Iliad

HOMER

8th century BC

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Ἰλιάς

Translated from the Greek with AI (Claude) and edited



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Iliad · Homer (8th century BC)

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INTRODUCTION

"Sing, goddess, the anger of Achilles." The Iliad, the oldest work of Western literature, covers a few weeks in the tenth year of the Greek war against Troy. Agamemnon, commander of the Greek army, insults Achilles, its greatest fighter, by taking away the woman he was given as a prize. Achilles withdraws from the fighting—and the Greeks begin to die.

The poem moves between the battlefield, the walls of Troy and the quarreling gods on Olympus. Its most famous scenes are human ones: the Trojan prince Hector saying goodbye to his wife Andromache and their baby son; the death of Achilles' friend Patroclus; Achilles' revenge on Hector; and the night the old king Priam comes to Achilles' tent to beg for his son's body.

The Greeks attributed the poem to Homer, about whom nothing certain is known. It was composed in the eighth or seventh century BC, at the end of a long tradition of oral poetry, in verse full of recurring phrases ("swift-footed Achilles," "rosy-fingered Dawn") that helped singers compose as they performed. The translation here is in prose, passage by passage beside the Greek.

Book 1

The quarrel
Apollo's plague; Agamemnon takes Briseis; Achilles withdraws, and Thetis wins Zeus' promise.

1.1 Sing, goddess, of the wrath of Achilles son of Peleus, the ruinous wrath that brought countless sorrows on the Achaeans. It hurled many mighty spirits of warriors down to Hades and made the men themselves a feast for dogs and for all the birds, and the will of Zeus was being accomplished, from the time when the two first parted in strife: the son of Atreus, lord of men, and godlike Achilles. Which of the gods, then, set the two of them to quarrel and fight? The son of Leto and Zeus. Angered at the king, he roused an evil plague through the army, and the people were dying, because the son of Atreus had dishonored Chryses, the priest. Chryses had come to the swift ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, bringing a boundless ransom and holding in his hands the sacred bands of far-shooting Apollo on a golden staff. He begged all the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus, marshals of the people:[1]

1.17 "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 come safely home. But free my dear child for me and accept this ransom, in reverence for the son of Zeus, far-shooting Apollo." Then all the other Achaeans shouted their assent, to respect the priest and accept the splendid ransom. But this did not please the heart of Agamemnon son of

1 The Achaeans are the Greeks besieging Troy. Chryses is a priest of Apollo whose daughter they had captured and given to Agamemnon.

Atreus. He sent him away harshly and laid a stern command on him: “Don’t let me find you by the hollow ships, old man, either lingering now or coming back again later, or the staff and the god’s bands may be no help to you then. Her I will not free. Old age will come upon her first, in our house in Argos, far from her homeland, as she goes to and fro at the loom and comes to my bed. Now go, and don’t provoke me, if you want to get home the safer.”

1.33 So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and obeyed his word. He went in silence along the shore of the loud-roaring sea. Then, when he had gone off by himself, the old man prayed long to lord Apollo, whom lovely-haired Leto bore: “Hear me, god of the silver bow, you who stand guard over Chryse and holy Cilla and rule Tenedos in might, Smintheus! If ever I roofed a pleasing temple for you, or if ever I burned for you the fat thigh-pieces of bulls and goats, then fulfill this wish for me: let the Danaans pay for my tears with your arrows.”[2]

1.43 So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him. Down from the peaks of Olympus he came, angry at heart, with his bow on his shoulders and his quiver closed at both ends. The arrows rattled on the shoulders of the angry god as he moved, and he came on like the night. Then he sat down apart from the ships and let fly an arrow, and terrible was the twang of the silver bow. First he went after the mules and the swift dogs, but then he aimed his sharp shaft at the men themselves and shot, and the pyres of the dead burned on and on, crowded thick. For nine days the god’s shafts ranged through the army, and on the tenth Achilles called the people to assembly, for the goddess, white-armed Hera, had put it in his mind: she was troubled for the Danaans, because she saw them dying.

2 Chryse, Cilla and Tenedos are places near Troy sacred to Apollo; Smintheus is one of his cult titles, linked in antiquity with mice.

THE QUARREL

Achilles calls an assembly; Calchas names the cause of the plague, and Agamemnon and Achilles quarrel.

1.57 When they had gathered and were all assembled, swift-footed Achilles stood up among them and spoke: "Son of Atreus, now I think we'll be driven back and sail home again—if we even escape death—if war and plague together are going to crush the Achaeans. But come, let us ask some seer or priest, or even an interpreter of dreams, for a dream too comes from Zeus, who could tell us why Phoebus Apollo is so angry: whether he faults us for some vow or hecatomb, and whether he might somehow accept the savor of lambs and full-grown goats and be willing to keep destruction away from us."[3]

1.68 So he spoke and sat down, and among them rose Calchas son of Thestor, by far the best of the bird-interpreters, who knew what is, what will be, and what was before, and who had guided the ships of the Achaeans to Ilium by the seercraft that Phoebus Apollo had given him. With good intent he addressed them and spoke: "Achilles, dear to Zeus, you bid me explain the wrath of Apollo, the far-shooting lord. Well, I will speak. But you, consider well, and swear to me that you will readily defend me with words and hands. For I think I will anger a man who rules with great power over all the Argives, and whom the Achaeans obey.

1.80 A king is the stronger when he is angry with a lesser man. Even if he swallows his anger that same day, he still keeps a grudge in his breast afterward, until he has satisfied it. So think whether you will keep me safe." Then swift-footed Achilles answered him: "Take heart, and speak out whatever prophecy you know. For by Apollo, dear to Zeus, to whom you pray, Calchas, when you reveal prophecies to the Danaans, no one, while I live and look upon the earth, will lay heavy hands on you by

3 A hecatomb is a great sacrifice—literally "a hundred oxen," though the word is used of any large offering.

the hollow ships—not one of all the Danaans, not even if you mean Agamemnon, who now claims to be by far the best of the Achaeans." And then the blameless seer took heart and spoke:

1.93 "It isn't for a vow that he faults us, nor for a hecatomb, but because of the priest whom Agamemnon dishonored: he did not free his daughter and did not accept the ransom. For that reason the far-shooter has given sorrows, and will give more still. Nor will he drive this shameful destruction from the Danaans until we give back the bright-eyed girl to her dear father, unbought and unransomed, and take a sacred hecatomb to Chryse. Then we might appease and persuade him." So he spoke and sat down, and among them rose the warrior son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, in deep distress. His dark heart was filled to the brim with fury, and his eyes were like blazing fire. First of all he addressed Calchas, with menace in his look:

1.106 "Prophet of evil, never yet have you told me anything pleasant. It's always dear to your heart to prophesy evil, and you've never yet spoken a good word or brought one to pass. And now you stand among the Danaans and declare in your prophecies that this is why the far-shooter is bringing sorrows on them: because I would not accept the splendid ransom for the girl Chryseis, since I very much want to keep her at home. In fact I prefer her to Clytemnestra, my wedded wife, since she is no way inferior to her, not in figure or in stature, not in mind or in handiwork. But even so I am willing to give her back, if that is better. I want the people safe, not perishing. But get a prize ready for me at once, so that I am not the only one of the Argives without a prize, since that is not fitting. For you can all see this—that my prize is going elsewhere."

