreus' son is now too
great,
both for the man and his gifts, at any rate have pity on all
the rest
of the Achaeans, suffering in the camp, and they will
honour you
as a god; and you could well win vast glory in their eyes,
for now you could kill Hector, since his murderous madness
will bring him very close to you; he reckons he has no equal

among the Danaans who have been brought here in their ships.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many schemes,
I must say what I say with frankness, and tell you bluntly
what thoughts are in my mind and how they will be fulfilled,
so that you do not sit there trying to coax me, each in his way;
for that man is as hateful to me as the gates of Hades
who hides one thing in his mind but says another.
I shall tell you, then, what seems best to me:
I do not think that Atreus' son Agamemnon will persuade me,
or the other Danaans, since I now see that battling with
the enemy, on and on without ceasing, earns no gratitude.
The man who just stands there and the man who fights
bravely
get the same share; coward and brave are equally
honoured;
a man dies just the same, whether he has done much or
nothing.
I have endured pain in my heart, always risking my life in
battle,
but I get no more of a share than others, not even a little.
Like a bird which brings all the morsels she can find
to her unfledged young, and suffers herself because of it,
so I too have passed many nights without sleeping, and
have come through days that were bloodstained with
fighting,
struggling against men, fighting for the sake of their
wives.*
Twelve cities of men have I sacked from my ships,
and on land I claim eleven such around rich-soiled Troy.
From all of these I took much splendid treasure, and

always I brought it back and gave it all to Agamemnon,
son of Atreus; and he would stay behind by the swift ships
and take it, sharing it out in small lots, keeping most for
himself.

All that he gave as prizes to the chieftains and kings is
stored safely in their keeping; from me alone of the
Achaeans

he took my prize, and keeps the wife who warmed my
heart. Well,

let him sleep beside her and take his pleasure. Why must
Argives

make war against Trojans? Why did Atreus' son assemble
an army

and bring it here? Was it not for lovely-haired Helen's sake?

Are then Atreus' sons the only ones among mortal men
who love their wives? Surely every good man of sound
mind

loves his own and cherishes her, just as I for my part
loved mine from my heart, though she was won by my
spear.

But now that he has cheated me, taking my prize from my
arms,

let him not test me—I know him too well; he will not
persuade me.

No, Odysseus, let him take thought with you and the other
kings

as to how you may keep destructive fire away from the
ships.

He has certainly laboured very hard while I was absent;

he has built a wall, look, and dug a ditch alongside it,
a great wide one, and he has planted stakes in it;

but for all that he cannot contain the might of Hector,

killer of men. So long as I was fighting with the Achaeans

Hector was unwilling to do battle away from his walls,

but came only as far as the Scaean gates and the oak tree;

there once he waited for me alone,* and scarcely escaped

my attack.

But now, since I have no wish to fight against glorious Hector,

tomorrow I shall make a sacrifice to Zeus and all the other gods,

and I shall drag my ships down to the sea and pile them full;

then you will see, if you have a mind to and if it matters to you,

my ships sailing at break of day over the Hellespont rich in fish, and my men in them straining at their oars.

And if the famed earthshaker grants me a good voyage, on the third day we should reach rich-soiled Phthia. I have much wealth there, which I left when I came here—to my cost.

And from here I shall take more—gold and red bronze, and women with fine girdles, and grey iron—everything, at any rate, that fell to my lot; but my prize, the one he gave me,

lord Agamemnon, Atreus' son, has taken back, violently insulting me. Tell him everything that I am telling you, quite openly, so that the rest of the Achaeans may be angry too,

in case he is hoping to cheat some other man of the Danaans,

clothed as he always is in shamelessness. But as for me, he would not dare to look me in the face, the dog.

I will not join him in his counsels, or in his actions;

he has cheated and wronged me. Let him not try to deceive me

again with words—once is enough; let him ruin himself as he pleases; Zeus the counsellor has robbed him of his wits.

I abominate his gifts, and I value him no more than a splinter.

Not even if he were to offer me ten or twenty times

all that he now possesses, and anything else he may
acquire,
or all the wealth that flows into Orchomenus or into Thebes
in Egypt,* where the houses are crammed full with
treasure,
and which has one-hundred gates, and two-hundred men
can ride out through every one, with chariots and horses;
not even if he gave me gifts as numerous as the sand or
dust—
not even then would Agamemnon win over my heart, until
he has paid me back in full for this heart-wounding outrage.
I will not marry a daughter of Atreus' son Agamemnon,
not even if she rivals golden Aphrodite in her beauty,
and is a match for grey-eyed Athena in the work of her
hands—
not even then will I marry her; let him choose another
Achaean,
whose rank is equal to his, and who is more kingly than I
am.
If the gods preserve me, and if I reach my home, then
surely Peleus himself will search out a wife for me:
there are many Achaean women throughout Hellas and
Phthia,
daughters of chieftains who defend their cities, and
whichever of these I want I shall make my dear wife.
Indeed, my proud spirit has many times moved me
to take a wedded wife there, a well-matched partner,
to enjoy the treasures that aged Peleus has amassed; I do
not think
that anything is of equal worth to my life, not even all the
wealth
they say that Ilium, that well-populated city, once
possessed
in time of peace before the sons of the Achaeans came,
nor all the wealth that the stone threshold of the archer
Phoebus Apollo guards inside his temple in rocky Pytho.*

Cattle and flocks of sturdy sheep can be got by raiding, and tripods and herds of chestnut horses can be made one's own,

but raiding and getting cannot bring back a man's life when once it has passed beyond the barrier of his teeth.

My mother, Thetis of the silver feet, tells me that there are two spectres carrying me towards the end of death:*

if I remain here and fight around the city of the Trojans, I shall lose my homecoming, but my fame will never die, while if I go back home to my dear native land, my noble fame will be lost, but my life will be long, and the end of death will not come quickly upon me.

As for the rest of you, I would advise you all to sail home, because you will never reach your goal of taking sheer Ilium, since Zeus the wide-thunderer has stretched his hand over it, and its people have taken heart. So go back now and report my answer plainly to the Achaeans' chieftains—for that is the office of elders—so that they can devise another, better plan in their minds, such as will safeguard their ships and the Achaean people beside the hollow ships, since this plan that they have invented

as a result of my stubborn anger will not work out for them. But let Phoenix stay behind and spend the night with us, so that he may sail with me on my ships to our dear native land

tomorrow, if he so wishes; I will not compel him to come.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still, amazed at his words, so forcibly had he refused them. But at last Phoenix, the old horse-driver, spoke out, bursting

into tears, because he feared greatly for the Achaeans' ships:

'Illustrious Achilles, if returning is really in your thoughts, and you have no mind at all to keep destructive fire

from the swift ships, because bitterness has entered your heart,
how can I be left behind here, dear child, without you, alone? Your father, the old horse-driver Peleus, sent me to you
on the day that he dispatched you from Phthia to Agamemnon,
a mere lad, not yet skilled in warfare that touches all men alike,
nor yet in debate, where men grow into distinction.
For this reason he sent me to teach you all these things, to be both a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.
So, dear child, I have no wish to be left alone after this without you, not even if a god himself were to promise to scrape away my old age and make me young and vigorous,
as I was when I first left Hellas of the beautiful women, escaping from a quarrel with my father Amyntor, Ormenus' son,
who was furious with me because of a lovely-haired concubine;
he was infatuated with her, and dishonoured his wife, my mother; and she would take me by the knees, entreating me
to lie with the concubine first, to make her loathe the old man.
I listened to her and did the deed; but my father quickly found out
and cursed me at length, and called on the hateful Furies to make sure that he would never set on his knees a dear son
who was born to me. And the gods fulfilled his curses—Zeus of the world below* and dread Persephone.
[I planned to kill him with the sharp bronze, but one of the immortals stayed my anger, putting into my mind the talk of my people and how men would censure me,

so that I should not be called a father-slayer among the Achaeans.]*

After this the spirit in my breast could no longer be confined,
to continue living in my father's halls while he was so angry.

Even so, my cousins and kinsmen who lived round about earnestly entreated me and tried to keep me there in his halls,

and sacrificed many sturdy sheep and shambling crook-horned cattle; and many a hog, rich with fat, was stretched out over Hephaestus' flame to be singed, and much wine was drunk from the old man's jars.

Nine nights they passed sleeping close around me, keeping watch by turns, and the fires never went out—one in the portico of the well-walled courtyard, and another in the entrance, in front of the doors of my room.

But when the tenth dark night came upon me, I broke down the close-fitting doors of my room and escaped, and leapt over the courtyard wall, easily, unseen by the men on guard and the women servants. So I became a fugitive through Hellas of the wide dancing-floors,

and came to rich-soiled Phthia, mother of flocks, to lord Peleus; and he received me with kindness, and loved me as a father loves his own dear son, a last-born only son, heir to many possessions, and he enriched me, and made over a numerous people to me, and I lived on the frontier of Phthia, ruling over the Dolopians.*

And, godlike Achilles, I made you into the great man you are,

loving you with all my heart; you never wanted to go to a feast

with anyone else, or to eat a meal in your own halls until I had set you on my knees and given you your fill,

first cutting your meat and holding the wine to your lips;
many times have you soaked the tunic on my chest,
dribbling wine down it in your childish helplessness.

So, I have endured much on your account, and toiled hard,
knowing that the gods were not going to bring into being
any offspring of mine; I made you my son, godlike Achilles,
so that one day you could protect me from ugly
destruction.

So come, Achilles, master your great spirit; you should not
have a pitiless heart—even the gods can be made to bend,
though their greatness and honour and power exceed our
own.

Men can sway them with sacrifices and propitiating prayers,
petitioning them with drink-offerings and the smoke of
burnt offerings,
whenever a man has overstepped the mark and done
wrong.

Indeed, there are Pleas for Forgiveness, daughters of great
Zeus,

who are lame and wrinkled, and their eyes are squinting,
and their office is to follow in pursuit of Delusion.

Now Delusion is strong and swift-footed, and therefore
far outruns them all, and gets in first, bringing hurt to men
all over the world; but the Pleas follow and heal them.

If a man respects these daughters of Zeus when they
approach,

they give him great blessings and listen to his prayers;
but if anyone denies and stubbornly rejects them, they go
to Cronus' son Zeus and entreat him, asking for Delusion
to go along with him, so that he will be hurt, and pay the
price.

So come, Achilles; you too must grant the daughters of
Zeus

the respect that bends the minds of others, fine men
though they are.

If Atreus' son was not offering you gifts, and promising

more to come, but was persisting in his furious rage,
I would not be telling you to cast your anger aside and
to defend the Argives, however much they have need of
you;
but as it is, he is offering you much now, and has promised
more,
and he has sent the best men on a mission to entreat you,
choosing them from the Achaean people—and they are also
the Argives you love most. Do not scorn their words or their
coming here, though before this your anger could not be
blamed.

So it was in former times too—the famous tales we have
heard
of heroes, of when violent anger came over one of them;
but
they were open to gifts, and could be won over by
speeches.

There is a story I recall from long ago, just as it happened,
though it
was not a recent event; we are all friends here, so I will tell
it to you.

The Curetes and Aetolians, steadfast in battle, were
fighting
around the city of Calydon, and were slaughtering each
other:
the Aetolians were defending lovely Calydon, while
the Curetes were raging to sack it in the war of Ares.
Artemis
of the golden throne had sent the Aetolians an evil thing,
being
angry because Oeneus had not offered her the first-fruits
from
his hillside orchard. The other gods were feasting on
hecatombs,
and it was only to great Zeus' daughter that he offered

nothing;
either he forgot, or he did not intend to do it; but his mind
was
mightily deluded. Furious, the archer-goddess, that divine
being,
sent against him a fierce wild boar, a white-tusked creature,
which kept causing great damage by ravaging Oeneus'
orchard:

it ripped out many tall trees and threw them to the ground,
roots, fruits, and blossom all at the same time.

This boar was killed by Meleager, the son of Oeneus,
after he had gathered together huntsmen and hounds
from many cities, for it could not be overcome by a few,
so huge it was, and had set many men upon the painful
pyre.

The goddess stirred up a great clamour and uproar over it
between the Curetes and the great-spirited Aetolians,
as to who should win the prize of its head and shaggy hide.
Now so long as Meleager, dear to Ares, kept fighting,
matters went badly for the Curetes, and they were not able
to stand their ground outside the wall, many as they were;
but when anger entered Meleager—such as swells the heart
in the breasts of other men too, even the sound of mind—
because he was angry with his own mother Althaea,
he lay beside his wedded wife, beautiful Cleopatra,
child of Euenus' daughter Marpessa of the lovely ankles,
and of Idas, who was the strongest among earth-dwelling
men

at that time—he it was who took up his bow to challenge
lord Phoebus Apollo over the girl with lovely ankles;
later Cleopatra's father and revered mother gave her the
name

Alcyone in their halls, because Marpessa had endured the
fate of

the mournful kingfisher, the halcyon; she would weep
because

Phoebus Apollo, the shooter from afar, had stolen her away
—

it was beside this Cleopatra that Meleager lay, brooding on
his

heart-wounding anger, furious at his mother's curses, who
was

grieving for her brother's killing, and she prayed often to
the gods,

and many times beat with her hands on the earth that
feeds many,

sitting hunched forward and soaking her lap with tears,

as she called upon Hades and dread Persephone to

bring death to her son; and the Fury, the drinker of blood,
whose heart cannot be placated, heard her from Erebus.

And soon the noise and din of the Curetes rose about the
gates,

as they battered the walls; and the elders of the Aetolians
kept sending the best priests of the gods to Meleager,
entreating

him to come out and fight, and promising him a huge gift:

they told him he could choose a magnificent estate in

the place where the lovely plain of Calydon was richest—

a tract of fifty acres, half of it vine-producing country

and half cleared ploughland, to be carved out for himself.

And many times the aged horse-driver Oeneus entreated
him,

standing on the threshold of his high-roofed chamber and

rattling its close-jointed doors as he implored his son;

many times his sisters and his revered mother entreated
him,

but he refused them all the more; many times his
companions

tried, those who were closest to him and dearest of all.

But for all that they could not win over the heart in his
breast,

until missiles rained thick on his chamber, and the Curetes

began to climb on the walls and to set fire to the great city. Then indeed his finely girdled wife entreated Meleager with lamentation, and described in full all the miseries that happen to people when their city is captured—the enemy kill the men, fire levels the city with the ground, and strangers carry off their children and deep-girdled women.

When he heard this dreadful tale Meleager's spirit was quickened, and he set off and put on his brightly gleaming armour. And so, though he had yielded to his anger, he kept the evil day from the Aetolians; but they did not give him the many fine gifts they had promised, and he saved them from disaster for nothing.*

Do not, I beg you, have thoughts like his, dear boy, and do not let some god turn you on to that course; it will be harder to defend

the ships when they are already ablaze. There are the gifts —

take them, and the Achaeans will honour you like a god. But if you enter the man-destroying conflict without gifts, you will not have the same honour, even if you drive the war away.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him: 'Phoenix, aged father, nurtured by Zeus, this is an honour* I do not need; it is by Zeus' will, I believe, that I am honoured, and this will stay with me beside my curved ships, as long as the breath remains in my breast and my own knees can lift me.

But I tell you another thing, and you should store in your

mind:

do not break my resolve with your grieving and lamentation,

hoping to win favour with the hero son of Atreus; do not take his side, or I, who love you, may come to hate you.

For you, the honourable course is to hurt the man who hurts me;

this way you may have half my kingdom and enjoy half my honour.

These men can take my answer back; you must stay here and sleep on a soft bed, and then as soon as dawn appears we shall decide whether to go home or to stay here.'

So he spoke, and signalled silently to Patroclus with his eyebrows,

to make up a thick bed for Phoenix, so that the others might

think the sooner of leaving the hut for home. Then Ajax, the godlike son of Telamon, spoke out among them:

'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many schemes,

let us go; I do not think our embassy's purpose will be fulfilled,

on this journey at any rate; we must quickly report

his reply to the Danaans, even though it is not good,

for they will surely now be sitting waiting for it. Achilles

has turned the great-hearted spirit in his breast to cruelty,

hard man, and he has no regard for his companions' love,

we who used to honour him above all others beside the ships.

He is without pity. And yet, a man will accept compensation for his dead brother or his own son from the man who killed him;

the murderer pays a great price and stays among his people,

and the other's heart and proud spirit are restrained,

now that he has accepted amends.* But as for you, the
gods
have given you a harsh and implacable heart in your breast
—
and all for one girl. Now we are offering you seven, the very
best,
and many other gifts besides; so make your heart gracious,
and
respect your obligations as a host—we are here under your
roof
on behalf of the whole Danaan army, and we are eager to
remain
your nearest and dearest friends among all the Achaeans.’

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
‘Ajax, son of Telamon, sprung from Zeus, ruler of the
people,
all that you have said seems much in keeping with my
mind;
but my heart swells with bitterness whenever I think of
what happened, of how contemptuously Atreus’ son treated
me
before the Argives, like some wandering migrant who has
lost
his rights. No; go back now and report my answer, in public:
I shall not think of entering the bloodstained war
until glorious Hector, the son of wise Priam,
reaches as far as the huts and ships of the Myrmidons,
killing the Argives and consuming the ships with fire.
But I think that when he reaches my hut and black ship
Hector will be held back, raging though he is for battle.’

So he spoke, and they each picked up a two-handled
cup,
made a libation, and returned along the row of ships, and
Odysseus
led the way. But Patroclus ordered his companions and

maids

to make up a thick bed for Phoenix as quickly as they could.
The women obeyed, and made up the bed as he had told them,

with fleeces and a rug and the softest of linen cloths; and there

the old man lay down and waited for the bright Dawn.

But Achilles went to sleep in the inmost part of his well-built hut,

and beside him lay a woman whom he had brought from Lesbos,

Diomedes of the beautiful cheeks, the daughter of Phorbas.

Patroclus lay on the other side, and beside him too was a woman,

Iphigenia of the lovely girdle, whom glorious Achilles had given him

when he captured sheer Skyros,* the citadel of Enyeus.

Now when the others reached the huts of Atreus' son, the sons of the Achaeans stood up and drank their health, one here, one there, in golden cups, and began to question them;

and the first to ask a question was Agamemnon, lord of men:

'Odysseus of many tales, great glory of the Achaeans, tell me:

is he willing to keep destructive fire away from our ships, or did he refuse, and does anger still grip his great-hearted spirit?'

Then in answer much-enduring glorious Odysseus addressed him:

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, the man has no mind to quench his anger, but is even more filled with fury, and he repudiates you and your gifts.

He tells you to take thought among the Argives as to how you may save both the ships and the Achaean people;

as for himself, he threatened that as soon as dawn breaks he will drag his well-benched, balanced ships down to the sea.

Moreover, he said that he advises all the rest of you to sail for home, because you will never reach your goal of taking sheer Ilium, because Zeus the wide-thunderer has stretched his hand over it, and its peoples have taken heart.

So he spoke; and these who went with me will say the same,

Ajax and the two heralds, both men of sound judgement. But the old man Phoenix is sleeping there, urged by Achilles,

so that he can sail with him on his ships to his dear native land

tomorrow, if he wishes; but he will not compel him to come.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still, amazed at his words, so forcibly had he spoken. For a long time

the sons of the Achaeans were speechless with despair, but at last Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke out among them:

'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men: I wish that you had never entreated the blameless son of Peleus

and offered him countless gifts; he is a proud man at any time,

but now you have driven him to even greater arrogance.

Let us leave him alone, to decide whether he goes or stays; later he will fight again, whenever the heart in his breast prompts him to and a god stirs him up.

So come, let us all accept what I say: for the present, all should go to bed, now that you have had your hearts' fill of food and wine, for that is our fury and courage;

and when lovely Dawn with her rosy fingers appears, you must quickly marshal the people and chariots before the ships,
and urge them on, and fight yourself among the front-warriors.'

So he spoke, and all the kings assented to what he said, amazed at the words of Diomedes, breaker of horses. Then they made libations, and went each to his own hut, and there they lay down to rest, and received the gift of sleep.

BOOK TEN

Now all the other chieftains of the Achaean people
slept through the night by their ships, overcome by soft
sleep;
but sweet sleep did not take hold of Atreus' son
Agamemnon,
shepherd of the people, as he pondered much in his mind.
As when the husband of lovely-haired Hera flashes his
lightning,
foretelling a heavy fall of rain or a prodigious hailstorm
or a blizzard, when snow covers the ploughed fields,
or somewhere opens the great jaws of harrowing war,
so Agamemnon kept groaning aloud, from the depths
of the heart in his breast, and the spirit within him
trembled.
Whenever he looked towards the plain of Troy
he marvelled at the many fires burning before Ilium,
and at the noise of pipes and flutes and the clamour of
men.
But when he looked at the ships and army of the Achaeans
he would tear the hair from his head by the roots, praying
to
Zeus who sits on high; and his noble heart groaned aloud.
And this seemed to him in his heart to be the best plan,
to go before all others to Nestor, the son of Neleus,
to see if he could with him devise some excellent counsel
that would keep disaster away from all the Danaans.
So he rose, and put a tunic about his chest,
and bound fine sandals under his shining feet,
then slung round himself the hide of a great tawny lion,

blood-dark and reaching to his feet, and picked up his spear.

In the same way trembling gripped Menelaus, for with him too sleep would not sit on his eyelids; he was afraid that some harm would befall the Argives, who for his sake had crossed a wide expanse of water to Troy, determined on audacious war. First he covered his broad back with a leopard's dappled skin, then lifted up a bronze helmet and placed it on his head, and with his brawny hand picked up a spear. He set off to rouse his brother, who was the supreme ruler over all the Argives, and was honoured by the people like a god.

He found him by the stern of his ship, putting his fine armour around his shoulders; and he was glad to see his brother come.

Menelaus, master of the war-cry, was the first to speak: 'Brother, why are you arming like this? Are you sending one of your companions to spy on the Trojans? I am terribly afraid that no one will undertake this mission for you, to go out and spy on the enemy forces, alone in the immortal night; he will have to be a man of very bold heart.'

Then in answer lord Agamemnon addressed him: 'Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, we have need of a plan, you and I, a shrewd one, that will protect and save the Argives and their ships, since Zeus' mind has turned away from us. Clearly, he has heeded Hector's offerings more than ours; I have never seen, nor have I heard anyone tell of, a single man devising as much destruction in one day as Hector, dear to Zeus, has inflicted on the sons of the

Achaean—

and on his own, for he is no dear son of a god or goddess. I think that the things he has done will trouble the Argives for

many, many years, such is the harm he has dealt the Achaeans.

But go now, run swiftly along the row of ships and summon Ajax and Idomeneus; and I will go in search of glorious Nestor, and will urge him to rise, to see if he is willing to go out and give orders to the devoted company of the sentries.

They are most likely to listen to him, for it is his son who is in charge of the sentries, he and Idomeneus' attendant

Meriones; to them especially we entrusted this duty.'

Then Menelaus, master of the war-cry, answered him: 'I will; but what do you mean by these orders and instructions?

Am I to remain there with them, waiting for you to come, or shall I run back to you when I have given them their orders?'

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed him:

'Stay there, in case we somehow miss one another as we go, for there are many footpaths through the camp. Wherever you go, shout aloud to the men to stay awake, reminding each of his ancestry and his father's name, and addressing all with respect. And do not show a haughty spirit;

we too must toil, on our own account—for this, it seems, is the heavy affliction that Zeus gave us when we were born.'

So he spoke, and sent his brother on his way with clear orders.

He himself set off to look for Nestor, shepherd of the

people,
and found him beside his hut and his black ship, lying on
his soft bed. Next to him lay his intricately worked armour,
a shield and a pair of spears and a shining helmet, and
by him too lay his bright-gleaming belt, which the old man
wore round him when he armed for man-destroying war,
leading his people, for he would not give in to painful old
age.

Nestor lifted his head and raised himself on his elbow,
and addressed the son of Atreus with a question:
'Who are you, going alone about the camp and along the
ships
through the dark night, when other mortals are asleep?
Are you looking for one of your mules, or some companion?
Speak; do not creep silently up on me. What do you want
here?'

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed
him:

'Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans,
you should recognize Agamemnon, Atreus' son, the one
whom Zeus has set amidst endless labours, beyond all
men,
while there is breath in my breast and my knees can lift me.
I am wandering like this because sweet sleep does not sit
on my eyes, and the war and the Achaeans' troubles vex
me,
and I am terribly afraid for the Danaans, and my heart
will not stay still, and I am distraught, and my heart leaps
out of my breast, and my bright limbs shake beneath me.
If you are minded to act—since sleep does not visit you
either—
let us go out there to the sentries, to inspect them,
in case they are exhausted by toil and sleeplessness
and have fallen asleep, and have quite forgotten to keep
watch.

The enemy are encamped close by, and we do not know what they intend; they might even attack us by night.'

Then Nestor the Gerenian horseman answered him:
'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men,
Zeus the counsellor will surely not fulfil all Hector's designs,
everything that he now hopes for; no, I believe that
he will have more troubles to struggle with, if only Achilles
can turn his dear heart away from his destructive anger.
I shall certainly go with you; but let us also wake some
others,
Tydeus' son the renowned spearman, and Odysseus,
swift-footed Ajax and Meges, the stalwart son of Phyleus.
And someone should go in search of other men too,
and summon them: I mean godlike Ajax and lord
Idomeneus,
for their ships are furthest away on either side, and not
close by.
As for Menelaus, though I love and respect him, I must
quarrel
with him—and I will not hide it, even if you are angry with
me—
because he is asleep, and has left you to toil on your own.
I could wish that he was working now among all the
chieftains,
entreating them, because an intolerable need has come
upon us.'

Then in answer Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed
him:
'Old man, at other times I might even urge you to blame
him,
since he is often remiss and unwilling to take his part in the
toil;
not because he gives way to cowardice or thoughtlessness,
but because he always looks to me and waits for my lead.
But this time he woke well before me, and came after me,

and I sent him forward to summon the men you are asking about.

Come then, let us go; we shall find them with the sentries, in front of the gates, which is where I told them to gather.'

Then Nestor the Gerenian horseman answered him: 'If that is so, none of the Argives will be angry with him or disregard him, when he gives orders and urges men on.'

So he spoke, and put a tunic on over his chest, and bound fine sandals under his shining feet, and with a clasp fastened about himself a bright purple cloak, long and double folded, and it had a thick wool nap on it. He picked up his stout spear, pointed with sharp bronze, and set off along the ships of the bronze-shirted Achaeans. The first man whom the Gerenian horseman Nestor roused from sleep was Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in scheming; he called to him, and the sound flowed quickly around his mind,

and he came out of his hut and addressed them, saying: 'Why are you wandering alone like this about the camp, along the ships, through the immortal night? Has some great need arisen?'

Then Nestor the Gerenian horseman answered him: 'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many schemes, do not be angry; a great grief has indeed crushed the Achaeans. Come, follow me, and we will wake others too, those who should rightly offer their advice as to whether we flee or fight.'

So he spoke, and Odysseus of many schemes went into his hut and slung a finely worked shield over his shoulders, and followed them.

They went in search of Tydeus' son Diomedes, and found

him

outside his hut, with his armour. Around him his companions

were sleeping, their heads on their shields; and their spears had been driven into the ground, upright on their butt-ends, and the bronze shone like the lightning of father Zeus. The hero

was asleep, and under him was spread the hide of a field ox,

and a bright rug was pulled up underneath his head.

Nestor the Gerenian horseman stood close to wake him; stirring him with his foot, he rebuked him to his face:

‘Wake up, son of Tydeus! Why sleep all night? Have you not heard that the Trojans are camped on the rising plain, close by the ships, and only a narrow space now separates us?’

So he spoke, and Diomedes woke and sprang up very quickly,

and addressed Nestor, speaking with winged words:

‘You are hard, old man, and you never rest from toil. Are there not other sons of the Achaeans, younger men, who might better go up and down the camp, rousing each of the kings? Old man, you are impossible to control!’

Then in answer Nestor the Gerenian horseman addressed him:

‘All that you say, my friend, is according to due measure; I do have blameless sons, and I have men, many of them, any of whom could go up and down the camp and summon people.

But a very great need has overwhelmed the Achaeans, and matters now stand upon a razor’s edge for all of us Achaeans: either survival, or an exceedingly miserable death.

So come; if you have any pity for me, go and rouse swift Ajax

and Meges, Phyleus' son—you are a younger man than I am.'

So he spoke, and Diomedes slung over his shoulders the hide of a great tawny lion, reaching to his feet, and picked up his spear; he set off, and woke the two men, and brought them back with him.

When they joined the sentries at the place where they were gathered, they did not find their leaders asleep, but they were all sitting there, armed and wide awake. As dogs who keep restive watch over sheep in a fold, having heard some ferocious wild beast coming down the mountains and through the woods, and a great clamour arises

from the men and hounds pursuing it, and their sleep is lost;

so sweet sleep was lost to the sentries' eyelids too as they kept watch through the uneasy night, since all the time they were facing the plain, waiting to hear the Trojans coming.

The old man was glad when he saw them, and rallied them with his speech, [and addressed them, speaking with winged words]:

'This is the way, dear children, to keep watch! Do not let sleep catch anyone unawares, in case we become a delight to our enemies.'

So he spoke, and strode over the ditch, and the other Argive kings followed him, all who had been called to the council.

And with them went Meriones and Nestor's splendid son, since they had been invited by the others to join their debate.

When they had crossed over the deep-dug ditch they sat

down
in an open space where the ground was clear of the dead
men
who had fallen, the place where towering Hector had
turned back
from slaughtering the Argives, when night covered the
earth.

Sitting there they began to converse with each other,
and the first to speak was Nestor the Gerenian horseman:
'My friends, could not some man put his trust in his
audacious spirit, to go among the great-spirited Trojans
and see if he could capture some enemy straggler,
or perhaps hear some rumour among the Trojans,
and so find out their plans, whether they are bent on
remaining here by the ships, away from their homes, or if,
having crushed the Achaeans, they will return to their city?
He could find all this out, and then come back to us
unscathed, and great would be his fame under the high sky,
among all men, and he will receive a noble reward:
all the chieftains who have command over ships
will each and every one give him a black sheep,
a ewe with its suckling lamb, a possession without equal;
and he will always be invited to their feasts and banquets.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still, but
Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke out among them:
'Nestor, my heart and my proud spirit prompt me
to steal into the camp of our enemies the Trojans, who lie
close by—but if some other man were to come with me,
I would find more encouragement and confidence.
When two go together, one can discern before the other
what is best for them; and even if one on his own can see
this,
his mind has a shorter reach, and his resource is weaker.'

So he spoke, and many men wanted to go with
Diomedes.

The two called Ajax, attendants of Ares, wanted to go,
Meriones wanted to go, Nestor's son wanted fervently to
go,
Atreus' son Menelaus, famed with the spear, wanted to go,
and stalwart Odysseus wanted to steal in among the Trojan
soldiery, for the heart in his breast was always daring.
Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke among them:
'Diomedes, son of Tydeus, delight of my heart,
you shall choose whichever companion you want, the best
of those who have come forward, for many are raging to
go.
But do not, out of respect in your heart, leave the better
man
and take the worse with you, yielding to your esteem for
him
and looking to his ancestry—not even if he is more kingly.'

So he spoke, and he was terrified for fair-haired
Menelaus.
Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke out among them
again:
'If you are really telling me to choose a companion myself,
how could I then forget godlike Odysseus,
whose heart and proud spirit are ready beyond others'
for all kinds of labours, and Pallas Athena loves him.
If he comes with me, we could even pass through blazing
fire
and return safe together, because his mind has no equal.'

Then in turn much-enduring glorious Odysseus
addressed him:
'Son of Tydeus, do not over-praise me, or dwell on my
faults;
you are speaking among Argives, who surely know me.
Come, let us go; night is almost at an end, and dawn is
near,
the stars' course is advanced, and most of the night has

gone;
two-thirds of it are spent, and only the third part is left.'

So speaking they both put on their terrifying armour.
Thrasymedes, steadfast in war, gave the son of Tydeus
a two-edged sword—because he had left his own by the
ship—

and a shield, and placed on his head a helmet made of
oxhide, without a horn or a crest, the kind that is called a
skullcap, and it protects the heads of strong young men.
Meriones gave Odysseus a bow and a quiver and
a sword, and placed on his head a helmet of leather,
carefully made: on the inside it was stretched tight
by many straps, and on the outside close-set pieces
of a shiny-toothed boar's white tusks ran this way and that,
very cunningly made; and inside it was fitted a felt cap.*
Autolycus had once stolen this from Amyntor, Ormenus'
son,

when he broke into his strongly built house in Eleon, and
he gave it to Amphidamas of Cythera to take to Scandeia;
Amphidamas gave it to Molus as a mark of guest-
friendship,
and Molus gave it to his son Meriones for him to wear;
and now it was set for his protection on the head of
Odysseus.*

So when the two of them had put on their terrifying
armour
they set off, leaving all the chief men where they were.
And Pallas Athena sent them an omen on the right, a heron
close to their path; they could not see it with their eyes
through the dark night, but they heard its piercing cry.
Odysseus was glad of the bird-omen, and prayed to Athena:
'Hear me, child of Zeus who wears the aegis, you who
stand
by me in all my labours, and who do not forget me when I
am

stirred to action; now especially show me favour, Athena, and grant that we may return to the ships in glory, having done some great deed that will disquiet the Trojans.'

Next, Diomedes, master of the war-cry, prayed in his turn:

'Hear me too, daughter of Zeus, Atrytone;* go with me as once you went with my father, glorious Tydeus, into Thebes, when he went as an envoy from the Achaeans.*

He had left the bronze-shirted Achaeans beside the Asopus, and was taking beguiling words to the Cadmeians in that place; but on his way back he devised terrible deeds, with your help, bright goddess, and you readily stood beside him.

So now again be willing to stand beside me and protect me, and I will in turn sacrifice to you a yearling heifer, broad of brow,

not yet broken, one that no man has yet led under the yoke;

I will sacrifice her to you, and I will cover her horns with gold.'

So they spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard them. And when they had prayed to great Zeus' daughter, they went on their way like two lions through the black night,

amidst the carnage, the dead men, the war-gear, and the black blood.

Nor indeed did Hector allow the proud Trojans to sleep, but he called together all their chief men to an assembly, all those who were leaders and captains of the Trojans; and when he had summoned them he put forward a shrewd plan:

'Is there anyone who will undertake to perform a task for me,

in return for a great reward? The recompense will be ample:

I will give him a chariot and two horses with powerful necks,
the best that there are beside the swift ships of the Achaeans,
to whoever dares—and he will also win glory for himself—to go up close to their swift-travelling ships, and to find out whether the swift ships are being guarded as before, or whether, having now been beaten down at our hands, they are thinking among themselves of flight, and, worn out by sheer weariness, do not care to watch through the night.'

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still. Now there was among the Trojans a son of the sacred herald Eumedes called Dolon,* who was rich in gold and bronze—a man of most ugly appearance, but swift-footed; Eumedes had five daughters, and he was the only son. This man then spoke out to the Trojans and to Hector: 'Hector, my heart and my proud spirit urge me to draw close to the swift-travelling ships and find out about them. So come, hold up the staff there, and swear to me that you will truly give me the horses and chariot, intricately worked with bronze, that now carry the blameless son of Peleus, and I shall prove no useless spy for you, nor frustrate your hopes: I shall go straight through the camp, until I reach the ship of Agamemnon, where their chieftains will doubtless be deliberating in council, whether to flee or to fight.'

So he spoke, and Hector put his hand to the staff and swore to him: 'Let Zeus himself, the deep-thundering husband of Hera, witness that no other Trojan shall ride behind those horses except

you,
and you, I declare, will take your delight in them for ever.'

So he uttered an oath that would come to nothing; but
it made

Dolon bold. At once he slung a curved bow over his
shoulders,

and over everything threw the pelt of a grey wolf, and
on his head a ferret-skin cap, and he took up a sharp spear
and started off from the camp for the ships; but he was not
destined to return from the ships and bring word to Hector.

He had left the mass of men and horses behind him
and was

on his way, full of fierce intent, when Odysseus, sprung
from Zeus,

saw him approaching, and addressed Diomedes:

'Look, Diomedes! Here is a man coming from their camp;

I do not know whether he means to spy on our ships,

or intends to strip the armour from one of the dead men.

Let us first allow him to pass by us on his way to the plain,

a little way, and after that we can rush out and capture him

quickly; and if he chances to outrun us on swift feet,

keep forcing him towards the ships, away from their camp,

darting at him with your spear, so that he cannot escape to
the city.'

So they spoke, and turned off the path and lay down
among

the dead men; and Dolon, in his ignorance, quickly ran
past.

But when he was as far ahead as the width of a day's

mule-ploughing—and mules are better than oxen

at dragging the jointed plough through deep fallow land—

the pair ran after him; and he, hearing the sound, stopped
still,

thinking in his heart that they were his Trojan companions

come to turn him back, because Hector had ordered him to

return.

But when they were separated by a spear-cast or even less,
he realized that they were enemies, and quickened his
limbs

into swift flight; and they quickly roused themselves in
pursuit.

As when two sharp-toothed hounds, skilled in the chase,
press in never-renting pursuit on a young deer or a hare,
through a wooded land, and it runs screaming before them,
so the son of Tydeus and Odysseus, sacker of cities,
in never-renting pursuit cut Dolon off from his own
people.

Now when in his flight towards the ships he was about to
fall in with the sentries, then indeed Athena cast fury
into Tydeus' son, so that none of the bronze-shirted
Achaeans

might boast that he hit Dolon first and Diomedes was
second.

Threatening him with his spear, mighty Diomedes
addressed him:

'Stop there, or my spear will find you; and then I do not
think

you will long escape sheer destruction at my hand.'

So he spoke, and let fly the spear, but deliberately
missed the man;

the point of the polished spear passed over his right
shoulder

and stuck fast in the ground. Dolon stood motionless,
terrified

and stammering, the teeth in his mouth chattering, and he
was

pale with fear. The two caught up with him, panting, and
seized him by the arms, and he burst into tears and spoke:

'Take me alive, and I will ransom myself; in my house
there is bronze and gold and elaborately worked iron,

from which my father would gladly give you a boundless ransom,
if he learnt that I was alive by the ships of the Achaeans.'

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed him:

'Do not despair, and do not let death cast your spirit down;
but come, tell me this, and give me an exact account:
where are you going all alone, away from your camp to the ships,
through the dark night, when all other mortals are asleep?
Do you mean to strip the armour from one of the dead men?

Or has Hector sent you out towards our hollow ships, to spy on everything there? Or did your own heart impel you?'

Then Dolon answered him, and his legs beneath him were
trembling:

'Hector has greatly deluded me, driving me out of my mind,
promising to give me the single-hoofed horses of splendid
Peleus' son, and his chariot, intricately worked with bronze;
he has ordered me to go through the swift dark night
and come close to our enemies' ships, and to find out
whether the swift ships are being guarded as before,
or whether, having now been beaten down at our hands,
they are thinking among themselves of flight, and, worn out
by sheer weariness, do not care to watch through the night.'

At this Odysseus of many schemes smiled and addressed him:

'These were indeed great rewards that your heart longed for,
the horses of Aeacus' war-minded grandson; but they are
hard to master and to drive, at least for mortal men,
except for Achilles, whom an immortal mother bore.
But come, tell me this, and give me an exact account: when

you

came here where did you leave Hector, shepherd of the people?

Where is his armour of war lying, and where are his horses?

How are the other Trojans' pickets placed, and where do they sleep?

What plans have they made among themselves—are they resolved

to stay where they are, near the ships and far from their city, or

will they return to the city, having now beaten down the Achaeans?'

Then in answer Dolon, son of Eumedes, addressed him:

'Very well, I will give you an exact account of all this:

Hector, in company with all those who are his advisors,

is holding a council beside the grave-mound of godlike

Ilus,*

away from all the hubbub. As to the pickets you ask about, hero, none has been appointed to defend or guard the camp.

At every watch-fire there are Trojan men under orders to stay wide awake and encourage each other to keep guard; but as for our allies, who are summoned from many lands, they are asleep, and leave it to the Trojans to keep watch, not having their children and wives lying near at hand.'

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed him:

'I see; but where are they sleeping—among the horse-breaking

Trojans, or apart from them? Tell me clearly, so that I may know.'

Then Dolon, the son of Eumedes, answered him:

'Very well, I will give you an exact account of all this:

by the sea are the Carians and Paeonians with their curved bows,

and the Leleges and the Caucones and the glorious Pelasgi;
the proud Mysians were assigned a place towards Thymbre,
with

the Phrygians, fighters from horses, and the Maeonian
horse-marshals.*

But why are you asking me to describe all this in detail?
If you two are raging to steal into the Trojan soldiery, over
there

at the furthest point, away from the rest, are the Thracians,
newly arrived, and with them is their king Rhesus, Eioneus'
son.*

His horses are the finest and the biggest I have ever seen:
they are whiter than snow, and they run like the winds.

His chariot is finely decorated with gold and silver,
and he has brought with him massive armour of gold,
a wonder to look at; it is not right for mortal men
to wear such things, but only for the immortal gods.

But take me now to your swift-travelling ships,
or else tie me up and leave me here, tightly bound,
and you can both go and test my account, to find out
if I have spoken to you according to the truth, or not.'

Mighty Diomedes looked at him darkly, and addressed
him:

'I warn you, Dolon; do not put thought of escape in your
heart;

your news may be good, but you have fallen into our
hands,

and if we now accept a ransom or let you go free,
you will surely return some day to the Achaeans' swift
ships,

either to spy on us or to fight us, matching strength to
strength.

But if you are beaten down by my hands and lose your life,
you will never after this be an affliction to the Argives.'

So he spoke. Dolon was about to touch his chin in

entreaty
with his brawny hand, but Diomedes lunged with his sword
and
drove it through the middle of his neck, severing both
tendons;
and his head rolled in the dust while he was still speaking.
They stripped the ferret-skin cap from his head, and
his wolf's pelt and curved-back bow and long spear;
and glorious Odysseus held them aloft in his hand
to Athena who gathers the spoils, and spoke in prayer:
'Be glad with these, goddess; of all the immortals on
Olympus
you will be the first we shall call on for help. Now help us
again,
and bring us to the horses and sleeping-places of the
Thracians.'

So he spoke, and lifted the spoils high above him and
hung them on a tamarisk bush; above it he set a clear
marker,
pulling together a bundle of reeds and sturdy tamarisk
branches,
so that they should not miss it, returning through the swift
dark night.

So the pair went onward through the war-gear and the
black blood,
and as they went came quickly to the company of the
Thracians.

These were sleeping, worn out by weariness, and their fine
weapons were piled neatly beside them on the ground,
in three rows; and by each man stood a pair of horses.
Rhesus was sleeping in the midst, and next to him his swift
horses
were tethered with leather straps to the end of his chariot's
rail.

Odysseus saw him first, and pointed him out to Diomedes:

‘This must be the man, Diomedes, and these must be the horses
that Dolon, the man whom we have killed, told us about.
So come, and bring your strong fury into play; this is no
time
to stand idle here with your weapons. Untie the horses—
or rather I will take care of the horses while you kill the
men.’

So he spoke, and grey-eyed Athena breathed fury into
Diomedes,
and he began to kill, laying about him with his sword; and a
shameful
groaning arose from the men he felled, and the ground
grew red
with blood. As a lion comes upon flocks which have no
herdsman,
either sheep or goats, and it leaps on them with havoc in its
heart,
so the son of Tydeus kept at the men of Thrace, until he
had killed
twelve of them. Whenever Tydeus’ son stood over a man
and
struck with his sword, Odysseus of many schemes would
come
from behind and seize him by the foot and drag him out of
the way—
with this plan in his mind, that the fine-maned horses might
pass easily through the camp and not tremble in their
hearts
as they trod on dead men; for they were still unused to
them.
When the son of Tydeus came upon the Thracian king,
he was the thirteenth whose sweet life he plundered as he
lay
there gasping; for by Athena’s contrivance an evil dream—

Diomedes, Oeneus' grandson—had that night stood over his head.*

Meanwhile steadfast Odysseus released the single-hoofed horses and tied them together with thongs, and drove them out of the camp, beating them with his bow, since he had not

thought to pick up the shining whip from the finely worked chariot.

Then he whistled a signal to glorious Diomedes who, however,

hung back, thinking of the most audacious thing that he could do,

either to seize the chariot where the finely worked armour lay and

drag it off by its pole, or else to lift it aloft and carry it away;

or whether he should rob even more Thracians of their lives.

As he was pondering this in his mind, Athena came and stood next to him, and addressed glorious Diomedes:

'Son of great-spirited Tydeus, think now about your return to

your hollow ships; you will not want to reach them in panic flight,

for it may be that some other god will wake the Trojans.'

So she spoke, and he knew he had heard a goddess' voice,

and quickly mounted; and Odysseus struck the horses with his bow, and they flew towards the swift ships of the Achaeans.

But Apollo of the silver bow was not keeping blind watch:

he could see Athena looking after the son of Tydeus, and, enraged with her, went down among the massed soldiery of the

Trojans and roused Hippocoön, a counsellor of the Thracians and Rhesus' excellent cousin. He started up from sleep, and when he saw the empty place where the swift horses had stood, and the men gasping their last amidst the ghastly carnage, he groaned aloud and called on his dear companion by name.

An enormous noise of shouting arose from the Trojans as they flocked to the place; they were amazed at the terrible deeds that the men had done before returning to their hollow ships.

When the pair reached the place where they had killed Hector's spy,

Odysseus, loved by Zeus, reined in the swift horses, and Tydeus' son leapt to the ground and placed the bloody spoils

in Odysseus' hands, and then mounted once again.

He whipped up the horses, and they flew willingly on towards the hollow ships, for their hearts were set on it.

The first to hear the hoof beats was Nestor, and he spoke: 'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives, my heart urges me to speak; will it turn out that I am deceived or right?

The beat of swift-hoofed horses strikes on my ears; may this mean that Odysseus and mighty Diomedes are driving single-hoofed horses here, straight from the Trojans! But I am terribly afraid in my heart that the Argives' chieftains have suffered some setback, and the Trojans are in full cry after them.'

He had not yet finished speaking when the pair arrived. They jumped down to the ground, and the others gladly welcomed them with clasped right hands and cordial words; and the first to question them was Nestor the Gerenian

horseman:

‘Come now, Odysseus of many tales, great glory of the Achaeans,
tell me how you two won these horses. Did you steal into the
Trojan soldiery, or did some god meet you and give you them?

They are amazing, and look to me like the rays of the sun.
I am always meeting Trojans in battle—I can claim that
I do not hang back by the ships, aged warrior though I am—
but I have never yet seen or clapped my eyes on such horses.

No, I think some god met you and made you a present of them,
for both of you are dear to Zeus who gathers the clouds,
and
to grey-eyed Athena, daughter of Zeus who wears the aegis.’

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed him:

‘Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans,
it would be easy for a god, if he wished it, to give us even finer
horses than these, since the gods are far stronger than we are.

No, these horses that you ask about, old man, have just come
here from Thrace. Courageous Diomedes killed their lord,
and twelve companions with him, all of them chieftains.
The thirteenth man was a scout we caught near the ships,
one whom Hector and the other splendid Trojans
had sent out to be a spy on us in our camp.’

So he spoke, and drove the single-hoofed horses across the ditch,
laughing aloud, and the other Achaeans went happily with

him.

When they reached the well-built hut of Tydeus' son they tied the horses up with finely cut leather straps, at the manger where Diomedes' own swift-footed horses were standing and munching honey-sweet wheat. And Odysseus laid the bloodstained spoils of Dolon in his ship's stern, until they could make an offering to Athena.

Then they waded into the sea and began to wash off the abundant sweat from their legs and necks and thighs. When the waves of the sea had washed away the abundant sweat from their skin, and their dear hearts were refreshed, they stepped into polished baths and soaked themselves; and having bathed and anointed themselves richly with oil, the pair sat down to supper, and from the full mixing-bowl they drew off honey-sweet wine and made an offering to Athena.

BOOK ELEVEN

Now Dawn arose from her bed beside splendid Tithonus, to bring light to immortals and to mortals, and Zeus dispatched Strife to the swift ships of the Achaeans—a goddess of pain, holding in her hands a portent of war. She stood on Odysseus' deep-bellied black ship, which was in the middle of the line, so that a shout could reach both ends, both to the hut of Ajax Telamon's son, and to Achilles' hut; these had dragged up their balanced ships at the furthest points, trusting in their courage and in the strength of their hands. Standing there the goddess gave out a great, terrifying shout, in a piercing voice, and cast into the heart of each Achaean great strength to take up arms and fight without ceasing; and at once war became a sweeter thing to them than a return in their hollow ships to their dear native land.

Then Atreus' son shouted to the Argives, ordering them to arm; and among them he himself put on the shining bronze.

First of all he fastened greaves around his shins, splendid ones, fitted with silver ankle-pieces; then over his chest he put on a corslet, one that Cinyras had once given him as a mark of guest-friendship. Cinyras had heard in Cyprus the momentous news that the Achaeans were to sail in their ships for Troy, and for that reason sent him this gift, to find favour with the king.

On it there were ten bands of dark-blue enamel, and twelve bands of gold and twenty of tin;

dark enamel snakes reached up towards the neck,
three on either side, like the rainbows that Cronus' son
imprints on a cloud as a portent for mortal men.
Around his shoulders he slung his sword; on it there were
rivets of gold, shining brightly, and the scabbard holding it
was silver, fitted with golden shoulder-straps.
He lifted up the body-covering shield, intricately worked
and beautiful and strong; round it ran ten bronze circles,
and on them there were twenty bosses of white tin,
and in the middle there was one of dark-blue enamel.
On the centre was set like a circlet a grim-faced Gorgon,
staring hideously, and about her were Terror and Panic.
From this shield hung a silver shield-strap, and on it
writhed an enamel snake with three heads that twisted
this way and that but grew from a single neck.
On his head he set a twin-ridged helmet with four plates
and a horsetail crest; and the plume nodded terribly above
him.
He chose for himself two stout spears, tipped with bronze
and sharp, and the gleam of their bronze reached
to the high sky. Athena and Hera thundered over him,
to show honour to the king of Mycenae, rich in gold.

Then each man instructed his charioteer to
rein in his horses in good order there by the ditch,
while they themselves, fully armed, streamed over on foot;
and their shouts rose unquenchable in the early morning.
They formed up at the ditch well before the charioteers,
who arrived soon after them. Cronus' son aroused
a dreadful uproar among them, and from the clear air
rained down drops heavy with blood, because he
intended to hurl many mighty heads down to Hades.

On their side the Trojans formed up on rising ground
in the plain, around huge Hector and blameless Polydamas
and Aeneas, who was honoured by the Trojan people like a
god,

and around the three sons of Antenor—Polybus, glorious Agenor,
and the unmarried Acamas, who looked like the immortals.
Among the front ranks Hector carried a perfectly balanced shield;
like the death-bringing star that appears rising out of the clouds,*
shining brightly, and then sinks again into the shadowing clouds,
so Hector would at one time appear among the front ranks,
and at another at the rear, urging them on. And all in bronze
he shone like the lightning of father Zeus who wears the aegis.

Just like reapers who start from opposite ends of the field
of a powerful man, and drive their path through wheat or barley, and the handfuls fall thick and fast;
so the Trojans and Achaeans surged forward and began to cut each other down, and neither side thought of fatal flight;
the battle kept them head to head, and they stormed in like wolves. Strife the bringer of groans was glad at the sight,
for she alone of the gods attended their fighting; the other gods were not present, but were sitting peacefully in their own halls, where each one's fine palace had been built along Olympus' upland glens, and they were all at odds with Cronus' son of the dark clouds, because he wished to give glory to the Trojans.
But the father paid them no attention; he had slipped away from the others, and was sitting alone, exulting in his glory, looking out towards the Trojans' city and the Achaeans' ships,
at the lightning-flash of bronze, at the slayers and the slain.

As long as it was morning, and the sacred day was growing,
both side's missiles struck home, and the people kept falling;
but at the time when a woodcutter prepares his meal
in the mountain glens, because he has worn out his arms
with felling tall trees, and weariness comes over his spirit,
and the desire for pleasant food takes hold of his mind,
then the Danaans called out to their companions along the lines,
and by their courage broke through the enemy ranks.
Agamemnon
was the first to charge; he killed Bienor, shepherd of the people—
first the man, and then his companion, Oïleus whipper of horses,
who had leapt down from the chariot and stood facing him,
and as he came raging on Agamemnon pierced his forehead
with his sharp spear. The heavy bronze helmet could not stop it,
and it passed through both it and the bone, and his brain inside
was all turned into pulp; and the man was beaten down in his rage.
Agamemnon, lord of men, left them both where they were,
their chests gleaming, for he had stripped them of their tunics,
and he pressed on, looking to kill and strip Isus and Antiphus,
two sons of Priam, one a bastard and one born in wedlock,
both standing in one chariot; the bastard was holding the reins,
while far-famed Antiphus stood beside him. Achilles had once
captured them on Ida's ridges as they tended their sheep

and

bound them with pliant osiers, and set them free for a ransom;

but this time Atreus' son, wide-ruling Agamemnon, hit Isus on the chest with his spear, above the nipple, and struck Antiphus

with his sword beside the ear, and threw him from the chariot.

He hastened to strip the pair of them of their fine armour, recognizing them, for he had seen them before by the swift ships,

when swift-footed Achilles had brought them down from Ida.

As a lion easily crushes the bones of a swift hind's young fawns, when it has come upon their lair and seized them in its mighty teeth, and rips out their tender hearts; and the mother, even if she chances to be nearby, cannot help them, because fearful trembling overcomes her limbs, and at once she darts away through dense thickets and woodland,

in a sweating fervour to escape the powerful beast's attack; so not one of the Trojans could keep death from these two, but were themselves driven in panic before the Argives.

Next he caught Peisander and Hippolochus, steadfast in battle,

the sons of war-minded Antimachus, who more than anyone

had taken the gold of Alexander, a splendid gift, and would never allow Helen to be returned to fair-haired Menelaus; it was his two sons that lord Agamemnon caught, both in one chariot, and both were trying to hold the swift horses, but the shining reins had fallen from their hands, and their horses were in confusion; Atreus' son rose like a lion before them, and from the chariot they entreated him: 'Take us alive, Atreus' son, and you will receive a worthy

ransom:

many treasures lie stored in the house of Antimachus,
bronze and gold and elaborately worked iron, from which
our father would gladly give you a boundless ransom,
if he learnt that we were alive by the ships of the
Achaeans.'

So these two, weeping, addressed the king with
soft words, but they received a hard answer:
'If you are truly the sons of war-minded Antimachus,
he who once in the Trojans' assembly advised that
Menelaus,
who had come on an embassy with godlike Odysseus,*
should be
killed there and then and not be allowed back to the
Achaeans,
then now you will surely pay for your father's ugly act.'

So he spoke, and with a spear-cast to his chest knocked
Peisander
out of his chariot, and he lay flat on his back on the earth.
Hippolochus leapt down, but Agamemnon killed him on the
ground,
slicing his arms away and cutting off his head with his
sword,
and sending the trunk rolling like a log away through the
soldiery.
He left them there, and sped on to where the fighting in the
ranks
was thickest, and with him went other well-greaved
Achaeans.
Foot-soldiers killed foot-soldiers, and charioteers slew
charioteers,
slashing at them with the bronze and driving them into
flight;
and on the plain a dust-cloud rose under the chariots,
kicked up

by the horses' thundering hoofs. Lord Agamemnon kept up the pursuit, killing all the time and urging the Argives forward.

As when destructive fire falls on a forest full of dry wood, and a swirling wind carries it everywhere, and bushes are uprooted and topple down, driven by the fire's onrush; so the routed Trojans kept falling before Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and many strong-necked horses rattled their empty chariots along the battle-lines of war, missing their blameless charioteers, who were now lying on the earth, far more appealing to vultures than to their wives.

Now Zeus withdrew Hector from the dust and flying weapons, from the slaughter of men and the blood and the uproar, and Atreus' son pressed on, shouting urgently to the Danaans.

The Trojans kept pouring back, past the burial-mound of old Ilus,*

son of Dardanus, across the mid-plain and past the wild fig tree,*

straining to reach the city; and Atreus' son kept up his pursuit, screaming, and his irresistible hands were spattered with gore.

When the Trojans reached the Scaean gates and the oak tree,*

there they halted and stood, waiting for one another; many were still fleeing in panic over the mid-plain, like cattle

stampeded by a lion that has come on them in the dead of night;

the rest have scattered, and one alone faces sheer death, and

first the lion seizes the neck in its powerful jaws and breaks

it,
and then greedily gulps down its blood and all its entrails.
So lord Agamemnon, son of Atreus, pursued the Trojans,
all the time killing the hindmost; and they fled in panic.
Many men fell from their chariots, head-first or on to their
backs,
at the hands of Atreus' son, such was the driving fury of his
spear.

But when he was about to pull up below the city and its
steep wall
then indeed the father of gods and men came down
from the high sky and took his seat on the peaks of Ida of
many springs; and he was holding a thunderbolt in his
hands.

Quickly he sent Iris of the golden wings away with a
message:

'Away now, swift Iris, and give this message to Hector:
as long as he can see Agamemnon, shepherd of the people,
rampaging among the front-fighters and killing the ranks of
men,

so long let him hold back, but order the rest of the people
to keep grappling with the enemy in the fierce crush of
battle.

But when Agamemnon is struck by a spear or hit by an
arrow

and leaps back into his chariot, then I will promise him the
strength

to kill, right up to when he reaches their well-benched
ships,

and the sun goes down and sacred darkness comes on.'

So he spoke, and wind-footed swift Iris did not disobey
him,

but flew down from the heights of Ida to sacred Troy,
and she found glorious Hector, son of wise Priam,
standing behind his horses in his close-jointed chariot.

Swift-footed Iris stood next to him and addressed him:
'Hector, son of Priam, the equal of Zeus in scheming,
father Zeus has sent me to bring you this message:
as long as you can see Agamemnon, shepherd of the
people,
rampaging among the front-fighters and killing the ranks of
men,
so long hold back from the fighting, but order the rest of
the people
to keep grappling with the enemy in the fierce crush of
battle.
But when Agamemnon is struck by a spear or hit by an
arrow and
leaps back into his chariot, then Zeus will promise you the
strength
to kill, right up to when you reach their well-benched ships,
and the sun goes down and sacred darkness comes on.'

So swift-footed Iris spoke, and left him, and Hector
leapt, fully armoured, from his chariot to the ground, and
hefting his sharp spears he ranged through the whole army,
urging the men to fight and rousing them for the grim
conflict.

They rallied, and took their stand facing the Achaeans,
while the Argives on their side strengthened their
companies.

So the battle-order was set, and they stood facing each
other, and

Agamemnon was the first to leap out, eager to fight in front
of all.

Tell me now, Muses, who have your homes on Olympus,
who was the first to come out and oppose Agamemnon,
whether of the Trojans themselves or of their far-famed
allies.

It was Iphidamas, the son of Antenor, a valiant and
mighty man,

who was raised in rich-soiled Thrace, mother of flocks;
his mother's father raised him in his house when he was a
little child—Cisses, who fathered Theano of the lovely
cheeks.

When he reached the time of manhood, when men long for
glory,

Cisses tried to keep him there, and offered him his
daughter's hand;

but straight after his marriage he left the bridal room,
hearing news

of the Achaeans' coming, and went to Troy with an escort of
twelve curved ships. He had left these balanced ships at
Percote,

and had continued on his journey on foot to Ilium, by
himself.

He it was who then came out to face Atreus' son
Agamemnon.

When they had advanced to within close range of each
other,

Atreus' son threw and missed, and his spear was deflected,
and Iphidamas stabbed him on the belt, below his corslet,
putting his weight behind the blow and trusting in his
brawny hand;

but he could not pierce the gleaming belt, and long before
that

happened his point met the silver and was bent back like
lead.

Wide-ruling Agamemnon grasped the spear with his hand
and pulled it towards himself, raging like a lion, wrenching
it

from Iphidamas' hand, and struck him in the neck with his
sword

and loosened his limbs. There he fell, and slept the sleep of
bronze,

pitiable man, helping his countrymen and far from his
wedded wife,

his bride, from whom he had no joy, though he had given much:*

first he gave a hundred cattle, and promised a thousand more,

goats and sheep mixed, from the countless flocks he owned.

And now Agamemnon, son of Atreus, stripped him of his gear,

and went back with the fine armour through the Achaean soldiery.

When Coön saw him—Coön, a man distinguished among men,

who was the eldest son of Antenor—a powerful grief for the death of his brother covered his eyes. He came up unnoticed with his spear at glorious Agamemnon's side and stabbed him on the middle of his forearm, below the elbow, and the point of the shining spear passed clean through.

At this Agamemnon, lord of men, shuddered, but even so he did not give up the battle and the fighting, but sprang at Coön with his wind-hardened spear. At this Coön, raging, seized the foot of his brother, his father's son, and began to drag him away, calling out to all the leading men;

but as he dragged him through the mass, Agamemnon stabbed him below

his bossed shield with a bronze-tipped spear, and loosened his limbs,

and coming up to him cut his head off, over the dead Iphidamas.

So there Antenor's sons filled up the measure of their lives at the hands

of the king, Atreus's son, and went down into the house of Hades.

Now the son of Atreus, so long as the blood welled up warm

from his wound, went up and down the Trojan ranks,
attacking them with spear and sword and great stones;
but when the wound began to dry, and the blood stopped
flowing,

then sharp pains began to assail the fury of Atreus' son.

As when a sharp spasm seizes a woman in labour, a
piercing

pang, sent by the Eilythyiae, goddesses of painful birth,
bringers of bitter suffering and daughters of Hera,

so sharp pains began to assail the fury of Atreus' son.

He leapt up into his chariot, and ordered the charioteer
to drive towards the hollow ships, for his heart was in
anguish.

He called out in a penetrating voice, shouting to the
Danaans:

'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives,
now it is your task to keep the wearisome conflict away
from our sea-traversing ships, since Zeus the counsellor
has not allowed me to fight all day against the Trojans.'

So he spoke, and his charioteer whipped the fine-
maned horses
towards the hollow ships, and they flew willingly on;
their chests were covered in foam and spattered beneath
with dust,

as they carried the wounded king away from the battle.

When Hector saw that Agamemnon was falling back,
he called to the Trojans and Lycians with a far-carrying
shout:

'Trojans and Lycians, and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters,
be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage!
Their best man has gone, and Cronus' son Zeus has given
me

great glory. Now drive your single-hoofed horses straight
at the mighty Danaans, and so win even greater glory!'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each

man.

As when a huntsman sets on his white-toothed hounds
in pursuit of some boar in the wilds, or a lion,
so Hector, Priam's son, the equal of Ares, doom of mortals,
set the great-spirited Trojans on in pursuit of the Achaeans.
He himself strode with high confidence among the front-
fighters,
and rushed into the fighting like a violent squall that
sweeps
down and churns the violet-coloured sea into swelling
motion.

Who then was the first, and who the last, to be killed
by Hector, Priam's son, when Zeus had granted him glory?
They were Asaeus first, and Autonomous and Opites,
Dolops, son of Clytius, and Opheltius and Agelaus,
Aesymnus and Orus and Hipponous, steadfast in battle.
These were leaders of the Danaans, and after them he
killed
a mass of men. As when the West Wind pounds clouds that
are
blown up by the clearing South Wind, beating them with its
violent blast, and the waves swell hugely and roll onward,
and the spray is scattered by the veering wind's assault;
so the people were beaten down in their multitudes by
Hector.

Then dreadful deeds, impossible to bear, would have
been done,
and indeed the Achaeans would have fled and fallen by
their ships,
had not Odysseus called out to Diomedes, son of Tydeus:
'Tydeus' son, what has made us forget our surging
courage?
Come here, my friend, and stand by me; we will surely be
blamed if Hector of the glittering helmet captures the
ships.'

Then in answer mighty Diomedes addressed him:
'Certainly I will stay and hold off their attack; but our relief
will be short-lived, since it is clear that Zeus the cloud-
gatherer
wishes to give victory to the Trojans and not to us.'

So he spoke, and toppled Thymbraeus from his chariot
to the
ground,
hitting him with a spear on the left nipple; and Odysseus
felled godlike Molion, who was lord Thymbraeus' attendant.
They left them there, having put an end to their fighting,
and rushed into the soldiery, spreading confusion, as when
two boars fall with fearless intent on a pack of hunting
hounds;
like them they turned and charged, killing Trojans, and the
Achaeans
were glad to catch their breath as they fled before glorious
Hector.

Next they took a chariot with two men, chieftains of
their people,
the two sons of Merops from Percote, who above all men
was skilled in seercraft; he had tried to prevent his sons
from going to man-destroying war, but they would not
listen
to him, for the spectres of black death were leading them
on.
It was these whom Diomedes, the spear-famed son of
Tydeus,
robbed of their life and breath, and took away their glorious
arms.
And Odysseus slew and stripped Hippodamus and
Hypeirochus.

Then the son of Cronus, looking down from Ida, pulled
the conflict
taut, making it on equal terms; and both sides kept killing

one another.

Tydeus' son hit and wounded Agastrophus, the hero son of Paeon,

on the hip-joint with his spear. His chariot and team were not at hand

for him to escape—he was mightily deluded in his mind, for his attendant was holding them some way apart, while he

stormed through the front-fighters on foot, until he lost his dear life.

Hector was quick to see this along the ranks, and ran at them

screaming, and with him went companies of the Trojans.

Seeing Hector, Diomedes, master of the war-cry, shuddered,

and at once addressed Odysseus, who was close by:

'Look, here is a great affliction rolling in on us—towering Hector;

come, let us stand firm, wait for him and then drive him off.'

So he spoke, and poising his long-shadowing spear threw it,

aiming at the head, and he did not miss, and hit Hector on his helmet's crest; but bronze rebounded from bronze, and did not reach the handsome flesh, stopped by the vizored three-layered helmet which Phoebus Apollo had given him.

At once Hector ran a long way back, joining the soldiery, then

dropped to his knees and paused, propping himself on the ground

with his brawny hand; and dark night covered his eyes.

But while the son of Tydeus was following his spear-cast far through the front-fighters to where it had fallen on the earth,

Hector recovered his breath, and leaping into his chariot

drove off into the mass of men, and avoided the black death-spectre.

Mighty Diomedes darted after him with his spear, and addressed him:

‘Dog, this time you have escaped death again, though disaster

came very near you. Once again Phoebus Apollo has saved you,

the god you doubtless pray to when you enter the thudding of spears.

Be sure that I shall make an end of you when I next meet you,

if I too can discover a god somewhere to come to my aid.

But now I shall go after the rest, and hope to overtake them.’

So he spoke, and began to strip the arms of Paeon’s spear-famed son.

But Alexander, the husband of lovely-haired Helen, aimed his bow at the son of Tydeus, shepherd of the people,

leaning against a pillar of the grave-mound that men had made for Ilus, Dardanus’ son, elder of the people in time past.

Diomedes was stripping the bright-shining corslet from mighty Agastrophus’ chest, and the shield from his shoulders

and his strong helmet, when Paris pulled against his bow’s grip

and shot; and the arrow did not fly vainly from his hand, but hit the flat part of Diomedes’ right foot, and the arrow went clean through and stuck in the earth. Paris laughed happily

and leapt from his hiding-place and spoke, boasting:

‘You are hit, and my arrow did not fly in vain! How I wish I had hit you in the base of your belly and taken your life

away,
for then the Trojans would have had some relief from their
misery,
they who shudder at you as bleating goats before a lion.'

Then mighty Diomedes answered him, in no way
alarmed:

'You archer*—braggart, hair-curled dandy, ogler of girls!
If you were to face me in a trial of strength, in full armour,
you would get no help from your bow and your showers of
arrows;
and now you have but scratched the flat of my foot, and
yet you boast.
I am no more troubled than if a woman or a careless child
had hit me,
for the arrow of a cowardly, worthless man is a feeble thing.
Quite different is the sharp spear that I throw, which takes
a man's life there and then, even if it only grazes him;
his wife tears her cheeks in grief, his children are made
orphans,
and he reddens the ground with his blood and rots away,
and there are more vultures gathered round him than
women.'

So he spoke, and Odysseus the renowned spearman
came near
and stood in front of him. Diomedes sat behind him, and
pulled
the sharp arrow from his foot, and a painful spasm ran
through his flesh.
He leapt up into his chariot, and ordered the charioteer
to drive towards the hollow ships, for his heart was in
anguish.

Odysseus, the renowned spearman, was left on his
own, and not one
of the Argives stayed with him, for fear had gripped them
all.

Deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit:
'What is to become of me now? A great disgrace if I flee,
in fear of their massed men; but even worse to be captured
alone, for Cronus' son has put the rest of the Danaans to
flight.

But why does my dear heart debate with me in this way?
I know well that those who run from the battle are cowards,
while those who fight bravely in war must take their stand
unyieldingly, either to kill others or be killed themselves.'

While he was considering this in his mind and in his
heart,
the ranks of shield-bearing Trojans came up on him, and
penned
him in their midst—but they brought suffering on
themselves.

As when hounds and strong young men close eagerly
in on a boar, and it breaks out of a dense coppice,
whetting its white fangs in its crooked jaws, and they
rush to surround it; the noise of gnashing teeth rises up,
but
they bravely stand their ground before it, terrible though it
is;

so the Trojans closed around Odysseus, dear to Zeus.
And first he wounded blameless Deïopites on the shoulder,
leaping forward and aiming high with his sharp spear,
and after them he cut down Thoön and Ennomus.

Next, when Chersidamas had jumped down from his
chariot,

he stabbed him with his spear in the groin, under his
bossed

shield; he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with his hand.
Odysseus left them there, and with his spear wounded
Charops, Hippasus' son, full brother of wealthy Socus.
Socus, a man like a god, ran up to protect him, and
standing very close to him addressed Odysseus:

‘Odysseus of many tales, insatiate of trickery and toil,
today you will either boast over two sons of Hippiasus,
when you have killed two fine men and stripped their
armour,
or else you will lose your own life, struck down by my
spear.’

So speaking he lunged at Odysseus’ perfectly balanced
shield,

and the massive spear passed through the shining shield,
and forced its way through his intricately worked corslet,
and tore the flesh right away from his flank; but Pallas
Athena

did not allow it to drive through into the hero’s guts.

Odysseus realized that the spear had not hit a fatal place,
and giving ground he addressed Socus: ‘Miserable man,
now sheer destruction is surely catching up with you!

You have indeed stopped me doing battle with the Trojans,
but I tell you here and now that death and its black spectre
will be with you on this day, when beaten down by my
spear you give

the glory to me and your shade to Hades, master of famous
horses.’

So he spoke, and Socus turned and began to run away,
but

as he twisted round Odysseus planted his spear in his back,
between the shoulders, and he drove the point through his
chest,

and Socus fell with a thud. Glorious Odysseus boasted over
him:

‘Socus, son of war-minded Hippiasus, breaker of horses,
the end of death has come to you before you could escape
it.

Luckless man, neither your father nor your revered mother
will close your eyes in death, but flesh-eating vultures
will tear at you, flapping their fast-beating wings about you.

But if I die, the glorious Achaeans will bury me with due rites.'

So he spoke, and began to pull war-minded Socus' massive spear out from his flesh and from his bossed shield. As he wrenched it out the blood spurted up, and his heart was distressed.

When the great-spirited Trojans saw Odysseus' blood, they called to each other down the ranks and made for him all together; and he gave ground, and shouted to his companions.

Three times he shouted in a voice as large as a man's head can hold,

and three times Menelaus, dear to Ares, heard his cry, and quickly spoke to Ajax, who was standing nearby:

'Ajax, son of Telamon, sprung from Zeus, ruler of the people,

I can hear the shouts of stout-hearted Odysseus ringing round me,

and they sound as if the Trojans have cut him off in the harsh

conflict; they have isolated him and are pressing him hard.

Come, let us go through the soldiery; rescue is the best course.

I am afraid that left alone like this something may happen to him,

brave though he is; and that will be a great loss to the Danaans.'

So he spoke and led the way, and the other, a godlike man, followed,

and they found Odysseus, dear to Zeus; and around him the Trojans were swarming like blood-red mountain jackals around a stricken horned stag that a man has shot with an arrow from his bowstring. The stag evades him on swift feet, as long as its blood is warm and its knees can lift it;

but when the swift arrow overcomes it the flesh-eating jackals tear it apart on the mountains, in a dark wood; and then some divine power leads a lion there, a ravening beast, and the jackals scatter in fright, and the lion eats the stag.

So the Trojans, many and courageous, crowded round war-minded Odysseus of the cunning wiles, but the hero kept the pitiless day from himself, lunging at them with his spear.

Then Ajax drew near, carrying his shield that was like a tower, and stood by him, and the Trojans scattered in fright, this way and that; and then warlike Menelaus took him by the hand and led him away from the mass of fighters, while his attendant drove up his chariot.

Next, Ajax sprang at the Trojans and killed Doryclus, a bastard son of Priam, and after that wounded Pandocus, and also wounded Lysandrus and Pyrasus and Pylartes. As when a brimming river in winter spate, swollen by rain from Zeus, sweeps down from the mountains to the plain, and carries along with it dead oaks and pines in abundance, and flings a mass of driftwood out into the sea, so then glorious Ajax drove them in confusion over the plain, cutting down both horses and men. As yet Hector knew nothing of this, since he was fighting on the battle's far left, by the banks of the river Scamander, where men's heads were falling thickest, and an unquenchable clamour was rising around huge Nestor and around warlike Idomeneus. Among these Hector was fighting, causing terrible havoc with spear and chariot-skill, crushing the ranks of young fighters.

But even so the glorious Achaeans would not have given ground,
had not Alexander, husband of Helen of the lovely hair,
checked the great deeds of Machaon, shepherd of the people,
hitting him with a three-barbed arrow on his right shoulder.
At this the Achaeans, breathing fury, were greatly afraid
that
as the battle shifted towards the Trojans he might be captured.
At once Idomeneus addressed glorious Nestor:
'Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans,
come, mount your chariot and let Machaon mount beside you,
and drive your single-hoofed horses with all speed to the ships;
a healer who has the skill to cut out arrows and apply soothing ointments is worth a great number of other men.'
So he spoke, and Nestor the Gerenian horseman did not disobey him;
straightaway he mounted his own chariot, and Machaon, son of the blameless healer Asclepius, got up beside him.
He lashed the horses, and they flew eagerly onward towards the hollow ships, for that is where they wished to be.

Now Cebriones, standing beside Hector in his chariot, saw that the Trojans were in confusion, and addressed him:
'Hector, while we two are engaged with the Danaans here on the furthest flank of war and its hideous clamour, the rest
of the Trojans are in wild confusion, both horses and men.
It is Telamon's son Ajax who is causing the rout; I know him well,
from the broad shield he wears across his shoulders. Let us too

direct our horses and chariot straight there, where
especially
men in chariots and on foot are clashing in fierce strife,
killing each other, and an unquenchable clamour goes up.'

So he spoke, and lashed the fine-maned horses with his
loud whip; and they, hearing the whip's crack, carried the
swift chariot at speed in among the Trojans and Achaeans,
trampling dead men and shields alike. The axle beneath it
and
the rails round the platform were splashed all over with the
blood
that was thrown up in showers by the horses' hoofs and
by the wheel-tyres. Hector was impatient to enter the mass
of men, to leap in and break through them; he caused
dreadful confusion among the Danaans, and gave his spear
little rest. Up and down the ranks of the fighters he went,
doing battle with spear and sword and huge stones,
but kept away from engaging with Ajax, son of Telamon,
[for Zeus was angry with him when he fought with a better
man.]*

But now father Zeus, seated on high, aroused terror in
Ajax: he stood
dumbfounded, and slung his shield of seven oxhides behind
him,
and looking keenly around him like a wild beast, turned in
flight
towards his own men, moving slowly step by step and
many times
wheeling round. As when country people and their dogs
drive
a tawny lion away from the yard where they keep their
cattle,
and keeping watch all night will not allow it to take
a fat beast from among the cattle; it is desperate for meat,
and keeps coming at them, but without success, for spears

and burning bundles of sticks fly thick from bold hands
against it, and terrify it for all its impatience,
and at daybreak it goes away, grieved at heart. So then
Ajax withdrew before the Trojans, grieved at heart, with
deep reluctance; for he was greatly afraid for the Achaeans'
ships.

As when a stubborn donkey, passing a cornfield, defies the
boys

driving it, and though many sticks have been broken on its
sides

it goes into the field and causes havoc in its deep crop, and
the boys beat it with sticks, but their strength is weak, and
they

drive it out with difficulty, only when it has had its fill of
food;

so then the high-hearted Trojans and their allies, assembled
from many lands, kept attacking great Ajax, Telamon's son,
thrusting at the centre of his shield with their polished
spears.

At one time Ajax would recollect his surging courage and
wheel round, keeping the companies of horse-breaking
Trojans at bay, and then again he would turn in flight.

So he prevented them all from marching on the swift ships,
standing alone in battle-fury on the ground between Trojans
and Achaeans. Spears were flung at him from bold hands;
some, as they flew towards him, stuck in his great shield,
and many, before they could reach his white body, came
to rest in the ground between, yearning to taste his flesh.

When Eurypylus, the splendid son of Euaemon, saw
that

Ajax was being overwhelmed by dense showers of missiles,
he went and stood beside him and let fly with his shining
spear,

and hit Apisaon, son of Phausius, shepherd of the people,
in the liver below his midriff, and quickly loosened his

knees.

He leapt forward, and began to strip the armour from his shoulders;

but when Alexander, who looked like a god, saw Eurypylus stripping the armour from Apisaon, he immediately drew his bow against him, and hit him with an arrow in his right thigh; and the shaft broke, and weighed his leg down. At once he withdrew into his companions' band, avoiding the

death-spectre, and with a piercing cry shouted to the Danaans:

'My friends, chieftains and rulers of the Argives, rally now and make a stand, and keep the pitiless day away from Ajax, who is overwhelmed by missiles, and I do not think he will escape war's hideous clamour. Come now, stand fast around huge Ajax, son of Telamon, and confront the enemy!'

So the wounded Eurypylus spoke, and they stood close beside him, leaning their shields against their shoulders and levelling their spears before them; Ajax came to meet them, and turned and stood when he had reached his companions' band.

So they fought on in the likeness of blazing fire. Meanwhile Neleus' mares, sweating, were carrying Nestor out of the battle, and with him Machaon, shepherd of the people.

Glorious swift-footed Achilles was aware of this and saw him;

he was standing on the stern of his deep-bellied ship, watching the grim toil of war and the miserable rout. At once he addressed his companion Patroclus, calling to him from the ship, and Patroclus heard from the hut and came out, looking like Ares; and this was to be the start

of his downfall. Menoetius' stalwart son spoke first:
'Why do you call me, Achilles? What need have you of me?'
Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
'Glorious son of Menoetius, delight of my heart,
now I think that the Achaeans will gather about my knees
and entreat me, for an intolerable need has come upon
them.

But go now, Patroclus, dear to Zeus, and ask Nestor
who this is that he is bringing wounded from the battle.
From behind he looks in every way like Machaon,
the son of Asclepius; but I did not see the man's eyes,
since the horses passed me by as they bolted onward.'

So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear companion,
and set off at a run for the huts and ships of the Achaeans.

When the others reached the hut of Nestor, Neleus'
son,
they got down from their chariot on to the earth that
nourishes many,
and Eurymedon his attendant unyoked the old man's
horses
from the chariot. The two then dried the sweat from their
shirts,
standing in the wind beside the seashore, and then
went into the hut and took their seats on the chairs there.
Hecamede of the lovely hair prepared a brew for them, the
girl
whom the old man had won at Tenedos when Achilles
sacked it,*
and she was the daughter of great-hearted Arsinous; the
Achaeans
had picked her out for him because he was the best of all in
counsel.

First she pushed up a table before them, a beautiful
thing, well-polished and with dark-enamel feet, and on it
set a bronze bowl with an onion, as a side-dish for the

drink,
and yellow honey and beside it bread made of sacred
barley,
and next to these a very beautiful cup,* which the old man
had brought
from his home; it was studded with golden rivets, and had
four handles; on each handle were two golden doves,
feeding,
one on either side; and underneath it rested on two feet.*
Other men would find it hard to raise the cup from the table
when it was full, but the old man Nestor could lift it easily.
In this cup the woman who looked like a goddess made
them
a brew of Pramnian wine, grating goat's cheese into it
with a bronze grater, and sprinkling white barley on top;
and when she had prepared the brew she invited them to
drink.

When they had drunk and driven away their parching thirst
and were engaging each other in pleasant conversation,
Patroclus, a man like a god, appeared standing at the door.
When the old man saw him he jumped up from his shining
chair,
took him by the hand, led him in, and told him to be
seated.

But Patroclus refused, staying where he was, and addressed
him:

'No chair for me, Zeus-nurtured old man, nor will you
persuade me;
he is easily offended and quick to anger, the man who sent
me
to find out who the wounded man is that you are bringing
back—
but I
know him myself, for I recognize Machaon, shepherd of the
people.

So now I shall go back on my errand and report to Achilles;

you know well, Zeus-nurtured old man, how terrifying a man
he is, likely to find fault even with one who is blameless.'

Then in answer Nestor the Gerenian horseman
addressed him:

'Why is Achilles now so touched with pity for the Achaeans'
sons,

all those who have been wounded by spears? He knows
nothing

of the great grief that has arisen in the camp, now that the
best men

are lying in their ships, wounded by thrown and stabbing
weapons.

Mighty Diomedes, son of Tydeus, has been wounded by a
spear,

while spear-famed Odysseus and Agamemnon have been
stabbed;

Eurypylus has been shot in the thigh by an arrow,

and just now I brought this other man out of the battle,

pierced by an arrow from the bowstring. Yet the brave
Achilles

cares nothing for the Danaans, and feels no pity for them.

Is he waiting until our swift ships burn with destructive fire
on the seashore, despite all the efforts of the Argives,

and until we are killed one after another—since my strength
is no longer as it used to be when my limbs were supple?

I wish I was as young and healthy,* and my strength as
secure,

as I was when a dispute arose between us and the Eleians*
over the matter of a cattle raid, and I killed Itymoneus,

the fine son of Hypeirochus, whose home was in Elis.* I was
driving off his herds in reprisal, and while he was defending

his cattle in the front-fighters a spear from my hand struck
him,

and he fell dead, and his rustic people fled in panic.

We drove off a huge amount of booty from the plain:
fifty herds of oxen, and as many flocks of sheep, as many
herds of swine, and as many wandering flocks of goats,
and one hundred and fifty head of chestnut horses,
all mares, many of them with their suckling foals.

All these we drove into Pylos, city of Neleus, into the city
by night; and Neleus was delighted in his heart, because
such success had come my way as a young man going to
war.

When dawn appeared heralds proclaimed in a clear voice
that all who had a debt owing in bright Elis should come
forward;

and those who were chieftains of the Pylians rounded up
and

shared out the booty, for the Epeians owed a debt to many,
since we in Pylos had become enfeebled and few in
number:

in the years before this Heracles, that violent being, had
attacked

and weakened us, and all our best men had been killed.

We sons of blameless Neleus had been twelve in all,
but of these I alone was left, and all the others had
perished.

As a result of this the bronze-shirted Epeians grew arrogant,
and

in their reckless machinations committed acts of violence
against us.