1.121 Then swift-footed godlike Achilles answered him: "Most glorious son of Atreus, greediest of all men, how can the great-hearted Achaeans give you a prize? We know of no great common store laid up anywhere. What we plundered from the cities has been divided, and it isn't fitting to make the men gather it all back again. No—you give her up to the god now, and we Achaeans will repay you three and four times over, if Zeus ever grants

us to sack the well-walled city of Troy." Then lord Agamemnon answered him: "Don't try to trick me like this, great as you are, godlike Achilles, since you won't get past me, and you won't persuade me. Do you want to keep your own prize while I just sit here doing without one, and is that why you tell me to give her back?

1.135 Well, if the great-hearted Achaeans will give me a prize, suiting it to my heart so that it will be of equal worth—well and good. But if they will not give one, then I will go and take one myself—your prize, or Ajax's, or I'll take Odysseus' and carry it off; and the man I come to will be angry. But we will think about these things again later. Now come, let us drag a black ship down to the shining sea, gather a fitting crew of rowers in it, put a hecatomb aboard, and set fair-cheeked Chryseis herself on board. And let one man of counsel be in command—Ajax or Idomeneus or godlike Odysseus, or you, son of Peleus, most formidable of all men—so that you may perform the sacred rites and appease the god who works from afar for us." Then, glaring at him from under his brows, swift-footed Achilles said:

1.149 "Ah, you who are clothed in shamelessness, you with your mind on profit, how can any of the Achaeans willingly obey your orders, either to go on a march or to fight men with all his might? I didn't come here to fight because of the Trojan spearmen, since they have done me no wrong. They never drove off my cattle or my horses, and never in Phthia, rich in soil and nurse of men, did they ravage my crops, since there is a great deal between us—shadowy mountains and the echoing sea. No—it was you, you utterly shameless man, that we followed here, to please you, trying to win honor from the Trojans for Menelaus and for you, dog-face. None of this do you regard or care about. And now you threaten that you yourself will take my prize away from me, the prize I toiled hard for, which the sons of the Achaeans gave me. 1.163 Never do I get a prize equal to yours whenever the Achaeans sack some well-peopled city of the Trojans. The greater part of the furious fighting is the work of my hands, but whenever the dividing comes, your prize is far greater, while I

go back to the ships with something small but dear, when I am worn out with fighting. Now I'm going to Phthia, since it's far better to go home with my beaked ships, and I have no mind to stay here dishonored, piling up wealth and riches for you." Then Agamemnon, lord of men, answered him: "Run away, then, if your heart is set on it. I won't beg you to stay for my sake. I have others with me who will honor me, and above all Zeus the counselor.

1.176 Of all the kings whom Zeus nurtures, you are the most hateful to me, for strife is always dear to you, and wars and battles. If you are very strong, it was a god, I suppose, who gave you that. Go home with your ships and your companions and lord it over the Myrmidons. I don't care about you, and I take no notice of your anger. But this is my threat to you: since Phoebus Apollo is taking Chryseis from me, I will send her off with my ship and my companions, but I will take fair-cheeked Briseis, your prize, going to your hut myself, so that you may know well how much greater I am than you, and so that others too may shrink from calling themselves my equal and setting themselves up against me to my face."[4]

1.188 So he spoke. Anguish came upon the son of Peleus, and the heart in his shaggy chest was torn two ways: whether to draw the sharp sword from beside his thigh, scatter the others, and kill the son of Atreus, or to check his anger and restrain his spirit. While he was turning this over in his mind and heart and was drawing his great sword from its sheath, Athena came down from the sky, for the goddess, white-armed Hera, had sent her, since she loved and cared for both men alike in her heart. She stood behind him and seized the son of Peleus by his fair hair, appearing to him alone; none of the others saw her. Achilles was astonished and turned around, and at once he recognized Pallas Athena; her eyes shone terribly. And he addressed her and spoke winged words:

1.202 "Why have you come this time, child of Zeus who bears the aegis? Is it to see the arrogance of Agamemnon son of

Atreus? But I tell you plainly, and I think it will be brought to pass: by his own overbearing acts he may soon lose his life." Then gray-eyed Athena spoke to him in turn: "I came from the sky to stop your fury, if you will obey. The goddess, white-armed Hera, sent me, since she loves and cares for you both alike in her heart. Come, then, leave off this strife, and don't draw your sword with your hand. Reproach him with words instead, telling him how it will be. For I tell you plainly, and this will be brought to pass: one day three times as many splendid gifts will be yours because of this arrogance. Hold back, and obey us."[5]

1.215 Then swift-footed Achilles answered her: "I must keep to the word of you two, goddess, however angry I am in my heart, for that is better. Whoever obeys the gods, they listen readily to him." He spoke, and held his heavy hand on the silver hilt, and thrust the great sword back into its sheath, and did not disobey Athena's word. And she had gone to Olympus, to the house of Zeus who bears the aegis, to join the other gods. But the son of Peleus spoke again to the son of Atreus with harsh words, and did not yet leave off his anger: "Heavy with wine, with the eyes of a dog and the heart of a deer, never have you had the courage in your heart to arm for battle with the army or to go out on an ambush with the best of the Achaeans: that looks to you like doom.

1.229 It's far better, isn't it, to go through the broad army of the Achaeans taking away the gifts of anyone who speaks against you—a king who devours his people, since you rule over nobodies. Otherwise, son of Atreus, this outrage would be your last. But I tell you plainly, and I will swear a great oath on it: by this scepter, which will never put out leaves and shoots, now that it has once left its stump in the mountains, nor will it grow green again, for the bronze has stripped it all around of leaves and bark; and now the sons of the Achaeans who give judgment

4 The Myrmidons are Achilles' own people; Briseis is a captive woman awarded to him as his prize.

5 The aegis is a divine goatskin or shield, terrifying to behold, carried by Zeus and Athena.

carry it in their hands, those who uphold the laws on behalf of Zeus—this will be a great oath for you: 1.240 the day will surely come when longing for Achilles will seize the sons of the Achaeans, every one of them, and then, for all your grief, you will be powerless to help them, when many fall dying at the hands of man-slaying Hector. And you will tear the heart within you in anger that you gave no honor to the best of the Achaeans." So spoke the son of Peleus, and he flung to the ground the scepter studded with golden nails, and sat down himself; and on the other side the son of Atreus was full of wrath. Then up sprang Nestor among them, sweet of speech, the clear-voiced speaker of the Pylians, from whose tongue words flowed sweeter than honey. In his lifetime two generations of mortal men had already passed away, who had been born and raised with him long before in sacred Pylos, and he was ruling among the third. With good intent he addressed them and spoke:

1.254 "Ah, a great grief is surely coming upon the land of Achaea! How Priam and the sons of Priam would rejoice, and how glad at heart the other Trojans would be, if they heard all this about you two quarreling, you who are first among the Danaans in counsel and first in fighting. Come, listen to me. You are both younger than I am. Before now I have kept company with better men than you, and they never made light of me. I have never seen such men since, nor shall I see them, as Pirithous and Dryas, shepherd of the people, and Caeneus and Exadius and godlike Polyphemus, and Theseus son of Aegeus, like the immortals. Those were the mightiest men ever raised on the earth. Mightiest they were, and they fought with the mightiest, the beasts that lived in the mountains, and destroyed them terribly.[6] 1.269 I kept company with those men, when I came from Pylos, far away from a distant land, for they themselves had summoned me. And I fought on my own; against those men no one of the mortals now on earth could fight. And they heeded

6 Nestor recalls the Lapiths of Thessaly, led by Pirithous, and their legendary war with the Centaurs, the "beasts" of the mountains; this Polyphemus is not the Cyclops.

my counsels and obeyed my word. So you too, obey, since obeying is better. You, great as you are, don't take the girl away from him; let her be, as the sons of the Achaeans first gave her to him as a prize. And you, son of Peleus, don't be set on striving against a king, force against force, since a scepter-bearing king, to whom Zeus has given glory, has never had an equal share of honor. 1.280 Even if you are strong, and a goddess was the mother who bore you, still he is the greater, since he rules over more. Son of Atreus, check your fury; and I beg Achilles to let go his anger, since for all the Achaeans he is a mighty bulwark against evil war." Then lord Agamemnon answered him: "Yes, old man, all this you have said is right and proper. But this man wants to be above all others. He wants to have power over all, to rule over all, to give orders to all—and there is someone, I think, who will not obey. If the gods who live forever made him a spearman, is that why insults come rushing forward for him to speak?" Then godlike Achilles answered him, breaking in:

1.293 "I would surely be called a coward and a nobody if I gave way to you in every matter, whatever you say. Lay these orders on others, but don't give orders to me, for I don't intend to obey you any longer. And I'll tell you something else, and you take it to heart: I will not fight with my hands for the girl's sake, not with you or with anyone else, since you who gave her are taking her away. But of the other things I have beside my swift black ship, you will not take one or carry it off against my will. Come on, then, try it, so that these men too may know: at once your dark blood will gush out around my spear."

BRISEIS TAKEN

Odysseus sails to return Chryseis, and Agamemnon's heralds lead Briseis away from Achilles.

1.304 So the two of them, after fighting it out with hostile words, stood up and broke up the assembly beside the ships of the Achaeans. The son of Peleus went off to his huts and his well-balanced ships with the son of Menoetius and his companions.

The son of Atreus had a swift ship drawn down to the sea, chose twenty oarsmen for it, put a hecatomb aboard for the god, and brought fair-cheeked Chryseis and seated her in it; and resourceful Odysseus went aboard as its leader. So they embarked and sailed over the watery ways. The son of Atreus ordered the troops to purify themselves. They purified themselves and threw the defilement into the sea, and they offered Apollo perfect hecatombs of bulls and goats along the shore of the barren sea; and the savor rose to heaven, curling around the smoke.[7]

1.318 So they busied themselves with this throughout the camp. But Agamemnon did not let go of the quarrel with which he had first threatened Achilles. He spoke to Talthybius and Eurybates, who were his heralds and ready attendants: "Go to the hut of Achilles, son of Peleus. Take fair-cheeked Briseis by the hand and bring her here. If he won't give her up, then I'll come with more men and take her myself—and that will go all the harder with him." So saying, he sent them off, and laid a stern command on them. The two went unwillingly along the shore of the barren sea and came to the huts and ships of the Myrmidons. They found him sitting beside his hut and his black ship; and Achilles was not glad to see them.

1.331 The two of them stood there in fear and awe of the king, and did not speak to him or ask him anything. But he understood in his heart, and called out: "Welcome, heralds, messengers of Zeus and of men. Come closer. It's not you I blame, but Agamemnon, who sent you both for the girl Briseis. Come, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, bring the girl out and give her to them to take. But let these two themselves be witnesses before the blessed gods and before mortal men, and before that harsh king, if ever there is need of me again to ward off shameful destruction from the rest. For he truly rages with a destructive mind, and has no idea how to look both ahead and behind, so that the Achaeans might fight in safety beside the ships."

1.345 So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear companion. He brought fair-cheeked Briseis out of the hut and gave her to them to take, and the two went back along the ships of the Achaeans; and the woman went with them unwillingly. But Achilles burst into tears and at once sat down apart from his companions, withdrawn, on the shore of the gray sea, gazing out over the boundless deep. Again and again he prayed to his dear mother, stretching out his hands: "Mother, since you bore me to live only a short while, Olympian Zeus who thunders on high ought at least to have granted me honor. But now he hasn't honored me even a little. For the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, has dishonored me: he has taken my prize and keeps it, having seized it himself."

1.357 So he spoke, shedding tears, and his queenly mother heard him as she sat in the depths of the sea beside her aged father. Swiftly she rose up from the gray sea like a mist, sat down before him as he wept, stroked him with her hand, and spoke to him, calling him by name: "My child, why are you crying? What grief has come to your heart? Speak out, don't hide it in your mind, so that we both may know." Then, groaning heavily, swift-footed Achilles said to her: "You know. Why should I tell all this to you, when you know it already? We went to Thebe, the holy city of Eëtion, and sacked it, and brought everything here. The sons of the Achaeans divided it fairly among themselves, and for the son of Atreus they picked out fair-cheeked Chryseis.[8]

1.370 Then Chryses, priest of far-shooting Apollo, came to the swift ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans to free his daughter, bringing a boundless ransom and holding in his hands the sacred bands of far-shooting Apollo on a golden staff. He begged all the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus, marshals of the people. Then all the other Achaeans shouted their assent, to respect the priest and accept the splendid ransom. But this did

7 The son of Menoetius is Patroclus, Achilles' closest companion.

8 Thebe was a city near Troy ruled by Eëtion, father of Hector's wife Andromache. Thetis' "aged father" is Nereus, the old man of the sea.

not please the heart of Agamemnon son of Atreus. He sent him away harshly and laid a stern command on him. The old man went back in anger; and Apollo heard him when he prayed, since he was very dear to him, and let fly an evil arrow against the Argives. The men died one after another, and the god's shafts ranged everywhere through the wide camp of the Achaeans. Then a seer who knew well declared to us the oracles of the far-shooter. 1.386 At once I was the first to urge that we appease the god. But then anger seized the son of Atreus. He sprang to his feet and made a threat, and now it has been carried out. For the bright-eyed Achaeans are taking that girl in a swift ship to Chryse, and bringing gifts for the lord; and this one the heralds have just come and led away from my hut—the daughter of Briseus, whom the sons of the Achaeans gave me. But you, if you can, protect your own son. Go to Olympus and beg Zeus, if ever you gladdened the heart of Zeus by word or deed. For I have often heard you in my father's halls, boasting that you alone among the immortals warded off shameful destruction from the son of Cronus, lord of the dark clouds, when the other Olympians wanted to bind him—Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athena. 1.401 But you, goddess, came and freed him from his bonds, quickly summoning to high Olympus the hundred-handed one whom the gods call Briareus, but all men Aegaeon—for he in turn is stronger than his father. He sat down beside the son of Cronus, exulting in his glory, and the blessed gods were afraid of him and did not bind Zeus after all. Remind him of this now, sit beside him and clasp his knees, in the hope that he may be willing to help the Trojans and pen the Achaeans in among the sterns of their ships and around the sea as they are slaughtered, so that they may all get the full enjoyment of their king, and so that the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, may recognize his blindness, in giving no honor at all to the best of the Achaeans." Then Thetis answered him, shedding tears:[9]