Out of the booty aged Neleus chose a herd of cattle and a
great flock

of sheep, selecting three hundred, and their shepherds with
them,

because he had a huge debt owing to him in bright Elis:
four prize-winning horses, together with their chariot, had
been

on their way to the games, intending to race for the prize
of a tripod; but Augeias,* lord of men, had kept them in his

house

and had sent the charioteer away, grieving for his horses.

The old man was enraged at these words and deeds, and so chose

for himself a huge amount of booty. The rest he gave to the people

to share out, so that no one to his knowledge should leave without

a fair share. So we were busy with all this, and making offerings

to the gods around the city, and on the third day the Epeians

arrived all together, many men and single-hoofed horses in great haste, and with them the two Moliones in armour, still boys, with no experience yet of surging courage.

Now there is a city called Thryoessa, set on a steep hill, far off beside the Alpheus, on the borders of sandy Pylos, and to this the Epeians laid siege, raging to destroy it utterly.

But when they had scoured the whole plain, Athena came to us

by night, in haste from Olympus, telling us to arm ourselves,

and she assembled an army in Pylos—men by no means unwilling,

but eagerly impatient to go to war. Now Neleus would not allow me to wear armour, and he hid my horses from me, because he said that I knew nothing as yet of war's work.

But all the same I surpassed even our own chariot-fighters, though I was on foot; such was the way Athena framed the battle.

There is a river called Minyeïus* that empties into the sea near Arene,* and there we Pylian chariot-fighters waited for the bright dawn, and the foot-soldiers' bands came streaming up.

Hastily we armed ourselves in our gear, and set out and

came at midday to the sacred waters of Alpheus.
There we sacrificed fine victims to all-powerful Zeus,
and a bull to Alpheus, and a bull to Poseidon,
but to grey-eyed Athena a cow from the herd; and
then we took our supper in ranks throughout the camp,
and lay down to sleep, each man in his armour,
by the banks of the river. Now the great-spirited Epeians
were camped around the city, raging to destroy it utterly,
but before they could, Ares' mighty handiwork was
revealed
to them: when the sun rose bright above the earth we
prayed
to Zeus and to Athena and joined together in battle.
When the conflict between Pylians and Epeians began, I
was
the first to kill a man, and I seized his single-hoofed horses
—
he was Mulius the spearman, the son-in-law of Augeias,
whose eldest daughter he had married, fair-haired
Agamede,
and she knew all the drugs that the wide earth nourishes.
As he charged at me I hit him with my bronze-tipped spear,
and he fell in the dust; then I leapt into his chariot and took
my place among the front-fighters. The great-spirited
Epeians
fled in panic this way and that when they saw the leader
of their chariot-fighters fall, a man who excelled in battle.
But I sprang at them in the likeness of a black tempest,
and I captured fifty chariots, and in each of them two men
fastened their teeth on the earth, beaten down by my
spear.
And indeed I would have cut down the two Moliones, the
sons of
Actor, had not their father, the wide-ruling earthshaker,
carried
them safe from the battle, covering them with a dense

mist.*

So there Zeus granted a great victory to the Pylians,
for we went after them over the wide rolling plain,
killing the men and gathering up their fine armour,
until we brought our chariots to Buprasium, rich in wheat,
and to the Olenian rock and the place that is called the hill
of Alesium;* and there Athena turned our people back.

There I killed my last man and left him there, and the
Achaeans

drove their swift horses back from Buprasium to Pylos,
and all praised Zeus among gods and Neleus among men.
Such a man I was among men—if I ever was. But Achilles is
the only one who will benefit from his valour—though I
think

he will weep much when it is too late and the people have
died.

My dear friend, I will tell you the advice that Menoetius
gave you

on the day that he sent you from Phthia to join
Agamemnon;

we two were in the house, I and glorious Odysseus, and
we easily heard all the advice he gave you in his halls.

We had come to the well-appointed palace of Peleus while
we

were assembling an army throughout Achaea that
nourishes many.

And we found the hero Menoetius there in the house, and
you,

and with you Achilles. The aged horse-driver Peleus was
burning

an ox's fat-wrapped thigh-bones for Zeus who delights in
the thunder,

in an enclosed space of his court; he was holding a golden
cup,

and pouring gleaming wine over the burning offerings.

You two were occupied with the ox-meat, when we

appeared,
standing in the doorway; Achilles jumped up, amazed,
and taking us by the hand led us in and invited us to sit,
and put before us the food that is right for strangers to
receive.

When we had satisfied our desire for food and drink,
I spoke first, saying that both of you should come with us.
You readily agreed, and your fathers both gave you much
advice:

the old man Peleus exhorted his son Achilles
always to be the best, and to stand out above others;
but this was the advice that Actor's son Menoetius gave
you:

"My son, Achilles is more distinguished than you in birth,
but you are the older. He is far stronger than you, but it is
for you to speak shrewdly to him, and give him
advice and guidance; and he will obey you, to his benefit."
So the old man advised you, but you have forgotten. Even
now

you could speak like this to war-minded Achilles, and you
might

win him over; who knows if you might with a god's help
arouse

his spirit by persuasion? A friend's persuasion is a good
thing.

But if in his heart he is trying to avoid some divine
revelation,

and his revered mother has brought him a message from
Zeus,

let him at least send you out, and the rest of the Myrmidon
people

with you, and perhaps you will prove to be the Danaans'
saving light.

Let him give you his fine armour to wear into battle, and
perhaps the Trojans will mistake you for him and hold back
from the battle, and the Achaeans' warlike sons will breathe

again,
worn down though they are; there is little breathing-space
in war.

Being unwearied, you might easily drive men who are
exhausted
in the battle's uproar back to the city from the ships and
huts.'

So he spoke, and roused the spirit in the other's
breast, and
he set off running past the ships towards Achilles, grandson
of Aeacus. But when as he ran Patroclus reached the ships
of glorious Odysseus, where they held their assembly and
public tribunal, and where they had built altars to the gods,
there he was met by Eurypylus, son of Euaemon,
a man sprung from Zeus, limping out of the battle,
wounded in the thigh by an arrow. Sweat was streaming
from his shoulders and head, and from his painful wound
black blood was oozing; but even so his mind was
unshaken.

Seeing this the stalwart son of Menoetius took pity on him,
and, groaning, he addressed him with winged words:
'Oh you poor wretches, leaders and rulers of the Danaans—
so after all it seems you will glut the swift dogs in Troy
with your white fat, far from your friends and native land!
But come, tell me, hero Eurypylus, sprung from Zeus,
is there any way that the Achaeans can restrain huge
Hector,
or are they now to perish, beaten down by his spear?

' Then in turn the wounded Eurypylus addressed him:
'Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, there can be no more defence
for the Achaeans; they will fall beside their black ships.
All those who were before the best men among us now
lie in their ships, wounded by thrown or stabbing weapons
at the Trojans' hands, whose strength is always increasing.
But come, help me, and take me to my black ship;

cut the arrow from my thigh and wash away the dark blood with warm water, and spread soothing ointments over it—those excellent medicines that they say you learnt from Achilles,

who was taught by Cheiron, most just of the Centaurs.*
We do have healers, Podaleirius and Machaon, but I think that one of them is lying in his hut nursing a wound, himself in need of a blameless healer, while the other is out on the plain, facing the Trojans and ferocious Ares.'

Then in turn the stalwart son of Menoetius addressed him:

'How can these things be? What are we to do, hero Eurypylus?

I am on my way to deliver to war-minded Achilles the words that Gerenian Nestor, protector of the Achaeans, spoke; but even so I shall not abandon you, exhausted as you are.'

So he spoke, and gripping the people's shepherd round the waist

he led him to his hut. An attendant saw them and spread oxhides

on the ground, and there Patroclus laid him down and with a knife

cut the sharp, piercing arrow out of his thigh, and with warm water

washed the dark blood away. Then with his hands he crushed a bitter

root, a killer of pain, and applied it, and wholly relieved his agony;

and the wound began to dry, and the blood stopped flowing.

BOOK TWELVE

So Menoetius' stalwart son attended to the wounded Eurypylus in the huts. Meanwhile the Argives and Trojans fought on in massed conflict, and it seemed that the Danaans' ditch would no longer hold out, nor the wide wall behind it. They had built this to shelter their ships, and had driven the ditch alongside it, to protect their swift ships and the vast booty within its bounds; but they had not offered splendid hecatombs to the gods, and it was built without the immortal gods' sanction, and therefore did not remain standing for long. As long as Hector lived, and Achilles kept his anger alive, and the city of Priam the king remained unsacked, so long the great wall of the Achaeans also endured; but when all the best men of the Trojans were dead, and many of the Argives had been killed, though some were left, and in the tenth year the city of Priam had been sacked, and the Argives had sailed in their ships to their dear native land, then indeed Poseidon and Apollo devised a plan to sweep the wall away, channelling the fury of rivers on to it, all those that flow from the mountain range of Ida to the sea: Rhesus and Heptaporus and Caresus and Rhodius, Granicus and Aesepus, and bright Scamander and Simoeis,^{*} where many oxhide shields and helmets and a generation

of the half-divine had fallen in the dust. Phoebus Apollo
diverted all these rivers' mouths to disgorge in the same
place,
and for nine days he flung their waters at the wall; and
Zeus rained
without ceasing, to sweep the wall more rapidly out to sea.
The earthshaker, holding his trident in his hands, himself
took the lead, and carried away on his waves all the
footings
of logs and rocks which the Achaeans had laboured to lay,
and levelled the beach beside the strong-flowing
Hellespont;
and when he had swept the wall away he covered the great
shore
again with sand, and diverted the rivers back to stream in
the channels where their lovely-flowing water had run
before.*

This is what Poseidon and Apollo would do in the future;
but now war and its clamour were blazing around the
well-built wall, and the timbers of its towers reverberated
as missiles struck it. The Argives, subdued by Zeus' lash,
were penned in and confined next to their hollow ships,
terrified by Hector, the ruthless deviser of panic rout.
He, as before, was fighting in the likeness of a whirlwind;
as when a boar or a lion is surrounded by hounds
and huntsmen and twists about, exulting in its strength,
while they form themselves into a close-knit wall
and confront it, and hurl their spears thick and fast
from their hands; but its superb heart is not daunted
or driven away in fear, and it is its courage that kills it;
again and again it wheels about, testing the ranks of men,
and wherever it charges the ranks of men retreat.
So Hector went wheeling about among the soldiery,
urging his companions to cross the ditch; but not even
his swift-footed horses would attempt it for him, but stood

whinnying loudly at its very edge: the wide ditch terrified them, and it was not easy to jump or to cross, since its banks along the whole length were overhanging, and at the top it was planted with great sharp stakes set close together, fixed there by the sons of the Achaeans as a defence against the enemy.

No horse drawing a well-wheeled chariot could easily get over it, and so the Trojans were thinking to try on foot. Then Polydamas stood next to daring Hector, and spoke: 'Hector, and all you leaders of Trojans and allies, it is madness to try driving our swift horses over the ditch. It is extremely hard to cross; there are sharp stakes set upright in it, and behind them is the Achaeans' wall. And there is no room for chariot-fighters to dismount there and fight; it is a narrow place, and I think we shall come to grief.

If high-thundering Zeus in his hatred for them means to destroy them utterly, and is intent on helping the Trojans, I for my part would wish this to happen here and now, that the Achaeans should die here far from Argos, their names forgotten; but if they should rally and make a counter-attack from the ships, and we become encumbered in the ditch that they have dug,

I do not think that even one man would then get back to the city with the news, once the Achaeans have turned to face us. So come, let us all do what I propose: let our attendants hold the horses back by the ditch, and let us arm ourselves in our gear as foot-soldiers and all accompany Hector in a body; the Achaeans will not resist us, if indeed they are caught fast in the snares of death.'

So Polydamas spoke, and his prudent advice pleased

Hector,
and at once he leapt, fully armed, from his chariot to the
ground.
Nor did the other Trojans stay massed together in their
chariots,
but when they saw glorious Hector they all jumped down.
Each man then instructed his own charioteer
to hold his horses in good order, there by the ditch,
while they separated and formed themselves up, and,
marshalled into five sections, marched off behind their
leaders.

Those who went forward with Hector and blameless
Polydamas
were the best and the most numerous, raging beyond the
rest
to break through the wall and fight by the hollow ships;
Cebriones made a third with these—Hector had left behind
another man, weaker than Cebriones, with his chariot.
Paris led the second company, with Alcathous and Agenor;
Helenus and godlike Deïphobus, two sons of Priam,
were in charge of the third, and with them went the hero
Asius—
Asius, son of Hyrtacus, whom huge gleaming horses
had brought from Arisbe, which is near the river Selleïs.*
The fourth company was led by the valiant son of Anchises,
Aeneas, and with him were the two sons of Antenor,
Archelochus and Acamas, well skilled in all battle's arts.
The commander of the far-famed allies was Sarpedon, and
he chose Glaucus and warlike Asteropaeus to go with him,
for they seemed to him to be without doubt the best of
all men, after himself; but he stood out above everyone.
When they had formed up, oxhide shields overlapping,
they eagerly made straight for the Danaans, thinking that
no one

could now resist them, and that they would fall on the black ships.

The rest of the Trojans and their far-famed allies followed the advice given by excellent Polydamas; but Asius, son of Hyrtacus, captain of men, was unwilling to leave his horses there with his attendant charioteer, and drove up close to the swift ships, chariot and all, fool that he was; he would not escape death's evil spectres and make his way back from the ships to windswept Troy, taking delight in his horses and his chariot. Before he could, his accursed destiny overwhelmed him, in the spear of Idomeneus, the splendid son of Deucalion.*

Asius charged towards the left of the ships, where the Achaeans were returning with their horses and chariots from the plain; here he drove his horses and chariot across, and at the gates he did not find the doors shut, nor the long crossbar in place, since men were keeping them wide open, hoping to save any of their companions fleeing from the battle to the ships.

Asius aimed straight with his chariot for this point, and his men

followed with shrill screams, thinking that the Achaeans could resist no longer, but would fall beside their black ships—

fools, for in the gateway they found two of the best fighters,

the high-hearted sons of Lapith spear-fighters;

one was mighty Polypoetes, the son of Peirithous, and

the other was Leonteus, the equal of Ares, doom of mortals.

Now these two took their stand in front of the high gateway,

looking like high-crested oak trees on the mountains
that day after day stand up to wind and rain,
securely fixed there by their great long roots;
so these two, trusting in the strength of their hands,
stood up to the charge of huge Asius, and did not take
flight.

The Trojans, with a mighty shout, made straight for
the well-built wall, holding up their shields of dried oxhide,
grouped around lord Asius and Iamenus and Orestes,
Adamas, the son of Asius, and Thoön and Oenomaus.
For a time the Lapiths remained behind the wall, trying to
rouse the well-greaved Achaeans to fight in the ships'
defence;

but when they saw that the Trojans were making a rush at
the wall, while the Danaans gave rise to shouting and
panic,

they charged out and began to fight in front of the
gateway,

looking like two wild boars on the mountains that confront
a noisy rabble of men and dogs coming at them; with
slanting forays they smash the underbrush about them,
ripping it up by the roots, and the noise of their clashing
teeth

rises up, until some man with a spear-cast robs them of
their lives.

So the shining bronze clashed on these two men's chests,
battered by enemy missiles, so fiercely did they fight,
trusting in the men above them and in their own strength.
Those above kept hurling stones from the well-built
towers, in defence of themselves and their huts and their
swift-travelling ships; and these fell to the ground like
flakes of

snow that a fierce blizzard, driving the dark clouds onwards,
heaps up in drifts on the earth that nourishes many;
just so the missiles streamed from the hands of Achaeans
and Trojans alike, and helmets and bossed shields

rang harshly, as rocks huge as millstones struck them. Then indeed Asius, son of Hyrtacus, groaned aloud, and striking both thighs spoke out in impotent rage: 'Father Zeus, so you too have turned out to be a complete and utter liar! I did not think that the Achaean heroes would withstand our fury and our irresistible hands; but they are like flickering-bodied wasps or bees that have made their habitation by a rocky road, and will not abandon their hollow house, but face the men who are tracking them, and fight to defend their children. Just so these men, though they are only two, will not fall back from the gates until they kill or are killed.'

So he spoke, but his speech did not persuade the mind of Zeus, whose heart wished rather to give the glory to Hector.

Now other men were fighting about other gates, but it would be hard for me to describe this in full, as if I were a god: everywhere around the wall of stone there arose awesome fire, and the Argives, for all their exhaustion, were compelled to keep fighting for their ships; and all the gods who supported the Danaans in battle were grieved in their hearts.

But at this point the two Lapiths rushed into the war and conflict, and the son of Peirithous, mighty Polypoetes, hit Damasus with his spear, through his bronze-cheeked helmet; the brazen helmet could not keep it out, and the bronze point passed clean through and smashed the bone, and his brain inside was all turned to pulp; so he crushed the man in his frenzied charge, and after this he killed Pylon and Ormenus. Leonteus, a shoot of Ares, hit Hippomachus, son of

Antilochus, with a spear-cast that went through his belt. Next he drew his sharp sword from its scabbard and darting through the soldiery first struck down Antiphates from close quarters, who sprawled on his back on the ground.

Then he brought down Menon and Iamenus and Orestes, all of them, one after another, on to the earth that nourishes many.

While they were stripping the shining armour from these men, the young men who accompanied Hector and Polydamas, who were the best and most numerous warriors, and were raging more than the rest to break through the wall and set the ships ablaze, were still standing along the ditch, uncertain what they should do; for though they were raging to cross it a bird-omen had appeared to them, an eagle, skirting the army and flying high from right to left, and carrying in its talons the portent of a blood-red snake, still alive and struggling; this had not forgotten its battle-lust, but, twisting backwards, bit its captor on the breast beside its neck, and the bird, smarting with the pain, let it fall to the earth, dropping it in the midst of the soldiery, and with a scream flew away on the gusts of the wind. The Trojans shuddered when they saw the writhing snake lying among them, a sign from Zeus who wears the aegis. Then indeed Polydamas stood beside bold Hector and spoke:

‘Hector, it seems you are always rebuking me in assemblies, though I give you good advice; it is of course not fitting

for one of the people to speak out against you, in council or in war, but we must always promote your authority. Now, however, I shall speak publicly as seems to me best. Let us not press on to fight against the Danaans over their ships;

I will tell you how I think it will end, if indeed it was for the Trojans that this omen came as they raged to cross the ditch—

an eagle, skirting the host and flying high from right to left, and carrying in its talons the portent of a blood-red snake, still alive; and then it let it fall before reaching its dear home,

and did not succeed in carrying it off to give to its children. So we, even if with our mighty strength we break down the Achaeans' gates and wall, and the Achaeans give ground, we shall not return from the ships by the same way in good order,

since we shall leave many Trojans behind, whom the Achaeans,

as they defend their ships, will cut down with the bronze.

This is how a prophet would interpret this sign, one whom the people

trusted, and who had sure knowledge of portents in his heart.'

Then Hector of the glittering helmet looked at him darkly,
and said:

'Polydamas, what you advise does not now please me; you know

that you could have thought of some better speech than this.

But if you are serious in giving this public advice, then the gods themselves must have destroyed your wits. You say I should forget the plans of loud-thundering Zeus, the promises that he gave me, and his confirming nod, and

you presume to tell me to put my trust in long-winged birds,
for which I have not the slightest regard or concern,
whether they fly to the right, towards the dawn and the sun,
or fly to the left, and towards the murky darkness.
No, let us put our trust in the plans of great Zeus,
who holds sway over all mortals and immortals. There is
one omen that is best of all—to fight for one's fatherland.
Why should you be so afraid of war and conflict?
Even if all the rest of us are killed beside the ships
of the Argives, you need have no fear of dying,
since your heart is not the kind to fight or to face the enemy.

However, if you do hold back from the slaughter, or
persuade
some other man with your words to turn from the conflict,
you will instantly lose your life, struck down by my spear.'

So he spoke, and led them on, and the others followed him
with an astonishing clamour; and Zeus who delights in the
thunder raised a storm-wind from the mountains of Ida
which blew dust straight against the ships, bewildering the
Achaeans' minds but giving glory to the Trojans and Hector.
Trusting in signs from Zeus and in their own strength, they
kept trying to breach the great wall of the Achaeans,
striving to
tear out the towers' abutments and to pull down its
battlements,
and to lever out the jutting buttresses that the Achaeans
had first sunk in the ground to be supports for the towers.
By uprooting these they hoped to breach the Achaeans'
wall,
but the Danaans would not give way; closing the gaps in
the battlements with oxhide shields they kept throwing

missiles

from behind them at the enemy as they advanced up to the wall.

The two called Ajax were ranging everywhere on the towers,
all the time giving orders and stirring up the Achaeans' fury,
addressing one man with soft words, and rebuking another with hard ones, if they saw anyone holding far back from fighting:

'Argive friends—exceptional warriors, or mediocre ones, or those who are weaker, since men are by no means all equal in war—now there is work for everyone to do. But of course you know this for yourselves; let no one turn back to the ships now that you have heard the call for battle, but press forward and encourage one another, in the hope that Olympian Zeus who sends the lightning will grant us to fend off the enemy's assault and drive them back to the city.'

So they, with cheering shouts, roused the Achaeans for battle.

As the flakes of snow that fall thick and fast
on a day in winter, when Zeus the counsellor begins to send the snow, revealing his shafts to men—
he lulls the winds, and keeps the snow falling until he has covered high mountain peaks and jutting crags, the fields of clover and the rich tillage of men,
and it settles thickly on the grey sea's bays and beaches, and melts on the waves as they break on the shore;
everything

is blanketed from above, when Zeus' heavy snowstorm falls

—

so from both sides the stones flew thick and fast,

hurled both at the Trojans and by them at the Achaeans,
without ceasing; and over the whole wall the din rose up.

Even so the Trojans and illustrious Hector would never
have broken through the wall's gates and their long
crossbar,

had not Zeus the counsellor roused his own son Sarpedon
against the Argives, like a lion against crook-horned cattle.
At once he held before him his perfectly balanced shield,
a fine work of beaten bronze, which a bronze-smith had
hammered out, and had stitched inside many layers of
hide,

attached with golden fastenings all the way around its rim.
Holding this before him, and poising his two spears,
Sarpedon set out like a mountain-nurtured lion that has
been

a long time without meat, and its noble spirit drives it on to
attack a strongly built farmyard and go after the sheep
there;

and even if it finds herdsmen in that very place,
keeping watch over their flocks with dogs and spears,
it refuses to be driven from the sheepfold before attacking
it,

and either pounces on a sheep and drags it away, or is
itself

struck down in its onslaught by a spear from a quick hand.

So now godlike Sarpedon's spirit impelled him to
make a rush at the wall and break through its battlements.

At once he addressed Glaucus, son of Hippolochus:

'Glaucus, why are we two especially honoured in Lycia
with the best seats and cuts of meat, and ever-full wine-
cups,

and all men look on us as if we were gods; and we
enjoy a huge estate, cut out beside Xanthus' banks,
fine land, of orchards and wheat-bearing ploughland?

That is why we must now take our stand in the first rank

of the Lycians, and confront the scorching heat of battle,
so that among the close-armoured Lycians men may say:
“Certainly those who rule us in Lycia are not without glory,
these kings of ours, who eat fattened sheep and drink
choice honey-sweet wine. There is also noble valour in
them,
it seems, because they fight in the first ranks of the
Lycians.”

My dear friend, if we two could escape from this war
and were certain to live for ever, ageless and immortal,
I would not myself fight in the first ranks, nor
would I send you into the battle where men win glory;
but now, since, come what may, death’s spectres stand
over us
in their thousands, which no mortal can flee from or
escape,
let us go forward, and give the glory to another man, or he
to us.’

So he spoke, and Glaucus did not turn away, or disobey
him,
and they strode straight ahead, leading a great company of
Lycians.

When Menestheus, son of Peteus, saw them he shuddered,
for they were making for his tower, bringing destruction
with them.

He peered along the Achaeans’ tower, in the hope of seeing
one

of the leaders, who might keep ruin away from his
companions;

and he saw the pair called Ajax, insatiate of war, standing
there,

and also Teucer, who had recently come up from his hut,
next to them. But he could not shout loud enough to be
heard,

so great was the noise and the clamour that reached the

high sky

as blows rained on shields and horsehair-crested helmets,
and on the gates; these had all been shut, and the Trojans
were standing at them, trying to shatter them and force a
way in.

At once Menestheus dispatched the herald Thoötes to Ajax:
'Go, glorious Thoötes, run to Ajax and summon him—
or rather both the Ajaxes, for that would be the best course
by far,

since sheer destruction will soon be done here,
so heavily do the Lycian leaders press us, they who before
have showed themselves formidable in the fierce crush of
battle.

But if toil and fighting are springing up about them there as
well,

at least let Ajax, the stalwart son of Telamon, come alone,
and let Teucer, a man skilled in archery, come with him.'

So he spoke, and the herald heard and did not disobey
him,

but set off at a run along the wall of the bronze-shirted
Achaean,

and came and stood by the two called Ajax, and at once
addressed them:

'You two named Ajax, leaders of the bronze-shirted Argives;
the dear son of Peteus, who was sprung from Zeus, directs
you

to go to him, to face the toil of battle, if only for a short
time—

better both of you, for that would be the best course by far,
since sheer destruction will soon be done there,
so heavily do the Lycian leaders press them, they who
before

have showed themselves formidable in the fierce crush of
battle;

but if toil and fighting are springing up about you here as

well,
at least let Ajax, the brave son of Telamon, come alone,
and let Teucer, a man skilled in archery, come with him.'

So he spoke, and huge Ajax, Telamon's son, did not
disobey him,
but at once addressed the son of Oïleus with winged words:
'Ajax, you and mighty Lycomedes stand here together, both
of you,
and urge the Danaans to fight as strongly as they can;
I shall go over there and meet the enemy's attack, face to
face,
and will quickly return once I have come to their rescue.'

So Ajax, the son of Telamon, spoke, and went on his
way,
and Teucer, his brother by the same father, went with him,
and along with them Pandion carried Teucer's curved bow.
They went along inside the wall, and came to the tower
of great-spirited Menestheus, and found men hard pressed,
since the powerful leaders and commanders of the Lycians
were climbing up the ramparts like a black tempest; and so
they crashed together in battle, and the clamour rose up.

Ajax, the son of Telamon, was the first to kill a man,
great-spirited Epicles, one of Sarpedon's companions,
hitting him with a huge jagged rock which was lying
inside the wall on top of a heap, next to the ramparts. No
man
among mortals who live now, even one in the prime of
youth,
could easily lift it with both hands; but Ajax heaved it high
and flung it, and shattered his four-plated helmet, smashing
all
the bones inside to pieces. Epicles plunged from the high
tower
like an acrobat, and the breath abandoned his bones.
Then, as Glaucus, Hippolochus' mighty son, rushed forward

at the high wall, Teucer hit him with an arrow at the point where

he saw that his arm was exposed, and put an end to his battle-lust.

He sprang back from the wall, unobtrusively, so that no Achaean

should see that he was wounded and shout boastfully over him.

Grief rose in Sarpedon as soon as he realized that Glaucus had left the fighting, but he did not forget his battle-lust; he struck at Alcmaon, Thestor's son, with his spear and stabbed him,

and wrenched the spear out; Alcmaon followed it and fell forward

and his armour, intricately worked with bronze, clattered about him.

Sarpedon seized the battlement with his massive hands and pulled, and it fell away in one piece, and the wall above was laid bare; and so he made a path for many men.

Then Ajax and Teucer set upon him together; Teucer hit him

with an arrow on the shining belt that held his man-protecting

shield across his chest, but Zeus kept the death-spectres from

his son, unwilling for him be beaten down at the ships' sterns.

Then Ajax leapt at him and stabbed at his shield, but the spear

did not pass right through, though it flung back his frenzied attack.

Sarpedon gave ground a little way from the rampart, but did not

fall back completely, since his heart was hoping to win glory.

Wheeling round he called out to the godlike Lycians:
'Lycians, why abandon your surging courage
in this way? It is hard for me, powerful as I am, to
break through on my own and make a path to the ships.
Forward! The more men, the quicker the work is done!'

So he spoke, and they trembled at their lord's loud
rebuke,

and pressed on all the harder around their king, the
counsellor.

On the other side the Argives strengthened their ranks
behind the wall, for an enormous task appeared before
them:

the powerful Lycians were not able to break through
the Danaans' wall and make themselves a path to the
ships,

but neither could the Danaan spearmen ever drive back
the Lycians from the wall when once they had reached it.

Like two men who are in dispute over boundary-stones,
on common ploughland, holding measuring-rods in their
hands,

and quarrelling over the fair division of a narrow patch of
earth,

so the battlements separated these men; and over them
both sides

kept hewing at the oxhide shields held before the others'
 chests,

shields both round and made from stretched, fringed hides.

The flesh of many men was gashed by the pitiless bronze,
both when fighters exposed their backs as they turned,

and when they were stabbed clean through the shield itself.

Everywhere the towers and battlements were spattered
with the blood of men from both sides, Trojan and Achaean.

But for all that the Trojans could not put the Achaeans to
flight;

they held out, just as when an honest wool-working woman

holds
her scales, lifting up the wool and weight together and
balancing them, to earn some mean pittance for her
children;
so the battle and the conflict was pulled taut on equal
terms,
until the moment when Zeus gave the greater glory to
Hector,
Priam's son, who was the first to leap inside the Achaeans'
wall.

With a far-carrying shout he called out to the Trojans:
'Up with you, Trojan breakers of horses! Break down
the Argive wall, and hurl awesome fire on to their ships.'

So he spoke, driving them on, and every ear caught his
voice,
and they made straight for the wall in a body; then,
gripping
their sharpened spears, they began to scale the abutments.
Hector had seized and was carrying a boulder that was
lying
in front of the gates, broad at its base but pointed above;
not even the two best men in any city, among mortals
who live now, could easily lever it from the ground
on to a wagon, but he lifted it easily, even on his own;
the son of crooked-scheming Cronus made it light for him.
As when a shepherd easily carries the fleece of a ram
in one hand, and its weight sits but lightly on him,
so Hector picked up the boulder and made straight
for the planks that made up the tall double gates,
close-fitted and strong; two bars held them on the inside,
crossing over from each side, and one bolt kept them shut.
He came up and stood close, and putting his weight behind
it
and with legs planted well apart, to give the rock extra
force,

he flung it at the gate's middle and smashed it out of both pivots;

the rock's weight carried it inside, and the gates groaned loudly,

and the crossbars could not hold, and the planks were shattered

in all directions under the stone's impact. Illustrious Hector sprang in, his face like swift night, shining in the terrible bronze armour that he wore on his body, gripping two spears

in his hands. No one but a god could have faced and held him back

when he leapt inside the gates; and his eyes blazed with fire.

Whirling round towards the soldiery he called to the Trojans to climb over the wall, and they obeyed his command;

at once some scaled the wall, while others streamed in through

the well-made gate itself. The Danaans scattered in panic among their hollow ships, and the clamour rose unceasing.

BOOK THIRTEEN

Now when Zeus had brought the Trojans and Hector to the ships,
he left the fighters beside them to endure toil and misery
without ceasing, while he himself turned his shining eyes
away,
looking far off to the land of the horse-breeding Thracians,
and
the Mysians, hand-to-hand fighters, and the splendid
Hippemolgi,
drinkers of mares' milk, and the Abii, most upright of men.*
But towards Troy he did not turn his shining eyes at all,
since he did not expect in his heart that any immortal
would come to the help of either Trojans or Danaans.

But the lord earthshaker was not keeping blind watch:
he was sitting, gazing with awe at the war and strife,
high on the topmost peak of wooded Samothrace,*
from where the whole of Ida's mountain could be seen,
and the city of Priam and the ships of the Achaeans.
He had gone up there from the sea, and sat pitying the
Achaeans,
beaten down by the Trojans; and he was mightily angry
with Zeus.

Straightaway he came down from the rugged mountain,
striding on swift feet; and the high mountains and woods
trembled under the immortal feet of Poseidon as he came.
Three strides he made, and with the fourth reached his goal
—

Aegae,* where his famous palace is built in the depths
of the sea, golden and gleaming, imperishable for ever.

There he went, and yoked his bronze-hoofed horses to his chariot,
swift-flying horses, their manes flowing with gold,
and armed himself in gold, and picked up his whip,
golden and finely made, and mounted the chariot and
drove off
over the waves. Everywhere sea-monsters rose from their lairs
and sported as he came, for they recognized their lord,
and the sea was split apart in joy. The horses flew lightly
on,
and the bronze axle beneath the chariot was not wetted;
and the springing horses carried him to the Achaean ships.

There is a wide cavern at the bottom of the deep sea,*
halfway between Tenedos and rugged Imbros, and
there Poseidon the earthshaker reined in his horses and
unyoked them, and threw immortal fodder before them,
for them to eat; around their hoofs he fastened golden
tethers,
that could not be slipped or broken, so that they would wait
there
securely for their lord's return. Then he made for the
Achaean camp.

Now the Trojans were following Hector, Priam's son, in a
mass,
like flame or a storm-wind, raging without cease and
shouting and yelling loudly, hoping to capture the ships
of the Achaeans, and to kill all their best men beside them.
But Poseidon, the shaker and encircler of the earth,
rose from the depths of the salt sea and urged on the
Argives,
taking the shape and tireless voice of Calchas. First he
addressed
the two called Ajax, who were themselves raging to fight:
'You two named Ajax, it is for you now to save the Achaean

people, turning your minds to courage and not to chilling panic.

Elsewhere I do not fear the invincible hands of the Trojans—they have climbed over our great wall in their masses, but the well-greaved Achaeans will hold them all in check—yet here I am terrified that we shall suffer some grim disaster,

here where that madman is leading them like a flame—Hector, who boasts that he is the son of all-powerful Zeus. May some god plant it in the minds of you both to stand resolutely here yourselves, and urge others to do the same, and

then you might drive him back from the swift-travelling ships

despite his onslaught, even if the Olympian himself drives him on.'

So the shaker and encircler of the earth spoke, and struck

both men with his rod and filled them with mighty fury, and made their limbs quick, both their legs and their arms above.

Then, like a swift-winged hawk that springs up in flight and hovers high up close to a beetling rock-face, and then swoops to chase some other bird across the plain, so Poseidon the earthshaker shot swiftly away from them.

Ajax, Oïleus' swift son, was the first to recognize the god, and at once addressed Ajax, the son of Telamon:

'Ajax, this is one of the gods who live on Olympus, taking the form of the seer and telling us to fight beside the ships; it was certainly not Calchas, prophet and observer of birds; I easily knew him from behind by the signs of his feet and legs as he left—gods are recognizable, though they are gods.

And for my part, my own heart in my dear breast now rouses me all the more to fight and do battle,

and my legs beneath and my hands above are raging to begin.'

Then in answer Ajax, son of Telamon, addressed him: 'So too my invincible hands are raging as I grip my spear, and fury rises up in me, and I am swept along by my legs beneath me. Hector, Priam's son, may rage without ceasing, but I am full of fervour to fight him, even all alone.'

While they spoke one to another in this way, delighting in the battle-joy which the god had thrust into their heart, the earth-encircler roused the Achaeans behind them who were trying to refresh their spirits beside the swift ships.

Their limbs were slackened by cruel weariness, and grief filled their hearts when they saw the Trojans, who had climbed over the high wall in great numbers; as they looked at them their eyes began to shed tears, since

they did not think they would escape disaster; but the earthshaker

moved easily among them and urged on the strong companies.

First he came to Teucer and roused him, and Leïtus and the hero Peneleos, and Thoas and Deïpyrus, Meriones and Antilochus, raisers of the battle-cry.

Urging these men on he addressed them in winged words:

'Shame, Argives, young fighters! It is in you that I had trusted to keep our ships safe by your fighting; if you are now holding back from war's misery, the day has surely dawned for us to be beaten down by the Trojans. This is indeed a great marvel for my eyes to see, a terrible thing, which I never thought would come to pass: the Trojans advancing on our ships, those men who before were like frightened does, that are the food of jackals

and leopards and wolves in the woods, aimlessly
wandering without spirit, and there is no battle-joy in them.
So the Trojans before now were unwilling to stand and face
the hands and fury of the Achaeans, even for a little while;
but now they are fighting by our hollow ships, far from their
city,

because of our leader's bungling and the people's
negligence,
who are at loggerheads with him and have no desire to
defend
their swift ships; and now they are being killed beside
them.

If it really is the whole truth that the cause of this
is the hero son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon,
because he did not honour the swift-footed son of Peleus,
still there is no cause at all for us to hold back from the war.
No, let us quickly heal ourselves; good men's minds can be
healed.

It is not good for you to give up your surging courage now,
you who are the best men in the camp. I myself would not
pick a fight with a man who held back from the battle
if he was a sorry creature, but with you I am angry in my
heart.

My friends, your heedlessness will surely soon make this
calamity worse; come, set shame and men's censure in
your hearts,

every one of you. A great conflict has arisen: you can see
that

powerful Hector, master of the war-cry, has broken down
the gates

and their long crossbar, and is fighting beside our ships.'

So the earth-encircler called to the Achaeans and urged
them on.

Around the two called Ajax powerful companies took their
stand,

men whom Ares would not treat with scorn if he met them,
nor
would Athena, who drives the people on; the pick of their
best men were ready to face the Trojans and glorious
Hector,
spear on spear fencing them in, and shield overlapping
shield.
Shield pressed on shield, helmet on helmet, man on man,
and the horsehair crests on their bright helmet-plates
touched
as they moved their heads, so close to each other did they
stand.
Spears shaken by bold hands formed an interwoven mass,
and they faced straight ahead, raging to join the battle.

Now the Trojans charged in a body, and Hector led
them,
raging straight ahead, like a boulder rolling down a cliff
that a river in winter flood has dislodged from its peak,
loosening the ruthless rock's footing with its huge flood;
it bounds high, flying onward, and the woods crash beneath
it,
but still it keeps running on, uncurbed, until it reaches
the level plain and stops rolling, for all its eager haste.
Just so Hector threatened for a while to pass with ease
through the huts and ships of the Achaeans as far as the
sea,
killing as he went; but when he met the close-packed
companies
he came to a stop, right up against them; and the
Achaeans' sons
facing him lunged with their swords and double-edged
spears,
and drove him back, and he was sent reeling and gave
ground.
Then he shouted to the Trojans in a far-carrying voice:

‘Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters,
stand by me! The Achaeans will not fend me off for long,
even
though they have ranged themselves in close order like a
wall.
No, I think they will give way before my spear, if indeed it
was
the chief of the gods who drove me on, Hera’s loud-
thundering husband.’

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each
man.
And among them Deïphobus, Priam’s son, came striding on,
in high confidence, holding his perfectly balanced shield
before him,
stepping lightly and advancing foot by foot under the
shield’s cover.
Meriones aimed at him with his shining spear, and did not
miss; he hit him on his perfectly balanced shield, which was
made of oxhide, but did not pierce it, for long before it
could
the long spear snapped at its socket. Deïphobus held
the oxhide shield away from him, fearing in his heart
the spear of war-minded Meriones; but that hero turned
back into the mass of his companions, bitterly angry
at losing his victory and the spear that he had broken.
He set off for the huts and ships of the Achaeans, meaning
to fetch the long spear which he had left behind in his hut.

The rest fought on furiously, and an unquenchable
clamour arose.
Teucer, son of Telamon, was the first to kill a man,
the spearman Imbrius, son of Mentor rich in horses;
he used to live in Pedaeon* before the sons of the
Achaeans came,
and had as wife Medesicaste, a bastard daughter of Priam;
but when the well-balanced ships of the Danaans came

he went back to Ilium, and excelled among the Trojans, and lived with Priam, who honoured him like his own children.

This was the man Telamon's son stabbed with his long spear,

below the ear; he wrenched the spear out, and Imbrius toppled

like an ash tree that is felled by the bronze on a far-seen mountain peak and brings its tender leaves down to the ground.

So Imbrius fell, and his intricate bronze-work armour rang about him.

Teucer sprang forward, in a rage to strip the armour from him,

and as he sprang Hector let fly his shining spear at him; but Teucer was looking ahead, and avoided the bronze-tipped spear

by just a little, and Hector hit Amphimachus, son of Cteatus,

who was Actor's son, in the chest with the spear as he returned

to the battle; he fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him.

Hector leapt forward to tear from the head of great-hearted Amphimachus the helmet which fitted close to his temples;

Ajax thrust at him with his shining spear as he came on, but no part of his body was exposed, for he was completely covered in terrifying bronze. Ajax pierced the shield's boss, and using his huge strength forced him back; Hector retreated

behind the two bodies, and the Achaeans dragged them away.

Glorious Stichius and Menestheus, captains of the Athenians,

carried Amphimachus back to the Achaean people, while the pair

called Ajax, raging with surging courage, seized Imbrius.

As two lions that have seized a goat from sharp-toothed dogs and carry it away through dense undergrowth, holding it in their jaws high above the earth, so the two commanders called Ajax held Imbrius aloft and stripped the armour from him. Oïleus' son, angry at Amphimachus' death, cut the head from Imbrius' delicate neck, and with a swing of his arm flung it like a ball through the soldiery; and it came to rest in the dust in front of Hector's feet.

Then indeed Poseidon was angry in his heart, because Amphimachus,* his grandson, had fallen in the grim conflict, and he set off along the huts and ships of the Achaeans, to urge the Danaans on; and he was devising misery for the Trojans.

He was met by Idomeneus, famed with the spear, on his way

from tending a companion who had just retired from the fighting

and had been wounded by the sharp bronze behind his knee.

His companions had carried him back, and Idomeneus had given

the healers orders and was going to his hut, for he was still raging

to face the fighting, when the lord earthshaker addressed him,

likening his voice to that of Thoas, son of Andraemon,

who was ruler over the Aetolians in all Pleuron and

in steep Calydon,* and was honoured by the people like a god:

'Idomeneus, counsellor of the Cretans, where now are the threats

that the sons of the Achaeans used to utter against the Trojans?’

Then in answer Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, spoke to him:

‘Thoas, there is no one man who is to blame now, at least as far as I know; we are all skilled in the craft of warfare, and no one has lost heart, gripped by fear, or has given way

to cowardice and is holding back from the dreadful fighting. No,

it must somehow be pleasing to the all-powerful son of Cronus that

the Achaeans should die here, their names forgotten, far from Argos.

Come, Thoas, you have always been a man to face the enemy,

and to urge on another when you see him giving up;

so do not stop now, but keep encouraging every man.’

Then in answer Poseidon the earthshaker addressed him:

‘Idomeneus, let the man who on this day deliberately shirks the battle never return to his home from Troy, but let him remain here and become the plaything of dogs.

Come now, fetch your armour and go with me; we must deal with

this matter together, if, though only two, we are to be of any help;

when men combine even poor fighters can show courage—and we two have the skill to fight even with the best.’

So the god spoke, and went back into the struggle of men.

And Idomeneus, as soon as he reached his well-built hut, put his fine armour on about his body, picked up two spears,

and set off, looking like the lightning that the son of Cronus

takes in his hand and hurls from bright Olympus, to show mortals a sign; and its flash is seen far and wide. Just so the bronze flashed about Idomeneus' breast as he ran.

When he was still close to his hut his attendant valiant Meriones met him—he was on his way to fetch a bronze-tipped spear—and mighty Idomeneus addressed him:

'Meriones, Molus' son, swift-footed, dearest of my companions, why have you left the fighting and conflict to come here? Are you wounded somewhere? Is a spear-point troubling you? Or are you coming to look for me with some message? I for one have no desire to sit idle in my hut, but am impatient to fight.'

Then in turn Meriones, a sagacious man, spoke to him: 'Idomeneus, counsellor of the bronze-shirted Cretans, I have come to fetch a spear, to see if there is one left in your hut, since I shattered the one I was carrying before when I threw it at the shield of arrogant Deïphobus.'^{*}

Then in turn Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, spoke to him:

'If it is spears you want, you will find one, or even twenty, standing against the shining outer wall of my hut, Trojan spears that I took from men I killed. It is not my way to stand at a distance in order to fight my enemies, and that is why I have spears and shields with bosses, and helmets and gleaming polished corslets.'

Then in turn Meriones, a sagacious man, spoke to him: 'I too have many spoils in my hut, taken from the Trojans, and in my black ship, but they are not nearby for me to fetch.

And indeed I too can claim not to have forgotten my

fighting spirit;
I take my stand among the front-fighters in the battle
where men win glory, whenever war's conflict arises.
It may be that some other bronze-shirted Achaean is
unaware
of my fighting prowess, but you, I think, know it for
yourself.'

Then in turn Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, spoke to
him:

'I know what your courage is like; what need to rehearse it?
If all our best men were now to be chosen by the ships
for an ambush, where men's courage can best be
discerned,
and both the coward and the brave man reveal themselves
—

for the coward's skin keeps changing colour, and
his spirit cannot be restrained to sit quietly within him,
but he changes position, shifting his weight from one leg
to another, and the heart within his breast throbs noisily
as he imagines death's spectres, and his teeth begin to
chatter;

but the brave man's skin does not alter, and he is not
greatly
afraid, when once he has taken his place in the ambush of
men,

but prays to enter into the grim conflict as soon as he can—
even there, no man would disparage your fury and hands'
strength.

If you were to be hit from afar or in close fight in battle's
toil

the weapon would not fall from behind on to your neck or
back,

but would meet you in the breast or belly as you press
forward

to take your place in the courtship of front-fighters.

But come, let us not stand here and talk of these things like little boys, or people may become extremely angry; go to my hut and choose a massive spear for yourself.'

So he spoke, and Meriones, the equal of swift Ares, quickly picked out a bronze-tipped spear from the hut and went to join Idomeneus, full of longing for the battle. Just as Ares, doom of mortals, goes into battle, and with him goes his dear son Panic,* mighty and fearless, who drives even the stout-hearted fighter to run in terror; and these two leave Thrace and arm themselves to join the Ephyri or the great-hearted Phlegyans,* though they pay no heed to the prayers of both, but give glory to one side or other;

so like them Meriones and Idomeneus, leaders of men, marched out to war helmeted in gleaming bronze.

Meriones was the first to address the other man:

'Son of Deucalion, where are you eager to join the soldiery? On the right wing of the whole army, or in the centre, or on the left wing, where more than anywhere I think the flowing-haired Achaeans will prove unequal to the fight?'

Then in turn Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, spoke to him:

'In the centre of the ships there are others to defend them —

the two called Ajax, and Teucer, the best among the Achaeans

at archery, and a good man too in standing close combat. These will compel Hector, Priam's son, to tire of the war, however ardent he is, and even though he is mightily strong.

It will be a very hard thing for him, raging though he is to fight,

to overcome their fury and their invincible hands and to fire the ships, unless the son of Cronus himself

should hurl a blazing firebrand into the swift ships.
Huge Ajax, son of Telamon, will never yield to any man
who is mortal and who eats the grain of Demeter,
and who can be broken by bronze or by huge stones.
Not even to Achilles, breaker of ranks, would he give way in
standing close combat, though no one can rival him in
running.

Let us make for the army's left, so that we may quickly
learn
whether we are to give the glory to others, or they to us.'

So he spoke, and Meriones, swift Ares' equal, led the
way, until
they reached the army at the place where Idomeneus had
advised him.

When the Trojans saw Idomeneus, his courage like a
flame,
and his attendant with him, in their finely crafted armour,
they shouted along the soldiery and all made towards him;
and a massed battle began at the sterns of the ships.
As when blasts of air blow furiously, driven by shrill winds,
on a day when the dust lies thickest on the roads,
and the winds raise a great turbulent cloud of dust;
so they crashed together in battle, raging in their hearts
to kill each other in the turmoil with the sharp bronze.
The battle that brings death to mortals bristled with the
long
flesh-slicing spears that they flourished, and the brazen
gleam
from glittering helmets and newly polished corslets and
shining shields blinded men's eyes as they charged
together
in the mêlée; it would indeed be a hard-hearted man
who took pleasure in seeing this toil, and did not feel grief.

So the two mighty sons of Cronus,* their wills opposed,
brought about cruel anguish for the warrior heroes.

Zeus willed victory for the Trojans and for Hector,
to give honour to swift-footed Achilles; he did not want
the Achaean people to perish utterly before Troy, but
was bringing glory to Thetis and her strong-spirited son.
And Poseidon rose up from the grey sea and went secretly
among the Argives, urging them on; he was grieved to see
them

beaten down by the Trojans, and was mightily angry with
Zeus.

Both were indeed of the same ancestry and parentage, but
Zeus was the elder by birth, and had the greater
knowledge;

and for that reason Poseidon avoided giving help openly,
and kept rousing them in the camp in the likeness of a man.
These two, one after the other, stretched tight the rope of
cruel strife and equal-balanced warfare over both sides; it
was

unbreakable, not to be untied, and it loosened many men's
knees.

Then Idomeneus, for all his grizzled hair, urged the
Danaans on,
and leaping at the Trojans spread panic among them.
He killed Othryoneus from Cabeus, who now lived in Troy;
he had recently come there, drawn by news of the war,
and had asked for the most beautiful of Priam's daughters,
Cassandra, without bride-gifts, promising instead a mighty
deed—

to drive the Achaeans' sons from Troy, resist though they
might.

The old man Priam had agreed, and had promised to give
him

the girl; and it was trusting in these promises that he was
fighting.*

Idomeneus aimed at him with a cast of his shining spear,
and hit him as he strutted forward; the bronze body-armour

he wore was not strong enough, and the spear lodged in mid-belly.

He fell with a thud, and Idomeneus spoke triumphantly over him:

‘Othryoneus, I must compliment you above all mortal men, if indeed you are going to fulfil all that you promised to Dardanus’ son Priam, who pledged you his daughter; we too could certainly make such a promise, and fulfil it—we could give you the loveliest of the daughters of Atreus’ son,

bringing her here from Argos, for you to marry, if only you would help us sack Ilium, that well-populated city. So come

with us to our sea-traversing ships, so that we can agree marriage

terms; you will not find us hard dealers over a bride-price.’

So the hero Idomeneus spoke, and dragged him by the foot

through the harsh conflict, but Asius came up to protect him;

he was on foot in front of his horses, held ready by his charioteer,

and could feel their breath on his shoulders. He longed in his heart

to strike Idomeneus, but the other got in first with a spear in the throat under his chin, and drove the bronze clean through.

Asius toppled as an oak topples, or a poplar, or a soaring pine that woodsmen have cut down on a mountain with their newly whetted axes, to become ship-timber; so Asius lay sprawled in front of his chariot and horses, roaring, and scrabbling at the blood-soaked dust.

His charioteer, unexpectedly stunned out of his wits, was not bold enough to wheel his horses and so escape the hands of his enemies, and Antilochus, steadfast in

battle,
struck him with his spear, pinning him through the middle;
the bronze corslet that he always wore was no help to him,
and the spear stuck fast in mid-belly. Gasping, he fell from
the
well-made chariot, and Antilochus, great-spirited Nestor's
son,
drove his horses from the Trojans to join the well-greaved
Achaean.

Then Deiphobus, grieving at Asius' death, came up very
close
to Idomeneus, and let fly with his shining spear, but he
was looking ahead, and avoided the bronze-tipped spear;
he was protected behind his perfectly balanced shield,
the shield that he always carried, faced with oxhide and
gleaming bronze; and it was fitted with two cross-grips.
Behind this he crouched, quite hidden, and the bronze-
tipped spear
flew over him, and as it grazed the shield it made a grating
sound; but it did not fly in vain from Deiphobus' heavy
hand,
but hit Hypsenor, the son of Hippias, shepherd of the
people,
in the liver below his midriff, and at once loosened his
knees.
Deiphobus gave a great shout, and boasted terribly over
him:
'Now, surely, Asius does not lie unavenged! I think that
even
as he travels to the house of Hades, the mighty gate-
guardian,
he will rejoice in his heart, because I have sent him an
escort.'

So he spoke, and grief came over the Argives at his
boasting,

and most of all he stirred war-minded Antilochus' heart, who, grieved though he was, did not desert his companion, and ran up and stood over him and sheltered him with his shield.

Then two trusty companions, Mecisteus, the son of Echius, and glorious Alastor, lifted Hypsenor on to their shoulders and carried him, groaning deeply, back to the hollow ships.

Idomeneus did not slacken his great fury, but strove all the time either to wrap some man of the Trojans in black night or to crash to the ground himself, keeping ruin away from the Achaeans.

Next he killed the hero Alcathous, the dear son of Aesyetes, nurtured by Zeus; he was the son-in-law of Anchises, and had married the eldest of his daughters, Hippodameia,^{*} loved by her father and revered mother with all their hearts in their halls, since she excelled all girls of her age in beauty, in handiwork, and in good sense; and so it was the best man in broad Troy who had gained her in marriage. He it was whom Poseidon beat down by Idomeneus' hand, bewitching his shining eyes and shackling his bright limbs; he was unable either to run back or to swerve aside, but stood motionless like a grave-pillar or a high-leaved tree, while the hero Idomeneus stabbed him with his spear in the middle of his chest, and broke through the bronze tunic

that had up to then kept death away from his body; but this time the spear tore through it with a loud grating noise. He fell with a thud, and the spear stuck fast in his heart, whose beating caused the spear to quiver, even to its butt-end;

but then towering Ares took away the heart's fury, and Idomeneus gave a great shout, and boasted terribly over him:

‘Deïphobus, do we judge it fair that three men have been killed
in exchange for your one? That indeed was how you liked to boast.
You are possessed! Now you too should stand up against me, so that
you can see what kind of a visitor I, Zeus’ offspring, am to your land. In the beginning Zeus fathered Minos, Crete’s guardian,
then Minos in his turn fathered a son, blameless Deucalion, and Deucalion fathered me, to be lord over many men in broad Crete; and now my ships have brought me here, to be an affliction to you and your father and the other Trojans.’*

So he spoke, and Deïphobus’ mind was divided in two, whether to draw back and find some companion among the great-spirited Trojans, or to make trial of Idomeneus alone.
And as he pondered it seemed to him the better course to go in search of Aeneas. He found him at the very rear of the soldiery, standing idle; he was all the time angry with glorious Priam, because he paid him no honour, though he was a fine man among men.
Standing close, Deïphobus addressed him with winged words:
‘Aeneas, counsellor of the Trojans, now surely is the time for you to help your brother-in-law, if indeed grief for him touches you.
So come, let us go and save Alcathous; he was your sister’s husband, and used to look after you in his house, when you were but a child;

look, spear-famed Idomeneus has stripped his armour from him.'

So he spoke, and quickened the spirit in Aeneas' breast, who made straight for Idomeneus, full of longing for battle. But Idomeneus was not seized by panic, like some little boy;

he stood firm, like a wild boar that trusts in its strength and stands firm against a great rabble of men attacking it in a lonely place in the mountains; the bristles stick up along its back, its eyes flash with fire, and it whets its tusks, raging to defend itself against both men and dogs. So spear-famed Idomeneus stood firm and would not give ground

to Aeneas as he came up to challenge him. He called out to his companions, looking to Ascalaphus and Aphareus and Deïpyrus,

and Meriones and Antilochus, raisers of the battle-cry; trying to rouse them, he addressed them in winged words: 'This way, friends, and help me—I am alone! I am terribly afraid

of the assault of swift-footed Aeneas, who is coming after me,

and who is a mighty man at killing men in battle, and is in the flower of youth, when the strength of a man is greatest.

If we were matched in age, our spirit is such that he would soon win a great victory, or it would be mine.'

So he spoke, and they all had one purpose in their hearts, and

came and stood by him, resting their shields on their shoulders.

And on the other side Aeneas called out to his companions, looking especially to Deïphobus and Paris and glorious Agenor,

who were with him leaders of the Trojans; and the people

followed them as sheep follow a ram from the pasture
to a drinking-place, and the shepherd is glad in his heart.
Just so the heart in the breast of Aeneas was glad,
when he saw that the mass of men were following him.

So they rushed forward to fight with their long spears
over
Alcathous, man to man, and on their chests the bronze
armour
rang terribly as they aimed their weapons at each other
in the mêlée; and two warlike men above the rest,
Aeneas and Idomeneus, both the equal of Ares, were
straining to slash the other's flesh with the pitiless bronze.
The first to throw his spear was Aeneas, but Idomeneus
was looking ahead and avoided the bronze-tipped spear,
and Aeneas' point passed by and stuck quivering
in the earth, flying to no effect from his massive hand.
Then Idomeneus hit Oenomaus in the middle of his belly,
breaking through his corslet's plate, and his innards gushed
out
round the bronze; he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with
his hand.
Idomeneus tore his far-shadowing spear from the dead
man,
but was not then able to strip the rest of the fine armour
from his shoulders, for he was pressed hard by missiles;
his feet were not steady enough to support him in a charge,
or to dart forward after his own weapon or to avoid
another's.
So in standing combat he kept the pitiless day from himself,
since
his feet could no longer carry him in swift flight from the
battle.
As he retreated, step by step, Deïphobus threw his shining
spear
at him, for he harboured a constant, enduring grudge

against him.

But once again he missed, and hit Ascalaphus, Enyalios' son,*

with his spear; the massive spear passed through his shoulder,

and he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with his hand.

Towering Ares of the mighty voice had not yet found out that his own son had fallen in the fierce crush of battle; he was sitting on a peak of Olympus, under golden clouds, confined by the will of Zeus to the place where the other immortal gods also were sitting, banned from the war.

Now men rushed to fight over Ascalaphus, man to man; Deïphobus tore the shining helmet from him, but Meriones, the equal of swift Ares, leapt at him and struck him with his spear on the arm, and the vizored helmet dropped from his hand clanging to the ground. Meriones leapt at Deïphobus a second time, like a vulture, and wrenched the massive spear from his upper arm, and then retreated into the mass of his companions.

Polites,

Deïphobus' full brother, put his arms around his waist and led him away from war's hideous clamour, until he reached

his swift horses, which were waiting for him behind the battle,

together with their charioteer and finely worked chariot.

These carried him towards the city, in pain and groaning deeply; and the blood poured from his newly wounded arm.

But the rest fought on, and the clamour rose unquenchable.

Next, Aeneas sprang at Aphareus, son of Caletor, who had turned to face him, and hit him in the throat with a sharp spear;

his head tilted backwards, and his shield and helmet fell in on him, and life-breaking death poured over him.

Antilochus was watching Thoön closely, and as he turned away

leapt and stabbed him, and completely sheared away the vein

which runs all the way up the back until it reaches the neck;*

this he sheared away completely, and Thoön fell on his back

in the dust, stretching out both hands to his dear companions.

Antilochus sprang forward, and began to strip the armour from his shoulders, looking keenly about him; the Trojans massed around him and lunged at his bright-gleaming shield,

but could not get past it, even to graze Antilochus' soft flesh

with the pitiless bronze, for Poseidon the earthshaker was protecting Nestor's son, even under the hail of spears.

He was never clear of enemies, but kept twisting about to face them; nor was his spear ever at rest, but all the time

shook as he flourished it, and kept aiming, determined either to hurl it at an enemy or to attack him at close range.

As he kept aiming at the soldiery he was seen by Adamas,

Asius' son, who, charging at him from close quarters, stabbed at

the middle of his shield with the sharp bronze; but Poseidon of

the dark-blue hair disabled his spear and denied him Antilochus' life;

half of it stuck where it was in Antiochus' shield like a charred stake, while the other half dragged on the ground, and Adamas retreated into the mass of his companions,

avoiding
death's spectres; but as he went Meriones pursued and hit
him
with his spear between the genitals and navel, in the place
where battle-death comes most painfully to wretched
mortals.
There he planted the spear, and Adamas fell forward,
impaled
on it, writhing like a bull that herdsman on the mountains
bind with a rope of withies and forcibly drag it, resisting,
away;
so the wounded man writhed—for a short time, not for very
long,
until the hero Meriones came up close to him and wrenched
the spear from his flesh; and darkness covered his eyes.

Helenus drew close to Deïpyrus and struck him on the
temple
with his huge Thracian sword, shattering his helmet, which,
knocked from his head, lay on the ground, and one of
the Achaean fighters picked it up as it rolled between his
feet.
As for Deïpyrus, black night dropped down and covered his
eyes.

Then grief seized Atreus' son, Menelaus, master of the
war-cry,
and he made menacingly for the hero, lord Helenus,
shaking his sharp spear; Helenus drew his bow, pulling
the string back to the grip, and so both at once prepared to
let fly,
one with a sharp spear, the other with an arrow from the
bowstring.
The son of Priam hit Menelaus on the chest with his arrow,
on a plate of his corslet, but the bitter shaft sprang back
from it;
as when on a great threshing-floor black-skinned beans

or chickpeas fly off a wide-bladed grain-shovel,
propelled by a shrill wind and the winnower's swing,*
so the bitter shaft flew far off from the corslet of
famed Menelaus, deflected a long way from its course.
Then Atreus' son, Menelaus, master of the war-cry, struck
Helenus' hand where he was holding the polished bow, and
the bronze-tipped spear drove clean through his hand into
the bow.

He retreated into the mass of his companions, avoiding
death's spectres,
his hand hanging at his side, trailing the ash spear after
him.

Great-spirited Agenor, shepherd of the people, pulled it
out of his hand, and bound the hand up in a well-twisted
strip of sheep's wool, a sling, which his attendant was
holding.

Then Peisander made straight for renowned Menelaus;
but his evil allotted portion led him on to death's end,
to be beaten down by you, Menelaus, in the grim conflict.
When they had advanced to within close range of each
other

Atreus' son missed his mark, and his spear was turned
aside,
while Peisander jabbed at renowned Menelaus' shield,
but could not drive the bronze straight through it;
the wide shield stopped it, and the spear snapped at its
socket,
though Peisander was glad in his heart, and hoped for
victory.

Then Atreus' son drew his sword with the silver rivets
and leapt at Peisander, who raised from behind his shield
a fine axe of good bronze, fitted on to an olive-wood shaft,
long and well-polished; and they set upon each other.
Peisander struck the plate of the other's horsehair-crested
helmet,

at the base of the plume itself, but as he attacked Menelaus hit him on the brow, above the base of his nose; the bones cracked,

and his eyes, awash with blood, fell in the dust before his feet.

He collapsed and fell, and Menelaus set his heel on his chest

and stripped the armour from him, and boasting spoke to him:

‘This is how you will retreat from the swift-horsed Danaans’ ships,

you arrogant Trojans, still greedy for war’s terrible clamour!

You are not slow to inflict insult and disgrace on others—

as you insulted me, you foul dogs, and had no fear in your hearts of the harsh anger of Zeus the loud thunderer, god of hosts and guests, who will one day destroy your steep city.

You carried away my wedded wife and many possessions, unprovoked, after you had been warmly welcomed by her, and now you are resolved to throw deadly fire into our sea-traversing ships, and to kill the Achaean heroes.

One day you will be stopped, despite your desire for Ares’ war.

Father Zeus, they say that you surpass all others in wisdom,

both men and gods; yet it is from you that all this comes, your favour towards these wantonly violent men,

these Trojans, whose fury is intolerable, who cannot ever get their fill of the fighting in equal-balanced warfare!

In all things there is a fullness, even of sleep and of love and of sweet singing and pleasurable dancing; all these are things where a man will want to have his fill, though not in war; but these Trojans cannot get enough of fighting.’

So spoke blameless Menelaus, and stripped the bloody armour

from Peisander's body and gave it to his companions; then he himself turned back again and joined the front-fighters.

Next Harpalion, son of the king Pylaemenes,* sprang at Menelaus; this man had followed his dear father to Troy to join the war, but did not return again to his native land. He jabbed at the middle of Atreus' son's shield with his spear,

from close quarters, but could not drive the bronze straight through,

and retreated into the mass of his companions, avoiding death's spectres,

looking keenly about him, in case anyone's bronze should find his flesh.

As he retreated Meriones let fly a bronze-tipped arrow at him,

and hit him in the right buttock; the arrow passed clean through his bladder and came out under the pubic bone.

Harpalion collapsed on the spot and breathed out his spirit in the arms of his companions, lying stretched out on the earth

like a worm; and the dark blood flowed out, and soaked the ground.

The great-hearted Paphlagonians* busied themselves about him,

and setting him in a chariot carried him to sacred Ilium, grieving, and with them went his father, weeping tears.

There was no compensation for the death of his son.

Paris was greatly angry in his heart at Harpalion's death,

for among the many Paphlagonians he had been his guest-friend;

enraged on his account, he let fly a bronze-tipped arrow.

Now there was a man called Euchenor, son of Polyidus the seer,

a rich man of noble birth, whose home was in Corinth. He had boarded his ship knowing well that it would be his ruin and death, because the old man, noble Polyidus, had often told him that he would either waste away in his halls from a painful sickness or go with the Achaean ships and be beaten down by the Trojans.

So he chose to go, avoiding both the Achaeans' heavy warfare* and a hateful sickness, and the agony his heart would suffer.

Paris hit him under the jaw, by his ear, and swiftly his life's breath abandoned his limbs, and hateful darkness seized him.

So all the rest fought on in the likeness of blazing fire; but Hector, loved by Zeus, had neither heard nor knew that on the left of the ships his people were being overcome by the Argives; and soon the glory would have gone to the Achaeans, so strongly did the encircler and shaker of the earth urge on the Argives, and also defended them with his strength.

So Hector held on where he had at first leapt inside the wall and the gate, and broken the close-packed ranks of shield-bearing

Danaans, in the place where the ships of Ajax and Protesilaus were,

drawn up on the shore of the grey sea. The wall protecting these

had been built very low, and it was there that the Achaeans were fighting at their fiercest, both they and their horses.

There were the Boeotians and Ionians with their trailing

tunics,
and the Locrians and Phthians and splendid Epeians, but
they
were hard put to resist glorious Hector's assault on their
ships,
nor could they drive him back; he was like a flame.
Picked men of the Athenians were there, and among them
their leader was Menestheus, Peteus' son, and with him
came
Pheidas and Stichius and valiant Bias. The Epeians' leaders
were Meges, son of Phyleus, and Amphion and Draceus,
and the Phthians' were Medon and Podarces, steadfast in
war.

Now this Medon was a bastard son of godlike Oïleus,
and so half-brother to Ajax; but his home was in Phylace,
far from his native land, because he had killed a man,^{*}
a brother of his stepmother Eriopis, wife of Oïleus; and
the other, Podarces, was the son of Iphicles, Phylacus' son.
These then were armed at the head of the great-spirited
Phthians,

defending the ships and fighting alongside the Boeotians.
Ajax, the swift son of Oïleus, would never take his stand
far from Ajax, Telamon's son, not even for a short time;
just as a pair of dark-faced oxen on fallow land strain
with matched spirit at the close-jointed plough, and
around the base of their horns quantities of sweat spring
up;

and only the well-polished yoke keeps them apart as they
toil

along the furrow, and the plough reaches the field's
headland;

so these two fighters stood close to each other, side by
side.

The son of Telamon was accompanied by many excellent
companions from his people, who would take his shield
from him whenever weariness and sweat came over his

limbs;
but Oileus' great-hearted son had no Locrians with him,
since their hearts were not stalwart enough for standing
combat;
they did not own bronze horsehair-crested helmets,
nor did they possess round shields and ash spears, but
they had come with him to Troy trusting in bows and slings
of twisted sheep's wool, with which they shot at the Trojans,
thick and fast, and broke down their companies.
So the former, in their finely worked armour, fought in front
against the Trojans and Hector of the bronze helmet, while
the
Locrians, hidden, kept shooting from behind; and the
Trojans
forgot their battle-lust, for the arrows bewildered them.

Then the Trojans would have retreated in a sorry state
from the ships and the huts towards windswept Troy,
had not Polydamas stood next to bold Hector and spoken to
him:

'Hector, you are a hard man to persuade with words of
advice.

A god has given you prowess in war beyond other men,
and therefore you want to excel others in counsel too;
but you cannot choose to have everything as you want it.

A god gives prowess in war to one man, and to another
skill in the dance, and to a third the lyre and song,
and in another's breast wide-thundering Zeus sets an
excellent

understanding, and many men derive benefit from it;
he is the salvation of many, and he himself knows this best.

Even so, I shall speak as it seems best to me,
seeing that the circlet of war is blazing all around you.
The great-spirited Trojans have crossed the wall, but
some of them are standing idle with their arms, while
others

are fighting, few against many, scattered among the ships.
So come, withdraw, and summon all the best men to us,
and after that we shall carefully consider every plan,
whether we should fall on their many-benched ships,
in the hope that a god will want to give us the victory, or if
instead we should fall back from them unharmed. As for
me,

I am afraid that the Achaeans will repay yesterday's debt,
since by their ships there waits a man insatiable in war,
and I do not think he will hold back from the battle for ever.'

So spoke Polydamas, and his prudent advice pleased
Hector,
and at once he leapt, fully armed, from his chariot to the
ground,
and addressed Polydamas, speaking with winged words:
'Polydamas, hold back all the best men here, and
I will go over there and take charge of the fighting;
I shall then return quickly, when I have given them clear
orders.'

So he spoke, and set off, looking like a snow-clad
mountain;
shouting orders he flew through the lines of Trojans and
their allies;
and they all rushed up to join the hospitable Polydamas,
the son of Panthous, when they had heard Hector's voice.
But Hector went up and down the front-fighters, looking for
Deiphobus and mighty lord Helenus, and Adamas, Asius'
son,
and Asius, Hyrtacus' son, in the hope of finding them.
He found them, but they had not all escaped injury or
death:
some were lying by the sterns of the Achaeans' ships,
having lost their life's breath at the hands of the Argives,
while
others were back inside the city walls, wounded by cast or

thrust.

But one he soon found, on the left of the battle, bringer of tears,

glorious Alexander, the husband of lovely-haired Helen, encouraging his companions and urging them on to fight. Standing next to him he addressed him in shaming words: 'Paris, Disaster-Paris, superbly beautiful, woman-crazed seducer!

Tell me, where are Deïphobus and mighty lord Helenus, Adamas, Asius' son, and Asius, the son of Hyrtacus?

And where is Othryoneus? Now steep Ilium must be utterly ruined, from top to bottom; this is surely the bitter end for you.'

Then Alexander who looked like a god answered him: 'Hector, your mind is always to blame one who is blameless;

at other times I may well have held back from the war, but my mother did not bear me to be a complete coward: ever since you roused your companions to fight by the ships*

we have been here, engaging the Danaans without ceasing. The companions you ask after have been killed, and only Deïphobus and the mighty lord Helenus* have left the battlefield, both wounded in the hand by long spears, though the son of Cronus kept death from them.

But now lead on, to wherever your heart and spirit tell you, and we will go with you, raging for the fight; I do not think we shall lack courage, as far as there is strength left in us—and

beyond his strength no man can fight, however spirited he is.'

So the hero spoke, and won over his brother's heart. They set off for where the battle and conflict were fiercest, around Cebriones and blameless Polydamas, and

around Phalces and Orthaeus and godlike Polyphetes, and
Palmys, and Ascanius and Morys, the two sons of Hippotion,
who had come as reliefs from Ascanië* of the rich soil
on the morning before; and now Zeus urged them to fight.
These came on like a squall of violent winds that
sweeps to earth, driven by the thunder of father Zeus,
and with a stupendous noise dives into the salt sea, and
in the loud-roaring sea countless waves swell up and crash,
arched over and white with foam, rank succeeding rank;
just so the Trojans came on in battle array, rank succeeding
rank,
gleaming in bronze and following behind their leaders.
Hector, son of Priam, the equal of Ares, doom of mortals,
led them, holding in front of him his perfectly balanced
shield,
deftly crafted with hides and covered with a thick layer of
bronze;
and about his temples his shining helmet waved to and fro.
Edging forward, he tested the enemy companies from
every side,
to see if they would yield to him as he moved up behind his
shield;
but he could not weaken the spirit in the Achaeans' breasts.
Ajax strode hugely up, and was the first to challenge him:
'You are possessed! Come closer; why try to frighten the
Argives
in this way? We are by no means unused to war, and it is
only by Zeus' vicious lash that we Achaeans are beaten
down.
No doubt your heart is hoping to destroy our ships utterly,
but we too have hands ready to defend them in a moment.
Long before that happens, your well-populated city
will be captured and sacked by our hands.
But for you, I say that the time is near at hand when in
flight
you will pray to father Zeus and the other immortals

to make your fine-maned horses swifter than hawks
as they carry you to your city, kicking up the dust on the
plain.'

And for him, as he spoke, a bird flew over from right to
left,
a high-soaring eagle, and the Achaean army yelled for joy,
encouraged by the omen; but illustrious Hector answered:
'Ajax, you incoherent, oafish ox, what nonsense is this?
I wish I could be for all my days as surely a son of Zeus,
wearer of the aegis, and lady Hera could be my mother,
and I was held in the same honour as Athena and Apollo,
as certainly as this day will bring utter ruin on the Argives,
every one of them; and you will be killed with them, if you
dare
to resist my long spear, which is going to tear your delicate
skin.
You will fall by the Achaeans' ships, and you will glut
the dogs and vultures of the Trojans with your flesh and
fat.'

So he spoke, and took the lead, and the rest followed
with
a stupendous clamour, and the people were yelling behind
him.
The Argives on their side yelled in response, and did not
forget
their courage, but held out as the best of the Trojans
attacked.
From both sides the clamour reached the upper air, even to
the rays of Zeus.

BOOK FOURTEEN

Now though Nestor was drinking in his hut he heard the shouting,
and he addressed the son of Asclepius with winged words:
'Consider, glorious Machaon, what is to be done now, for
the shouts of the strong young men by the ships are
growing louder.

You must sit here and continue to drink gleaming wine,
until Hecamede of the lovely hair has heated water for a
warm bath and washed away the clotted blood, and I shall
go to a lookout place, and quickly find out what is
happening.'

So speaking he picked up the well-made shield of his
son,
horse-breaking Thrasymedes, which was lying in the hut,
made of brightly shining bronze; for the son had his father's
shield.

And he took up a stout spear, with a point of sharp bronze,
and stood outside the hut; and at once he saw an ugly sight
—

the Achaeans in disorder, and the high-hearted Trojans
behind
driving them into confusion; and the Achaean wall had
fallen.

As when the great open sea heaves with a soundless swell,
foreboding the rushing onslaught of shrill-sounding winds,
and the waves cannot break, or roll on one way or another,
until some decisive wind comes down from Zeus;
so the old man pondered, his mind torn this way and that,
whether to go and join the soldiery of swift-horsed Danaans
or to make for Atreus' son Agamemnon, shepherd of the

people.

And as he pondered it seemed to him the better course to look

for Atreus' son. Meanwhile the rest of them kept up the battle,

killing each other, and the relentless bronze rang about their bodies

as they jabbed at each other with swords and double-edged spears.

As Nestor went, those Zeus-nurtured kings who had been wounded

by the bronze—the son of Tydeus and Odysseus and Atreus' son

Agamemnon—fell in with him on their way up from the ships.

Their ships had been drawn up a long way from the fighting,

on the shore of the grey sea, for the first ships had been hauled up

on to the plain, and the Achaeans had built a wall around their sterns.

But the beach, wide though it was, did not have space for all the ships, and the people were cramped for room; and for that reason they had drawn them up in rows, and had filled

all the space between the headlands along the coastline's wide bay.*

These men were coming up together, leaning on their spears,

wishing to see the battle and its clamour, and the hearts in their

breasts were grieving. When the old man Nestor met them, the hearts in the breasts of these Achaeans were struck with alarm, and lord Agamemnon spoke, and addressed him:

‘Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans,
why have you left the man-destroying war and come here?
I am fearful that towering Hector will fulfil the threat
he once made when speaking in the Trojan assembly,
that he would not turn back to Ilium from the ships
until he had set them ablaze and killed the men as well.
That was what he declared, and now it is all being fulfilled.
This is a disaster! The other well-greaved Achaeans must
also
harbour bitterness against me in their hearts, as Achilles
does,
if they are now refusing to fight beside the sterns of their
ships.’

Then the Gerenian horseman Nestor answered him:
‘Indeed these things have been fulfilled, and not even Zeus
the high-thunderer himself could order them differently.
Certainly the wall has been destroyed, the wall that we
trusted
would be an indestructible barrier for our ships and
ourselves,
and our men by the swift ships are engaged in unceasing
and relentless battle. Nor could you tell, however hard you
looked,
from which direction the Achaeans are being driven in
disorder,
so confused is the killing; and the clamour reaches the high
sky.
But let us consider what is to be done here, if thought
can achieve anything—I do not advise us to enter the
battle, since there is no way that a wounded man can
fight.’

Then in turn Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed him:
‘Nestor, our men are now fighting by the sterns of their
ships,
and neither the wall that we built has proved of use, nor the

ditch
over which the Danaans toiled so hard, hoping in their
hearts
that it would be an indestructible barrier for the ships and
themselves;
so, I suppose, it must be pleasing to all-powerful Zeus, that
the
Achaean should die here, their names forgotten, far from
Argos.

I knew it in the past when he willingly helped the Danaans,
and I know it now when he exalts the Trojans to the height
of the blessed gods, and has tied down our hands and our
fury.

Come then, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:
let us drag down the ships that were drawn up first, near
the sea, and let us launch them all into the bright salt sea,
mooring them far out with anchor-stones, until the immortal
night comes—if the Trojans will leave off fighting even then;
and after that we may haul down all the rest of the ships.
There can be no blame in fleeing from ruin, even at night;
it is better for a man to flee and escape ruin than to be
captured.'

Much-scheming Odysseus looked at him darkly and
addressed him:

'Son of Atreus, what words are these that cross your teeth's
barrier?

Accursed man, I wish you commanded some other,
spiritless,
army and did not rule over us, to whom Zeus has seemingly
given the charge of winding the thread of cruel wars from
youth
right up to old age, until we perish, each and every one of
us.

Can it really be that you are raging to abandon the city of
Troy

with its wide streets, over which we have endured such misery?
Be silent, or some other of the Achaeans may hear your words,
words which no other man would even let pass through his mouth—
one, that is, who knew in his mind how to speak to good purpose,
and was a staff-holding king, and had as many people subservient to him as the Argives over whom you rule.
From what you say, I think you have completely lost your wits,
when you tell us, surrounded as we are by war and clamour,
to drag our well-benched ships down to the sea; this will answer
still more of the Trojans' prayers—though even now they have
the mastery—and sheer destruction's scales will tip against us.
The Achaeans will not keep up the fight if the ships are dragged
seaward, but will keep looking about them, and lose their battle-lust.
And then, marshal of the people, your plan will end in disaster!'

Then Agamemnon, lord of men, answered him:
'Odysseus, your harsh rebuke has gone straight to my heart.

I agree: I shall not order the sons of the Achaeans to drag their well-benched ships down to the sea against their will. Now, if there is someone who has better advice than this, young or old, let him give it; and I would welcome it.'

Then Diomedes, master of the war-cry, spoke out among them:

‘That man is nearby, and we shall not have long to seek him—

if you are willing to listen to me, and none of you feels indignant

or resentful because I am the youngest in years among you.

Yet I too can boast that my birth was from a good father, Tydeus, whom a heaped mound of earth now covers in Thebes.

Portheus had three blameless sons born to him, and they lived in Pleuron and in steep Calydon: they were Agrius and Melas, and the third was the horseman Oeneus, father of my father, and he surpassed them all in courage. Oeneus stayed there, but my father wandered away and settled

in Argos; such, it seems, was the will of Zeus and the other gods.*

There he married a daughter of Adrestus, and he lived in a house of great wealth, and had abundant corn-bearing ploughland, and many enclosures of trees round about, and flocks in plenty; and he excelled all the Achaeans in spear-craft. You will have heard all this, and know if it is true.

You cannot then say that I am a coward and a weakling by descent,

and so reject the advice I put before you, if it is good.

Let us go to the battlefield, wounded as we are—we are forced to—

and there let us keep ourselves away from the fighting, out of

missiles’ range, so that no one receives wound upon wound;

but we shall rouse and send the rest into battle, those who before

were loyal in heart but now hang back and refuse to fight.’

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he said;
and they set off, and Agamemnon lord of men led them.

But the renowned earthshaker was not keeping blind watch,
and went to meet them in the likeness of an old man,
and grasped Atreus' son Agamemnon by the right hand,
and addressed him, speaking with winged words:
'Son of Atreus, the deadly heart of Achilles must surely now
be glad in his breast, as he looks on the slaughter and rout
of the Achaeans; there is no sense in him, not even a little.
May he die, then; may a god cripple his strength.
But against you the blessed gods are not yet completely
hostile;
the Trojan leaders and rulers will some day raise the dust
across the wide plain, and you yourself will see them
fleeing towards their city, away from the ships and huts.'

So he spoke, and sped away over the plain with a great
shout,
as loud as the shouts of nine- or ten-thousand men as they
grapple with each other on a battlefield in Ares' strife;
so loud was the cry which the lord earthshaker let fly
from his chest, and he cast great strength into the heart
of every Achaean, to go to war and fight without ceasing.

Now Hera of the golden throne saw this happening
before her eyes
from where she stood on a peak of Olympus; and at once
she recognized her brother and husband's brother bustling
about
the battle where men win glory, and she was glad in her
heart;
but then she saw Zeus sitting on the topmost crest of Ida
with its many springs, and he was hateful to her heart.
Then ox-eyed lady Hera deliberated as to how she
might deceive the mind of Zeus who wears the aegis;

and this seemed to her in her heart to be the best plan:
to make herself exceptionally beautiful and to go down to
Ida,

in the hope that he would feel the desire to sleep beside
her and make love to her, and she would pour a soft,
forgetful sleep over his eyelids and his crafty mind.

She set off for the chamber that her dear son Hephaestus
had made for her, and had set the close-fitting doors on
their posts

and made them fast with a secret bolt, that no other god
could pull back;

and there she went in and closed the shining doors.

First she washed every smudge from her desirable body
with deathless balm, and anointed her clothing* richly with
deathless olive oil; this was her perfumed garment, and it
only had to be shaken in the bronze-floored house of Zeus
for its fragrance to be spread over the earth and the high
sky.

She smoothed this oil also over her beautiful body and hair,
and with her hands plaited the shining hair that fell
in its undying beauty from her immortal head.

Then she put on the deathless dress, which Athena had
woven

for her to a smooth finish and had embroidered with many
designs,

and pinned it over her breast with golden clasps.

Round her waist she fastened a girdle with a hundred
tassels,

and set earrings with three drops like mulberries in the
pierced lobes of her ears, and they shone with great allure.

Then the bright goddess covered her hair with a veil,
beautiful and not yet worn, and it was as bright as the sun;
and under her gleaming feet she bound fine sandals.

When she had adorned her body with all her finery
she made her way from the chamber and called Aphrodite
aside from the other gods and addressed her:

‘Tell me, dear child—will you do something for me that I ask,
or will you refuse, holding a grudge in your heart
because I help the Danaans and you help the Trojans?’

Then in answer Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, said:
‘Hera, elder goddess, daughter of great Cronus,
say what is in your mind; my heart tells me to fulfil it,
if I am able, and it is something that may be accomplished.’

Lady Hera addressed her, with guile in her heart:
‘Give me now that love and desire, with which you
overcome everyone, both immortals and mortal men.
I am going to the limits of the earth that feeds many, to
visit
Oceanus, first father of the gods, and their mother Tethys,
who raised me kindly and brought me up in their own
house
when they received me from Rhea, when wide-thundering
Zeus
imprisoned Cronus under the earth and the unresting sea.
These I am going to visit, and I shall dispel their unresolved
strife;
for a long time now, since anger invaded their hearts, they
have
kept apart from each other, from love and from the
marriage-bed.
If I could win both their hearts round with my words
and bring them back to loving union in the marriage-bed,
I should earn their friendship and respect for ever.’*

Then Aphrodite who loves to smile answered her:
‘It is not possible for me to refuse your request, nor is it
right,
since you sleep in the arms of Zeus, highest of the gods.’
So she spoke, and untied from her breasts a stitched and
embroidered band, on which all her enchantments were
crafted;*

on it was love, on it was desire, and on it was seductive dalliance, which steals away the wits even of men of good sense.

This she thrust into Hera's hands and spoke to her, saying: 'There! Take this embroidered band, and tie it to your breast; all things are crafted on it, and I do not think you will come back without achieving your heart's desire.'

So she spoke, and the lady ox-eyed Hera smiled, and smiling tied the band to her breast.

So Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, went to her house, and Hera darted away, leaving the peak of Olympus, and alighted on Pieria and lovely Emathia; she sped on to the snowy mountains of the Thracian horse-breeders, over their highest peaks, and her feet did not touch the ground;

from Athos she continued over the swelling open sea, and came to Lemnos, the city of godlike Thoas.*

There she fell in with Sleep, the brother of Death, and grasping his hand in hers she spoke to him, saying: 'Sleep, you who are lord over all gods and all men, as you have listened to my requests before, so now again do as I say; and I shall be grateful to you for ever.

Lull Zeus' shining eyes to sleep under his brows for me, as soon as I have lain down in love next to him, and I shall give you as gifts a fine throne, imperishable for ever, made of gold; my son, bow-legged Hephaestus, will make it with his craft, and will set below it a stool for your feet, where you may rest your gleaming feet when you are feasting.'

Then in answer sweet Sleep addressed her: 'Hera, elder goddess, daughter of great Cronus, any other of the gods who live for ever I might lightly lull to sleep, even the waters of Ocean himself, who is the first father of all the immortals. But as for Zeus, Cronus' son, I would not approach him,

nor would I lull him to sleep, unless he himself ordered it.
I have learnt wisdom from a task you set me once before,
on the day when Heracles, that arrogant son of Zeus,
sailed from Ilium, after he had sacked the Trojans' city.
Then indeed I stilled the mind of Zeus, wearer of the aegis,
softly pouring myself around him; and you devised ruin
against Heracles in your heart, rousing blasts of violent
winds
over the sea, and carried him off to well-populated Cos,
far from all his friends. When Zeus awoke he became angry
and
began to fling gods about his house, and looked especially
for me;
and he would have hurled me from the high sky into the
sea,
into oblivion, had not Night, who subdues gods and men,
saved me;
I had fled to her as a suppliant, and though Zeus was angry
he
stopped,
for he was in awe of doing anything displeasing to swift
Night.
Now, once again, you are telling me to do something
impossible.'*

Then the goddess ox-eyed lady Hera addressed him:
'Sleep, why do you brood on these things in your mind?
Do you think wide-thundering Zeus will be as angry when
he
helps the Trojans as he was on behalf of his own son
Heracles?
Come now, agree and I will give you one of the younger
Graces for you to marry, so that she shall be called your
wife—
[Pasithee, whom you will desire for all your days.']*

So she spoke, and Sleep was gladdened, and said in

answer:

‘Come then, and swear to me by the inviolable water of Styx,*

and with one hand take hold of the earth that nourishes many,

and with the other the glittering sea, so that all the gods who are below the earth with Cronus may be our witnesses, that you will on oath give me one of the younger Graces—I mean Pasithee, whom I myself have desired all my days.’

So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not disobey him,

and she swore as he had ordered her, naming all the gods who are under Tartarus, and are called Titans.*

When she had sworn and brought her oath to an end, they left the cities of Lemnos and Imbros behind and continued,

clothed in mist, and quickly passed on their journey.

They reached Ida with its many springs, mother of wild beasts,

at Lecton; here they first left the sea, and went on above the

dry land, and the tops of the trees shook under their feet.*

There Sleep halted before the eyes of Zeus could see him, and climbed up into a tall fir tree, the loftiest then growing on Ida, which stretched up through the mist into the high sky.

On this he sat, hidden by the branches of the fir tree, in the likeness of a shrill-voiced mountain bird that the gods call ‘chalcis’ and men call the hawk-owl.*

But Hera went quickly on to Gargarus, the summit of lofty Ida, and Zeus who gathers the clouds saw her. The moment he saw her, desire enveloped his crafty mind, just as it used to when they would first go to their bed and make love together, without their dear parents’ knowledge. Zeus stood in front of her and spoke to her, saying:

‘Hera, what has driven you to come down here from Olympus?

And where are the horses and chariot that you ride in?’

Then with guile in her heart lady Hera addressed him:
‘I am going to visit the limits of the earth that feeds many,
to see Ocean, first father of the gods, and their mother
Tethys,

who raised me kindly and brought me up in their own
house.

I shall visit them, and dispel their never-ending strife:
for a long time now, since anger invaded their hearts, they
have

kept apart from each other, from love and from the
marriage-bed.

My horses are standing at the foot of Ida of the many
springs,

my horses that will carry me over the dry land and water;
but I have come down here now from Olympus because of
you,

in case you become angry with me afterwards, if I go off
to the house of deep-flowing Ocean without telling you.’

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed
her:

‘Hera, you can set out for that place at any time in future;
but now, let us go to bed and turn our thoughts to love.

Never before has desire for a goddess or for a woman
so flooded around and subdued the heart in my breast,
not even when I fell in love with the wife of Ixion,

who bore me Peirithous, equal of the gods in counsel,
nor with Danaë of the lovely ankles, Acrisius’ daughter,

who bore me Perseus, renowned among all men,
nor when I desired the daughter of far-famed Phoenix,

who bore me Minos and godlike Rhadamanthys,
nor when I desired Semele or Alcmene in Thebes—

Alcmene gave birth to Heracles, a child of mighty spirit,

while Semele bore me Dionysus, the joy of mortals—
nor when I desired lady Demeter of the lovely hair,
nor when I desired splendid Leto, nor you yourself—
never has such desire for you or sweet longing seized me.’*

Then with guile in her heart lady Hera addressed him:
‘Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said?
If you are longing now to lie with me and make love
on the peaks of Ida, where everything can easily be seen,
how would it be if one of the gods who live for ever
were to see us two sleeping, and then go and report it to
all the other gods? I could not then rise from this bed and
go back to your house; it would be a most shameful thing.
But if this is what you really want, and your heart is set on
it,
you have a chamber that your dear son Hephaestus built
for you, and made fast the close-fitting doors on their
posts;
let us go there and lie down, since bed is your desire.’

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed
her:
‘Hera, do not be afraid on that account, that some god or
man
will see us; I shall wrap a golden cloud around us,
such that not even the Sun could see us through it,
he whose light gives him the keenest sight of all.’

So the son of Cronus spoke, and clasped his wife in his
arms;
and beneath them the bright earth put forth fresh-growing
grass
and dew-drenched clover and crocus and hyacinth,
thick and soft, which kept them raised above the ground.
On this the two of them lay, wrapped in a beautiful
golden cloud; and from it fell drops of glistening dew.

So the father slept, motionless on the height of
Gargarus,

overcome by sleep and love, clasping his wife in his arms;
but sweet Sleep set off at a run for the ships of the
Achaean,
to carry his message to the shaker and encircler of the
earth,
and standing next to him he addressed him with winged
words:
'Poseidon, you may now put your heart into helping the
Danaans
and giving them the glory—for a short time only, while
Zeus
is still asleep, for I have wrapped soft slumber about him;
Hera beguiled him into going to bed to make love.'

So he spoke, and left to join the renowned tribes of
men,
setting Poseidon free to help the Danaans even further; and
he,
with a great leap forward among the front-fighters, called
out:
'Argives, are we once again going to yield the victory to
Hector
Priam's son, for him to capture our ships and win glory?
That is what he says and boasts he will do, because Achilles
is staying idle by the hollow ships, his heart full of
bitterness;
but we will not miss him overmuch, if only the rest
of us can bestir ourselves to come to each other's help.
So come, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:
let us arm ourselves with the best and biggest shields
there are in the camp, and cover our heads with blazing-
bright
helmets, and take the longest spears in our hands, and
march out. I shall lead the way, and I do not think that
Hector,
Priam's son, will yet resist us, for all his great frenzy.

And let every man who is resolute in battle, and shoulders a small shield, give it to a lesser man and arm himself with a larger.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he said;

and even the kings, wounded though they were, armed themselves—

Tydeus' son and Odysseus and Atreus' son Agamemnon. They went through the soldiery exchanging weapons of war:

the good man put on good armour, and gave worse to the worse.

When they had equipped themselves in gleaming bronze, they made ready to go, and Poseidon the earthshaker led them,

gripping in his brawny hand his terrible long-bladed sword, which is like a lightning-flash; no one may engage with him in cruel warfare, but fear holds men back.

On the other side illustrious Hector was marshalling the Trojans.

Then indeed the grim contest of war was stretched tight by Poseidon of the dark-blue hair and glorious Hector, one fighting on the Argives' side, the other on the Trojans'.

As the two sides crashed together with a mighty clamour the sea surged up to the huts and ships of the Argives; but neither the sea's waves thundering on to the land, when they

are stirred up from the deep by the North Wind's fierce blast,

nor the roaring of a blazing fire that springs up in the clearings of a mountain, ready to burn down the forest, nor the howling of the wind in high-leaved oak trees when its bellowing rage is at its very loudest,

are as loud as were the shouts of Trojans and Achaeans, when with terrifying yells they rushed upon each other.

First illustrious Hector let fly his spear at Ajax,
who had turned to face him directly, and he did not miss,
but hit him where two straps were stretched across his
chest,
one supporting his shield and the other his silver-riveted
sword,
and these two protected his soft flesh. Hector was enraged
that his swift weapon had flown from his hand in vain,
and he fell back among the band of his companions,
avoiding
the death-spectre. As he retreated, huge Ajax, Telamon's
son,
picked up a stone, one of many that served as props for
the swift ships, and which were rolling about the fighters'
feet,
and hit Hector on the chest, above his shield-rim and near
his neck,
sending him spinning like a top with the blow, staggering
this way and that. As when an oak tree falls, uprooted by a
strike
from father Zeus, and a fearful stench of sulphur rises from
it,
and courage deserts those who come close to look at it,
because the thunderbolt of Zeus is a hard thing to endure;
so Hector's fury quickly collapsed to the ground in the dust.
The spear dropped from his hand, and his shield and
helmet fell in
on him, and his armour, intricately worked with bronze,
clattered
about him.
The sons of the Achaeans gave a loud shout and ran up,
hoping to drag him away, and began to hurl their spears,
thick and fast, but no one could stab or hit the shepherd of
the
people; before they could, chieftains came and stood over
him,

Polydamas and Aeneas and glorious Agenor and
Sarpedon, captain of the Lycians, and blameless Glaucus.
And none of the rest deserted him, but held their round
shields

in front of him; and his companions lifted him in their arms
and carried him from the battle's toil to his swift horses,
which were standing waiting for him at the rear of the
battle

and the fighting, with their charioteer and finely crafted
chariot.

They set off to carry him, groaning heavily, towards the city.

But when they came to the crossing of the clear-flowing
river,

swirling Xanthus, whose father was immortal Zeus, there
they lifted him from the chariot to the ground, and splashed
water over him; and he revived and looked upwards,
and getting to his knees spewed up a cloud of dark blood.
Then he sank back on to the ground, and black night
covered his eyes, for the blow was still crushing his spirit.

When the Argives saw Hector withdrawing, they sprang
the more eagerly at the Trojans, and called up their battle-
lust.

Well before all the rest swift Ajax, son of Oïleus, leapt at
Satnius, Enops' son, and wounded him with his sharp spear

—

Satnius, whom a blameless water-nymph had borne to
Enops as he tended his cattle by the banks of Satnioeis.
He it was that Oïleus' son, famed with the spear, came up
to

and stabbed in the side; he fell on to his back, and over him
Trojans and Danaans grappled in the fierce crush of battle.
Polydamas, son of Panthous, wielder of the spear, came up
to protect him, and hit Prothoënor, the son of Areïlycus,
on the right shoulder, and the massive spear drove through
his shoulder, and he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with

his hand.

Polydamas gave a great shout, and boasted loudly over him:

‘Once again, I reckon, a spear has not leapt aimlessly from the massive hand of Panthous’ great-spirited son! An Argive has given it a home in his flesh, and I think he will use it as a staff when he goes down into the house of Hades.’

So he spoke, and grief entered the Argives at his boast; most of all he stung the heart of Telamon’s war-minded son Ajax to anger, because Prothoënor had fallen very near him.

As Polydamas retreated he threw a shining spear at him, but Polydamas avoided the black death-spectre with a sideways leap, and the man who received it was Antenor’s son

Archelochus, for the gods had planned that he should die. The spear hit him at the joining-point of head and neck, on the topmost vertebra, and sheared through both tendons;

and as he fell his head and his mouth and nose hit the ground long before his legs and knees.

Ajax in his turn shouted to blameless Polydamas:

‘Think on this, Polydamas, and give me a true answer: is it not fair that this man was killed in exchange for Prothoënor? He does not seem a low-born man to me, nor of

low-born stock—more like horse-breaking Antenor’s brother,

or his son; there is a close family likeness about him.’

He said this knowing the truth; and grief seized the Trojans’ hearts.

Then, standing over his brother, Acamas stabbed

Promachus,
a Boeotian, with his spear, as he tried to drag the dead
man off by his feet.
Acamas gave a great shout, boasting loudly over him:
'Argive braggarts—you can never have your fill of making
threats!

I tell you, we are not the only ones to whom hardship and
misery
will come, but one day you too will be cut down like this
man.

See there how your companion Promachus sleeps, beaten
down
by my spear; repayment for my brother's death has not
been
slow in coming. This is why a man will pray to leave a
kinsman behind in his halls—someone to ward off harm.'

So he spoke, and grief came over the Argives at his
boast;
but most of all he stung war-minded Peneleos' heart;
he leapt at Acamas, and Acamas could not withstand
the onslaught of lord Peneleos. Next he stabbed Ilioneus,
son of Phorbas, rich in flocks, whom Hermes loved
most of all the Trojans, and had given him riches; and
Ilioneus was the only son his mother bore to Phorbas.

Peneleos
stabbed him below the brow, at the eye's base,
and forced out his eyeball; the spear passed straight
through
the eye-socket and the tendons of his neck, and he
collapsed,
stretching out both hands. Peneleos drew his sharp sword
and drove it at the middle of his neck, and struck off his
head,
helmet and all, and it fell to the ground. The massive spear
stayed

stuck in his eye; Peneleos lifted up the head, like a poppy-head

on its stem, and displayed it to the Trojans, and spoke boastingly:

‘Trojans, take my words and tell the dear father and mother of splendid Ilioneus to set up lamentation in their halls; nor will

the wife of Promachus, son of Alegenor, have any joy at the return of her beloved husband, whenever it is that we sons of the Achaeans sail with our ships from Troy.’

So he spoke, and trembling stole into all their limbs, and each man looked about to find some escape from sheer ruin.

Tell me now, Muses, who have your homes on Olympus, who was the first of the Achaeans to take the bloody spoils from a man killed, after the famed earthshaker turned the battle.

It was Ajax first, the son of Telamon, who stabbed Hyrtius, son of Gyrtias, captain of the stout-hearted Mysians.*

Antilochus stripped the spoils from Phalces and Mermerus, and Meriones killed Morys and Hippotion, and Teucer slew Prothoön and Periphetes.

Atreus’ son then stabbed Hyperenor, shepherd of the people,

in the side, and the bronze tore into him and let out a stream of innards; his life rushed hastily through the gaping wound, and darkness covered his eyes.

But it was Ajax, Oïleus’ swift son, who killed the most; no one was his equal at pursuing on foot when men fled in panic, after Zeus had stirred up the rout among them.

BOOK FIFTEEN

Now when the retreating Trojans had crossed the stakes
and the
ditch, and many had been beaten down at the Danaans'
hands,
they came to a stand beside their chariots and waited
there,
pale with fear and thrown into confusion; and Zeus awoke
on the peaks of Ida at the side of Hera of the golden throne,
and sprang up and stood there, and saw the Trojans and
Achaeans—
the Trojans in disorder and the Argives driving them on
from behind, and among them was the lord Poseidon.
He saw Hector lying on the plain, and around him were
sitting
his companions; he was gasping painfully, dazed, and
vomiting blood, for it was not the feeblest of the Achaeans
who had felled him. As he watched, the father of gods and
men
felt pity for him, and looking darkly at Hera addressed her:
'Hera, you are impossible to control! It is surely your evil
plotting
that has taken glorious Hector from the battle and routed
his people.
I wonder: shall I take the lash to you, and will you once
again
be the first to reap the benefit of your mischievous
scheming?
Or do you not remember when you were hung on high, and
I tied
two anvils on your feet, and twisted a golden, unbreakable

chain
around your hands? You hung there in the upper air, in
among
the clouds, and the gods on high Olympus stood around
you
distraught, but could not release you; whoever I came upon
I would seize and hurl from the threshold, and when they
reached
the earth there was little life in them.* Even so, my
ceaseless
anguish for godlike Heracles would not let my heart rest;
you had won over the North Wind's storm-blasts, and he
helped you
in your wicked scheme to send Heracles over the unresting
sea,
and then you brought him to Cos, that well-populated
island.*
But I rescued him from there, and brought him back to
horse-rearing Argos, after he had suffered many hardships.
I will remind you of this to force you to give up your
trickery,
so that you may know if your love-making in bed will profit
you—
this abandoning the gods and lying with and deceiving me.'

So he spoke, and the lady ox-eyed Hera shuddered,
and addressed him, speaking with winged words:
'May my witnesses be earth and the wide high sky above,
and the water of Styx that flows downwards,* which is
the greatest and most terrible oath among the blessed
gods,
and also your sacred head and our shared bridal bed,
a thing by which I would never swear falsely:
it is not through my desire that Poseidon the earthshaker
is afflicting the Trojans and Hector, and aiding their
enemies.

It must be that his own heart urges and commands him, for he pitied the Achaeans when he saw them hard pressed by their ships. But I would certainly advise him too to follow wherever you, lord of the dark cloud, may lead him.'

So she spoke, and the father of gods and men smiled, and he answered her, speaking with winged words:

'Lady ox-eyed Hera, if in future you were truly to be of the same mind as me when you sit with the immortal gods,

then Poseidon would quickly change his mind and follow your and my wishes, however much he wanted his own way.

However, if what you are saying really is the exact truth, go now to the assembly of the gods and summon Iris and Apollo, renowned with the bow, to come here:

Iris must go among the people of bronze-shirted Achaeans and instruct the lord Poseidon to abandon the fighting and return to his own house, and Phoebus Apollo

must stir Hector up to enter the battle, and

breathe fury into him again, to make him forget

the pain that now oppresses his heart; he must instil a

spiritless panic in the Achaeans and drive them back again,

so that they fall back in flight on the many-benched ships of

Peleus' son Achilles. He will then send his companion

Patroclus

into battle. Illustrious Hector will kill him with his spear

in front of Ilium, after Patroclus has slain many young

men, and among them my own son, glorious Sarpedon.*

In bitter rage at his death, glorious Achilles will then kill

Hector.

From that time on I shall bring about a counter-attack

from the ships, keeping it up unremittingly, until the

Achaeans

capture steep Ilium, through the designs of Athena.

But until then I shall not give up my anger, nor shall I allow

any other of the immortals to help the Danaans down there,
until I bring to fulfilment the plea of Peleus' son, just as I promised him at the beginning, and nodded my head in assent,
on the day that the goddess Thetis clasped my knees, entreating me to give honour to Achilles, sacker of cities.'

So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not disobey him,
but set off from the mountains of Ida for high Olympus. As swiftly as the astute mind of a man who has travelled through many lands darts among the many thoughts he keeps,
saying to himself, 'I wish I was in this place, or in that place,'
so speedily did the lady Hera fly away in urgent haste; and she reached steep Olympus and joined the gathering of the immortal gods in Zeus' house, and when they saw her
they all rose quickly and held out their cups in welcome. She ignored the others, but accepted a cup from Themis*
of the lovely cheeks; she was the first to meet Hera, and addressed her, speaking with winged words:
'Hera, what brings you here? You seem distraught; it must be
that the son of Cronus, your husband, has made you afraid.'

Then in answer the white-armed goddess Hera addressed her:
'Goddess Themis, do not ask me about that; you yourself know
how overbearing and unbending his spirit is. Now make the fairly apportioned feast ready in the gods' house, and you will hear, in company with all the other immortals, what dreadful deeds Zeus is about to reveal; and in case

some are
hoping to enjoy the feast, I do not think that they will all be
glad in their hearts to hear the news, neither mortals nor
gods.'

So the lady Hera spoke and took her seat, and
the gods in the house of Zeus were troubled; she smiled
with her lips, but the forehead above her dark brows
showed no softening. Angrily she addressed them all:
'What fools we are to rage witlessly against Zeus!
We are still determined to approach him and stop his
schemes
by argument or by force, but he sits apart and pays no
attention,
and has no regard for us; he says that his power and
strength
make him beyond doubt supreme among the immortal
gods.

So you must each accept whatever troubles he sends you—
as now, I believe, suffering has been laid up for Ares:
his son has been killed in the fighting—Ascalaphus,
dearest of men, whom huge Ares acknowledges his own.'

So she spoke, and Ares struck his powerful thighs
with the flat of his hands, and spoke in sorrow:
'Do not now blame me, you who have your homes on
Olympus,
if I go to the Achaeans' ships and avenge my son's
slaughter,
even if it is my destiny too to be struck down by Zeus'
thunderbolt
and to lie among the dead men, in the blood and dust.'

So he spoke, and ordered Terror and Panic to yoke
his horses, and himself put on his brightly shining armour.
Then an even greater, more painful bitterness and anger
would have arisen between Zeus and the immortal gods,
had not Athena, terrified on all the gods' behalf, leapt up

from
the throne where she was seated and run through the
doorway, and
pulled the helmet from his head and the shield from his
shoulders,
and seized the bronze spear from his massive hand and set
it aside. She rounded on impetuous Ares with these words:
'Madman, your wits are wandering! You are ruined! Your
ears hear,
but to no avail; your mind and your sense of shame have
gone!

Did you not hear what the goddess white-armed Hera said

—

she who only now has come from Olympian Zeus?
Do you really want to take your full measure of punishment,
and then be forced to come back, chastened, to Olympus,
and sow the seeds of great suffering for the rest of us?
Because Zeus will quickly abandon the high-hearted Trojans
and
Achaeans, and will make for us on Olympus with violence in
mind,
and will lay hands on us, one after another, guilty and
innocent alike.

So I tell you now to give up your bitterness over your son;
many a man, better than him in his hands' strength, has
been killed
before now, and will be killed again. It would be a hard
thing
to keep safe the children and offspring of every mortal man
there is.'

So she spoke, and made impetuous Ares sit back on his
throne.

Then Hera summoned Apollo to come out of the house,
and Iris, she who carries messages between the gods,
and addressed them, speaking with winged words:

‘Zeus orders you both to go to him on Ida as quickly as you can;
when you have arrived and looked upon the face of Zeus,
you must do whatever he orders and instructs you.’

So the lady Hera spoke, and went back into the house
and
sat down on her throne; and the two gods darted off in
flight,
and came to Ida of the many springs, mother of wild
beasts,
and found wide-thundering Zeus sitting on the height of
Gargarus, and a fragrant cloud encircled him like a crown.
The two gods came and stood before Zeus who gathers the
clouds;
and when he saw them he was not angry in his heart,
because they had quickly obeyed the words of his dear
wife.

He addressed Iris first, speaking with winged words:
‘Away now, swift Iris, and go to the lord Poseidon,
and report to him all that I say, and do not be a false
messenger:
tell him to leave the battle and the fighting alone and to
join the assembly of gods, or else to go back into the bright
sea.

If he does not obey my orders, and makes light of them,
then let him reflect in his mind and in his heart that,
mighty though he is, he may not have the endurance to
resist my onset, since I reckon myself much stronger than
him,
and older by birth; but his heart does not baulk at thinking
himself
my equal, even though the other gods live in dread of me.’

So he spoke, and wind-footed swift Iris did not disobey
him,
but dived down from the mountains of Ida to sacred Ilium.

As when snow or freezing hail drops from the clouds at the onset

of a blast from the North Wind, whose birth is in the upper air,

so rapidly swift Iris dropped down, impatient to be off, and standing nearby addressed the famed shaker of the earth:

‘Dark-haired encircler of the earth, I have come here bringing a message to you from Zeus who wears the aegis. He orders you to leave the battle and the fighting alone and to

join the assembly of gods, or else to go back into the bright sea.

If you do not obey his orders, and make light of them, he threatens to come here in person and fight you, matching

strength to strength; he warns you to keep out of the reach of his hands, since he reckons himself much stronger than you,

and older by birth; but your heart does not baulk at thinking

yourself his equal, even though the other gods live in dread of him.’

Then, deeply angered, the renowned earthshaker answered:

‘This is too much! Great though he is, he has spoken arrogantly,

if he wants to restrain me by force against my will, when I am

his equal in honour. We are three brothers, borne by Rhea to Cronus,

Zeus and myself, and the third is Hades, who rules over the dead.

The world was divided into three, and each was given his portion:

when the lots were shaken I was awarded the grey salt sea,
to live in it for ever; Hades drew the murky darkness, and
Zeus the wide high sky, among the clouds and upper air,
but the earth and high Olympus were left common to all
three.*

So I shall not live according to Zeus' will, not at all. Let him
live at his ease in his third portion, powerful though he is,
and let him not try to frighten me with his hands' strength,
as if I were some abject coward; it would be better for him
to

use his violent threats on his sons and daughters, his own
children,

who are under compulsion to listen to the orders that he
gives.'

Then in answer wind-footed swift Iris spoke to him:
'Dark-haired encircler of the earth, is this then the grim and
unyielding message that I am to take back to Zeus? Will
you not
change your mind, just a little? Good men's minds can be
swayed.

You know how the Furies always side with the firstborn.'*

Then in answer Poseidon the earthshaker addressed
her:

'Goddess Iris, what you say is surely according to due
measure;

and it is an excellent thing when a messenger is right-
thinking.

But this is a bitter grief that comes over my heart and
spirit,

when Zeus is minded to rebuke with harsh words one who
has an equal share, and has been allotted a like portion.

Still, though I am indignant, I will give way for now; but
I will tell you another thing, and it is a threat straight from
my heart:

if against my will, and the will of Athena who gathers the

spoil,
and against the will of Hera and Hermes and lord
Hephaestus—
if he spares steep Ilium and is unwilling to sack it, and
refuses to give a great victory to the Argives, he should
know that the bitterness between us will be without
remedy.'

So speaking the shaker of the earth left the Achaean
army
and dived into the sea; and the Achaean heroes felt his
absence.
Then Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed Apollo:
'Go now, dear Phoebus, and look for bronze-helmeted
Hector;
the encircler and shaker of the earth has by now
gone away into the sacred sea, avoiding my sheer anger—
or else others too would certainly have heard of our
quarrel,
even the gods who live with Cronus below the earth.*
But this course was a far better thing for me and for him,
that
though he was angry before he should avoid my hands,
since the matter would not have been settled without
sweat.

Come now, take the tasselled aegis* in your hands and
shake it fiercely to put the Achaean heroes to flight, and,
shooter from afar, let illustrious Hector be your special
care:
stir up great fury in him until such time as the Achaeans
in their flight come to their ships and the Hellespont;
from that moment on I myself will plan in word and deed
how the Achaeans may in turn gain a breathing-space from
their toil.'

So he spoke, and Apollo was not deaf to his father's
words,

but set off down from Ida's mountains like a hawk,
a swift killer of doves, the fastest of all flying creatures.
He found glorious Hector, wise Priam's son, no longer lying
down, but sitting up; he had just recovered his senses, and
could now
recognize his companions around him. His gasping and
sweating
ceased, once the mind of Zeus the aegis-wearer had roused
him.

Standing close, Apollo who shoots from afar addressed him:
'Hector, son of Priam, why do you sit here apart from the
rest,
with little life in you? Has some disaster overtaken you?'

Exhausted, Hector of the glittering helmet answered
him:

'Which of the gods are you, lord, who ask me this, face to
face?

Did you not hear how, as I was killing his companions
by the sterns of the Achaean ships, Ajax, master of the war-
cry,
hit me in the chest with a rock, and stopped my surging
courage?

Indeed, I had thought that on this day I would breathe out
my dear life and pass down to the dead and the house of
Hades.'

Then in answer lord Apollo who shoots from afar
addressed him:

'Take courage now; such is the helper whom the son of
Cronus

has sent to you from Ida, to stand by and defend you—
I, Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, am protecting you
as I have done before, both you yourself and your steep
citadel.

So come now, command your many charioteers to
drive their swift horses up against the hollow ships;

I shall go ahead of them and make the whole way smooth for the horses; and I shall put the Achaean heroes to flight.'

So he spoke and breathed great fury into the shepherd of the people.

As when a horse that is kept in a stall and fed full with barley
breaks its tether and gallops exultantly, hoofs drumming,
over the plain, since its habit is to bathe in the waters
of a sweet-flowing river; it holds its head high, and its mane
flows about its shoulders, and confident in its splendour
its legs carry it easily to the haunts and pastures of horses;
so swiftly did Hector move his knees and legs, and urge
on his charioteers, when he had heard the voice of the god.
As when men who live in the country set out with their
dogs in swift pursuit of a horned stag or a wild goat,
but it is saved by a sheer rock-face and a shady wood,
and it was not after all their due destiny to catch it;
but hearing the shouts a bearded lion appears in their way,
and at once sends them running back, despite their
resolve;
so the Danaans for a while kept up the pursuit in a body,
jabbing at the enemy with swords and double-edged
spears;
but when they saw Hector ranging up and down the ranks
of men
they were all terrified, and their spirits dropped beside their
feet.

Then Thoas, the son of Andraemon, spoke among them;
he was
by far the best of the Aetolians, both skilled in spear-
throwing and
a fine man in standing combat, and few Achaeans could
defeat him
in the assembly, whenever the young men competed in
debate.

With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them:
'This is indeed a great marvel that I see before my eyes!
Here he is once again, escaping death's spectres and rising
up—

Hector I mean! The heart of each one of us surely hoped
that he had died at the hands of Ajax, son of Telamon;
but now some god has rescued him and kept him alive,
Hector, who has indeed loosened the knees of many
Danaans,

and will, I think, do so again—for it is not without the will
of loud-thundering Zeus that he stands raging in the front
ranks.

So come, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:
let us order the mass of soldiery to turn back to the ships,
while those of us who claim to be the best fighters in the
army
make a stand with spears held before us, in the hope that
we can
meet and hold off his first assault; I think that he, for all his
heart's raging, will be afraid to plunge into the mass of
Danaans.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he
said.

And those who were led by Ajax and lord Idomeneus,
and by Teucer and Meriones, and by Meges, the equal of
Ares,
called on the best men and formed a close-set battle-line,
intending to face Hector and the Trojans; and behind them
the mass of soldiery retreated towards the Achaeans' ships.

Now the Trojans pressed forward in a body, and Hector
led them
with long strides; and in front of him went Phoebus Apollo,
his shoulders wrapped in a cloud, and holding the surging
aegis,
terrible with its shaggy fringe, and shining brightly, that

Hephaestus

the bronze-smith had given to Zeus to carry, to make men
flee in terror;

holding this in his hands Apollo led the people forward.

The Argives massed and resisted them, and a piercing
clamour

arose from both sides. Arrows sprang from bowstrings,
and spears in great numbers flew from bold hands;

some pierced the bodies of young men, swift in the fight,
but many fell in the middle ground before reaching white
flesh

and stuck in the earth, longing to glut themselves on flesh.

As long as Phoebus Apollo held the aegis steady in his
hands,

both sides' missiles struck home, and the people kept
falling;

but when he looked full in the faces of the swift-horsed
Danaans

and shook it, and himself gave a great loud shout, he
stupefied

the hearts in their breasts, and they forgot their surging
courage.

As two wild beasts drive a herd of cattle or a great flock of
sheep

into turmoil, coming on them suddenly in the depth of
black night, when there is no herdsman at hand, so the
Achaeans fled in terror, spiritless; for Apollo let confusion
loose among them, and gave the glory to Hector and the
Trojans.

Then, when they had broken the battle-front, man killed
man.

Hector slew Stichius and Arcesilaus,

one the leader of the bronze-shirted Boeotians, and

the other the trusty companion of great-spirited

Menestheus,

and Aeneas killed and stripped Medon and Iasus.
Now Medon was the bastard son of godlike Oïleus
and so half-brother to Ajax, but his home was in Phylace,*
far from his native land, because he had killed a man,*
the brother of his stepmother Eriopis, wife of Oïleus;
and Iasus was one of the captains of the Athenians,
and was called the son of Sphelus, who was Boucolus' son.
Polydamas slew Mecisteus, and Polites killed Echius
in the battle's forefront, and glorious Agenor killed Clonius.
As Deïochus fled with the front-fighters Paris hit him at
the base of his shoulder, and drove the bronze clean
through.

While the Trojans were stripping these men's armour,
the Achaeans
rushed frantically this way and that, entangled in the stakes
and
ditch that they had dug, and were forced to fall back behind
the wall.

Then Hector called out to the Trojans with a great shout:
'Leave these bloodstained spoils, and press on to the ships!
If I see anyone going to any other place, and not to the
ships,
I shall make sure he dies there on the spot, and the men
and
women of his family will not give him the due rite of
burning,
but dogs will tear him to pieces in front of our city.'

So he spoke, and with a downward swing of his
shoulders whipped
his horses, and called out along the Trojan ranks; and they
all went
with him, raising a stupendous clamour, driving their
chariot-hauling
horses onward. And in front of them Phoebus Apollo
kicked down the banks of the deep ditch with ease,

making a heap out of them in its midst, and built up
a long, broad causeway, as wide as the cast of a spear
when a man throws it to make trial of his strength.
Over this the Trojans poured in massed order, and in front
Apollo held out the precious aegis; and with great ease
he broke down the Achaean wall, just as a boy builds
sandcastles on the seashore, in the way that children have,
and
then delights in knocking them over again with hands and
feet.
So you, lord Apollo, shattered the immense toil and labour
of the Achaeans, and provoked them to panic-stricken
flight.

So the Achaeans halted beside the ships and stopped
there,
calling out to each other and holding up their hands
to all the gods, and praying fervently, each and every man;
and Nestor the Gerenian, protector of the Achaeans, prayed
hardest of all, lifting his hands up to the starry high sky:
'Father Zeus, if ever one of us back in Argos, rich in wheat,
burnt for you the thigh-bones of ox or sheep, wrapped in
fat,
and prayed for his return, and you assented and promised
it,
remember that now, Olympian, and keep the pitiless day
from us,
and do not let the Trojans beat the Achaeans down in this
way.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus the counsellor
thundered loudly,
when he heard the prayers of the old man, son of Neleus.

But when the Trojans heard the thunder of Zeus the
aegis-wearer
they called up their battle-lust and charged harder at the
Argives.

Just as when on the wide ways of the sea a huge wave,
driven on by the wind's violence—for this is what chiefly
causes the waves to swell—sweeps over the gunwales of a
ship,
so the Trojans swept over the wall with a loud yell,
driving their chariots on, and began a close-combat fight
by the sterns: the Trojans from chariots, with double-edged
spears,
and the Achaeans, after climbing high on to their black
ships,
with the long jointed pikes that they had lying in the ships
for fighting at sea,* clothed at their point in bronze.

Now Patroclus, as long as the Achaeans and Trojans
were
fighting around the wall, some way from the swift ships,
was sitting in the hut of kindly Eurypylus, and
cheering him with talk, and spreading ointments
over his aching wound to soothe his black pains;*
but when he saw that the Trojans were charging at the wall,
and that shouting and panic were spreading among the
Danaans,
he groaned aloud, and striking both thighs with the flat
of his hands spoke in lamentation to Eurypylus:
'Eurypylus, I can no longer stay here with you, however
much you need me, for a great conflict has now arisen.
Let your attendant look after you now, and I shall
go quickly to Achilles, to persuade him into the fighting.
Who knows if, with some god's help, I may arouse his spirit
by my persuasion? A friend's persuasion is a potent thing.'

So he spoke, and left on quick feet. Meanwhile the
Achaeans
were stoutly holding off the Trojans' attack, but they could
not
drive them from the ships, though they were fewer in
number;

nor could the Trojans ever break the companies of the Danaans,
and so make their way in among their huts and ships.
As a carpenter's cord in the hands of a skilful craftsman,
a man who is proficient in every kind of craft through Athena's guidance, makes a straight line along a ship's timber,
so the fierce fighting was stretched taut between them.
Some were fighting round one ship, and some round another;
but Hector made straight for splendid Ajax, to engage him,
and the pair of them toiled in battle around a single ship;
but
neither could Hector drive Ajax away and hurl fire into the ship,
nor could Ajax force him back, since a god was urging him on.
Then glorious Ajax hit Caletor, the son of Clytius, in the chest
with a spear as he was bringing fire up to the ship, and
he fell with a thud, and the torch dropped from his hand.
When Hector saw that his cousin had fallen in the dust
before his eyes, in front of the black ship,
he called out to the Trojans and Lycians with a great shout:
'Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters,
do not back away from the battle in this narrow space,
but rescue Clytius' son, so that the Achaeans do not strip
his armour, now that he has fallen in the assembly of the ships.'

So Hector spoke, and let fly a shining spear at Ajax,
but missed him, and hit Lycophron, son of Mastor,
an attendant of Ajax from Cythera, who lived with him
because he had killed a man in sacred Cythera;
the sharp bronze struck him on the head above his ear
as he stood next to Ajax, and he fell from the ship's stern

on to his back in the dust, and his limbs were loosened.
Ajax shuddered, and addressed his brother:
'Dear Teucer, look, our trusty companion has been killed—
Mastor's son from Cythera, whom we honoured at home
in our halls as much as we did our own dear parents.
Great-spirited Hector has killed him; where now are your
swift
death-bearing arrows, and the bow that Phoebus Apollo
gave you?'

So he spoke, and Teucer understood, and ran up to
stand beside him,
carrying in his hand his curved bow and the quiver that
held
his arrows, and at once began to shoot his arrows at the
Trojans.
And he hit Cleitus, the splendid son of Peisenor, the
companion
of Polydamas, who was the splendid son of Panthous,
as he held the reins in his hands, for he was busy with his
horses,
driving them to where the companies' confusion was
thickest,
hoping to please Hector and the Trojans; but disaster soon
overtook him, and no one could ward it off, though they
longed to.
The grief-bearing arrow lodged in the back of his neck,
and he toppled from the chariot, and his horses shied away,
making the empty chariot rattle. Lord Polydamas quickly
saw
this, and came up before anyone else to head the horses
off;
he then gave them to Astynous, son of Protiaon, urging him
strongly to keep him in sight and hold them nearby.
Then he himself went back and joined the front-fighters.

Next, Teucer aimed another arrow at bronze-helmeted

Hector,
and he would have ended the battle by the Achaean ships
if he had hit him and taken away his life in his time of
triumph;
but he did not catch the crafty mind of Zeus unawares, who
was protecting Hector, and even as Teucer drew the well-
twisted
string on his blameless bow at Hector, Zeus broke it, and
robbed
Telamon's son of his glory; the bronze-weighted shaft
swerved off its target, and the bow dropped from his hand.
At this Teucer shuddered, and addressed his brother:
'Some divine being must be cutting all our battle-plans
short!
He has knocked the bow from my hand, and broken
the newly twisted string that I tied this morning,
so that it would stand up to the volleys of my leaping
arrows.'

Then in answer huge Ajax, son of Telamon, spoke:
'Dear brother, leave your bow and quick-flying arrows to lie
here; some god has a grudge against the Danaans and has
made them useless. Take a long spear in your hand and a
shield
on your shoulder, and do battle with the Trojans, and stir up
the rest
of the people. Even if they defeat us, let them not capture
our
well-benched ships without a struggle; let us call up our
battle-lust!'

So he spoke, and Teucer laid his bow down in his hut,
and slung about his shoulders a shield with four hide layers,
and set on his mighty head a well-made helmet with a
horsehair crest; and the plume nodded terribly above it.
He picked up a stout spear, tipped with sharp bronze,

and set off running quickly, and took his stand by Ajax's side.

Now when Hector saw that Teucer's weapons were useless,
he called out to the Trojans and Lycians with a great shout:
'Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters,
now be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage,
here by the hollow ships; I have seen with my own eyes
how Zeus has ruined one of their best men's weapons.
Courage that comes from Zeus can easily be discerned by
men,
both by those to whom he pledges the glory of victory,
and by those whom he makes weak and has no wish to
defend—
just as now he is weakening the Argives' fury, and helping
us.

So mass together and fight by the ships, and if any of you
meets his due death, whether struck from afar or in close
fight,
let him die, for it is no ugly thing if a man dies fighting for
his country; his wife and children will be safe in the future,
and his house and plot of land will be unharmed, if one day
the Achaeans sail away in their ships to their dear native
land.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in every
man.

On the other side, Ajax called out to his companions:
'Shame, Argives! It is now certain that we shall either die,
or be saved and drive this danger away from our ships.
Do you really think that, if Hector of the glittering helmet
takes
the ships, you can all get back to your native land on foot?
Can you not hear Hector urging on all his people?
You can see how great his rage is to set the ships on fire;
it is not a dance he is inviting you to, but a fight.

For us, there can be no better plan or stratagem than to match hands and fury with them in close combat; better to decide things once and for all, to die or to survive, than to be slowly crushed like this in a grim struggle beside the ships, at the hands of men worse than us.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in every man.

Then Hector killed Schedius, the son of Perimedes, a captain of the Phocians, and Ajax killed Laodamas, Antenor's splendid son, a leader of foot-soldiers.

Polydamas slew Otus, a man from Cyllene, companion of Phyleus' son Meges, captain of the great-spirited Epeians.

When Meges saw this he leapt at him, but Polydamas swayed

out of his reach, and Meges missed him—Apollo would not let Panthous' son be beaten down in the front-fighters—and stabbed Croesmus in the middle of his chest with his spear.

Croesmus fell with a thud, and Meges began to strip the gear

from his shoulders, but as he did so Dolops sprang at him—an expert spearman, who was Laomedon's grandson, and the mightiest of Lampus' sons, well skilled in surging courage;

he now closed with Meges and leapt at him, jabbing his spear

at the middle of his shield, but the close-set corslet he wore protected him with its fitted plates. Meges' father Phyleus had once brought this from Ephyre,* from the river Selleïs; a guest-friend there, Euphetes, lord of men, had given it to him

to wear in war as a defence against men of the enemy, and now it kept destruction away from his son's flesh.

Meges thrust with his ash spear at the topmost plate

of Dolops' bronze helmet with its horsehair plume, and broke off the plume of horsehair, and it fell in one piece, bright with fresh sea-purple dye, to the dusty ground. For a time Dolops stood his ground and fought, hoping for victory,

but then warlike Menelaus came up to help Meges, and stood with a spear at his side, unnoticed, and hit Dolops

in the shoulder from behind; the eager spear, speeding forward, came out through his chest, and he crumpled and fell headlong.

Meges and Menelaus came up to strip the bronze armour from his shoulders, but Hector called out to his kinsmen, every one of them, and the first he rebuked was Hicetaon's son,

mighty Melanippus. For a while, before the enemy came, this man used to pasture his shambling cattle in Percote,* but when the well-balanced ships of the Danaans arrived he returned to Ilium, and excelled among the Trojans, and lived near Priam, who honoured him like his own children.

It was he whom Hector rebuked; he spoke, calling him by name:

'Melanippus, are we to give up like this? Is your dear heart not moved at all at your cousin's killing? Can you not see how they are busying themselves with stripping Dolops' gear?

Come with me; we can no longer stand off from the Argives,

but must fight with them until either we kill them, or they destroy steep Ilium from top to bottom, and slaughter her citizens.'

So he spoke, and led the way, and the godlike man went with him.

But huge Ajax, son of Telamon, urged on the Argives:
'Be men, my friends, and put shame in your hearts, and in
the harsh crush of battle have regard for what other men
think;
when men fear disgrace in others' sight, more escape than
are killed,
but there can be no strength or glory in panic-stricken
flight.'

So he spoke, and they too raged to drive the enemy
back,
and lodged his words in their hearts, and fenced the ships
with a wall of bronze; and Zeus roused the Trojans against
them.

Then Menelaus, master of the war-cry, prompted
Antilochus:

'Antilochus, there is no one among the young Achaeans
who is swifter of foot or braver than you in the fight;
see if you can leap out and strike down some man of the
Trojans.'

So he spoke, and hurried back; he had roused
Antilochus,
who leapt forward from among the front-fighters, looked
keenly
around him, and threw his shining spear. As he let the spear
go
the Trojans gave ground, and the weapon did not fly in vain,
but hit Hicetaon's son, the arrogant Melanippus,
on the breast next to his nipple as he entered the battle;
he fell with a thud, and darkness covered his eyes.
Antilochus sprang at him like a hound pouncing on
a wounded fawn that a hunter shoots at and hits
as it leaps up from its den, and unlooses its limbs;
so Antilochus, steadfast in battle, leapt on you, Melannipus,
intent on stripping your armour. But glorious Hector saw
him,

and came running up through the fighting to meet him.
Antilochus, swift fighter though he was, could not withstand him,
and fled like a wild beast that has done some hideous thing,
killing either a dog or a herdsman tending his cattle,
and flees before a body of men can be assembled;
so the son of Nestor fled, and the Trojans and Hector
showered him with whirring missiles, making an astonishing noise;
he reached the mass of his companions, and turned and stood.

Now the Trojans, in the likeness of flesh-eating lions,
kept charging at the ships, fulfilling the commands of Zeus,
who all the time woke great fury in them, but beguiled the hearts

of the Argives and took away their glory, and roused the Trojans;

in his heart he wished to give the glory to Hector, son of Priam, so that he might hurl awesome, unwearying fire on to the curved ships, and so fulfil all of the immoderate prayer of Thetis. And so Zeus the counsellor was waiting for his eyes to catch sight of the glare of a ship on fire, since he intended the Trojans from that very moment to be driven back from the ships, and to give glory to the Danaans.

With this in mind, he was urging Hector, Priam's son, to attack

the hollow ships, though Hector himself was now raging to do so;

he was mad like Ares, wielder of the spear, or like deadly fire

that rages over mountains, in the thickets of a deep wood;
there was foam around his mouth, and his eyes
flashed beneath his fierce brows, and about his temples

the helmet shook terrifyingly as Hector fought—
for Zeus himself in the high sky was his ally,
Zeus who gave him honour and glory, choosing him to be
one man out of a great many, since he was to be short-
lived;
and already Pallas Athena was bringing on the day of
his due destiny, at the hands of the violent son of Peleus.
And indeed he was longing to test the ranks of men and
break them,
wherever he saw the greatest numbers and the finest
armour;
but even so he could not break them, raging wildly though
he was,
since they stood tower-like in close formation, like a
huge sheer cliff that stands on the edge of the grey sea,
and holds out against the shrill winds' scurrying paths
and the waves that roll in and break against it.
So the Danaans stubbornly withstood the Trojans, and did
not run.
But Hector, blazing all around like fire, leapt into their
mass,
falling upon them like a violent wave, wind-nurtured
by storm-clouds, that crashes on to a swift ship; it is
covered
all over in foam, and the wind's fearful blast
roars in its sail, and the sailors tremble in their hearts
in terror, only just being carried out of the way of death;
just so the spirits in the Achaeans' breasts were torn apart.
But Hector came on like a murderous lion falling on cattle
that are grazing in the low-lying land of a great water-
meadow
in their thousands, and the herdsman with them does not
know
how to fight off a beast from the carcass of a crook-horned
cow,
and so all the time walks alongside the cattle at the front

or at the rear; and the lion leaps into the middle of the herd
and
devours a cow, and all the rest cower in fear. So then the
Achaeans
were panicked into amazing flight by Hector and father
Zeus,
all of them; but Hector killed only one man, Periphetes from
Mycenae, the dear son of Copreus, who used to carry
messages from lord Eurystheus to the mighty hero
Heracles.

This inferior man had fathered a son much better than him
in every kind of excellence, in speed of foot and in fighting,
who was in understanding among the finest in Mycenae.

It was he who now bestowed greater glory on Hector:
as he turned to retreat he tripped on the rim of the shield
that

he carried, one that reached to his feet, a rampart against
spears;

stumbling against this he fell on his back, and as he fell
to the ground his helmet rang mightily about his temples.

Hector was quick to see him, and ran up and stood close
by,

and planted a spear in his chest, killing him in front of his
dear companions; despite their distress they could not help
their

companion, for they themselves were terrified of glorious
Hector.

The Argives were now in amongst their ships, and the
topmost

line that had been hauled up first was protecting them; but
the

Trojans poured in after them, and they were forced to
retreat

from the nearer ships, and rallied by the huts in close
formation,

and did not scatter throughout the camp, for shame and fear restrained them; and they kept shouting encouragement to each other.

Now Nestor the Gerenian, protector of the Achaeans, more than

anyone entreated them and appealed to each in his parents' name:

'Be men, my friends, and put shame in your hearts, shame before other men; and each one of you must call to mind his wife and children, his possessions and his parents, whether his parents are living or dead; though they are not here, it is on their account that I beg you to stand your ground resolutely, and not to be turned to flight.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each man.

And Athena drove an amazing cloud of mist from their eyes,*

and the bright light of day shone out for them on both sides,

both from the ships and from the equally balanced battlefield, and

they could make out Hector, master of the war-cry, and his companions,

both those who were holding back in the rear and not fighting,

and those who were fighting in the battle by the swift ships.

Now great-hearted Ajax was not content in spirit to take his stand

in the place where the other sons of the Achaeans had retreated,

but kept ranging up and down the ships' half-decks* with huge strides,

wielding in his hands a huge pike that was used for sea-

fighting,
firmly jointed with dowels, and twenty-two cubits long.
As a man well skilled in horsemanship, who from many
horses
has harnessed together four and drives them at speed
from the plain towards a great city, along the public way,
and many people marvel at him, both men and women,
as he leaps from horse to horse, changing his stance but
all the time keeping secure on his feet, while the horses fly
along;*_
so Ajax kept ranging from deck to deck of the swift ships,
taking huge strides, and his voice reached the high sky
in constant terrible shouts, as he called to the Danaans
to defend their ships and huts. Nor did Hector
stay behind among the mass of close-armoured Trojans,
but just as a tawny eagle swoops down on a flock
of winged birds that are feeding beside a river—
geese or cranes, or swans with long necks—
so Hector made straight for a dark-prowed ship,
dashing right up to it; and from behind Zeus pushed him
with his huge hand, and urged his people to go with him.

Now once again bitter fighting broke out beside the
ships;
you would think that the men felt no weariness or fatigue
as they grappled with each other, so fiercely did they fight.
And as they struggled these were the thoughts of each
side:
the Achaeans did not think they could avoid disaster, but
would die, while the heart in the breast of each Trojan
hoped
to set the ships on fire and to kill the Achaean heroes;
these were
the thoughts in their minds as they stood up to face each
other.
Then Hector laid hold of the stern of a sea-traversing ship,

a fine ship, swift over the sea, which had brought
Protesilaus
to Troy, but did not take him back again to his native land.*
It was around his ship that the Achaeans and Trojans
were now cutting each other down, hand to hand; no longer
did they wait at a distance for volleys of arrows or spears,
but stood up at close quarters, both sides being of one
mind,
and fought with sharpened axes and hatchets,
and with great swords and double-edged spears.
Many fine swords with black hilts fell to the ground,
some from hands, some cut from the shoulders of
men as they fought; and the earth ran dark with blood.
Once Hector had laid hold of the stern he did not let it go,
but
gripping the sternpost with his hands called out to the
Trojans:
'Bring fire! Mass all together, and renew the battle!
Now Zeus has given us a day to make up for all the rest—
a chance to capture the ships that came here against the
gods' will,
and caused us great suffering, through the cowardice of old
men,
who though I was eager to fight by the ships' sterns
persisted in holding me back and restraining my men.
But if wide-thundering Zeus was then wrecking our wits,
now he is himself encouraging and directing us onward.'

So he spoke, and they charged more fiercely at the
Argives.
Ajax, overwhelmed by missiles, could no longer withstand
them;
thinking he was about to die, he fell back a little way,
leaving
the well-balanced ship's decks, on to a seven-foot thwart.
There he stood, alert, constantly thrusting the Trojans back

from
the ships with his pike, whenever one brought up
unwearying fire;
and all the time he called out orders to the Danaans,
shouting terribly:
'Friends, heroes of the Danaans, attendants of Ares—
now be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage!
Do we suppose that there are men behind to help us, or
that
there is a better wall, one that can keep ruin away from
men?
There is certainly no tower-surrounded city nearby, where
we could
find a force to turn the battle's tide and so save ourselves.
No, we are here on the plain of the close-armoured Trojans,
with our backs to the sea and far from our native land;
salvation lies in our arms, not in some slackening of war!'

So he spoke, and dashed forward, raging with his sharp
spear;
and whenever any Trojan rushed up to the hollow ships
with blazing fire, in obedience to Hector's commands,
Ajax was waiting with his long spear and jabbed at him;
twelve men he wounded, at close quarters in front of the
ships.

BOOK SIXTEEN

So they continued fighting around the well-benched ship; but Patroclus stood beside Achilles, shepherd of the people, weeping warm tears, like a spring of black water that pours its dark stream down a sheer rock-face. Swift-footed glorious Achilles felt pity when he saw him, and addressed him, speaking with winged words: 'Patroclus, why are you weeping like a little girl who runs at her mother's side and demands to be carried, clutching at her dress, tugging her back as she tries to hurry, and tearfully looking up at her until she is picked up? That is what you are like, Patroclus, weeping soft tears. Have you something to say to the Myrmidons, or to me, or have you heard some message from Phthia, touching you alone? Yet men say that Menoetius, son of Actor, is still living, and Peleus, son of Aeacus, still lives among the Myrmidons — these are two whose death we would be grieved to hear about. Or perhaps you are weeping for the way that the Argives are dying by the hollow ships, as a result of their own arrogance? Tell me, do not hide it in your heart, so that we may both know.'

Then, charioteer Patroclus, you groaned heavily and addressed him:

'Achilles, son of Peleus, by far the greatest of the Achaeans, do not be angry. Yes, great distress has crushed the

Achaean:

all those who before this were the best of us are lying
in their ships, wounded by thrown or stabbing weapons.

Diomedes, the mighty son of Tydeus, has been hit,

Odysseus

the renowned spearman and Agamemnon have been
stabbed,

and Eurypylus has been hit by an arrow in the thigh.

Healers skilled in medicines are now busy about these men,
treating their wounds—but you, Achilles, cannot be moved.

O valiant man! May bitterness such as you store inside
yourself

never grip me; how will you benefit men yet unborn

if you do not now protect the Argives from ugly ruin?

You are without pity—your father was not the horseman

Peleus,

nor Thetis your mother, but it was the grey sea and sheer
cliffs

that bore you, so unbending is your spirit. If in your heart
you are seeking to avoid some divine pronouncement, and
your revered mother has brought you a message from
Zeus,

at least send me out, and send the rest of the Myrmidon
people

with me, and perhaps I shall prove the salvation of the
Danaans.

Give me your armour to wear around my shoulders, and
then the Trojans may mistake me for you, and hold back
from the fighting, and the Achaeans' warlike sons will
breathe again

in their weariness; there is little enough breathing-space in
war.

Those who are unwearied may easily drive men exhausted
in the conflict away from the ships and huts, back to their
city.'

So he spoke, entreating, great fool that he was, for it was to be his own dreadful death and its spectre that he was praying for.

Deeply angered, swift-footed Achilles addressed him: 'O Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, what are you saying? I know of no divine pronouncement that should concern me,

nor has my revered mother brought me a message from Zeus;

no, this is a bitter grief that has come over my heart and spirit,

when a man is ready to dispossess his equal and to take back a prize, because he is the greater in power; that is my bitter grief, after all the pains my heart has endured.

The girl whom the sons of the Achaeans chose as a prize for me,

whom I won with my spear when I sacked a strongly walled city—

lord Agamemnon, Atreus' son, has taken her back from my hands,

as if I were some wandering migrant who has lost his rights. Still, all that is past and done; we should let it go. It is after all

impossible to keep bitterness alive in one's heart for ever, though I did think that I would not give up my anger until war and its clamour reached as far as my ships.

Here, put my famous armour around your shoulders and lead the Myrmidons who love war into the battle, now that a dark menacing cloud of Trojans is surrounding our ships, and the Argives are hemmed in on the shore of the sea, and hold on to only a narrow strip of land, and the whole Trojan city has come out against them, full of daring, because they cannot see my helmet's frontal gleaming close to them. They would soon flee and fill up

the watercourses with their dead, if only lord Agamemnon had

used me kindly; as it is, they are fighting all around our camp.

The spear of Diomedes, Tydeus' son, rages no more in his hands to keep destruction away from the Danaans, nor have I yet heard the voice of Atreus' son shouting from his hated mouth; it is man-slaying Hector's voice that bursts around us as he urges on the Trojans, while they fill the whole plain with their war-shout and defeat us in the battle.

Despite all this, Patroclus, you must attack them with vigour

and keep destruction from the ships, so that they do not burn them with blazing fire, and rob us of our longed-for return.

Now listen, and I shall put the purpose of my instructions in your mind:

you must win great honour and glory for me in the sight of all the Danaans, so that they will send the beautiful girl back to me, and give me splendid gifts in addition. When you have driven the Trojans from the ships, come back; and if

Hera's loud-thundering husband grants you the winning of glory,

do not set your heart on fighting against the war-loving Trojans without me, because then you will diminish my honour

. And do not, as you take delight in the war and conflict, killing Trojans as you go, lead your troops on to Ilium, in case one of the ever-living gods of Olympus enters the battle

against you; Apollo who shoots from afar loves them dearly. Instead, turn back again once you have brought salvation's light to the ships, and leave the others to fight on the plain. O father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, how I wish that

of all the Trojans there are, none could escape death, nor any of the Argives, and that we two could avoid destruction, so that we alone could tear down the sacred headdress of Troy!' *

So they spoke, one to another, in this way; but Ajax, overwhelmed by flying weapons, could no longer stand his ground—both the will of Zeus and the splendid Trojans' spear-casts were beating him down, and his shining helmet rang terribly about his temples as it was struck, battered again and again on its well-made cheek-plates. His left shoulder was tiring from constantly holding his glittering shield steady; but though they kept throwing at him they could not knock it from his grasp. All the time he was gripped by a painful gasping, and sweat was running down in streams from all his limbs, and he had no chance to draw breath; everywhere disaster was piled on disaster.

Tell me now, Muses who have your homes on Olympus, how fire first fell upon the ships of the Achaeans.

Hector drew close to Ajax and struck his ash pike with his great sword, hitting it at the socket below the point, and sheared the tip clean away; Telamon's son Ajax kept shaking the docked pole in his hand, uselessly, and far away from him the bronze head fell with a clang to the ground. Ajax shuddered, realizing in his blameless heart that this was the work of gods, that Zeus the high-thunderer was cutting their plans short, and plotting victory for the Trojans.

He gave way before the missiles, and the Trojans threw
unwearying
fire on to the swift ship, and unquenchable flames quickly
spread
over it. So fire swirled round the stern; but Achilles
struck both his thighs and addressed Patroclus: ‘
Up with you Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, driver of horses!
I can see the blaze of destructive fire, there, by the ships;
I am afraid they will take our ships, and then there will be
no way
to escape; so put your armour on, quickly, while I gather
the people.’

So he spoke, and Patroclus began to arm himself in
flashing bronze.

First he fastened greaves around his legs,
fine ones, fitted with silver ankle-clasps;
next he put on round his chest the elaborately crafted,
star-decorated corslet of swift-footed Aeacus’ grandson.
Over his shoulders he threw a silver-riveted sword,
made of bronze, and after that a huge, massive shield.
On his powerful head he set a well-fashioned helmet
with a horse-tail crest; and the plume nodded terribly above
him.

Then he chose two stout spears, which fitted his grasp.
The only weapon of Aeacus’ blameless grandson he did not
take

was his spear, heavy, thick, and massive; none of the
Achaeans
could brandish it, but only Achilles knew how to handle it—
the

Pelian ash spear, which Cheiron had long ago given to his
dear father,

cut from a peak on Pelion,* to be the death of heroes.

Patroclus ordered Automedon to yoke the horses without
delay,

Automedon, whom he honoured most after Achilles,
breaker
of ranks, and could trust most of all to wait for his call in
battle.

So Automedon led the swift horses under the yoke for him
—

Xanthus and Balius, a pair who flew with the winds' blast,
whom Podarge the storm-mare had borne to the West Wind
as she grazed in a meadow beside the waters of Ocean.
In the trace-reins he harnessed the blameless Pedasus,
the horse that Achilles carried off when he took Eëtion's
city;
though it was mortal, it could keep up with immortal
horses. *

Meanwhile Achilles went up and down his huts and
armed
all the Myrmidons in their gear; and they were like wolves,
eaters
of raw flesh, whose hearts are full of unbelievable strength,
and who have killed a great horned stag on the mountains
and now tear it apart, and all their jowls are red with blood;
and they go in a pack to lap with their thin tongues
at the surface of the dark water of some murky spring,
belching forth clots of blood; and the spirit in their breasts
is without fear, and their bellies are crammed full.
Such were the chieftains and captains of the Myrmidons,
swarming to join the noble attendant of swift-footed
Aeacus'
grandson; and in their midst stood warlike Achilles,
urging on the horses and the shield-bearing men.

There were fifty swift ships* that Achilles, loved by
Zeus,
had brought to Troy, and in each of them there were
fifty men, his companions, seated at the benches;
he had appointed five captains, whom he trusted to

give orders, while he himself had high command over them.

The first line was led by Menesthius of the glittering corslet; he was the son of Spercheius, a river fed by rain from Zeus, and beautiful Polydore, daughter of Peleus, had borne him to unwearying Spercheius, a woman sleeping with a god, though in name he was the son of Borus, Perieres' son, who publicly married her, after giving a huge bride-price.

In charge of the second line was warlike Eudorus, born out of wedlock to Polymele, beautiful in the dance, daughter of Phylas. The mighty slayer of Argus fell in love with her when his eyes fell on her among singing girls, in the chorus who danced for Artemis of the golden distaff, goddess of the hunting-cry. At once Hermes the kindly god went up into her chamber and lay with her in secret, and gave her

a glorious son, Eudorus, a peerless swift runner and fighter. When Eileithyia, the goddess who attends painful birth, had brought him into the light, and he saw the sun's rays, then Echeclus, Actor's son, a man of mighty strength, took her

as wife to his home, after giving an immense bride-price; but the old man Phylas raised him kindly and brought him up,

showing him affection as if he had been his own son.

In charge of the third line was warlike Peisander, the son of Maemalus, who was the best of all the Myrmidons

at fighting with the spear, after the companion of Peleus' son.

The fourth line was led by the old horse-driver Phoenix, and the fifth by Alcimedon, the blameless son of Laerces. When Achilles had drawn them all up in order and posted them

with their leaders, he laid a harsh command on them: 'Myrmidons, let me not find any of you forgetful of the

threats

that you used to make against the Trojans beside the swift ships,

in all the time of my anger. Each one would blame me, saying: “

Hard son of Peleus, we see now that your mother raised you on bile—

pitiless man, holding your unwilling companions back by the ships.

Let us go back again in our sea-traversing ships to our homes,

since it is clear that ruinous bile has entered your heart.”

That is what you often said against me when you met together; but now

you are faced with a great work of war, such as you desired before;

so let every man keep a brave heart, and fight against the Trojans.’

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each man;

and when they heard their king their lines closed more tightly.

As when a man fits together close-set stones to build the wall

of a tall house, as protection against the winds’ violence,

so their helmets and bossed shields fitted tight together,

shield pressing on shield, helmet on helmet, man on man;

helmets with their horsehair crests and bright plates

touched

when they moved their heads, so close they stood to each other.

And in front of everyone two men stood in their armour,

Patroclus and Automedon, with one intention in their minds,

to enter the battle in front of the Myrmidons. But Achilles

set off for his hut, and raised the lid of a chest,

fine and intricately worked, which silver-footed Thetis had put on his ship to take with him, filling it full with tunics and cloaks and woollen rugs, to protect him against the wind.

In it he had a finely worked cup; no other man ever drank the gleaming wine from it, nor did Achilles ever pour libations from it to any god except to father Zeus. Taking this cup from the chest he first purified it with sulphur,* and then rinsed it in a stream of clear water, and washed his hands, and drew off some gleaming wine. Then, standing in mid-court, he prayed and poured out the wine,

looking up to the high sky; and thunder-delighting Zeus heard him: ‘

Lord Zeus, god of Dodona, Pelasgian, you who live far away,

ruling over wintry Dodona; and around you live your interpreters

the Selli, who sleep on the ground and whose feet are unwashed; *

when I prayed to you in the past you heard my words, and gave me honour, and dealt the Achaean people a heavy blow,

so this time also fulfil this plea for me:

I myself shall remain here in the ships’ gathering-place, but I am sending out my companion with many Myrmidons, to do battle; grant him glory, wide-thundering Zeus, and embolden the heart within him, so that Hector may come to know whether my attendant has the skill to fight on his own, or whether his hands rage irresistibly only when I go into the grind of Ares’ warfare.

But when he has driven the clamorous fighting from the ships,

let him come back unharmed to me by the swift ships, with all his gear, and with his hand-to-hand-fighting companions.’

So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus the counsellor heard him,
and the father granted him one request, but refused the other:
he granted that Patroclus should drive war and fighting from the ships,
but refused him a safe and sound return from the battle.
So when Achilles had poured a libation and prayed to father Zeus
he went back into his hut, and put the cup back in the chest,
and went out and stood in front of the hut; still he wished in his heart to see the terrible conflict of Trojans and Achaeans.

Meanwhile the men who had armed with great-hearted Patroclus
marched onward until with high thoughts they charged at the Trojans.
They came pouring out like wasps at a road's side,
whom boys love to provoke, forever in their childish folly tormenting them in their nests beside the way;
and so they make a common nuisance for many people,
and if some traveller passing that way unwittingly stirs them up, they fly out with courage in their hearts,
one and all, and do battle on their young ones' behalf.
With hearts and spirits like theirs the Myrmidons then poured out from the ships, and an unquenchable shout rose up.
Patroclus called out to his companions with a great shout: 'Myrmidons, companions of Achilles son of Peleus!
Be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage, to honour
Peleus' son, who is far the best of the Argives by the ships,
and whose close-fighting attendants are also the best; so that

Atreus' son, wide-ruling Agamemnon, may come to know his delusion, in that he did not honour the best of the Achaeans.'

So he spoke, and quickened the fury and spirit in each man,
and they fell in a mass upon the Trojans; and about them the ships echoed terrifyingly to the shouts of the Achaeans.

When the Trojans saw the stalwart son of Menoetius, the man himself and his attendant, gleaming in their armour,
all their hearts were perturbed, and their ranks wavered, since they supposed that the swift-footed son of Peleus had thrown off his anger and had chosen reconciliation; and each man looked about for escape from sheer destruction.

Patroclus was the first to let fly with a shining spear, right into the midst, where the confusion of men was thickest,
beside the stern of the ship of great-spirited Protesilaus, *
and he hit Pyraechmes, who had brought his horse-marshalling
Paeonians from Amydon, from the broad-flowing Axius; *
he struck him on the right shoulder, and he fell on his back in the dust, groaning, and his Paeonian companions around him
were panic-stricken, for Patroclus had let loose terror among them all
by killing their leader, who was always their champion in battle.
Then he drove them away from the ships, and doused the blazing fire;
the half-burnt ship was left there, and the Trojans fled in terror
with an astounding clamour, and the Danaans poured out between the hollow ships, and the shouts rose without ceasing.

As when Zeus who gathers the lightning drives a dense cloud
away from the lofty pinnacle of a huge mountain, and
all the crags and jutting peaks and mountain glens stand
out,
and boundless bright air breaks down from the high sky;
so the Danaans drove the ravening fire from their ships and
breathed briefly again—though there was no pause in the
fighting,
for the Trojans had not yet been forced back in headlong
flight
from the black ships by the Achaeans, dear to Ares, but still
held out, retreating from the ships only in the face of
greater force.

Then as the fighting spread further man killed man
among
the chieftains. First, the stalwart son of Menoetius hit
Areïlycus
in the thigh with his sharp spear just at the moment when
he was turning to run, and drove the bronze clean through;
his spear shattered the bone, and Areïlycus fell headlong
on the earth. Then warlike Menelaus stabbed Thoas in the
chest
where it was unprotected next to his shield, and loosened
his limbs.
Phyleus' son Meges watched Amphiclus as he charged at
him,
and was too quick for him, lunging at the top of his leg
where a man's muscle is thickest; the tendons were ripped
apart
around the point of the spear, and darkness covered his
eyes.
Of Nestor's two sons, Antilochus stabbed Atymnius with his
sharp spear; the bronze-tipped spear went clean through
his side,

and he toppled forward. Maris, incensed on his brother's behalf,
sprang at Antilochus from close quarters, and took his stand
over the dead man; but godlike Thrasymedes was too quick for him, and before Maris could wound him lunged at his shoulder, and did not miss; the spear's point tore the base of
his arm away from the muscles, and split it as far as the bone.

He fell with a thud, and darkness came down over his eyes. So these two were beaten down by the two brothers and went down to Erebus; they were noble companions of Sarpedon,

spear-throwing sons of Amisodarus, who had reared the ferocious Chimaera that brought ruin to many men.

Ajax, son of Oïleus, sprang at Cleobulus and took him alive, entangled in the confusion; there and then he struck him

in the neck with his hilted sword and loosened his fury—the whole sword grew warm with his blood, and purple death

and his cruel destiny came down and fastened on to his eyes.

Peneleos and Lycon charged at each other, for they had missed

with their spears; both throws had been in vain, and so they

ran at each other with their swords. Lycon swung at the plate of the other's horsehair-crested helmet, but his sword shattered at the hilt; then Peneleos struck him in the neck

below his ear, and the blade sank right in; only the skin held

his head, and it slumped to one side, and his limbs were loosened.

Meriones overtook Acamas on swift feet and stabbed him on the right shoulder as he was about to mount his chariot; he toppled from the chariot, and a mist spread over his eyes.

Idomeneus stabbed Erymas in the mouth with the pitiless bronze, and the bronze-tipped spear passed clean through, underneath his brain, and smashed the white bones; his teeth were shaken out, and both eyes were filled with blood; gaping, he blew blood up through his mouth and nostrils, and a black cloud of death enveloped him.

And so these Danaan leaders each killed his man. As ravening wolves fall on lambs or kids, taking them from herds that have become separated on the mountains through their herdsman's folly, and the wolves see this, and quickly carry the beasts off, since they have a timid spirit;

so the Danaans fell on the Trojans, whose minds turned to clamorous flight, and they forgot their surging courage.

Now huge Ajax was forever impatient to throw his spear at

Hector of the bronze helmet, but he in his battle-knowledge kept his broad shoulders concealed behind his oxhide shield,

watching out for the whistle of arrows and the thud of spears.

He knew well that the battle had turned through his enemies' valour, but still he stood his ground, trying to save his trusty companions.

As when, after clear bright air, a cloud breaks into the high sky

from Olympus, when Zeus is unfurling a tempest so from the ships there arose shouting and the sounds of rout,

as the Trojans crossed the ditch again, but not in good

order. Hector
was carried off by his swift-footed horses, arms and all, and
abandoned
the Trojan people who were trapped, involuntarily, by the
deep ditch;
and in the ditch many swift chariot-hauling horses
broke their pole at its end and left their lords' chariots
behind.
Patroclus pursued them, incessantly urging on the
Danaans,
with ruin in his mind for the Trojans, now that they were
scattered,
and filling all the ways with shouts and the noise of rout;
high above,
a dust storm spread up to the clouds as the single-hoofed
horses
strained to escape from the ships and huts back to the city.
Patroclus, shouting, aimed straight for wherever he saw
that
the people were in the greatest confusion; men fell
headlong from
chariots under his axles, and their chariots turned upside-
down.
The immortal swift horses that the gods had given to Peleus
*
as a glorious gift pressed onward and cleared the ditch with
one
bound; Patroclus' heart called to him to go after Hector, and
he longed to fell him, but Hector's swift horses carried him
away.
As when the whole of the black land is oppressed by a
storm
on a day in autumn, when Zeus pours down great torrents
of rain;
he is full of rancour towards men and is furious with them,
because they give violent, crooked judgements in their

assembly,
and drive out justice, with no concern for the gods' gaze,
and all the rivers in their land are flowing in full spate,
and everywhere torrents are tearing the hillsides away,
rushing with a mighty roar down from the mountains
headlong into the purple sea, sweeping away the works of
men—

So great was the roar of the Trojan chariots as they fled.

When Patroclus had cut off the nearest companies he
drove them
back again, penning them by the ships, and would not let
them
make for the city, for all their striving, but charged in
among them between the ships, the river, and the high
wall, and
began the killing, exacting payment for the deaths of many
men.

First he hit Pronous with his shining spear, where his chest
was unprotected next to his shield, and loosened his limbs,
and he fell with a thud. Next, Patroclus leapt at Thestor,
the son of Enops; he had been knocked out of his senses,
and
was sitting hunched in his well-polished chariot, and the
reins
had slipped from his hands; Patroclus stood close and
stabbed him
with his spear on his jaw's right side, driving it through his
teeth,
then hoisted him with the spear, and dragged him over
the chariot-rail,
like a man who sits on a jutting rock and drags a sacred fish
out
of the sea with line and glittering bronze hook. So Patroclus
dragged Thestor, gaping, from his chariot on his shining
spear,

and thrust him down on his face; and his life left him where he fell.

Next, as Erylaus charged at him, he struck him with a rock on the middle of his head, and split it completely in two inside his heavy helmet; and the man fell face-forward to the ground, and life-breaking death poured round him.

Next he brought down Erymas and Amphoterus and Epaltes,

Tlepolemus, the son of Damastor, and Echius and Pyris, Ipheus and Euippus and Polymelus, son of Argeas, all of them,

one after another, down to the earth that nourishes many.

When Sarpedon saw his companions with unbelted shirts

being beaten down at the hands of Menoetius' son Patroclus,

he called out in reproach to the godlike Lycians: 'Shame, Lycians! Where are you running? Be quick now!

I am going out to confront this man, to find out who it is that prevails here, and has indeed inflicted great hurt on the Trojans, unloosing the limbs of many noble men.'

So he spoke, and leapt fully armed to the ground from his chariot.

And on the other side Patroclus, when he saw him, jumped down

from his chariot. Like hook-taloned vultures with curved beaks

that fight, shrieking loudly, on some lofty peak, so these two charged screaming against each other.

When the son of crooked-scheming Cronus saw them he pitied them, and spoke to Hera, his sister and wife: 'This is a great sorrow for me, that it is the fate of Sarpedon,

dearest of men, to be beaten down by Patroclus, Menoetius' son.

As I ponder in my mind my heart is divided two ways,

whether I should pluck him up alive out of the battle,
bringer of tears, and set him down in the rich land of Lycia,
*
or if I should now beat him down at the hands of Menoetius'
son.'

Then in answer the lady ox-eyed Hera said: '
Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said?
This is a mortal man, whose due destiny was fixed long
ago;
is it really your desire to release him from death's gloomy
lament?
Go, do it; but all we other gods will not approve it.
And I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your
mind:
if you send Sarpedon back to his own home, alive,
consider whether in the future some other god also will
want
to send his own dear son away from the harsh crush of
battle.
There are many sons of immortals fighting around the great
city
of Priam, and you will cause terrible resentment among
them.
No; if he really is dear to you, and your heart mourns for
him,
allow him to be beaten down in the harsh crush of battle
at the hands of Patroclus, son of Menoetius;
but when his breath and life have gone from him,
send Death and sweet Sleep to carry him away
until they come to the land of broad Lycia, and there
his brothers and kinsmen will give him proper funeral rites,
with grave-mound and pillar, which is the privilege of the
dead.'

So she spoke, and the father of gods and men did not
disobey her,

but began to rain a shower of bloody raindrops upon the earth, *

honouring his own dear son, whom Patroclus was about to kill in rich-soiled Troy, far from his native land.

When they had advanced to within close range of each other,

then Patroclus hit far-famed Thrasymelus, who was the valiant attendant of lord Sarpedon, in the base of his belly and loosened his limbs.

Sarpedon threw second at him with his shining spear and missed Patroclus, but hit the horse Pedasus with the spear on its right shoulder; it screamed as it gasped its life away, and fell bellowing in the dust, and the life flew from it.

The other horses sprang sideways, the yoke creaked, and the reins

became tangled in them, since their trace-horse lay in the dust,

but Automedon, famed with the spear, found a remedy for that:

drawing his long-bladed sword from beside his sturdy thigh, he lunged forward and skilfully cut the trace-horse free.

The other two straightened themselves and pulled at the reins,

and the two men came together again in heart-devouring war.

Then Sarpedon missed again with his shining spear, and its point passed over Patroclus' left shoulder, and did not strike him; Patroclus in turn aimed his bronze-tipped spear, and it did not fly from his hand in vain, but hit Sarpedon where the midriff closes round the beating heart.

He toppled as an oak tree topples, or a poplar, or a soaring pine that woodsmen have cut down on the mountains with their newly whetted axes, to be ship-timber;

so Sarpedon lay sprawled in front of his horses and chariot,
roaring, and scrabbling at the blood-soaked dust.
As when a lion gets in among a herd and kills a bull,
a great-spirited, gleaming beast among shambling cattle,
and it dies bellowing under the lion's jaws,
so the captain of the shield-bearing Lycians
died raging, and called out to his dear companion: '
Glaucus, my friend, fighter among men, now you must
more than ever be a spearman and a daring fighter;
now, if you are swift, let ruinous war be your desire.
First, go everywhere up and down those who are leaders
of the Lycians and exhort them to do battle over Sarpedon;
and after that fight yourself with the bronze for my sake;
I shall in future time be a disgrace and a reproach to you,
for ever, for all your days, if the Achaeans strip me of
my armour, here where I fell at the gathering of the ships.
So be strong and hold firm, and urge on the people.'

As Sarpedon spoke, the end of death covered his eyes
and nostrils; Patroclus planted his foot on his chest, and
wrenched the spear from his flesh, and the midriff came
with it—

he had pulled out the spear's point and Sarpedon's life
together.

There the Myrmidons held on to his snorting horses,
anxious
to take flight, now that they were free of their lords' chariot.

Terrible grief came over Glaucus when he heard
Sarpedon's voice;
his heart was in turmoil, because he could not come to his
aid.

With his hand he gripped his arm and squeezed it, for he
was hurt

by the wound that Teucer, staving off ruin from his
companions,

had caused with an arrow when Glaucus charged at the

high wall. *

He spoke in prayer to Apollo who shoots from afar: ‘
Hear me, lord, you who are somewhere in the rich land
of Lycia, or in Troy! Wherever you are, you are able to hear
a man in torment, as now torment has come over me;
this wound I have is severe, and my whole arm is shot
through with piercing agony, and my blood will not dry,
and my shoulder is numb and useless because of it;
I cannot hold my spear firmly, nor am I able to go
into battle against the enemy. The best of men is dead,
Sarpedon, the son of Zeus—who will not help even his own
son.

Lord, I beg you, heal this grave wound for me,
soothe the agony, and give me strength, so that I can
call out to my Lycian companions and urge them into
battle,
and can myself fight over the body of the dead man.’

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him,
and immediately stopped the pain, and dried the dark
blood

in his agonizing wound, and cast fury into his heart.

Glaucus knew in his heart what had happened, and was glad
that the great god had listened to him when he prayed.

First he went everywhere among the leaders of the Lycians
and exhorted them to do battle over Sarpedon, and then
made his way with great strides among the Trojans,
to Polydamas, son of Panthous, and to glorious Agenor,
and then went to find Aeneas and bronze-helmeted Hector;
standing nearby he addressed them in winged words: ‘
Hector, you must now have completely forgotten your
allies,

who for your sake are wasting their lives away far from
their friends and native land, while you refuse to help them.
Sarpedon, captain of the shield-bearing Lycians, lies dead,
who used to defend Lycia with his judgements and his

strength;
brazen Ares has beaten him down under Patroclus' spear.
Come, my friends, take your stand beside me, and set
anger
in your hearts, so that the Myrmidons do not strip his arms
and mutilate the dead man, being angry for all the Danaans
who have died, killed with our spears beside their swift
ships.'

So he spoke, and overwhelming grief took hold of the
Trojans,
uncontrollable and not to be endured, for Sarpedon was
always
a rampart of their city, though from a foreign land; a great
army
had come with him, and among them he was always their
finest fighter.

They made straight for the Danaans, full of passion, and
Hector
led them, enraged for Sarpedon's sake. But the Achaeans
were stirred up by the shaggy heart of Menoetius' son
Patroclus;

first he addressed the two called Ajax, who were already
raging to fight:

'You two called Ajax, now it must be your desire to defend
yourselves,
to be as you have been before among men, or even better.
The man lying dead was the first to leap on to the Achaean
wall *—

Sarpedon; let us see if we can capture and mutilate him,
and strip the armour from his shoulders, and beat down
with
the pitiless bronze any of his companions who defend him.'

So he spoke, and they themselves were raging to aid
him in the fight.

On both sides then the armies strengthened their

companies,
Trojans and Lycians, and Myrmidons and Achaeans,
and they crashed together, to fight over the dead man,
shouting terrifyingly; and the men's armour rang out loud.
Zeus spread a deadly darkness over the fierce crush of
battle,
so that there should be deadly toil of battle over his dear
son.

At first the Trojans drove the darting-eyed Achaeans
back;
by no means the worst man of the Myrmidons was struck
down,
glorious Epeigeus, the son of great-spirited Agacles,
who used to rule over Boudeion, a well-populated city,
in former times; but he had killed a noble kinsman, and
came as a suppliant to Peleus and silver-footed Thetis, and
they had sent him to accompany Achilles, breaker of ranks,
to Ilium rich in horses, in order to fight against the Trojans.

*

As this man laid hands on the dead Sarpedon, illustrious
Hector
hit him on the head with a rock, and split it completely in
two
inside his heavy helmet, and the man fell face-forward
over the body, and life-breaking death poured round him.
Grief came over Patroclus at the death of his companion,
and he charged straight through the front-fighters like a
swift
hawk, which causes panic among doves and starlings;
just so, Patroclus, driver of chariots, you rushed straight for
the Lycians and Trojans, angry in your heart for your
companion.
Next he hit Sthenelaus, the dear son of Ithaemenes,
on his neck with a rock, and tore the sinews away from it.
The front-fighters retreated before him, and illustrious

Hector

with them; as far as is the carry of a long, light javelin thrown by a man trying his strength in a competition or in war, when he is hard pressed by life-breaking enemies, so far the Trojans retreated, and the Achaeans drove them back.

The first to turn and face them was Glaucus, captain of the shield-bearing Lycians, and he killed great-spirited

Bathycles,

the dear son of Chalcon, whose home was in Hellas, and he was

conspicuous among the Myrmidons for wealth and prosperity.