1.414 "Oh, my child, why did I raise you, after bearing you to misery? If only you could sit beside the ships without tears and

without harm, since your portion of life is short, not long at all. But now you are both swift-doomed and wretched beyond all men; so it was to an evil fate that I bore you in our halls. Still, I will go myself to snowy Olympus to tell this to Zeus who delights in thunder, in the hope that he may be persuaded. But for now, sit by your swift-sailing ships, nurse your wrath against the Achaeans, and hold back from the fighting altogether. For yesterday Zeus went to Ocean, to the blameless Ethiopians, for a feast, and all the gods went with him. On the twelfth day he will come back to Olympus, and then I will go to the bronze-floored house of Zeus and clasp his knees, and I think he will be persuaded."[10]

CHRYSEIS RETURNED

Odysseus returns Chryseis to her father, and Chryses prays Apollo to end the plague.

1.428 So she spoke and went away, and left him there, angry at heart over the well-girdled woman whom they had taken by force against his will. Meanwhile Odysseus came to Chryse, bringing the holy hecatomb. When they had come inside the deep harbor, they furled the sails and stowed them in the black ship, lowered the mast by the forestays and quickly brought it down into its crutch, and rowed the ship forward to its mooring. They threw out the anchor-stones and made fast the stern-cables. Then they themselves stepped out onto the surf-beaten shore, and brought out the hecatomb for far-shooting Apollo; and Chryseis stepped out of the seafaring ship. 1.440 Then resourceful Odysseus led her to the altar, placed her in her dear father's hands, and said to him: "Chryses, Agamemnon, lord of men, has sent me to bring your daughter back to you and to offer a holy hecatomb to Phoebus on behalf of the Danaans, so

9 Clasping someone's knees was the gesture of a suppliant, a formal plea that the gods expected to be respected.

10 In Homer the Ethiopians live at the edge of the world by Ocean, the river that encircles the earth, and the gods go to feast among them.

that we may appease the lord who has now sent sorrows full of groaning on the Argives." So saying, he placed her in his hands, and Chryses received his dear daughter with joy. Quickly they set the holy hecatomb for the god in order around the well-built altar. Then they washed their hands and took up the barley grains, and Chryses lifted up his hands and prayed aloud for them:

1.451 "Hear me, god of the silver bow, you who stand guard over Chryse and holy Cilla and rule Tenedos in might! Once before you heard me when I prayed: you honored me and struck the army of the Achaeans hard. Now too fulfill this wish for me: ward off shameful destruction from the Danaans now." So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him. And when they had prayed and scattered the barley grains, first they drew back the victims' heads, slaughtered them and flayed them. They cut out the thigh-bones and wrapped them in fat, making a double layer, and laid raw meat on top. The old man burned them on split wood and poured gleaming wine over them, while young men beside him held five-pronged forks in their hands.

1.464 When the thigh-bones were burned up and they had tasted the innards, they cut up the rest and spitted it, roasted it carefully, and drew it all off the spits. And when they had finished the work and prepared the meal, they feasted, and no one's heart went without its fair share of the feast. And when they had put from them the desire for drink and food, the young men filled the mixing bowls to the brim with drink and served it out to all, first pouring a few drops into each cup. All day long the young men of the Achaeans sought to appease the god with song, singing a beautiful paean, hymning the one who works from afar; and his heart was glad as he listened.

1.475 When the sun went down and darkness came on, they lay down to sleep beside the ship's stern-cables. When early-born Dawn appeared, rosy-fingered, they put out to sea for the wide camp of the Achaeans, and Apollo who works from afar sent them a following wind. They set up the mast and spread the white sails. The wind filled the middle of the sail, and the dark-

gleaming wave roared loudly around the stem as the ship went on; and she ran over the waves, making her way. When they reached the wide camp of the Achaeans, they hauled the black ship up onto the land, high on the sand, and set long props beneath it; and they themselves scattered among their huts and ships.

THETIS AND ZEUS

Thetis begs Zeus to honor her son; he nods assent, and Hera quarrels with him.

1.488 But he sat by his swift-sailing ships and nursed his wrath, the son of Peleus sprung from Zeus, swift-footed Achilles. He never went to the assembly, where men win glory, nor ever to the war, but wasted away his own heart, staying where he was, and longed for the battle cry and the war. But when the twelfth dawn after that came, then the gods who live forever went to Olympus all together, with Zeus leading. And Thetis did not forget her son's requests: she rose up from the wave of the sea, and early in the morning went up to great heaven and Olympus. She found the far-seeing son of Cronus sitting apart from the others on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus. She sat down before him, clasped his knees with her left hand, took hold of him under the chin with her right, and in supplication spoke to Zeus, son of Cronus, the lord:

1.503 "Father Zeus, if ever among the immortals I helped you by word or deed, fulfill this wish for me: honor my son, who is doomed to die sooner than any other. But now Agamemnon, lord of men, has dishonored him: he has taken his prize and keeps it, having seized it himself. But you at least, honor him, Olympian Zeus of wise counsel. Give strength to the Trojans until the Achaeans honor my son and raise him high in honor." So she spoke; but Zeus the cloud-gatherer said nothing to her, and sat a long time in silence. But Thetis held on as she had clasped his knees, clinging close, and asked him a second time: "Promise me truly and nod your assent, or else refuse—you have

nothing to fear—so that I may know well how far I am the least honored goddess of all."

1.517 Then, deeply troubled, Zeus the cloud-gatherer said to her: "A ruinous business, this, now that you'll drive me to quarrel with Hera, when she provokes me with taunting words. Even as it is she is always scolding me among the immortal gods, and says I help the Trojans in battle. But go back now, so that Hera doesn't notice anything. I'll see to these things and bring them about. Here, I'll nod my head to you, so that you may be sure of it. For this, coming from me, is the greatest pledge among the immortals: nothing of mine can be taken back, or is false, or goes unfulfilled, once I have nodded my head to it."

1.528 He spoke, and the son of Cronus nodded with his dark brows; the lord's ambrosial locks flowed forward from his immortal head, and he made great Olympus shake. When the two had made their plan, they parted. She leapt into the deep sea from shining Olympus, and Zeus went to his own house. All the gods rose together from their seats to meet their father: not one dared to wait for him to come, but they all stood to face him. So he sat down there on his throne. Nor did Hera fail to see, when she looked at him, that silver-footed Thetis, daughter of the old man of the sea, had been making plans with him. At once she addressed Zeus, son of Cronus, with cutting words:

1.540 "Which of the gods has been making plans with you this time, you schemer? You always like to be away from me, settling things you've thought up in secret, and you've never yet brought yourself to tell me willingly a single word of what you have in mind." Then the father of men and gods answered her: "Hera, don't hope to know all my thoughts: they'll be hard for you, even though you are my wife. Whatever is fit for you to hear, no one, god or man, will know it before you. But whatever I choose to think out apart from the gods, don't you question me about each thing or pry into it."

1.551 Then ox-eyed queenly Hera answered him: "Most dread son of Cronus, what a thing to say! Up to now I've hardly questioned you or pried at all; you plan whatever you please quite

undisturbed. But now I'm terribly afraid in my heart that silver-footed Thetis, daughter of the old man of the sea, has talked you round. For early this morning she sat beside you and clasped your knees. I think you nodded to her in solemn truth that you would honor Achilles and destroy many beside the ships of the Achaeans." Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her:

1.561 "Strange woman, you're always suspecting, and I can never escape you. Yet you'll accomplish nothing by it; you'll only be further from my heart, and that will go all the harder with you. If this is as you say, then it must be what I want. Now sit down in silence and do as I tell you, or all the gods there are on Olympus won't be able to help you when I come at you and lay my invincible hands on you." So he spoke, and ox-eyed queenly Hera was afraid. She sat down in silence, bending her heart to his will; and throughout the house of Zeus the heavenly gods were troubled. Then Hephaestus, the renowned craftsman, began to speak among them, doing a kindness to his dear mother, white-armed Hera:

1.573 "This will be a ruinous business and past bearing, if you two quarrel like this over mortals and set the gods brawling. There'll be no pleasure in the fine feast, when the worse wins out. I advise my mother, though she knows it herself, to do a kindness to our dear father Zeus, so that father doesn't scold again and throw our feast into confusion. For if the Olympian, lord of lightning, wanted to hurl us from our seats—he is far the strongest. So speak to him with soft words, and then the Olympian will be gracious to us at once." So he spoke, and springing up he put a double cup into his dear mother's hand, and said to her:

1.586 "Bear up, mother, and endure it, grieved as you are, so that I don't see you beaten before my eyes, dear as you are to me. Then I couldn't help you, for all my sorrow, since the Olympian is hard to stand against. Once before, when I was eager to defend you, he caught me by the foot and hurled me from the heavenly threshold. All day long I was carried along, and as the sun went down I fell on Lemnos, with little life left in me. There the Sin-

tian men took care of me at once after my fall." So he spoke, and the goddess, white-armed Hera, smiled, and smiling she took the cup from her son's hand. Then he poured sweet nectar for all the other gods from left to right, drawing it from the mixing bowl; and unquenchable laughter rose among the blessed gods as they watched Hephaestus bustling through the halls.[11]

1.601 So then all day long until the sun went down they feasted, and no one's heart went without its fair share of the feast, nor of the beautiful lyre that Apollo held, nor of the Muses, who sang in turn with lovely voices. But when the bright light of the sun had set, they went off to lie down, each to his own home, where the famous lame god Hephaestus had built a house for each of them with his skillful mind. And Zeus the Olympian, lord of lightning, went to his own bed, where he always lay whenever sweet sleep came over him. There he went up and slept, and beside him Hera of the golden throne.

11 Lemnos is an island in the northern Aegean; the Sintians were its legendary inhabitants.

Book 2

The dream and the catalogue
Zeus sends Agamemnon a false dream; the army is tested; the Catalogue of Ships.

2.1 Now the other gods and the men who fight from chariots slept all night long, but sweet sleep did not hold Zeus. He was pondering in his mind how he might honor Achilles and destroy many beside the ships of the Achaeans. And this seemed to his heart the best plan: to send a baneful Dream to Agamemnon, son of Atreus. He called to it and spoke winged words: "Off with you, baneful Dream, go to the swift ships of the Achaeans. When you come to the hut of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, tell him everything exactly as I command. Bid him arm the long-haired Achaeans in full force, for now he may take the wide-streeted city of the Trojans. The immortals who have their homes on Olympus are no longer divided in mind: Hera has bent them all by her pleading, and sorrows are fastened upon the Trojans."[1]

2.16 So he spoke, and the Dream went off once it had heard his word. Quickly it came to the swift ships of the Achaeans and went to Agamemnon, son of Atreus. It found him sleeping in his hut, with ambrosial sleep poured around him. It stood above his head in the likeness of Neleus' son Nestor, whom Agamemnon honored most of all the elders. In his likeness the divine Dream addressed him:

2.23 "You're sleeping, son of Atreus, that fierce-hearted tamer of horses! A man who sits in counsel, to whom the people have

1 Zeus is keeping the promise he made to Thetis in Book 1: to honor Achilles by letting the Trojans win until the Achaeans make amends to him.

been entrusted and who has so much on his mind, should not sleep the whole night through. Now listen to me, quickly: I am a messenger to you from Zeus, who, far away as he is, cares greatly for you and pities you. He bids you arm the long-haired Achaeans in full force, for now you may take the wide-streeted city of the Trojans. The immortals who have their homes on Olympus are no longer divided in mind: Hera has bent them all by her pleading, and sorrows are fastened upon the Trojans by Zeus. Keep this in your mind, and don't let forgetfulness take hold of you when honey-sweet sleep releases you."

2.35 With these words it went away and left him there, turning over in his heart things that were never to come true. For he thought he would take Priam's city that very day—the fool! He did not know what Zeus was planning: Zeus was yet to lay pains and groans on Trojans and Danaans alike through fierce battles. He woke from sleep, with the divine voice still poured around him. He sat up and put on a soft tunic, fine and new-made, and threw a great cloak around him; under his shining feet he bound fine sandals, and over his shoulders he slung his silver-studded sword. He took up the scepter of his fathers, imperishable forever, and with it went among the ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans.

AGAMEMNON TESTS THE ARMY

Agamemnon tells the elders his dream, then tests the troops, who rush for the ships.

2.48 The goddess Dawn went up to high Olympus to announce the light to Zeus and the other immortals, and Agamemnon ordered the clear-voiced heralds to summon the long-haired Achaeans to assembly. The heralds made the call, and the men gathered very quickly. But first he seated a council of the great-hearted elders beside the ship of Nestor, the king born in Pylos. When he had called them together, he laid out a shrewd plan: "Listen, friends. A divine Dream came to me in my sleep through the ambrosial

night. In looks and stature and build it was most like godlike Nestor. It stood above my head and spoke these words to me:

2.60 'You're sleeping, son of Atreus, that fierce-hearted tamer of horses! A man who sits in counsel, to whom the people have been entrusted and who has so much on his mind, should not sleep the whole night through. Now listen to me, quickly: I am a messenger to you from Zeus, who, far away as he is, cares greatly for you and pities you. He bids you arm the long-haired Achaeans in full force, for now you may take the wide-streeted city of the Trojans. The immortals who have their homes on Olympus are no longer divided in mind: Hera has bent them all by her pleading, and sorrows are fastened upon the Trojans by Zeus. Keep this in your mind.' With these words it flew off and was gone, and sweet sleep released me. 2.72 But come, let us see if we can somehow arm the sons of the Achaeans. First I will test them with words, as is the custom, and order them to flee with their many-oared ships; and you, each from your own place, hold them back with words." With these words he sat down, and among them rose Nestor, who was king of sandy Pylos. With good intent he addressed them and spoke: "Friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, if any other Achaean had told us this dream, we would call it a lie and turn our backs on it all the more. But the man who saw it claims to be by far the best of the Achaeans. So come, let us see if we can somehow arm the sons of the Achaeans."