As Bathycles pursued and was about to catch him, Glaucus suddenly

turned and stabbed him with his spear in the middle of his chest;

he fell with a thud, and thick grief seized the Achaeans, because a fine man had fallen. The Trojans were hugely exultant,

and came up and stood round Glaucus in a mass; but the Achaeans

did not forget their valour, and their fury carried them straight at him.

There in his turn Meriones killed a helmeted man of the Trojans—

Laogonus, the daring son of Onetor, who was a priest of Idaean Zeus, and was honoured by the people like a god.

Meriones hit him under his jaw and ear, and the life quickly deserted his limbs, and hateful darkness took hold of him.

Aeneas let fly a bronze-tipped spear at Meriones,

hoping to hit him under the shield as he advanced; but

Meriones looked ahead, and avoided the bronze-tipped spear—

he crouched forward, and behind him the long spear stuck fast in the ground, making its butt-end quiver,

and then towering Ares took the fury away from it.
[Aeneas' spear passed quivering into the earth,
since it had flown in vain from his powerful hand. *
Aeneas grew angry in his heart, and spoke to him: '
Meriones, you may well be a good dancer, but my spear
would
soon have stopped you once and for all, if only I had hit
you.'

Then in turn Meriones, famed with the spear, addressed
him: '

Aeneas, it is hard for you, strong though you are, to
quench the fury of every man who comes face to face
with you in the fighting. You too were born a mortal, and
if I were to throw and hit you in the belly with the sharp
bronze,
though mighty and confident in your hands you would soon
give
the glory to me, and your shade to Hades, master of
famous horses.'

So he spoke, but the stalwart son of Menoetius rebuked
him: '

Meriones, you are a fine man; but why use words like this?
My friend, insulting words will not make the Trojans turn
back
from the dead man; the earth will hold many a man before
that.
War's outcome hangs on the work of hands; the place for
talk is
the council. It is not our task to heap words on words, but to
fight.'

So he spoke, and led off, and Meriones, a godlike man,
followed.

As when the crashing caused by woodcutters rises up from
the clearings of a mountain, and the sound is heard far
away,

so there rose up from the earth of wide ways the thudding of bronze and of leather and of well-made oxhide shields, as men jabbed at each other with swords and double-edged spears.

And now not even an observant man would have recognized glorious

Sarpedon, since he was covered by spears and blood and dust

from his head right down to the toes of his feet. And all the time men were swarming over the dead man, like flies in a farmyard that buzz around overflowing pails, in the spring season when buckets are awash with milk; just so they swarmed over the dead man, and Zeus never turned his shining eyes from the harsh crush of battle, but all

the time kept looking down at them and musing in his heart,

debating at great length about the death of Patroclus, whether illustrious Hector should now cut him down as well with the bronze, there and then in the harsh crush of battle over godlike Sarpedon, and strip the armour from his shoulders,

or if he should pile up war's arduous toil for even more men. And as he pondered this seemed to him to be the better course,

that the valiant attendant of Achilles, son of Peleus, should drive the Trojans and bronze-helmeted Hector back again to the city, and should rob many of their lives.

First of all he put a spiritless temper into Hector, who mounted his chariot and turned in flight, and called to the other Trojans to flee, for he saw the work of Zeus' sacred scales.

Then not even the powerful Lycians stood firm, but they all fled in terror when they saw their king struck in the heart, lying in a heap of dead men—for many men had fallen over him

after the son of Cronus had prolonged the fierce strife.
The Achaeans stripped his gleaming bronze armour from
Sarpedon's shoulders, and the stalwart son of Menoetius
gave it to his companions to take to the hollow ships.
Then Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed Apollo: '
Come now, dear Phoebus; go and take Sarpedon out of
the spears' range, and wash away his dark blood, and then
carry him far away and bathe him in a river's waters and
anoint him with ambrosia and clothe him in immortal
garments;
send him to be carried away by swift escorts,
the twin brothers Sleep and Death, who will quickly
set him down in the rich land of broad Lycia, where
his brothers and kinsmen will give him proper funeral rites,
with grave-mound and pillar, which is the privilege of the
dead.'

So he spoke, and Apollo did not fail to listen to his
father.
He set off down from the mountain of Ida to the grim
conflict,
and quickly lifted glorious Sarpedon out of the spears'
range and
carried him far away and bathed him in a river's waters and
anointed him with ambrosia and clothed him in immortal
garments;
then he sent him to be carried away by swift escorts,
the twin brothers Sleep and Death, who quickly
set him down in the rich land of broad Lycia.

Now Patroclus shouted instructions to Automedon in his
chariot
and went in pursuit of the Trojans and Lycians, and he was
mightily deluded, fool that he was. Had he marked the
words of Peleus' son
he would surely have escaped the evil spectre of black
death,

but the mind of Zeus is always more powerful than that of men:

he turns even the brave man to flight and takes away his victory,

easily, and yet at another time can himself rouse men to fight,

as now he caused resolve to enter the breast of Patroclus.

Then who was it you first slew, Patroclus, and who last, when the gods had summoned you to your death?

Adrestus was the first, and Autonus and Echeclus,

and Perimus, the son of Megas, and Epistor and

Melanippus,

and after them Elasmus and Mulus and Pylartes.

These he killed, and all the rest turned their minds to flight.

Then the sons of the Achaeans would have taken high-gated Troy

at the hands of Patroclus, for he was storming ahead with his spear,

had not Phoebus Apollo taken his stand on the well-built wall

with thoughts of death for Patroclus, and minded to help the Trojans.

Three times Patroclus climbed a corner of the high wall,

and three times Apollo smashed him back, shoving

the shining shield away with his immortal hands;

but when he launched himself for the fourth time, like a god,

Apollo gave a terrible shout and spoke winged words to him: ‘

Go back, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus! It is not your destiny that the city of the lordly Trojans should be sacked by your spear,

nor at the hands of Achilles, who is a far better man than you.’

So he spoke, and Patroclus fell back a long way,

avoiding the anger of Apollo who shoots from afar.

Meanwhile Hector was holding back his single-hoofed horses
by the Scaean gates, unsure whether to drive into the
mêlée again
and fight, or to call out to the people to gather by the wall.
As he was musing on this Phoebus Apollo came and stood
by him,
in the likeness of a vigorous and strong young man,
Asius, who was horse-breaking Hector's uncle on his
mother's
side, a full brother of Hecuba, and the son of Dymas,
whose home was in Phrygia by the waters of Sangarius;
taking his likeness, Apollo, son of Zeus, addressed him: 'Hector,
why have you stopped fighting? You should not do so.

I wish I were as much stronger than you as you are than me

—
you would soon find it painful to withdraw from the fighting.
Come now, drive your strong-hoofed horses at Patroclus
to see if you can kill him, and if Apollo will give you glory.'

So he spoke, and went away, a god joining the toil of men;
and illustrious Hector ordered war-minded Cebriones
to lash the horses into the fighting. Apollo left them
and joined the mass of men, and let loose ruinous
confusion
among the Argives, but gave glory to the Trojans and Hector.

Hector left the other Danaans alone, killing none of them,
but drove his strong-hoofed horses towards Patroclus;
Patroclus on the other side leapt to the ground from his
chariot,
holding a spear in his left hand and in his right he held a
stone,

jagged and shining, and his hand covered it completely. He flung it with his weight behind it; the sharp stone did not miss its man, nor fly in vain, but hit Hector's charioteer, Cebriones, a bastard son of splendid Priam, on the forehead as he was holding the reins.

The rock crushed both his brows together, and the bone could not hold, and his eyes fell to the ground in the dust, there before his feet; he dropped like a diver from the well-made chariot, and the life left his bones.

Then, charioteer Patroclus, you addressed him jeeringly: 'Well, this is a very nimble fellow, and an agile diver! Doubtless if he were on the fish-rich sea this man could leap from a ship and satisfy the hunger of many by looking for oysters, even in very stormy weather—so agilely does he now dive from his chariot on to the plain. So, it seems, there are acrobats even among the Trojans!'

So speaking he made for the hero Cebriones with the spring of a lion, that while causing a shambles in cattle-folds is hit in the chest, and is killed by its own courage; just so, Patroclus, you sprang at Cebriones, full of rage. On the other side Hector jumped to the ground from his chariot, and the two of them struggled over Cebriones like lions on mountain peaks fighting with fearless spirits, both of them hungry, over a hind that has been killed; so these two raisers of the battle-cry, Patroclus, Menoetius' son,

and illustrious Hector, strained over Cebriones to hack at each other's flesh with the pitiless bronze. Hector seized him by the head, and would not let go, while Patroclus on his side caught him by the foot; and the rest of the Trojans and Danaans joined in the fierce crush of battle.

As when the East and South Winds struggle with each other

in the clearings of a mountain to make a deep wood shake
—

beech, ash, and smooth-barked oak tree, which dash their
long branches against each other with an astounding
clamour—

and the noise of their cracking goes up as they break,
so the Trojans and the Achaeans leapt upon each other,
cutting men down, and neither side thought of fatal flight.
Around Cebriones many sharp spears were driven home,
and winged arrows too, springing from bowstrings, and
many great rocks were smashed into men's shields as they
struggled over him. And all this time he was lying in the
whirling

dust, mightily in his might, his chariot-skill all forgotten.
As long as the sun bestrode the midpoint of the high sky
both sides' missiles struck home, and the men kept falling;
but when the sun sloped towards the time when oxen are
unyoked,
then the Achaeans proved stronger, beyond what was
fated.

They dragged the hero Cebriones out of the missiles' range,
away

from the Trojans' shouts, and stripped the armour from his
shoulders,

and Patroclus sprang at the Trojans with destruction in his
heart.

Three times he leapt forward, the equal of swift Ares,
yelling

terribly, and three times he killed nine men. But when he
was

about to charge for the fourth time like some divine being,
then, Patroclus, the end of your life became clear to see;
in the fierce crush of battle Phoebus came to oppose you,
terrible god. Patroclus did not see him coming through the
mêlée,

because he came to confront him concealed in a thick mist;

he stood behind Patroclus and struck his back and broad shoulders with the flat of his hand, and his eyes whirled round.

Then Phoebus Apollo struck the helmet from his head, and the vizored helmet rolled clanging away under the feet of the horses, its plumes defiled with blood and dust. Before this it had not been allowed for this horsehair-crested helmet to be defiled with dust, when it protected the head and handsome face of the godlike man, Achilles; but this time Zeus gave it to Hector to wear on his head—though his own death was near at hand.

Patroclus' long-shadowing spear, heavy, thick, and massive and

bronze-pointed, shattered completely in his hands, and his fringed

shield fell from his shoulders to the ground, together with its strap,

and lord Apollo, the son of Zeus, unfastened his corslet; fatal delusion seized his wits, his glorious limbs were unloosed,

and he stood there in a daze. Then a Dardanian hit him from close

behind with his sharp spear, in the back, between the shoulders;

this was Euphorbus, the son of Panthous, who excelled all men

of his age in spear-throwing and chariot-skill and speed of foot,

and had already brought down twenty men from their chariots,

though it was the first time he had come in his chariot to learn about war;

it was this man who first threw a spear at you, charioteer Patroclus,

but he did not kill you; after pulling the ash spear from your

flesh

he ran back and mingled with the soldiery, and would not wait

to face Patroclus in the battle, unarmed though he was.

He, beaten down by the god's blow and by the spear, began

to retreat to his companions' people, avoiding the death-spectre;

but when Hector saw that great-spirited Patroclus had been wounded with the sharp bronze and was falling back,

he came up along the ranks and from close by thrust his spear

into the base of his belly, and drove the bronze clean through.

He fell with a thud, and brought great grief to the Achaean army.

As when a lion overpowers a tireless boar in battle—

the two of them fighting with fearless spirits on some mountain's peaks over a little spring, where both want to drink—

and the lion violently beats it down as it struggles for breath;

so, after Menoetius' stalwart son had killed many men, Hector,

Priam's son, came close and with a spear robbed him of his life,

and boasting over him he addressed him with winged words: '

Patroclus, doubtless you thought you would sack our city, and would rob the Trojan women of their day of freedom, and would carry them off in ships to your dear native land.

Fool! To protect them, the horses of Hector were straining on swift feet to join the fighting, and here am I, the finest spear-fighter of the war-loving Trojans, to defend them from the day of necessity. As for you, vultures will devour you here.

Poor wretch, not even Achilles, for all his greatness, could help you;

when you left and he stayed he doubtless said to you many times: “

Patroclus, driver of horses, do not come back to me here at the hollow ships, until you have slashed the shirt of Hector, slayer of men, around his chest, and covered it with his blood.”

So, I think, he spoke to you, and persuaded your witless wits.’*

Then, charioteer Patroclus, with little strength left you addressed him: ‘

Boast loudly while you can, Hector; Cronus’ son Zeus and Apollo

have given you the victory, they who have beaten me down easily—for it was they who stripped the armour from my shoulders.

But if twenty men such as you are had come to confront me they would have died here and now, beaten down by my spear.

No, it was my fatal destiny and Leto’s son that killed me, and among men, Euphorbus; and you are the third to slay me.

But I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your mind:

you yourself have not long to live, and already death and your own harsh destiny are standing close to you, beaten down by the hands of Aeacus’ grandson, blameless Achilles.’

As he said this the end of death enveloped him, and his shade

winged its way from his limbs and went down to Hades, lamenting its doom and leaving behind its manliness and youth.

Then illustrious Hector addressed him, though he was now dead: ‘

Patroclus, why do you prophesy a grim death for me?
Who knows if Achilles, the son of Thetis of the lovely hair,
may yet be struck down by my spear and lose his life
before I do?’

So speaking he set his foot on Patroclus and pulled the
bronze-tipped spear
from the wound, and kicked him away from it to lie on his
back;
then with his spear he immediately went in pursuit of
Automedon,
the godlike attendant of swift-footed Achilles, since he was
eager
to strike him down; but the swift-footed horses were
carrying him off,
the immortal horses that the gods had given Peleus as a
splendid gift.

BOOK SEVENTEEN

ATREUS' son Menelaus, dear to Ares, was not unaware that Patroclus had been beaten down by the Trojans in the fighting.

He set off through the front-fighters, helmeted in gleaming bronze,

and stood over him, as a mother-cow that before this has not given birth stands lowing over her firstborn calf; just so fair-haired Menelaus stood over Patroclus.

In front of him he held his spear and perfectly balanced shield,

raging to kill any man who came up to confront him.

Nor did the fall of excellent Patroclus pass unnoticed by Panthous' son Euphorbus of the blameless ash spear; he took

his stand close to warlike Menelaus and addressed him:

'Menelaus, Atreus' son, marshal of the people, nurtured by Zeus—

get back, leave the dead man, and let the bloodstained spoils lie;

no man of the Trojans or of their famous allies struck Patroclus with his spear in the harsh battle-crush before I did;

so leave me alone to win splendid glory among the Trojans, before I strike you down and rob you of your honey-sweet life.'

Deeply angered, fair-haired Menelaus addressed him: 'Father Zeus, it is not a good thing to boast so insolently! Not the fury of the panther, nor the fury of the lion, Not the fury of the deadly wild boar, whose spirit in its breast

is the greatest of all as it glories in its might, is seemingly
as great
as is the proud fury of Panthous' sons of the fine ash spear.
Yet the mighty Hyperenor, breaker of horses, did not go on
to take delight in his youth once he had faced and
insulted me.* He said I was the most contemptible fighter
among the Danaans; but I do not think it was on his own
feet that
he returned, to bring happiness to his dear wife and wise
parents.
So it is with you; if you challenge me I shall assuredly undo
your fury. I tell you: give way and go back into the mass
of men, and do not take your stand against me, or some
calamity may befall you; even a fool understands after the
event.'

So he spoke, but did not persuade Euphorbus, who
answered him:
'Now, Menelaus, nurtured by Zeus, you will surely pay for
my brother whom you killed and spoke boastfully over, and
made his wife a widow, deep in her new marriage-chamber,
and brought unspeakable grief and lamentation to his
parents.
I could bring some respite to these wretched people's
lamenting
if I could take your head and your armour to them and
lay them in the hands of Panthous and bright Phrontis.
But now—our business must not remain longer without test
or fighting, whether it ends in victory or in flight.'

So speaking he jabbed at Menelaus' perfectly balanced
shield,
but the bronze did not break through it, and the spear-point
was bent back in the tough shield. Then Atreus' son
Menelaus
stood up holding his bronze spear, and prayed to father
Zeus,

and as Euphorbus fell back he stabbed him in the base of his throat, throwing his weight behind his brawny hand's thrust;

the point passed clean through Euphorbus' tender neck, and he fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him. His hair that was lovely as the Graces', his curls twisted and pinned with silver and gold, were drenched with blood.

As when a man grows the healthy shoot of an olive tree in a lonely place, a fine, flourishing shoot that has been soaked by abundant water; light winds from every quarter set it trembling, and it bursts into white blossom, but then a wind suddenly arises and with a great gust uproots it from its trench and lays it flat on the earth; so lay Panthous' son, Euphorbus of the fine ash spear, when

Menelaus, Atreus' son, killed him and stripped his armour.

As when some mountain-nurtured lion, trusting in its valour, seizes on the cow that is the best in a herd at pasture, and first takes the neck in its powerful jaws and breaks it, and then greedily gulps down its blood and all its entrails, tearing it apart; and around the lion dogs and shepherds clamour loud and long, but from a distance, and are unwilling

to come up and confront it, because pale fear grips them; so no Trojan's heart in his breast had the courage to come up and confront splendid Menelaus.

Then Atreus' son would easily have stolen the famous armour

of Panthous' son, had not Phoebus Apollo grudged it him, and roused Hector, the equal of swift Ares, against him, likening himself to a man, Mentès, leader of the Cicones;* and he addressed Hector, speaking with winged words: 'Hector, you are now running after what you cannot reach, pursuing the horses of Aeacus' war-minded grandson;

they are troublesome for mortal men to subdue and drive, except for Achilles, and he was born to an immortal mother.*

Meanwhile here is Menelaus, the warlike son of Atreus, standing over Patroclus; and he has killed the best of the Trojans, Euphorbus, Panthous' son, putting an end to his surging valour.'

So the god spoke and went back into the toil of men, and bitter grief flooded into Hector's dark inner heart; he looked keenly along the ranks, and immediately saw one man stripping the famous armour, and the other lying on the ground; and blood was flowing around the stab-wound.

He set off through the front-fighters, helmeted in gleaming bronze,

with a piercing shout, in the likeness of the unquenchable flame

of Hephaestus. Atreus' son was not unaware of his piercing cry,

and, deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit: 'What is to be done? If I leave the fine armour behind me, with Patroclus, who lies here because he tried to avenge me,

I am afraid that any Danaan who sees it will be angry with me.

But if I confront Hector and the Trojans alone, and so avoid disgrace, I fear that they will surround me, many against one;

Hector of the glittering helmet is bringing all the Trojans here.

But why does my dear heart debate with me in this way? When a man aspires, against a god's will, to fight with another

whom the gods love, great suffering soon floods over him.

No man of the Danaans, then, will be angry with me, if he sees

me giving way before Hector, who fights with the help of the gods.

If only I could somewhere find Ajax, master of the war-cry, then we could go together and call up our battle-lust, even against a god's will, to see if we could drag the dead man away,

for Peleus' son Achilles; that would be the least bad of our troubles.'

While Menelaus was pondering all this in his heart and spirit,

the Trojan ranks advanced, and Hector led them.

Menelaus left the dead man, and gave way and retreated, continually twisting round like a thick-maned lion that dogs and men are chasing away from a farmyard with spears and shouts; a chill invades the stalwart heart within it and it retreats from the yard only with reluctance; just so fair-haired Menelaus retreated from Patroclus.

When he reached the band of his companions he turned and

stood, looking about him keenly for huge Ajax, Telamon's son;

and very soon he saw him, on the left of the whole battle, cheering on his companions and encouraging them to fight, for Phoebus Apollo had cast astonishing terror into them.

Menelaus ran up towards him, and stood by him and said: 'Ajax, my friend, come this way! Patroclus is dead—let us hurry,

and we may at least be able to carry his body back to Achilles,

stripped though it is; Hector of the glittering helmet has his armour.'

So he spoke, and roused the spirit in war-minded Ajax, who strode

through the front-fighters, and with him went fair-haired Menelaus.

Now when Hector had stripped Patroclus' famous armour, he began

to pull at him, meaning to cut the head from his shoulders with the

sharp bronze, and to drag the body away and give it to the Trojan dogs.

But Ajax drew near, carrying his great shield that was like a tower,

and Hector gave ground, back into the mass of his companions,

and jumped into his chariot; and he gave the famous armour

to the Trojans to carry into the city, to be a great glory for him.

Then Ajax covered Menelaus with his broad shield, and stood there, like some lioness standing in front of its young cubs;

it has led them through a forest and it falls in with some men

who are hunting and, exulting in its strength, it hoods its eyes,

drawing down the folds of skin that cover its brows.

In the same way Ajax stood over the hero Patroclus;

and on the other side of him Atreus' son, warlike Menelaus, stood firm, while great grief swelled in his breast.

Then Glaucus, Hippolochus' son, captain of the men of Lycia,

looked darkly at Hector and rebuked him with rough words:

'Hector, you are handsome to look at, but you are unequal to the

fight; now we know that your fine reputation hides a cowardly girl.

Think now how you may save your town and its citadel

on your own, with only those warriors who were born in Ilium,
because not one of the Lycians will go out to fight the Danaans
on the city's behalf, since I now see that doing battle with the
enemy fighters, on and on without respite, earns no gratitude.
How could you ever rescue a lesser man among your massed troops,
hard man, now you have abandoned Sarpedon, your guest-friend
and companion, to the Argives, to be their prey and prize*
—

Sarpedon, who served you loyally, both you and the city, while he
lived? Yet now you are not brave enough to save him from the dogs.

So now, if any of the men of Lycia will listen to me, we shall go home, and sheer ruin will surely fall upon Troy. If now the Trojans had dauntless, indomitable fury in them, such as comes into men who for their native land's sake will undergo toil and armed conflict with their enemies,

then we could quickly drag Patroclus back into Ilium; and if we were to haul him out of the battle, and he came, a dead man, into the great city of lord Priam, the Argives would at once give up Sarpedon's fine armour, and we could bring Sarpedon himself into Ilium.* Such is the man whose attendant has been killed, by far the best of the Argives

among their ships, both he himself and his close-fighting followers.

But you had not the courage to stand and face great-spirited Ajax,

looking him in the eyes amidst the shouts of the enemy,
nor
to charge straight at him, because he is a better man than
you.'

Then Hector of the glittering helmet looked darkly at
him, and said:

'Glaucus, how can a man such as you speak so haughtily?
I am amazed; I had thought that you were the wisest man
among all those who live in Lycia of the fertile soil;
but now I scorn your wisdom utterly, as I hear you speak,
telling me that I could not stand up against towering Ajax.
I tell you, I am not one to shudder at battle or the din of
chariots;

but the mind of Zeus the aegis-wearer always prevails, he
who

turns even the brave man to flight, and takes away his
victory,

easily, and yet at another time can himself rouse men to
fight.

No, my friend; come here, stand by me and watch my
handiwork,

and see if I shall show myself a coward all day long, as you
say,

or whether I shall stop some Danaan, however great his
desire

for brave deeds, from fighting to defend the dead

Patroclus.'

So he spoke, and gave a great shout and called out to
the Trojans:

'Trojans and Lycians and Dardanian hand-to-hand fighters!
Be men, my friends, and call up your surging courage,
until I put on the fine armour of blameless Achilles,
which I stripped from mighty Patroclus after I killed him.'

So Hector of the glittering helmet spoke, and left the
deadly

warfare, and set off at a run, pursuing his companions on swift feet, and quickly overtook them, for they were not yet far off, carrying the famous armour of Peleus' son towards the city. Standing apart from the tear-laden battle he changed his armour; he gave his own gear to the Trojans who delight in war to carry to sacred Ilium, while he put on the immortal armour of Achilles, son of Peleus, which the gods of the high sky had given to his father,* and he had presented it to his son when he grew old; but the son did not grow old in his father's armour.

When Zeus who gathers the clouds saw from afar Hector arraying himself in the armour of the son of Peleus, he shook his head and spoke to his own heart: 'Wretched man! There is no thought of death in your heart, yet it is close to you; you are putting on the immortal armour of one who is the best of men, before whom other men quail. It was his companion you killed, a gentle and mighty man, and you were wrong to strip the armour from his head and shoulders; but as compensation I will now put great power into your hands, because you will not return from the battle, and Andromache will not receive the famous armour of Peleus' son from you.'

So Cronus' son spoke, and nodded assent with his dark brows. The armour fitted Hector's body, and Ares, the terrible

Enyalios, entered him, and his limbs were filled with courage and strength. With a great yell he set off, looking for his famed allies, and appeared before all of them resplendent in the armour of Peleus' great-spirited son. Going up and down the ranks he spoke to and roused each man:

Mesthles and Glaucus and Medon and Thersilochus,
Asteropaeus and Deisenor and Hippothous,
Phorcys and Chromius and Ennomus the bird-seer;
all these he encouraged, addressing them with winged words:

'Listen to me, you countless tribes of allies who live around us!

It was not because I was seeking or desiring a huge army that I assembled each of you here from your cities, but that you might of your own free will defend the Trojans' wives

and infant children for me against the war-loving Achaeans. That is my purpose when I wear my people out, demanding gifts

and food for you—to make strong the spirit in each one of you.

Therefore let everyone turn and charge straight for the enemy,

either to die or to live; for that is the courtship of war.

And whoever makes Ajax give way to him, and drags Patroclus,

dead man though he is, in among the horse-breaking Trojans,

I shall award him half of the spoils, and half I shall keep for myself; and so his glory will be as great as mine.'

So he spoke, and they lifted their spears and threw their weight behind the charge, straight at the Danaans, for their hearts yearned

to drag the dead man from under Ajax, the son of Telamon
—

fools, for he robbed many of their lives fighting over
Patroclus.

Then indeed Ajax spoke to Menelaus, master of the war-cry:
‘My friend, Menelaus, nurtured by Zeus, I do not now think
that even we two will return home from the war.

My great fear is not so much that the dead Patroclus
will soon glut the dogs and vultures of the Trojans, rather
that

I am much afraid that some calamity will fall on my life, and
yours, since there is a cloud of war—Hector—enveloping
everything around us, and sheer destruction appears clear
before us.

Come now, call out to the Danaans’ chieftains; someone
may hear.’

So he spoke, and Menelaus, master of the war-cry, did
not
disobey him, and shouted to the Danaans with a piercing
cry:

‘My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives—those who
drink at the public cost with Atreus’ sons, Agamemnon and
Menelaus, and who each have a share in commanding the
people,

and their honour and glory is bestowed on them by Zeus!

It is a hard matter for me to tell each of the leaders
apart when the strife of war blazes so fiercely round us, so
let each

advance without being named, and feel outrage in his heart
that Patroclus should become a plaything for the dogs of
Troy!’

So he spoke, and Ajax, the swift son of Oïleus, heard
him clearly,
and was the first to come running through the fighting to
meet him,

and after him came Idomeneus, and Idomeneus' attendant Meriones, the equal of Enyalios, killer of men; as for the rest, what man could recall and tell the names of all those who after them roused the Achaeans to battle?

Now the Trojans pressed forward in a mass, and Hector led them.

As when, at the outpouring mouth of a river that is fed by Zeus,

a great wave roars against the current, and the seashore's headlands round about bellow as the salt water washes back,

so loud were the Trojans' shouts as they came on. But the Achaeans

stood firm around Menoetius' son, with one purpose in their hearts,

fenced in as they were by their bronze shields; and over their

bright helmets the son of Cronus poured a thick mist,*

because even before this he had not hated Menoetius' son, while he was alive and was the attendant of Aeacus' grandson.

He shrank from letting him become the prey of his enemies' dogs

in Troy, and so he roused his companions to fight over him.

At first the Trojans drove the darting-eyed Achaeans back, and

they abandoned the dead man and fled in fear; the arrogant

Trojans did not kill any with their spears, though they longed to,

but they did begin to drag the dead man away. But the Achaeans

were not likely to stay away for long; Ajax quickly rallied them,

Ajax, who after the blameless son of Peleus surpassed all

the other Danaans both in handsomeness and in deeds of hand.

He charged straight through the front-fighters, in courage like a wild boar that on the mountains easily scatters dogs and vigorous young men as it twists and turns through the glens;

just so glorious Ajax, the son of splendid Telamon, rushed in among and easily scattered the Trojan companies who were standing astride Patroclus with high hopes of dragging him away to their city and so winning glory.

Hippothous, the illustrious son of Lethus the Pelasgian,*
had tied his sword-belt around the tendons of Patroclus' ankle

and was dragging him by the foot through the fierce crush of battle,

to ingratiate himself with Hector and the Trojans; but ruin quickly

came upon him, and none of his companions could save him, though

they longed to. Telamon's son sprang at him through the soldiery

and struck him at close quarters through his bronze-cheeked helmet;

the helmet of horsehair plumes split about the spear's point,

smashed by the great spear and Ajax's brawny hand, and his brain, drenched in blood, spurted out of the wound along

the spear's socket, and there his fury was loosened; he let great-hearted Patroclus' foot fall from his hands to the ground,

to lie there, and he fell beside it, on his face over the dead man,

a long way from Larisa of the rich soil; he could not repay his dear parents for his upbringing, for his life-span was

brief,
beaten down as he was by the spear of great-spirited Ajax.

Hector in his turn let fly at Ajax with his shining spear,
but
Ajax was looking ahead and avoided the bronze-tipped
spear,
narrowly; and Schedius, the son of great-spirited Iphitus,
by far the best of the Phocians, who had his home in
splendid
Panopeus, and who ruled over many men, was the man
whom
Hector hit, under the middle of his collarbone; the bronze
spear-point passed right through and came out under his
shoulder,
and he fell with a thud, and his armour clattered about him.

Ajax in his turn hit Phorcys, the war-minded son of
Phaenops,
in the middle of his belly while he was standing over
Hippothous,
breaking through the plate of his corslet; the bronze let out
a stream
of innards, and he fell in the dust, clawing the earth with his
hand.
The front-fighters gave ground, as did illustrious Hector,
and
the Argives gave a loud shout, and dragged the dead men
back,
Phorcys and Hippothous, and peeled the armour from their
shoulders.

Then the Trojans would once again have retreated
before the Achaeans,
dear to Ares, and gone up into Ilium, beaten down by their
lack of spirit,
and the Argives would by their strength and power have
won glory

even beyond their destiny allotted by Zeus; but Apollo in person
roused Aeneas, taking on the form of the herald Periphas,
son of Epytus, who had grown old with Aeneas' aged father,
practising his herald's craft, and was well disposed towards
him;

it was in his likeness that Zeus' son Apollo addressed
Aeneas:

'Aeneas, how could your people save steep Ilium if it is
against
the will of a god? I have indeed seen other men save their
cities,
trusting only in their strength and power, and in their
courage
and numbers, even though their people were very few; but
now

Zeus wills the victory for us, far more than for the Danaans,
and yet you are all in an amazing panic, and will not fight.'

So he spoke; and Aeneas recognized Apollo who shoots
from afar

when he looked him full in the face, and shouted loudly to
Hector:

'Hector, and all you other captains of Trojans and allies, this
is

now a cause of shame for us, to retreat before the
Achaeans,

dear to Ares, and to go up into Ilium beaten down by our
lack of spirit!

Even now one of the gods came and stood beside me,
saying

that Zeus, the all-powerful schemer, is on our side in the
battle.

So let us go straight at the Danaans, so that they do not
find it

an effortless task to take the dead Patroclus back to their ships.'

So he spoke, and sprang far beyond the front-fighters and stood there; and the Trojans rallied and took their stand facing the Achaeans.

Then Aeneas with his spear wounded Leiocritus, who was the son of Arisbas, the excellent companion of Lycomedes; as he fell Lycomedes, dear to Ares, took pity on him, and went and stood very close to him, and threw his bright spear,

and hit Apisaön, shepherd of the peoples, son of Hippasus, in the liver below his midriff, and at once loosened his knees;

Apisaön had come from Paeonia where the soil is rich, and after Asteropaeus was their best man in the fighting.

As he fell, warlike Asteropaeus took pity on him, and rushed straight forward, eager to grapple with the Danaans;

but he could not now do so, since they stood around Patroclus,

fenced on all sides by their shields, holding their spears before them.

Ajax ranged back and forth among them all, continually directing them,

ordering that none of them should fall back from the dead man,

nor should anyone fight far in front of the other Achaeans, but they

should all stand very close to Patroclus and fight hand to hand.

So towering Ajax gave his orders, and the earth was drenched

with crimson blood; dead men fell one on top of another, Trojans and their allies who were filled with fury and

Danaans

all together—for they too did not fight without shedding blood,
though far fewer of them perished, since all the time they were
mindful to keep sheer death from each other in the mass of men.

So these men fought like fire, and you could not have said
whether the sun and the moon were still in their place, since they were enveloped in mist, all the champions who took their stand around the dead son of Menoetius. All the rest of the Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans were fighting untroubled under a clear sky; the sun's vivid brightness was spread about them, and over all the earth and the mountains there was no cloud to be seen. They fought
in bursts, standing far back and avoiding each other's whirring missiles; but all the champions in the middle ground, worn down by the pitiless bronze, were suffering terribly from both the mist and the fighting.* Two splendid men, Thrasymedes and Antilochus, had not yet discovered that blameless Patroclus was dead; they thought he was still
alive, and fighting the Trojans in the forward clash of men. These two, watching anxiously for their companions' death or flight,
were fighting apart from the rest, as Nestor had instructed them
when he roused them to leave the black ships and enter the battle.

So all day long the huge struggle of their grim strife went on;
and all the while every man's knees and legs and feet

beneath him, and their arms and eyes, were soaking wet with unremitting sweat and weariness, as they fought over the noble attendant of Aeacus' swift-footed grandson.

As when a man gives the hide of a great ox, a bull, one that has been soaked in fat, to his people to stretch out, and

they take it, and, standing round it in a circle, begin to stretch it,

and the moisture goes out of it and the fat sinks in while many men pull, and the whole hide is stretched right through;*

so both sides kept pulling the dead man this way and that in this narrow space, for their hearts had great hopes of dragging him away, the Trojans to Ilium, and the Achaeans to their hollow ships. So a savage struggle arose over him, and neither Ares who drives the soldiery on nor Athena could have made light of it as they watched, not even if they

were deeply angry, such was the ruinous toil of men and horses

that Zeus extended over Patroclus on that day. But glorious Achilles did not yet know that Patroclus was dead, because they were fighting a long way from the swift ships, under the Trojans' walls; and so he never imagined in his heart

that he was dead, but thought he would go right up to the gates

and then return alive. He had no thought at all that Patroclus

would storm the citadel without him, nor even with him—many times he had heard his mother telling him this would not be,

secretly, for she used to report the intentions of great Zeus to him.

But this time his mother had not told him of the great disaster

that had happened, that the companion he loved the most was dead.

Meanwhile the others, wielding sharp spears in their hands,
were fighting unceasingly, hand to hand, over the dead man, killing
each other. And this is what one of the bronze-shirted Achaeans
would say: 'My friends, it will bring us no glory to go back to the hollow ships; rather let the black earth gape open here before us all, which would surely be a far better thing for us if we are going to allow the Trojans, breakers of horses, to drag
this man back to their city and so win glory for themselves.'

And this is what one of the great-spirited Trojans would say:
'My friends, if it is our destiny to be beaten down near this man,
all of us together, let no man draw back from the fighting.'

This is what they were saying, seeking to quicken each man's fury.

So they fought on, and the clangour of iron rose up to the brazen high sky, through the echoing upper air. But the horses of Aeacus' grandson,* far from the battle, had been weeping ever since they heard that their charioteer
had fallen in the dust at the hands of man-slaughtering Hector.

Automedon, the stalwart son of Dioreas, kept lashing them with repeated blows of the swift whip, and many times he spoke to them with soft words, and many times with threats;

but they had no wish either to go back to the ships by the broad
Hellespont, or to join the Achaeans in the fighting,

but as a grave-pillar that stands over the burial-mound
of a dead man or woman stays in place, firmly fixed,
so they stayed motionless, harnessed to the beautiful
chariot,
their heads drooping to the earth; and hot tears
flowed from their eyes to the ground, as they mourned
in longing for their charioteer; and their thick manes were
soiled,
hanging from the yoke-pad along both sides of the yoke.

As they mourned, the son of Cronus noticed and took
pity on them,

and shaking his head he addressed his own heart:

'Poor wretches! Why did we give you two to lord Peleus,
a mortal man, you who are both ageless and immortal?
Was it so that you might suffer pain along with luckless
men?

Truly, among all things that breathe and creep over the
earth

there is nowhere anything more pitiable than man.

But it cannot be that Hector, son of Priam, will ride in the
intricately made chariot behind you; I shall not permit it.
Is it not enough that he holds the armour and boasts idly
over it?

No, I shall thrust fury into your knees and your hearts, so
that

you can at any rate bring Automedon safe out of the
fighting

to the hollow ships, for still I shall give the Trojans glory,
to keep killing until they reach the well-benched ships,
and the sun goes down and sacred darkness comes on.'

So speaking he breathed valiant fury into the horses,
and

they shook the dust from their manes to the ground, and
lightly carried the swift chariot in among the Trojans and
Achaean.

Behind them Automedon fought on, though he grieved for his companion, swooping down in the chariot like a vulture after geese; with ease he would elude the Trojans' noisy mêlée, and then with ease swoop down, pursuing them through the crowded soldiery.

But as he sped along in pursuit he did not kill anyone, because being alone in the sacred chariot he was not able both to strike with his spear and to hold back his swift horses.

At last one of his companions caught sight of him—Alcimedon, the son of Laerces, who was Haemon's son; he stood behind the chariot and addressed Automedon: 'Automedon, which of the gods has put this profitless notion into your heart, and has taken away your excellent wits? You fight against the Trojans in the forefront of the soldiery, alone, and yet your companion has been killed, and Hector is preening himself, wearing Achilles' armour on his own shoulders.'

Then in turn Automedon, son of Diores, addressed him: 'Alcimedon, what other Achaean man could control these immortal horses as well as you and hold back their fury, except for Patroclus, the equal of the gods in counsel, while he lived? But now death and his destiny have overtaken him.

Come, take the whip and shining reins for yourself, and I will dismount from the chariot and join the fighting.'

So he spoke, and Alcimedon leapt into the chariot, swift to the rescue; quickly he took the whip and reins into his hands,

and Automedon jumped down. Illustrious Hector noticed him,
and immediately addressed Aeneas, who was standing nearby:
'Aeneas, counsellor of the bronze-shirted Trojans,
look there; I see the horses of Aeacus' swift-footed grandson
coming plainly out to battle, driven by feeble charioteers.
Now I could hope to capture them—if, that is, you are willing
in your heart to help—since they would not be strong enough
to stand and match their battle-strength against the two of us.'

So he spoke, and the valiant son of Anchises did not disobey him;
and they advanced together, their shoulders protected by shields
of dried and toughened oxhide, covered with a thick layer of bronze.

Together with them went Chromius and godlike Aretus,
and both in their hearts hoped fervently to kill
the two men and to drive off the strong-necked horses—
fools that they were, for they would not make their way back

from Automedon without bloodshed. He was praying to father Zeus,
and his dark inner heart was filled with courage and strength,

and straightaway he addressed Alcimedon, his loyal companion:

'Alcimedon, do not, I beg you, hold the horses far from me,
but keep them breathing close on my back, for I do not think

that Hector, son of Priam, will cease from his fury until

he has killed the two of us and mounted behind Achilles' fine-maned horses, and has put the ranks of the Argive men to flight, or else has himself been killed among the front-fighters.'

So speaking he called out to the two called Ajax and to Menelaus:

'You two called Ajax, leaders of the Argives, and Menelaus! As for the dead man, entrust him to the best men that there are,

to stand resolutely over him and fend off the enemy ranks; but we here are alive—come, keep the pitiless day from us both,

for here in the tear-laden warfare Hector and Aeneas, the best men among the Trojans, are pressing us hard.

Still, all this lies on the knees of the gods; I shall throw my spear, and the rest will be Zeus' concern.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and threw it, and hit the perfectly balanced shield of Aretus, which could not

keep the spear out, and the bronze passed clean through, and drove through the man's belt into the base of his belly.

As when a strong man takes a sharpened axe, and striking behind the horns of an ox from the fields cuts clean through the tendon, and it starts forward and collapses,

so Aretus started forward and then fell on his back; the sharp

spear stuck quivering in his belly, and loosened his limbs.

Then Hector let fly at Automedon with his shining spear, but

he was looking ahead and avoided the bronze-tipped spear; he crouched forward, and the long spear stuck fast in the ground behind him, making its butt-end quiver,

and then towering Ares took the fury away from it.
Then they would have gone at each other with swords,
hand to hand,
had not the two called Ajax, who had come up through the
soldiery
at their companion's call, separated them, raging though
they were;
struck with terror at the sight of them, Hector and Aeneas
and Chromius who looked like a god fell back once again,
and left Aretus where he was, his life torn out,
lying there. Automedon, the equal of swift Ares,
stripped him of his armour and spoke boastfully over him:
'Truly, I have relieved my heart a little of its grief at the
death
of Menoetius' son, though it is a lesser man that I have
killed.'

So speaking he picked up the bloodstained spoils and
laid them
in the chariot, and mounted himself, his feet and hands
covered in gore like a lion that has devoured a bull.

Once again the grim struggle, cruel and tear-laden, was
extended
over Patroclus; Athena had come down from the high sky
and
wakened the strife, for Zeus the wide-thunderer had sent
her
to stir up the Danaans, since now his mind had changed.
As when Zeus extends a dark-shimmering rainbow over
mortals
in the high sky, to be a portent to them either of war or
to foretell a wintry storm, and it causes men to cease from
their labours on the land, and it is a vexation to flocks,
so Athena, wrapping herself closely in a dark-shimmering
cloud,
descended on the Achaean people, and stirred up every

man.

The first she addressed, urging him on, was Atreus' son, mighty Menelaus—for he was standing close to her—taking on the likeness of Phoenix, in form and tireless voice: 'Menelaus, it will surely be a disgrace and a reproach to you if under the wall of the Trojans swift dogs tear apart the loyal companion of splendid Achilles. So be strong and steadfast, and urge on the whole army.'

Then in answer Menelaus, master of the war-cry, addressed her:

'Phoenix, venerable father, long in years; how I wish that Athena could grant me strength and fend off the spears' onrush, and then I would be willing to stand by Patroclus and defend him, for his death has touched my heart closely. But Hector has the terrible fury of fire, and does not cease from cutting men down with the bronze, for Zeus is granting him glory.'

So he spoke, and the goddess owl-eyed Athena was glad, because he had prayed to her before all the other gods. She put force into his shoulders and into his knees, and into his breast she implanted the daring of a fly, that, however often it is brushed away from a man's skin, persists in biting him, so delicious does it find human blood; with daring like this the goddess filled his dark inner heart, and he went and stood over Patroclus, and threw his shining spear.

Now there was among the Trojans a certain Podes, son of Eëtion, a rich and noble man, and Hector honoured him above all the people, since he was a friend and shared his feasts. As this man darted back in flight, fair-haired Menelaus hit him

on the belt, and drove the bronze right through; he fell with a thud, and Atreus' son Menelaus dragged him, dead, away from the Trojans' side and back into his companions' band.

But now Apollo came and stood next to Hector and stirred him on, taking on the likeness of Phaenops, son of Asius, who of all his guest-friends was dearest to him, and his home was in Abydos; in his likeness Apollo who shoots from afar addressed Hector:

'Hector, what other man of the Achaeans will now fear you, if you tremble like this at Menelaus, who in former times was but a soft spearman? Now he has gone off, carrying on his own a dead man from the Trojans' side; he has killed Podes, Eëtion's son, your loyal companion, and a fine man in the front-fighters.'

So he spoke, and a black cloud of grief enveloped Hector, and he set off through the front-fighters, helmeted in gleaming bronze.

Then indeed the son of Cronus took up the tasselled, shining aegis, and concealed Ida in clouds, and sent forth a lightning-flash and a loud thunderclap, and shook the aegis, and gave victory to the Trojans, causing panic among the Achaeans.

The first man to flee in panic was Peneleos, a Boeotian, struck on the shoulder by a spear, as he kept his body facing the enemy; it was a surface scratch, but Polydamas' spear grazed the bone, since it had been thrown from close

quarters.

Then Hector closed with Leïtus, son of great-spirited

Alectryon,

and wounded him on the wrist, putting an end to his battle-lust;

he gazed around him and trembled, since he no longer thought

he could hold a spear in his hand and fight against the Trojans.

As Hector launched himself after Leïtus, Idomeneus

hit him on the corslet covering his chest, next to the nipple; the long spear snapped at the socket, and the Trojans shouted.

Hector then aimed his spear at Idomeneus, Deucalion's son,

as he stood in his chariot, and missed him by only a little, but hit Coeranus, Meriones' attendant and charioteer, who had

come with him from Lyctus, a well-built city. Idomeneus had earlier come up on foot after leaving the well-balanced ships, and he would have handed a great victory to the Trojans,

had not Coeranus quickly driven up his swift-footed horses; so

he proved to be Idomeneus' salvation, fending off the pitiless day,

but himself lost his life at the hands of man-slaying Hector.

He it was whom Hector hit under the jaw and ear, and the spear

tore his teeth out by the roots and cut his tongue in half.

He toppled from the chariot, letting the reins drop from his hands,

but Meriones stooped and picked them up from the ground in his own hands, and addressed Idomeneus:

'Come, lash the horses now until you reach the swift ships;

you know yourself that the Achaeans are no longer victorious.'

So he spoke, and Idomeneus lashed the fine-maned horses towards the hollow ships, for panic had fallen upon his heart.

Great-hearted Ajax and Menelaus were not unaware that Zeus was handing victory in their turn to the Trojans. The first of them to speak was huge Ajax, Telamon's son: 'What are we to do? Even a man who is a great fool can see that father Zeus himself is helping the Trojans. Every one of them who lets fly a spear, good fighter or bad, hits his mark, since Zeus guides them all alike; but all of ours fall to the ground, useless and ineffectual. Come, let us devise the best plan we can on our own, both how we may drag the body back, and also bring delight

to our dear companions by returning home ourselves; doubtless they are looking this way full of grief, and do not think

that the fury and irresistible hands of man-slaying Hector can yet be contained, but that they will fall upon our black ships.

I wish there were some companion to take a message quickly

back to Peleus' son, since I do not think he has even heard the cruel news that his dear companion has been killed; but I cannot see such a man anywhere among the Achaeans,

for they themselves and their horses are alike covered in mist.

Father Zeus, rescue the sons of the Achaeans from the mist,

I beg you, make the sky clear, give our eyes power to see!

Kill us in broad daylight if you wish, since this is your pleasure!’

So he spoke, and the father took pity on him as he wept;
immediately he scattered the darkness and drove the mist away,
and the sun burst out, and the battle was all made plain.*
Then indeed Ajax spoke to Menelaus, master of the war-cry:
‘Look now, Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, to see if you can find
if Antilochus, the son of great-spirited Nestor, is still alive,
and urge him to go quickly to war-minded Achilles, and
tell him that the companion he loves beyond others is
dead.’

So he spoke, and Menelaus, master of the war-cry, did not
disobey him, but set off like a lion that leaves a farmyard
when it has tired of plaguing the dogs and men
that keep watch all night and will not let it take a
fat beast from the cattle; it is desperate for meat,
and keeps coming at them, but without success, for spears
and burning bundles of sticks fly thick from bold hands
against it, and terrify it for all its impatience,
and at daybreak it goes away, troubled at heart.
Just so Menelaus, master of the war-cry, left Patroclus,
much against his will, for he was sorely afraid that the
Achaeans
would flee in panic and abandon him as prey to the enemy.
He gave full instructions to Meriones and the two called
Ajax:
‘You two called Ajax, leaders of the Argives, and you,
Meriones,
now is the time for men to call to mind the gentleness of
luckless Patroclus; it was his way to show kindness to all
while he lived, and now death and his destiny have
overtaken him.’

So speaking fair-haired Menelaus went on his way,
looking keenly around him like an eagle, which men say
has the sharpest sight of all winged creatures under the
high sky;
even when it hovers on high it can detect the swift-footed
hare
cowering under a thick-leaved bush, and swoops down
on it, quickly seizes it, and robs it of its life.
Just so, Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, your shining eyes whirled
everywhere among the numerous company of your
companions,
to see if the son of Nestor was anywhere still alive.
Very quickly he noticed him on the left of the whole battle,
putting heart into his companions and urging them to fight;
standing close by, fair-haired Menelaus addressed him:
'Zeus-nurtured Antilochus, come here and learn the
cruel news—but how I wish it had never happened!
I think that you have already seen for yourself, and know
that
a god is rolling affliction on to the Danaans, and that victory
lies with the Trojans. The best of the Achaeans has been
killed,
Patroclus, and a great loss has come to pass for the
Danaans.
You must run at once to Achilles by the Achaeans' ships and
tell him,
to see if he can quickly bring the dead man back safe to his
ship—
though stripped, since Hector of the glittering helmet has
the armour.'

So he spoke, and hearing him Antilochus was struck
with horror;
for a long time speechlessness gripped him, and his eyes
filled with tears, and his hearty voice was choked; but
he did not ignore the command of Menelaus, and set off

at a run, having given his armour to his blameless companion,
Laodocus, who was wheeling his single-hoofed horses round nearby.

So Antilochus' feet carried him, weeping, from the battlefield,
on his way to bring a painful message to Peleus' son Achilles.

But your heart, Zeus-nurtured Menelaus, had no wish to help the hard-pressed Pylian companions whom Antilochus had left behind him, though they greatly missed him. Menelaus put glorious Thrasymedes in charge over them, and himself went to stand again over the hero Patroclus. He ran and stood by the two called Ajax, and at once addressed them:

'I have sent the man you spoke of back to the swift ships, to go to Achilles of the swift feet; but I do not think he will come now, hugely angry though he is with glorious Hector, since he cannot fight against the Trojans without armour. No, let us devise the best plan we can on our own, both how we can drag the dead man back, and also ourselves escape death and its spectres, away from the Trojans' war-clamour.'

Then huge Ajax, son of Telamon, answered him:
'Far-famed Menelaus, all that you say is according to due measure.
Now go, you and Meriones, and quickly lift the dead man on to your shoulders, and carry him out of the conflict, while we two stay and carry on the fight against the Trojans and glorious Hector—
one in name and one in spirit as we are, who in times past

also

have taken our stand side by side and faced violent Ares.'

So he spoke, and with a tremendous heave they raised the dead man

in their arms and held him high. Behind them the Trojan army

gave a yell when they saw the Achaeans hoisting the dead man,

and they made straight for them like dogs that speed after a wounded wild boar, running in front of young huntsmen; for a while they race along, raging to tear it to pieces, but when, trusting in its courage, it wheels round on them, they back away and scatter in flight, this way and that.

So the Trojans, massed together, for a while kept pursuing, jabbing at them with their swords and double-edged spears;

but when the two called Ajax wheeled round and took their stand

against them, their skin changed colour, and no one dared dart forward and fight for possession of the dead man.

So those two, raging, carried the dead man from the battlefield,

towards the hollow ships, and round them the battle spread,

fierce as fire that suddenly bursts into a blaze and sweeps through a city of men, and their houses are destroyed in a great conflagration, fanned by a mighty roaring wind. Just so the incessant uproar of horses and spear-carrying men

followed Menelaus and Meriones as they went on their way.

Like mules that devote their mighty fury to dragging a beam or some huge ship-timber down from a mountain along a rocky path, and the spirit in them is worn down by weariness and sweat alike as they strain at their task; so they with fierce energy carried the dead man; and

behind them
the two called Ajax kept the enemy back, as a wooded
ridge,
stretching in a continuous line across a plain, holds back a
flood,
withstanding even the ravaging torrents of mighty rivers
and
diverting all their waters so that they spread over the plain,
and the torrents' strength is not enough to break through;
so the two called Ajax kept fending off the Trojans'
onslaught
behind them. But the Trojans continued the pursuit, two
men
above all, Aeneas, the son of Anchises, and illustrious
Hector.

As a flock of starlings or jackdaws flies in screaming turmoil
when they see a hawk coming after them, because it is a
bringer of death to their small fledglings, so the young men
of the Achaeans, pursued by Aeneas and Hector, fell back
in screaming turmoil and forgot their battle-lust.

Splendid gear fell in quantities about and around the ditch
as
the Danaans fled in panic; and there was no stay in the
fighting.

BOOK EIGHTEEN

So they fought on in the likeness of blazing fire, and Antilochus, swift-footed messenger, came to Achilles, and found him in front of his ships with their tall sterns, brooding in his heart on the things that were indeed being fulfilled.

Deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit: 'This is bad! Why are the flowing-haired Achaeans again being driven in confusion and panic over the plain to the ships?

May it not be that the gods have brought about the painful grief for my heart that my mother once foretold to me, saying

that while I still lived the best of the Myrmidons would leave the sun's light, overpowered by Trojan hands.*

It must be that the stalwart son of Menoetius is dead—stubborn man! I told him to drive the enemy's fire away and

to return to the ships, and not to pit his strength against Hector's.*

While he was pondering this in his mind and in his heart Antilochus, the son of splendid Nestor, came up close to him,

weeping warm tears, and gave him the cruel message:

'Ah, son of war-minded Peleus, this is most painful news for you to hear; how I wish it had never happened!

Patroclus lies dead, and they are even now fighting over his stripped body; Hector of the glittering helmet has the armour.'

So he spoke, and a black cloud of grief covered Achilles;

with both hands he gathered up the sooty dust and poured it over his head, disfiguring his handsome face, and the black ashes settled all over his fragrant tunic. Mightily in his might, he lay stretched out in the dust, and with his own hands tore and disfigured his hair. The maidservants captured by Achilles and Patroclus cried aloud in agony of heart and all rushed out of doors to stand around war-minded Achilles, and with their hands they beat their breasts, and each one's limbs were loosened.

On his other side Antilochus grieved, weeping tears and holding Achilles' hands and groaning in his noble heart, terrified that he might cut his throat with the iron. Achilles gave a terrible cry, and his revered mother heard him, sitting in the depths of the salt sea near her father the ancient, and in turn screamed in grief, and the goddesses gathered round, all the daughters of Nereus who lived in the deeps of the sea.

Around her gathered Glauce and Thaleia and Cymodoce, Nesaeë and Speio and Thoë and ox-eyed Halië, Cymothoë and Actaeë and Limnorea, Melite and Iara and Amphithoë and Agauë, Doto and Proto and Pherousa and Dynamene, Dexamene and Amphinome and Callianeira, Doris and Panope and far-famed Galatea, Nemertes and Apseudes and Callianassa, and there too were Clymene and Ianeira and Ianassa, Maera and Oreithyia and Amatheia of the lovely hair, and the other daughters of Nereus who lived in the deeps of the sea.

The shining white cave was filled with these nymphs, and they all together beat their breasts, and the keening was led by

Thetis:

'Listen to me sisters, daughters of Nereus, that you may all hear and know well the great grief that is in my heart.

How wretched I am, unhappy in bearing the best of men!

I gave birth to a son who is blameless and mighty, supreme among heroes. He shot up tall like a sapling,

and I nursed him like a young tree in a hill-orchard,

and I sent him away in his curved ships to Ilium,

to fight against the Trojans; but I shall never again

welcome him back home to the house of Peleus.

I know that while he is alive and looks on the sun's light he is deeply troubled, and that going to him will bring no help.

But go I will, to see my dear child and to hear of the sorrow that has come over him while he keeps away from the war.'

So she spoke and left the cave, and the nymphs went with her,

weeping, and around them the waves of the sea were split apart. When they reached rich-soiled Troy they came ashore one by one, on the beach where the Myrmidons' ships

were drawn up close to each other around swift-footed Achilles.

He groaned heavily, and his revered mother stood next to him,

and with a shrill cry of grief took her son's head in her hands,

and in lamentation addressed him with winged words:

'My child, why do you weep? What grief has come over your heart?

Tell me, do not hide it. You can see that Zeus has fulfilled what you prayed for before, when you held up your hands to him—

that the sons of the Achaeans should all be penned in by their ships,

feeling the want of you, and should suffer shameful treatment.'

With a heavy groan, swift-footed Achilles addressed her:

'Mother, the Olympian has indeed fulfilled that prayer for me;

but what pleasure can it bring me when my dear companion is dead,

Patroclus, whom I honoured above all my companions, as much as my own life? I have killed him; Hector has cut him down and stripped the huge armour from him, that fine armour, a wonder to see, which the gods gave as a splendid gift

to Peleus on the day that they laid you in the bed of a mortal man.

How I wish that you had stayed with the immortal sea-goddesses,

and that Peleus had brought a mortal woman to his house as wife!

But as it is, you too must suffer countless sorrows in your heart:

your son will die, and you will never again welcome him as he returns home, because my own heart tells me to abandon the company of men and live no more—unless Hector

is first struck by my spear and gives up his life, and pays the blood-price for the death of Patroclus, Menoetius' son.'

Then in answer Thetis addressed him, weeping tears: 'Then, my child, from what you say, you are indeed short-lived,

since straight after Hector's death your own is soon to come.'

Then, deeply troubled, swift-footed Achilles addressed her:

'Let me then die immediately, since it is clear I was not

meant

to come to my companion's rescue at his killing; he died far from

his country, when he needed me to defend him from harm.

But now, since I shall not return to my dear native land, and since I proved to be no saviour to Patroclus or to my other companions, beaten down in numbers by glorious Hector, while I sit here by the ships, a useless burden on the earth, a man whose war-skill is beyond that of all the bronze-shirted

Achaean—though there are others better in the assembly —

I wish that strife itself could perish from among gods and men,

and bitterness too, which causes even the wisest to become angry

and which spreads far sweeter than the dripping of honey and swells like smoke in the breasts of men—even as Agamemnon, lord of men, lately provoked me to anger.

Still, that is past and done; we must let it go, grieved though we are,

and must keep the spirit in our breast subdued by necessity.

Now I shall go out, to track down Hector, the destroyer of that

dear life, and after that I shall accept the death-spectre, whenever

Zeus and the other immortal gods wish to bring it on.

Not even the mighty Heracles could escape the death-spectre,

he who was loved above all by lord Zeus, the son of Cronus, but his due destiny and Hera's cruel anger beat him down;*

and I too, if indeed a destiny like his has been shaped for me,

will one day lie in death. But for now, let me win splendid glory,

let me force some Trojan woman or deep-bosomed
daughter
of Dardanus to wail in lamentation as with both hands she
wipes
the flooding tears from her tender cheeks;* let them know
that
I have stayed too long away from the warfare. Though you
love me,
do not hold me back from the battle; you will not persuade
me.'

Then the goddess Thetis of the silver feet answered
him:

'All this is good and true, my child: it is no bad thing to
save one's hard-pressed companions from sheer
destruction.

But your splendid gleaming armour of bronze is held by
the Trojans, and Hector himself of the glittering helmet
wears it triumphantly on his shoulders—though I do not
think

he will glory in it for long, since death is close to him.
So do not go down yet into the dour struggle of Ares,
not until you see with your own eyes that I have returned;
because in the morning, at the rising of the sun, I shall
come,
bringing you handsome armour from lord Hephaestus.'

So she spoke, and turned away from her son and left
him,
and moving to face her sisters of the sea she addressed
them:

'You must now go down into the broad gulf of the sea,
to visit the ancient of the sea and our father's house,
and tell him everything; I am going to high Olympus,
to find Hephaestus the renowned smith, to see if he is
willing
to give me famous and far-shining armour for my son.'

So she spoke, and at once they dived below the sea's waves,
while she, the goddess Thetis of the silver feet, made her way
to Olympus, to fetch famous armour for her dear son.

So her feet carried her towards Olympus; meanwhile the Achaeans,
with inhuman shrieks, were fleeing in panic before man-slaying
Hector, and had reached the ships and the Hellespont. Nor could
the well-greaved Achaeans manage to drag the body of Patroclus,
Achilles' attendant, out of range of their missiles, for once again the Trojans in their chariots caught up with it, and
with them was Hector, son of Priam, his courage like a flame.
Three times illustrious Hector caught hold of his feet from behind,
raging to drag him away, and calling loudly on the Trojans, and
three times the two called Ajax, clothed in impetuous courage,
smashed him back from the dead man; but Hector, trusting resolutely
in his fighting spirit, would now dash into the mêlée, and now
stand firm, yelling loudly; and not one step did he retreat.
As shepherds in open country are unable drive a tawny lion that is racked by hunger away from a beast's carcass,
so the two fighters called Ajax could not frighten Hector, son of Priam, away from the dead man.
And he would have dragged it away and won immense glory,

had not wind-footed swift Iris come running from Olympus with a message to the son of Peleus to arm himself, without the knowledge of Zeus and the other gods, for Hera had sent her.

Standing next to him she addressed him with winged words:

‘Up with you, son of Peleus, most outrageous of men! Go to Patroclus’ help, for whose sake grim conflict has broken out in front of the ships; men are killing each other, some trying to keep harm from the dead man’s body while others, the Trojans, are straining to drag him towards windswept Ilium—and more than anyone illustrious Hector is raging to haul him away, for his heart is telling him to cut the head from his soft neck and set it on the wall’s palisade.

Get up—do not stay lying there! Put respect into your heart, do not let Patroclus become a plaything for the dogs of Troy. It will be your disgrace if he goes disfigured down to the dead.’

Then glorious swift-footed Achilles answered her: ‘Goddess Iris, which of the gods sent you as a messenger to me?’

Then in turn wind-footed swift Iris addressed him: ‘It was Hera, the honoured wife of Zeus, who sent me. Cronus’ son on his lofty seat does not know I have come, nor any of the other immortals who live on snow-swept Olympus.’

Then swift-footed Achilles spoke to her in answer: ‘How am I to go into the fighting? The Trojans have my armour, and my dear mother has said that I must not arm myself until I see with my own eyes that she has come back here, for she promised to bring me splendid armour from Hephaestus.

I do not know of any man whose armour I could put on, unless it were the shield of Ajax, son of Telamon; but he, I suppose, is now in the thick of the front-fighters, causing havoc with his spear over the dead Patroclus.'

Then in turn wind-footed swift Iris addressed him: 'We too know well that your splendid armour is held over there; but go to the ditch as you are, and show yourself to the Trojans, and perhaps they will be frightened at the sight and hold back from the fighting, and the Achaeans' warlike sons will breathe again in their weariness; there is little breathing-space in war.'

So swift-footed Iris spoke and departed from him; and Achilles, loved by Zeus, arose, and around his powerful shoulders Athena threw the tasselled aegis, and around his head the bright goddess set a crown, a cloud of gold, and from it she made a bright shining flame blaze out. As when smoke rises from a city and reaches the upper air, on some far distant island that enemies are besieging, and all day long the defenders contest the issue from their city in hateful Ares' war—but at the setting of the sun beacons blaze out one after another, and their brightness leaps aloft for those who live around to see, and the citizens hope that these men will come to the rescue in their ships; so the gleaming flash from Achilles' head reached the upper air. He went out and stood in front of the wall, but did not join the Achaeans, since he respected his mother's wise warning. There he stood and shouted, and far away Pallas Athena gave voice, and roused unspeakable confusion in the

Trojans.

As loud as the sound that rings out from a trumpet
when a city is surrounded by life-breaking enemies,
so loud then rang out the shout of Aeacus' grandson.
When the Trojans heard Achilles' brazen voice, the hearts
of all were confused, and their fine-maned horses began
to wheel the chariots round, for their hearts sensed pain to
come;
and when they saw the terrible, unwearying fire that the
goddess
grey-eyed Athena had kindled blazing above the head of
Peleus' great-hearted son, the charioteers were stunned.
Three times glorious Achilles shouted loud across the ditch,
and
three times the Trojans and their far-famed allies were
thrown
into turmoil; then and there twelve of their best men
perished,
entangled in their own chariots and spears. The Achaeans
were delighted, and dragged Patroclus out of missiles'
range and
laid him on a litter, and his dear companions stood around
him,
weeping; and swift-footed Achilles went with them,
letting fall hot tears, when he saw his faithful companion
lying on a bier, disfigured by the sharp bronze—
the man he had sent out to the battle with his horses
and chariot, but never welcomed him home again.

And now the lady ox-eyed Hera sent the unwearyed
sun to return, unwillingly, into the streams of Ocean;
and the sun went down, and the glorious Achaeans
rested from the cruel conflict and the equally balanced war.

On their side, the Trojans retreated from the harsh
crush
of battle, and unyoked their swift horses from the chariots

and, before thinking of their supper, gathered in an assembly.

They held this assembly standing on their feet, and no one dared

sit, for trembling had gripped them all, because Achilles had

appeared after a long time away from the painful fighting.

Among them the sagacious Polydamas was the first to speak,

Panthous' son, who alone of them could see the future and the past;

he was Hector's companion, and they were born in the same night,

though one was far better with words, and the other with the spear.

With generous intent he spoke out and addressed them:

'Think hard on both sides, my friends. For my part, I advise you

to go now to the city, and not to wait for the bright dawn on the plain beside the ships; we are a long way from our wall.

As long as this man raged against glorious Agamemnon, so long it was easier for us to fight against the Achaeans, and

I for one was happy to camp at night by the swift ships, in the hope that we would capture their well-balanced ships.

But now I am terribly afraid of the swift-footed son of Peleus;

so over-violent is his spirit that he will not be content to remain on the plain, where Trojans and Achaeans share Ares' fury between them in the middle ground, but he will fight to possess our city and its women.

Let us then return to the city; believe me, this is how it will be:

for now, immortal night has restrained the swift-footed

son of Peleus, but if tomorrow he charges out fully armed and finds us here still, everyone will recognize him; and the man who runs from him will be glad to reach sacred Ilium, and many will be the Trojans who are devoured by dogs and vultures—though may my words be as if they had not been said!

If, despite our misgivings, we are persuaded by my words, we shall keep our forces safe tonight in the assembly-place, and the towers and high gateways, and the tall polished doors

that are set close-fitting into them, will protect the city.

And tomorrow, at break of day, we shall put on our armour and take our stand on the walls; and it will be the worse for anyone

who tries to come up from his ships and fight us round our walls;

he will be off back to his ships, when he has given his strong-necked

horses their fill of aimless running up and down below the city.

As for breaking into it, however great his anger he will not succeed,

nor will he ever sack it; before that happens, swift dogs will eat him.'

Then Hector of the glittering helmet looked at him darkly, and said:

'Polydamas, what you say does not now please me—telling me

that we should go back and shut ourselves up in the city.

Have you not yet had your fill of being caged behind towers?

In times gone by all mortal men would tell tales of the city of

Priam, how it was rich in gold and rich in bronze; but now

these fine treasures have been spent and have left its houses,
and most of its wealth has gone as payment to Phrygia and lovely Maeonia,* ever since great Zeus became angry with us.

Now, when the son of crooked-scheming Cronus has granted me
to win glory by the ships, and to pen the Achaeans in by the sea,
do not, foolish man, put thoughts like these in front of the people.

None of the Trojans will listen to you; I shall not allow it.

So come, let us all be agreed, and do as I say:

take your supper now in your ranks throughout the camp,
and be sure to set sentries, and let each man be vigilant;
and if any Trojan is troubled overmuch about his possessions,

let him collect them and give them to the people to devour
as

commonly held goods, for it is better that they and not the Achaeans

should enjoy them. Then tomorrow, at daybreak, let us put
on

our armour, and wake violent Ares beside the hollow ships.

If glorious Achilles really has risen up beside the ships,

it will be the worse for him, if that is what he wants; I shall
not

run from war's hideous clamour, but will stand fast and face
him,

and we shall see if it is he or I who wins the great victory.

Enyalios is an impartial god, and often kills the would-be
killer.'

So Hector spoke, and the Trojans shouted their
approval,

fools that they were, for Pallas Athena had taken away their

wits;

they gave their approval to Hector's disastrous counsel,
and not to Polydamas, who had framed excellent advice.
Then they ate their supper throughout the camp, while the
Achaeans all night long wailed in mourning for Patroclus.
Among them the son of Peleus began the unbroken lament,
laying his man-slaying hands on his companion's chest,
groaning loud and long like some thickly bearded lion
whose cubs a hunter of deer has secretly stolen away
in a dense wood; it returns too late and is struck by grief,
and ranges up and down the glens, tracking the man's trail,
hoping to find him, because bitter anger has gripped it—
so Achilles, groaning heavily, addressed the Myrmidons:
'Ah, truly it was a vain word that I spoke on that day
when I tried to reassure the hero Menoetius in his halls!
I said I would bring his son back to Opous, famed for his
sack of Ilium and bringing his fair share of the spoils.
But Zeus does not bring all men's schemes to fulfilment:
it is our destiny that we two will make the same earth red
here in Troy, since I too will not return home, and my father,
the aged horse-driver Peleus, will not welcome me in his
halls,
nor Thetis my mother, but the earth will cover me here.
So now, Patroclus, since I am to follow you below the
ground,
I shall not hold your burial rites until I have brought here
the armour and head of Hector, your great-spirited killer;
and in front of your pyre I shall cut the throats of twelve
noble sons of the Trojans,* because of my anger at your
death.
Until then, you shall lie as you are beside my curved ships,
and around you deep-bosomed Trojan women and
daughters
of Dardanus will mourn for you, day and night weeping
tears,
women whom we toiled to capture by force and the long

spear,
when we two sacked the prosperous cities of mortal men.'

So glorious Achilles spoke, and called to his companions
to set a huge tripod over the fire, so that they might quickly
wash away the bloody gore from Patroclus. So they set a

three-legged cauldron for bath-water over the blazing fire,
and poured water into it and put wood beneath it for
burning;
the fire began to spread round the cauldron's belly, and the
water

grew hot, and when it was boiling in the flashing bronze
they washed Patroclus and anointed him richly with oil,
and filled his wounds with oil that was nine years old.
Then they laid him on a bier, and covered him with a linen
cloth

from head to foot, and over this they spread a white robe.
Then, all night long, the Myrmidons gathered round Achilles
the swift-footed, and lamented and mourned for Patroclus.

Then Zeus addressed Hera, his wife and sister:
'So, ox-eyed lady Hera, you have succeeded again,
and aroused swift-footed Achilles. It would seem that
the flowing-haired Achaeans must be your own children.'

Then the lady ox-eyed Hera answered him, saying:
'Most dread son of Cronus, what is this that you have said?
Any man who is mortal and does not possess wisdom like
ours
is allowed, I suppose, to do what he can for another man;
how then should I, who claim to be the best of goddesses,
in two ways, by my birth, and because I am famed as
your wife, and you are lord of all the immortals—how
should I not in my anger stitch together trouble for the
Trojans?'

So they spoke, one to another, in this way; meanwhile
Thetis of the silver feet came to Hephaestus' house, a

house
imperishable, starry, and conspicuous among the gods'
homes;
it was made of bronze, and the crook-footed god had built it
himself.
She found him bustling about, sweating, and busying
himself
with his bellows, for he was forging tripods, twenty in all,
that were to stand around the wall of his well-built hall;
under the base of each one he had fixed wheels of gold,
so that of their own accord they could enter the gods'
assembly
and then return again to his house—a wonder to look upon.
They were nearly finished, but he had not yet added their
craftily
worked ear-handles, and he was fitting these, and
hammering in
their rivets. While he was working at this with his cunning
skill,
the goddess silver-footed Thetis came and stood nearby,
and
Charis* of the shining headdress saw her and came
forward,
lovely Charis whom the far-famed bow-legged god had
married;
she gripped her hand firmly in hers, and spoke, addressing
her:
'Thetis of the long robe, what can bring you to our house?
You are
respected and a friend, but before this you have not come
often.
Come in with me, that I may put gifts of hospitality before
you.'

So the bright goddess spoke and led her inside, and
seated her on a fine, intricately worked throne with

rivets of silver, and there was a footstool under her feet.
Charis called to Hephaestus the renowned smith and spoke to him:

‘Hephaestus, come in here! Thetis has need of you.’

Then the far-famed bow-legged god answered her: ‘Well! I have an awe-inspiring and venerable goddess in my house:

it was Thetis who saved me when I was in agony after my long fall, caused by my mother’s will, bitch that she is—she wished to hide me because I was lame, and I would have suffered

agonies in my heart had not Eurynome, daughter of Ocean that flows into itself, and Thetis welcomed me to their bosom.

Nine years I spent with them, shaping much cunning bronze-work—

brooches and curved pins, earrings and necklaces—in their hollow cave; and around it the streams of Ocean flowed without ceasing, roaring with foam. No one knew of this, not any one of the gods nor any one of mortal men, except that Thetis and Eurynome knew, they who saved me.*

And now you have come to my house; so there is a great need on me

to do my best to pay back lovely-haired Thetis for rescuing me.

Charis, offer her good things, fit for a guest; set them in front of her

now, until I have stowed away my bellows and all my tools.’

So he spoke, and stood up from the anvil-block, a monster puffing and limping, though his slender legs moved nimbly beneath him.

He shifted the bellows away from the fire, and collected all the tools with which he worked into a silver chest;

with a sponge he wiped his face on both sides, and both his hands, and also his powerful neck and hairy chest, and put on a tunic, and took up a stout staff, and came to the door,

limping. Women servants moved nimbly to support their lord;

these were made of gold, and resembled living young women.

They have in them wits and understanding, and also a voice and

strength, for they have learnt their skills from the immortal gods.

These bustled about, supporting their lord, who moved unsteadily

near to where Thetis was, and sat down on a shining throne;

he gripped her hand firmly in his and spoke, calling her by name;

‘Thetis of the long robe, what can bring you to our house?

You are

respected and a friend, but before this you have not come often.

Tell me what is in your mind; my heart urges me to accomplish it—

if, that is, I can accomplish it and such a thing is possible.’

Then Thetis answered him, weeping tears:

‘Hephaestus, is there any goddess of all those on Olympus who has had to endure in her heart as many bitter sorrows as those that Cronus’ son Zeus has given me, above all others?

Choosing me from all the other sea-dwellers he made me subject

to a man, Peleus, Aeacus’ son, and I had to endure a man’s bed,*

though it was greatly against my will; he now lies in his

halls,
worn out with cruel old age, but I have other sorrows—
he gave me a son for me to bear and raise, one supreme
among other heroes; he shot up tall like a sapling,
and I nursed him like a young tree in a hill-orchard,
and I sent him away in his curved ships to Ilium,
to fight against the Trojans; but I shall never again
welcome him back home to the house of Peleus.
I know that while he is alive and looks on the sun's light
he is deeply troubled, and yet my going to him will bring no
help.

And the girl whom the sons of the Achaeans chose as his
prize—

lord Agamemnon took her back, out of his hands, and
in grief for her his heart wasted away. Then the Trojans
penned the Achaeans by their ships, preventing them from
breaking out, and the elders of the Argives entreated him,
naming the many splendid gifts that they were offering,
but he refused to keep destruction from them at that time;
but he did put his own armour on Patroclus, and sent him
out

to the fight, and gave him a great force to go with him.

All day long they fought around the Scaean gates, and
indeed they would have sacked the city on that day, if
Apollo

had not killed Menoetius' stalwart son after he had caused
great ruin among the front-fighters, and given the glory to
Hector.

It is for this reason that I come to entreat you at your
knees,

in the hope that you will agree to give my short-lived son a
shield and a helmet, and fine greaves fitted with ankle-
pieces,

and a corslet; his loyal companion, beaten down by the
Trojans, has lost

the armour he had, and Achilles lies on the ground, his heart full of grief.'

Then the far-famed bow-legged god answered her: 'Do not despair, and do not let these things trouble your heart.

I wish I could hide him far away from death's gloomy lament,
at the time when his terrible due destiny comes to him, as easily as I shall equip him with fine armour, such as all men will wonder at in time to come, when they see it.'

So he spoke, and left her there, and went to fetch his bellows,
and turned them on to his fire, and told them to set to work;
and the bellows, twenty in all, began to blow on his crucibles,
giving out well-moderated blasts from all directions, to help Hephaestus as he hurried to this place and to that, according as he wished and as the work went on. Into the fire he threw bronze that does not wear away, and tin and precious gold, and silver; then he positioned a great anvil on its anvil-block, and in one hand took up a powerful hammer, and in the other took up some tongs.

First of all he made a huge, heavy shield,* decorating it intricately all over, and round its edge fixed a triple rim, bright and gleaming, and hanging from it a silver sword-belt.

There were five rings on the shield itself, and on them, with skilful craft, he created many cunning works of art.

On it he fashioned the earth and the high sky and the sea,

the sun that does not tire, and the waxing moon, and all the constellations that are a crown for the high sky—the Pleiades and the Hyades and mighty Orion, and the Bear that men also call the Wain, which turns

always in the same place and keeps careful watch on Orion,
and alone has no share in the baths of Ocean.*

On it he fashioned two cities of mortal men, fine ones.
In one there were weddings and feasts, and people
were escorting brides from their chambers through the city
with bright-shining torches, and the loud marriage-song
rose up.

Young men were whirling in the dance, and accompanying
them

flutes and lutes kept up their sound, and the women
stood and marvelled at it, each one by her own porch.

In the meeting-place a crowd of citizens had formed;
a dispute had arisen there, and two men were quarrelling
over the blood-money of a man who had been killed.*

One claimed he had paid it in full, appealing to the people,
while the other said he had received nothing; both were
anxious

to go to an arbitrator for judgement. The people took sides,
shouting support for both; heralds were holding them back,
while the elders sat on polished stones in a sacred circle,
holding in their hands the loud-voiced heralds' staffs.

The disputants rushed up to these men, and they gave
their judgements

in turn; two talents of gold lay before them, to be given to
the judge who should deliver to them the straightest
verdict.

Around the other city two armies of men were
encamped,
glittering in their armour. Two counsels found favour among
them,

either to sack the city utterly, or to divide with the
inhabitants

all the wealth that the beautiful city held within it.

But the defenders were not ready to yield, and were
secretly

arming for an ambush; and on the wall stood their dear
wives
and children, ready to defend it, and with them men in the
grip
of old age. The rest marched out; Ares and Pallas Athena
led them—
both were made of gold, and clothed in garments of gold,
handsome and huge in their armour, and, as befits gods,
standing
clearly out; but the people below them were much smaller.
When the men came to a place where there was space for
an ambush,
in a riverbed where there was a watering-place for all kinds
of beasts,
there they settled down, armed in their flashing bronze.
Two scouts from the people were posted some way off, on
the alert
for when they should catch sight of sheep and crook-horned
cattle;
soon enough they appeared, and two herdsmen with them,
amusing themselves on their pipes, for they did not suspect
a trap.
When those in hiding saw the beasts they ran out, and
quickly rounded up the herds of cattle and the fine flocks
of white sheep, and killed the herdsmen with them.
When the besiegers, sitting in their meeting-place, heard a
loud
clamour coming from the cattle, they instantly mounted
behind
their high-stepping horses and went in pursuit, and quickly
found them.
Both sides formed up and began a battle along the
riverbanks,
each hurling their bronze-tipped spears at the other side.
Strife was among them, and Confusion, and the lethal
Death-Spectre,

holding one freshly wounded man, still alive, and another
unwounded,
and dragging another who was dead by his feet through the
mêlée;
and the garment over her shoulders was red with the blood
of men.
These figures grappled and fought like living mortals,
and each dragged away the dead belonging to the other's
side.

On it he set a wide field of rich ploughland, three times
turned over after lying fallow, and on it many ploughmen
were wheeling their teams, driving them up and down;
whenever they reached the field's headland and turned
round,
a man would come up to them and put into their hands a
cup
of honey-sweet wine, and they would turn back along the
furrows,
eager to reach the next headland in the deep-soiled field.
Behind them the field grew dark, just as a ploughed field
looks,
though it was made of gold; it was indeed a great marvel of
art.

On it he set a king's estate, where hired labourers were
reaping with sharp sickles in their hands; some sheaves
were
falling to the ground, one after the other, along the reapers'
swaths,
while sheaf-binders were tying up others with ropes.
Three sheaf-binders stood over the work, and behind them
boys picked up the sheaves and carried them in their arms,
constantly handing them to the binders; and the king stood
silently
among them next to the swath, staff in hand, gladdened in
his heart.

Some way off heralds were preparing a feast under an oak tree,
busying themselves with a great ox they had sacrificed,
and women
were mixing plentiful white barley for the labourers' supper.

On it he set a vineyard, beautifully made of gold,
heavily
laden with grapes; the grape-clusters along it were black,
and the vines throughout were propped on silver poles.
Round it he made a ditch in blue enamel, and outside this
he worked a fence of tin; there was a single track to the
vineyard,
by which pickers would go to gather in the vintage.
Unmarried girls and youths, with lightness in their hearts,
were carrying away the honey-sweet fruit in woven baskets,
and in their midst a boy played beguilingly on a clear-voiced lyre, and sang the Linus-song* to its accompaniment,
in a beautiful, light voice; and they kept time with him,
singing and shouting, and followed him on dancing feet.

On it he made a herd of cattle with upright horns;
the cows were fashioned from gold and tin, and
were hurrying from the farmyard's dung to pasture
beside a murmuring river, next to a waving reedbed.
Herdsman made of gold were going along with the cattle,
four of them, and nine swift-footed dogs went with them;
two terrible lions had fallen on the first of the cattle
and were seizing a bellowing bull, that roared loudly as it
was dragged away, and the dogs and young men pursued it.

But the lions had torn open the hide of the huge ox and
were
gulping down its entrails and black blood, and in vain
did the herdsman urge the swift dogs, driving them on;

but they hung back from the lions, afraid to bite them,
and stood close by, barking and keeping out of their way.

On it the far-famed bow-legged god made a pasture
in a beautiful valley, a great pasture of white sheep,
with farmyards, and roofed shelters, and sheepfolds.

On it the far-famed bow-legged god worked a dancing-
place,
just like the one which Daedalus had fashioned in time past
in spacious Cnossos for Ariadne of the beautiful hair.* On it
young men and girls who would earn marriage-gifts of
oxen were dancing, holding each other at the wrist.
The girls wore light linen clothes, while the boys were
dressed

in well-woven tunics, gleaming faintly with a sheen of oil;
the girls had beautiful garlands, and the boys had
daggers of gold, hanging from silver sword-belts.

At one time they would dance in a circle on skilful feet,
very lightly, as when a potter sits at the wheel that
fits his hands and tries it to see if it will run, and at
another they would run up in lines towards each other.
A great crowd was standing around the lovely dance,
watching with delight, [and among them a divine singer
sang and played the lyre]* and in their company whirled
two tumblers, taking the lead in the song and dance.

On it he set the mighty power of the river Ocean,
running
round the outermost rim of the cunningly worked shield.

When he had finished making the huge, heavy shield,
he forged
for him a corslet, shining brighter than the gleam of fire,
and
fashioned for him a strong helmet, fitting close to his
temples,
a fine helmet, intricately worked, and on it he set a golden

crest;

and he fashioned for Achilles greaves of pliant tin.

When the far-famed bow-legged god had finished all the armour,

he lifted it up and laid it before the mother of Achilles;

and she gathered up the gleaming arms from Hephaestus and

like a hawk came swooping down from snow-clad Olympus.

BOOK NINETEEN

Now saffron-robed Dawn rose up from Ocean's waters,
to bring light to immortals and to mortals, and Thetis
came to the ships, carrying the gifts from the god.
She found her dear son lying with his arms about Patroclus,
weeping loudly; and round him many of his companions
were
lamenting. Thetis, bright among goddesses, stood beside
him in
their midst, and gripped his hand firmly in hers and spoke
to him:
'My child, grieved though we are, we should let this man
lie,
since it was from the start by the gods' will that he was
beaten down; but take now this glorious, splendid armour
from Hephaestus, such as no man has ever worn on his
shoulders.'

So the goddess spoke, and laid the armour in front of
Achilles; and it rang out loud in all its intricately worked
glory.
Trembling seized all the Myrmidons, and no one dared look
directly at it, and they drew back in fear. But the more
Achilles
looked at it the more bitterness came over him, and the
eyes
in him flashed out fearfully below their lids, like a flame;
and
he was glad as he held the splendid gifts of the god in his
hands.
But when he had had his heart's fill of gazing at the
intricate work,

he straightaway addressed his mother with winged words:
'Mother, this god's gift of armour is indeed such as we
would

suppose immortals to have made, and not the work of
mortal men.

So now I shall arm myself in it; but I am terribly afraid
that while we delay flies will settle on the wounds of
Menoetius' stalwart son, slashed in him by the bronze, and
will breed worms in them, and defile his body, now that
the life has gone from him; and all his flesh will rot.'

Then the goddess Thetis of the silver feet answered
him:

'My child, do not let this be a concern in your heart;
I shall set myself to keep those cruel tribes from him,
the flies that eat away at men who have been killed in
battle.

Even if he were to lie for the whole of a circling year,
his flesh will remain undecayed, or even firmer than now.

But now you must summon the Achaean heroes to
assembly,

and renounce your anger at Agamemnon, shepherd of the
people,

and at once arm for war and clothe yourself in courage.'

So she spoke, and filled him with a fury that was full of
daring,

and through Patroclus' nostrils she dripped ambrosia
and red nectar, so that his flesh should remain undecayed.*

Then glorious Achilles made his way along the
seashore,

yelling fearfully, and roused the heroes of the Achaeans.

And men who before used to stay in the ships' gathering-
place,

those who were steersmen and looked after the steering-
oars,

and were stewards in the ships and used to distribute the

food,
even they now went to the assembly-place, because
Achilles
had appeared, after long absence from the painful fighting.
The two attendants of Ares came up limping—Diomedes,
Tydeus' son, steadfast in war, and glorious Odysseus,
both leaning on spears, since their wounds still pained
them;
and they came and sat down in the front of the assembly.
Last of all to come was Agamemnon, lord of men,
carrying the wound that Coön, son of Antenor, had dealt
him
with his bronze-tipped spear in the fierce crush of battle.
When all the Achaeans were gathered together,
swift-footed Achilles stood up and addressed them:

‘Son of Atreus, was it really a good thing for both of us,
for you and me, to rage grieved in heart at each other
in life-devouring strife, all for the sake of a girl?
If only Artemis had killed her with an arrow by the ships*
on the day that I chose her after I had sacked Lyrnessus,*
then so many Achaeans would not have bitten the vast
earth,
crushed by their enemies' hands, while I stayed away in my
anger.
Only Hector and the Trojans profited from this; the
Achaeans,
I think, will long remember the strife between you and me.
Still, that is past and done; we must let it go, grieved
though we are,
and must keep the spirit in our breast subdued by
necessity.
Here and now I abandon my anger; there is no need for me
to rage so unrelentingly. Come then, quickly stir up
the Achaeans with their flowing hair to fight, so that I can
go to meet the Trojans face to face and make trial of them,

to see if they are still minded to camp out by our ships. I think that any of them who manage to escape my spear out of the savage conflict will be glad enough to rest their knees.'

So he spoke, and the well-greaved Achaeans were glad that great-spirited Peleus' son had abandoned his anger. Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke among them from the place where he had been sitting, not standing in their midst:

'My friends, Danaan heroes, attendants of Ares, it is a good thing to listen to a man on his feet, and it is not right to interrupt him—for that is hard, even for a skilled speaker; how can anyone listen, or speak, when men are making a great uproar? Even a clear-voiced orator can be thrown off balance.

It is to Peleus' son that I shall declare myself—but each one of you other Argives should take notice, and mark my words.

Many times have the Achaeans spoken to me about this matter, and they have reproached me; yet it is not I who was to blame, but Zeus and my destiny and the Fury who walks in darkness, who drove a cruel delusion into my mind at the assembly, on the day that I took away Achilles' prize with my own hand.

What could I do? It is a god who brings all things to fulfilment:

she is Zeus' eldest daughter Delusion, an accursed thing* that

deludes and drives astray the minds of all; her feet are

tender,
and she does not touch the ground, but passes over men's
heads,
bringing harm to mankind—and she has shackled others
before me.
Indeed, even Zeus was once driven mad by Delusion, he
who
men say is supreme among gods and men: even he
was beguiled by Hera's womanly deceitfulness,
on the day that Alcmene was due to give birth to mighty
Heracles in Thebes, that city crowned with strong walls.
Zeus, full of boasting, spoke in the presence of all the gods:
"Listen to me, all you gods and all you goddesses,
and I will say what the heart in my breast is telling me:
today Eileithyia, she who attends painful birth, will bring
into the light a man who, born of a line that shares in my
blood, will rule over all those who live round about him."
Then the lady Hera, with guile in her heart, addressed him:
"You will be proved a liar, and you will not bring your words
to
fulfilment. Come now, Olympian, swear a strong oath to me
that the man who on this day will fall between a woman's
feet,
and who is born of those men who are of your blood's line,
will surely rule over all those who live round about him."
So she spoke, and Zeus did not perceive her deceit,
but swore a great oath, and so was mightily deluded.
Hera left the peak of Olympus, and swooping down
quickly came to Achaean Argos, where she well knew lived
the noble wife of Sthenelus, who was Perseus' son.
She was pregnant with her son, and the seventh month had
begun,
and Hera brought him into the light before his due month;
but she delayed Alcmene's childbirth, and held back
Eileithyia.
Then she brought the news in person to Cronus' son Zeus,

saying:

"Father Zeus of the bright thunderbolt, I will put a word in your

mind: today a noble man is born, who will rule over the Argives—

Eurystheus, son of Sthenelus who was Perseus' son, of your line; so it is no shameful thing for him to rule over the Argives."

So she spoke, and sharp grief pierced Zeus to his heart's depths;

at once, full of anger in his heart, he seized Delusion by her head of sleek hair, and swore a mighty oath that she, Delusion, who drives madness into everyone, would never again come to Olympus and the starry high sky.

So he spoke, and whirling her round in his hand hurled her out of the starry high sky, and she quickly reached the works of men;

but Zeus would always groan at her, whenever he saw his dear son

performing a shameful task in the labours set him by Eurystheus.

So it is with me.* While great Hector of the glittering helmet was slaughtering Argives by the ships' sterns, I could not forget

Delusion, who when this all began drove madness into my mind.

Still, since I was deluded, and Zeus took away my wits, I am now willing to make amends, and to pay a boundless ransom.

So come, rouse yourself for the battle, and rouse the rest of the people;

as for the gifts, I am ready here to offer you everything that glorious

Odysseus promised you yesterday when he came to your huts.

Or if you wish, wait, even though you hanker after Ares'

battle,
and my attendants will take the gifts from my ship and
bring them
to you, so that you can see how I will satisfy your desire.'

Then in answer Achilles of the swift feet addressed him:
'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men; as
for
the gifts, you may wish to offer them, as is right and
proper, or to
keep them; it is your choice. But now, let us call up our
battle-lust,
immediately, since this is no time to stay here, talking to no
purpose,
or to delay; there is still great work that must be done,
so that men may once again see Achilles in the front-
fighters,
slaying companies of the Trojans with his bronze-tipped
spear.
Let every man of you be mindful of this as he faces his
opponent.'

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed
him:
'Godlike Achilles, great chieftain though you are, do not
urge
the sons of the Achaeans on to Ilium to fight with the
Trojans
when they are hungry; this battle will not last a short time,
when once the companies of men engage with the enemy
and a god has breathed fury into both sides.
No, give orders for the Achaeans to take food and wine
beside the swift ships, for that is their fury and courage.
No man will be able to fight hand to hand all day long
until the setting of the sun if he has not taken food;
even if in his heart he is full of rage to fight, heaviness
creeps into his limbs unawares, and thirst and hunger

catch up with him, and his knees give way as he moves.
But the man who has taken his fill of wine and food
will do battle all day long against his enemies;
the heart within him is full of daring, and his limbs
will not tire until everyone has withdrawn from the battle.
So come, disperse the people, and give orders for supper
to be prepared; and as for the gifts, let Agamemnon, lord of
men,
bring them into the midst of the assembly, so that all the
Achaeans
can see them with their own eyes; and your heart may be
softened.

And let him stand up among the Argives and swear an oath
that he has never gone up to the girl's bed or lain with her,
as is the usual way, lord, between men and women; *
and for you too, let the heart within you be ready to forgive.
Let Agamemnon make a rich feast in his huts and seek
reconciliation
with you, so that you will not fall short of your due in any
way.

Son of Atreus, in future you will act more properly towards
others
as well; no one can be justly angry with a king if he makes
amends
to a man when he has been the first to commit an outrage.'

Then in turn Agamemnon, lord of men, addressed him:
'Son of Laertes, I am glad to hear your speech; everything
that you said in your full account was according to due
measure.

I am indeed ready to swear an oath—my heart tells me so—
and I will not swear falsely before a god. Let Achilles
wait here for a while, even though he hankers after Ares'
battle,
and let all the rest wait together, until the gifts come from
my hut

and until we make a solemn truce and pledge friendship.
To you, Odysseus, I give this order and instruction:
choose the best young men out of all the Achaeans
to bring the gifts from my ship, all that yesterday we
promised
to give to Achilles, and let them bring the women too.
And in the broad camp of the Achaeans let Talthylus
quickly prepare a boar for me, to sacrifice to Zeus and the
Sun.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
'Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men,
there will be another time when you should attend to this,
whenever there is some lull in the fighting, and
when the fury in my breast is not so strong;
but now there are men out there lying disfigured, whom
Hector, Priam's son, beat down when Zeus gave him the
glory—
and you two are urging us to eat! For my part, I would order
the sons of the Achaeans to enter the conflict now, though
hungry and unfed, and then, at the setting of the sun,
to make a great meal, when we have avenged this insult.
Until then, my desire is that nothing should pass my throat,
neither food nor drink, because my companion is dead,
and he is lying there in my hut, disfigured by the sharp
spear,
with his feet towards the door,* and around him our
companions
mourn. I have no interest in my heart in food and drink, but
only in slaughter and blood and the anguished groans of
men.'

Then in answer Odysseus of many schemes addressed
him:
'Achilles, son of Peleus, by far the greatest of the Achaeans,
you are stronger than I am, and not a little better than me
with the spear, but I might surpass you by a long way

in judgement, since I am older than you and know more;
so let your heart submit in patience and listen to my words.
Men very quickly have their fill of fighting; the bronze
scatters the straw of fighting in abundance on the ground
and yet the harvest is scantiest when Zeus, who is the
dispenser of war to mankind, has tilted his scales.*

The Achaeans cannot mourn a dead man by starving;
day after day men fall in great numbers, one after another,
so when could a man ever gain some respite from his toil?
No, we have to bury all those who have been killed,
hardening our hearts, and weeping only enough for one
day.

All those who have survived the hateful conflict must
turn their minds to food and drink, so that we can fight
all the better against our enemies, on and on without
ceasing,
clothing our bodies in tireless bronze. So let none of the
people
hang back, waiting for some other summons to action;
this is the call, now, and it will be the worse for anyone who
is
left behind by the Argives' ships. Let us all march out
together,
and stir up bitter Ares against the Trojans, breakers of
horses.'

So he spoke, and took to go with him glorious Nestor's
sons,
and Meges, son of Phyleus, and Thoas and Meriones,
and Lycomedes, the son of Creontes, and Melanippus; and
they made their way to the hut of Atreus' son Agamemnon.
No sooner was the word spoken than the deed was done:
they brought out of the hut the seven tripods he had
promised
to Achilles, and twenty gleaming cauldrons, and twelve
horses;

they quickly led out the women, skilled in fine handiwork, seven of them, and the eighth was Briseïs of the lovely cheeks.

Then Odysseus weighed out fully ten talents of gold and led the

way back, and with him the Achaean young men carried the gifts.

These they placed in the middle of the assembly-place; Agamemnon

stood up, and beside the shepherd of the people stood Talthybius,

a man whose voice was like a god's, his hands holding a boar.

With his hand the son of Atreus drew out the knife that always hung beside his sword's great scabbard and began the offering by cutting hairs from the boar's head, and prayed, lifting up his hands to Zeus; and all the Argives sat in proper silence in their places, listening to their king.

Looking up to the broad high sky, he spoke in prayer:

'Let Zeus, the highest and best, be my witness first, and after him Earth and Sun and the Furies, who below the earth

exact repayment from men who have broken their oaths—that I have never laid hand on the girl, Briseus' daughter, either because I desired her in bed, or for any other reason, but she has lived in my huts all this time, untouched.

If anything I have sworn is false, may the gods send me all the sufferings they give to those whose false oaths offend them.'

So he spoke, and cut the boar's throat with the pitiless bronze.

Talthybius swung the body round and flung it into the great expanse of the grey salt sea, to be food for fishes; [*](#) and then

Achilles stood up and spoke among the Argives, lovers of

war:

'Father Zeus, how utterly you drive men out of their minds! Never would the son of Atreus have stirred the heart in my breast to its depths, nor in his stubbornness have taken the girl away against my will, had not Zeus somehow wished that death should come to great numbers of the Achaeans. Now go and make your meal, that we may soon join in Ares' war.'

So he spoke, and quickly broke up the assembly. So all the rest scattered, each man to his own ship, but the great-hearted Myrmidons busied themselves with the gifts, and carried them away to the ship of godlike Achilles; they set the gifts down in his huts, and settled the women there, and excellent attendants drove the horses to join his herd.

When Briseus' daughter, who resembled golden Aphrodite, saw Patroclus lying there, disfigured by the sharp bronze, she threw herself on him and let out a shrill lament, and tore her breast and soft neck and beautiful face with her hands; then she, a woman like the goddesses, spoke through tears:

'Patroclus, chief delight of my heart, how wretched I am! When I went from this hut you were still living, but now, marshal of the people, I come back to find you dead; how one evil always follows another for me! I saw the man to whom my father and revered mother gave me disfigured with the sharp bronze in front of my city, and my three brothers, born to the same mother as I was, all of them very dear to me, meeting their day of death. Even so, when swift Achilles killed my husband and sacked the city of godlike Mynes, you would not let me weep,

but declared that you would make me godlike Achilles' lawful wedded wife, and would take me in your ships to Phthia, and would hold a marriage feast among the Myrmidons;* so now I mourn you inconsolably; you were always kind to me.'

So she spoke, weeping, and the women lamented with her, outwardly for Patroclus, but each for her own sorrows. The elders of the Achaeans gathered around Achilles and begged him to eat; but he refused them with a groan: 'I beg you, my dear companions, if any will listen to me, do not order me to satisfy my dear heart yet with food or drink, because bitter grief has come upon me; I am resolved to endure, and will stay here until the setting of the sun.'

So he spoke, and sent the other kings away; but Atreus' two sons and glorious Odysseus stayed behind, and Nestor and Idomeneus, and Phoenix the old horseman, trying to comfort him in his incessant grief; but he would not be comforted in his heart until he had gone into the bloody jaws of war. Remembering Patroclus, he fetched up a deep sigh, and said:

'There was a time when you too, ill-fated man, dearest of my companions, would yourself set out a pleasant meal in this hut, quickly and deftly, when the Achaeans were in haste to wage tear-laden war against the horse-breaking Trojans; but now you lie there, disfigured, and my heart wants no part of food and drink, though they are here in the hut, because of my longing for you. I could not suffer anything worse than

this,
not even if I were to hear of the death of my father,
who now, I suppose, is shedding soft tears in Phthia
for the loss of his dear son, while I make war on the Trojans
in a foreign land, for the sake of Helen, that calamitous
woman;

nor if it were my dear son, being raised for me in Skyros—
if indeed godlike Neoptolemus is still alive somewhere.*

Up to this time the heart in my breast had hoped that
I alone would perish far from Argos, rearer of horses,
here in Troy, and that you, Patroclus, would return to
Phthia, and then you could fetch the boy from Skyros
for me in your swift ship and show him everything:
my possessions, maidservants, and great high-roofed
house.

Peleus, I think, must already be dead and gone,
or he is somehow clinging to a miserable life in
wretched old age, all the time expecting to hear
the cruel news about me, that I have been killed.'

So he spoke, weeping, and the elders mourned with
him,
each one calling to mind what he had left behind in his
halls.

As they lamented, Cronus' son saw and took pity on them,
and at once addressed Athena with winged words:

'My child, I see you have completely deserted your man;
have you no longer any concern in your heart for Achilles?
He is sitting in front of the ships with their tall sterns,
weeping for his dear companion; all the others have gone
to seek their supper, but he is fasting, and does not eat.
Go now, and distil nectar and delectable ambrosia
into his breast, so that hunger does not come upon him.'

So he spoke, and roused Athena, who was already
eager to go,
and she swooped down from the high sky through the clear

air,
in the likeness of a long-winged, shrill-voiced falcon. While
the Achaeans were arming themselves throughout the
camp
she distilled nectar and delectable ambrosia into his
breast,*
so that aching hunger should not weaken his knees, and
then returned to her mighty father's strongly built house.
The Achaeans began to pour forth, from among their swift
ships;
as when snowflakes flutter down thick and fast from Zeus'
sky,
frozen, and driven by blasts of the North Wind whose birth
is in the upper air, so then their brightly glittering helmets
and bossed shields and strongly plated corslets and
ash spears streamed thick and fast from the ships.
Their gleam reached the high sky, and all around the earth
smiled at the flashing bronze, and the noise rose up under
the feet of men. In their midst glorious Achilles began to
arm;
his teeth ground noisily together, and his eyes blazed
like the flashing of fire, and unbearable grieving entered
his heart. Full of rage at the men of Troy, he put on the gifts
of the god, which Hephaestus by his craft had made for
him:
first he fastened the greaves around his legs,
fine ones, fitted with silver ankle-clasps, and
next he put the corslet on around his chest.
Over his shoulders he threw the silver-riveted sword,
made of bronze, and after that lifted up the great, massive
shield, whose far-reaching gleam was like the moon's.
As when the gleam of a burning fire appears to sailors
on the open sea, blazing in a lonely sheepfold, high on
some mountain, while they are being driven helplessly
by storms over the fish-rich sea, far from those they love;
so the gleam from Achilles' splendid, intricately worked

shield rose up into the clear sky. He lifted the strong helmet and set it on his head, and the horsehair-crested helmet shone out like a star, and the golden plumes that Hephaestus had fastened thickly about the crest were set waving. Then glorious Achilles tested himself in his armour, to see if it fitted him and if his bright limbs moved freely; it became like wings to him, and it lifted up the shepherd of the people. Then from its case he took out his father's spear, heavy, thick, and massive; no other man of the Achaeans could lift it, but only Achilles had the skill to lift it—the Pelian ash spear that Cheiron had given his dear father, cut from a peak of Pelion, to be the death of heroes. Automedon and Alcimus busied themselves with yoking the horses, setting the fine yoke-strap on them and fitting the bits in their jaws, and pulling the reins behind them on to the well-jointed chariot. Automedon picked up a bright whip that fitted his hand and leapt up behind the horses, and behind him Achilles mounted, in full armour, shining brightly in his weaponry like Hyperion the Sun, and he called to his father's horses with a terrible cry: 'Xanthus and Balius, far-famed children of Podarge! * This time take more care to bring your charioteer back to the Danaans' soldiery when we have had enough of fighting, and do not leave him there dead, as you did Patroclus.'

Then from under the yoke the glancing-footed horse Xanthus spoke to him; it had bent its head down, and all its mane was drooping to the ground from the yoke-pad beside the yoke, and the goddess Hera of the white arms had given it speech:

'We shall surely bring you back safe this time, huge Achilles;
but the day of your death is near at hand, and it is not we who
will be its cause, but a great god and your powerful destiny.*

It was not through our sloth or carelessness that the Trojans stripped the armour from the shoulders of Patroclus, but it was

the best of the gods, he whom lovely-haired Leto bore, who killed him among the front-fighters and gave the glory to Hector.

We two could run with the speed of the West Wind, which men say is the fastest of all things; but it is your fate to be beaten down by the might of a god and of a man.'

When it had spoken in this way the Furies silenced its voice;

and swift-footed Achilles, deeply angered, addressed it: 'Xanthus, why do you prophesy my death? There is no need.

I know very well myself that it is my destiny to die here, far from my dear father and mother; but for all that I shall not hold back until I have driven the Trojans to eat their fill of war.'

He spoke, and with a yell to the leaders drove out his single-hoofed horses.

BOOK TWENTY

So the Achaeans armed themselves by their curved ships,
around you, son of Peleus, who could never have your fill of
battle;

and on their side the Trojans armed, on the plain's rising
ground.

Meanwhile, from the peak of many-valleyed Olympus,
Zeus ordered Themis* to call the gods to an assembly; and
she

ranged back and forth and ordered them to come to Zeus'
house. Not

one of the rivers stayed away, except Ocean,
nor any of the nymphs who haunt beautiful groves and
springs of rivers and grassy water-meadows, but they all
came to the house of Zeus who gathers the clouds,
and took their seats in the polished stone porticoes that
Hephaestus had built for father Zeus with his cunning skill.*

So they assembled in Zeus' house; nor did the
earthshaker
neglect the goddess's summons, but rose from the sea to
join

the rest, and sat in their midst, and questioned Zeus'
purpose:

'Wielder of the bright thunderbolt, why do you call the gods
again

to an assembly? Are you anxious about the Trojans and
Achaeans,
because war and fighting are very close to blazing out
between them?'

Then Zeus who gathers the clouds answered and

addressed him:

'Earthshaker, you know the purpose in my breast, why I have gathered you here; I am concerned for them, dying as they are.

As for me, I shall remain here, seated in a valley of Olympus,

from where I can gladden my heart with watching; but you others

may go and mingle with the Trojans and Achaeans, and may bring help to either side, wherever you have a mind, since

if Achilles fights the Trojans without your help they will not be able to resist Peleus' swift-footed son, even for a short time;

even before this they would shake with fear when they saw him,

and now that he is terribly angry in his heart for his companion,

I am afraid that he will overstep his destiny and storm the wall.'

So the son of Cronus spoke, and stirred up relentless warfare.

The gods made their way to the fighting, divided in their purposes:

Hera made for the gathering of the ships with Pallas Athena and with Poseidon the earth-encircler, and Hermes the swift runner, celebrated for his wise understanding; and Hephaestus

too went with them, exulting in his strength, and limping, though his slender legs moved nimbly beneath him. But to the Trojan side went Ares of the glittering helmet, and with him

was Apollo of the unshorn hair, and Artemis, shooter of

arrows,
and Leto and Xanthus and Aphrodite who loves to smile.

For as long as the gods kept themselves apart from the mortals

the Achaeans were mightily triumphant, because Achilles had appeared after long absence from the painful fighting; a fearful trembling stole over the limbs of every Trojan, and they were afraid when they saw Peleus' swift-footed son, the equal of Ares, doom of mortals, shining brightly in his armour.

But when the Olympians came down and joined the mass of men,

then mighty Strife who drives the people on rose up, and Athena

roared, now standing outside the wall, beside the hollowed ditch,

and now shouting loudly down the deep-thundering seashore; and

on the other side Ares, looking like a black storm-cloud, roared,

urging the Trojans on with his piercing cries, now from the city's heights,

and now running along Simoeis' banks, over the hill Callicolone.*

So the blessed gods drove both sides on to crash together,

and caused wearisome strife to break out among themselves.

High above, the father of gods and men thundered terribly, and below Poseidon caused the boundless earth and the steep crags on the mountains to tremble; on Ida of the many springs all its foothills and peaks began to shake,

and the Trojans' city and the Achaeans' ships trembled too. In the depths, Aïdoneus,* lord of the dead below, was

struck

with horror, and leapt yelling from his throne, terrified that Poseidon the earthshaker would split apart the earth above him,

and that his dank and dreadful dwellings, which even the gods abhor, would be laid bare to mortals and immortals;

so huge was the crash that rose up when the gods clashed in strife. Face to face against lord Poseidon, Phoebus Apollo took his stand, his winged arrows in his hand, and opposite Enyalios stood the goddess grey-eyed Athena; against Hera stood Artemis of the golden distaff, goddess of the

hunting-cry and arrow-shower, sister of him who shoots from afar.

Against Leto stood mighty Hermes the swift runner, and opposite Hephaestus stood the great deep-eddying river whom the gods call Xanthus, but men call Scamander. *

So they opposed each other, god against god; but Achilles

was longing above everything to enter the mass of men and face

Hector, Priam's son—it was with his blood more than others'

that his heart impelled him to glut Ares the shield-bearing warrior.

But Apollo who drives the soldiery on made straight for Aeneas

and roused him to face Peleus' son, filling him with daring fury;

he made his voice sound like that of Lycaon, Priam's son, and in this likeness Apollo, the son of Zeus, addressed him: 'Aeneas, counsellor of the Trojans, where now are those boasts

that you used to make to the Trojans' kings over your wine,

promising to match your strength against Peleus' son Achilles?'

Then in answer Aeneas addressed him:

'Son of Priam, why are you telling me to do this, to face Peleus' arrogant son in combat, when I have no desire for it?

This will not be the first time that I stand up against swift-footed

Achilles; once before this he drove me with his spear in flight

from Ida, at the time when he descended upon our cattle and

sacked Lyrnessus and Pedasus;* but Zeus stirred up fury in me, and made my knees nimble and came to my rescue —

otherwise I would have been beaten down under Achilles' hands,

and Athena's, who went before him, bringing success, and told him

to slaughter the Leleges and Trojans with his bronze-tipped spear.

So it is not possible for a man to fight Achilles in single combat,

since there is always one of the gods beside him, to ward off ruin;

moreover, his spear always flies straight, and does not give up

until it has passed through a man's flesh. But if some god were to

stretch war's outcome equally between us, he would not easily

overcome me, not even if he claims to be made entirely of bronze.'

Then in turn lord Apollo, son of Zeus, addressed him:

'Come now, hero, pray to the immortal gods yourself!

They say that your birth was divine—from Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, while Achilles is the son of a lesser deity: one is Zeus' daughter, and the other a child of the ancient of the sea.

Come, then, and make straight for him with the untiring bronze, and do not let him turn you aside with bitter words or threats.'

So he spoke, and breathed great fury into the shepherd of the people, and went on through the front-fighters, helmeted in gleaming bronze.

But Anchises' son did not go unnoticed by white-armed Hera

as he strode through the mass of men to meet the son of Peleus;

she brought all the gods together and spoke among them: 'Poseidon and Athena, it is you two who must deliberate in your minds how these things will come to pass:

here is Aeneas, helmeted in gleaming bronze, going out to meet the son of Peleus, and Apollo has sent him.

Come, let it be our charge to turn him straight back, or let one of us go out and stand next to Achilles, and bestow great power on him; and let him not lack courage, so that he may know that it is the best of the immortals who love him, and that those who in the past kept war and conflict away from the Trojans now have no power at all.

We all came down from Olympus to take part in this battle so that Achilles should not suffer harm at the Trojans' hands,

today—as for the future, he must suffer whatever Fate spun for him with her thread at his birth, when his mother bore him.*

If Achilles does not hear this by means of the gods' utterance,

he will be afraid when some god comes to match strength with him
in battle; and gods are hard to face when they appear undisguised.'

Then Poseidon, shaker of the earth, answered her:
'Hera, do not be angry beyond reason; there is no need. For my part, I have no wish to drive the gods together in strife,
us against the rest, since we are much stronger than they are.
No, let us now leave this well-trodden field and take our seats
on some high watching-place, and leave the war to men. But if Ares or Phoebus Apollo sets hostilities going again, or if they hold Achilles back and keep him from the fight, they will have a fighting quarrel on their hands with us too; and then I think that they will very quickly break off the battle
and go back to Olympus, to the company of the other gods, beaten down by the overwhelming force of our hands.'

So the god of the dark-blue hair spoke, and led them away to
the heaped-up stronghold of Heracles, descended from a god,
the high wall built for him by the Trojans and Pallas Athena, so that he might escape the sea-monster and be safe whenever it pursued him from the seashore to the plain.*
On this Poseidon and the other gods took their seats, and covered their shoulders with an impenetrable cloud; and the gods on the other side sat on the brows of Callicolone, gathered around you, lord Phoebus, and Ares, sacker of cities.

So they sat on their different sides, devising their schemes,

but both parties shrank from starting the grim fighting, though Zeus who sits on high had instructed them to do so.

The whole plain was filled with men and horses, and blazed with bronze, and the earth rang to the beat of men's feet as they charged at one another. Two men, by far the best, met in the ground between the two sides, raging to fight—Aeneas, the son of Anchises, and glorious Achilles.

Aeneas was the first to stride forward, full of threats, his strong helmet nodding; in front of his chest he held his shield of battle, and he shook a bronze-tipped spear. On the other side Peleus' son ran to meet him, like a lion bent on slaughter that a whole village's resolute men have gathered together to kill; at first it pays them no attention and

continues on its way, but when some war-swift young man hits it with his spear it crouches, jaws gaping, and foam gathers around its teeth, and the brave spirit in its heart groans, and with its tail it lashes its ribs and flanks on both sides, and drives itself on to fight; staring-eyed, its fury carries it straight at the men, hoping either to kill one of them or to die itself in the forefront of the conflict. In just this way his fury and noble spirit drove Achilles on to come face to face with great-hearted Aeneas.

When they had advanced to within close range of each other,

swift-footed glorious Achilles was the first to speak:

'Aeneas, why have you come out so far in front of the mass to take your stand? Does your heart direct you to fight with me because you hope to rule over the horse-breaking Trojans, Priam's realm? But even if you kill me, Priam will not for that reason put this prize in your hands; he still has other sons, and his mind is strong, and not infirm.

Or have the Trojans cut out an estate for you, better than

all others—

fine orchards and ploughland, for you to cultivate
if you kill me? I reckon you will find that hard to do, for
I think I have once before put you to flight with my spear;
do you not remember when I found you alone with your
cattle
and chased you away, to run in swift-footed haste down
Ida's mountain slopes, fleeing without a backward glance?
From there you got away to Lyrnessus, but I made an
expedition
against it and sacked it, with the help of Athena and father
Zeus,
and led its women away as booty, robbing them of their
day
of freedom.* Zeus and the other gods protected you then,
but I do not think they will protect you this time, as you
imagine in your heart. So I advise you to go back into
the mass of men, and not to stand up against me, in case
some calamity befalls you; even a fool understands after
the event.'

Then in turn Aeneas answered him and said:

'Son of Peleus, do not think you can frighten me with words,
as if I were a child; I myself also know well how to
taunt and to fling unseemly abuse at another man.
We know of each other's ancestry, and each other's
parents,
for we have heard of their fame through mortal men's
words;
but you have never yet set eyes on my parents, nor I on
yours.

They say that you are the offspring of blameless Peleus,
and your mother is the sea-goddess Thetis of the lovely
hair;
but for my part, I can boast that I am the son born to
great-hearted Anchises, and that my mother is Aphrodite.

Of these parents, one couple will today weep for their dear son, because I do not think it is with childish words such as these that we shall settle this affair and leave the battle.

But perhaps you wish to learn of my ancestry, to know it well; many men know about my family already.

In the beginning, Zeus the cloud-gatherer fathered Dardanus,

and founded Dardania—for sacred Ilium, city of mortal men, had not yet been built on the plain, and people lived on the foothills of Ida of the many springs.

Dardanus in his turn fathered a son, King Erichthonius, who became the richest of all mortal men; he had three thousand mares of his own grazing in meadows on marshland, delighting in their tender young foals; and while they were at pasture the North Wind was seized by desire for

them, and lay with them in the likeness of a dark-maned horse,

and they conceived and gave birth to twelve foals.

Now whenever these gambolled over the grain-giving earth they would run on the very tops of corn-ears and not break them,

and whenever they skipped over the sea's broad back they would run on the very wave-crests of the grey salt sea.

Erichthonius fathered Tros, born to be king over the Trojans, and after this there were born to Tros three blameless sons, Ilus and Assaracus and godlike Ganymedes, who

as you know was the most beautiful of mortal men, and who, because of his beauty, was stolen away by the gods to be the cupbearer of Zeus and to live among the immortals.

Ilus in his turn fathered a son, blameless Laomedon, and Laomedon was the father of Tithonus and Priam

and Lampus and Clytius and Hicetaon, a shoot of Ares.

Assaracus had a son, Capys, and his son was Anchises;

Anchises is my father, and Priam's son is glorious Hector.
This, then, is the ancestry and bloodline that I boast is mine;*

but as for bravery, it is Zeus who increases or diminishes it, according as he wishes, for he is the mightiest of all.

So come, let us no longer bandy words in this way like children,

standing as we do in the middle ground of harsh war;
we can both fling insults at the other in such numbers
that not even a hundred-benched ship could bear their weight.

Man's tongue is a pliant thing, and in it there are many words of

different kinds, and the bounds of his speech spread far and wide;

any words you utter you are likely to hear coming back to you.

What compulsion makes us quarrel and wrangle face to face,

squabbling and bickering with each other like women who become angry because of some heart-devouring dispute and

go out into the middle of the street and argue with each other,

with true and untrue words—for anger also makes them lie?

I am on fire for this trial of courage, and you will not deflect me

from it with words—not before we have fought with the bronze,

face to face. So come, let us taste each other's bronze-tipped spears.'

So he spoke, and hurled his massive spear at the other's terrible, awe-inspiring shield, and the shield rang aloud under the spear's point.

Peleus' son held the shield away from him in his brawny hand;
he was terrified, because he thought that the far-shadowing spear
of great-hearted Aeneas would pass through it with ease,
fool that he was, who did not understand in his heart and mind
that the splendid gifts of the gods are not lightly
beaten down by mortal men, nor will easily yield to them.
And so this time the massive spear of war-minded Aeneas
did not break through the shield, for the god's gift stopped it.

He drove it through two layers, but there were three more,
for the crook-footed god had bonded five layers on to it,
two of bronze, two of tin on the shield's inner side,
and one of gold, which was where the ash spear stopped.

Then Achilles in turn hurled his far-shadowing spear,
and hit the perfectly balanced shield of Aeneas on the
outside of its rim, where the bronze ran thinnest, and
thinnest too was the oxhide on top; the Pelian ash spear
tore clean through it, and the shield gave a loud crack.
Aeneas crouched low, and held his shield away from him,
in fear, and the eager spear split both circles of his body-
protecting
shield and flew over his back and fixed itself in the ground.
Aeneas, now that he had avoided the long spear, stood
there,
terrified because the spear had stuck fast so near to him,
and a huge wave of grief flooded down over his eyes.
Then Achilles drew his sharp sword and sprang at him
raging,
giving a terrifying yell; but Aeneas picked up a rock in his
hand—a mighty feat—which not even two men such as
mortals
now are could lift, but he easily raised it on his own.

He would have hit Achilles with this rock as he charged,
either on
the helmet or the shield that had already saved him from
miserable
death, and then Peleus' son would have come close and
robbed him
of his life with the sword, had not Poseidon the earthshaker
been
quick to see it, and at once spoken out to the immortal
gods:

'This cannot be! Grief comes over me for great-hearted
Aeneas,
who will quickly go down to Hades' house, beaten down by
Peleus' son, because he listened to the words of Apollo the
far-
shooter, the fool—Apollo will not save him from miserable
death.

Why does this innocent man* now suffer such pointless
agonies
for the sake of others' troubles, when he has always
given pleasing gifts to the gods who live in the broad high
sky?

Come, let us lead him ourselves out of the way of death;
even the son of Cronus may become angry if Achilles
kills Aeneas, because it is his destiny to escape, so that
the race of Dardanus shall not perish without issue and
unremembered—Dardanus, whom Cronus' son loved
above all the children borne to him by mortal women,
though now the son of Cronus hates the race of Priam.*
And so mighty Aeneas will rule over the Trojans, he and his
children's children, those who are born in time to come.'

Then the lady goddess ox-eyed Hera answered him:
'Earthshaker, you must decide in your own mind
about Aeneas, whether to save him, or allow him to be
beaten down by Peleus' son Achilles, fine man though he is.

We two have sworn many oaths among the immortal gods,
I and Pallas Athena, that we shall never keep the day of ruin
away from the Trojans, not even when the whole of
Troy is ablaze, burning in the ravaging fire, and the
warlike sons of the Achaeans have put it to the torch.'

When Poseidon the earthshaker heard her words
he made his way through the battle and the spears'
turmoil,
and came to where Aeneas and renowned Achilles were.
Then straightaway he poured a mist over the eyes of
Peleus' son Achilles, and pulled the spear with its sharp
bronze point from the shield of great-hearted Aeneas;
this he laid before the feet of Achilles, and lifting
Aeneas up swept him away, high above the ground.
Over many ranks of heroes and over ranks of horses
Aeneas vaulted, sped on by the hand of the god,
and came down at the edge of the violent battlefield,
where the Caucones were arming themselves for war.
Poseidon the earthshaker came very close to him
and addressed him, speaking with winged words:
'Aeneas, which of the gods is telling you to fight so
recklessly,
hand to hand with the high-hearted son of Peleus,
who is both stronger than you and dearer to the immortals?
Stop; and if ever you are thrown in his path, fall back
so that you do not reach the house of Hades before your
time;
but when Achilles has met his death and his doom, then
you may take courage and fight among the foremost,
for no other man of the Achaeans is meant to kill you.'

So he spoke, and left him there, when he had explained
all this.

Quickly he scattered the divinely sent mist from
Achilles' sight, who at once saw clearly with his eyes;
deeply disquieted, he addressed his great-hearted spirit:

'Oh, this is indeed a great marvel that I see before my eyes!

Here is my spear lying on the ground, but I cannot see the man against whom I threw it in my rage to kill him. It seems that Aeneas was after all loved by the gods, even though I thought his boasting was vain and empty. Well, to hell with him; this time he was glad to escape death,

and he will not have the stomach to make trial of me again. Come! I will give instructions to the war-loving Danaans, and go to face the other Trojans, and put them to the test.'

So he spoke, and sprang into the ranks, and urged on each man:

'Glorious Achaeans, do not any longer stand back from the Trojans, but let each go forward, man against man, raging to do battle.

It is hard for me, powerful as I am, to go in pursuit of so many men and to engage all of them in battle; not even Ares, who is an immortal god, nor Athena would have the endurance to go and face the jaws of such a great conflict. But whatever my hands and feet and strength can achieve, that I will do, and I shall not give way, not even a little, but will press on right through their ranks, and I do not think any Trojan will be glad when he comes within range of my spear.'

So he spoke, urging them on; and illustrious Hector shouted encouragement to the Trojans, promising to go out and face Achilles:

'High-hearted Trojans, do not be afraid of Peleus' son; I too could fight with words, even against the immortals, though with the spear it would be harder, since they are much stronger.

Nor will Achilles fulfil all that his many words promise;
some things he accomplishes, some he cuts off half-done.
I shall go out and face him, even if his hands are like fire—
indeed, even if his hands are like fire, and his fury like
gleaming iron.'

So he spoke, urging them on, and the Trojans raised
their spears
at the enemy; both sides' fury crashed together, and the
battle-cry
rose up. Then Phoebus Apollo stood near Hector and said:
'Hector, do not on any account go forward to challenge
Achilles,
but wait for him in the mass of men and the battle's roar;
otherwise he
may hit you with a spear or wound you from close by with
his sword.'

So he spoke, and Hector once again entered the mass
of men,
alarmed when he heard the sound of a god's voice.
But Achilles, his heart clothed in courage, sprang at the
Trojans
with a frightening yell, and the first he felled was Iphition,
the fine son of Otrynteus, commander of a great force,
whom a Naiad nymph* bore to Otrynteus, sacker of cities,
below snow-clad Tmolus, in the rich land of Hyde. As he
came
straight at him, raging, glorious Achilles hit him with a
spear
on the middle of his head, and it was completely split in
two;
he fell with a thud, and glorious Achilles boasted over him:
'Lie there, son of Otrynteus, most outrageous of men!
Your death is here, though your birth was by the lake
of Gygaea,* where your father's estate is, next to
Hyllus, rich in fish, and the swirling waters of Hermus.'

So he spoke, boasting, and darkness covered Iphition's eyes.

The Achaeans' horses cut him to pieces with their wheel-tyres

in the battle forefront, and over him Achilles stabbed Demoleon,

son of Antenor and a fine man at fending off the battle, in the temple, right through his helmet's bronze cheek-pieces;

the bronze helmet could not stop the spear-point, which flew right through and shattered the bone, and his brain inside was all turned to pulp; so he was beaten down, raging.

Next, when Hippodamas had leapt quickly down from his chariot

and was fleeing before him, Achilles pierced him in the back with his spear; he gasped out his life, bellowing like a bull when it is dragged by young men around the shrine of the Heliconian,* while the earthshaker delights in them.

Just so Hippodamas bellowed as his noble life left his bones.

Then Achilles went after godlike Polydorus, Priam's son, with his spear. His father had always forbidden him to fight, because he was the youngest by birth among his sons, and dearest to him; and he surpassed everyone in speed of foot.

This time he was showing off his prowess in childish display,

storming through the front-fighters, until he lost his dear life.

Glorious swift-footed Achilles hit him with a spear in the middle

of his back as he rushed past, in the place where his belt's golden buckles were fastened, and the halves of his corslet met.

The spear's point went right through and came out by his navel,

and he fell on to his knees with a scream, and a dark cloud covered him, and he sank down, clutching his guts in his hands.

When Hector saw his brother Polydorus clutching his guts in his hands and sinking down to the ground, a mist flooded over his eyes; he could bear no longer to go back and forth at a distance, but made straight to face Achilles, shaking his sharp spear and looking like flame. As soon as Achilles saw him he sprang up, and spoke exultingly: 'Now here at hand is the man who has vexed my heart most of all, the one who killed my honoured companion; now we shall cower no longer away from each other along the battle-lines of war.'

So he spoke, and looking darkly at brilliant Hector addressed him: 'Come closer, so you will sooner be caught in the snares of death.'

Then Hector of the glittering helmet addressed him fearlessly: 'Son of Peleus, do not think you can frighten me with words as if I was a child; I myself also know well how to taunt and to fling unseemly abuse at another man. I know that you are great, and that I am much inferior; but the outcome of all this lies on the knees of the gods, whether I, though a lesser man, will rob you of your life with a cast of my spear; my weapon too has been proved sharp enough in the past.'

So he spoke, and poised his spear and let it fly; but Athena, with the lightest of breaths, turned it aside from splendid Achilles, and it flew back to glorious Hector

and fell there, in front of his feet. Then Achilles,
in a rage to kill Hector, sprang on him full of frenzy,
with a frightening yell; but Apollo snatched him away
with great ease, as a god can, wrapped in a dense mist.
Three times swift-footed glorious Achilles charged at him
with
his bronze-tipped spear, and three times he struck the thick
mist;
but when for the fourth time he rushed at him like some
divine being,
he gave a terrible shout and addressed him in winged
words:
'You dog, once again you have escaped death, though
disaster
came close to you; this time Phoebus Apollo has saved you,
the god you doubtless pray to when you enter the thudding
of spears.
When I meet you again I shall surely put an end to your life,
if I can find some god somewhere who will help me as well.
But now I shall go after the rest, and hope to overtake
them.'

So he spoke, and speared Dryops in the middle of his
neck;
he fell in front of Achilles' feet, who left him there, and
threw
a spear at Demuchus, Philetor's son, a valiant and mighty
man,
and halted him with a spear-strike to the knee. Achilles then
slashed at him with his great sword and took away his life.
Next he leapt at Laogonus and Dardanus, two sons of Bias,
and forced them both out of their chariot, one with a cast of
his
spear, and the other with a sword-blow at close quarters.
Then Tros, Alastor's son—he had come up to grasp his
knees,

hoping that Achilles would take him prisoner and let him go alive,
sparing him death out of pity because he was of a similar age—
fool that he was, and did not know that he would not persuade him,
for this was a man with no softness in his heart, nor any gentleness,
but full of rage. As in anxious entreaty Tros tried to touch Achilles’
knees with his hands, he struck him in the liver with his sword,
and the liver slid out of his body, and the dark blood from it filled his lap; he lost hold of his life and darkness covered his eyes.

Achilles next closed with Mulius, and stabbed him in the ear with his spear, and the bronze tip passed clean through, and came out of the other ear. Next he struck Echeclus, Agenor’s son, on the middle of his head with his hilted sword,
and the whole sword grew warm with his blood, and purple death
and his cruel destiny came down and fastened on his eyes. Next he hit Deucalion where the sinews join on to the elbow,
and pierced his arm there with his bronze-tipped spear. Deucalion stood waiting for him, his arm drooping heavily, staring at death before his face; Achilles struck at his neck with
his sword, and sent head and helmet flying together; the marrow
burst out of his backbone, and he lay sprawled on the ground.
Then he set off in search of the blameless son of Peirous, Rhigmus, who had come from rich-soiled Thrace, and hit him

in the midriff with his spear, and the bronze stuck in his lung,
and he tumbled from his chariot. As Rhigmus' attendant Areïthous
turned his horses round Achilles struck him in the back with his spear
and thrust him from the chariot; and the horses were panic-stricken.

Just as awesome fire rages through the deep valleys of a
parched mountain, and the deep woods keep burning,
and the driving wind sets the flames rolling everywhere,
so Achilles stormed everywhere with his spear like some divine being,
pursuing and killing, and the black earth ran with blood.
As when a man yokes together broad-browed bulls,
intending
to crush white barley on a well-built threshing floor, and
it is quickly shelled under the feet of the loud-bellowing bulls,
so under great-hearted Achilles' chariot the single-hoofed horses
trampled down dead men and shields alike. The axle
beneath
and the rails running round the platform were splashed all
over
with blood that was thrown up in showers by the horses' hoofs
and by the wheel-tyres. And he, Peleus' son, kept pressing on
to win glory, spattering his unconquerable hands with gore.

BOOK TWENTY-ONE

BUT when they reached the crossing of the clear-flowing river,^{*}
swirling Xanthus, whose father was immortal Zeus, there Achilles
cut the Trojan forces into two. Some he pursued across the plain
towards the city, where the Achaeans had fled in confusion on the day before, when illustrious Hector was full of rage, and here the Trojans streamed away in panic, and Hera spread
a dense mist in front to hamper them. The rest were penned in against the deep-flowing, silver-swirling river, and they fell into it with a great noise, and the deep waters roared,
and the banks on both sides threw back the loud echo; yelling,
they swam this way and that, whirled about by the eddies. As when locusts rise fluttering and flee towards a river, driven by a blast of untiring fire that has suddenly leapt up in a blaze, and then huddle together in the water,^{*}
so at Achilles' onslaught the stream of deep-swirling Xanthus
was filled with a confused clamour of horses and men.

Achilles, sprung from Zeus, left his spear there on the bank,
leaning against a tamarisk bush, and jumped into the river like a
divine being, with only his sword, intent on terrible deeds, and began
to strike, whirling this way and that; and shameful groans

arose

from men slashed by his sword, and the water grew red with blood.

As when fish flee the onslaught of a monstrous dolphin, and cowering in fear crowd into the secret places of a harbour of

good anchorage, and the dolphin gobbles up all those it can catch,

so the Trojans huddled beneath the overhangs along the terrible

river's waters. When Achilles had tired his arms with slaughter

he chose twelve young men who were still alive from the river

to be payment for the death of Patroclus, son of Menoetius.

These he drove, stunned like fawns, on to the land and tied their hands behind them with the well-cut leather belts that they wore around their closely woven tunics, and handed

them over to his companions to take back to the hollow ships.*

Then he sprang back, raging to continue the fighting.

There he fell in with a son of Priam, descendant of Dardanus,

as he was escaping from the river—Lycaon, whom once before in a

night raid he had captured in his father's orchard and brought back,

struggling; Lycaon had been cutting the young branches of a

wild fig tree with the sharp bronze to make into chariot-rails,

and glorious Achilles came on him as an unexpected calamity.

At that time Achilles carried him off in his ships and sold

him

into well-built Lemnos, and Euneus, Jason's son, bought him.

From there his guest-friend Eëtion of Imbros ransomed him for a great price and sent him away to bright Arisbe, but he escaped secretly from there and came to his father's house.

For eleven days after he returned from Lemnos he gladdened

his heart among his friends; but on the twelfth day a god thrust him once again into the hands of Achilles, who would now send him unwillingly on a journey to the house of Hades.

When swift-footed glorious Achilles caught sight of him unarmed, without helmet or shield, with no spear in his hand,

because he had thrown them all to the ground—for he was weary

and sweating as he climbed from the river, and fatigue sapped his

knees' strength—he was angry and spoke to his great-hearted spirit:

'Well now, here is indeed a great wonder I see before my eyes!

It seems that all the great-hearted Trojans I have killed will rise once again from the murky darkness below, seeing how this man has escaped the pitiless day, after he was

sold into lovely Lemnos. Not even the grey sea's expanse could hold him back, though it restrains many against their will.

But now he will taste the point of my spear, so that I can see

and know for sure in my mind if he will return in the same way

even from there, or if the earth that gives life to all will hold him down, as it holds down even the strong man.'

So he pondered and paused; and Lycaon, bewildered, drew close, desperate to grasp him by the knees, for he had a great desire to escape miserable death and its black spectre. Glorious Achilles lifted up his long spear, raging to stab him, but Lycaon ducked under it and ran up stooping to grasp his knees, and the spear flew over his back and stuck in the ground, longing to glut itself on human flesh. With one hand Lycaon held on to Achilles' knees, entreating him, and with the other gripped the sharpened spear and would not let it go. Then he spoke, addressing Achilles with winged words: 'Achilles, I entreat you! Show me respect and have pity on me. Zeus-nurtured man, I come to you as a suppliant, worthy of respect; you were the first man with whom I ate Demeter's grain on the day that you captured me in our well-ordered orchard and carried me far away from father and friends and sold me into lovely Lemnos. I earned you the worth of a hundred oxen, but then I was ransomed for three times as much; and this is the twelfth day since I came back to Ilium, after much hardship, and my malignant destiny has placed me again in your hands. I suppose I must be hated by father Zeus, who has delivered me up to you a second time. It was a short life

I was born to by my mother Laothoë, daughter of old Altes, ruler over the Leleges whose delight is warfare, who has his home in steep Pedasus beside the river Satnioeis.* Priam took his daughter as wife, though he had many others, and she bore two sons, and now you will have butchered us both: one you beat down in the front rank of foot-fighters, godlike Polydorus, felling him with your sharp spear,* and now here you will be my destruction too, for I do not think I will escape your hands, since some god has brought us together.

But I tell you another thing, and you should store it in your mind:

do not kill me, because I am not from the same womb as Hector,

the one who slew your gentle and mighty companion.'

So the illustrious son of Priam addressed him, entreating

him with his words; but he received an implacable reply:

'Fool, do not make speeches to me or talk of ransom.

In the time before Patroclus met the day of his destiny

I was in some way prepared in my heart to spare the men of Troy, and I took many alive and sent them over the sea;

but now there is no man who can escape death, once a god thrusts him into my hands in front of Ilium—not one man of all the Trojans, and above all the sons of Priam.

So, my friend, you too must die; why lament like this?

Even Patroclus is dead, who was a far better man than you.

Can you not see what kind of a man I am, how handsome and great?

I am the son of a well-born man, and the mother who bore me was

a goddess, and yet over me too hangs death and my harsh destiny.

There will be a dawn or an afternoon or the middle of a day

when some man will take the life from me too in Ares' war,
with a cast of his spear or an arrow sped from the
bowstring.'

So he spoke, and Lycaon's knees and dear heart were
loosened;

he let go of the spear and crouched there, spreading both
arms

wide. Achilles drew his sharp sword and struck him on
the neck next to his collarbone, and the two-edged sword
sank right in, and Lycaon fell forward on to the earth and
lay there

sprawled, and his dark blood flowed out and wetted the
ground.

Achilles seized him by the foot and flung him into the river
to be carried away, and boasting over him spoke winged
words:

'Lie there now among the fish, who will lick away the blood
from your wound without a thought for you; nor will your
mother

lay you on a bier and lament over you, but instead swirling
Scamander will carry you into the wide gulf of the salt sea,
and fish will dart up through the waves' dark rippling
surface and will feed on the white fat of Lycaon.

Die, all of you, until we reach the citadel of sacred Ilium,
you fleeing and I dealing out slaughter in pursuit.

Not even this clear-flowing, silver-swirling river will help
you,

this river to whom you have for many years sacrificed bulls
in plenty, and hurled single-hoofed horses alive into its
eddies.

No—die, every one of you, a miserable death, until you
have

paid the price for Patroclus' death and for the slaughter of
the

Achaeans you killed beside the swift ships while I stayed away.'

So he spoke, and the river grew very angry in his heart, and pondered in his mind how he might put an end to glorious Achilles' battle-work, and keep destruction away from the Trojans.

Meanwhile the son of Peleus, holding up his far-shadowing spear, sprang at Asteropaeus, the son of Pelegon, raging to kill him.

Pelegon was the son of broad-flowing Axius and Periboea,* who was the eldest of the daughters of Aecessamenus, and the deep-swirling river Axius lay with her. It was at Pelegon's son that Achilles sprang as he stood in the river facing him, holding two spears; Xanthus had put fury in his heart, angry at the slaughter of the young fighters Achilles had cut down in his waters, showing them no pity. When they had advanced to within close range of each other

swift-footed glorious Achilles was the first to speak:

'Who are you, and where are you from, that you dare to face me?

Unhappy are the parents whose sons oppose my fury!'

Then in turn the illustrious son of Pelegon addressed him:

'Great-spirited son of Peleus, why do you ask about my ancestry?

I come from Paeonia of the rich soil, far from this place, and I command the men of Paeonia with their long spears, and this is now the eleventh day since I came to Ilium.

My birth-line goes back to Axius the broad-flowing, Axius who pours forth the loveliest waters over the earth; he fathered Pelegon, famed with the spear, whom they say was my father. Now, illustrious Achilles, let us fight!'

So he spoke, full of threats, and glorious Achilles raised the Pelian ash spear. The hero Asteropaeus was ambidextrous, and threw spears from both his hands at the same time; with one spear he hit Achilles' shield, but it did not break through, since the gold, the gift of a god, kept it out. With the other he hit Achilles on the right forearm, grazing it, and a dark cloud of blood spurted out, but the spear passed beyond him and stuck fast in the ground, longing to taste flesh. Throwing second, in a rage to kill him, Achilles let fly his straight-flying ash spear at Asteropaeus, but he missed his mark, and the ash spear hit the high riverbank and stuck there in the bank up to its mid-point. Then Peleus' son drew his sharp sword from beside his thigh and leapt raging at Asteropaeus, who was trying in vain to wrench Achilles' ash spear from the bank with his brawny hand; three times in his rage to pull it out he made it quiver, and three times he gave up the struggle. The fourth time he tried to bend and break the ash spear of Aeacus' grandson, but too soon Achilles closed with him and robbed him of his life with the sword, hitting him in the belly next to the navel, and all his guts spilled out on to the ground and he breathed out his life, and darkness covered his eyes. Achilles jumped on to his chest and stripped him of his armour, and spoke boastfully over him: 'Lie there, and learn how hard it is, though born from a river, to pit yourself against the descendants of Cronus' mighty son.*

You said you were descended from a broad-flowing river,
but I can claim a blood-line running from great Zeus:
the man who fathered me rules over the numerous
Myrmidons,
Peleus, the son of Aeacus; and Aeacus was a son of Zeus.
Zeus is more powerful than rivers that flow into the sea,
and
therefore the lineage of Zeus is more powerful than a
river's.

And here is a great river flowing beside you, who might
help you; but no one can fight with Zeus, the son of Cronus.
Not even lord Achelous can match himself against him,
nor even the immensely strong deep-flowing Ocean,*
from whom every river and the sea in its entirety
and all springs and deep wells draw their flow.
Even he is in fear of the lightning-bolt of great Zeus and
his terrible thunder, when it crashes from the high sky.'

So he spoke, and wrenched the bronze-tipped spear
from the
bank,
and left Asteropaeus there, after robbing him of his dear
life,
lying where he was on the sands; and the dark water
soaked
into him and eels and fishes busied themselves about him,
gnawing at his kidneys and tearing the fat around them.
Then Achilles set off after the horsehair-crested Paeonians,
who had been thrown into turmoil along the swirling river
when they saw their champion beaten down in the harsh
conflict by the hands of Peleus' son and the might of his
sword.

He now killed Thersilochus and Mydon and Astypylus,
and Mnesus and Thrasius and Aenius and Ophelestes;
and swift Achilles would have slain even more Paeonians
had not the deep-swirling river grown angry and addressed

him,
speaking from a deep whirlpool in the likeness of a man:
'Achilles, your strength and the violence of your deeds
are beyond all men; the gods are always protecting you.
If the son of Cronus has granted it to you to kill all the
Trojans,
at least drive them out of me on to the plain and do your
worst there;
you can see that my lovely streams are crammed full of
dead men,
and there is no way that I can pour my waters into the
bright sea,
clogged as I am with dead men, while you continue your
brutal
killing.
Come now, let me be! Astonishment grips me, captain of
the people.'

Then swift-footed Achilles addressed him in answer:
'Very well, Scamander, nurtured by Zeus, it will be as you
say—
but I shall not give up slaughtering the arrogant Trojans
until
I have penned them inside their city, and have tested
Hector,
matching our strength; either he will beat me down, or I
him.'

So he spoke, and hurled himself at the Trojans like
some divine being.
Then the deep-swirling river addressed Apollo:
'God of the silver bow, this is hard! You have not respected
the plans of Cronus' son, he who repeatedly instructed you
to
stand by the Trojans and to defend them until the evening
comes

and the sun goes down at last, shadowing the rich-soiled ploughland.'

So he spoke, and Achilles, famed with the spear, leapt from the bank into the middle of the river, who rushed at him in a seething mass, boiling up all its waters to a crest, and stirring the many dead men killed by Achilles who were lying in him in great numbers; roaring like a bull he flung them out on to the dry land, but keeping those who were alive safe along his lovely waters, hiding them in the vast depths of his swirling stream. The wave reared up terribly, seething around Achilles, and its watery mass fell on his shield and smashed him back; he could not find a firm stance for his feet, and he seized a tall, well-grown elm tree in his hands; but it came away from its roots and tore the whole bank down with it, and blocked the fine stream with its thick-growing branches, and as it fell made a barrier right across it. Achilles heaved himself out of the swirling river and dashed away, flying over the plain on swift feet, terrified. The great god did not pause, but rose up menacingly to a dark crest, seeking to put an end to the battle-work of glorious Achilles and to keep destruction from the Trojans. Peleus'son sprang back from him as far as a spear-cast, swooping away like the black eagle, the hunting bird, that is both the strongest and the swiftest of winged creatures; in this likeness he bounded on, and on his chest the bronze armour clattered terribly. So he fled, crouching under the

river's

onslaught, but Xanthus with a mighty roar flowed on in pursuit.

As when a man, a digger of channels, guides a stream's flow

from a spring of dark water through plants in his garden, and,

mattock in hand, clears obstructions away from the channel;

as the water flows onwards it sweeps all the pebbles out of its way, and with a gurgling sound glides quickly down the land's gentle slope, too fast even for the man digging.

Just so the wave of the river kept catching up with Achilles, swift though he was, for gods are stronger than men.

As often as swift-footed glorious Achilles strove to make a stand and match his strength with the river, hoping to find if

all the immortal gods who inhabit the high sky were pursuing him,

so often the great wave of the Zeus-fed river would crash on to his shoulders from above. Anguished in spirit, he kept trying to leap clear of it, but the river rushed violently beneath him,

weakening his knees and sucking the dirt from under his feet.

The son of Peleus looked up to the wide high sky and groaned:

'Father Zeus, to think that none of the gods has promised to save me

from the river, pitiful as I am! After this, I could face any ordeal.

But none of the dwellers in the high sky is as much to blame

as my own mother, who beguiled me with lying words, saying that I would die under the walls of the armoured Trojans, struck down by the swift arrows of Apollo.*

How I wish that Hector, the best man bred here, had killed me;

a champion would have been the slayer, and a champion the slain.

But the truth is that I am fated to die a wretched death, trapped in a great river like a boy, some swineherd, who is swept away by a torrent as he tries to cross it in winter.'

So he spoke, and at once Poseidon and Athena came and stood close to him in the likeness of men, and taking him by the hand spoke encouraging words to him. The first of them to speak was Poseidon, shaker of the earth:

'Son of Peleus, you must not be greatly alarmed or fearful, seeing that two gods like us are here to support you, I and Pallas Athena—and we have come with Zeus' consent.

Be sure that it is not your destiny to be beaten down by a river;

this one will soon give up, and you will see it for yourself.

Now I will give you some shrewd advice, and perhaps you will listen:

do not rest your hands from equally balanced warfare until you have penned all the Trojan people who escape you inside

the splendid walls of Ilium. Then, when you have robbed Hector of his life, go back to the ships; this glory we grant you.'

So they spoke, and went away to join the immortals, and Achilles,

greatly cheered by the gods' advice, made his way to the plain.

It was entirely flooded by the overflowing mass of water, and

much fine weaponry and the bodies of young fighters slain in

battle were floating there. Achilles' high-stepping, nimble

knees

carried him straight upstream against the current, and the broad-flowing

river could not stop him, for Athena had thrust great strength into him.

Even so Scamander would not abate his fury, but became yet more angry at the son of Peleus, and reared his waters high to a crest, and called out in a shout to Simoeis:

‘Dear brother, let us together hold back this man’s strength,

or he will very soon sack the great city of lord Priam, and the Trojans will not be able to withstand the heat of battle.

Come quickly, help me, and fill up your channels with water from your springs, and stir all your streams into spate.

Raise a huge wave and stir up a great crashing of tree-trunks

and rocks, so that we can restrain this wild man, who now stands supreme and rages like the gods.

I tell you, neither his violence will help him nor his beauty, nor that splendid armour, which will lie somewhere deep in my waters, covered in slime. I shall wrap him in sand and heap up a huge pile of shingle over him, and the Achaeans will not know where to find his bones in order to assemble them, so deep will be the silt I shall hide him in.

That will be his tomb, and there will be no need to raise a grave-mound when the Achaeans perform his funeral rites.’

So he spoke, and rearing up in a seething mass rushed at Achilles

in a roaring tumult of foam and blood and dead men.

The dark wave of the river fed by Zeus rose high, looming over the son of Peleus, and was about to overwhelm him; but Hera gave a great shout, terrified on his behalf that the great deep-swirling river would sweep him away.

Straightaway she addressed Hephaestus, her dear son:
'Up with you, my crook-footed son! You are the one who
we thought could be a fit opponent for swirling Xanthus.
Come quickly now and help me: make a great flame flash
out,
and I will go and rouse a violent storm from the salt sea,
blown by the West Wind and the clearing South Wind;
it will bring with it a destructive blast that will consume
the Trojans' armour and their dead men. Burn the trees
along Xanthus' banks, and fill him with fire; let him not
on any account turn you back with beguiling words or
threats,
and do not cease from your fury until such time as I shout
out
to you—only then must you hold back your tireless fire.'

So she spoke, and Hephaestus made ready awesome
fire.

First of all the fire burnt on the plain, searing the many
dead men who lay there in great numbers, killed by
Achilles.

The whole plain was scorched, and the bright water was
checked.

As when in autumn the North Wind quickly dries up a
newly watered orchard, and the man who tills it is glad,
so the whole plain was scorched dry, and the dead men
were consumed. Then Hephaestus turned his dazzling
flame on

the river, and the elms and willows and tamarisks burned,
and the clover and rushes and galingale that grew in
abundance around the lovely waters of the river burned
too.

All along its eddies the eels and fishes were afflicted,
leaping like acrobats this way and that in the lovely waters,
tormented by the blast of much-scheming Hephaestus.

The mighty river himself was on fire, and addressed him by

name:

‘Hephaestus, no one of the gods can stand up against you, and I cannot fight you when you blaze with fire like this.

Leave off

this strife, and let glorious Achilles drive the Trojans at once from

their city. What is this quarrel to me? Why should I take sides?’

So he spoke, burnt by the fire, and his lovely waters were boiling.

As a cauldron is heated by a great fire made of dry wood that crackles beneath it, and as it seethes inside renders down

the fat of a richly fed hog which bubbles up all around, so the river’s lovely streams blazed in the fire, and his water boiled.

He stopped still and had no desire to flow onward; the blast of mighty Hephaestus of many schemes tormented him.

Pouring out entreaties he spoke to Hera with winged words: ‘Hera, why has your son attacked my streams, making me suffer

above others? It is not I who am to blame as much as all the other gods who are helping the Trojans. Very well, I am ready to stop, if this is what you command—only let Achilles give up as well. And I will swear an oath in addition, that I shall never keep the day of destruction from the Trojans,

not even when the whole of Troy is ablaze, burning in the ravaging

fire, when the warlike sons of the Achaeans have put it to the torch.’

When the goddess Hera of the white arms heard this she straightaway addressed her dear son Hephaestus:

‘Hephaestus, my far-famed son, restrain yourself! It is not

right
to batter an immortal god like this for the sake of mortals.'

So she spoke, and Hephaestus quenched his awesome
fire,
and the wave rolled back along the river's lovely streams.

When the fury of Xanthus had been beaten down both
fighters
stopped, because Hera held them back, angry though she
was;
but then a painful, weighty conflict descended on the other
gods,
and the spirit in their hearts was blown in contrary
directions.

They collided with a great crash, and the broad earth
groaned,
and the great high sky sounded its trumpet; Zeus heard it
as he sat on Olympus, and laughed with delight in his
dear heart when he saw the gods clashing in strife.

No longer did they stand apart from each other: Ares the
shield-piercer began the fighting, and charged at Athena
with his bronze-tipped spear, and spoke insultingly to her:
'Dog-fly, what is this wild daring? Why are you once again
driving the gods against each other, urged on by your great
spirit?

Do you not recall when you provoked Tydeus' son Diomedes
to wound me, and you yourself took up a spear, for all to
see,
and thrust it straight at me and tore my handsome flesh?*_
I think that you will now pay me back for what you did
then.'

So bloodthirsty Ares spoke, and lunged with a stab
of his long spear at the terrible, tassel-decorated aegis
that not even the thunderbolt of Zeus can overcome.
Athena fell back and picked up a rock in her brawny hand,
a black boulder that was lying on the plain, jagged and

huge,
which men of former times had put there to be a field-
boundary;
with this she struck impetuous Ares in the neck, and
loosened his limbs.
Ares fell, with a clatter of armour about him, covering
seven
acres, and fouling his hair in the dust; Pallas Athena
laughed,
and boasting over him addressed him with winged words:
'Fool, why do you match your strength against mine?
Have you not yet learned how much better than you I claim
to be?
This way you will pay the full price to your mother's Furies; *
she is angry, and plans mischief against you because you
have
abandoned the Achaeans and offer help to the arrogant
Trojans.'

So she spoke, and turned her shining eyes away from
him,
and Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, took his hand and led him
away, groaning deeply; he had scarcely recovered his
breath.

When the goddess Hera of the white arms saw Aphrodite
she immediately spoke to Athena with winged words:
'Daughter of Zeus the aegis-wearer, Atrytone, * this will not
do!
Here is that dog-fly again, leading Ares, doom of mortals,
through the mêlée out of the deadly battle. Quick, after
her!'

So she spoke, and Athena sped off in pursuit, glad in
her heart,
and closing with Aphrodite hit her on the breast with her
brawny
hand; and then and there her knees and her dear heart

gave way.

So both Ares and Aphrodite lay on the earth that feeds many;

Athena boasted over them and addressed them with winged words:

‘Let this be the treatment of all those who help the Trojans whenever they fight against the armoured Achaeans, and let them be as daring and unflinching as Aphrodite was when she came to the help of Ares and faced my fury, and then we would long ago have finished with this war, and would have sacked the well-built citadel of Ilium.’

So she spoke, and the goddess Hera of the white arms smiled.

But the lord who shakes the earth addressed Apollo:

‘Phoebus, why do we two keep our distance? It is not right when

the others have begun hostilities, and will be even more shameful if

we return to Zeus’ bronze-floored house on Olympus without a fight.

You go first; you are younger by birth, and it would not be proper for me to start, since I am older and wiser than you.

Fool, what a thoughtless heart you have! Do you not remember the many hardships we endured around Ilium,

we two alone of the gods, when we were sent by Zeus and served arrogant Laomedon for a year for a fixed

wage, and he gave us our orders and told us what to do?

It was my task to build a wall round the city for the Trojans, a broad, splendid wall, so that the city should be

impregnable,

while you, Phoebus, were herdsman to shambling, crook-horned

cattle in the glens of wooded Ida with its many valleys.

But when the joyful seasons brought round the due time for

payment, then the appalling Laomedon violently refused us the whole of our wage and sent us away with menaces, even threatening to tie our hands and feet together and to send us off to be sold in some far-distant islands; he also declared he would lop our ears off with the bronze. So we returned home with resentment in our hearts, deprived of the payment he had promised but did not fulfil.*

And now it is his people you show favour to, and make no effort to ensure with us that the overbearing Trojans perish utterly and wretchedly, along with their children and honoured wives.'

Then in reply the lord Apollo the far-shooter addressed him:

'Shaker of the earth, you would not say I was possessed of a sound mind if I were to fight with you for the sake of mortals—wretched creatures, who like leaves at one time flourish in a blaze of glory, feeding on the fruits of the tilled earth, and at another wither spiritlessly away. No, let us leave the battle immediately, and let the mortals fight on by themselves.'

So he spoke, and turned away, because he felt awe at the thought of exchanging blows with his father's brother. But his sister Artemis, haunter of the wild, queen of beasts, reproved him bitterly and spoke to him in words of censure: 'So, shooter from afar, you are running away, handing the victory entirely to Poseidon, giving him a chance to boast—for nothing.

You fool, what is the point of carrying that futile, useless

bow?

Let me not hear you boasting again in the halls of our father,
as you have done before among the immortal gods, that you
would match your strength with Poseidon's, face to face.'

So she spoke, and Apollo the far-shooter gave her no answer;

but Hera, honoured wife of Zeus, was angry with her and rebuked the shooter of arrows in words of censure:

'Reckless bitch, how can you now have the daring to stand up

against me? It will be hard for you to oppose my fury, even though you carry a bow and Zeus has made you a lioness against

women, and has allowed you to kill those whom you choose.*

I tell you, you would do better to slaughter wild beasts and deer on the mountains than to fight with those who are stronger.

But if you are minded to learn about war, so be it; you will soon

find out how much stronger I am, when you oppose my fury.'

So she spoke, and with her left hand seized both Artemis' wrists,

and with her right hand pulled the bow and quiver from her shoulder,

and began to beat her about the ears with her own weapons, smiling

as the other twisted and turned; and the swift arrows fell from the quiver.

Then the goddess Artemis fled cowering and weeping, like a pigeon

that flies from a hawk's pursuit into the hollow of a rock, a

deep cleft, because it was not its destiny to be caught; just so

Artemis fled weeping, leaving her bow and arrows where they were.

Then Hermes the guide, slayer of Argus, addressed Leto: 'Leto, there is no way I can fight with you; it is a painful thing

to exchange blows with the consorts of Zeus the cloud-gatherer.

No, you may quite freely boast among the immortal gods that you overcame me by your own strength and might.'

So he spoke; and Leto gathered up the curved bow and its arrows

that had fallen out here and there in the whirling dust, and when she had picked up her daughter's weapons she withdrew.

Meanwhile the maiden goddess had arrived at the bronze-floored

house of Zeus on Olympus, and sat weeping on her father's lap,

and her immortal robe shivered about her. Her father, Cronus' son,

took her to him, and laughing gently began to question her: 'My dear child, which of the Uranian gods has done this to you

so thoughtlessly, as if you had committed some public mischief?'

Then in answer the fair-crowned leader of the noisy chase said:

'It was your wife who thrashed me, father, white-armed Hera;

because of her, strife and quarrelling have now gripped the immortals.'

So they spoke, one to another, in this way; and meanwhile

Phoebus Apollo had made his way into sacred Ilium—
he was concerned for the wall of the well-built city, fearing
that the Achaeans would sack it on that day, before its due
time.

But the other gods who live for ever went off to Olympus,
some of them angry, and some mightily triumphant, and
sat down beside the father, god of the dark cloud, while
Achilles

continued to slaughter the Trojans and their single-hoofed
horses;

as when smoke rises from a city that has been fired and
reaches

up to the wide high sky, for the gods have unleashed their
anger

against it and have sent toil to all and unleashed grief on
many,

just so Achilles let loose toil and grief upon the Trojans.

Now the old man Priam was standing on the sacred
tower,

and he saw towering Achilles, and how the Trojans were
fleeing in confused panic before him, and there was no
courage

in them. With a cry he made his way down from the tower
and roused the splendid gate-guards along the wall:

‘Set your hands to the gates and keep them open, until the
people in their panic flight reach the city. Look, there is
Achilles

close behind, driving them on, and I think disaster is near.
When they are safe inside the wall and can catch their
breath,

then shut the close-fitting doors again in their places;

I am afraid that murderous man may leap inside our wall.’

So he spoke, and they knocked back the crossbars and
opened

the gates; thrown wide open they offered safety. Then

Apollo

sprang out to meet the Trojans, meaning to keep ruin from them,

and they made straight in flight for the city and the high wall,

covered in dust from the plain, their throats rough from thirst;

but Achilles pursued them relentlessly with his spear, and all the time

violent madness had hold of his heart, and he raged to win glory.

Then the Achaeans would have taken Troy of the high gates

had not Phoebus Apollo roused glorious Agenor into action, the worthy, blameless, and mighty son of Antenor.

Into his heart he thrust daring, and he himself stood beside him, leaning against an oak tree and hidden in a thick mist, to keep the heavy spectres of death from him.

When Agenor saw Achilles, sacker of cities, he stood motionless, and as he waited his heart was in great turmoil; deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-hearted spirit:

‘How hard this is! If I flee before mighty Achilles to where the rest have been driven in panic-stricken tumult, he will still overtake me and cut my defenceless throat; but if I leave these others to be driven in confusion by Achilles, son of Peleus, and if my feet take me by another way

in flight from the wall to the plain of Ilium, and bring me to the spurs of Ida where I can hide in its undergrowth—then in the evening I could wash myself in the river and dry the sweat from my body and get back to Ilium.

But why does my dear heart speak with me in this way?

I am afraid Achilles will see me leaving the city for the plain and will come after me on his swift feet and overtake me.

Then I shall no longer be able to escape death and its

spectres,
for he is surpassingly mighty, far beyond all mankind.
But what if I were to go out to face him in front of the city?
It must be that his flesh too can be wounded by the sharp
bronze,
and there is but one life in him, and men say that he is
mortal, even though Cronus' son Zeus is giving him the
glory.'

So he spoke, and gathering himself waited for Achilles,
his
brave heart within him urging him to enter the battle and
fight.
Just as a leopard emerges from her lair in a deep wood
to confront the man who is hunting her, and has no fear or
terror in her heart when she hears the baying of his
hounds,
and though the huntsman might get in first with a stab or a
thrown
weapon, she will not slacken her courage, even if skewered
by a spear, until she either closes with him or is beaten
down;
just so splendid Agenor, the son of noble Antenor,
had no thought of flight before he put Achilles to the test,
but held his perfectly balanced shield steadily before him,
and aimed his spear at him, shouting in a loud voice:
'Illustrious Achilles, doubtless you hoped in your mind to
sack the city of the proud Trojans on this day. You are
a fool! There is yet much anguish to be suffered over it.
There are many of us, men of courage, inside the city,
we who keep Ilium safe before the eyes of our dear wives
and children. As for you, you will meet your death here,
however terrifying and daring a fighter you may be.'

So he spoke, and let fly the sharp spear from his heavy
hand.

He did not miss Achilles, but hit him on the leg below his

knee,
and on his shin the greave of newly forged tin clattered terribly, and the bronze-tipped spear sprang back after it struck, and did not pierce him, for the god's gift protected him.

Then in turn the son of Peleus leapt at godlike Agenor, but this time Apollo did not allow him to win glory; he snatched Agenor away and covered him in a thick mist, and sent him to make his way quietly from the fighting. Then the god who shoots from afar separated Achilles from the people by a trick: he likened himself in every way to Agenor, and stood before Achilles' feet, who rushed to pursue him and chased him over the wheat-bearing plain, working him towards the river, deep-swirling Scamander; but Apollo kept running a little way in front of him, beguiling him with his trickery, for Achilles always hoped to catch him as he ran. Meanwhile the other Trojans were fleeing in a panic-stricken rout, and gladly reached the city, and filled it with their crowding. They had not the courage to wait any longer for each other outside the city and to find out which of them had escaped and which were dead in the fighting, but streamed in haste into the city, as their feet and knees were able to save them.

BOOK TWENTY-TWO

So the Trojans ran into the city like terrified fawns, and there dried the sweat from their bodies and drank to slake their thirst, leaning against the fine battlements; and the Achaeans drew closer to the wall, shields held in front of their shoulders.

But Hector's deadly destiny shackled him, making him wait where he was, in front of Ilium and the Scaean gates.

Then Phoebus Apollo addressed the son of Peleus: 'Son of Peleus,

why are you pursuing me on swift feet, you a mortal and I an immortal god? You have not even recognized me as a god, such is your ceaseless raging.

You shirk your battle-work with the Trojans you have put to flight,

and now they huddle in the city while you have strayed out here.

But you will not kill me, for you know I am not the one fated to die.'*

Then swift-footed Achilles, deeply angered, addressed him:

'You have thwarted me, far-shooter, most deadly of gods, by turning me away from the wall; if you had not, many men

would have clamped their teeth on the earth before reaching Ilium.

Now you have robbed me of great glory by easily saving these men, because you have no fear of future retribution—but I would make you pay for this, if only I had the power.'

So he spoke, and made for the city with fearless spirit, speeding along like some prize-winning horse that races with its chariot, galloping effortlessly over the plain; so swiftly did Achilles stir his knees and legs into movement.

The old man Priam was the first to catch sight of him, shining brightly like a star as he sped over the plain—the star that rises in autumn, and its rays shine out blazing among all the other stars in the depths of night, and men give it the name of Orion's dog; it is indeed the brightest star, but it is a sign of suffering, and brings with it much fever for wretched mortals.*

Just so the bronze on Achilles' chest blazed as he ran.

The old man let out a groan, and raising his hands high beat his head, and called out with a great cry, appealing to his dear son; but Hector had already taken his stand in front of the gates, raging relentlessly to fight with Achilles.

The old man stretched out his hands to him and spoke piteously:

'Hector my dear son, do not, I beg you, wait for this man, alone, without any others; you will soon meet your death, beaten down by Peleus's son, for he is far stronger than you,

and merciless. How I wish he was loved by the gods as much

as he is by me! Then he would soon lie out there, eaten by dogs and vultures, and bitter grief would leave my heart—this man who has bereaved me of so many fine sons, both killing them and selling them to far-distant islands.

And indeed there are now two of my sons that I cannot see among the Trojans crowded into the city, Lycaon and Polydorus,*

who were borne to me by Laothoë, a princess among women.

If they are somewhere in the enemy's camp, alive, I can surely ransom them with bronze and gold, for there is much within; the aged Altes, a far-famed man, gave his daughter a huge dowry. But if they are now dead and in the halls of Hades, then it is an agony for their parents' hearts, for me and for their mother, though for the rest of the people the pain will last a shorter time, as long as you too do not die, beaten down by Achilles. Come back inside the wall, my son, and protect the men and the women of Troy; do not present great glory to Peleus' son by letting your own dear life be cut short. Have pity on me, too, while I still have understanding, unhappy and ill-fated man, whom the father, Cronus' son, will destroy at the threshold of old age, in a cruel fate; I will be forced to witness appalling sights—my sons slaughtered, my daughters raped, their bedchambers ravaged, little children flung to the ground in the cruel fighting, and my sons' wives dragged away by the Achaeans' murderous hands. And I myself will be the last to go; my own dogs, gone wild, will tear me apart at the entrance to my house, after some man has taken the breath from my limbs with a stab or a spear-cast—the very dogs I reared in my halls to be by my table and guard my doors will drink my blood as they lie about my porch, driven mad in their hearts. A young man is a seemly sight when he lies slain on the battlefield, torn by the sharp bronze;

whatever his appearance, everything about him is beautiful,
even in death. But when an old man is killed and his dogs defile his grey head and grey beard and genitals, it is surely the most pitiable thing that can befall wretched mortals.'

So the old man spoke, and seizing his grey hairs in his hands pulled them from his head; but he could not move Hector's heart.

Then in turn his mother began to lament, weeping tears, unloosing the fold of her dress and with the other hand holding her breast;

weeping tears, she addressed Hector with winged words: 'Hector my child, have respect for this, and show me pity, if ever I held my breast to your lips to make you forget your cares.

Think on this, dear child, and save us from this deadly man, but from inside the wall; do not go out and oppose him one against one.

Cruel man! If he kills you I shall never mourn you on a funeral bier, dear child of our line, neither I who bore you nor your richly dowered wife, but far away from us swift dogs will devour you beside the ships of the Argives.'

So the two of them wept and addressed many prayers to their dear son, but they could not persuade Hector's heart, and he waited there for monstrous Achilles to come near him.

As when a snake in the mountains waits for a man by its lair,
a snake that has swallowed lethal poisons, and is full of bitter

anger, and glares terrifyingly at him as it writhes over its
lair,
so Hector, unquenchable fury in him, would not give
ground,
and leant his shining shield against the projecting tower.
Deeply troubled, he spoke to his great-spirited heart:
'What shall I do? If I go back through the gates in the wall P
olydamas will be the first to heap reproaches on me,
because he urged me at the start of this last deadly night,
when glorious Achilles rose up, to lead the Trojans into the
city.*

I would not listen to him—but it would have been much
better.

But now, since I have ruined the people by my
recklessness,

I feel shame before the Trojan men and the Trojan women
with their

trailing robes, in case some man of low rank may say of
me:

"Hector trusted in his own might and so ruined his people."

That is what they will say; and then it would be far better
to go and meet Achilles face to face and either kill him and
return,

or die at his hands, full of glory, in front of the city.

And yet, suppose I lay down my bossed shield and
strong helmet and lean my spear against the wall, and
go out by myself to meet blameless Achilles, and
promise to give back Helen and her possessions with her,
every single thing that Alexander brought to Troy in his
hollow ships—which was the beginning of this quarrel—
for the sons of Atreus to take away, and we could also
share

with the Achaeans everything else that this city keeps
hidden?

Then I could make the Trojan elders swear a solemn oath
not to conceal anything but to divide everything in two,

all the treasure that the splendid city holds within itself;
but why does my dear heart speak with me in this way?
I am afraid that if I go out and meet him he will have no
pity
and will show me no respect but will kill me there and then
defenceless, like a woman, since I will have taken off my
armour.