2.84 So he spoke, and led the way out of the council, and the other sceptered kings rose up and obeyed the shepherd of the people; and the troops came hurrying. As swarms of thronging bees come out of a hollow rock, fresh ones always coming on, and fly in clusters to the flowers of spring, some flying in crowds this way and some that way, so their many throngs marched in companies from the ships and huts along the deep shore to the assembly. Among them Rumor blazed, Zeus' messenger, urging them on, and they gathered. The assembly was in turmoil, and the earth groaned beneath the troops as they sat down, and there was uproar. Nine heralds were shouting to hold them

back, to see if they would ever stop their clamor and listen to the kings nurtured by Zeus. 2.99 With effort the troops were seated and kept in their places, and they stopped their clamor. Then lord Agamemnon stood up, holding the scepter that Hephaestus had toiled to make. Hephaestus gave it to lord Zeus, son of Cronus, and Zeus gave it to the guide Argeïphontes; lord Hermes gave it to Pelops, driver of horses, and Pelops in turn gave it to Atreus, shepherd of the people; Atreus at his death left it to Thyestes, rich in flocks, and Thyestes in turn left it to Agamemnon to carry, to be lord over many islands and all Argos. Leaning on it, he spoke these words to the Argives: "Friends, Danaan warriors, servants of Ares, Zeus son of Cronus has bound me fast in heavy ruin—the cruel god! He once promised me, and nodded his assent, that I would sack well-walled Ilium before I went home. But now he has devised an evil deception and orders me to return to Argos in dishonor, after I have lost so many men.

2.116 This, I suppose, must be the pleasure of almighty Zeus, who has brought down the crowns of many cities and will bring down more, for his power is the greatest. And it is a shameful thing, even for generations to come to hear of, that so fine and so great an army of Achaeans should fight a fruitless war like this, all in vain, battling against fewer men, with no end yet in sight. Suppose we were willing, Achaeans and Trojans both, to swear binding oaths and both be counted—the Trojans gathering all who have hearths in the city, and we Achaeans arranged in groups of ten—and each group of ours chose one Trojan man to pour its wine: many tens would go without a wine-pourer. 2.129 That is how far, I say, the sons of the Achaeans outnumber the Trojans who live in the city. But they have allies from many cities, spear-wielding men, who lead me far astray and won't let me sack the well-settled citadel of Ilium, much as I want to. Nine years of great Zeus have gone by now; the timbers of our ships have rotted and the ropes have come loose. And our wives and little children, I suppose, sit in our halls waiting for us; yet the task for which we came here remains just as it was, unaccom-

plished. So come, let us all do as I say: let us flee with our ships to our dear native land, for we will never take wide-streeted Troy."

2.142 So he spoke, and stirred the hearts in the breasts of all throughout the crowd who had not heard the council. The assembly heaved like the long waves of the sea, the Icarian sea, which the East Wind and the South Wind raise, rushing down from the clouds of father Zeus. And as when the West Wind comes and stirs a deep field of grain, sweeping violently down on it, and the field bows down with its ears, so the whole assembly was stirred. With a shout they rushed toward the ships, and from under their feet the dust rose and hung in the air. They urged one another to lay hold of the ships and drag them into the bright sea, and they cleared out the launching-channels; their clamor reached the sky as they strained for home, and they began pulling the props from under the ships. Then the Argives would have had a homecoming beyond what fate allowed, had Hera not spoken to Athena:[2]

2.157 "For shame, child of aegis-bearing Zeus, Unwearied One! Is this really how the Argives will flee home to their dear native land over the broad back of the sea, and leave Argive Helen behind for Priam and the Trojans to boast of—Helen, for whose sake many Achaeans have died in Troy, far from their dear native land? Go now among the army of the bronze-clad Achaeans. With your gentle words hold back each man, and don't let them drag their curved ships into the sea." So she spoke, and the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, did not disobey. She went darting down from the peaks of Olympus and quickly came to the swift ships of the Achaeans. There she found Odysseus, equal to Zeus in counsel, standing still. He had not laid a hand on his black, well-benched ship, for grief had come upon his heart and spirit. Standing close by, gray-eyed Athena spoke to him:

2.173 "Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many wiles, is this really how you will flee home to your dear native

2 The Icarian sea lies off the island of Icaria in the eastern Aegean, known for its storms.

land, tumbling into your many-oared ships, and leave Argive Helen behind for Priam and the Trojans to boast of—Helen, for whose sake many Achaeans have died in Troy, far from their dear native land? Go now among the army of the Achaeans and hang back no longer. With your gentle words hold back each man, and don't let them drag their curved ships into the sea." So she spoke, and he knew the voice of the goddess as she spoke. He set off at a run and threw off his cloak; the herald Eurybates of Ithaca, who attended him, picked it up. He himself went straight up to Agamemnon, son of Atreus, and took from him the scepter of his fathers, imperishable forever; with it he went among the ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans.

2.188 Whenever he came upon a king or a man of note, he would stand beside him and hold him back with gentle words: "Sir, it isn't right for you to be frightened like a coward. Sit down yourself, and make the rest of the people sit. You don't yet clearly know what the son of Atreus has in mind. Now he is testing us, but soon he will come down hard on the sons of the Achaeans. Not all of us heard what he said in the council. I'm afraid that in his anger he may do some harm to the sons of the Achaeans. Proud is the spirit of kings nurtured by Zeus; their honor comes from Zeus, and Zeus the counselor loves them." But whenever he saw a man of the common people and found him shouting, he would strike him with the scepter and rebuke him with words:

2.200 "You there, sit still and listen to what others say, who are better than you. You're unwarlike and feeble, never counted for anything in war or in council. We Achaeans can't all be kings here. Rule by many is no good thing: let there be one ruler, one king, to whom the son of crooked-counseling Cronus has given the scepter and the laws, so that he may take counsel for his people." So he went through the army, taking command, and they came rushing back to the assembly from the ships and huts with a roar, as when a wave of the loud-roaring sea thunders on a long beach and the open sea resounds.

THERSITES

Thersites abuses Agamemnon, and Odysseus beats him with the scepter.

2.211 The others sat down and were kept in their places; only Thersites, unbridled of tongue, still kept up his jabbering. His head was full of words, many and disorderly, for wrangling with the kings—recklessly, with no sense of decency, saying anything he thought would make the Argives laugh. He was the ugliest man who came to Ilium: bow-legged and lame in one foot, his two shoulders hunched and drawn together over his chest; above them his head came to a point, with a sparse stubble of hair sprouting on it. Achilles and Odysseus hated him most of all, for he was always railing at them; but now, shrieking shrilly, he was heaping abuse on godlike Agamemnon. The Achaeans were furiously angry with him and indignant in their hearts. But he, bawling loudly, railed at Agamemnon with words:

2.225 "Son of Atreus, what are you complaining about now, what more do you want? Your huts are full of bronze, and there are many women in your huts, the choicest, whom we Achaeans give to you first of all whenever we take a city. Or do you want gold as well, which some horse-taming Trojan will bring out of Ilium as ransom for his son, after I, or some other Achaean, have tied him up and led him away? Or a young woman to lie with in love, to keep apart for yourself? It isn't right for one who is their leader to bring the sons of the Achaeans into misery. 2.235 You weaklings, you sorry disgraces—Achaean women, not Achaean men! Let's go home with our ships and leave this man here in Troy to brood over his prizes, so he can see whether we too are any help to him or not. Now he has dishonored Achilles, a far better man than he is: he took his prize and keeps it, having snatched it himself. But there's no anger at all in Achilles' heart; he lets it go. Otherwise, son of Atreus, this outrage would be your last." So Thersites spoke, railing at Agamemnon, shepherd of the people. But godlike Odysseus quickly came and stood

beside him and, glaring at him from under his brows, rebuked him with harsh words:

2.246 "Thersites, you reckless talker, clear-voiced speaker though you are, stop, and don't try to quarrel with kings all on your own. I say there is no meaner mortal than you among all who came to Ilium with the sons of Atreus. So you shouldn't go around with kings' names in your mouth, hurling insults at them and watching for your chance to go home. We don't yet clearly know how these things will turn out, whether we sons of the Achaeans will go home well or badly. And so now you sit here abusing Agamemnon, son of Atreus, shepherd of the people, because the Danaan warriors give him a great deal; you speak only to mock. 2.257 But I tell you this, and it will be accomplished: if I find you playing the fool again as you are now, then let Odysseus' head no longer sit on his shoulders, and let me no longer be called the father of Telemachus, if I don't take hold of you and strip off your own clothes, your cloak and tunic that cover your nakedness, and send you off to the swift ships wailing, beaten out of the assembly with shameful blows." So he spoke, and struck him with the scepter on his back and both his shoulders. Thersites doubled over, and a big tear fell from his eyes; a bloody welt rose up on his back under the golden scepter. He sat down, terrified, and in pain, with a helpless look, he wiped away the tear.[3]

2.270 The others, troubled though they were, laughed heartily at him, and one would say like this, glancing at his neighbor: "Well, well! Odysseus has done countless good deeds, leading the way in good counsel and marshaling men for battle, but this is by far the best thing he has done among the Argives, putting a stop to this foul-mouthed slanderer's ranting in the assembly. His proud spirit surely won't stir him again to rail at the kings with insulting words." So the crowd spoke. Then up stood Odysseus, sacker of cities, holding the scepter, and beside him gray-eyed Athena, in the likeness of a herald, ordered the troops to be

3 Telemachus is Odysseus' son, left at home on Ithaca as a baby when his father sailed for Troy.

silent, so that the foremost and the hindmost of the sons of the Achaeans alike might hear his speech and consider his counsel. With good intent he addressed them and spoke:

2.284 "Son of Atreus, my lord, the Achaeans now want to make you the most despised of all mortal men. They will not keep the promise they made you while they were still on their way here from horse-pasturing Argos, that you would sack well-walled Ilium before you went home. Like young children or widowed women, they wail to one another about going home. There is hardship enough here, of course, to make a man weary and want to go home. A man who stays away from his wife for just one month chafes beside his many-benched ship when winter storms and the heaving sea pen him in. But for us this is the ninth year come round that we've been waiting here. So I don't blame the Achaeans for chafing beside the curved ships. But all the same, it's shameful to stay so long and go home empty-handed. 2.299 Bear up, friends, and stay a while, so that we may learn whether Calchas prophesies truly or not. This we know well in our hearts, and all of you are witnesses, all whom the doom of death has not carried off. It seems only yesterday or the day before that the ships of the Achaeans were gathering at Aulis, bringing evil to Priam and the Trojans. We were offering perfect hecatombs to the immortals on the holy altars around a spring, beneath a fine plane tree where bright water flowed. There a great sign appeared. A serpent, blood-red on its back and terrible, which the Olympian himself had sent into the light, darted out from under the altar and sprang at the plane tree.[4] 2.311 On it were the nestlings of a sparrow, helpless young ones, cowering under the leaves on the topmost branch. There were eight of them, and the mother who had borne them made nine. The serpent devoured them as they cheeped pitifully, while the mother fluttered around wailing for her dear young. Then he coiled himself and caught her by the wing as she shrieked around him. But when he had eaten the sparrow's young and the

4 Aulis, a harbor in Boeotia facing the island of Euboea, was where the Greek fleet assembled before sailing for Troy.

mother too, the god who had brought him to light made him a sign for all to see: the son of crooked-counseling Cronus turned him to stone. We stood there amazed at what had happened. So when these dread portents of the gods broke in upon the hecatombs, Calchas at once spoke out and prophesied:

2.323 'Why have you fallen silent, long-haired Achaeans? Zeus the counselor has shown us this great portent, late in coming and late in fulfillment, whose glory will never perish. This serpent devoured the sparrow's young and the mother herself, eight of them, and the mother who bore them made nine. Just so we shall fight there for as many years, and in the tenth we shall take the city of wide streets.' That is what he said, and now it is all coming true. So come, all of you, well-greaved Achaeans, stay here until we take the great city of Priam." So he spoke, and the Argives gave a great shout, and all around them the ships echoed terribly with the shouting of the Achaeans as they praised the words of godlike Odysseus. Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, spoke among them too:

2.337 "For shame! You're holding assembly like little children who care nothing for the work of war. What will become of our compacts and our oaths? Into the fire, then, with the counsels and plans of men, the libations of unmixed wine and the handclasps we trusted in! We wrangle uselessly with words and can find no remedy, though we've been here a long time. Son of Atreus, keep your purpose unshaken as before and lead the Argives through the fierce battles. Let these one or two waste away, the ones who make plans apart from the Achaeans, though nothing will come of them, to go back to Argos before they have even learned whether the promise of Zeus who bears the aegis is a lie or not. 2.350 For I say the mighty son of Cronus nodded assent on the day the Argives went aboard their swift-sailing ships, bringing slaughter and doom to the Trojans. He flashed lightning on our right and showed us favorable signs. So let no one be in a hurry to go home before he has lain with the wife of some Trojan and avenged the struggles and groans over Helen. And if anyone is desperately eager to go home, let him

lay a hand on his black, well-benched ship, so that he meets death and doom before the rest. But you, my lord, plan well yourself, and listen to another. The word I speak will not be thrown away. Divide the men by tribes and by clans, Agamemnon, so that clan may support clan, and tribe support tribe. 2.364 If you do this and the Achaeans obey you, you'll know which of the leaders is a coward and which of the men, and which is brave, for they will be fighting each with his own. And you'll know too whether it is by the will of heaven that you fail to sack the city, or through the cowardice of your men and their folly in war." Then lord Agamemnon answered him: "Once again, old man, you surpass the sons of the Achaeans in assembly. Father Zeus, Athena and Apollo, if only I had ten such counselors among the Achaeans! Then the city of lord Priam would soon bow its head, captured and sacked at our hands.