There is surely no way that I can flirt with him
“from a rock or an oak tree”* like a girl with a young man,
in the way that girls and young men flirt together.
No, it must be better to join battle with him as soon as
possible,
and then we shall see to which of us the Olympian grants
glory.’

So he waited, pondering, and Achilles came up close to
him,
looking like Enyalios, the fighter with the glittering helmet,
and brandishing the terrible Pelian ash spear above his
right
shoulder; and about him his bronze armour shone like
the brightness of blazing fire or of the sun at its rising.
When Hector saw him he was gripped by trembling; he
could
no longer hold his ground, but left the gates and fled in
fear.

Peleus’ son sprang after him, trusting to his swift feet;
like a hawk in the mountains, the swiftest of winged
creatures,
that swoops with ease in pursuit of a timid dove, but she
flies away from under it, and from close behind it darts at
her
again and again, screaming shrilly, its heart urging it on to
kill—
so Achilles flew raging straight for Hector, and he ran
terrified

along under the Trojans' wall, driving his knees into swift action.

So they raced ever onwards, past the lookout place and the wind-

blown fig tree, along the wagon track, away from under the wall,

and came to the clear-flowing springs where two fountains gush up from eddying Scamander. One of these flows with warm water, and all around it there is steam rising, as if it were smoke going up from a blazing fire; and the other sends out a stream in summer like hail or freezing snow or water that has formed into ice.

Beside these, close by, there are fine wide washing-pools built of stone, where the Trojans' wives and their lovely daughters used to wash their shining clothes in former times,

in the days of peace before the sons of the Achaeans came.

Past this place they ran, Hector fleeing and Achilles pursuing;

the one fleeing was a fine man, but the swift pursuer was far better. It was not for a sacrificial beast or a bull's hide that

they competed, such as are the prizes for men in foot-races,

but they ran for the life of Hector, breaker of horses.

As when single-hoofed prizewinning horses effortlessly round

the turning-point, in a race in honour of a man who has died,

where the prize is great, either a tripod or a woman,

so these two ran circling three times round the city of Priam on their swift feet. And all the gods were watching them, and

the first to speak among them was the father of gods and men:

'This is a wretched thing! Before my eyes I see a man I love

being pursued around the wall; my heart grieves for Hector, who has burnt the thigh-bones of many oxen in my honour on the peaks of many-valleyed Ida, and at other times

on the city's heights;* and now here is glorious Achilles pursuing him on swift feet around the city of Priam.

Come now, gods, share your counsel with me and advise me:

should we save him from death or should we beat him down,

noble man though he is, at the hands of Peleus' son Achilles?'

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena addressed him:

'Father, god of the bright thunderbolt and the dark cloud—what have

you said! This is a mortal man, whose own fate was fixed long ago;

is it really your desire to release him from death's gloomy lament?

Go, do it; but all we other gods will not approve it.'

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed her:

'Be comforted, my dear child, Tritogeneia;* I do not speak with serious intent; and towards you I am minded to be gentle.

Go where your mind leads you, and hold back no longer.'

So he spoke, and encouraged Athena, who was already eager to act,

and she went swooping down from the peaks of Olympus.

Meanwhile swift Achilles drove on unremittingly at Hector.

As when on the mountains a hound starts a deer's fawn from its covert and hunts it through glens and clearings, and even if the fawn deceives it by cowering under a bush

the hound noses it out and keeps running until it finds it,
so Hector could not shake off Peleus' swift-footed son.
As many times as he gathered himself to dash under
cover of the well-built bastions by the Dardanian gates,
in the hope that those above might protect him with
missiles,

so many times Achilles would get in front and, flying along
between him and the city, would turn him towards the
plain.

As in a dream a man cannot catch another who runs from
him—

the quarry cannot escape, nor can the pursuer catch him—
so Achilles could not run Hector down nor Hector escape
Achilles.

How then could Hector have escaped the spectres of death,
if Apollo had not come to meet him for one last time and
stood close and stirred up fury in him and made his knees
swift?

Glorious Achilles signed with his head to his people, telling
them

not to hurl bitter weapons at Hector, in case someone
felled him and so won the glory, and he came second.

But when they had reached the fountains for the fourth
time,

then indeed the father held up his golden scales and placed
in them two spectres of death that brings long misery,
one for Achilles and another for Hector, breaker of horses.

Taking the bar by the centre he held it up, and Hector's
fated day

sank down; his way lay to Hades, and Phoebus Apollo left
him.*

Then the goddess grey-eyed Athena came up to the son of
Peleus

and standing nearby addressed him with winged words:

'Illustrious Achilles, dear to Zeus, now I can hope that we
two

will carry off great glory to the ships for the Achaeans,
when we slay Hector, insatiable for battle though he is.
It is no longer possible for him to escape from us to safety,
not even if Apollo who shoots from afar were to submit to
every
indignity and grovel before father Zeus who wears the
aegis.
Now, stand here and catch your breath, and I will go and
persuade Hector to fight with you, matching strength to
strength.'

So Athena spoke, and he followed her orders, glad at
heart,
and stood there, leaning on his bronze-pointed ash spear.
She left him there, and caught up with glorious Hector,
likening herself in form and unwearying voice to Deïphobus.
She stood close to him and addressed him with winged
words:

'Brother, I can see that swift Achilles is tormenting you
sorely,
pursuing you round the city of Priam on his flying feet.
Come, let us make a stand here, and defend ourselves
together.'

Then in turn great Hector of the glittering helmet
addressed him:

'Deïphobus, you were always by far the dearest to me of
my
brothers, all those who are the sons of Hecuba and Priam;
and now I think I shall value you all the more, because
when you caught sight of me you had the courage to come
out
beyond the wall for my sake, while all the rest stayed
inside.'

Then in answer the goddess grey-eyed Athena
addressed him:

'Dear brother, our father and revered mother and my

companions
around me clasped my knees and begged me at length,
one after
another, to stay behind, so greatly do they all tremble at
Achilles;
but the heart within me was worn down by painful anxiety
for you.

So now let us go straight for him, raging, and let there be
no sparing of spears, and we shall then know if Achilles will
kill us both and carry off our bloodstained armour as spoils
to the hollow ships, or if he will be beaten down by your
spear.'

So he spoke; and Athena by her trickery led Hector on.
When they had advanced to within close range of each
other
the first to speak was great Hector of the glittering helmet:
'No longer, son of Peleus, shall I run from you, as before I
fled
three times around Priam's great city, and I did not have
the
courage to wait for your attack. Now my heart tells me to
take my stand against you; and I shall be killed, or else kill
you.

So, come on! Let us offer each other our gods; they are the
best
witnesses and overseers of agreements, and will be such
for us:

I shall commit no shameful outrage on you, if Zeus grants
me
the endurance to win and I take your life from you; when
I have stripped you of your fine armour, Achilles, I shall
give you back, dead, to the Achaeans. You must do the
same.'

Then swift-footed Achilles looked at him darkly and
said:

‘Hector, accursed man, do not speak to me of agreements! There are no binding oaths between lions and men, and wolves and lambs are never of the same mind, but all their lives harbour hostile thoughts against each other; so friendship between you and me is not possible, and there will be no oaths between us, until one or the other dies and gluts Ares, the shield-bearing warrior, with his blood.

Summon up all the valour you can; now more than ever you must show yourself a spearman and a daring fighter. There is no longer any escape; Pallas Athena will quickly beat you down with my spear, and now you will pay me in full for all the sufferings of my companions you killed in your spear-frenzy.’

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and threw it; but illustrious Hector was looking ahead and avoided it; he saw it and crouched, and the bronze-tipped spear flew over him and stuck in the earth. But Pallas Athena caught it up and returned it to Achilles, unseen by Hector, shepherd of the people.

Then Hector addressed the blameless son of Peleus: ‘You missed! It seems after all, godlike Achilles, that you do not yet know from Zeus when I shall die, though you thought you did; you are a glib man, cunning with words, saying that fear would make me forget my courage and fury.

But you will not fix your spear in my back as I run from you; no, drive it straight through my chest as I come raging at you, if a god gives you the chance. Now in your turn try to avoid my

bronze -tipped spear. May you catch it fully in your flesh;
then the war would be easier for the Trojans to bear,
if you were dead, since you are their greatest affliction.'

So he spoke, and poised his long-shadowing spear and
threw it,

and did not miss but hit the middle of Peleus' son's shield;
but the spear rebounded far from the shield, and Hector
was angry

that his swift weapon had flown uselessly from his hand,
and

he stood there downcast, since he had no other ash spear.
He called out with a great shout to Deïphobus of the white
shield,

and demanded a long spear from him; but he was nowhere
near.

Then Hector knew the truth in his heart, and spoke:

'This is the end; the gods are surely calling me to my death.

I was certain that the hero Deïphobus was near at hand,
but he is inside the wall, and Athena has deceived me.

Now indeed a miserable death is close, no longer far off,
and there is no escape. So, after all, this is what Zeus and
his son

who shoots from afar have long wanted, they who before
this

were glad to protect me. Now my destiny has overtaken
me.

Let me at least not die without a struggle and without glory,
but only after doing some great deed for future men to
hear.'

So he spoke, and drew out the sharp sword that hung,
huge and massive, down at his side, and gathering himself
swooped like an eagle that flies high in the sky and
stoops down to the plain through murky clouds,
meaning to seize a tender lamb or a cowering hare.
So Hector swooped down, brandishing his sharp sword.

And Achilles charged too, his heart filled with wild fury,
holding his fine, intricately worked shield in front of his
chest
to cover himself; and his shining helmet with its four plates
nodded above, and the fine golden plumes that Hephaestus
had fastened thickly about the crest were set waving.
Like the star that moves among others in the darkness of
night,
Hesperus, the loveliest star that is set in the high sky,
so light flashed from the tip of the sharp spear that Achilles
brandished in his right hand, with deadly thoughts for
glorious
Hector, as he eyed his fine flesh for the least-protected
place.
Now most of Hector's flesh was covered by the fine bronze
armour
that he had stripped from mighty Patroclus when he killed
him,*
but the place where the collarbones hold the shoulders
from the
neck was visible—the gullet, where death comes quickest—
and
at this, as Hector charged at him, glorious Achilles drove his
spear,
and the point passed clean through his soft neck. But the
ash spear,
heavy with its bronze, did not shear through his windpipe,
and he could still address words to Achilles by way of
answer.
He toppled over in the dust, and glorious Achilles boasted
over him:
'Hector, doubtless you thought when you stripped Patroclus
that
you would be safe, and you did not heed me, for I was far
away.
You fool—he who was left far behind by the hollow ships

was a
much better man than Patroclus, and would avenge him. I
am he,
and now I have loosened your knees; dogs and vultures will
tear you shamefully, but the Achaeans will bury him with
due rites.'

Then Hector, with little life now left in him, addressed
Achilles:

'I beg you, by your life and your knees and by your parents'
name,
do not let the dogs of the Achaeans devour me by their
ships!

Take for yourself bronze and gold as much as you want,
gifts that my father and my revered mother will give you,
and return my body to its home, so that in death the
Trojans
and their wives may grant me the due rite of fire.'

Swift-footed Achilles looked at him darkly and
addressed him:

'Dog—do not entreat me by my knees or my parents'
name!

I wish there was a way that my heart's fury could give me
leave

to carve and eat your raw flesh, to pay for your terrible
deeds,

as surely as there is no one who can keep the dogs from
your head,

not even if your people bring a ransom here and weigh it
out,

ten or twenty times your offer, and if they promise more
besides,

nor even if Dardanus' descendant Priam orders them to
hand over

your weight in gold—not even then will your revered
mother,

the one who bore you, lay you on a bier and lament over you;
no, the dogs and vultures will share you out and devour you utterly.'

Then, dying, Hector of the glittering helmet spoke to him:

'I know you well as I look at you, and I was never going to persuade you. Truly, you have an iron heart in your breast.

But think on this; it may be that my death will provoke the gods'

anger against you, on the day that Paris and Phoebus Apollo

slay you, fine man though you are, beside the Scaean gates.'

As he said this the end of death enveloped him, and his shade

winged its way from his limbs and went down to Hades, lamenting its doom and leaving behind its manliness and youth.

Glorious Achilles addressed him, even now he was dead:

'Die now: as for my death-spectre, I will accept it whenever Zeus and the other immortal gods are minded to bring it on.'

So he spoke, and wrenched his bronze-tipped spear from the dead man

and laid it aside, and then stripped the armour from his shoulders,

all bloodstained; and other sons of the Achaeans ran up and stood

around him, gazing in wonder at the stature and amazing beauty

of Hector; not one of the bystanders failed to wound him, and

this is what they would say, each man looking at his

neighbour:

‘Look at this! Hector is certainly a softer man to deal with now than when he set our ships ablaze with burning fire.’

So they spoke, standing around Hector and stabbing him.

When glorious swift-footed Achilles had stripped the dead man

he stood in the midst of the Achaeans and spoke winged words:

‘My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, since the gods have granted me to beat this man down, who caused more suffering to us than all the rest together, come, let us make a circuit round the city under arms and test

the Trojans, to see if we can discover what their intentions are:

will they abandon their citadel now that this man has fallen, or

are they determined to stay inside, even though Hector is dead?

But why does my dear heart speak to me in this way?

There is a dead man lying by the ships, unlamented and unburied—

Patroclus, whom I shall never forget, so long as I am in the world of the living and my knees have power to move.

And though in Hades the dead may forget the dead, yet even there I shall always remember my dear companion.

Come now, young men of the Achaeans, let us go to the hollow ships, carrying this man, and strike up a victory song.

We have won great glory: we have killed glorious Hector, who

the Trojans would pray to throughout their city as if he were a god.’

So he spoke, and devised shameful treatment for

glorious

Hector:

at the back of the feet he made holes by the tendons, from heel

to ankle, and threaded straps of oxhide through them, and tied

them to his chariot, leaving the head to drag behind.

Then he lifted the famous armour into his chariot and mounted,

and whipped his horses to make them go, and they flew willingly on.

As Hector was dragged along a cloud of dust arose, and his dark hair streamed out on both sides, and his head that before was

so handsome was tumbled in the dust, for now Zeus had handed

him over to his enemies to treat shamefully, in his own fatherland.

And so Hector's head was completely fouled in the dust. When

she saw her son his mother began to tear her hair, and flung her

bright headdress far from her and raised a loud, mourning wail.

And his dear father cried piteously too, and all about them through the city the people gave way to wailing and lamenting.

It was as if the whole of jutting Ilium was now smouldering with fire all the way from its top to its bottom.

Only with difficulty did the people hold back the aged man in his raging desire to go out beyond the Dardanian gates; he rolled round in the dung and implored all of them, calling on them and addressing each man by his name:

'Hold back, my friends! Though you care for me, give me leave to go from the city to the ships of the Achaeans,

alone, to entreat this man, this violent doer of monstrous deeds,
to see if he will have respect for my age and take pity on my years. He too has a father of the same age as I am—Peleus, who gave him life and raised him to be an affliction to the Trojans; but to me beyond all others has he brought pain,
for he has killed so many sons of mine in the prime of their life.

Yet despite my misery I do not mourn for them all as much as

I do for one, bitter grief for whom will carry me off to Hades —

Hector. How I wish that he had died in my arms, for then we could have had our fill of weeping and mourning, his mother who bore him, ill-fated woman, and I myself.'

So he spoke, weeping, and the citizens joined their groans to his.

And among the Trojan women Hecuba began the unbroken dirge:

'My child, how wretched I am! Why should I live in cruel suffering now that you are dead—you who were night and day my boast throughout the town, and a source of strength

to the Trojan men and women all over the city, and they greeted you like a god. You were indeed a great glory for them

while you lived, but now death and your destiny have overtaken you.'

So she spoke, weeping. Now Hector's wife had not yet learnt

what had happened, for no trustworthy messenger had come

to tell her that her husband had stayed outside the gates. She was at her loom in the tall house's innermost part,

weaving
a red double cloak, and working a pattern of flowers into it.
She called out through the house to her lovely-haired
servants
to set a great tripod over the fire, so that Hector might
have
a warm bath when he returned from the fighting—poor
innocent that she was, and did not know that grey-eyed
Athena
had beaten him down at Achilles' hands, far away from
baths.*
She heard the wailing and lamentation coming from the
tower,
and her limbs shook and she dropped the shuttle to the
ground.
Immediately she called out to her lovely-haired maids:
'Come here, two of you, and follow me; I want to see what
has
happened. I heard the voice of my husband's respected
mother,
and the heart in my breast leapt into my mouth, and my
knees
locked together; some disaster must be near for Priam's
children.
May my words be as if unsaid! But I am terribly afraid
that glorious Achilles may have cut off my bold Hecto.
from the city on his own and pursued him towards the
plain,
and indeed has put an end to that dangerous valour that
has always
possessed him; for he would never hang back in the mass
of men,
but would always run far ahead, yielding to no one in his
fury.'

So she spoke, and rushed through the hall like a

maenad,*

her heart beating wildly; and her women servants went with her.

When she reached the tower and the massed gathering of men

she stood on the wall, looking all about her, and saw him being dragged along in front of the city, swift horses hauling him heedlessly towards the Achaeans' hollow ships.

Black night came down and enveloped her eyes, and she fell backwards and gasped out her life-breath,

flinging far from her head her shining headdress with its headband, its kerchief, and its plaited binding, and the headscarf that golden Aphrodite had given her on the day that Hector of the glittering helmet had brought her from Eëtion's house, after giving him countless bride-gifts.

Her husband's sisters and his brothers' wives crowded round her,

holding her up in their midst, distraught to the point of death.

When she regained her breath and the spirit was gathered into

her breast, sobbing deeply she spoke among the Trojan women:

'Hector, how wretched I am! So we were born with the same fate,

both of us: you in Troy in the house of Priam, and I in Thebe under wooded Placus, in the house of Eëtion, who raised me

from a baby—unhappily fated father of a child who was born to a cruel destiny; how I wish he had never given me life!

Now you are going to the house of Hades, deep in the depths

of the earth, and you are leaving me in hateful mourning, a widow in your halls; and our son, whom you and I, ill-fated parents, gave life to is still but an infant. But you are dead,

Hector, and will bring no delight to him, nor he to you: even if he escapes tear-laden war with the Achaeans struggle and hardship will always be his, because other men will fix their boundary-stones on his land. The day that orphans a child parts him utterly from his fellows:

his head for ever bowed down, and his cheeks wet with tears,

he approaches his father's companions full of need, tugging at the cloak of one man and the tunic of another; some take pity, and one man briefly offers him a cup, enough to wet his lips but not to moisten his palate. Then a boy with both parents living shoves him away from the feast, beating him with his fists and shouting abuse at him:

"Get out of here! Your father does not share in our feast!"

Then the boy goes back in tears to his widowed mother—Astyanax, who in former times, sitting on his father's knees, would eat only marrow and the rich fat of sheep, and when he had finished his playing and sleep took him he would sleep in his bed in the arms of his nurse, on soft bedding, his heart filled with contentment.*

But now he has lost his beloved father he will suffer terribly —

Astyanax, 'Lord of the City', as the Trojans have called him —

because you alone used to defend their gates and long walls.

And now beside the curved ships, far from your parents, squirming worms will eat you as you lie naked when the dogs have had their fill; yet there are clothes lying ready for you in your halls, delicate and beautiful, woven by women's hands. I shall burn them all in a blazing fire; they will be no use to you, because you will never lie in them,

but they will be your glory in the sight of Trojan men and women.'

So she spoke, weeping, and her women lamented with her.

BOOK TWENTY-THREE

So the Trojans lamented throughout the city; meanwhile the Achaeans returned to their ships and the Hellespont, and most of them dispersed, each man to his own ship, but Achilles would not allow the Myrmidons to disperse, and he addressed his warfare-loving companions:
'Swift-horsed Myrmidons, my trusty companions, let us not unyoke our single-hoofed horses yet from the chariots, but let us drive our horses and chariots close to Patroclus and mourn him, for that is the privilege of the dead. And when we have had our hearts' fill of cruel lamentation we shall all set our horses loose and make our supper here.'

So he spoke, and they mourned loudly together, and Achilles led them;
three times they drove their fine-maned horses round the dead man,
lamenting; and among them Thetis stirred up the desire to weep.
The sands were wet with the men's tears, and their gear was wet
with tears, such was the man they had lost, a deviser of panic rout
. Among them the son of Peleus began the unbroken lament,
laying his man-slaying hands on his companion's chest:
'Hail and farewell, Patroclus, even in the halls of Hades!
All that I promised you before this I am now fulfilling:
I have dragged Hector here, to give him, raw, to the dogs to eat,
and I shall cut the throats of twelve noble sons of the

Trojans

in front of your pyre; so great is my anger at your death.'*

So he spoke, and devised shameful treatment for glorious Hector, laying him sprawled on his face in the dust beside the bier of

Menoetius' son. Then each man of the Myrmidons put off his

gleaming bronze armour and untied his loud-neighing horses, and

they sat down beside the ship of Aeacus' swift-footed grandson

in their thousands, and he gave them a funeral feast to satisfy

their hearts: many sleek oxen slumped to the ground, slaughtered

with the iron knife, and many sheep too and bleating goats, and many white-tusked hogs, rich with fat, were stretched out over Hephaestus' fire to be singed; and all around the dead man the blood flowed in cupfuls.

Now the Achaean kings were taking the swift-footed lord, Peleus'

son, to the hut of glorious Agamemnon, having persuaded him

with difficulty, for he was still angry at heart for his companion.

When their journey brought them to Agamemnon's hut they straightaway gave orders to the clear-voiced heralds to set a great tripod over the fire, hoping to persuade the son of Peleus to wash the bloody gore from himself; but he stubbornly refused, and moreover swore an oath: 'By Zeus, who is the highest and best of the gods, I will not! It is not lawful to let water come near my head until I have set Patroclus on his pyre and heaped up a grave-mound and

shorn my hair,* since as long as I remain among the living
grief such as this will never come to my heart again.
Still, let us agree for the moment to eat, hateful though
that is;
and in the morning, Agamemnon, lord of men, rouse the
people
to gather wood and make ready everything that is proper
for a
dead man to have when he goes to the murky darkness
below,
so that unwearying fire may quickly burn this man away
from our sight, and that the people may turn again to their
work.'

So he spoke, and they listened intently and did as he
said.
They hurried to prepare their supper, and then feasted in
separate
companies, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the
meal.
When they had put from themselves the desire for food and
drink
all the rest went to prepare for sleep, each man to his own
hut,
but the son of Peleus lay down on the shore of the loud-
roaring
sea, groaning deeply, surrounded by his many Myrmidons,
in an open place where the waves broke on to the
seashore.
When sleep took hold of him, sweet slumber pouring over
him
and relieving the cares of his heart—for his glorious limbs
were weary with chasing Hector towards windswept Ilium—
there came to him the shade of unhappy Patroclus,
exactly resembling him in his stature and lovely eyes and
voice, and his body was clad in the same clothes as before.

He stood over Achilles' head and addressed him in these words:*

'You sleep, Achilles, and you have forgotten me; when I lived you did not neglect me, but you do now that I am dead.

Bury me as quickly as you can, and let me pass Hades' gates;

the shades there, images of the dead, are keeping me out, and will not yet allow me to cross the river and join them, and

I wander aimlessly by the house of Hades of the wide gates.*

Give me your hand, I beg you; I will not come again from Hades, once you have granted me the due rite of fire. Never again in life shall we two sit apart from our companions

and make our plans together, for over me gapes the hateful death -spectre which was appointed me right from my birth.

And for you too, godlike Achilles, your destiny is fixed, to meet your death below the walls of the noble Trojans.

And I say another thing to you, a request, if you will agree: do not lay my bones in a different place from yours, Achilles,

but together, just as we were brought up in your house, after Menoetius had brought me as a child from Opous to your house because of a calamitous slaying of a man, on the day that I killed the son of Amphidamas in childish folly,

not with intent, but being angry over a game of knucklebones;*

and then the horseman Peleus welcomed me into his house and raised me with kindness and named me your attendant.

So may one and the same vessel hide the bones of us both,*

the golden, two-handled jar that your revered mother gave you.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed him:
'Dear brother, why have you come here to me, and why do you give me all these instructions? I will surely fulfil everything that you tell me to do, and will do as you say. But come, stand closer to me, and for this brief moment at least let us embrace and enjoy our fill of cruel lamentation.'

So he spoke, and held his arms out to Patroclus, but he could not grasp him, and like smoke the shade slipped squeaking away below the earth. Achilles jumped up, amazed, and beat his hands together and his words were full of sorrow:

'So it is true after all: there is a shade and image of the dead in the house of Hades, but there is no real substance to it; all this night a shade of unhappy Patroclus has been standing over me, wailing and lamenting, and giving me exact instructions; and it looked marvellously like him.'

So he spoke, and aroused in them all the desire to weep; and they were still mourning over the piteous dead man when

Dawn with her rosy fingers appeared. Then lord Agamemnon gave orders for mules and men to go from all the huts to fetch wood; and in charge of them was a noble man, Meriones, who was the attendant of courteous Idomeneus. So they went off, holding in their hands wood-cutting axes and well-twisted ropes, and the mules walked in front of them.

Uphill and downhill they went, along and aslant the hills, and when they came to the spurs of Ida with its many

springs
they at once busied themselves with felling high-leaved
oaks
with their sharp-bladed bronze, and the trees crashed
noisily
as they fell. The Achaeans then split the trunks and tied
them
behind the mules, and their hoofs cut furrows in the ground
as they passed through the dense thickets, eager to reach
the plain.
All the woodcutters too were carrying logs, for these were
the orders of Meriones, attendant of courteous Idomeneus.
They threw these down in a row on the shore, where
Achilles
had planned a great grave-mound for Patroclus and for
himself.

When they had piled up vast quantities of wood
everywhere
they sat down and waited all together. At once Achilles
ordered the Myrmidons, lovers of warfare, to put on their
bronze armour and every man to yoke the horses to his
chariot, and they arose and clothed themselves in armour
and
mounted their chariots, fighting-men and charioteers alike,
men in chariots in front and a cloud of foot-soldiers
following,
numberless; and in their midst his companions carried
Patroclus,
covering all his body with their hair that they had cut off
and
heaped on him. Behind them glorious Achilles held
Patroclus' head,
grieving, for he was sending his blameless companion to
Hades.

When they came to the place that Achilles had

described to them
they laid Patroclus down, and quickly raised an ample pile
of wood.

Then swift-footed glorious Achilles had one more thought:
he stood some way from the pyre and cut off a lock of his
fair hair

that he had been growing long to offer to the river
Spercheius;

deeply moved, he looked out over the wine-faced sea and
spoke:

‘Spercheius, my father prayed to you in vain, when he
promised that when I returned home to my dear native land
I would cut off my hair for you and offer you a holy
hecatomb,

sacrificing fifty uncastrated rams there and then into the
springs where you have your precinct and smoking altar.

So the aged man prayed, but you have not fulfilled his
intent.

So now, since it seems I am not to return to my dear native
land,

may I give this lock to the hero Patroclus to take with him
instead.’*

So he spoke, and placed the lock in the hands of his
dear

companion, and roused in all of them the desire to weep.

And indeed the sun’s light would have set on their
lamentation

had not Achilles quickly stood by Agamemnon and spoken
to him:

‘Son of Atreus, you are the man whose words the Achaean
people

follow above all; men may indeed have their fill of
mourning,

but disperse them for now from the fire and tell them to
prepare

their meal. We, who are closest to the dead man, will occupy ourselves with all this; but let the leaders stay with us.'

When Agamemnon, lord of men, heard Achilles' words he at once dispersed the people to their well-balanced ships,

but the mourners stayed where they were and heaped up the wood

and built a pyre of a hundred feet each way, and on top of the pyre, grieving in their hearts, they laid the dead man.

In front of the pyre they flayed many strong sheep and shambling,

crook-horned cattle, and prepared them, and from all of them

great-spirited Achilles took the fat and covered the dead man

from his head to his feet, and piled the flayed bodies around him.

On the pyre he laid two-handled jars of honey and oil,

leaning them against the bier. Then, with loud groans,

he hurriedly flung four strong-necked horses on to the pyre.

Lord Patroclus had kept nine dogs by his table, and Achilles cut the throats of two of these and threw them on to the pyre,

and with the bronze slew twelve noble sons of the great-spirited

Trojans, for that had been the cruel plan he had in his heart.*

Then he let loose the iron fury of fire to feed on the pyre.

With a lamenting cry he called out the name of his dear companion:

'Hail and farewell, Patroclus, even in the halls of Hades!

Everything that I promised before this I now fulfil for you:

here are twelve noble sons of the great-spirited Trojans, all of

whom the fire will consume with you. As for Hector, Priam's son,
I shall not give him to the fire, but to the dogs to tear apart.'

So he spoke, threatening; but the dogs never busied themselves
around Hector, since Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, kept them away
day and night, and anointed him with deathless oil of roses so that
Achilles should not tear the skin from him as he dragged him along.
And Phoebus Apollo brought a dark cloud down from the high sky to the plain and covered all the place where the dead man lay, so that the sun's fury should not too soon
shrivel the flesh that lay all around his sinews and limbs.*

But the pyre of the dead Patroclus would not catch fire. Then swift-footed glorious Achilles had one more thought: standing some way from the pyre he prayed to the two winds,
the North and West, and promised them splendid offerings; pouring liberal libations from a golden cup he begged them to come, so that the wood might quickly be kindled and the corpses make haste to blaze in the fire. At once Iris heard
his prayer and set off to carry the news to the winds. They were together in the house of the stormy West Wind, enjoying a feast; Iris came running and stood there on the stone threshold, and when they saw her before their eyes they all leapt to their feet and each one invited her in to join them, but she refused to sit down and said:
'No chair for me; I am on my way back to the streams of Ocean,
to the Ethiopians' land,* where they are offering hecatombs

to the
immortal gods, so that I too may have a share in the sacred
feast.

But Achilles is praying to the North and the roaring West
Wind

to come to him, and is promising you splendid offerings;
hoping that you will set ablaze the pyre on which Patroclus
is lying, the man for whom all the Achaeans groan aloud.'

So she spoke, and went away, and they arose with an
astounding noise, driving the clouds headlong before them.
Quickly they reached the open sea and blew on it, making
the

waves rear under their shrill blast, and arrived at rich-soiled
Troy

and fell upon the pyre, and the awesome fire gave a great
roar.

All night long they beat the flames of the pyre together,
blowing shrilly; and all night long swift Achilles, holding a
two-handled cup, drew wine off from a golden mixing-bowl
and poured it on to the ground and soaked the earth,
calling on the shade of Patroclus, that unhappy man. As a
father mourns, burning the bones of his newly married son
who in dying has brought grief to his unhappy parents,
so Achilles mourned as he burnt his companion's bones,
dragging his steps around the pyre with frequent groans.

At the time when the Morning Star rises to proclaim
light over
the earth, and saffron-robed Dawn follows, spreading over
the sea,
then the burning pyre began to sink and the flames abated,
and the winds set off to make their way home over the
Thracian sea, making its waters roar and heave into a swell.
Then the son of Peleus turned from the pyre to another
place
and lay down exhausted, and sweet sleep overtook him;

but Atreus' son and those with him gathered together,
and as they came near the noise and clamour awoke
Achilles.

He started up and addressed them with these words:
'Son of Atreus and you other chieftains of all the Achaeans,
first you must quench the burning pyre with gleaming wine,
all of it, as far as the fire's fury has reached, and after that
let us gather together the bones of Patroclus, Menoetius'
son,

separating them properly; they are easy to recognize, for
he was lying in the middle of the pyre, while the others
burnt

far from him, horses and men jumbled together at its
edges.

Let us place these bones in a golden jar, in a double layer
of fat, until such time as I myself lie hidden in Hades.

As for the grave-mound, I order you not to toil at building it
up high, but make it a fair size; and later the Achaeans may
make it broad and tall, those of you who will be left behind
here in your ships with many benches, after I have gone.'*

So he spoke, and they did as swift-footed Peleus' son
said.

First they quenched the burning pyre with gleaming wine,
as far as the flames still had hold and the ash had settled
deep;

then, weeping, they gathered the bones of their gentle
companion

and placed them in a golden jar inside a double layer of fat,
and then wrapped it in a linen cloth and laid it in his hut.

To make his grave-mound they marked a circle round the
pyre

and set stones on it as a base. Then they quickly heaped
earth

over it, and when they had raised the mound they made to
go away;

but Achilles held the people back and made them sit in a wide assembly, and brought prizes from his ships,*
cauldrons
and tripods and horses and mules and mighty oxen,
and women who wore fine girdles, and grey iron.

First, for the swift horsemen, he put before them splendid prizes—
a blameless woman, skilled in crafts, and a two-eared tripod
that held twenty-two measures, as a reward for the winner.
For the man coming second he put up a six-year-old mare,
unbroken and carrying a mule-foal in her womb.
For the third he put up a cauldron as yet untouched by fire,
a fine one, holding four measures and still bright as new.
To the fourth he offered two talents of gold, and for the fifth
he put up a jar with two handles that was untouched by fire.

He stood straight up and spoke to the Argives in these words:

‘Son of Atreus and you other well-greaved Achaeans,
these are the prizes that wait for the horsemen in this contest.

If we Achaeans were now competing in honour of some other man

then I myself would win first prize and carry it off to my tent,

for you know how far my horses surpass others in excellence,

because they are immortal, and Poseidon gave them to my father Peleus, who then handed them on to me.*

But I and my single-hoofed horses will stay where we are, such is the splendid fame of the charioteer they have lost—a kindly man, who would often pour smooth olive oil over their manes after he had washed them down in bright water.

So they both mourn for him as they stand there, and their manes are drooping to the ground as they stand with grieving hearts.

So bestir yourselves throughout the camp, all you Achaeans who are confident in your horses and your close-jointed chariots.'

So the son of Peleus spoke, and the charioteers quickly assembled.

The very first to rise to his feet was Eumelus, lord of men, the dear son of Admetus, a man supreme in horsemanship. After him there rose the son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes, and he led under his yoke the horses of Tros that he had taken

from Aeneas some time before, though Apollo saved their master.*

Next after him there rose Atreus' son, fair-haired Menelaus, sprung from Zeus, and he led his swift horses under the yoke,

Agamemnon's mare Aethe and his own horse Podargus.

Echepolus, son of Anchises, had given Aethe to

Agamemnon

as payment to avoid going with him to windswept Ilium, so that

he could stay at home and live at ease; Zeus had given him great

wealth, and he lived in Sicyon of the wide dancing-places, and it was

this mare, impatient for the race, that Menelaus led under the yoke.

The fourth to harness his fine-maned horses was

Antilochus,

the splendid son of high-hearted lord Nestor, who was the son of

Neleus, and the swift-footed horses that drew his chariot

were

bred in Pylos. His father stood near him and with generous intention gave him advice—though Antilochus was shrewd enough:

‘Antilochus, even though you are still young, Zeus and Poseidon

show you favour and have taught you all the many arts of charioteering, and so there is no great need to instruct you; you know well how to wheel round the turning-post, but your horses

are the slowest runners, and so I fear it will turn out badly for you.

These others’ horses are swifter than yours, but their drivers

are no more skilled than you at planning what to do.

So come, my dear son, fill your heart full of cunning, so that negligence does not cause you to lose the prize.

It is by cunning, not by brute force, that the woodcutter excels,

it is by cunning that the helmsman steers his swift ship on the wine-faced sea when it is tossed by the winds, and it is by cunning that one charioteer can outwit another.

Another man, even if he trusts in his horses and his chariot, may in his carelessness take a wildly circling line, so that his horses wander over the course and he cannot control them;

but he who though driving an inferior team has useful skill always keeps the post in sight and turns close to it, and knows

how to strain his horses to the limit with the oxhide reins, keeping his team out of danger and watching the man in front.

Now I will tell you of a sure sign, which you are bound to see:

there is a stump of dry wood, standing a fathom above the ground,

of oak or pine; it never rots away in the rain, and two white stones are set against it, one on either side, where the course

bends back and there is smooth ground to drive on both sides.

It is either a memorial to some mortal man, long since dead, or

it served as the race's turning-point in the time of former men;

and now swift-footed Achilles has made it the halfway mark.

As you drive your chariot and horses hold closely to this, and lean a little way yourself to the left in your well-woven chariot-body, whipping on and calling out to your

right-hand horse, giving it free rein with your hands;

let your left-hand horse run very close to the turning-post, so that the nave on your well-made wheel seems to graze its edge—but take care not to touch the stone, or you may damage the horses or shatter the chariot entirely, which would be a joy to all the rest and a reproach to you yourself.

So, my dear son, be prudent and stay on your guard;

if at the turning-point you come up and overtake the

rest there will be no one who can catch or pass you,

not even if he comes from behind driving glorious Arion,

Adrestus' swift horse, who was descended from the gods,

or the horses of Laomedon, who are the finest bred here.'

So Nestor, son of Neleus, spoke, and sat down again in his place

when he had told his son how to handle each part of the race.

The fifth man to harness his fine-maned horses was Meriones;

and then they all mounted their chariots and cast lots.

Achilles shook the lots, and out jumped the lot of

Antilochus*

Nestor's son; and after him lord Eumelus drew his starting-place,
and after him Menelaus, son of Atreus, famed with the spear,
drew his starting-place, and after him Meriones, and the last
to draw was Tydeus' son Diomedes, by far the best of them.
They stood in line abreast, and Achilles pointed out the turning-
post, far away on the level plain; he had stationed an umpire
beside it, godlike Phoenix, the attendant of his father,
to watch the running and to bring back a true account of it.

So they all at the same time lifted their whips over the horses
and flicked them with the reins, and shouted commands to make them run, and the horses quickly galloped over the plain,
leaving the ships far behind; under their chests the dust rose and hung in the air like a cloud or a whirlwind, and their manes streamed behind them, blown by the wind's gusts.
The chariots at one time bent low to the earth that nurtures many
and at another bounded high in the air; their drivers stood in their chariots, and each man's heart was beating hard in his desire for victory, and each man was calling out to his horses, as they flew across the plain in clouds of dust.

When the swift horses were finishing the last part of the course
and turning back towards the grey sea, then as the horses ran
at full stretch each man's prowess became clear; soon the swift

mares of Pheres' grandson Eumelus broke into the lead,
and
keeping pace with them came the stallions of Diomedes,
the horses of Tros. They were not far behind, but very close,
seeming always on the point of mounting Eumelus' chariot
and
blowing with their warm breath on his back and broad
shoulders,
for they were holding their heads right over him as they
flew along.
And indeed Diomedes would have driven past him or made
the
race a dead-heat, had not Phoebus Apollo been enraged
with
Tydeus' son and struck the shining whip from his hands.
Tears of rage flowed from Diomedes' eyes; he could see
Eumelus' mares drawing further and further ahead, while
his own horses were thwarted, since they ran without the
whip.
But Apollo's cheating of Tydeus' son did not escape
Athena's
notice, and she quickly chased after the shepherd of the
people
and gave him back his whip and filled his horses with fury.
Then she strode angrily after Admetus' son Eumelus and—
as a goddess can—smashed his chariot's yoke, and the
mares
ran off the track and the pole dropped to the ground.
Eumelus himself was tossed out of the chariot beside the
wheel;
the skin was torn from his elbows and mouth and nose,
and his forehead above his brows was bruised, and his eyes
filled with tears, and his hearty voice was choked.
Tydeus' son pulled his single-hoofed horses sideways and,
holding them straight, got well clear of the others, for
Athena

had filled them with fury and had put glory into himself.
Next after him came Atreus' son, fair-haired Menelaus,
and then Antilochus, who called out to his father's horses:
'Press on, the pair of you; now for an all-out effort!
I am not urging you to compete with those there, the
horses
of Tydeus' war-minded son, on whom Athena has
just now bestowed speed and has put glory into Diomedes.
Faster now, try to catch the horses of Atreus' son! Do not
fall
behind, and do not let Aethe, who is only a mare, pour
scorn
over the pair of you. Why are you lagging, my champions?
I tell you this plainly, and it will surely be fulfilled:
you will get no more care from Nestor, shepherd of
the people, but he will kill you at once with the sharp
bronze
if your slipshod ways mean that we win a lesser prize.
So off you go after them, run as fast as you can!
My part will be to fashion and devise some stratagem
to slip past them in a narrow place; I shall not miss the
chance.'

So he spoke, and they, trembling at their lord's loud
rebuke,
ran faster for a while. Soon afterwards Antilochus, steadfast
in
battle, saw a place where the track became narrow and
hollowed;
there was a gully in the ground where water had collected
in winter
and broken part of the track, scooping out all the ground,
and
along this Menelaus drove, making it hard for chariot
wheels to run
side by side. Antilochus pulled his single-hoofed horses

sideways

off the track and held them straight, pursuing him a little to one

side. Atreus' son was alarmed, and shouted to Antilochus:

'Antilochus, you are driving like a madman! Keep your horses back!

The track is narrow, but it will soon get wider, and you can pass;

do not risk crashing into my chariot and wrecking us both.'

So he spoke, but Antilochus drove even harder, urging his

horses on with the whip, and it was as if he had not heard.

As far as the length of a discus-cast that a fit man throws, swinging from the shoulder as he tries the strength of his youth,

so far they ran on together; but then the mares of Atreus' son

fell back, and he himself was glad to give up driving them, for fear that the single-hoofed horses should crash together on

the track and overturn the well-woven chariot-bodies, and that they

themselves should tumble in the dust in their haste for victory.

Then fair-haired Menelaus shouted abusively to Antilochus:

'Antilochus, there is no mortal more destructive than you; to hell with you! We Achaeans were wrong to think you had any

sense; but you won't win a prize without a challenge on oath.'

So he spoke, and called out to his horses, saying:

'Come on now, do not hold back! Do not stand there grieving

in your hearts! Their hoofs and knees will become tired

before yours do, because they are both well past their youth.'

So he spoke, and they, trembling at their lord's loud rebuke,
ran on faster, and quickly closed on Antilochus' team.

Now the Argives were sitting in assembly and watching the horses as they flew over the plain, raising clouds of dust.

The first to catch sight of them was Idomeneus, captain of the

Cretans, sitting as he was outside the assembly on a high place;

and when he heard a man shouting to his team, though far away

he knew who it was, and he recognized the horse in front, which was marked by being chestnut overall except that it had white blaze on its forehead, circular like the moon.

He stood straight up and spoke to the Argives in these words:

'My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, is it only I who can see the horses, or can you too? It seems to me that the horses in front of the others are not the same,

and a different charioteer is coming into sight. The mares that

up to now were winning must have been impeded out there on the plain; I saw them rounding the turning-post first but I cannot now make them out, though my eyes are scanning everywhere on the Trojan plain as I look out for them.

Perhaps the reins dropped from the driver's hands, and he failed

to hold his course round the post, and came to grief on the turn.

I think he would then have fallen out and smashed his chariot,

and his mares would have swerved, their hearts gripped by fury.

Come, stand up and look for yourselves; I cannot make him out clearly, but I think the man in front is Aetolian by birth, one who rules among the Argives—it is the son of Tydeus the horse-breaker, mighty Diomedes.'

Then swift Ajax, son of Oïleus, rebuked him with shameful words:

'Idomeneus, why are you always ranting on like this? Those high-stepping mares are still far off, flying over the wide plain.

You are by no means the youngest among the Argives, nor are the eyes in your head the sharpest-sighted, yet you are always flinging words about when there is no need

for this kind of crass talk; there are others here better than you.

Those in front are still the same mares as led before, Eumelus'

horses, and he is standing in the chariot, holding their reins.'

At this the captain of Cretans spoke angrily in reply: 'Ajax, you dolt, you are a master of abuse, but in all else you are

inferior to the Argives, because you have a stubborn disposition.

Come, let us two make a wager—a tripod or a cauldron—as to which horses are leading, and let us appoint Atreus' son

Agamemnon as referee; you will find out who it is when you pay.'

So he spoke; and swift Ajax, the son of Oïleus, leapt angrily

to his feet, ready to answer him with bitter words; and indeed the quarrel between them would have gone further

had not Achilles himself stood up and spoken to them:
'No more flinging harsh and bitter words at each other,
Ajax and Idomeneus; it is not the proper thing to do.
Indeed, you would both be angry with anyone else who did
this.

No, take your seats in the assembly and watch out for
the horses; they will soon be here, straining after victory,
and then each one among you all will know which of the
Argives' teams is coming in first and which is second.'

So he spoke; and now Tydeus' son was driving very
near them,
repeatedly swinging his whip from the shoulder, and his
horses
were stepping high as they skimmed swiftly over the plain.
Showers of dust fell continually on their charioteer,
and the chariot, covered all over with gold and tin,
ran on behind the swift-footed horses; and there was
scarcely a wheel-mark left behind them by the tyres
in the powdery dust as the two horses flew eagerly on.
Diomedes drew up in the midst of the assembly, and
abundant
sweat dripped to the ground from his horses' necks and
chests.

He himself leapt to the ground from his shining chariot and
propped his whip against its yoke, and mighty Sthenelus
without

waiting rushed up to receive the prize; he gave the woman
to his high-hearted companions to lead away and the two-
eared
tripod for them to carry off. Then he unyoked the horses.

After him Antilochus, Neleus' grandson, drove up his
horses,
having outstripped Menelaus not by speed but by trickery.
Even so Menelaus held his swift horses close behind him;
as wide as is the gap between wheel and horse as it

strains hard to pull its lord in his chariot over a plain, and the hairs at the tip of its tail keep touching the wheel's tyre, and there is no great space between them as the wheel keeps

running close to the horse on its career over the wide plain —

by such a distance did Menelaus trail blameless Antilochus. Though at first he was left behind by the length of a discus-cast,

he had caught up very quickly, because the strong fury of Aethe, Agamemnon's fine-maned mare, was always increasing,

and if both had had to run still further he would have passed

Antilochus and there would have been no dispute at the end.

Next came Meriones, the valiant attendant of Idomeneus, lagging behind splendid Menelaus by a spear-cast;

his fine-maned horses were the slowest in the race, and he himself was the weakest at driving in a chariot-race.

Last of them all came Eumelus, son of Admetus, dragging his fine chariot himself and driving his horses in front.

When glorious swift-footed Achilles saw him he felt pity, and standing among the Argives he spoke in winged words: 'The last man to drive up his single-hoofed horses is the best!

Come, let us give him a prize, for that is the proper thing to do—

the second prize, for Tydeus' son must carry off the first.'

So he spoke, and they all approved of his proposal; and he would have given Eumelus the mare, since the Achaeans had

agreed, if Antilochus, great-hearted Nestor's son, had not stood up and answered Peleus' son Achilles with an objection:

'Achilles, I shall be very angry with you if you carry out what you have said; you are minded to rob me of my prize because Eumelus' chariot and swift horses were wrecked, just as he was, fine man though he is. He should have prayed to the immortals, and then he would not have lagged and come in last.

If you feel pity for him and he is dear to your heart, there is in your hut much gold and bronze and many sheep, and you also have maidservants and single-hoofed horses; choose from these and give him an even greater prize later, or do it here and now, and the Achaeans will applaud you. But as for the mare, I will not give her up; anyone who feels inclined may test me by fighting for her with his fists.'

So he spoke, and swift-footed glorious Achilles smiled, pleased with Antilochus, who was his dear companion, and in answer addressed him with winged words: 'Antilochus, if you are telling me to give some further prize from my hut's store to Eumelus, I will certainly do this: I will give him the corslet that I took from Asteropaeus,* made of bronze, and there is a layer of shining tin worked around it; and it will be worth a great deal to him.'

So he spoke, and ordered his dear companion Automedon to bring it from his hut, and he went and brought it for him, and laid it in the hands of Eumelus, who received it with delight.

Then Menelaus stood up among them grieving in his heart, unrelenting in his anger at Antilochus; a herald put the staff in his hand and ordered the Argives to be silent, and then the man who was like a god addressed him: 'Antilochus,

you used to be a man of good sense; but see what you have done!

By fouling my horses and driving yours ahead—though they are far inferior—you have brought shame on my manhood.

Come now, you leaders and rulers of the Argives, judge impartially between us both, without favour to either, so that no man of the bronze-shirted Achaeans can say, “Menelaus forced a win over Antilochus by lying, and went off with the mare; his horses were far inferior, but he himself was his superior in manhood and in strength.”

Or rather, I myself will propose a solution, and I think no Danaan will find fault with me, for the case will be just.

Come, Zeus-nurtured Antilochus, and as is right and proper stand in front of your horses and chariot; hold the pliant whip with which you drove just now in your hands, and touching your horses swear by the holder and shaker of the earth that you did not mean to impede my chariot by cheating.’

Then in turn Antilochus, a man of good judgement, answered him:

‘One moment! I am a long way younger than you, lord Menelaus, and you are an older and a better man than me. You know how a young man’s rash acts come about; his mind may be quicker but his judgement is a flimsy thing.

So let your heart bear with me; I will freely give you the mare that I won, and if you were to ask for anything better from my house I would willingly give it to you here and now rather than fall out of favour with you, Zeus-nurtured man, and become a wrongdoer in the gods’ sight.’

So the son of great-spirited Nestor spoke, and led the mare up to Menelaus and handed her over to him; and Menelaus’ heart was softened, as when the dew falls on ears of corn in

the season when the ploughland is bristling with a growing crop.

So, Menelaus, the heart in your breast was softened, and you addressed Antilochus, speaking with winged words:

‘Antilochus, I will now give way and leave off my anger against you; you were never wild or thoughtless before this, though this time youthful spirits overcame your judgement; another time be careful to avoid deceiving your betters. No other man of the Achaeans could easily have won me over, but you have endured much and struggled hard on my behalf, you and your noble father and your brother; and so I will listen to your entreaties, and will give you back the mare, even though she is mine, so that these men also may know that my heart is never arrogant or unbending.’

So he spoke, and gave the mare to Antilochus’ companion Noëmon to lead away, and took for himself the brightly shining cauldron.

Meriones took away the two talents of gold, since he had come in fourth. The fifth prize, the jar with two handles, was

left over, and Achilles carried it through the assembly of the Achaeans and presented it to Nestor; standing next to him he said:

‘Here now, aged man, this is for you, a keepsake to remind you

of the burial of Patroclus, for you will not see the man again among the Argives; I give you this prize without a contest, since you will certainly not fight with fists again, nor wrestle,

nor will you ever enter for a spear-contest or a running race,

because now burdensome old age presses hard upon you.’

So he spoke, and laid the jar in Nestor's hands, and he was delighted to receive it, and addressed Achilles in winged words:

'All that you have said, my son, is according to due measure:

no longer are my limbs steady, my friend, nor my feet, nor do my arms swing easily from both my shoulders.

I wish I was in my prime again and my strength was as sound

as when the Epeians made a burial for lord Amarynceus at Buprasium, and his sons held games in honour of the king.

Then there was no man who was my equal, not of the Epeians

nor of the Pylians themselves nor of the great-spirited Aetolians.

In the boxing I overcame Clytomedes, the son of Enops, and

in the wrestling Ancaeus of Pleuron, who stood up against me.

In the foot-race I overtook Iphiclus, fine man though he was,

and in the spear-cast I threw further than Phyles and Polydorus.

It was only in the chariot-race that Actor's two sons beat me;

they got in front by force of numbers, begrudging me the victory

because the greatest prizes were reserved for this contest.

These men were twins; one of them held steadfastly to the reins,

and while he held them the other urged the team on with the whip.

Well, that is what I was once; it is now the turn of younger men

to take part in such things, while I must give in to wretched old age—but then I was someone of distinction among heroes.*

Go now and honour your companion with funeral games; I accept this gift with pleasure, and my heart is glad because

you always remember me as a friend, and you do not forget the honour that is my rightful due among the Achaeans.

May the gods reward you bountifully for this act of yours.'

So he spoke; and Peleus' son went back through the great gathering of Achaeans when he had heard the son of Neleus' generous praise.

Next he set up the prizes for the painful business of a boxing match:

he brought into the assembly and tethered there a hard-working mule,

a female six years old and unbroken, the kind that is hardest to control;

and for the man who would lose he presented a two-handled cup.

He stood straight up and spoke to the Argives in these words:

'Son of Atreus and you other well-greaved Achaeans, to compete for these prizes we summon the two men who are best

at putting up their fists and landing blows. The man to whom

Apollo grants endurance, and is judged so by all the Achaeans,

may take this hard-working mule and go back with her to his tent,

while the one who loses will take this cup with two handles.'

So he spoke, and at once there rose to his feet a valiant

and

mighty man, skilled at boxing, Epeius, the son of Panopeus, who laid his hand on the hard-working mule and spoke:

‘Let the man approach who will carry off the two-handled cup;

as for the mule, I say that no man of the Achaeans will beat me at boxing and take it away, since I say I am the greatest.

You say, and well you may, that I am a poorer soldier than the rest;

but there is no way that a man can be expert in everything. I tell you this plainly, and it will surely be fulfilled:

I shall split his skin with a straight blow and smash his bones

to pieces; let those who care for him wait here all together, to carry him away when my hands have broken him.’

So he spoke, and they all remained silent and still.

The only man to rise was Euryalus, a man like the gods, the son of lord Mecisteus, whose father was Talaus; this Mecisteus had long ago come to Thebes when Oedipus fell, for his funeral games, and there overcame all the Cadmeians.*

The spear-famed son of Tydeus acted as Euryalus’ second, and

rallied him with his words, since he greatly wished him to win.

First he laid his loincloth by him on the ground, and then gave

him the well-cut thongs made from the hide of a field-ox.*

So the two boxers put on their loincloths and strode into the midst of the assembly, and putting up their powerful hands

they fell upon each other, and began to trade heavy blows.

A dreadful cracking of jawbones ensued, and sweat flowed from

all their limbs; then glorious Epeius advanced, and as Euryalus looked for an opening he caught him on his cheek; there his bright limbs failed him, and he could no longer stand upright.

As when the sea is roughened by the North Wind and a fish arches up from weed-strewn shallows and then disappears again in the dark water, so Euryalus arched at the blow; but great-spirited Epeius put his arms around him and set him upright, and his companions stood round him and led him through the assembly, his feet dragging behind him, spitting gouts of blood and drooping his head to one side. They took him and sat him down in their midst, still stupefied, and themselves went up and collected the two-handled cup.

Then Peleus' son quickly set up the prizes for the third contest, which were for a pain-laden wrestling match, and displayed them to the Danaans: for the winner a great tripod, made to stand over a fire, that the Achaeans valued among themselves at twelve oxen, and for the man defeated he brought into their midst a woman who was skilled in many crafts, and they valued her at four oxen.

He stood straight up and spoke to the Argives with these words:

'Stand up, any two who wish to try themselves in this

contest!'

So he spoke, and there stood up huge Ajax, Telamon's son, and then much-scheming wily Odysseus rose to his feet.

They both put on their loincloths and strode into the midst of the assembly, and grasped each other's arms with their powerful hands, like crossing rafters that a renowned carpenter

has fitted in the roof of a high house to keep off the wind's violence.

Their backs creaked under the force of their sturdy arms' unremitting grip, and the sweat ran off them in streams, and weal after weal, red with blood, kept starting up along their sides and shoulders, while all the time they struggled to win the prize of the well-made tripod. But neither could Odysseus trip Ajax and throw him to the ground

nor could Ajax Odysseus, since his mighty strength held firm.

But when the well-greaved Achaeans began to grow restive, then huge Ajax, son of Telamon, addressed Odysseus:

'Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many schemes,

either lift me or I will lift you; all the rest can be left to Zeus.'

So he spoke, and lifted Odysseus, who did not forget his usual guile

but caught and struck the back of Ajax's knee and loosened his limbs,

and threw him on to his back; Odysseus dropped on to his chest, and the people were astonished as they watched. Then in turn much-enduring glorious Odysseus tried to lift Ajax;

he moved him a little way off the ground, but could not raise him,

and so hooked his knee round the other's, and they fell to

the
ground side by side, and were both begrimed in the dust.
Then they would have leapt up and begun to wrestle a third
time
had not Achilles himself risen to his feet and stopped them:
'No more struggling—do not wear yourselves out with your
efforts;
both of you have won; share the prizes equally and go,*
so that other Achaeans can take part in the contests.'

So he spoke, and they listened carefully and did as he
said,
and when they had wiped off the dust they put on their
tunics.

Then Peleus' son quickly put up other prizes for speed
of foot.
a finely worked silver mixing-bowl that held six measures,
and in beauty was by far the best in the whole world,
for the Sidonians who are skilled in many crafts had
fashioned it,
and men of Phoenicia had ferried it across the misty sea
and had put in to harbour and given it as a gift to Thoas.
Euneus, who was Jason's son, had given it to the hero
Patroclus as a ransom for Lycaon, the son of Priam; and
now
Achilles presented it as a prize in honour of his companion,
to the man who should prove to be fastest in the swift foot-
race.*

For the man who came second he offered a great ox, rich
with fat,
and for the last runner he offered a half-talent of gold.
He stood straight up and spoke to the Achaeans in these
words:
'Stand forward, any who wish to test themselves in this
contest!'

So he spoke, and at once there stood up swift Ajax Oïleus'

son,
and also Odysseus of many schemes, and after him
Nestor's son
Antilochus, who always beat the young men in the foot-
race.
They stood in line abreast, and Achilles pointed out the
turning
post, and right from the starting-line they ran at full stretch;
soon
Oïleus' son took the lead, and after him came glorious
Odysseus,
running very close, as close as the weaving-rod of a fine-
girdled
woman is to her breast as she deftly draws it tight with her
hands,
pulling the spool along the warp, and holding it close to her
breast; so close was Odysseus as he ran behind Ajax, his
feet
pounding in his tracks before the dust could settle into
them;
and as glorious Odysseus kept up his swift running his
breath
kept drifting about Ajax's head. All the Achaeans cheered
on
his desire for victory, and applauded his mighty efforts.
When they were completing the last part of the course
Odysseus quickly prayed in his heart to grey-eyed Athena:
'Hear me, goddess; be good to me and come to help my
running!'
So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard him
and made his limbs light, both his legs and his arms. But
when they were on the point of dashing up for the prize
Ajax slipped as he ran—for Athena had caused him to
stumble—
in the place where dung was spread from the slaughter
of the loud-

bellowing oxen that swift-footed Achilles had killed for Patroclus.
His mouth and nostrils were crammed full with ox-dung, and much-enduring glorious Odysseus carried off the mixing-bowl, because he had come in first. Illustrious Ajax took the ox, and stood there, holding in his hands a horn of the field-ox and spitting out dung, and spoke out among the Argives: 'That was unfair! It was the goddess who tripped me! She has before this stood by Odysseus like a mother and helped him.'

So he spoke, and they all laughed happily at his distress. Then Antilochus carried off the last prize with a smile, and spoke among the Argives with these words: 'My friends, you all know what I am going to say to you—that even now the gods honour men who are older born. Ajax is a little older than I am, but Odysseus here is from an earlier generation and from men of past times; men say he is on the verge of old age, but it is hard for the Achaeans to compete with him on foot, except for Achilles.'

So he spoke, flattering the swift-footed son of Peleus, and Achilles answered him, addressing him in these words: 'Antilochus, your words of praise will not go for nothing; here, I give you a half-talent of gold, in addition to your prize.'

So he spoke, and put it in his hands, and Antilochus was glad to receive it. Then Peleus' son took a far-shadowing spear and laid it down in the gathering, and also a shield and helmet—the arms of Sarpedon, that Patroclus had taken from him.*
He stood straight up and spoke to the Achaeans in these

words:

'To compete for these arms we order two men, the best,
to put on their armour and take up the flesh-splitting
bronze
and to test each other in front of the gathered soldiery.
Whichever of them first makes a hit on the other's
handsome flesh
and gets through to his innards past armour and black
blood,
to him I shall give this sword here with its silver rivets,
a fine sword from Thrace, which I took from Asteropaeus;*
as for the armour, let both take and hold it in common,
and we shall put before them a splendid feast in the huts.'

So he spoke, and huge Ajax, the son of Telamon, rose
up,
and the son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes, also stood up.
When they had armed themselves on either side of the
soldiery
they both advanced into the middle ground, raging to fight
and glaring terribly; and amazement gripped all the
Achaeans.

When they had advanced to within close range of each
other,
three times they charged and three times lunged from
close quarters.
Then Ajax stabbed at Diomedes' perfectly balanced shield,
but
did not pierce his flesh, because the corslet behind it saved
him.

Then Tydeus' son all the time kept threatening to strike at
Ajax's neck over his great shield with the bright spear's
point,
so much so that the Achaeans feared greatly for Ajax
and called on them to stop fighting and take equal prizes.
And so Achilles gave the great sword to the hero Tydeus'

son, and
handed it to him with its scabbard and belt of skilfully cut
leather.

Next the son of Peleus laid before them a mass of iron,
formed in
the melting-furnace, that the mighty Eëtion used to throw;
but swift-footed glorious Achilles had killed him, and had
brought this lump in his ships, together with his other
treasures.*

He stood straight up and spoke to the Achaeans in these
words:

‘Stand up, anyone who wishes to try for this prize too;
even if the rich lands of the man who wins it are very
remote
its usefulness will last him for five circling years, and
none of his shepherds or ploughmen will be forced to
go to the city for want of iron, but it will be there for them.’*

So he spoke, and Polypoetes, steadfast in war, rose to
his feet,
and also mighty Leonteus, a man like the gods,
and also Ajax, son of Telamon, and glorious Epeius.
They stood in a line, and glorious Epeius picked up the
weight
and whirling round threw it, but the Achaeans all laughed at
him.

The second to take his turn and throw was Leonteus, a
shoot
of Ares, and the third to let fly from his powerful hand was
huge Ajax, son of Telamon, and he passed all the others’
marks.

But when Polypoetes, steadfast in war, lifted up the weight
he hurled it as far as an oxherd flings a throwing-stick, and
it flies whirling through his cattle in the fields; so far did
Polypoetes hurl it beyond all the competitors, and everyone

shouted, and the mighty man's companions stood up and carried their king's prize off to their hollow ships.

Then for the archers Achilles put up a prize of dark iron. He set up a row of ten double axes and ten single axes, and fixed the mast of a blue-prowed ship far off in the sand, and tied a timid dove to it by the foot with a thin cord, and ordered them to shoot at it: 'Let the man who succeeds in hitting the timid dove take the double axes as his prize and carry them home; and if he hits the cord but misses the bird he will take away the single axes, since he is less of a marksman.'

So he spoke, and there rose to his feet mighty lord Teucer, and after him Meriones, the valiant attendant of Idomeneus.

They took two lots and shook them in a bronze helmet, and Teucer's lot won first place; straightaway he let fly an arrow with great force, but did not promise to sacrifice a splendid hecatomb of firstborn lambs to the archer lord. Because Apollo grudged him this success he missed the bird

and hit the cord by which it was tied at its foot, and the bitter arrow sliced the cord clean away; the bird at once soared up to the high sky, and the cord hung down towards the earth, and the Achaeans shouted in approval. But Meriones rushed up and tore the bow from Teucer's hand—he had been holding an arrow while the other aimed —

and straightaway promised to sacrifice a splendid hecatomb

of firstborn lambs to Apollo who shoots from afar.

He could see the timid dove high up under the clouds, and as it circled in flight he hit it in the breast under its wing, and the arrow passed clean through and fell back and stuck in the earth before Meriones' feet; but the bird

was caught on the mast of the blue-prowed ship, its neck hanging limp and its fast-beating feathers drooping. Quickly the breath flew from its limbs, and it fell all the way down.

from the mast; and the people were astonished as they watched.

Meriones took as his prize all ten double-axes and Teucer carried off the single-axes to his hollow ships.

Next the son of Peleus brought a far-shadowing spear and a cauldron untouched by fire, embossed with flowers and worth an ox, and

set them down before the assembly. Up rose the javelin-throwers,

and up rose the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, and up rose Meriones, the valiant attendant of Idomeneus.

But swift-footed glorious Achilles spoke among them:

‘Son of Atreus, we know how far you outstrip all others, and how much you are the best in the strength of your throw;

so take this prize and go back to your hollow ships, and let us give the spear to the hero Meriones, if you too wish it in your heart, for it is I who urge you to do this.’

So he spoke, and Agamemnon, lord of men, did not dissent;

the hero gave the bronze-tipped spear to Meriones, but to his herald Talthibius he presented his own magnificent prize.

BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

So the assembly broke up and the people dispersed, each company to its swift ships, and all their thoughts were of food and the pleasure of sweet sleep; but Achilles wept ceaselessly as he remembered his dear companion, and sleep that subdues all took no hold of him. He tossed and turned, thinking with longing of Patroclus, of his manhood and his valiant strength, of all that he had accomplished with him and the trials he had endured, of wars of men undergone and the arduous crossing of seas. As he called all this to mind he let fall huge tears, lying at one time on his side and at another on his back, and then again on his face; then he would rise to his feet and wander distraught by the shore of the salt sea, and would never fail to see the Dawn as she appeared over the sea and its shores. Then he would harness the swift horses to his chariot and lash Hector to it, to be dragged along behind it; three times he would haul him round the burial-mound of Menoetius' dead son, and then he would rest in his hut and leave Hector sprawled face-down in the dust. But Apollo protected his flesh from shameful disfigurement, feeling pity for the

man,
even in death, and covered him all over with his golden
aegis,
so that Achilles would not tear his flesh as he dragged him
along.

So Achilles in his rage kept trying to disfigure glorious
Hector;
but when the blessed gods saw this they took pity on him,
and
continually urged the keen-eyed slayer of Argus to steal
him away.
All the other gods were pleased with this plan, but it would
never
find favour with Hera or Poseidon or the grey-eyed maiden,
who stuck to the hatred they had felt from the beginning
for
sacred Ilium and Priam and his people, because of
Alexander's
deluded folly: he had insulted the goddesses when they
came to
his sheepfold, choosing the one who rewarded him with
fatal lust.*

But when the twelfth dawn after Hector's death appeared
then Phoebus Apollo spoke out among the immortals:
'You are unbending, you gods, and cruel! Did Hector never
burn
the thigh-bones of cattle and flawless goats as offerings to
you?
And yet now you could not bring yourselves to rescue him,
even
in death, for his wife and for his mother and his son to see,
and for his father Priam and his people to burn him in
the fire and carry out the funeral rites that are his due.
No, you gods, you prefer to stand by deadly Achilles, even
though his wits are not in their rightful place and the mind

in his breast is not easily bent. He has a cruel nature, like a lion that gives in to its great strength and proud heart when it wants to feed, and attacks the sheep-flocks of mortal men. Just so Achilles has killed pity, and there is no respect in him, respect that both greatly harms and also benefits men. Any man, I suppose, is likely to have lost someone even dearer to him than this, a brother born of the same mother, or even a son, but in the end he gives up his weeping and lamentation, because the Fates have placed in men a heart that endures; but this Achilles first robs glorious Hector of his life and then ties him behind his chariot and drags him round the burial-mound of his dear companion. Yet he should know that there is nothing fine or good about this; let him beware of our anger, great man though he is, because in his fury he is outraging mute earth.'

Then in anger Hera of the white arms addressed him: 'Lord of the silver bow, your words would be reasonable if all of you mean to give equal honour to Achilles and to Hector.

But Hector is a mortal, and sucked at a woman's breast, while Achilles was born of a goddess, one whom I myself raised and nurtured,* and I gave her as wife to a mortal, Peleus, who was dearest of all men to the immortals' hearts.

All of you gods were at the wedding, and you, Apollo, feasted

among them, lyre in hand—you ever-devilous friend of the wicked.'

Then in answer Zeus who gathers the clouds addressed her:

'Hera, do not take your anger with the gods to excess; the honour given to these men will not be the same. Even so,

Hector was always the dearest to the gods of mortals in Ilium—

certainly to me, for he never failed to offer me pleasing gifts.

Never has my altar lacked a fair share of the feast, of drink offerings and the savour of burnt flesh, which is our privilege.

But as for stealing bold Hector away, let us say no more of it—

this is not possible without Achilles' knowing, and his mother

is all the time by his side, in the day and in the night.

No, let some god go and summon Thetis to my side, and I will give her carefully considered advice, how Achilles may receive gifts from the hands of Priam and so ransom Hector.'

So he spoke, and storm-footed Iris rose to take the message,

and dived into the dark expanse of the sea between Samothrace

and rocky Imbros;* and the waters groaned as she entered them.

She dropped to the depths of the sea like a lead weight, mounted on horn from an ox that is kept in the field, which as it sinks brings death to ravenous fishes.

She found Thetis in a hollow cavern, and around her the other

sea-goddesses were seated, gathered together, while she in

their
midst was weeping over the fate of her blameless son, who
was to
die, taken from her, in rich-soiled Troy, far from his native
land.

Standing next to Thetis swift-footed Iris addressed her:
'Up with you, Thetis! Zeus whose plans are immortal
summons you.'

Then in answer the goddess Thetis of the silver feet said:
'Why does that great god send me orders? I feel shame at
joining the gods, for the grief I have in my heart is never-
ending.

Still, I will go, and his words will not be in vain, whatever he
says.'

So she, bright among goddesses, spoke, and took up
her
deep-blue veil—there is no darker garment than this—
and set off on her way, and wind-footed swift Iris went first
and guided her; and the waves of the sea opened around
them.

They came out on the seashore and sprang up to the high
sky,
and found Zeus the wide-thunderer, and around him all the
other
blessed gods who live for ever were sitting gathered
together.

Athena gave up her place and Thetis sat next to father
Zeus,
and Hera put a beautiful golden cup in her hand and spoke
words of welcome; and Thetis drank and handed back the
cup.

Then the father of gods and men began to speak among
them:

'So you have come to Olympus, goddess Thetis, despite
your sorrow;

you have grief in your heart that you cannot forget—I too know this,
but even so I will tell you why I have summoned you here.
For nine days a quarrel has arisen among the immortals concerning Achilles, sacker of cities, and the body of Hector.

They want the keen-sighted slayer of Argus to steal it away; but I will tell you of the glory that I intend to grant Achilles, and so keep your respect and friendship in time to come. Go quickly now to the camp and give your son my orders: tell him that the gods are displeased with him, and that I above

all the immortals am angry because in his frenzied heart he keeps Hector by his curved ships and has not released him;

and in this way he may come to fear me, and ransom Hector.

Then I shall send Iris to great-hearted Priam, telling him to go to the ships of the Achaeans and ransom his dear son, taking with him gifts for Achilles such as will gladden his heart.'

So he spoke, and the goddess silver-footed Thetis did not disobey him,

and she went swooping down from the peaks of Olympus

and came to the hut of her son. She found him there, weeping

without respite, and around him his dear companions were bustling about their tasks and preparing their early meal; they had sacrificed a great fleecy sheep for themselves in the hut.

His revered mother sat down very close to Achilles, and stroked him with her hand and spoke to him, saying:

'My child, how long will you eat your heart out with grieving and lamentation, giving no thought to food or to

bed? It is indeed a good thing to lie with a woman,
since your life will not be long and I shall lose you, and
already death and your harsh destiny stand beside you.
Come now, listen to me; I come to you as Zeus' messenger.
He says that the gods are displeased with you, and that he
above
all the immortals is angry because in your frenzied heart
you
keep Hector beside your curved ships and have not
released him.
So come, let him go, and accept a ransom in return for the
body.'

Then in answer swift-footed Achilles addressed her:
'Let it be so; may he who brings the ransom also take away
the body,
if indeed the Olympian himself commands me with all his
heart.'

So mother and son spoke to each other in the
gathering-place
of the ships, exchanging many winged words.
Then the son of Cronus roused Iris to go to sacred Ilium:
'Go now, swift Iris; leave the seat of Olympus and go to
Ilium and announce to great-hearted Priam that he must go
to
the ships of the Achaeans and ransom his dear son, taking
with him gifts for Achilles such as will gladden his heart;
but he must be alone, and no other Trojan must go with
him.

Let some older man, a herald, follow him, to guide
the mules and the well-wheeled wagon, and to bring back
to the city the dead man whom glorious Achilles has killed.
And let him have no concern or fear about death in his
heart,
since I shall provide him with a worthy guide, the Argus-
slayer,

who will lead him on his way until he reaches Achilles. When Hermes has conducted him into his hut Achilles will not kill him, and will keep all the others away from him; he is neither witless nor heedless, nor is he wicked, but will treat a man who is his suppliant with kindness, and spare him.'

So he spoke, and storm-footed Iris rose to take the message.

She arrived at Priam's house and found there crying and wailing;

in the courtyard his sons were sitting around their father, soaking their clothes with tears, and the old man was in their midst, tightly wrapped in his cloak, and his head and neck were covered with the quantities of dung that he had gathered up in his hands as he grovelled on the ground.*

In the house his daughters and wives of his sons were weeping,

remembering the many noble men who were lying dead, those who had lost their lives at the hands of the Argives.

The messenger of Zeus stood beside Priam and addressed him,

speaking in a low voice; but even so trembling seized his limbs:

'Do not despair in your heart, Priam of Dardanus' line, nor be afraid;

it is not to foretell calamity that I come to this place, but with

good intentions towards you. I am indeed the messenger of Zeus, who though he is far off cares greatly and pities you.

The Olympian commands you to ransom glorious Hector, taking with you gifts for Achilles such as will gladden his heart;

but you must be alone, and no other Trojan must go with you.

Let there be some older man, a herald, to follow you, to

guide

the mules and the well-wheeled wagon, and to bring back to the city the dead man whom glorious Achilles has killed. Do not have any concern or fear about death in your heart, since a worthy guide will accompany you, the slayer of Argus,

who will lead you on your way until you reach Achilles. When Hermes has conducted you into his hut Achilles will not kill you, and will keep all the others away from you; he is neither witless nor heedless, nor is he wicked, but will treat a man who is his suppliant with kindness, and spare him.'

So swift-footed Iris spoke, and departed from him; and Priam ordered his sons to make ready a well-wheeled wagon, drawn by mules, and to fasten a wicker basket on top.

He himself went down into a sweet-smelling, high-roofed chamber, built of cedarwood and containing many precious things;

then he called to his wife Hecuba and addressed her:

'Dear wife, an Olympian messenger has come to me from Zeus,

telling me to go to the Achaeans' ships and ransom my dear son,

and to take with me gifts for Achilles, such as may gladden his heart.

Come, tell me, how does this seem to you in your heart?

As for me, the fervour in my heart urges me strongly to go down there to their ships, into the wide camp of the Achaeans.'

So he spoke, and his wife shrieked and answered him: 'You are mad! Where has that good sense gone that you were

famous for among foreigners and among the people you rule?

How can you want to go alone to the ships of the Achaeans, into the sight of the man who has slaughtered so many of your noble sons? Your heart must be made of iron.

If he sets eyes on you and makes you his captive, that treacherous eater of raw flesh will show you neither pity nor the smallest respect. No, let us instead sit here in our halls,

far from him, and lament; this was how his harsh destiny once

spun the thread for Hector at his birth, at the time I bore him,

that he should glut swift-footed dogs far from his parents, by a violent man's side; how I wish I could fasten my teeth deep into his liver and devour it—and then there would be vengeance done for my son! He was no coward when

Achilles

killed him, but was standing firm to defend the Trojan men and

their deep-bosomed women, thinking neither of flight nor shelter.'

Then in his turn the old man, godlike Priam, addressed her:

'Do not try to hold me back; I am determined to go. And do not

be a bird of ill-omen in our halls, for you will not persuade me.

If it were someone else, a mortal, who was ordering me, one of our prophets or diviners from sacrifice or priests, we would say the message was false and would take no notice;

but as it is I have heard the goddess' voice myself and seen her

face to face, and I shall go, and her words will not be empty. If it

is my fate to die beside the ships of the bronze-shirted

Achaeans,
that is what I want. Let Achilles kill me quickly as I hold my
son
in my arms, after I have put from myself the desire for
weeping.'

So he spoke, and opened the handsome lids of the
coffers,
and lifted out of them twelve robes of great beauty, and
twelve simple cloaks and as many blankets, and as many
white mantles, and as many tunics to go with them.
He weighed and brought out a total of ten talents of gold,
and lifted out two gleaming tripods and four cauldrons,
and lifted out a cup of great beauty which men of Thrace
had
given him when he went on an embassy, a great treasure;
but the
old man did not spare even this in his halls, for he wished
fervently
in his heart to ransom his dear son. Next he drove all the
Trojans
out of his portico, rebuking them with words of abuse:
'Get out, you worthless things, bringers of shame! Have
you no
lamentation at home, that you come here to cause me
misery?
Do you think it nothing that Zeus, Cronus' son, has given
me the pain
of losing the best of my sons? You will learn soon enough
for
yourselves, when you prove to be easier for the Achaeans
to
slaughter now that Hector is dead. But as for me, may it
happen
that I go down to the house of Hades before I see my city
plundered and laid waste before my very eyes.'

So he spoke, and chased the men away with his staff,
and they
retreated before the old man's outburst. Then he shouted
to his
sons, rebuking them: to Helenus and Paris and glorious
Agathon,
to Pammon and Antiphonus and Polites, master of the war-
cry,
to Deiphobus and Hippothous and to splendid Dius, nine
in all that the old man shouted his harsh orders to:
'Go quickly, you wretched children, bringers of disgrace,
who
should all have been killed by the swift ships instead of
Hector!
Oh what a miserable destiny is mine! I fathered the best
sons
in broad Troy, but now I cannot say that any of them is left:
Mestor who was like a god, and Troilus the charioteer,
and Hector, who was a god among men, and seemed
to be the son not of a mortal man but of a god. But Ares
has
killed them, and all those who are left bring disgrace on me
—
tellers of lies, dance-experts, masters of fancy footwork,
robbers in your own country of other people's lambs and
kids!
Go, make ready a wagon for me as quickly as you can, and
load all these things on to it, so that we can be on our way.'

So he spoke, and they were terrified at their father's
loud rebuke,
and brought out a wagon with fine wheels, drawn by mules,
a splendid one, newly built, and they lashed a basket on
top of it;
from its peg they lifted down a mule-yoke made of
boxwood,

complete with its boss and well fitted with guide-rings, and with it they brought out a yoke-strap nine cubits long. The yoke they fitted carefully on to the well-polished shaft at its front end, and put the ring over its peg and wound the strap three times over each side of the boss; then they lashed this repeatedly round the shaft and tucked in its end.

From the store-chamber they brought out the boundless ransom for Hector's body and piled it on the well-polished wagon, which they then yoked to strong-hoofed mules that worked in harness, which the Mysians had once presented to Priam as a splendid gift.

Then to Priam's chariot they yoked some horses which the old man kept for himself and reared at their well-polished manger.

So these two had their teams yoked in the lofty palace, the herald and Priam, with many thoughts in their minds; and Hecuba came and stood next to them, troubled at heart, holding in her right hand mind-cheering wine in a golden cup, for them to make a drink-offering before they went. Standing in front of the chariot she spoke to them in these words:

'Here, make a drink-offering to father Zeus, and pray that you will return home in safety from among your enemies; it is your heart that is driving you to approach their ships, and I do not wish it.

So come, pray to Cronus' son, the lord of the dark clouds, he who has his seat on Ida and from there watches all Troy, and ask for a bird-omen—the swift messenger, which of all

birds is the dearest to him and whose strength is the greatest—
to appear on the right hand, so that you see it with your own eyes
and trust in it as you go to the ships of the swift-horsed Danaans.
But if Zeus the wide-thunderer refuses to send you his messenger
then I would certainly not urge you to go to the ships of the Argives, however strongly you desire to do so.'

Then in answer godlike Priam addressed her:
'Wife, I will certainly not disregard this advice of yours; it is a good thing to raise hands to Zeus, to see if he will have pity.'

So the old man spoke, and ordered his housekeeper servant
to pour clean water over his hands, and she stood beside him holding a jug and a basin in her hands.
When he had washed he took the cup that his wife offered and stood in the middle of the courtyard and poured out some wine, looking up to the high sky, and spoke these words:

'Father Zeus, greatest and most glorious, ruling from Mount Ida,*

grant that I may find friendship and pity in Achilles' hut.
Send me a bird-omen—your swift messenger, which of all birds is the dearest to you and whose strength is the greatest—

to appear on the right hand, so that I see it with my own eyes
and trust in it as I go to the ships of the swift-horsed Danaans.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus the counsellor heard him,
and at once sent an eagle, the most prophetic of winged

creatures,
the dark hunter, the one that men call the dusky eagle.
As wide as is the door of a high-roofed chamber that has
been
built for a rich man, a door that fits tightly when it is shut,
so wide did its wings extend on both sides; and it appeared
to them
on the right hand, sweeping over the city. And they rejoiced
when they saw it, and the heart in all of them was
gladdened.

Then the old man made haste and mounted his chariot
and
drove it through the outer gate, out of the echoing portico.
In front of him the mules drew the four-wheeled wagon
which keen-minded Idaeus was driving; behind came the
horses that the old man was urging swiftly through the city*
as he wielded his whip, and all his family kept up with him,
full of lamentation, just as though he was going to his
death.

When they had gone down through the city and reached
the plain,
his sons and sons-in-law turned back towards Ilium;
but Priam and Idaeus did not escape the notice of Zeus
as they emerged on to the plain, and when he saw the old
man

he felt pity for him and quickly spoke to Hermes, his dear
son:

‘Hermes, it is your special pleasure to be men’s companion,
and you always listen to those to whom you are partial;
go now and escort Priam to the hollow ships of the
Achaeans

in such a way that no one of the Danaans sees or is aware
of him until you have reached the hut of Peleus’ son.’

So he spoke, and the guide, the slayer of Argus, did not
disobey him.

Immediately he bound under his feet his beautiful sandals,
golden and deathless, that carried him over the watery sea
and the boundless earth with the speed of the wind; then
he picked up the wand with which he charms the eyes of
those he chooses, and rouses others from their sleep.
Holding this in his hands the mighty slayer of Argus flew
down
and quickly arrived at Troy and the Hellespont, and set off
on his way in the likeness of a young prince, one whose
beard
is beginning to show, which is the most charming time of
youth.

Now when the two men had driven past the great
burial-mound
of Ilus they pulled up the mules and horses for them to
drink
in the river, since now darkness had come over the earth.
Then, when Hermes was close at hand, the herald looked
up
and saw him, and spoke to Priam with these words:
'Priam of Dardanus' line, take care! There is something here
that
calls for care. I see a man, and I think we shall soon be cut
to pieces;
Quick, let us make our escape in the chariot—or let us
catch him
by the knees and beg for mercy; he may take pity on us.'

So he spoke, and the old man's mind was confused,
and he was terribly
afraid, and the hairs on his bent limbs stood up, and he
stood there
in bewilderment; but the swift runner came and stood by
him,
and taking the old man's hand questioned and addressed
him:

‘Father, where are you driving these horses and mules through the deathless night, while other mortals are asleep?

Are you not afraid of the Achaeans who breathe fury, your ruthless enemies, who are camped close by you? If any of these were to see you bringing all these precious things through the swift black night, what could you think of doing?

You are not a young man yourself, and this man attending you

is too old to defend you against any man who picks a fight. But I shall do you no harm, and I will protect you from anyone

who may attack you; you have the look of my own father.’

Then in answer the old man, godlike Priam, addressed him:

‘Everything that you say, dear child, is close to the truth. It seems that some god is still stretching his hand over me, in that he has sent such a traveller to fall in with me, a bearer of good fortune; your stature and beauty are to be wondered at, and you are shrewd in mind—your parents are indeed blessed.’

Then in turn the guide, the slayer of Argus, addressed him:

‘Old man, all that you have said is according to due measure.

But come, tell me this, and give me an exact account: are you sending all these splendid treasures away somewhere,

to men in some foreign land, where they can wait for you in safety, or are you all now abandoning sacred Ilium in terror because a man is dead, the best among you, your

son, who was never found wanting in battle with the Achaeans?’

Then in answer the old man, godlike Priam, addressed him:

‘Who are you, lord, and who are your parents, you who speak so unerringly about the fate of my unlucky son?’

Then in turn the guide, the slayer of Argus, addressed him:

‘You are testing me, old man, asking me about glorious Hector:

many times I have seen him before my eyes in the battle where

men win glory, especially when he was killing the Argives he had

driven against their ships, butchering them with the sharp bronze.

We stood in amazement, not moving, because Achilles would not let us fight, being full of bitterness at Atreus’ son.

I am his attendant, and one well-made ship brought us here.

I am one of the Myrmidons, and my father is Polyctor, who is a wealthy man, and an aged man like you; he has six other sons, and I am the seventh. I cast lots with the other sons, and it fell to me to accompany Achilles here.

Now

I am on my way from the ships to the plain, because at dawn

the darting-eyed Achaeans will set the battle going around the city;

sitting idle makes them chafe, and the kings of the Achaeans

cannot hold them back, impatient as they are for battle.’

Then in answer the old man, godlike Priam, addressed him:

‘If you really are an attendant of Peleus’ son Achilles,

then come, tell me the whole truth—is my son
still lying beside the ships, or has Achilles by now
chopped him up and thrown him limb by limb to his dogs?’

Then in turn the guide, the slayer of Argus, addressed
him:

‘Aged man, the dogs and vultures have not devoured him
and he is still there, lying in Achilles’ hut beside his ship,
just as he was; and this is the twelfth day that he has been
lying there, and his flesh has not decayed, and he has not
been eaten by the worms that feed on men killed in war.
To be sure, whenever the bright dawn appears Achilles
drags him
ruthlessly round the burial-mound of his dear companion,
but he causes him no shameful injury; if you went up to him
you would be amazed how he lies as fresh as dew, and the
blood is
washed away, and there is no defilement. The wounds
where he was
stabbed are all closed up, even though many men drove
the bronze
into him. It seems that the blessed gods care for your son,
even in death, since he was dear to their hearts.’

So he spoke, and the old man was gladdened and
answered:

‘My child, it is indeed a good thing to give the immortals
their proper offerings. Never did my son—if ever I had one
—
forget in his halls the gods who dwell on Olympus. And so
they have repaid the favour, if only after his destined
death.

But come, accept this handsome cup from me and protect
me and

be my escort—together with the gods—
and help me to come to the hut of the son of Peleus.’

Then in turn the guide, the slayer of Argus, addressed

him:

'You are testing me, aged man, a younger man than you, telling me to accept your gift without Achilles' knowledge. You will not persuade me; I am afraid of him, and would feel shame in my heart at robbing him, in case something bad comes my way in future. Still, I am ready to be your escort, even as far as famous Argos, accompanying you in a swift ship or on foot, as is right; no one will attack you out of contempt for your guide.'

So the swift runner spoke, and leapt into the chariot behind the horses and quickly took the whip and reins into his hands, and breathed great fury into the horses and the mules. When they reached the ditch and the wall protecting the ships, the sentries had just begun to busy themselves with their meal; and the guide, the slayer of Argus, poured sleep over them all and at once thrust back the bars and opened the gates, and conducted Priam inside with the wagonload of splendid gifts. When they arrived at the hut of the son of Peleus, the tall hut that the Myrmidons had built for their king—they had felled pine trunks and then covered it with a roof of rough thatch that they had gathered in the meadows, and after that had built for their king a large courtyard, surrounded with close-set stakes, and it had a door with one bar

made of pine; it took three of the other Achaeans to ram the great locking-bar shut and three to pull it back to open it, but Achilles could ram it shut, even on his own—there Hermes the swift runner opened the gate for the old man and brought in the splendid gifts for Priam's swift-footed son, and then got down to the ground from the chariot and spoke:
'Aged man, it is indeed an immortal god who has come to you;
I am Hermes, and my father sent me to be your escort. But now I must go back again, and will not appear before the eyes of Achilles; it would attract blame if an immortal god was entertained face to face by mortals in this way. But as for you, you must go in and grasp the knees of Peleus' son and entreat him in the name of his father and his lovely-haired mother and his child, in the hope that you will move his heart.'

So Hermes spoke, and went back to high Olympus, and Priam leapt to the ground from the chariot and left Idaeus where he was, to wait and look after the horses and the mules. The old man went straight into the dwelling where Achilles, dear to Zeus, usually sat, and he found him; his companions were sitting some way apart, and only two, the hero Automedon and Alcimus, a shoot of Ares, were busy attending him. He had just finished eating and drinking at his meal, and the table still stood beside him. Great Priam entered, undetected by the two men, and stood close to Achilles and took his knees in his arms and kissed

the
terrible man-slaughtering hands that had killed so many of
his sons.

As when delusion* takes tight hold of someone who has
killed a
man in his own country, and he comes to another people,
to the
house of a rich man, and amazement seizes the onlookers,
so Achilles was amazed when he saw godlike Priam; and
the others too were amazed, and looked at one another.
Priam spoke to Achilles, entreating him with these words:
'Achilles, man like the gods, think now of your own father,
a man of my years, on the grim threshold of old age;
it may be that his neighbours round about are vexing him,
and there is no one to protect him from damage and
destruction, but when he hears that you are still living he
rejoices in his heart, and day after day he hopes to
see his dear son returning home from Troy. As for me,
I am most ill-fated of all men, for I fathered the finest sons
in broad Troy, and yet cannot say that any one of them is
left.

Fifty I had when the sons of the Achaeans came;
nineteen of them were born to me from one womb,
and other women bore the rest to me in my halls.
Impetuous Ares loosed the knees of most of them; but
the one left to me, who protected the city and its citizens—
you killed him not long ago as he was defending his
country.

He was Hector; and for his sake I now come to the ships of
the

Achaeans, to redeem him from you, bringing a boundless
ransom.

Come, Achilles, respect the gods, and have pity on me,
remembering your own father; yet I am more worthy of
your pity,
for I have endured to do what no other mortal on earth has

done:

to raise to my mouth the hand of the man who killed my son.'

So he spoke, and aroused in Achilles a desire to weep for his father.

Taking hold of the old man's hand he gently pushed him away;*

they both remembered their own, Priam crouched at Achilles'

feet and weeping without ceasing for man-slaying Hector, while Achilles wept for his own father, and then again for Patroclus; and their groaning went up, spreading through the hut.

Now when glorious Achilles had had his fill of lamentation and the desire for it had gone from his mind and his limbs, he rose at once from his seat and with his hand raised the old man,

because he felt pity for his grey head and his grey beard, and addressed him, speaking with winged words:

'Ah, poor man, you have endured much misery in your heart!

How could you bring yourself to come alone to the Achaeans'

ships, into the sight of a man who has killed so many fine sons

of yours? Surely your heart must be made of iron.

But come, sit here on this chair, and let us leave our pain to lie at rest in our hearts, grieved though we are.

There is nothing to be gained from chill lamentation; that is how the gods have woven the threads for wretched mortals,

to live with grief, while they themselves are without sorrow.

There are two jars standing on Zeus' threshold, full of the gifts that he dispenses, one of bad things and the other of good.

When Zeus who delights in the thunder gives a man a mixture,
he meets at one time with ill fortune and at another with good, but
when he gives only from the store of bad things he makes a man
despised; cruel hunger drives him over the bright earth,
and
he wanders up and down honoured by neither gods nor mortals.*
_

So it was that the gods also gave Peleus splendid gifts
from the time of his birth: he stood out above all men in prosperity and in wealth, and ruled over the Myrmidons,
and
though he was a mortal the gods gave him a goddess for wife.

But even to him the gods brought misery, in that he had no offspring of princely sons born to him in his halls, but fathered only one, and him doomed to an early death; I cannot
care for him as he grows old because I sit here idly in Troy, far from my native land, bringing sorrow to you and your children.

And we hear tell that you too, aged man, were once prosperous:

all that is bounded out to sea by Lesbos, seat of Macar, and up-country by Phrygia, and by the vast Hellespont—in all these lands, they say, you were supreme in wealth and in sons.*
_

And yet the dwellers in the high sky have now brought this affliction

on you—constant battles and killings of men round about your city.

You must endure, and not mourn unceasingly in your heart; there is nothing to be gained by grieving for your son, since you will

not bring him back to life; you will sooner suffer another sorrow.'

Then the old man, godlike Priam, answered him:
'Zeus-nurtured man, do not make me sit down as long as Hector is lying uncared-for in your huts, but release him to me at once, so that I can see him with my eyes; then you may accept the huge ransom that we bring you. May you have pleasure in it and so return to your native land, because you have allowed me to live and to gaze on the light of the sun.'

Then swift-footed Achilles looked at him darkly and said:
'Do not provoke me too far, aged man. I myself am minded to release Hector to you, for a messenger came to me from Zeus— my mother who bore me, daughter of the ancient of the sea. Furthermore, Priam, you do not deceive me: I know that one of the gods has conducted you to the swift ships of the Achaeans. No mortal would dare to come here into the camp, not even one in the prime of youth; he would not be able to pass the sentries unnoticed, nor could he easily push back the bars of our gates. So do not rouse the pain in my heart any further, aged man, in case I break the ordinances of Zeus and forget to spare you, even you, while you are a suppliant here in my hut.'

So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and did as he said.

Then the son of Peleus leapt out through the door like a lion,
not alone, but there were his two attendants with him,
the hero Automedon and Alcimus, the two whom Achilles
valued most of all his companions after the dead Patroclus.
These now freed the horses and mules from under their
yokes

and led in the herald, the old man's summoner, and
sat him down on a chair; and from the well-polished wagon
they took the boundless ransom for the body of Hector.
They laid apart two cloaks and a skilfully woven tunic for
Achilles to wrap him in when he gave him to be carried
home.

Then Achilles called his maidservants and told them to take
Hector

aside so that Priam should not see his son, and to wash and
anoint him,

for he was afraid that in the grief of his heart Priam would
not restrain

his anger when he saw his son, and that his own heart
would be

disturbed so that he killed Priam, and broke the ordinances
of Zeus.

When the maidservants had washed and anointed Hector
with

olive oil they wrapped him in the fine cloak and the tunic,
and

Achilles himself lifted him up and laid him on a bier, and his
companions hoisted him on to the well-polished wagon.

Then Achilles cried out and called on his dear companion by
name:

'Do not bear me rancour, Patroclus, if you come to hear,
even in

the house of Hades, that I have released glorious Hector to

his
dear father because he has brought me a not-unfitting
ransom.
I shall in time hand over to you the share in this that is your
due.'

So glorious Achilles spoke, and went back into his hut,
and sat
again on the intricately worked chair from which he had
risen,
which was set against the opposite wall. Then he spoke to
Priam:

'There, aged man, your son is released to you, as you
asked,
and is lying on a bier. As soon as dawn appears you will see
him,
and may take him away; but now let us turn our thoughts
to eating.

You must know that even lovely-haired Niobe thought of
food*

after her twelve children had been killed in her halls—
six daughters she had, and six sons in the prime of youth.
Apollo killed the sons with arrows from his silver bow, being
angry with Niobe, and Artemis the shooter of arrows slew
the girls,
because Niobe had compared herself with Leto of the lovely
cheeks,
saying that Leto had borne only two while she had borne
many;
and so the gods, though they were only two, killed all
Niobe's children.

For nine days they lay in their gore, and there was no one
to

bury them, for the son of Cronus had turned the people to
stone;

but on the tenth day the gods who dwell in the high sky

buried them.

Then it was that Niobe, worn out with weeping,
remembered food;
and now today, somewhere among the rocks on some
lonely mountain,
on Sipylus, where men say that the goddess nymphs who
leap
in the dance about Achelous* have their resting-places,
there,
though now a stone, she broods on the sorrows sent her by
the gods.
Come then, aged and glorious man, let us two turn our
minds to
food, and afterwards you may mourn your dear son, when
you have
taken him back to Ilium; and he will surely bring forth many
tears.'

So swift-footed Achilles spoke, then leapt up and
slaughtered a
white sheep, and his companions flayed and prepared it
expertly,
and chopped the meat skilfully and threaded it on to
skewers,
and cooked it with great care and then drew it off.
Automedon fetched bread and set it out on the table
in fine baskets; but Achilles apportioned the meat.
They reached out for the good things lying ready before
them, and
when they had put from themselves the desire for food and
drink
then Priam of Dardanus' line looked in amazement at
Achilles,
seeing how huge and handsome he was, for he seemed like
the gods;
and Achilles too was amazed at Priam of the line of

Dardanus,
seeing his noble appearance and hearing him speak.
When they had taken their pleasure from looking at each other
the first to speak was godlike Priam, who said:
'Quick now, Zeus-nurtured man, give me a place to lie, so that
we may take the pleasure of being lulled by sweet sleep;
my eyes beneath my eyebrows have not closed
since the time my son lost his life at your hands, and
all this time I have groaned and brooded on my thousands of
sorrows, rolling in the dung in the stalls of my courtyard.*
Now at last I have tasted bread and poured gleaming wine
down my throat; but before this time I could eat nothing.'

So he spoke, and Achilles told his companions and maidservants
to lay out a bed underneath the colonnade and to throw
fine red rugs on top of it and to spread coverlets over them,
and to set out fleecy woollen cloaks to be a covering over
all.

The maids went out of the hall with torches in their hands
and quickly set about laying beds for the two of them.

Then in a bantering tone* swift-footed Achilles addressed
Priam:

'Lie outside there, aged man, in case any of the Achaean
counsellors comes this way, one of those who from time to
time

sit here and make plans with me, as is the proper custom.
If one of these were to see you through the swift black
night

he would at once report it to Agamemnon, shepherd of the
people,

and then there would be a delay in releasing the body.

So come, tell me and give me an exact account of how

many
days you are minded to conduct glorious Hector's funeral
rites,
so that I myself can cease for that time and also restrain
the people.'

Then the old man, godlike Priam, answered him:
'If you really wish me to give glorious Hector a proper
burial,
then it would be a kindness to me if you do what I shall ask.
You know how we are penned close in the city, and it is a
long way
to fetch wood from the mountain, and the Trojans are
terrified;
give us leave to lament over Hector in our halls for nine
days,
and on the tenth we will bury him and the people will feast,
and on the eleventh day we will build a burial-mound over
him
and on the twelfth we will fight again, if fight we must.'

Then in answer swift-footed glorious Achilles addressed
him:

'Very well, aged Priam; it will all be as you ask it:
I shall hold back the fighting for the time that you tell me.'

So he spoke, and took the old man by the wrist of his
right hand so that he should have no fear in his heart.
And so those two, the herald and Priam, lay down to rest
there
in the forecourt of the building, with many thoughts in their
minds;
but Achilles slept in the inmost part of his well-built hut,
and beside him lay Briseus' daughter of the lovely cheeks.

Now all other beings, gods and horse-marshalling men,
slept the whole night long, overcome by soft sleep,
but sleep did not take hold of Hermes the swift runner as he
pondered in his heart how he should escort Priam the king

away from the ships unnoticed by the devoted gate-guards; he stood over Priam's head* and spoke to him in these words:

'Aged man, you have no thought of danger, sleeping soundly like this among men who are your enemies, since Achilles has spared you.

Now you have paid a great price to redeem your dear son, but in return for your life your sons who are left at home would

give a ransom of three or four times as much, if Agamemnon,

son of Atreus, and all the Achaeans found out you were here.'

So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and roused the herald.

Hermes yoked the horses and mules for them, and himself drove them swiftly through the camp, and no one saw them.

But when they came to the crossing of the clear-flowing river,

swirling Xanthus, who was fathered by immortal Zeus, Hermes immediately went away to high Olympus, and Dawn

in her saffron robes was spread over the whole earth; and Priam and the herald drove the horses with groans and lamentation

towards the city, while the mules brought the dead man. No one

from among men or women with their lovely girdles saw them

except Cassandra, she who resembled golden Aphrodite; she had gone up on to Pergamus and recognized her dear father

as he stood in the chariot, and the herald, the town-crier,

with him.

And she saw him too, Hector, lying on a bier in the mule-wagon,
and shrieked aloud and her shout went through all the city:
'Men and women of Troy, if ever you were glad to see
Hector
returning from the battle when he was alive—for he was a
great joy
to the city and all its people—come and gaze on him now.'

So she spoke, and soon there was no man or woman
left in
the city, for unendurable sorrow had come upon them all.
They met Priam near the gate as he brought back the body,
and
first to them were Hector's wife and his revered mother,
tearing their
hair for him and throwing themselves at the well-wheeled
wagon and
touching his head; and the mass of people stood weeping
round them.
And indeed, as they shed their tears before the gates, they
would have
mourned Hector the whole day long until the setting of the
sun,
had not the old man spoken to the people from his chariot:
'Give way there, let the mules pass through! After that you
may
have your fill of weeping, when I have taken him to his
home.'

So he spoke, and they stood aside and let the wagon
pass.
When they had brought Hector into his famous house they
laid him on a fretted bed and caused bards to sit beside
him
to begin the lament; and these sang a song of mourning

while the women moaned in answer to their lamentation.
Among the women white-armed Andromache began her dirge,
holding the head of man-slaying Hector in her hands:
'Husband, you are dead, gone from life too young, leaving me a widow in our halls! Our son, whom you and I, ill-fated parents, gave life to, is still but an infant, and I do not think he will reach manhood. Before that happens this city will be sacked from top to bottom, because you, its guardian, are dead, you who always protected it and kept its devoted wives and little children safe; but they will very soon be carried off in hollow ships, and I among them, and you, my child, will either accompany me to a place where you will work at tasks that bring shame on you, labouring for a pitiless master, or else some Achaean will seize and hurl you from the walls* to a cruel death, angry because Hector may have killed his brother or his father or even his son, for great numbers of Achaeans have fastened their teeth on the vast earth at Hector's hands; your father was never gentle in the savage warfare, and that is why the people lament him throughout the city. Hector, you have brought cursed wailing and grief to your parents, but for me especially there will be left cruel anguish; you did not hold out your arms to me from our bed as you died, or speak a memorable word to me, something that I could remember through the nights and days as I weep tears for you.'

So she spoke, weeping, and the women answered her with their moans.

Then in turn Hecuba began her unbroken lament among them:

‘Hector, by far the dearest to my heart of all my sons!
I know for certain that you were dear to the gods in life, and now

it is clear that they care for you even in your fated death.

All the other sons of mine whom swift-footed Achilles captured

he would sell for ransom over the resounding sea, to Samos or to Imbros or to Lemnos that is surrounded in mist; but when he had taken away your life with the sharp-bladed bronze

he dragged you many times round the tomb of his companion

Patroclus, whom you killed—yet he did not bring him back to life.

But now I see you lying dewy-fresh and unsullied in your halls, like someone whom Apollo, lord of the silver bow, has gone after and put to death with his kindly shafts.’

So she spoke, weeping, and aroused ceaseless lamentation.

Then after her Helen was the third to begin her lament:

‘Hector, by far the dearest to me of my husband’s brothers!

My husband is indeed Alexander who looks like the gods, who brought me to Troy—and I wish I had died before that happened! But this is now the twentieth year* since

I came from Sparta and deserted my father’s country, and I have never yet heard an unkind or reproachful word from you. If someone else spoke harshly to me in the halls,

one of your brothers or sisters or a brother’s fine-robed wife, or

your mother—your father is always as gentle as if he was my own—

you would always calm and restrain them with your words,
by your tenderness of spirit and your gentle speech.
And so, grieved at heart, I weep for you and for myself,
luckless
as I am; there is no one left in broad Troy who could show
me such kindness or friendship, but everyone shudders at
me.'

So she spoke, weeping, and the vast crowd echoed her
groans.

Then the old man Priam spoke out among the people,
saying:

'Bring wood into the city, men of Troy, and do not be afraid
in your hearts of any crafty ambush laid by the Argives;
Achilles promised when he sent me from the black ships
that he would do us no injury until the twelfth dawn comes.'

So he spoke, and they harnessed oxen and mules to the
yokes

of carts and straightaway gathered in front of the city.
For nine days they kept bringing in wood in vast quantities,
and when the tenth dawn that brings light to mortals
appeared

then at last, pouring forth tears, they carried out daring
Hector

and laid the dead man on a lofty pyre and set fire to it.

Then, when early-born Dawn with her rosy fingers
appeared

the people all collected around the pyre of famous Hector,
and when they had assembled and were gathered together
first they quenched the burning pyre with gleaming wine,
all of it as far as the fire's fury still had hold, and then
his brothers and companions collected his white bones,
lamenting, and huge tears kept flowing down their cheeks.
When they had assembled the bones they placed them in a
golden coffin, covering them with soft red robes; this they
quickly laid in a hollow grave, and over it they spread a

layer of great stones, closely set together. Then they swiftly heaped up an earthen burial-mound, and set lookouts all around it,

in case the well-greaved Achaeans should attack before the due time.

When they had heaped up the mound they went back to the city

and duly assembled and took part in a magnificent feast in the house of Priam, the king nurtured by Zeus.

So they conducted the funeral rites for Hector, breaker of horses.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BOOK ONE

The poet invokes the Muse and sets out the subject-matter of his poem (1-7). The narrative begins with the arrival of Chryses, a priest of Apollo, to the Achaean camp: he has come to offer ransom in return for his daughter, who was captured by the Achaeans on an earlier campaign; Agamemnon refuses to release the girl, who is now his slave, and threatens her father; Apollo, angered at the treatment of his priest, inflicts a plague on the Achaeans (8-52). Encouraged by Achilles, the prophet Calchas reveals the cause of the plague; Agamemnon agrees to release Chryses' daughter—but only if the Achaeans compensate him for his loss (53-120). Achilles protests, and Agamemnon demands to be given Achilles' own slave Briseïs; in anger, Achilles declares he will no longer fight for the Achaeans (121-87). Agamemnon reacts with contempt, and Achilles comes close to killing him; the goddess Athena restrains him (188-303). The Achaeans make sacrifice to Apollo, and two heralds collect Briseïs from Achilles' tent (304-50). Achilles complains to his mother, the marine goddess Thetis, who hears him from the depths of the sea, and comes to shore:

she tries to console him, and promises to entreat Zeus on his behalf (351-430). Odysseus delivers Chryseïs to her father, and the Achaeans pray and sacrifice to Apollo (431-87). Thetis entreats Zeus, who promises that he will make the Achaeans lose for as long as Achilles refuses to fight (488-535). Hera, who supports the Achaeans, discovers this with some displeasure; tension mounts on Olympus, until Hephaestus manages to calm down Hera; at dusk, Apollo and the Muses make music for the gods, and the Olympians feast together, until Zeus and Hera withdraw to their marital bed (536-611).

[anger](#): the original text starts with a rare Greek word, *mēnis*. This word describes the vengeful anger typical of the gods: at 1.75, for example, it is used of Apollo's anger, which results in the plague. Achilles' *mēnis* is equally destructive: it will cause heavy Achaean losses.

Hades: the Underworld; also used of the god of the Underworld; cf. 15. 187-93.

Atreus' son: Agamemnon, leader of the Achaeans.

The son of Zeus and Leto: Apollo.

the woollen bands of Apollo who shoots from afar: fillets (perhaps of wool, though the original text is unclear) are tied around Chryses' staff: they are part of his ritual attire.

Cilla . . . Tenedos: Cilla was probably on the west coast of the Troad; Tenedos is an island flanking the west coast of the Troad.

Smintheus: the meaning of this cult name of Apollo was debated also in antiquity: perhaps 'lord of mice', a term possibly related to Apollo's power to inflict (and protect from) contagious disease.

[fat-wrapped thigh-bones](#): see note to 1.447–68.

hecatomb: a sacrifice of 100 oxen or, more generally, a large sacrifice.

the shooter from afar: Apollo.

the far-worker: Apollo.

[Phthia](#): in north-east Greece, see Map 1; land of Achilles and his father Peleus.

winged words: an arresting Homeric expression. Readers have wondered about its exact meaning: the medieval commentator Eustathius thought of words flying straight to the listener, like birds. More recently, scholars have suggested that the expression may evoke feathered arrows. It always introduces direct speech.

[aegis-wearing Zeus](#): the aegis was a protective garment or weapon associated especially with Zeus and his daughter Athena; there was some uncertainty, also in antiquity, about its precise nature, perhaps 'cloak made of goat-skin'. For a detailed description, cf. 5.738–42.

[Pylians](#): the people of Pylos in the south-west Peloponnese, see Map 1. Nestor was their ruler.

Peirithous Polyphemus: the Lapiths from Thessaly, famous in myth and art for fighting against the Centaurs.

Theseus son of Aegeus, who resembled the immortals:
Aegeus was a mythical king of Athens, his son Theseus was the most famous Attic hero. Some scholars suspect that this line is an Athenian addition to the *Iliad*.

the son of Menoetius: Patroclus, Achilles' closest friend.

When they had purified themselves . . . into the sea: the Achaeans wash themselves and then throw the dirty water into the sea, which was thought to have purifying powers.

[sprung from Zeus](#): Patroclus is not Zeus' son; this epithet is used of many heroes, and corresponds to Zeus' standard description as 'father of gods and men'.

[Thebe, the sacred city of Eëtion](#): see note to 6.397.

Briareus . . . Aegaeon: a monster. There are three other passages in the *Iliad* where the poet draws a distinction between human and divine names: 2.813-14, 14.291, and 20.74.

take hold of his knees: cf. note to 1.500-1.

Ocean . . . Ethiopians: a river that was thought to surround the earth. Ethiopians were a people thought to live at the edges of the world, in the far East and the far West, 'most distant' of people (*Odyssey* 1.22-4). Xenophanes, in the sixth century BC, described them as 'snub-nosed and black'.

Quickly . . . meal: a full description of a ritual sacrifice. The sacrificers threw barley-groats at the animals, so as to make them lift their heads, and 'willingly' expose their necks to the cut. Then they slaughtered and skinned the cattle. Finally they wrapped the thigh-bones in fat and, together with small pieces from all parts of the animal, burnt them as an offering to the gods. The rest of the animal was roasted for human consumption.

paean: a hymn in honour of Apollo.

[sprung from Zeus](#): see note to 1.337.

Sitting... chin: the gestures of a formal supplication.

[the ancient of the sea](#): Nereus; on his daughters, cf. 18.35-64.

You are possessed!: this expression translates the Greek *daimonie*, a word used to address somebody who acts in an unaccountable way, as if possessed by a *daimōn*, a divine power.

[Lemnos](#): island in the north-east Aegean, the main cult centre of Hephaestus in the Greek world.

Sintian men: probably a reference to the pre-Greek population of Lemnos.

[shuffling](#): bustling about the place, and probably limping too, as the ancient commentators thought; see note to 18.395–405.

BOOK TWO

Zeus sends a deceptive dream to Agamemnon (1–34). Thinking that he is about to conquer Troy, Agamemnon reveals his dream to the council of elders, and then plans a deception of the Achaeans, in order to test their resolve (35–83). He tells the troops that, according to a dream he has just had, they will never conquer Troy: at this, the Achaeans immediately scatter in disarray, eager to sail home (84–154). Hera and Athena discuss the situation, and Athena enlists the help of Odysseus, who calls the troops to order (155–210). Thersites—a disorderly and ugly soldier—speaks up against Agamemnon (211–42). Odysseus rebukes and beats him, provoking general merriment (243–77); he then addresses Agamemnon and insists that the Achaeans should stay and fight (278–332). Nestor also speaks to Agamemnon, who accepts his advice (333–93). The Achaeans then make sacrifice and Agamemnon prays that he may conquer Troy on the following day; Zeus accepts the offerings but does not grant Agamemnon’s wish; Nestor sets out a plan of action; and the Achaeans prepare for battle (394–483). The poet enlists the help of the Muses, then launches into the Catalogue of Ships (484–760); and names the best Achaean horses (761–85). He then turns his attention to the Trojan army (786–815), offering a Catalogue of the Trojans and their Allies (816–77).

[It stood above his head](#): the position always taken by dream figures.

[the guide, slayer of Argus](#): obscure epithets of Hermes. Some ancient readers thought that the second epithet meant 'slayer of Argus'. According to one myth, Zeus fell in love with a girl called Io and, in an attempt to hide his new love from Hera, turned Io into a cow. Hera realized this and set Argus, a dog/monster with eyes all over his body, to watch over the cow. Zeus asked Hermes to help him solve the problem.

[Pelops Argos](#): Pelops is the father of Atreus and Thyestes, and the ancestral king of Argos. We know from later sources that Thyestes usurped the throne, and was punished by Atreus, who killed his children, cooked them, and served them up to their father. There is no overt reference to these events in the *Iliad*.

Icaria: a small island off the coast of Asia Minor. The stretch of sea between Icaria and Samos is especially rough.

Atrytone: a traditional epithet of Athena whose meaning was debated also in antiquity; perhaps 'unwearied'.

Argos: in Homer the name can connote the city of Argos in the north-east Peloponnese, or the whole Peloponnese, or the land of the Argives more generally (i.e. what we would call Greece).

[Aulis](#): in Boeotia, see Map 1. The Achaean contingent gathered there before sailing to Troy.

Gerenian: standard epithet of Nestor, of obscure meaning.

[the streams of Caÿster](#): near Ephesus, on the coast of Asia Minor. Similes do not usually refer to specific places: this is an exception, and prompted ancient and modern readers to wonder whether the poet Homer came from this area.

Scamander: one of the two rivers near Troy, cf. note to 5.773-4.

So I shall relate the ships' captains and the number of their ships: for the places listed in the Catalogue of Ships, see Map 1, except for Crete, Rhodes, and Cos on Map 2. The poet starts in Aulis, which is where the Achaean contingent gathered before sailing to Troy, then moves in a spiral west, north, east, and south (494-580). A second spiral starts in Lacedaemon and moves west and north (581-614). A third spiral starts in Elis, and again moves west and then north to include Ithaca and Calydon (615-44). In a fourth spiral, the poet mentions Crete, then moves east and north, including Rhodes and Cos (645-80). The Catalogue concludes in northern Greece, starting in Phthia, then moving north and west to Dodona, and then back east to Pelion (681-759).

[Lower Thebes](#): see note to 4.406.

a shoot of Ares: the expression simply means 'a warrior', contrast Ascalaphus and Ialmenus at 512, who really are sons of Ares.

Dulichium: the location, and even existence, of this island is much debated.

and fair-haired Meleager was dead: Phoenix tells the story of Meleager's anger at 9.529-99 (see note to that passage); his death is mentioned only here.

their captain was the skilled archer Philoctetes . . . beside their ships: the Achaeans eventually sent a delegation to Lemnos to retrieve Philoctetes. Sophocles staged a version of that episode in his tragedy *Philoctetes*.

Centaurs: the Greek text simply says 'the Beasts', but clearly refers to the Centaurs.

the waters of Styx, dreadful river of oaths: the Styx is the main river of the underworld, cf. note to 8.362–9. According to 15.37–1, the gods swear their ‘greatest and most terrible oath’ by the river Styx.

[as when . . . Typhoeus' bed](#): cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 820–68, where Zeus strikes down Typhoeus with his thunderbolt. The location of the 'land of the Arimi' was debated also in antiquity, and was identified with several volcanic or lightning-blasted areas. The phrasing in Homer may suggest awareness of several different stories about this land.

[the burial-mound of ancient Aesyetes](#): the only mention of this landmark in the poem.

There is . . . Myrine: another landmark mentioned only here. For the poet's ability to distinguish between human and divine names, see note to 1.403-4.

There now the Trojans and their allies marshalled themselves: for the Catalogue of the Trojans, see Map 2. The poet starts in Troy then spirals outwards, first north-east, then south again (816-43). He then resumes in Thrace and moves west to Paeonia (844-57). From Mysia, further south, he moves east to Phrygia (858-63); then, when listing the Maeonians, the poet moves from west to east (864-6); finally, starting from Miletus, he moves south-east to Lycia (867-77).

BOOK THREE

The armies line up, ready for battle: Paris steps forward, but quickly withdraws when he sees that Menelaus is ready to fight against him (1-37). Hector rebukes him bitterly (38-57), and Paris declares himself willing to face his rival (58-75). The two sides agree that the winner will take Helen and her possessions (76-120). Meanwhile, Helen is busy weaving a robe depicting the Trojan war, when Iris—disguised as Priam's daughter Laodice—calls her out to witness the events on the battlefield (121-45). The old men of Troy comment on Helen's beauty as she approaches the city walls, and yet declare themselves ready to hand her over to the Achaeans; Priam addresses her kindly, and asks her to identify the main Achaean warriors on the battlefield (146-244). The two sides swear an oath, and make sacrifice before the duel (245-323). Paris and Menelaus start fighting and Menelaus quickly gains the upper hand, when Aphrodite wraps Paris in mist, removes him from the battlefield, and deposits him in his own bedroom (324-82). Then, disguised as an old woman, she tells Helen to go and join him there; Helen recognizes the goddess from her lovely neck and breasts and vents all her anger and frustration; ultimately,

however, she must comply (383-420). Back in the bedroom, Helen addresses Paris with contempt, and he expresses his overwhelming desire for her; finally they make love (421-47). On the battlefield Agamemnon declares Menelaus the winner, and demands the return of Helen and her possessions, as well as compensation for war damages (448-61).

[the streams of Ocean](#): see note to 1.423.

Pygmy men: the Pygmies and their battle with the cranes are mentioned only here in Homer, but are popular in later poetry and art.

[Alexander](#): more frequent than the alternative name Paris. Homer never explains why this character has two names. 'Paris' does not seem to be Greek in origin, and 'Alexander' may be a memory of Alakšandu, prince of Wilusa, mentioned in a Hittite treaty of the early thirteenth century BCE.

dear to Ares: often of Menelaus, not because he is especially bellicose, but perhaps because he is implicated in the causes of the Trojan War.

you would be | wearing a stone garment: i.e. you would have been killed by stoning.

[the Scaean gates](#): the main gates facing the battlefield. The Trojans often observe the battlefield from a tower near or above the gates.

Otreus . . . Mygdon: otherwise unknown.

Sangarius: in Asia Minor, discharging into the Black Sea.

[Amazons](#): described in the *Iliad* as warlike women who posed a threat to the populations east, north, and south of Troy. In the *Aethiopis*, an early sequel to the *Iliad* (now largely lost), the Amazons join forces with the Trojans, and Achilles kills their queen Penthesilea.

Glorious Odysseus has been here before . . . concerning_you:
see note to 11.139-40.

[son of Laomedon](#): on Priam's father, see note to 21.441-57,
and cf. the family tree included in the note to 20.215-41.

[ruling from Mount Ida](#): Zeus is invoked here as a local deity. In the *Iliad* he often observes the Trojan War from Mount Ida, south-east of Troy.

and you two . . . false oaths: the ancient scholar Aristarchus took this as a reference to Hades and Persephone (cf. 9.456–7); alternatively, it may be a reference to the Furies (cf. 19.259–60).

[the island | Cranaë](#): the location of this island was debated in antiquity; the name probably just means 'rocky island'.

BOOK FOUR

The gods hold an assembly; Zeus maliciously suggests that they could end the war after the botched duel between Paris and Menelaus; Hera and Athena are outraged, and the latter swoops down to the battlefield like a shooting star: she ensures that hostilities resume by giving some ill advice to Pandarus, a Trojan ally (1-103). Inspired by her, Pandarus breaks the truce by shooting an arrow against Menelaus: Athena deflects it, like a mother brushing away a fly from her sleeping baby, and Menelaus receives only a superficial wound (104-222). The war resumes and Agamemnon reviews the Achaean contingents, distributing praise and blame (223-49); he is delighted with Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans (250-71); then expresses his approval for the two leaders called Ajax (272-91); he has a positive exchange with Nestor (292-325); then rebukes Menestheus and Odysseus, because their men are idle (326-63); and finally criticizes Diomedes, comparing him unfavourably to his father (364-421). After Agamemnon's review the Achaeans advance in silence, like waves, listening out for the orders of their leaders; the Trojans, by contrast, loudly call out to each other in their different languages, like bleating sheep (422-45). The battle breaks out, and the poet lists the first individual encounters and deaths (446-544).

[Hera of Argos and Athena of Alalcomenae](#): there was a famous cult of Hera at Argos; the worship of Athena at Alalcomenae in Boeotia is less well attested.

[the waters of Aeseopus](#): cf. 2.824–7.

Lycian-born Apollo: only here and at 119; the epithet, perhaps a neologism, may express Pandarus' own perceptions, since he is himself a Lycian from the Troad.

who gathers the spoils: this is a possible translation of *ageleiē*, though the meaning of the epithet is far from transparent.

a woman of Maeonia or Caria: we have no specific knowledge about Maeonian or Carian craft, though elaborate western Asiatic ivory objects have been found in Mycenaean graves and, occasionally, in early Iron Age ones too.

Argive Helen: i.e. 'Greek', not 'from the city of Argos'. She is never called 'Helen of Troy' in the *Iliad*.

Asclepius: described as an ordinary mortal in Homer. From the sixth century onwards Asclepius became the patron god of important healing cults, most famously at Epidaurus.

Ereuthalion: Nestor recalls his duel with Ereuthalion also at 7.136-56.

the son of Tydeus . . . Capaneus: both Diomedes and Sthenelus are Epigoni, i.e. sons of those who fought in the disastrous expedition of the Seven against Thebes. The *Iliad* often alludes to the war between the two sons of Oedipus, Eteocles and Polyneices, over the rule of Thebes. Polyneices led the expedition of the seven against Thebes, besieged the city, and failed to conquer it. The two brothers killed each other in front of one of the seven city gates.

[a campaign against Thebes' sacred walls](#): the campaign of the Seven against Thebes is remembered in the *Iliad* as a great but disastrous war fought in the previous generation.

Cadmeians: the people of Thebes, named after Cadmus, the mythical founder of the city.

Maeon . . . steadfast in war: mentioned only here.

since we actually captured the city of seven-gated Thebes:
in the Catalogue of Ships there is only a reference to Lower Thebes (2.505), presumably because the citadel was razed by the Epigoni.

Pergamus: the acropolis, or highest part of Troy.

Tritogeneia: a traditional epithet of Athena, of obscure meaning.

BOOK FIVE

Encouraged by Athena, Diomedes begins his onslaught, and immediately dominates the battlefield like a river in flood (1-94). Although Pandarus wounds him with an arrow, Athena grants him extraordinary strength, and his onslaught continues (95-165). Aeneas seeks out Pandarus, and together they plan how to stop Diomedes (166-239). As the two approach him, Diomedes steps forward to meet them (240-73). In the confrontation that follows Pandarus dies, and Diomedes smashes Aeneas' hip with a stone; Aphrodite intervenes to rescue her son Aeneas, and Diomedes wounds her too (274-362). Ares takes Aphrodite back to Olympus, and her mother Dione consoles her; Athena and Hera, by contrast, make fun of her with Zeus, and he finally tells Aphrodite to concern herself with love, not war (363-430). Diomedes tries to attack Apollo, who tells him to step back; the god then fashions an image of Aeneas, over which the two sides fight while he rescues the actual hero; Apollo finally tells Ares to put an end to Diomedes' rampage; and Aeneas, now healed, returns to the battlefield (431-518). The Trojans slowly gain ground, until Athena and Hera determine to stop Ares: they enter the battlefield with Zeus' permission, and Athena leaps on to Diomedes' chariot, making it creak under her weight (519-845). At the instigation of the goddess Diomedes wounds Ares, who screams as loud as nine- or ten-thousand men and withdraws to Olympus; Zeus expresses his contempt for Ares, and yet ensures that he is healed; Hera and Athena

return to Olympus, having accomplished their mission (846-909).

[the star](#): Sirius, see note to 22.27-31.

As for the son of Tydeus . . . with the Achaeans: the front ranks are intertwined and Diomedes cuts his own course.

the lord son of Zeus: Apollo.

[the horses of Tros](#): when Zeus abducted the beautiful boy Ganymedes he gave some divine horses to King Tros, the boy's father, by way of compensation, see below on 5.268-70.

[Anchises . . . Laomedon's knowledge](#): the divine breed of horses was handed down from king to king: Tros, Laomedon, and finally Priam. Anchises belongs to a different branch of the family (see note to 20.215-41) and thus has no right to the horses, which are evidently a royal prerogative. This is one of several passages where the line of Anchises and Aeneas is subordinated to that of Priam and Hector, see especially 13.460-1 and 20.179-83.

Cypris: Aphrodite.

Enyo: goddess of war, cf. Ares' epithet Enyalios.

Uranian: descendants of Uranus, Zeus' grandfather.

when Otus . . . wearing him down: there is no other reference to this episode, though another myth about the two brothers is mentioned at *Odyssey* 11.305–20. There we learn that their father was Poseidon, that they were giants (9 fathoms tall at age nine), and that they challenged the Olympians.

the mighty son of Amphitryon: Heracles.

Monstrous Hades suffered too with the rest: Heracles' wounding of Hades at Pylos is attested only here, and provoked much debate in antiquity.

Paeëon: a god of healing mentioned only here and at *Odyssey* 4.232, and later identified with Apollo.

such a man has no homecoming . . . conflict: in fact Diomedes did return, though some late sources claim that he was not welcomed home and immediately left for Italy, because by then his wife had settled with another man. This myth seems to spell out the consequences of offending Aphrodite, as Diomedes does in the *Iliad*.

in the holy shrine on Pergamus . . . stood: i.e. in Troy, cf. note to 4.508.

Leto and Artemis: Apollo's mother and his twin sister are not normally associated with healing, but on this occasion seem to act on Apollo's behalf.

Demeter: one of the very few references to this goddess in the *Iliad*.

Pherae: one of the seven Messenian cities promised by Agamemnon to Achilles at 9.151, probably on the site of modern Kalamata.

[the mares of Laomedon](#): see note to 5.268–70. Heracles saved Laomedon's daughter from a sea-monster and was promised some of these semi-divine horses in return. When Laomedon cheated him of them, he proceeded to sack Troy.

[the Seasons](#): see note to 8.394.

When they came . . . unite their waters: the battlefield consists of a triangle formed by the two rivers and the walls of Troy; the Simoeis and the Scamander unite before reaching the sea. The actual geography of the area does not fit Homer's description, and may never have done: ancient geographers also struggled to reconcile this and other passages in the *Iliad* with the landscape of the Troad.

[Dardanian |_gates](#): the ancient scholar Aristarchus thought this was a different name for the Scaean gates, but it is possible that it refers to another entrance to the city.

as an envoy to Thebes: cf. 4.380-4.

As when fig-juice thickens white milk . . . stirs it: fig-juice was used for curdling milk. This is a good image for the coagulation of human blood, though here it describes the swiftness of Ares' divine recovery.

BOOK SIX

As soon as the gods leave the battlefield the Achaeans gain ground and break through the lines (1-71). Helenus addresses Hector and Aeneas, telling them to line up the army; he then adds that Hector should return to Troy and tell the women to entreat Athena; the Trojans make a stand and Hector departs (72-118). Glaucus and Diomedes drive forward between the lines, ready to fight each other; Diomedes asks Glaucus whether he is human or divine (119-43), and Glaucus gives a full account of his genealogy (144-211). Diomedes remembers an old bond of hospitality that links him to Glaucus and proposes an exchange of gifts (212-36). Hector enters the city and is surrounded by women asking after their dear ones; he then meets his own mother, Hecuba, who tries, and fails, to delay him with an offer of wine (237-85). Hecuba and the other women then go to the temple of Athena, promise a sacrifice, and ask for help—but the goddess rejects their entreaties (286-311). Hector looks for Paris and, when he finds him handling weapons in his own bedroom, tells him to return immediately to the battlefield; Helen invites Hector to sit down while Paris gets ready (312-68). Hector declines her invitation and leaves, hoping to see his wife Andromache: he does not find her at home, but eventually meets her at the Scaean gates. After an anguished exchange, he takes leave from her and their baby son, and she returns home, mourning for her husband as if he were already dead (369-

502). Paris catches up with Hector and, after a brief exchange, the two brothers head out (503-29).

[the river nymph . . . Bucolion](#): we know nothing else about this nymph.

steep Pedasus: in the south Troad, the city was founded by the Leleges (21.86–7) and destroyed by Achilles (20.92).

Can it be . . . in your own home?: an allusion to the rape of Helen.

[mighty Lycurgus](#): king of the Edonians, a prominent figure in Greek myth, though mentioned only here in Homeric epic.

[Nysa](#): birthplace of Dionysus. Its exact location was debated also in antiquity, though it was generally thought to be somewhere in the east.

Not even . . . immortal gods: one of the rare mentions of Dionysus in Homeric epic.

[Ephyre](#): ancient readers speculated that this was another name for Corinth, but that is far from clear.

[Sisyphus. . . son of Aeolus](#): the story of how Sisyphus tried to cheat death is not told in Homer, but is certainly old; this passage implies that he tried to gain some sort of unfair advantage. Later sources tell several different tales of how Sisyphus tried to escape death. Eventually, the gods punished him for his tricks by making him push a huge rock up a hill, and then letting the rock roll back again every time Sisyphus was close to completing his task.

[Bellerophon](#): most famous for his hubristic attempt to reach heaven on his winged horse Pegasus, a gift of Poseidon (his divine father). There is no explicit reference to the story here, except a vague mention of Bellerophon's divine ancestry (6.191), and a cryptic statement that the gods punished him towards the end of his life (6.200).

[Proetus](#): only here in Homer, though other sources mention him as a king of Argos or Tiryns. According to the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, his daughters suffered from sexual incontinence; here it is a characteristic of his wife.

[Solyimi](#): Herodotus 1.173 describes them as an indigenous population of Lycia.

[Amazons](#): see note to 3.189.

Aleian plain: the name of the plain puns on *alato*, 'he wandered', suggesting that this is a place of wretched wanderings; the location is left unspecified, though Herodotus 6.95 mentions a place called Aleion in Cilicia, east of Lycia.

Oeneus: Diomedes' grandfather.

Eëtion: king of Cilician Thebes.

Thebe | under Placus: ancient readers located Cilician
Thebes opposite the island of Lesbos.

Scamandrius . . . Ilium: the boy is named Scamandrius after the river flowing near Troy, and Astyanax (lit. 'keeper of the city'), because his father keeps Troy safe.

three times . . . stalwart son: there is no other mention of these attacks in the *Iliad*; some ancient readers accused Andromache of lying.

[Messeis or Hypereia](#): probably generic names for springs, 'Middle Spring' and 'Upper Spring' respectively.

BOOK SEVEN

Hector and Paris enter the battlefield; Athena swoops down to help the Achaeans but Apollo intercepts her: they decide to stop the war for the day (1-42). Perceiving the intention of the gods, Helenus tells Hector to challenge an Achaean warrior; Athena and Apollo observe events perched like vultures on an oak tree (43-91). Menelaus accepts Hector's challenge, but Agamemnon tells him not to fight against a better man; Nestor rebukes the other Achaeans for their reluctance to fight against Hector and nine warriors eventually volunteer for the duel; Ajax is selected by lot, much to everyone's relief (92-205). Hector and Ajax fight hard until the heralds interrupt them at nightfall; at that point they exchange gifts as tokens of friendship (206-312). Nestor proposes a truce for burying the dead, and outlines a plan for building a wall and trench around the Achaean camp; the Trojans tell Paris that he should hand Helen back to Menelaus, but he refuses to do so; he only concedes that he would be willing to return her possessions and offer more in addition (313-64). A herald conveys Paris' offer to the Achaeans, who reject it outright; the two sides then agree on a truce (365-411). After burying their dead, the Achaeans build a wall—which annoys Poseidon; ships from Lemnos bring wine to the Achaeans in exchange for hides, cattle, and slaves; Zeus thunders ominously while the Achaeans try, and fail, to enjoy their feast (412-82).

[Arne](#): in Boeotia.

[by the oak tree](#): near the Scaean gates, cf. 6.237.

a grave-mound . . . beside the broad Hellespont: a large mound was visible on the shore near Troy in Homer's time.

questioning me in his house: Nestor and Odysseus went to Phthia to recruit Achilles, cf. 11.769–90.

when men fought . . . Iardanus: a reference to the conflict between Pylians and Arcadians; the location of Pheia was much debated also in antiquity.

Ereuthalion: Nestor remembers his famous duel with Ereuthalion also at 4.319.

Areïthous . . . with an iron club: little is known about Areïthous; his weapon is unusual, and may have featured in stories about brigands.

Enyalius: cf. note to 5.333.

[you who rule from Ida](#): see note to 3.276.

[Hyle](#): perhaps Hyle in Boeotia, mentioned at 2.499–500.

take a man's bones . . . to our native land: these two lines are generally considered a late addition, because the custom of bringing back bones or ashes is unparalleled in Homer.

[a high-towered wall](#): references to the Achaean wall have been much discussed by ancient, and indeed modern, readers: Thucydides insists that the Achaeans must have built their wall at the beginning of the war; Aristotle, fr. 162 Rose, considers the wall a 'creation of the poet' (see also note to 12.1-33).

next to Priam's gates: i.e. outside Priam's palace, on the acropolis.

Trojans and Dardanians: two different ways of referring to the Trojans.

Great Priam forbade them to cry out: presumably because excessive displays of grief would weaken morale.

[the wall which Phoebus . . . Laomedon](#): see 21.441–57 (and note to it), where Poseidon claims that he alone built the wall, while Apollo looked after Laomedon's cattle.

[Euneus . . . whom Hypsipyle had borne to Jason](#): a rare reference to the voyage of the Argonauts, which took place a generation before the Trojan War. The Argonauts stopped at Lemnos on their journey, and were warmly welcomed by the Lemnian women, who had been abandoned by their husbands. Jason slept with King Thoas' daughter, Hypsipyle, who subsequently gave birth to Euneus.

BOOK EIGHT

Zeus threatens the gods, and warns them not to interfere with the war; he then leaves Olympus for Mount Ida and, from there, observes the fighting (1-52). The two sides are evenly matched until midday, when Zeus starts favouring the Trojans; Diomedes comes to the rescue of Nestor, and together they drive forward to face Hector; Zeus, however, arrests their progress with a thunderbolt, and Hector advances (53-197). Hera is angry, but fails to persuade Poseidon to help the Achaeans; Agamemnon rallies the troops; the Achaeans pray to Zeus, and are granted temporary respite (198-252). Diomedes leads the counter-attack; Teucer hides behind the shield of his half-brother Ajax, and kills several men with his arrows; Hector finally hits him with a stone (253-334). The Achaeans are forced to withdraw behind the ditch; Hera and Athena plan to come to their rescue, but Zeus sees them from Mount Ida and sends Iris to stop them (335-437). Zeus announces that the Trojans will keep winning until the death of Patroclus (438-83). At nightfall, the Achaeans finally experience some relief from the fighting, whereas Hector feels frustrated: he tells the troops to light fires on the plain and camp out, ready to resume the fighting at dawn (484-565).

murky Tartarus . . . above the earth: ancient and modern commentators have worried about the apparent lack of symmetry here. Under the earth there is Hades and, below that, Tartarus (presented, also in Hesiod's *Theogony*, as a nether place where insubordinate gods and monsters are imprisoned). Tartarus is as far from earth as is the 'high sky', i.e. (probably) the sky above Olympus.

[rope of gold from the high sky](#): the details of this scenario have intrigued and puzzled readers. In antiquity the passage gave rise to a debate about the location of Olympus, which here seems to be suspended somewhere in the upper sky. Elsewhere in the *Iliad*, however, it is clearly conceived as a mountain.

[golden scales](#): see note to 22.209-13.

I captured them from Aeneas: cf. 5.259-73 and 318-24.

[Helice . . . Aegae](#): Poseidon had a cult at Helice, in the northern Peloponnese, and was thought to have a submarine palace at Aegae—various conjectures have been put forward concerning the precise location of Aegae, but it seems to have denoted no more than a mythical place, somewhere deep down in the Aegean Sea.

loud boasts that you made on Lemnos: the Achaeans stopped at Lemnos on their way to Troy; Philoctetes stayed behind, because he was bitten by a snake (cf. 2.716–25).

[Aesyme](#): the location of this city is unknown.

Gorgo: a female monster whose gaze turned people into stone.

He has not the smallest memory . . . Styx: an allusion to the labours of Heracles, which Hera inflicted on him. Only one labour is specifically mentioned: the stealing of Cerberus, a many-headed dog that guarded the gates of the underworld (Erebus), beyond the river Styx. With Athena's help Heracles managed to conquer death, cross the Styx, steal Cerberus, and return from Hades. Now Athena suggests that she only helped Heracles because Zeus has told her to do so: this admission seems designed to increase Hera's resentment against Zeus, and create a stronger bond between the two goddesses.

the Seasons: daughters of Zeus and Themis in Hesiod's *Theogony* 901-2.

where Iapetus and Cronus sit: Tartarus (see note to 8.13-15). Iapetus is the father of Prometheus, and an insubordinate Titan; Cronus was defeated by his son Zeus and confined to Tartarus.

[\[and they sacrificed . . . for the immortals\]](#): the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Alcibiades* 2, 149d, quotes these four lines, which, however, do not appear in our manuscripts of the *Iliad*. They seem to be an addition to the poem that circulated already in antiquity.

BOOK NINE

Agamemnon, in tears, tells the Achaeans that they will never win and might as well sail home; Diomedes is indignant; Nestor outlines security measures for the night (1-88). Agamemnon entertains the leaders of the Achaeans in his tent, and Nestor mentions the wrongful seizure of Briseïs (89-114). Agamemnon acknowledges his mistake, and declares himself ready to give her back to Achilles, together with many other presents; Nestor makes plans for an embassy to Achilles (115-81). Odysseus, Ajax, and Phoenix, together with two heralds, leave for Achilles' tent, and are kindly received (182-204). Odysseus speaks first (205-306); Achilles—in a stunning speech—rejects all his entreaties (307-429). All remain silent, amazed at the force of his words; then Phoenix addresses Achilles again, as his mentor, and warns him through the example of Meleager (430-605). Achilles does not relent, but asks Phoenix to remain with him for the night, in case he should decide to return to Phthia with him in the morning (606-19). Achilles signals to Patroclus that he should start preparing Phoenix's bed, hoping that the others might take the hint and leave; Ajax briskly addresses Odysseus, telling him they must accept that the embassy has failed, and then condemns Achilles' behaviour; Achilles agrees with Ajax, but is too incensed with Agamemnon to reconsider his position (620-68). The embassy returns to the camp, and Odysseus

reports on their failed mission; amid general despair, Diomedes delivers a resolute speech (669–713).

You have already insulted my courage in front of the Danaans: cf. 4.370-400. 142 *Orestes*: the only mention of Orestes in the *Iliad*. The poet assumes that his audience know about him, and offers no elaborate introduction. The *Odyssey* describes the fate of Agamemnon (murdered on his return home and avenged by Orestes, his son). In light of that, the suggestion that Achilles might enjoy life like Orestes will have sounded ominous.

Chrysothemis and Laodice and Iphianassa: there is no mention here of Electra or Iphigenia (prominent daughters of Agamemnon in later texts). Iphianassa may be Iphigenia, but in that case there is no reference here to her sacrifice in Aulis at the beginning of the Trojan expedition (an event which features prominently in tragedy).

[without bride-gifts](#): see note to 11.243.

[Cardamyle . . . vines](#): all the towns mentioned are located near the Messenian Gulf, between Lacedaemon and Pylos, see Map 1.

[they](#): in Greek, the word for 'they' is dual rather than plural, i.e. it indicates that there are only two ambassadors, rather than the three designated by Nestor: Phoenix, Odysseus, and Ajax. The duals recur at 183, 185, 192, 196, 197, and 198 (with one plural at 186, and consistently plurals after 198): this is puzzling. Several explanations have been put forward: some scholars have argued that the duals are a survival from an earlier version of the story, where there were only two ambassadors; alternatively they may indicate that Odysseus and Ajax are the ambassadors proper, accompanied by Phoenix and the messengers, or that Phoenix has gone ahead on his own.

Aeacus' grandson: Achilles. Aeacus was the first king of the Myrmidons, and father of Peleus.

when he sacked Eëtion's city: cf. 6.414–28.

for the sake of their wives: i.e. for the sake of Menelaus' wife, Helen, but including Briseïs as a reason for fighting (cf. 9.335-43).

there once he waited for me alone: there is no other reference to this episode, but it clearly anticipates the final confrontation between Achilles and Hector at 22.5–366.

[Orchomenus . . . Egypt](#): Orchomenus was one of the most powerful cities in the Mycenaean age; Egyptian Thebes and more generally Egypt are remembered for their wealth in Homeric epic.

[Pytho](#): an older name for Delphi, this is one of the very few Homeric references to the oracle.

two spectres carrying me towards the end of death: at 1.352 and in several other passages Achilles claims he was destined to be short-lived. Here, he maintains that he can still choose between fame and a long life.

Zeus of the world below: i.e. Hades.

[\[I planned . . . the Achaeans\]](#): these lines do not feature in the manuscripts of the *Iliad*; they are quoted by Plutarch at *Moralia* 26 (and in part at *Moralia* 72b and in the *Life of Coriolanus* 32). Plutarch claims that the Alexandrian scholar Aristarchus 'removed' them from the *Iliad*. It seems unlikely, however, that even the influential Aristarchus could have had such a pervasive effect on the manuscript tradition; it seems likelier that the lines are an intelligent ancient expansion: Phoenix shows that he can sympathize with Achilles' challenges to authority, while urging him to listen to his elders.

Dolopians: mentioned only here in Homer.

The Curetes and Aetolians . . . for nothing: the saga of Meleager took place before the Trojan War (cf. 2.638–42: the sons of Oeneus are now all dead). Phoenix adapts a story about the past in order to make it suitable as an example to Achilles. According to this and other versions, Meleager's father Oeneus offended Artemis, who punished him and his people by setting against them a wild boar; Meleager killed the Caledonian boar, as a result of which a dispute between Curetes and Aetolians arose over its spoils; Meleager killed his maternal uncle(s) in the course of that dispute, and his mother cursed him for that. In most versions she did so by throwing a firebrand that represented his life into the fire—as the firebrand burned, Meleager's strength ebbed away. In Phoenix's version, however, Meleager takes to his bed out of anger at his mother—while his companions and relatives urge him to return to the fighting, offering him gifts. Meleager's wife Cleopatra, in particular, begs him to fight. He rejects all entreaties, but in the end must take up arms to defend his house, even without gifts. It is unclear when and how the folk-tale elements (a mother cursing her son, the firebrand, the boar) became part of a heroic saga (the war of the Curetes and Aetolians); it is also unclear to what extent Phoenix modifies the story so as to create parallels with Achilles' situation. It seems likely that the theme of Meleager's anger, and the role of Cleopatra (who resembles Patroclus in name and function) are specific to this version.

an honour: i.e. the recompense mentioned by Odysseus.

a man will accept compensation . . . amends: Ajax refers to the practice according to which a murderer offered compensation to the family of his victim.

[Skyros](#): Aegean island, east of Euboea.

BOOK TEN

Sleepless Agamemnon goes to see Nestor and meets Menelaus on the way. After several meetings and messages, the Achaean leaders converge near the trench, and discuss the situation (1-179). Nestor calls for a volunteer to go and spy on the Trojans, and Diomedes declares himself willing to go, provided that somebody accompany him (180-226). Many volunteer, and Diomedes chooses Odysseus, the most suitable companion for this kind of expedition: the two set off, and Athena sends a favourable omen (227-98). Meanwhile, in the Trojan camp Hector is looking for somebody to go and spy on the Achaeans; Dolon volunteers, because Hector promises that he will give him Achilles' horses: as Dolon moves towards the Achaean camp Diomedes and Odysseus notice him, hide among the corpses, then cut him off from the Trojan camp, capture him, and interrogate him (299-389). Dolon, hoping to save his life, reveals that Rhesus, leader of the Thracians, has just arrived in a gold-and-silver chariot pulled by a team of magnificent white horses; after they have gained all the information they need Diomedes and Odysseus kill Dolon (390-464). They then reach the Thracian camp: Diomedes kills Rhesus and twelve other Thracians in their sleep, and Odysseus makes off with the horses; the two warriors then withdraw, following Athena's advice (465-514). Apollo alerts Rhesus' cousin, who wakes up the other Trojans; Diomedes and Odysseus make it safely back to camp (515-79).

Since antiquity, Homeric scholars have considered book 10 a late addition to the *Iliad*.

a helmet of leather . . . a felt cap: the boar's-tusk helmet fell out of use after the fifteenth-century BCE. It is remarkable that the poet describes, in accurate detail, a Bronze Age helmet: perhaps he inherited the description from an age-old tradition of poetry, though there is nothing particularly ancient in the language of these verses. It seems more likely that he had seen a depiction of it, or was familiar with an actual surviving specimen.

[Autolycus had once stolen this . . . Odysseus](#): the poet gives a full history of this remarkable helmet, following its whereabouts from Eon in Boeotia, to Cythera (between Crete and Laconia), to Crete (Meriones' homeland). Autolycus was the maternal grandfather of Odysseus.

[Atrytone](#): see note to 2.157.

when he went as an envoy from the Achaeans: Agamemnon mentioned the same events to Diomedes at 4.382–98.

[Dolon](#): this character features only in book 10; his name translates as 'Sneaky'.

[the grave-mound of godlike Ilus](#): Ilus was the son of Laomedon and grandfather of Priam (see note to 20.215-41). His grave-mound is repeatedly mentioned as a prominent landmark on the Trojan plain.

Carians Maeonian horse-marshals: for Carians, Paeonians, Mysians, Phrygians, and Maeonians, see Map 2. The Leleges come from the southern Troad; the Caucones can only be placed generally in Asia Minor; the Pelasgi cannot be located at all: they are a mythical autochthonous people.

[the Thracians . . . Eioneus' son](#): for the Thracians, see Map 2. Rhesus seems to be a genuine Thracian name. The ancient commentaries (scholia A and bT *ad* 435) preserve two further stories about Rhesus, which were either inspired by *Iliad* 10, or were known and adapted by the composer of this book. According to one version, Rhesus arrived late at Troy, and fought so valiantly that Hera sent Diomedes and Odysseus to kill him. According to another story, an oracle revealed that Rhesus and his horses would become invincible if they drank from the river Scamander; however, Diomedes and Odysseus killed Rhesus on the night he arrived at Troy, before he had a chance to drink.

[had that night stood over his head](#): see note to 2.20.

BOOK ELEVEN

Zeus sends Strife to the Achaean camp; Agamemnon arms himself, and leads the Achaeans to battle; Hector advances with the Trojans (1-66). The Achaeans initially break through the Trojan lines, and Zeus warns Hector to keep away from Agamemnon (67-217). The poet invokes the Muse, and offers a catalogue of Agamemnon's brutal killings; his last victim, Coön, wounds him, and Agamemnon must finally withdraw (218-83). On seeing this, Hector immediately goes on the attack (284-309); Odysseus and Diomedes oppose him; Diomedes hits Hector's helmet without wounding him, and Paris hits Diomedes in the foot with one of his arrows (310-400). Odysseus continues to fight on his own, but he too is wounded eventually; at this point, Menelaus and Ajax come to his rescue: Menelaus takes Odysseus back to safety, while Ajax kills several Trojans before retreating himself (401-595). Achilles observes the wounded leaders as they return to the ships, and sends Patroclus to make enquiries (596-617). Patroclus bursts into Nestor's tent while the old man is drinking from his famous cup: Nestor explains the situation to him, talks about his own past exploits, and tells Patroclus that he should persuade Achilles to return to the fighting, or—failing that—that he should don Achilles' armour and lead the Myrmidons out to battle himself (618-803). On his way back to Achilles' hut Patroclus meets another injured warrior, Eurypylus, and tends his wound (804-48).

[the death-bringing star that appears rising out of the clouds](#): Sirius, see note to 22.27-31.

Menelaus . . . on an embassy with godlike Odysseus: the embassy is also mentioned at 3.205-24. Here, the poet reveals that Paris bribed Antimachus (124), in order to ensure that Helen would not be returned.

[the burial-mound of old Ilus](#): see note to 10.415.

[the wild fig tree](#): also mentioned at 6.433 and 22.145. It marks the most vulnerable part of the walls.

[the Scaean gates and the oak tree](#): see note to 7.22.

though he had given much: Homeric marriages typically involved both a bride-price and a dowry; the bride usually moved in with the husband, although there were exceptions to this custom: in this case, Iphidamas first moved to Thrace, then married a local girl and stayed there.

You archer: clearly meant as an insult; the bow is repeatedly disparaged in the *Iliad* as a treacherous and ineffectual weapon.

[\[for Zeus . . . better man\]](#): this line does not feature in the manuscripts; it is cited with slight variations by Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1387a35, Plutarch, *Moralia* 24c, and pseudo-Plutarch, *Life of Homer* 2.132. It must have been an addition designed to explain why Hector did not confront Ajax.

Tenedos when Achilles sacked it: cf. 9.328–9, where Achilles boasts about his raids on the towns near Troy.

[a very beautiful cup](#): several actual vessels have been compared to Nestor's cup: for example, a gold cup found in a grave in Mycenae features two bird-shaped handles. More interesting, however, is a modest clay cup found in Ischia, and dated to the Geometric period (750–700 BCE): it bears an inscription in hexameter verse, which probably starts with the statement: 'I am Nestor's cup There is no physical resemblance between the modest clay cup and Nestor's gold vessel, but the inscription may be an early, playful reference to it. The inscription is one of the earliest surviving examples of Greek writing, and informs arguments about the possible date of composition of the *Iliad*; see Introduction.

two feet: possibly extensions of the handles, but the exact design of the cup is unclear. The Greek text may not refer to 'feet', but to a double or false bottom.

[I wish I was as young and healthy . . .](#): Nestor describes in detail his earlier exploits, in order to set an example: Achilles, or at least Patroclus, should think about the common good, and lead the eager Myrmidons back to war. The events are clearly set out: first, Nestor and the Pylians engaged in a cattle raid, and he killed Itymoneus. The booty was driven down to Pylos, and Nestor's father took the greatest share. The Epeians retaliated by attacking Thryoessa, a Pylian city. When news of this reached Pylos, Nestor led the eager Pylians to war, against the will of his own father (who was worried for him); the Pylians camped by the river Alphaeus, near Thryoessa, and on the next day defeated the Epeians; Nestor killed Mulius, and would have killed the Moliones too, except that their father Poseidon protected them. The Moliones, we know from other sources, were eventually killed by Heracles. There are also other, more explicit references to Heracles in Nestor's account: these help to set Nestor's story in the distant past, since Heracles belonged to an earlier generation of heroes.

Eleians: only here, apparently used as a synonym for Epeians.

[Elis](#): in the north-western Peloponnese, see Map 1.

[Augeias](#): his son Phyleus is mentioned at 2.627–30, where he is said to have left Elis because he was angry with his father.

There is a river called Minyeios: mentioned only here,
location unknown.

[Arene](#): mentioned in the Catalogue of Ships immediately after Pylos (2.591); its exact location is unknown.

the two Moliones . . . a dense mist: the Moliones are identified by both their divine and their human father; this is not uncommon, cf. e.g. Heracles, who is described as the son of Amphitryon and of Zeus.

[Buprasium . . . Alesium](#): mentioned also in the Catalogue of Ships, in the Epeian entry (2.615–17).

[Cheiron, most just of the Centaurs](#): several archaic Greek texts describe Cheiron as Achilles' mentor. Centaurs are generally hubristic; Cheiron is an exception.

BOOK TWELVE

The battle reaches the Achaean wall which—the poet reveals—is destined to collapse soon (1-33). For now, however, the Achaeans retreat behind it, and the Trojan horses baulk before the ditch; Polydamas suggests to Hector that they leave the horses behind and continue their attack on foot, and Hector agrees (34-87). Asius alone remains on his chariot and—because the main gate to the camp is still open—charges ahead; Leonteus and Polypoetes defend the gate, and frustrate his attack (88-174). The poet declares that it would be impossible to describe the attack on the wall in all its details (175-94). Hector is about to charge forward when a portent spreads panic among the Trojans: Polydamas offers a cautious interpretation, and Hector declares that he recognizes the authority of only one omen—fighting for one's country (195-250). The battle intensifies: Ajax, son of Telamon, and Locrian Ajax are in charge of the defence; Sarpedon addresses Glaucus in a famous speech, in which he presents the prospect of death as a reason for fighting in the first line of battle (251-328). The Achaeans rally; Glaucus is wounded; Sarpedon tears down a piece of the battlement with his bare hands, and Ajax and Teucer restrain his attack (329-441); Hector smashes the gate with a huge boulder, and bursts into the camp; some Trojans follow him, while others scale the wall (442-71).

Rhesus . . . Simoeis: an impressive list that attracted the attention of ancient and modern commentators alike. The Rhesus, Heptaporus, Caresus, and Rhodius are not securely identified; the Granicus and Aesepus flow east of the Troad, the Scamander and Simoeis are the two rivers flowing near Troy.

They had built this . . . before: an intriguing revelation. Aristotle, fr. 162 Rose, took it to be an attempt on the poet's part to explain why no traces of the wall were visible in his own time, cf. note to 7.338.

Asius . . . Selleis: cf. 2.838-9.

[he would not escape death's evil spectres . . . son of Deucalion](#): this passage foreshadows 13.383-93.

BOOK THIRTEEN

Zeus and Poseidon observe the Trojan plain from opposite mountain-tops: as soon as Zeus turns his gaze away Poseidon takes advantage of his distraction, leaves for his underwater palace, arms himself, and intervenes in the fighting (1-58). The Achaeans immediately take courage (59-154). Meriones breaks his spear and returns to the Achaean camp (155-68). The Achaeans press forward, but the Trojans kill Amphimachus, Poseidon's grandson (169-205). Spurred on by the grieving god, Idomeneus arms himself and meets Meriones, who was looking for a replacement spear: rather defensively, they talk about their own valour, then join the fighting on the left (206-329). The wills of Zeus and Poseidon are pitted against each other, and the battle intensifies (330-60). Idomeneus kills Othryoneus and Asius; Antilochus slays Asius' charioteer; Deïphobus kills Hypsenor; Idomeneus slays Alcathous—and mocks the Trojans (361-454). Aeneas—who has been skulking behind the battle-lines because he thinks that Priam neglects him—joins forces with Deïphobus: they force Idomeneus to withdraw, and Deïphobus kills Ares' son Ascalaphus, though Ares does not notice this (455-525). Deïphobus then takes Ascalaphus' helmet, but Meriones wounds him in the hand so he has to let go of it (526-39). The Achaeans keep their advantage in a sequence of intense fighting (540-672). Hector, who is engaged in the centre, comes under increasing pressure from Achaean missiles: Polydamas advises him to consult with the other Trojan leaders, and Paris tells Hector that many of the

Trojans fighting on the left are now dead or injured (673–787). Hector rallies the troops; the Achaeans, led by Ajax, resist (788–837).

horse-breeding Thracians . . . the Abii, most upright of men: for the Thracians and the Mysians, see Map 2. The other two populations have speaking names: ‘Hippemolgi’ literally means ‘mare-milkers’, and the ‘Abii’ are ‘men without violence’; the poet draws attention to the etymologies of these names.

on the topmost peak of wooded Samothrace: island to the north-west of Troy.

[Aegae](#): cf. note to 8.203-4.

There is a wide cavern at the bottom of the deep sea: this is not a reference to an actual submarine cave, but a display of the poet's divine knowledge even of the depths of the sea, cf. 24.77-86.

[Pedaeon](#): unidentified.

Amphimachus: Amphimachus' father, one of the two Moliones, is Poseidon's son, cf. note to 11.750-1.

[in all Pleuron and in |_steep Calydon](#): in western Greece, see Calydon on Map 1.

since I shattered the one I was carrying before . . . arrogant
Deiphobus: cf. 11.159-66.

with him goes his dear son Panic: personified Panic is described as Ares' son also in Hesiod's *Theogony* 934.

and these two leave Thrace . . . the Ephyri or the great-hearted Phlegyans: Ares was traditionally thought to come from Thrace; the Ephyri and the Phlegyans probably lived in Thessaly, in northern Greece.

the two mighty sons of Cronus: Zeus and Poseidon.

[Othryoneus from Cabesus . . . he was fighting](#): Otryoneus is an obscure character, and the location of Cabesus was debated also in antiquity.

Alcathous, the dear son of Aesyetes . . . Hippodameia: a prominent and well-connected Trojan warrior. Aesyetes' tomb was a landmark on the Trojan plain (cf. note to 2.793); Hippodameia, daughter of Anchises and hence sister of Aeneas (cf. 13.462–7), is mentioned only here in the *Iliad*, though features prominently in other Greek texts.

In the beginning Zeus fathered Minos . . . the other Trojans:
Idomeneus explains in what sense he is 'Zeus' offspring'
(449). Minos was a mythical king of Knossos.

Enyalios' son: cf. note to 5.333.

the vein . . . until it reaches the neck: presumably the spinal marrow.

as when on a great threshing-floor. . . the winnower's swing:
the winnower tosses the beans and lentils against the wind
with a flat wooden shovel, in order to separate them from
their husks. As they fall, the pulses bounce on the threshing-
floor.

[king_Pylaemenes](#): cf. 5.576–89.

Paphlagonians: from northern Asia Minor, see Map 2.

the Achaeans' heavy war-fine: this is the only explicit mention of a fine for those who refused to join the Trojan expedition, though cf. 23.296-7.

because he had killed a man: the episode is mentioned also at 15.333-6.

ever since you roused your companions to fight by the ships: at 13.149-54.

[Deiphobus and the mighty lord Helenus](#): cf. 13.526–39 and 593–600.

Ascanië: i.e. the area around lake Ascanië, near the sea of Marmara, see Map 2.

BOOK FOURTEEN

Nestor, who was tending the wounded Machaon in his hut, hears the din of battle, goes out to investigate, and meets with the wounded Diomedes, Odysseus, and Agamemnon (1-63). They realize that the ships are in danger, and Agamemnon suggests that they should drag them out to sea and moor them with anchors (64-81). Odysseus and Diomedes think this is a very bad idea (82-132). Poseidon encourages Agamemnon with a speech and the whole army with a mighty shout (133-52). Hera, who does not want Zeus to notice Poseidon's intervention, prepares to seduce him: she tricks Aphrodite into lending her a love-charm, and bribes Sleep to accompany her to Mount Ida (153-291). As soon as Zeus sees her he is overcome with passion, and the two make love shrouded in a golden, dewy cloud (292-351). Sleep tells Poseidon that Zeus has fallen asleep, and the god immediately rouses the Achaeans, who redistribute armour so that the strongest are also the best equipped (352-401). Hector aims his spear at Ajax, who answers by knocking him out with a stone: the Trojans manage to rescue their leader, and take him to the river Xanthus (402-39). In Hector's absence the Achaeans gain the upper hand; Peneleos thrusts his spear through Ilioneus' eye-socket then cuts off and brandishes his head aloft; this spectacle terrifies the Trojans (440-507). The poet invokes the Muse, and offers a brief catalogue of killings (508-22).

Their ships had been drawn up . . . along the coastline's wide bay: because the beach could not hold all the ships,

they were drawn up in rows along the entire curved coastline, and were hence arranged 'like a theatre', as the ancient scholar Aristarchus put it.

Portheus had three blameless sons . . . the will of Zeus and the other gods: this seems to be an allusion to a violent Aetolian saga, which Diomedes does not here want to describe in detail. It seems that Tydeus did not just wander away and settle in Argos, but went into exile after killing one of his uncles, cf. the Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women*, fr. 10d.50 ff.

anointed her clothing: the original text is obscure, but seems to refer to the Mycaeanean practice of anointing clothes with perfumed oils.

Oceanus, first father of the gods . . . respect for ever: a reference to an unusual myth of origins, in which the sea-gods Oceanus and Tethys are the primeval parents of the universe. Hera alleges a quarrel between them, and also remembers a time of cosmic upheaval, when Zeus imprisoned his father Cronus: she thus presents herself as a cosmic peacemaker, whereas in fact she is planning to deceive Zeus and destabilize his rule.

and untied from her breasts . . . were crafted: probably a band passing over one shoulder and under the opposite arm, and then back over the shoulder and across to the other arm, forming an X at the cleavage.

[Pieria and lovely Emathia . . . godlike Thoas](#): Hera first reaches Pieria, at the foothills of Mount Olympus, then continues north along the Macedonian coast to Mount Athos, and crosses the sea to Lemnos. From there, she continues north-east to Imbros, then south down the coast of the Troad to Lectoria, and finally travels across the mainland to Ida. Her itinerary may seem erratic, but in fact makes perfect sense: she avoids open water, just as real-life sailors did.

a task you set me once before . . . you are telling me to do something impossible: for Heracles' sack of Troy, see note to 5.640. Zeus gives more detail about what happened to Heracles when he left Troy at 15.24-8 (on which see note). For Hera's hostility towards Heracles, cf. notes to 8.362-9 and 19.95-134.

[\[Pasithée... your days\]](#): this verse is a late addition clumsily modelled on line 276.

the inviolable water of Styx: river of the underworld, cf. note to 8.362–9.

all the gods | who are under Tartarus, and are called Titans:
see note to 8.13-15.

they left the cities of Lemnos and Imbros . . . shook under their feet: for this itinerary, cf. note to 14.226–30.

the gods call 'chalas' and men call the hawk-owl: for other instances where Homer distinguishes between divine and human speech, see note to 1.403-4. This seems to be an allusion to a girl called Chalcis, who was transformed into an owl.

Never before has desire for a goddess or for a woman so . . . seized me: a list of Zeus' most famous love affairs. Ancient and modern readers have worried that this list might offend, rather than attract, Hera. It also draws attention to the fact that the ensuing union, unlike the others he lists, fails to result in the conception of a child.

[Mysians](#): the people living east of Troy, see Map 2.

BOOK FIFTEEN

Zeus wakes up, realizes what has happened, and threatens Hera (1–33). She cleverly swears that Poseidon acted of his own accord when he decided to help the Achaeans (34–46). Zeus sends Hera back to Olympus and asks her to summon Iris and Apollo to Ida: she returns to Olympus at the speed of thought, addresses the gods—with a frown hardly disguised by a smile—and reveals that Ascalaphus, Ares' son, is dead (47–112). This creates havoc: Ares wants to avenge his son, but Athena manages to restrain him (113–41); Iris and Apollo go to see Zeus on Mount Ida: he dispatches Iris to Poseidon, and she persuades him to withdraw (142–219); then he sends Apollo to revive Hector, and his renewed strength causes alarm among the Achaeans (220–80). On Thoas' advice most of the Achaean troops retreat, while the best warriors try to slow down the Trojan advance (281–342); Hector urges on the Trojans, and Apollo kicks down the Achaean wall like a boy destroying a sandcastle (343–66). The fighting rages near the ships; Patroclus hears it and leaves Eurypylus' hut in order to try and persuade Achilles to fight (367–404). The battle has now reached the ships, and the fighting intensifies (405–673). Ajax leaps from ship to ship, attacking the enemy with a long pike; Hector gets hold of Protesilaus' ship and calls to the Trojans to bring him fire; Ajax keeps killing the Trojans as they try to bring torches to Hector (674–746).

[Or do you not remember . . . there was little life in them](#): the punishment of Hera is presented as a case of domestic violence. And yet it also has cosmic significance: it recalls

other myths where the sky-god establishes his superiority over the earth-goddess, e.g. Zeus' confrontation with Gaia and her son Typhoeus in Hesiod's *Theogony*.

Even so . . . well-populated island: Sleep already alluded to this episode at 14.249-62 (on which see note). Quite what happened to Heracles in Cos is unclear.

downwards: the Styx was thought to drip down from a cliff,
cf. Hesiod, *Theogony* 786.

He will then send his companion . . . glorious Sarpedon: a clear prediction of what will happen in book 16.

but accepted a cup from Themis: personified 'Right' is the goddess who presides over divine assemblies, and traditionally protects Zeus' power. Her role here suggests that order will soon be restored among the gods.

I believe, suffering has been laid up for Ares . . . his own: cf.
13.518-25.

We are three brothers . . . the earth and high Olympus were left common to all three: this division of the cosmos is paralleled in Babylonian mythology.

the Furies always side with the firstborn: the Furies were in charge of punishing breaches of respect in the family.

even the gods who live with Cronus below the earth: see
note to 8.13–15.

take the tasselled aegis: unusually, Zeus gives the aegis to Apollo, cf. note to 1.202.

[Phylace](#): in Thessaly.

because he had killed a man: see note to 13.696.

[with the long jointed pikes . . . for fighting at sea](#): these pikes were made of sections glued together and held with pins, cf. 13.677-8. A Theran fresco depicts Bronze Age ships with pikes in their bows.

Now Patroclus . . . black pains: cf. 11.837–48.

[Ephyre](#): it seems that three different cities are called Ephyre in the *Iliad*, cf. note to 6.152. This one must be located in Elis, in the north-west Peloponnese, see Map 1.

[Percote](#): see Map 2.

And Athena drove an amazing cloud of mist from their eyes:
ancient and modern critics have rightly pointed out that this is the first time we hear of a mist enveloping the Achaeans. Yet there is no reason to believe that the poet ought to have mentioned the mist before: human vision is always limited, cf. 5.127-8, where Athena lifts a mist from Diomedes' eyes so that he can suddenly tell apart gods from men. Now all Achaeans, whether in the first line of battle or at the rear, can suddenly see the danger they face.

[half-decks](#): images of ships from the Geometric period (c.900–700 BCE) show that they had two half-decks, one at the prow and one at the stern.

As a man well skilled in horsemanship . . . while the horses fly along: the simile describes a rider bringing four horses from the stables or pastures into the city; the horses are harnessed together, and he rides each in turn, changing mounts as they gallop (either to show off, or to avoid overtiring a single horse). Just like the rider, Ajax leaps from the half-deck of one ship to that of the next.

[which had brought Protesilaus . . . native land](#): Protesilaus' death is remembered also at 2.698–701. He was the first Achaean to disembark at Troy, the first to be killed, and now his ship is the first to come under attack. His ship is in fact the only one that gets burnt: cf. 16.122–4 and 294.

BOOK SIXTEEN

Patroclus begs Achilles to intervene in the fighting, and Achilles agrees to let him lead the Myrmidons instead (1–100). The Trojans burn Protesilaus' ship; Patroclus dons Achilles' armour and prepares for battle (101–54). Achilles exhorts the Myrmidons, and a catalogue of their leaders follows (155–209). Back in his tent Achilles prays for Patroclus' success and safety—but Zeus grants only his first request (210–56). Unnerved by Patroclus' sudden appearance the Trojans withdraw behind the ditch, suffering heavy losses (256–418). Sarpedon, Zeus' son, makes a stand, and Zeus considers saving his life; Hera objects, and Zeus limits himself to honouring Sarpedon with a shower of blood (419–61). Sarpedon kills Patroclus' trace-horse, and Patroclus kills him; Glaucus prays to Apollo for strength, but does not manage to protect Sarpedon's body (462–547). A fierce battle breaks out around it, and he is stripped; Zeus then sends Apollo, Sleep, and Death to carry off the body so that Sarpedon may be buried in Lycia (548–683). Patroclus pursues the Trojans all the way to the city walls, where Apollo issues a warning (684–711). Patroclus kills Hector's charioteer with a stone (712–76); the Achaeans strip him, and Apollo hits Patroclus on the back with the flat of his hand, stunning him; Euphorbus wounds him in the back, and Hector finally stabs him in the belly (777–842). Before dying, Patroclus tells Hector that Achilles will avenge his death (843–67).

so that we alone could tear down the sacred headdress of Troy: the walls of Troy are compared to a woman's headdress, which is torn off as she is dragged into captivity.

the Pelian ash spear, which Cheiron . . . Pelion: the centaur Cheiron lived on Mount Pelion. Several seventh-century vase paintings depict him with Achilles.

Xanthus and Balius . . . Pegasus . . . immortal horses:

Achilles' horses reflect his status as the son of a goddess. They are immortal, and have prophetic powers (cf. 19.404-17); Poseidon gave them to Peleus as a wedding gift. The trace-horse Pegasus (taken after the sack of Andromache's city, cf. note to 6.397) is mortal but exceptionally fast, just like Achilles himself.

[There were fifty swift ships](#): the Catalogue of the Myrmidons (168–97) is configured as an addition and expansion of the Myrmidons' entry in the Catalogue of Ships (2.681–94). The Myrmidon contingent is guided by five leaders, each of whom is in charge of ten ships. Menesthius, Eudorus, and Peisander are mentioned only here: their biographical details suggest that they are similar but inferior to Achilles.

sulphur: a holy substance in ancient Greek culture, often used to fumigate and purify.

Lord Zeus, god of Dodona, Pelasgian . . . whose feet are unwashed: Achilles invokes Zeus as the god presiding over the ancient oracle at Dodona, in north-western Greece. The Pelasgians were a prehistoric tribe, considered indigenous. The strange habits of the Selli, the local priests, may reflect local religious taboos.

beside the stern of the ship of great-spirited Protesilaus: see
note to 15.705.

and he hit Pyraechmes . . . from the broad-flowing Axius: for the Paeonians, cf. 2.848-50. For the location of the river Axius, see Map 2.

The immortal swift horses that the gods had given to Peleus:
on Achilles' horses, see note to 16.149-54.

the rich land of Lycia: see Map 2.

began to rain a shower of bloody raindrops upon the earth:
an unusual portent, foreshadowing Sarpedon's imminent death. Rain in southern Europe sometimes does deposit red sand from the Sahara.

for he was hurt . . . at the high wall: Teucer wounded
Glaucus at 12.387-91.

was the first to leap on to the Achaean wall: Sarpedon was not actually the first to enter the Achaean camp. Ancient and modern readers have been worried by the apparent inconsistency introduced by this line.

glorious Epeigeus . . . to fight against the Trojans: the episode is mentioned only here, and the location of Boudeion is unclear. Unusually, the poet here presents Peleus and Thetis as still living together.

[Aeneas' spear . . . powerful hand]: these lines are a medieval addition, which arose from a mistake in copying.

[he doubtless said to you . . . your witless wits](#): this is not true. Achilles actually recommended caution, and warned Patroclus against Apollo, cf. 16.83–96.

BOOK SEVENTEEN

Menelaus kills Euphorbus and Apollo incites Hector; Menelaus retreats, calling on Ajax for help (1–122). Ajax successfully protects Patroclus' corpse; Glaucus meanwhile rebukes Hector, who decides to don Achilles' armour (123–97). Zeus reflects that Hector is about to die and decides to grant him temporary strength (198–236). Menelaus again calls for help; Zeus shrouds Patroclus' body and those fighting over it in a mist, and Ajax continues to defend it well (237–318). Apollo rebukes Aeneas, while Ajax remains in control: the fighting over Patroclus' body intensifies (319–425). Achilles' horses mourn the death of Patroclus, and Zeus pities them (426–55). Energized by Zeus, the horses start moving again; Automedon protects them on foot, and Hector fails to capture them (456–542). Athena swoops down to the battlefield like a rainbow; encouraged by her presence, Menelaus kills Podes (543–81). Apollo exhorts Hector, and Zeus thunders his support for him; the Achaeans flee towards the ships (582–625). Ajax begs Zeus to disperse the mist and sends Menelaus to find Antilochus: the latter should then run to Achilles and convey the bad news to him; Antilochus himself is stunned to hear that Patroclus is dead and that Hector has taken Achilles' armour (626–99). Together with Meriones, Menelaus finally manages to drag Patroclus' body off the battlefield, while Ajax, son of Telamon, and Locrian Ajax hold off the Trojans; the poet illustrates the intense struggle with five similes (700–61).

Yet the mighty Hyperenor . . . insulted me: Menelaus killed Hyperenor, brother of Euphorbus, at 14.516–19.

Mentes, leader of the Cicones: features only here.

you are now running after what you cannot reach . . . to an immortal mother: on Achilles' horses, see note to 16.149-54.

now you have abandoned Sarpedon . . . their prey and prize:
cf. 16.656–65.

we could bring Sarpedon himself into Ilium: Glaucus is unaware that the gods have carried Sarpedon's body to Lycia, cf. 16.666–83.

which the gods . . . had given to his father: the gods attended the marriage of Peleus and Thetis (cf. 24.62), and brought gifts (cf. 18.84-5).

[the son of Cronus poured a thick mist](#): the gods repeatedly spread or dispel mist, but only here do we get a full account of the mist's onset, continuation (366-77), and dispersal (643-50).

Hippothous, the illustrious son of Lethus the Pelasgian: on the Pelasgian allies of Troy, cf. 2.840–3.

and you could not have said . . . the mist and the fighting:
cf. note to 17.269.

As when a man gives the hide of a great ox . . . is stretched right through: a detailed description of leather tanning.

[But the horses of Aeacus' grandson](#): on Achilles' horses, see note to 16.149-54.

for they themselves . . . the battle was all made plain: cf. note to 17.269.

BOOK EIGHTEEN

Achilles fears that Patroclus may be dead, and Antilochus confirms this (1-21). He cries out, grief-stricken, and covers his head in ash; Thetis laments Achilles' own fate together with her sea-nymph sisters in their underwater palace, and then goes up to visit him, followed by them (22-77). Achilles summarizes the events of the past days and declares his intention to avenge Patroclus and kill Hector (78-92). Thetis warns him that he will die soon after, then tells him not to return to battle until she has given him new armour (93-147). Meanwhile, the Achaeans and the Trojans are still fighting over Patroclus' body; Hera sends Iris to summon Achilles to the fighting: he hesitates because he has no armour, but Athena throws her aegis around him, and the Trojans retreat in terror as soon as they see him and hear his war-cry; twelve Trojans die on the spot, entangled in their own weapons, while the Achaeans bring back Patroclus' body (148-238). Hera forces the sun to set early; the Trojans hold an assembly, and Polydamas recommends a retreat; Hector angrily rejects his good advice and declares himself ready to fight Achilles; in his tent Achilles mourns Patroclus and thinks about his own death (239-355). On Olympus Zeus congratulates Hera on Achilles' return and teases her; she replies that it is only right she should try and get her way (356-67). Thetis reaches the home of Hephaestus and his wife Charis, who give her a warm welcome: Hephaestus remembers that Thetis rescued him in the past, and readily agrees to make new armour for her

son (368–467). He fashions an amazing shield, corslet, helmet, and greaves (468–617).

[my mother once foretold to me . . . Trojan hands](#): this is the only time this particular prophecy is mentioned, though at 17.408–11 we are told that Achilles often heard about Zeus' plans from Thetis.

I told him . . . against Hector's: at 16.86–96.

Not even the mighty Heracles . . . beat him down: in the *Iliad* Heracles is the hero who comes closest to immortality, cf. note to 8.362–9. Other ancient texts depict him as a god.

let me force some Trojan woman . . . her tender cheeks: the *Iliad* ends precisely with the women's funeral laments for Hector.

these fine treasures have been spent . . . lovely Maeonia:
Hector is worried about the cost of paying for the allies; for
the location of Phrygia and Maeonia, see Map 2.

I shall cut the throats of twelve | noble sons of the Trojans:
Achilles will carry out his savage plan at 21.27-32 and
23.175-6.

Charis: personified 'Grace'; in the *Odyssey* Hephaestus is married to Aphrodite herself.

it was Thetis who . . . saved me: this story features only here, and emphasizes Thetis' role as a motherly goddess. At 1.590-4 Hephaestus claims that Zeus hurled him from Olympus when he tried to help Hera—and that he became lame as a result. In this passage the suggestion is that Hephaestus was lame from birth, and that Hera cast him off in disgust. Mythical variations on a theme (in this case: Hephaestus' fall and lameness) were common in ancient Greece.

he made me subject . . . and I had to endure a man's bed:
the *Iliad* never explains why Zeus married Thetis off to a mortal but, according to other ancient sources Zeus himself wanted to marry Thetis, until a prophecy revealed that her son would be stronger than her partner; on hearing that, Zeus married her off to Peleus; see especially [Aeschylus], *Prometheus Bound* 907-27; Pindar, *Isthmian Ode* 8.26-48. This myth also left its mark on the pictorial record: some early vase paintings represent Thetis as she takes on different shapes in an attempt to resist the approaches of her mortal husband.

First of all he made a huge, heavy shield: the exact layout of Achilles' shield has been much debated. The shield is round and seems to have four concentric, decorated bands. One possible reconstruction, based on the description at lines 478–608, is this: the centre is taken up by the earth, sea, sun, moon, and stars; the innermost band is divided between a representation of the city at peace and one of the city at war; the next band depicts the four seasons, starting with ploughing in spring, then reaping, the vintage, and finally cattle and sheep rearing; the third band is decorated with dancers; the river Ocean flows in a circle around the rim. Some Cretan bronze shields and Phoenician silver bowls dated to the late eighth century BCE closely resemble Achilles' shield: they too feature concentric bands decorated with different scenes (war, hunting, processions, wild and domestic animals, etc.). Homer's description, however, emphasizes movement, sound, and the passing of time: it turns images into stories. It also adds a cosmic dimension: the shield as a whole is a powerful representation of the world, and of human life in it.

[the Pleiades and the Hyades . . . in the baths of Ocean:](#)
these are among the most prominent constellations. The Pleiades and Hyades are star clusters near Orion; Orion is the most prominent constellation in the southern sky during winter; the Bear is the most prominent constellation in the northern sky and, for viewers in the northern hemisphere, never dips below the horizon (or, as Homer puts it, 'has no share in the baths of Ocean').

the blood-money of a man who had been killed: see note to 9.632-5.

[the Linus-song](#): Linus was a famous mythical singer.

just like the one which Daedalus . . . beautiful hair: this is the only reference to a dance-floor built by Daedalus, a mythical craftsman. He was more generally credited with building the Labyrinth for Ariadne's father, Minos, who kept the Minotaur in it.

[and among them a divine singer | sang and played the lyre]: this seems to be a late addition, taken from *Odyssey* 4.18–19, and designed to provide the dancers with some music.

BOOK NINETEEN

Thetis brings the new armour to Achilles and finds him mourning for Patroclus (1–39). Achilles admires Hephaestus' work, then calls an assembly and declares that he is ready to let go of his anger and fight again (40–73). For his part, Agamemnon admits that he must have been the victim of Delusion when he antagonized Achilles, then tells of Delusion's power over Zeus himself, and finally declares himself ready to make amends (74–144). Achilles insists that he does not care about Agamemnon's gifts and wants to enter battle immediately; Odysseus points out that the men have not eaten, that Agamemnon's gifts need to be displayed, and that Agamemnon must swear that he has not touched Briseïs (145–83). Despite Achilles' impatience, Agamemnon follows Odysseus' instructions (184–275). On returning to Achilles' tent Briseïs laments the death of Patroclus, and claims that he had promised her she would marry Achilles after the war; all the women mourn in response—ostensibly for Patroclus, but actually for their own reasons; Achilles, meanwhile, refuses to eat (276–308). The leaders gather in his tent to console him while the soldiers have a meal; Athena fortifies Achilles with ambrosia and nectar, he dons his armour, and the Achaeans prepare for battle (309–403). Achilles rebukes his horses, and Xanthus responds by prophesying his master's death; Achilles declares himself ready to die, and drives forward (404–24).

and through Patroclus' nostrils . . . remain undecayed: see
note to 19.353.

If only Artemis had killed her with an arrow by the ships:
Artemis was generally held responsible for the death of women.

Lyrnessus: in the Troad; the fall of this city is described at 2.690-3.

she is Zeus' eldest daughter, Delusion, an accursed thing:
delusion, or *ate*, is invoked by speakers when they try to excuse themselves for behaviour that is so bad that it actually has no explanation, cf. English: 'I do not know what got into me.' Even though Agamemnon talks of Delusion as a powerful goddess, from a judicial point of view he remains accountable—and indeed offers compensation for his actions.

Indeed, even Zeus was once driven mad by Delusion . . . So it is with me: as in many other stories, an ill that was once experienced by the gods is then banned from Olympus and inflicted on human beings alone. The particular story of how Hera manipulated the birth-dates of Heracles and Eurystheus may not have involved Delusion in other versions, but here Agamemnon is drawing a rather exalted parallel between himself and the supreme god.

as is the usual way, lord, between men and women: this line features only in some manuscripts, and may have been added by analogy with 9.276. Alternatively, it might have been left out from some manuscripts for reasons of modesty.

with his feet towards the door: the traditional position in which bodies were laid out before burial.

Men very quickly have their fill . . . tilted his scales: the precise meaning of this metaphor was much debated also in antiquity. Odysseus seems to compare the cut straw to the bodies of dead soldiers on the battlefield; the scanty harvest helps him make the point that there may be many casualties with little gain—particularly as the soldiers are now hungry, and the last thing they need is scanty food.

Talthybius swung the body round and flung it . . . to be food for fishes: it seems that animals sacrificed in an oath-taking were thought to be polluted and could not be eaten.

but declared that you would make me . . . a marriage feast among the Myrmidons: this detail features only here; through her lament, Briseïs is publicly raising the possibility of marriage with Achilles.

nor if it were my dear son . . . still alive somewhere: Achilles fathered Neoptolemus on the island of Skyros. Later texts explore in detail the circumstances of his stay there, but the *Iliad* does not go into detail.

she distilled nectar and delectable ambrosia into his breast:
nectar and ambrosia are food of the gods; at 19.38-9 they
are used to preserve Patroclus' body.

Xanthus and Balius, far-famed children of Podarge: on
Achilles' horses, see note to 16.149-54.

[a great god and your powerful destiny](#): Apollo will kill Achilles—or rather Paris will shoot him with an arrow, with Apollo's help. See further notes to 21.276–8 and 22.359–60.

BOOK TWENTY

Zeus summons all the gods to an assembly and invites them to take part in the war: they march out and line up for battle (1–74). Apollo, in the guise of Lycaon, rebukes Aeneas and urges him to challenge Achilles: Aeneas is reluctant to do so, particularly because in an earlier confrontation he shamefully ran away from Achilles; Apollo points out that Aeneas' mother—the goddess Aphrodite—is much more powerful than Achilles' own divine mother Thetis (75–109). Stung in his pride, Aeneas challenges Achilles; Hera expresses her alarm, and Poseidon suggests that they monitor the situation from a distance; the gods withdraw: those supporting the Achaeans observe events from a stronghold originally built for Heracles, while the Trojan faction occupies a nearby hill (110–55). Achilles taunts Aeneas by saying that Priam prefers his own children to him, and by reminding him of their past encounter; Aeneas makes great boasts about his ancestry (156–258). The duel begins: each warrior casts his spear in vain, then Achilles draws his sword and Aeneas picks up a huge stone—at this point Poseidon reflects that Aeneas is not destined to die at Troy, and rescues him (259–339). Achilles exhorts the Achaeans, and Hector marshals the Trojans; Apollo warns Hector not to face Achilles in single combat; Achilles kills many Trojans, including Hector's own brother Polydorus (340–418). Enraged, Hector charges forward, but Athena intervenes and Apollo drives him away to safety; Achilles

meanwhile resumes his slaughter of the Trojans, who withdraw in disarray (419–503).

[Themis](#): see note to 15.87.

Not one of the rivers stayed away . . . cunning skill: the presence of the river-gods and the nymphs prepares for the role Scamander plays in the ensuing battle of the gods.

Callicolone: this hill near the Trojan plain is mentioned only here and at 20.151.

Aïdoneus: another name for Hades.

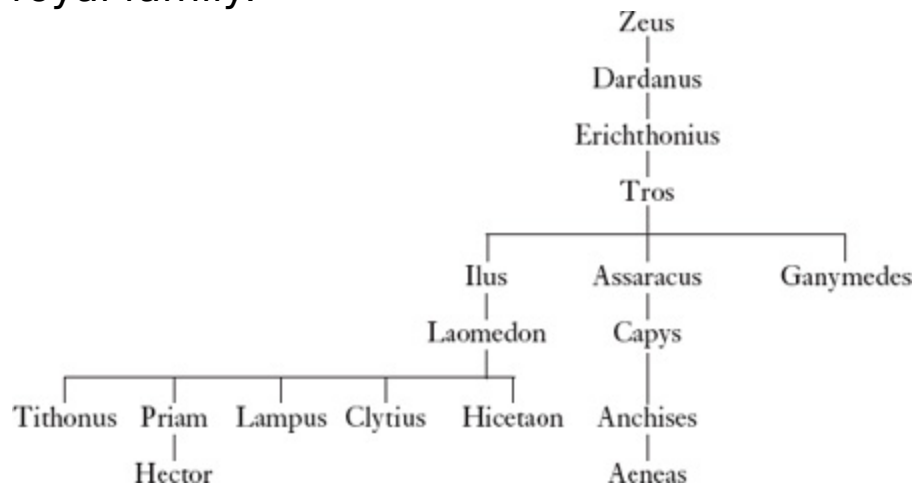
Face to face against lord Poseidon . . . Scamander: the following gods line up on the Achaean side: Poseidon, Athena, Hermes, and Hephaestus; they are met, on the Trojan side, by Apollo, Enyalios (i.e. Ares), Leto, and the river Scamander. Aphrodite may have taken Zeus' warning to heart (cf. 5.426–30), and does not line up now—though she will later try to assist Ares, and will consequently suffer at the hands of Athena (21.416–33).

once before this he drove me with his spear . . . Lyrnessus and Pedasus: on the sack of Lyrnessus, see 2.690-3; Pedasus is another city in the Troad. This confrontation between Aeneas and Achilles featured in the *Cypria*, an early epic poem now largely lost, and is also remembered by Achilles at 20.188-94 (on which see note). 127-8 *he must suffer whatever Fate spun . . . when his mother bore him*: the image of the spinning Fates was widespread in antiquity, indeed one name for them was 'the Spinners'.

[the heaped-up stronghold of Heracles . . . from the seashore to the plain](#): when Laomedon failed to pay Poseidon for building the walls of Troy, Poseidon inflicted a sea-monster on the Trojans. Heracles offered to defeat the monster for them—and Laomedon failed to pay him for that (cf. notes to 5.640 and 21.441-57). Heracles' stronghold is mentioned only here.

do you not remember when I found you . . .freedom: cf. note on 20.90-3. One of the women Achilles captured after the fall of Lyrnessus was Briseïs.

In the beginning, Zeus . . . the ancestry and bloodline that I boast is mine: Aeneas' mother, Aphrodite, easily trumps Thetis (cf. 20.105-7). For this reason, Aeneas now sets out his ancestry on his father's side: his boasts, however, only confirm Achilles' observation that Aeneas will not inherit the throne (cf. 20.179-83). On the horses of Tros, see also notes to 5.222 and 5.268-70. This is the family tree of the Trojan royal family:



this innocent man: this is a reference to Laomedon's outrageous behaviour (cf. note to 21.441-57). Aeneas is not a descendant of Laomedon, and therefore should not suffer for what he did.

because it is his destiny to escape . . . the race of Priam: this is the only reference to Aeneas' survival in the *Iliad*, and it has caused much debate. It is unclear how early Greek audiences understood these lines, and who they took Aeneas' descendants to be (an aristocratic family living in the Troad is a plausible suggestion); Roman and later readers of the *Iliad* understood these lines to allude to the events told in the *Aeneid*.

Naiad nymph: a minor goddess living near or in water; from the Greek verb *naiō* = 'flow'.

Tmolus . . . Gygaea: see Map 2.

[the shrine of the | Heliconian](#): 'the Heliconian' is Poseidon.

BOOK TWENTY-ONE

Achilles pursues the Trojans right into the waters of the river Scamander (1-33). He kills Lycaon, a son of Priam whom he had previously captured and sold into slavery (34-135). Achilles' behaviour enrages the river Scamander, especially after he kills Asteropaeus, a grandson of the river Axius (136-204). The river issues a warning, then pursues Achilles over the plain; Poseidon and Athena intervene to reassure Achilles (205-97). Scamander enlists the help of the river Simoeis, and comes close to overwhelming Achilles (298-329). Following Hera's request, Hephaestus burns the plain and parches the river; Scamander begs for mercy, and promises never to help the Trojans again (330-82). Ares attacks Athena, who knocks him out with a stone (383-414). Aphrodite comes to Ares' rescue, and Athena—encouraged by Hera—hits her on her breasts, knocking her out too (415-33). Poseidon tells Apollo that they too ought to fight each other, but Apollo insists there is no point fighting over mortals (434-67). Artemis taunts Apollo; Hera gets angry with her and boxes her ears (468-88). Hermes sees this and thinks that he had rather not fight against Leto, another powerful consort of Zeus; Artemis complains to Zeus about Hera (489-513). All the gods return to Olympus—except for Apollo, who heads for Troy; Priam makes arrangements for the Trojans to find refuge inside the city gates (514-43). Inspired by Apollo, Agenor makes a stand: he fights briefly against Achilles, until the god rescues him and takes on his appearance: Achilles runs after the disguised Apollo, while the Trojans find safety inside the gates (544-611).

the crossing of the clear-flowing river: the exact location of the ford in relation to other landmarks on the Trojan plain was much debated in antiquity, and remains unclear today.

As when locusts rise . . . then huddle together in the water:
the simile describes the ancient practice of driving locusts
out of the fields with fire.

he chose twelve young men . . . to take back to the hollow ships: cf. 18.336-7 (with note).

daughter of old Altes . . . in steep Pedasus beside the river Satnioeis: the Leleges were a people of the Troad; Achilles sacked Pedasus, cf. note to 20.90-3. Laithoë and her father Altes, ruler of Pedasus, are mentioned again at 22.46-51.

one you beat down in the front rank . . . with your sharp
spear: for Polydorus' death, cf. 20.407-18.

Pelegon was the son of broad-flowing Axius and Periboea:
the river Axius flows through Macedonia, see Map 2. Pelegon
was mentioned before, but here the poet draws attention to
his river-ancestry.

against the descendants of Cronus' mighty son: Achilles, rather than referring to his mother Thetis, stresses his father's descent from Zeus.

Not even lord Achelous . . . the immensely strong deep-flowing Ocean: Achelous is the longest river in Greece and was always considered important, indeed the name 'Achelous' was sometimes used as a synonym for 'water'. On Oceanus, see note to 1.423.

as my own mother . . . struck down by the swift arrows of Apollo: references to Achilles' imminent death become increasingly more specific in the last books of the *Iliad*: at 18.96 Thetis reveals that Achilles will die soon after Hector; at 19.404-17 the horse Xanthus predicts that Achilles will be killed by a god and a man (cf. note to 19.410), and now Achilles remembers Thetis' claims that he will be struck down by an arrow. Moments before dying, Hector gives an even fuller account: Achilles will die in front of the Scaean gates, killed by Paris and Apollo, see note to 22.359-60. The lost cyclic poem *Aethiopis* told the story of how an arrow, shot by Paris with Apollo's aid, killed Achilles.

Do you not recall when you . . . tore my handsome flesh?: cf.
5.855-61.

This way you will pay the full price to your mother's Furies:
Ares' mother is Hera, and she supports the Achaeans. On the Furies, see note to 15.204.

[Atrytone](#): see note to 2.157.

Fool . . . he had promised but did not fulfil: Poseidon taunts Apollo by remembering a specific episode, when Laomedon, king of Troy, refused to pay Poseidon and Apollo for their services (they had built the Trojan wall and tended his cattle, cf. note to 7.452-3). Quite why the two gods were in service to the king is unclear: ancient commentators claim that they had been punished by Zeus for an act of insubordination, or that they were testing Laomedon. The story continued with the gods' revenge: Apollo inflicted a plague, and Poseidon sent a sea-monster against the Trojans (cf. note to 20.145-8). Poseidon now makes the point that Apollo foolishly supports the Trojans, despite Laomedon's offences.

Zeus has made you a lioness . . . kill those whom you choose: cf. note to 19.59.

BOOK TWENTY-TWO

Hector remains outside the walls, and Apollo taunts Achilles (1-24). Priam and Hecuba beg their son to retreat inside the city, but Hector feels too ashamed to do so (25-130). As Achilles draws near, Hector briefly considers talking to him, then turns and flees; the two men run three times around the city walls, as the gods look on; Zeus wonders whether he should save Hector, and Athena objects to that (131-87). When Achilles and Hector reach the springs for the fourth time Zeus holds up the scales of fate and Hector's side sinks: at this, Apollo instantly abandons him and Athena joins Achilles (188-223). The goddess persuades Hector to make a stand by taking on the appearance of his favourite brother Deiphobus (224-46). Hector tries to strike a deal with Achilles before fighting: the winner should return the corpse of the loser; Achilles violently objects to this, then casts his spear and misses (247-88). Hector manages to hit Achilles' shield, but his spear rebounds—and he realizes that Athena has tricked him (289-305). Again he begs Achilles to spare his body after death, and is refused; Achilles wounds him in the neck and, before dying, Hector predicts Achilles' own death (306-66). The Achaeans draw near and stab Hector's corpse; Achilles drags it behind his chariot (367-404). Priam and Hecuba lament the death of their son (405-36). Andromache, who was weaving at home and making arrangements for Hector to have a warm bath, hears the commotion outside, rushes to the wall, and faints; she then laments Hector's death (437-515).

Son of Peleus fated to die: Apollo's contemptuous speech alludes to Achilles' imminent death, and exposes the futility of his actions. 'Swift-footed' Achilles cannot catch up with a god, let alone kill him—in fact, it is Achilles who will soon die at the hands of Apollo, see notes to 21.276–8 and 22.359–60.

the star that rises in autumn . . . for wretched mortals:

Sirius, the brightest fixed star. It first becomes visible in the eastern horizon before dawn in mid-July, and the Greeks associated it with the intense heat of the summer months.

Lycaon and Polydorus: Achilles killed Lycaon at 21.34-135,
and Polydorus at 20.407-18.

because he urged me at the start . . . to lead the Trojans into the city: cf. the debate between Polydamas and Hector at 18.243–313.

“from a rock or an oak-tree”: this expression seems to have been proverbial; its exact meaning is unclear.

who has burnt the thigh-bones . . . on the city's heights:

Hector regularly sacrificed to Zeus, both on the mountain-tops of Ida and in the city of Troy. As a result, Zeus feels some obligation towards him.

[Tritogeneia](#): see note to 4.515.

the father held up his golden scales . . . and Phoebus Apollo left him: the scales of Zeus are mentioned also at other crucial moments in the narrative, cf. esp. 8.68–74. Here they mark the moment when Hector’s fate is sealed.

that he had stripped from mighty Patroclus when he killed him: cf. 17. 125-97.

on the day that Paris and Phoebus Apollo . . . beside the Scaean gates: moments before dying, Hector describes Achilles' death with prophetic clarity. This is the most specific prediction of it in the whole *Iliad*, cf. note to 21.276-8.

Now Hector's wife had not yet learnt . . . far away from baths: at 6.490-3 Hector told Andromache to return home, see to the weaving, and supervise her servants. This is precisely what she is doing now.

[a maenad](#): a frenzied female devotee of the god Dionysus.

[The day that orphans a child . . . filled with contentment:](#) affecting as this image of Astyanax's future is, what will actually happen to him is far worse; see note to 24.734-5

BOOK TWENTY-THREE

Achilles and the Myrmidons lament over Patroclus (1-34). Achilles refuses to wash and eat; Patroclus' shade appears to him in a dream to demand a proper burial (35-107). At dawn the Achaeans make preparations for the funeral (10860). After sacrificing sheep, cattle, horses, dogs, and twelve Trojan captives, Achilles lights the pyre and, because it fails to burn, prays to the winds for help; Iris summons them (161-225). After a night of lamentation Achilles finally falls asleep, but is woken up by the arrival of the Achaean leaders: he gives final instructions for the burial, and then brings out prizes for the funeral games (226-61). The contestants for the chariot-race get ready (262-361). The race is tense (362-447); the spectators Idomeneus and Locrian Ajax argue about who is in the lead (448-98). Prizes are awarded, after some disagreements are settled (499-650). Epeius beats Euryalus in the boxing contest (651-99). Ajax and Odysseus compete in wrestling: after a while Achilles interrupts the match, declaring it a draw (700-39). In the foot-race Locrian Ajax is in the lead, until Athena makes him slip on a pile of dung and grants victory to Odysseus; Antilochus comes last, but doubles his prize by flattering Achilles (740-96). Ajax, son of Telamon, and Diomedes compete in the armed duel: fearing for their lives, the Achaeans stop the contest (797-825). Polypoetes wins the throwing contest (826-49). Achilles offers two prizes for archery: for the man who hits a dove tied to a mast, and for the man who hits the string; Teucer forgets to pray to Apollo

and hits the string, then Meriones shoots the dove as it flies away (850-83). Achilles awards first prize to Agamemnon for spear-throwing, without bothering to have a contest between him and Meriones (884-97).

and I shall cut the throats . . . my anger at your death: cf. 18.336-7 (with note).

shorn my hair: cutting one's hair in mourning was common practice in ancient Greece.

He stood over Achilles' head . . . these words: cf. note to 2.20.

Bury me as quickly as you can . . . Hades of the wide gates:
here Patroclus implies that only after burial will he be able to
join the shades of the dead; other Homeric passages,
however, do not conform to this view.

after Menoetius had brought me . . . angry over a game of knucklebones: exile for homicide is common in the *Iliad*; the details of Patroclus' crime are mentioned only here.

So may one and the same vessel hide the bones of us both:
later in the book Patroclus' ashes are stored in Achilles' hut,
until he too has died, cf. 243-4 and 252-4.

one more thought . . . to take with him instead: there are other examples of young men offering their hair to their local river, usually in thanksgiving for their nurture; the practice features, for example, in Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 1.37.3 and 8.41.3. Here Achilles' gesture expresses the thought that he will soon die himself.

with the bronze slew twelve noble sons . . . the cruel plan he
had in his heart: see note to 18.336-7.

but the dogs never busied themselves . . . his sinews and limbs: similarly, Thetis intervened to preserve Patroclus' body; see note to 19.353.

[the Ethiopians' land](#): see note to 1.423.

As for the grave-mound . . . after I have gone: Achilles indicates that Achaeans should build a broader and higher mound when he dies too.

[prizes from his ships](#): the funeral games are meant to honour Patroclus (cf. 23.646), and the prizes function as mementoes of his death (cf. 23.618-20 and 748). They are also material tokens of Achilles' greatest exploits. Several other funeral games are mentioned in Homer, cf. 23.630-1 and 678-80, as well as 22.162-6 (a simile) and *Odyssey* 24.85-92 (the games in honour of Achilles).

for you know how far my horses surpass . . . who then handed them on to me: on Achilles' horses, see notes to 16.149-54 and 17.195-6.

and he led under his yoke the horses of Tros . . . Apollo saved their master: on the horses of Tros, see notes to 5.222 and 5.268–70. Diomedes gains possession of them at 5.319–27.

Achilles shook the lots, and out jumped the lot of Antilochus:
Achilles draws lots in order to establish the placing of contestants in the race. The contestant driving nearest to the post is best placed to win. For the practice of shaking lots out of a helmet, cf. 7.175–83.

but you won't win a prize without a challenge on oath: cf. 23.581-5, where Menelaus challenges Antilochus to swear that he has not used trickery to defeat him.

I will give him the corslet that I took from Asteropaeus: cf.
21.182-3.

as when the Epeians made a burial for lord Amarynceus . . . among heroes: cf. 11.699–702 where we are told that Neleus sent a four-horse chariot to compete at another contest in Elis.

Mecisteus had long ago come to Thebes . . . all the Cadmeians: in this Homeric version Oedipus dies at Thebes. The story that he died in Athens seems to be an Athenian myth.

well-cut thongs made from the hide of a field-ox: ancient Greek boxers bound their hands in leather thongs.

share the prizes equally and go: also ancient readers were at a loss as to how the prizes could be divided equally.

a finely worked silver mixing-bowl . . . fastest in the swift foot-race: as often, the poet draws attention to an object not by describing it in detail, but by telling its story. This particular bowl is linked to the capture and release of Lycaon, and functions as a reminder of his death at the hands of Achilles, cf. 21.34-135.

the arms of Sarpedon, that Patroclus had taken from him:
again the prizes function as reminders of exploits described
earlier in the poem, cf. 16.663–5.

which I took from Asteropaeus: cf. 23.560 (with note).

that the mighty Eëtion used to throw . . . together with his other treasures: another echo of Achilles' past exploits; for his killing of Eëtion, Andromache's father, see especially 6.413-28.

[its usefulness will last . . . it will be there for them](#): the idea is that the iron will be used to make tools for the farmers, and that no other iron will be needed for five years. Modern scholars have worried that an isolated farm might not have had a forge, but it seems unlikely that Achilles would have worried about such practicalities: his speech is a display of largesse.

BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

Achilles cannot sleep; at dawn he drags Hector's corpse three times round the tomb of Patroclus, then leaves it there face-down in the dust (1-21). The gods take pity on Hector and debate whether Hermes should steal his body; after twelve days Zeus decides to send Thetis as a messenger to Achilles: obediently, she tells her son that he must release Hector's corpse (22-137). Zeus then sends Iris as a messenger to Priam; she finds the king in deepest grief (138-87). Following her orders, Priam tells his sons to prepare a wagon so that he may carry ransom to Achilles; Hecuba is alarmed by this plan, but Zeus sends a good omen (188-321). Hermes meets Priam on his way to Achilles' hut and escorts him there (322-467). When Priam appears, Achilles has just finished eating: the old man clasps his knees, kisses his hands in supplication, and Achilles pushes him gently away—they both weep (468-512). Achilles then raises Priam, recognizing in the old man an image of his own father (513-51). Priam asks for the immediate release of Hector's body; Achilles warns him not to provoke him, then makes arrangements for the body to be returned, apologizing to Patroclus (552-95). Achilles quotes to Priam the story of Niobe, and invites him to eat: after their meal the two men gaze at each other in wonder,

then Priam asks for a place to sleep and Achilles goes to bed with Briseïs (596–676). Hermes wakes up Priam and escorts him out of the Achaean camp; Cassandra sees him returning with Hector's body and spreads the news; Andromache and Hecuba come to meet him (677–717). Professional singers begin the lament for Hector, followed by Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen (718–75). The Trojans collect wood for nine days, and on the tenth they set light to the pyre; finally they hold a funeral feast for Hector (776–804).

he had insulted the goddesses . . . fatal lust: the only explicit reference to the judgement of Paris in the *Iliad*.

one whom I myself | raised and nurtured: this detail is mentioned only here, and seems designed to explain why Hera should intervene in favour of Thetis (of whom she was so suspicious at the beginning of the poem). Hera's upbringing of Thetis features in later texts (e.g. Apollonius, *Argonautica* 4.790-8). In a fragment from the early epic *Cypria*, Thetis refuses marriage with Zeus as a favour to Hera.

between Samothrace | and rocky Imbros: the poet displays his knowledge even of the depths of the sea, cf. note to 13.32.

and his head . . . as he grovelled on the ground: cf. 22.414.

[ruling from Mount Ida](#): cf. note to 3.276.

the four-wheeled wagon . . . swiftly through the city: Idaeus drives a four-wheel wagon drawn by mules; Priam drives a light, two-wheel chariot drawn by horses.

[delusion](#): cf. note to 19.91.

Taking hold of the old man's hand he gently pushed him away: Achilles' initial reaction is to push Priam aside, i.e. reject his supplication.

There are two jars standing on Zeus' threshold . . . mortals:
these famous lines express the idea that mortals can either experience a mixture of good and evil, or undiluted evil; there are several references to these lines in later Greek literature.

all that is bounded out to sea . . . supreme in wealth and in sons: Achilles defines the southern (Lesbos), eastern (Phrygia), northern and western (Hellespont) boundaries of Priam's kingdom. In Homer, 'the Hellespont' is used of the sea west and north of Troy, not just the Dardanelles. *Macar*: the legendary founder and king of Lesbos.

You must know that even lovely-haired Niobe thought of food: the poet selects only the most relevant aspects of the story of Niobe, and seems to have adapted it quite radically so as to turn it into a close parallel for Priam's situation. The main point of the story is to invite Priam to eat, even in his bereavement: Achilles himself refused to eat after the death of Patroclus (cf. 19.205-14 and 314-55). He is now imparting a lesson he has only just learned.

Achelous: here the word refers to the water flowing from the rock identified as Niobe, i.e. her tears. On Achelous as a synonym for water, cf. note to 21.194-5.

rolling in the dung in the stalls of my courtyard: cf. 22.414 and 24.162–5. Similarly, Achilles reacted to Patroclus' death with an act of self-defilement: 18.22–7.

in a bantering tone: it was normal practice to offer guests a bed under the portico. In this case, it is hard to see how Priam could escape the notice of night-visitors when sleeping there: the bantering draws attention to this. Achilles knows that his guest must leave by night (and this is what Priam actually does); his speech thus hints at the reasons for Priam's imminent departure, while still making a hospitable gesture.

he stood over Priam's head: see note to 2.20.

or else some Achaean | will seize and hurl you from the walls: Astyanax will indeed die in this manner. The lost cyclic poems *Iliupersis* and *Little Iliad* described in detail how Astyanax was hurled from the city walls; the episode was also the subject of an early seventh-century vase painting; for a later account, cf. Euripides, *Trojan Women* 721-5 and 1134-5.

[this is now the twentieth year](#): twenty is a standard figure in Homer, here it means 'a long time', 'more than ten years'. The events narrated in the *Iliad* take place in the tenth year of the Trojan War; Helen's reckoning seems to take account of some episodes that happened between her abduction and the beginning of the war itself. Odysseus returns home in the twentieth year since he left, according to the *Odyssey*; that chronology is not strictly compatible with this one.

INDEX OF PERSONAL NAMES

In this translation Greek names are generally Latinized (e.g. Achilles) and the Latin forms are sometimes Anglicized (e.g. Priam rather than Priamus); since practice in the treatment of Greek names in English is not fixed, a degree of flexibility allows familiar forms to be used in preference to a strictly consistent, but more artificial system.

The index aims to provide full guidance to readers, but does not list every mention of each character. References below are to the book and line number in the translation.

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INTRODUCTION

VIVID, painful, and direct, the *Iliad* is one of the most influential poems of all time. It has continuously featured in the school curriculum for two-and-a-half millennia; and, even before then, audiences regularly heard it performed at public festivals and in private houses. The success of the *Iliad* is astonishing, particularly because this poem is neither easy nor pleasant. Already in antiquity, listeners struggled to understand its language, and sometimes fell asleep during performances. And yet the difficulties posed by the diction and sheer length of the poem are insignificant when compared to the demands that the *Iliad* makes on our hearts and minds. This poem confronts, with unflinching clarity, many issues that we had rather forget altogether: the failures of leadership, the destructive power of beauty, the brutalizing impact of war, and—above all—our ultimate fate of death. That the *Iliad* has been so widely heard and read is not just a testament to its immense power. It also speaks of the commitment of its many readers, who have turned to it in order to understand something about their own life, death, and humanity.

The composition of Homeric epic

It is not at all clear when or how the *Iliad* was composed, or what purpose it might have served. If no literature from ancient Greece survived, we certainly would not expect it to

start with a monumental poem about the anger of Achilles. We would rather assume that it began with shorter compositions destined for specific occasions (for example, wedding songs and funeral laments), and answering practical purposes such as courtship, party entertainment, and martial exhortation. We know that those kinds of compositions did exist, and indeed the *Iliad* makes reference to them. What it does not do is explain its own existence. Scholars have ferociously debated the origins of the *Iliad*, partly because the poem reveals so little about them. At a very general level, the poem shows awareness of material circumstances not found before the later eighth or early seventh century BCE, such as temples and cult statues, narrative art, and knowledge of the world extending from Thrace to Phoenicia and Egypt. This gives a *terminus post quem*: the poem cannot have been composed much before 700 BCE.

Some historians argue that the rapidly changing social and political circumstances of the early seventh century demanded an intense exploration of authority, and that the *Iliad* answers to that need. Even a brief summary of the plot shows that the poem is indeed much concerned with how authority is established, questioned, and maintained. It opens with a startling invocation to the Muse:

Sing, goddess, the anger of Achilles, Peleus' son,
the accursed anger which brought the Achaeans
countless agonies...

Achilles' anger inflicts countless agonies not on the enemy, the Trojans—but on his own side, the Greeks, or rather 'Achaeans' as Homer calls them.¹ The reason for his anger is quickly explained. The narrative is set sometime towards the end of the Trojan War, and starts with the arrival of a priest of Apollo at the Achaean camp: he has come to ransom his daughter Chryseïs, who was captured by the

Achaeans in a raid, and assigned to Agamemnon as a slave. Agamemnon refuses to release her, claiming that he finds her more enjoyable than his own wife, and threatens her father. Outraged by Agamemnon's behaviour, Apollo sends a plague that devastates the Achaean army. Eventually, Agamemnon agrees to release Chryseïs to appease the god, but demands recompense for his loss—in the form of Achilles' own slave Briseïs. Achilles is so angry at this demand that he comes close to killing Agamemnon, though Athena restrains him, and he decides to withdraw from the war instead. The poem shows how, without him, the Achaeans suffer heavy losses on the battlefield, and the Trojans come close to burning their ships. In the face of imminent defeat, Agamemnon offers to return Briseïs and to add many more gifts besides, but Achilles rejects an embassy detailing Agamemnon's offers. It is only after the death of his closest friend Patroclus that Achilles returns to the fighting. He is determined to avenge him by killing Hector, best of the Trojans. His mother Thetis warns him that he will die soon after Hector, but Achilles returns to the battlefield regardless. He kills Hector, lashes his body to his chariot, and drags it to his hut. The poem ends when Priam, Hector's father, arrives at the Achaean camp and offers ransom to Achilles in return for Hector's body. Achilles is reminded of his own father, another old man who will never see his son again. He sends Priam back with Hector's body, and the women lead the funeral laments for him. As the last line in the poem says,

So they conducted the funeral rites for Hector,
breaker of horses.

Clearly, the *Iliad* is deeply concerned with leaders and their people. The countless agonies of the Achaeans are told in painful detail: they die when Agamemnon offends the priest and Apollo sends the plague—and they die again

when Achilles quarrels with Agamemnon and withdraws from the fighting. The Trojans die too, even more copiously. Hector's death is the most affecting in the whole poem, partly because its consequences for his wife, his baby son, and the entire Trojan community are made very clear. The death of Hector symbolizes the fall of the city itself. Historians point out that, in the palatial culture of the late Bronze Age, authority was diffuse, and that this might have inspired stories like the *Iliad*; they also argue that the rapid social and political changes of the seventh century—when we can trace expanding communities, new settlements, increased trade and travel—provide an appropriate context for a poetic exploration of authority.² This seems right, but the issues explored in the *Iliad* remain interesting and relevant in later times too. The common soldier Thersites is ridiculed and humiliated in the assembly; commander-in-chief Agamemnon is exposed, in the narrative, as authoritarian and weak; Achilles, in the extremity of his behaviour, seems inhuman even to the gods; and Hector, by his own admission, fails his people. Depending on how we read these characters, we can attach different political meanings to the *Iliad*. The main point is that no interpretation leads to a single original audience, or to a specific political agenda in support of which the poem must have been composed. Flawed leaders like Agamemnon are always interesting; and critics of authority, like Achilles and Thersites, are never entirely comfortable. The *Iliad* tells a story of universal appeal. This is something that the ancient Greeks themselves articulated in their earliest responses to the poem. The philosopher Xenophanes, writing in the sixth century BCE, described Homer as a universal teacher since time immemorial.³

However uncertain the exact context in which the *Iliad* was composed, it is clear that it was aimed at a broad and committed audience. The *Iliad* is more than 15,000 lines long,

and it would have taken approximately three full days (or nights) to perform it in its entirety.⁴ Performances of this kind must have required some infrastructure and organization—and we know that, from the sixth century onwards, they received institutional support. The Athenian tyrant Pisistratus, or one of his sons, decreed that the Homeric poems should be recited at the most important city festival, the Great Panathenaea.⁵ Every four years, at a feast in honour of their patron goddess, the Athenians listened to the *Iliad*. We do not have as much information about Homeric performances in other cities, but we know they took place. Several sources describe professional epic reciters, known as ‘rhapsodes’, travelling from city to city and performing Homeric poetry at public festivals and private gatherings.⁶ The earliest authors known to have discussed Homer come from opposite ends of the Greek-speaking world: Xenophanes came from Colophon in Asia Minor, and Theagenes, another early interpreter of Homer, came from Rhegium in southern Italy. The sixth-century poet Simonides of Ceos (an island in the Aegean Sea) explicitly praised and quoted Homer in his own poetry. The material record confirms the picture suggested by our written evidence: it preserves late archaic images inspired by the *Iliad* and originating from several different places.⁷ All this evidence provides a *terminus ante quem* for the *Iliad*: by the late sixth century BCE the poem was well known.

Scholars continue to debate the exact date of the *Iliad*. Their disagreements stem, in part, from a difference in emphasis: some seek to pinpoint the original contribution of an early poet, others focus on the earliest documented context for Homeric recitation, which is the Panathenaea. Beyond these differences, all Homerists agree that sixth-century performances and texts must have captured something considerably older. An examination of the language and style of Homeric epic shows that it stems from

a very long tradition of oral poetry. Homeric Greek is an artificial mixture of several different dialects.

It was never used by any real-life community, but rather developed, over several centuries, for the purpose of singing the deeds of gods and men.⁸ The predominant dialect is Ionic, but there is also a strong Aeolic component. Linguists identify Euboean and Boeotian influences too, and point to several Attic elements, though many of these concern matters of spelling, and therefore testify to the influence of a written Athenian text, rather than to an early Attic contribution to epic diction. Compared to modern linguists, ancient Homeric scholars were even more wide-ranging in their characterization of Homeric diction: they claimed that Homer knew *all* the Greek dialects. This is an exaggeration that reflects, in part, the status of the *Iliad* as a poem that appealed to all the Greeks. It also captures the astounding linguistic richness and variety of Homeric epic: there are very many ways to say 'he was' or 'to be', for example. Some Homeric expressions and forms seem relatively recent, and some are very old: there may even be remnants of Mycenaean Greek, a language that was spoken in the second millennium BCE. At times, it seems that even the poet of the *Iliad* is unsure about the exact meaning of some of the inherited expressions he uses. They sound grand and heroic but—for the sake of clarity—he adds possible synonyms and etymologizing explanations inside the poem. These internal explanations are, of course, lost in translation: reading the *Iliad* in the original Greek gives a much better sense of the historic depth and richness of its language. References to material objects, in the poem, offer a good analogy for the effect of Homeric words: many artefacts fit a late eighth- or early seventh-century context, but some are much older. At 10.261–5, for example, Homer describes a boar's-tusk helmet that fell out of use after the fifteenth century BCE. Linguistic and archaeological evidence

shows that the epic tradition developed in the course of many centuries, and went through very different linguistic environments, social contexts, and material cultures.

One of the most striking features of Homeric epic, and the tradition from which it stems, is its repetitiveness. Achilles is called 'swift-footed' again and again and again—even when he sulks, motionless, in his hut. Hector is 'Hector of the glittering helmet'. After a meal, Homeric characters always 'put away the desire for eating and drinking'. At daybreak, 'early-born Dawn with her rosy fingers appears'. Comparative studies have established that such repeated phrases, or 'formulae', help bards compose poetry in real time, as they perform in front of an audience. In the 1930s two American scholars—Milman Parry and Albert Lord—travelled to what was then Yugoslavia, and recorded the performances of illiterate Bosnian singers in local coffee-houses.⁹ They showed that these singers were able to recite poems as long as the *Iliad*—not by remembering a fixed script, but by combining formulaic expressions, and by arranging them into well-established narrative patterns or 'themes'. Formulae and themes were, to a large extent, inherited: they had developed over generations, in order to enable singers to compose, or re-compose, their poems in the course of live performances. The singer had at his disposal a stock of different formulae that described the same character, situation, thing, or action, each of which had a specific metrical shape. He could choose the appropriate formula depending on how many beats he needed in order to reach the end of the line. Parry showed that, in Homeric epic, there is usually just one formula describing a particular character or action in any given number of beats. This formulaic economy enables singers to get to the end of the line, without having to take too long thinking about different options for describing an action or character. For example, depending on how many beats he

needs to get to the end of the line, the poet can say 'Achilles', or 'glorious Achilles', or 'swift-footed Achilles', or 'swift-footed glorious Achilles'. Parry and Lord made a tremendous contribution to our understanding of Homeric epic, but their work also posed new problems and questions.

One problem concerns the meaning and interpretation of Homeric formulae. Parry himself reached rather discouraging conclusions on that issue: he argued that some traditional formulae have little meaning, that audiences feel indifferent towards them, and that they are perhaps best left untranslated. This sort of conclusion does not seem entirely satisfactory: formulaic expressions are not equivalent to an instrumental interlude, or a bit of humming, or some other wordless rhythmical 'filling' that enables singers to keep the performance going. They are words, and affect audiences through their meaning, as well as through their rhythmical qualities. It is true that formulae are not always sensitive to context, but that can in itself become a poetic resource. For example, 'swift-footed' Achilles refuses to leave his hut for most of the *Iliad*: this tension between his traditional description and what he actually does draws attention to his problematic behaviour. Most of the time, traditional expressions unobtrusively shape the narrative, but sometimes the poet brings them into sharp focus. At 6.467-70, for example, baby Astyanax realizes that his father is indeed 'Hector of the gleaming helmet': he looks at the terrifying thing on top of his father's head, and screams. There is often a dynamic, expressive tension between the traditional formulations used by the poet, and the specific situations he describes. Formulae fasten characters and things to specific qualities, but the poet tells a far less stable story. Leaders, for example, are called 'shepherds of the people', but in the *Iliad* the people perish, inexorably.¹⁰ It seems then that the tools of oral poetry, far from being a

convenient but stilted aid to composition, enable the poet to tell his story powerfully and idiomatically.^{[11](#)}

The second problem raised by the comparative study of oral poetry is that the *Iliad* is not, actually, an oral poem: what we have is a written text. Scholars have long debated the possible role of writing in the composition of Homeric epic; the German philologist Friedrich August Wolf famously tackled the issue in his *Prolegomena ad Homerum* (1795), a work that inaugurated modern classical scholarship. The earliest examples of Greek alphabetic writing date to the second half of the eighth century BCE. The most interesting piece of evidence, for Homerists, is a modest clay cup found in Ischia, an island off the coast of Naples. It bears an inscription which proudly announces in verse: 'I am the cup of Nestor . . .' There is no physical resemblance between this modest vessel and the gold cup of Nestor in the *Iliad*, but the inscription may well be a playful reference to some poem about the legendary Nestor and his cup. Some have argued that the extremely regular layout of the verse inscription may reflect the influence of epic texts written on papyrus or leather, though such texts (if they existed) need not have been our *Iliad*. It seems, then, that the *Iliad* harnesses the resources of a rich and ancient tradition of oral poetry, but also comes into existence at a time when writing was beginning to develop. Quite what influence this new technique had on the composition and preservation of the poem is something we will never know for sure. As Albio Cassio points out, in a balanced and judicious assessment of the evidence, our *Iliad* is 'likely to be the result of extremely complicated processes involving both orality and writing, which we can no longer reconstruct'.^{[12](#)}

Our own interest in writing may ultimately lead to wrong assumptions about its role and importance in early Greece. In the *Iliad*, writing (or something close to it) is depicted as a nasty business: at 6.168–70 Proetus sends Bellerophon into

exile, giving him a folded tablet in which he has inscribed the order to kill the bearer of the message. This is the only reference to writing in the whole poem: there is no hint, in Homeric epic, that writing may be used to record great deeds, or help singers compose their songs. This may simply be because the Homeric poems are set in a distant, heroic past, where writing did not yet exist or was just being invented by resourceful crooks like Proetus. The actual context of composition of the *Iliad* may have been quite different from the situation depicted inside the poem. What remains true beyond all speculation, however, is that the poet of the *Iliad* describes his own work in terms of singing, and expects future generations to hear about what happened at Troy by listening.

The poet's voice

From antiquity to the present, there has been much speculation about the author of the *Iliad*. The Greeks considered him the greatest poet that ever lived, but knew nothing certain about him: the earliest sources that mention his name are speculative and contradictory. They depict him as a blind beggar and a divine singer; someone who suffered many indignities in life, and composed the most beautiful poetry. These ancient portraits of Homer tell us something important about the early reception of epic, but say little about the actual composition of the *Iliad*.¹³ In some ways, the situation today is rather similar: those who attempt to give a detailed portrait of Homer often reveal more about themselves than about Homeric epic. Albert Lord, for example, imagined Homer as an illiterate singer dictating his poems to a scribe. As many have noted, this Homer closely resembles a Bosnian singer performing for

Lord himself. Lord wrote under dictation, and also used audio recording. The situation in early Greece was different: writing was infrequent, slow, and expensive. We therefore do not know to what degree the circumstances of Bosnian singers and American scholars in the 1930s offer a fitting parallel for those in which the *Iliad* was actually composed and written down.

Rather than looking for the poet *of* the *Iliad*, then, it seems more fruitful to look for the poet *in* the *Iliad*, and listen to his voice. In the opening invocation to the Muse, the poet confidently asks the goddess to sing about the anger of Achilles, from the time when he quarrelled with Agamemnon. After the proem, the story begins precisely with the quarrel: from that moment onwards, the voice of the poet and that of the Muse blend together. It is only when the poet approaches a particularly difficult or important topic that he again puts some distance between himself and the goddess, and asks for help. This happens, for example, at the beginning of the Catalogue of Ships (2.484–93):

Tell me now, Muses who have your homes on
Olympus—
for you are goddesses, and are present, and know
everything,
while we hear only rumour, and know nothing—
who were the commanders and princes of the Danaans.
As for the soldiery, I could not describe or name them,
not even if I had ten tongues and ten mouths,
an indestructible voice, and a bronze heart within me,
unless the Muses of Olympus, daughters of aegis-
wearing
Zeus, were to recount all those who came to besiege
Ilium.
So I shall relate the ships' captains and the number of
their ships.

The Muses alone 'are present, and know everything'. Without their help, the poet is in the same position as his audience: 'we hear only rumour, and know nothing.' This is a declaration of dependence, and a plea for knowledge. The Muses are close to the poet, and they help him perform his song. But they are also 'present' in a different sense: they know everything with the reliability of an eyewitness. The poet himself has no sure knowledge about those who fought at Troy, because—as he repeatedly points out—they lived long before him, and were far superior to 'men as mortals now are'. It is only with the help of the Muses that he can give a precise account of what happened at Troy, 'as if he had been there himself'.¹⁴

Many details in the narrative speak of the poet's direct access to his subject matter. For example, he occasionally addresses his own characters.¹⁵ These apostrophes are so startling, that ancient and modern readers have thought they betray something about the poet—a special affection for some of his characters, for example. Not all direct addresses seem to express affection, but they all add to the immediacy of the story. The poet is, at times, so close to his characters that he even talks to them. By contrast, he never addresses his real audience. He never asks for attention, for example, or flatters his listeners. Rather than talking to or about his audience, the poet gives them a direct insight into what happened during the Trojan War.

In general, the *Iliad* conveys a clear sense of the poet's presence at Troy, and even of the specific vantage-point from which he observes the action: he views the battlefield from above, facing Troy and keeping his back to the sea. The curved coastline, with its beached Achaean ships, is arranged before him 'like a theatre'.¹⁶ When he describes what happens 'on the left' or 'on the right' of the battlefield, he is always speaking from that specific viewpoint. He is, however, not confined to observing things from there: he

can zoom in and describe, for example, how Polypoetes' spear breaks through Damasus' forehead, and makes pulp of the brain inside (12.181-7). He can observe at close quarters how a pair of horses trip over a branch, breaking free of their chariot—and then zoom out in order to show how the horses join a chaotic, general stampede towards Troy (6.38-41). Contemporary readers often comment on the cinematic qualities of Homer's poetry;¹⁷ but there were no helicopters in antiquity from which to take aerial shots, and no cameras zooming in or out. For the ancient Greeks, Homer's powers were truly divine: they called him *theios aoidos*, 'the divine singer', and with good reason. Apart from the poet, only the gods could view things from above, or observe the fighting at close quarters, objectively, and without fear of death. The poet himself makes that point at 4.539-44, where he claims that someone who entered the battlefield under divine protection, and could not be touched by missiles, would agree with his own assessment of how hard Trojans and Achaeans fought.

Divine inspiration, then, is not just a matter of conventional invocations to the Muses: it tells us something crucial about how the poet views things. The Catalogue of Ships, for example, is a dazzling display of the poet's knowledge, and of his powers of visualization. He starts in Aulis and spirals out, mentioning well over a hundred place-names, and organizing them in a way that shows he has a clear mental picture of the whole of Greece.¹⁸ The poet's encyclopaedic command of his subject matter emerges from many other details. For example, he always mentions by name those who die on the battlefield, and often adds a unique detail about them: Protesilaus leaves behind a wife 'tearing her cheeks in grief | in a half-built house' (2.700-1). Axylus used to live by a main road, 'and he would entertain everyone' (6.13). These details suggest that the poet knows more about his characters than he chooses to tell. We would

long to hear more about them: we perceive our loss—precisely at the moment when they die.¹⁹

The many similes that punctuate the narrative also tell us something important about the poet's knowledge. Some images occur in many variations and evoke the grandness of the epic world: lions and hunters, for example, feature prominently not just in the *Iliad*, but also more generally in early Greek and Near Eastern art and poetry. Other similes are more specific, and suggest a keen sense of observation. At 5.902–4, for example, Ares' blood coagulates as quickly 'as when fig-juice thickens white milk when . . . a man stirs it'. At 17.389–97 the Trojans and the Achaeans pull Patroclus' body in opposite directions, like leather-tanners stretching a skin. At 23.712–13 the Achaeans grasp each other's hands 'like crossing rafters that a renowned carpenter has | fitted in the roof of a high house'. At 23.760–3 Odysseus runs behind Ajax

. . . as close as the weaving-rod of a fine-girdled woman is to her breast as she deftly draws it tight with her hands,
pulling the spool along the warp, and holding it close to her breast . . .

In this simile, in particular, there is a palpable sense that the woman is being observed as she works. She is intent on her weaving, and we can imagine someone looking at her—and noticing how close she pulls the weaving-rod to her breast. Just so, in the poet's vision, Odysseus pulls close to Ajax in the foot-race.

Often the poet of the *Iliad* describes things from the perspective of an implicit observer: narratologists call this technique 'focalization'. At times the same scene is focalized through different characters in close succession. At 6.401, for example, when Hector looks at his baby son Astyanax, the poet adopts the language of a doting parent,

piling on words of endearment for the little boy. Only a little later, however, when it is Astyanax who looks at his father, the poet shares the bewildered, terrified perspective of the baby boy (6.468–70). Although the poet has great powers of empathy—even for characters so young they cannot speak—he never loses his overall control of the narrative. He always knows, for example, what the gods are doing and, even more importantly, what they are planning. The characters, by contrast, have a very limited understanding of the gods, and are often deluded about their own circumstances. We see them struggle, in their ignorance, with their hopes and fears—while the poet tells us exactly what is in store for them.

There is only one character in the poem who seems able to look at the situation with the same clarity and detachment as the poet: Helen, daughter of Zeus. This is how Homer first introduces the beautiful woman who caused the Trojan War. While her two husbands, Menelaus and Paris, prepare to face each other in single combat, the goddess Iris goes to look for her (3.125–8):

She found Helen in her hall; she was weaving a great web,
a red double cloak, and on it she was working the struggles
of the horse-breaking Trojans and the bronze-shirted Achaeans
that they were undergoing for her sake at the hands of Ares.

Like the poet, Helen weaves a picture of the Trojan War. She even sees herself as the subject of future poetry (6.357–8):

Zeus has given us a wretched portion, so that in time hereafter

we may become a theme for the songs of generations yet to come.

And yet, not even Helen shares the poet's full and objective knowledge of all things. At 3.234-42, for example, she scans the battlefield looking for her brothers among the Achaean troops, and wonders why she cannot see them. At that point the poet tells us that they died in Lacedaemon, before the Trojan War had even started.

The poet often draws attention to the ignorance of his own characters. Most famously, he describes Andromache making arrangements for Hector to have a bath, when he is already dead (22.440-6):

She was at her loom in the tall house's innermost part, weaving
a red double cloak, and working a pattern of flowers into it.
She called out through the house to her lovely-haired servants
to set a great tripod over the fire, so that Hector might have
a warm bath when he returned from the fighting—poor innocent that she was, and did not know that grey-eyed Athena
had beaten him down at Achilles' hands, far away from baths.

Even when the poet does not offer explicit comments of this kind, it is clear that he and his audience share an understanding that the characters inside the poem do not have. This understanding stems, in part, from a shared knowledge of the epic tradition: audiences of all times always knew that Troy was destined to fall, and that the Achaeans would suffer greatly on their return home.

The main effect of our knowledge, and of the characters' lack of it, is a sense of tragic irony—a realization that mortals have no sure understanding of the gods, or even of their own situation. For once, when listening to the poet, we share his divine perspective—but the spectacle is not simply entertaining, because the pain, suffering, and uncertainty of Homer's characters are ultimately our own.

Achilles' anger

The very first line of the *Iliad* announces a grand poem about a very specific issue: the anger of Achilles. The poem describes only a handful of days towards the end of the Trojan War: it does not include the fall of Troy, or even the death of Achilles. By leaving those events outside the remit of his narrative, the poet invites us to focus on his chosen theme. The first word in the original Greek text is *mēnin*, a rare term for anger which describes the vengeful wrath typical of the gods. Soon after the proem, the same word occurs again: at 1.75 it describes Apollo's angry reaction to Agamemnon's insults, and his decision to inflict a plague on the Achaeans. This verbal correspondence underlines a more general truth: at the beginning of the poem Achilles behaves very much like a god.²⁰ When Agamemnon insults him, he plans the extermination of the Achaeans. He asks his mother, the goddess Thetis, to enlist the help of Zeus, and the supreme god agrees to his plan: the Achaeans will perish as long as Achilles refuses to fight. No ordinary mortal could react to Agamemnon's arrogance by sending a personal envoy to Mount Olympus—but Achilles is the son of a goddess, and behaves accordingly. The problem is that Achilles is mortal: the fact that he must die complicates his

relationship to Agamemnon, and ultimately compromises his plan.

When Agamemnon realizes that without Achilles he will lose his army, his honour, and the war, he offers to return Briseïs, together with countless other gifts. The women, cities, tripods, and other goods that Agamemnon promises to Achilles in book 9 betoken a transferral of honour on a quite unprecedented scale. And yet, Achilles refuses Agamemnon's offer, pointing out that no amount of wealth can compensate for the loss of his life (9.400-9):

. . . I do not think
that anything is of equal worth to my life, not even all
the wealth
they say that Ilium, that well-populated city, once
possessed
in time of peace before the sons of the Achaeans came,
nor all the wealth that the stone threshold of the archer
Phoebus Apollo guards inside his temple in rocky Pytho.
Cattle and flocks of sturdy sheep can be got by raiding,
and
tripods and herds of chestnut horses can be made one's
own,
but raiding and getting cannot bring back a man's life
when once it has passed beyond the barrier of his teeth.

The god Apollo may be content with guarding his riches 'in rocky Pytho' (a rare reference to his sanctuary at Delphi); but the mortal Achilles must guard something far more precious to him: his life.

As the poem unfolds, Achilles' mortality is thrown into sharp relief, and it becomes increasingly clear that his fate is bound to that of other mortals. Already in book 11, soon after he has rejected Agamemnon's offer, Achilles notices the wounded Achaean leaders as they return to camp, and

sends Patroclus to make enquiries. His friend returns with terrible news, and asks Achilles to let him, at least, return to the battlefield and lend his support. Achilles is worried about Patroclus' safety but agrees to his request, and gives him his own armour for protection.

Soon after, Hector kills Patroclus and takes Achilles' armour as spoils. At that point Achilles enters the battlefield again, not because his attitude to Agamemnon has changed (several details in the narrative suggest that it has not), but because revenge now matters to him more than life itself. According to Apollo, Achilles' reaction to the death of Patroclus is excessive and inexcusable. This is what he says to the other gods at 24.44-54:

‘. . . Achilles has killed pity, and there is no respect in him,
respect that both greatly harms and also benefits men.
Any man, I suppose, is likely to have lost someone even dearer
to him than this, a brother born of the same mother, or even a son,
but in the end he gives up his weeping and lamentation, because the Fates have placed in men a heart that endures; but
this Achilles first robs glorious Hector of his life and then ties him
behind his chariot and drags him round the burial-mound of his
dear companion. Yet he should know that there is nothing fine
or good about this; let him beware of our anger, great man
though he is, because in his fury he is outraging mute earth.’

In Apollo's view, Achilles must stop defiling Hector's body, and start to consider his pain in relation to that of other mortals. It may be that his suffering is not as great as that of a man who loses a brother, or a son. Later in book 24 Achilles comes precisely to that realization—when he sees Priam, and thinks about the imminent bereavement of his own father.

All this suggests that Achilles may not be so special after all. His anger is as devastating as that of the gods, but his confrontation with death is something we all recognize. There are, in fact, many parallels for the story of Achilles—some are embedded in the poem itself, and others belong to broader ancient traditions of poetry. For example, Phoenix tries to persuade Achilles to accept Agamemnon's gifts by telling him the story of Meleager—who refused to go to war out of anger, but who ultimately returned to the fighting in order to defend his wife and home (9.529–99). Here too a young man initially opts out, rejecting the social obligations placed upon him, but eventually must recognize the bonds of affection that link him to others, and which ultimately lead him to face death. Quite how hard Phoenix presses the details of Meleager's story in order to turn it into a fitting example for Achilles is something that scholars have long debated. What remains clear is that, just like Phoenix, the poet himself invites us to see the story of Achilles as an example of a wider truth. In the early Greek tradition other narratives echoed that of Achilles. For example, the early epic poem *Aethiopis*, now largely lost, told the story of Memnon, king of the Ethiopians. Memnon too was the son of a goddess, Dawn, and of a mortal man, Tithonus—and he too had to die. These echoes suggest that the story of Achilles' anger, though specific in the detail, has its roots in a wider ancient understanding of what it means to be mortal. This emerges with special clarity when we compare the *Iliad* with the *Epic of Gilgamesh*.

This extraordinary Babylonian poem resembles the *Iliad* not just in some striking details, but in overall conception.²¹ Like Achilles, Gilgamesh is of mixed human and divine ancestry, and the greatest man that ever lived. When his closest friend Enkidu dies, he resolves to go in search of eternal life. He undertakes a long and difficult journey to meet Utnapishtim, the survivor of a great flood and the only man who has been granted immortality. In the Old Babylonian version of the poem he meets a wise ale-wife in the course of his journey, who tells him:

‘You will not find the eternal life you seek.
When the gods created mankind,
they appointed death for mankind,
kept eternal life in their own hands.
So, Gilgamesh, let your stomach be full,
day and night enjoy yourself in every way,
every day arrange for pleasures.
Day and night, dance and play,
wear fresh clothes.
Keep your head washed, bathe in water,
appreciate the child who holds your hand,
let your wife enjoy herself in your lap.’²²

In the extremity of his pain, Gilgamesh does nothing of the sort. Immediately after Enkidu’s death he tears out his hair, casts off his fine clothes, and roams in the wilderness wearing an animal skin. He continues to travel until he finds Utnapishtim—and it is only at that point that he learns a fundamental lesson. In the Standard Babylonian version, Utnapishtim tells him that he will never find the secret of eternal life, and then sends him home with a fresh set of clothes.

Achilles’ physical reaction to bereavement closely resembles that of Gilgamesh. When Patroclus dies, he

defiles himself. He refuses to eat, and cannot sleep (24.1-10):

. . . the assembly broke up and the people dispersed,
each
company to its swift ships, and all their thoughts were of
food
and the pleasure of sweet sleep; but Achilles wept
ceaselessly
as he remembered his dear companion, and sleep that
subdues
all took no hold of him. He tossed and turned, thinking
with
longing of Patroclus, of his manhood and his valiant
strength, of
all that he had accomplished with him and the trials he
had endured,
of wars of men undergone and the arduous crossing of
seas.
As he called all this to mind he let fall huge tears,
lying at one time on his side and at another on his back,
and then again on his face; then he would rise to his
feet . . .

Achilles' mother suggests to him that he should sleep with Briseïs, in an argument that, in essence, is the same as that of the ale-wife in the Old Babylonian version of *Gilgamesh*. This is what Thetis says at 24.130-2:

It is indeed a good thing to lie with a woman,
since your life will not be long and I shall lose you,
and already death and your harsh destiny stand beside
you.

Achilles seems inconsolable, but eventually does follow his mother's advice and sleeps with Briseïs. When Priam enters

his hut, he is eating. Priam, by contrast, is still feeling the rawest pain at the loss of Hector: he has just covered himself in dung—and has not eaten or slept since the death of his son. Eventually, Achilles persuades him to eat, drink, and sleep, telling him the story of Niobe—a mythical mother who lost her twelve children and yet managed (according to Achilles) to have a meal after that. Again it seems that Achilles adapts the details of Niobe's story in order to make his point; and yet what he is trying to say is a general truth about human life. That truth emerges clearly after Achilles and Priam have eaten together (24.628–32):

when they had put from themselves the desire for
food and drink
then Priam of Dardanus' line looked in amazement at
Achilles,
seeing how huge and handsome he was, for he seemed
like the gods;
and Achilles too was amazed at Priam of the line of
Dardanus,
seeing his noble appearance and hearing him speak.

The poet even says that Achilles and Priam took 'pleasure from looking at each other' (24.633). After their defilement, hunger, thirst, and sheer exhaustion, these two men share a meal and, in the calm that follows, reach beyond their own personal suffering. Their pleasure is an affirmation of life in the face of death.

The Trojan War

The *Iliad* tells the story of Achilles' anger, but also encompasses, within its narrow focus, the whole of the Trojan War. The title promises 'a poem about Ilium' (i.e.

Troy), and the poem lives up to that description. The first books recapitulate the origins and early stages of the Trojan War. The quarrel over Briseïs mirrors the original cause of the war, for it too is a fight between two men over one woman. The Catalogue of Ships in book 2 acts as a reminder of the expedition; book 3 introduces Helen and her two husbands; book 4 dramatizes how a private quarrel over a woman can become a war; in book 5 the fighting escalates; and book 6 takes us into the city of Troy. The narrative now looks forward to the time when the Achaeans will capture the city: it anticipates the end of the poem, and of the war itself. The bulk of the *Iliad* is devoted to the fighting on the battlefield. It describes only a few days of war, but the sheer scale of the narrative, and its relentless succession of deaths, come to represent the whole war.²³

The poet is specific about the horrors of the battlefield: wounds, for example, are described in precise and painful detail. At 13.567–9 Meriones pursues Adamas and stabs him ‘between the genitals and navel, in the place | where battle-death comes most painfully to wretched mortals’. At 15.489–500 Peneleos thrusts his spear through Ilioneus’ eye-socket, then cuts off his head and brandishes it aloft. At 20.469–1 Tros tries to touch Achilles’ knees in supplication, but Achilles stabs him

... in the liver with his sword,
and the liver slid out of his body, and the dark blood
from it
filled his lap ...

No Hollywood version of the *Iliad* is as graphic as the poem itself. Descriptions of the physical impact of war are matched by an unflinching psychological account of those who fight in it. Homer shows exactly what it takes to step forward in the first line of battle, towards the spear of the

enemy. He describes the adrenaline, the social conditioning, the self-delusion required.^{[24](#)} And the shame of failure, which is worse than death.^{[25](#)}

The truth and vividness of the *Iliad* have struck many readers. In her towering exploration of violence, Simone Weil, for example, calls the *Iliad* 'the most flawless of mirrors', because it shows how war 'makes the human being a thing quite literally, that is, a dead body. The *Iliad* never tires of showing that tableau.'^{[26](#)} Weil was writing in 1939: her *L'Illade ou le poème de la force* did not just describe the Trojan War; it anticipated the Second World War, and prophesied how it would again turn people into things. Just like Weil, women inside the *Iliad* make powerful statements against violence—and even against the courage of their own men. Hector's wife Andromache, for example, tells him that his own prowess will kill him, and that he will make her a widow (6.431–2). When confronted with his wife's words, Hector claims he would rather die on the battlefield than witness her suffering (6.464–5). He then tries to console her in the only way he knows: by imagining more wars. He picks up his baby son and prays that he may be stronger than him and, one day, bring home the spoils of the enemy, so that his mother may rejoice (6.476–81). This is how the poet Michael Longley, in the context of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, paraphrases Hector's prayer: he 'kissed the babbie and dandled him in his arms and | prayed that his son might grow up bloodier than him'.^{[27](#)}

The Trojan War, the Second World War, the Troubles: the *Iliad* is intertwined with all stories about all wars. Already in antiquity it was part of a wider tradition of poetry, which found its inspiration in the ruins of a Bronze Age city, well visible on the coast of Asia Minor.^{[28](#)}

The *Iliad* often refers to that wider tradition. For example, when Hector picks up his baby and dandles him in his arms, his gesture recalls that of an enemy soldier who will soon

pick up the little boy—and throw him off the walls of Troy. Other early poems described the death of Astyanax in a manner that clearly recalled his last meeting with his father. Some stories about the fall of Troy were known to the poet of the *Iliad* and his earliest audiences; others were inspired by it. As a result, the *Iliad* became more allusive and complex in the course of time.²⁹ This is how Zachary Mason describes the situation in a recent novel inspired by Homer:

It is not widely understood that the epics attributed to Homer were in fact written by the gods before the Trojan war—these divine books are the archetypes of that war rather than its history. In fact, there have been innumerable Trojan wars, each played out according to an evolving aesthetic, each representing a fresh attempt at bringing the terror of battle into line with the lucidity of the authorial intent. Inevitably, each particular war is a distortion of its antecedent, an image in a warped hall of mirrors.³⁰

Mirrors and distorted mirrors: what readers ask of the *Iliad* is whether things can be different. Whether we must imagine wars and more wars, like Hector when he prays for his son, or whether there can perhaps be peace—and even a poetics of peace. This is, for example, the insistent question of the German post-war poet Peter Handke, in *Der Himmel über Berlin*.³¹ The *Iliad* itself offers no clear answer, only fleeting images of peace in the form of distant memories, startling comparisons, and doomed aspirations. Hector runs past the place where the Trojan women used to wash their clothes before the war (22.153–9). Andromache wishes Hector had died in his own bed (24.743–5). Athena deflects an arrow like a mother brushing away a fly from her sleeping baby (4.129–33). On the shield of Achilles—which is a representation of the whole world—there is a city at war, but there is also a city at peace. There is a wedding, and the vintage, and a row of boys and girls dancing to music

(18.478–608). These images are precious, because they are so very rare.

NOTE ON THE TEXT AND EXPLANATORY MATERIALS

EDITING the *Iliad* is a difficult task because—as the Introduction points out—there are some open questions about the composition and transmission of the poem. Those who believe that Homer created a master copy of the *Iliad* in the late eighth or early seventh century BCE privilege readings that look old, find it easier to justify interventions that aim at consistency, and tend to emend or expunge passages or features that seem recent relative to other aspects of the text. Those who believe that the *Iliad* may stem from a more drawn-out process of textual fixation are prepared to allow for a less consistent and early-sounding text. The present translation is based on the critical edition by H. van Thiel, published by Olms-Weidmann in 1996: it presents the transmitted text with cautious editorial interventions. One of its advantages, for the purposes of this translation, is that it includes in square brackets passages that circulated in antiquity, but which are not transmitted, or only weakly attested, in the medieval manuscripts. These passages are not considered authentic by the editor, but tell us something about the early textual history of the *Iliad*: they have been included in this translation—which helpfully follows the line numeration of the original text—and left in square brackets. This makes them available, for the first time, to readers of the Oxford World's Classics.

The Explanatory Notes include succinct book summaries: they are meant to help the reader appreciate

the overall design and plot of the poem, and locate specific episodes in it. The notes clarify geographical and mythical references, offer brief accounts of ancient rituals and other practices to which the poem alludes, draw attention to echoes, allusions, and correspondences within the poem, and comment on some key passages and additional lines. They occasionally draw from ancient explanations and commentaries. Two maps offer minimal information on the geography of Greece and Asia Minor, and facilitate an appreciation of the Catalogue of Ships and the Catalogue of the Trojans and their Allies in the second book of the *Iliad*. Full, accurate, and up-to-date maps are available in the second volume of J. Latacz and A. Bierl, *Homers Ilias. Gesamtkommentar* (Munich and Leipzig, 2000—); this commentary is now the standard work of reference for any rigorous engagement with the *Iliad*. A short bibliography offers suggestions for further reading in English.

NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

THE translation respects as far as possible the line numeration of Homer's Greek, which means that references to the original text can easily be matched to the line numbers in the margin of this version. It does not claim to be poetry: my aim has been to use a straightforward English register and to keep closely to the Greek, allowing Homer to speak for himself—for example, in the use of repeated epithets and descriptions of recurrent scenes. I have tried to avoid importing alien imagery, and have preserved variations in sentence length. Similarly, I have kept clear of 'poeticizing' Homer at one extreme and reducing the scale of his invention to the level of a modern adventure story at the other. Both approaches, not unknown to recent translators, tend to get in the way of the poem's directness and power.

I have benefited greatly from the criticism and encouragement of friends in preparing this version. John Taylor and Tessa Smith gave me sound advice; Michael Clarke steered me expertly through drafts of the early books; and Barbara Graziosi's scholarship and ear for a telling phrase lie behind most pages. As always, my editor Judith Luna has been a constant support. Any surviving inaccuracies and infelicities are entirely my own.

Anthony Verity

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MAP 1. Greece



MAP 2. Asia Minor

¹ The Achaean army is made from contingents from the whole of Greece, but is never called 'Greek' in the poem. That word has a much more specific application in Homeric epic: it describes people coming from Hellas, in northern Greece (see Map 1). When describing the whole army, Homer uses three different collective names: Achaeans, Danaans, or Argives.

² For a good summary, see R. Osborne, 'Homer's Society', in R. Fowler (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Homer* (Cambridge, 2004), 206–19.

³ Fr. 10 in H. Diels and W. Kranz (eds.), *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 3 vols., 6th edn. (Berlin, 1951-2).

⁴ Many scholars have tried to reconstruct how the *Iliad* might have been performed, see e.g. O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings: The Shaping of the 'Iliad'* (Oxford, 1995).

⁵ See esp. [Plato], *Hipparchus* 228b and Lycurgus, *In Leocratem* 102.

⁶ For a vivid, if rather hostile, portrait of a rhapsode, see Plato's *Ion*.

⁷ The visual evidence for Iliadic scenes is collected in J. Burgess, *The Tradition of the Trojan War in Homer and the Epic Cycle* (Baltimore, 2001), 53–94.

⁸ On Homeric Greek, see further G. Horrocks, 'Homer's Dialect', in I. Morris and B. Powell (eds.), *A New Companion to Homer* (Leiden, 1997), 193–217.

⁹ See M. Parry, *The Making of Homeric Verse: The Collected Papers of Milman Parry* (Oxford, 1991), and A. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 2nd rev. edn. (Cambridge, Mass., 2000).

[10](#) See further J. Haubold, *Homer's People: Epic Poetry and Social Formation* (Cambridge, 2000).

¹¹ J. M. Foley makes this point very persuasively in *Homer's Traditional Art* (University Park, Pa., 1999); see further B. Graziosi and J. Haubold, *Homer: The Resonance of Epic* (London, 2005), and A. Kelly, *A Referential Commentary and Lexicon to Homer, 'Iliad VIII'* (Oxford, 2007).

[12](#) A. Cassio, 'Early Editions of the Greek Epics and Homeric Textual Criticism', in F Montanari (ed.), *Omero tremila anni dopo* (Rome, 2002), 114.

¹³ See B. Graziosi, *Inventing Homer: The Early Reception of Epic* (Cambridge, 2002).

[14](#) These are the words Odysseus uses when complimenting the blind singer Demodocus on the accuracy of his song about Troy (*Odyssey* 8.489–91): ‘You sing the fate of the Achaeans precisely, according to order; | what they did and endured and all they suffered, | as if you had been there yourself, or heard from someone who had.’

¹⁵ See e.g. 7.104 (Menelaus), 15.582 (Melanippus), 16.787 (Patroclus), 20.2 (Achilles), 20.152 (Apollo).

[16](#) This is the description of the ancient Homeric scholar Aristarchus, see Explanatory Notes, note to lines 14.30–6.

[17](#) On Homer and the cinema, see esp. M. M. Winkler (ed.), *Troy: from Homer's 'Iliad' to Hollywood Epic* (Oxford, 2007).

¹⁸ See Explanatory Notes, note to line 2.493, which is based on G. Danek, 'Der Schiffskatalog der Ilias: Form und Funktion', in H. Heftner and K. Tomaschitz (eds.), *Ad Fontes! Festschrift für Gerhard Dobesch* (Vienna, 2004), 59–72.

[19](#) On minor characters in the *Iliad*, see further the excellent study by J. Griffin, *Homer on Life and Death* (Oxford, 1980), esp. ch. 4.

[20](#) On Achilles and Apollo, see esp. G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans: Concepts of the Hero in Archaic Greek Poetry*, 2nd edn. (Baltimore, 1999).

²¹ On the parallels between Greek and Near Eastern Epic, see M. L. West, *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 1997).

²² Quoted from S. Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*, 2nd edn. (Oxford, 2000), 150. For the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, see A. R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2003).

[23](#) For a more detailed, book-by-book summary of the *Iliad*, see the Explanatory Notes.

²⁴ On these issues see, among others, M. Clarke, *Flesh and Spirit in the Songs of Homer* (Oxford, 1999), and R. Scodel, *Epic Facework: Self-Presentation and Social Interaction in Homer* (Swansea, 2008).

²⁵ See D. Cairns, *Aidōs: The Psychology and Ethics of Honour and Shame in Ancient Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1993).

[26](#) The best English edition is by J. P. Holoka, *Simone Weil's 'The Iliad or The Poem of Force': A Critical Edition* (New York, 2003).

[27](#) M. Longley, *The Ghost Orchid* (London, 1995), 226.

[28](#) On the site of Troy, see J. Latacz, *Troy and Homer: Towards a Solution of an Old Mystery*, trans. K. Windle and R. Ireland (Oxford, 2004).

[29](#) See B. Graziosi and J. Haubold, *Homer. 'Iliad 6': A Commentary* (Cambridge, 2010).

³⁰ Z. Mason, *The Lost Books of the 'Odyssey'* (London, 2010), 54.

[31](#) The film, directed by Wim Wenders, scripted by Handke, and released in English as *Wings of Desire*, explores the divided city of Berlin and (as its German title indicates) the sky above it. It was released in 1987, only two years before the fall of the Berlin wall.