2.375 But Zeus, son of Cronus, who bears the aegis, has given me troubles and keeps casting me into fruitless quarrels and strife. Achilles and I fought over a girl with hostile words, and I was the first to grow angry. But if ever we are of one mind, the Trojans will have no more respite from evil, not even a little. Now go to your meal, so that we may join battle. Let each man sharpen his spear well and set his shield in order well. Let him feed his swift-footed horses well, look his chariot over well and take thought for war, so that all day long we may contend in hateful war. 2.386 There will be no respite, not even a little, until night comes and parts the fury of men. The strap of many a man's body-covering shield will be soaked with sweat around his chest, and his hand will grow weary on his spear. Many a man's horse will sweat as it strains at the polished chariot. And anyone I see wanting to hang back from the fighting beside the curved ships will have no way then to escape the dogs and the birds." So he spoke, and the Argives gave a great shout, as when a wave crashes on a high shore, on a jutting crag, when the South Wind comes and stirs it up. The waves never leave that crag alone, driven by every kind of wind, whenever they rise this way or that.

THE ARMY MARSHALED

Agamemnon sacrifices to Zeus, and the Achaeans pour out onto the plain.

2.398 They rose and hurried off, scattering among the ships. They lit fires among the huts and took their meal. Each man sacrificed to one or another of the gods who live forever, praying to escape death and the turmoil of Ares. But Agamemnon, lord of men, sacrificed a fat five-year-old ox to the mighty son of Cronus. He summoned the elders, the best of all the Achaeans: first of all Nestor and lord Idomeneus, then the two Ajaxes and the son of Tydeus, and sixth Odysseus, the equal of Zeus in counsel. Menelaus, good at the war cry, came of his own accord, for he knew in his heart how hard his brother was laboring. They stood around the ox and took up the barley grains, and lord Agamemnon prayed among them:

2.412 "Zeus, most glorious and greatest, lord of the dark clouds, dwelling in the upper air, let the sun not set and darkness come on before I have hurled the smoke-blackened hall of Priam headlong to the ground and burned its doors with blazing fire. Let me tear Hector's tunic around his chest and slash it to shreds with bronze, and may many of his comrades around him fall headlong in the dust and bite the earth." So he spoke, but the son of Cronus would not yet grant him fulfillment. He accepted the offerings, but he heaped up grievous toil. When they had prayed and scattered the barley grains, first they drew back the victim's head, slaughtered it and flayed it. They cut out the thigh-bones and wrapped them in fat, making a double layer, and laid raw meat on top. These they burned on split wood stripped of leaves, and they spitted the innards and held them over the fire of Hephaestus.

2.427 When the thigh-bones were burned up and they had tasted the innards, they cut up the rest and spitted it, roasted it carefully, and drew it all off the spits. And when they had finished the work and prepared the meal, they feasted, and no

one's heart went without its fair share of the feast. And when they had put from them the desire for drink and food, Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, began to speak among them: "Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, let us not sit here talking any longer, or put off any longer the work the god is putting into our hands. Come, let the heralds of the bronze-clad Achaeans call out to the troops and gather them by the ships. Let us go together, just as we are, through the broad camp of the Achaeans, so that we may rouse sharp Ares all the sooner."

2.441 So he spoke, and Agamemnon, lord of men, did not disobey. At once he ordered the clear-voiced heralds to call the long-haired Achaeans to war. The heralds made the call, and the men gathered very quickly. The kings nurtured by Zeus rushed about with the son of Atreus, marshaling them, and among them went gray-eyed Athena, holding the precious aegis, ageless and immortal. From it hang a hundred tassels of solid gold, every one of them finely woven, and each worth a hundred oxen. With it she sped flashing through the host of the Achaeans, urging them forward, and in each man's heart she roused the strength to fight and do battle without ceasing. At once war became sweeter to them than going home in their hollow ships to their dear native land.

2.455 As a destructive fire blazes over a vast forest on the peaks of a mountain, and its glare is seen from far off, so as they marched the dazzling gleam of their marvelous bronze rose through the upper air to heaven. And as the many flocks of winged birds, geese or cranes or long-necked swans, fly this way and that over the Asian meadow by the streams of the Cayster, exulting in their wings, and settle with loud cries, each ahead of the next, while the meadow resounds, so their many tribes poured from the ships and huts onto the plain of the Scamander. Beneath them the earth rang terribly under the feet of men and horses. They stood in the flowering meadow of the Scamander, countless, as many as the leaves and flowers that come in their season.

2.469 As the many swarms of teeming flies that buzz around a sheepfold in springtime, when milk drenches the pails, so many were the long-haired Achaeans who stood on the plain facing the Trojans, eager to tear them apart. And as goatherds easily sort out their wide flocks of goats when they have mingled at pasture, so the leaders marshaled them here and there to go into battle. Among them was lord Agamemnon, in his eyes and head like Zeus who delights in thunder, in his waist like Ares, and in his chest like Poseidon. As a bull stands out far above all the rest in a herd, for he is conspicuous among the gathered cattle, so Zeus made the son of Atreus that day, conspicuous among many and preeminent among the warriors.

THE CATALOGUE OF SHIPS

The poet calls on the Muses and lists the Achaean contingents, leaders and ships.

2.484 Tell me now, Muses who have your homes on Olympus, for you are goddesses, you are present and know all things, while we hear only rumor and know nothing: who were the leaders and lords of the Danaans? The multitude I could not tell or name, not even if I had ten tongues and ten mouths, a voice that could never break, and a heart of bronze within me, unless the Olympian Muses, daughters of Zeus who bears the aegis, should call to mind all those who came to Ilium. So I will tell the commanders of the ships, and all the ships.[5]

2.494 The Boeotians were led by Peneleos and Leitus, Arcesilaus, Prothoenor and Clonius. They were the men who lived in Hyria and rocky Aulis, Schoenus, Scolus and Eteonus with its many ridges, Thespeia, Graea and spacious Mycalessus; those who lived around Harma, Eilesium and Erythrae; those who held Eleon, Hyle and Peteon, Ocalea and Medeon, a well-built citadel, Copae, Eutresis and Thisbe of the many doves; those who held Coroneia and grassy Haliartus; those who held

5 Here begins the Catalogue of Ships, which lists each Greek contingent by region, with its leaders and its number of ships.

Plataea and those who lived in Glisas; those who held Hypothebae, a well-built citadel, and holy Onchestus, the shining grove of Poseidon; those who held Arne rich in vines, and Mideia, sacred Nisa and Anthedon at the land's edge. Fifty ships of theirs came, and in each went a hundred and twenty young men of the Boeotians.

2.511 Those who lived in Aspledon and Minyan Orchomenus were led by Ascalaphus and Ialmenus, sons of Ares. Astyoche bore them in the house of Actor, son of Azeus. She was a revered maiden who went up to the upper chamber to mighty Ares, and he lay with her in secret. With them thirty hollow ships came on in line. The Phocians were led by Schedius and Epistrophus, sons of great-hearted Iphitus, son of Naubolus. They were the men who held Cyparissus and rocky Pytho, sacred Crisa, Daulis and Panopeus; those who lived around Anemoreia and Hyampolis; those who dwelt beside the divine river Cephisus; and those who held Lilaea by the springs of the Cephisus. With them followed forty black ships. Their leaders busied themselves setting the ranks of the Phocians in order, and they armed themselves on the left, close beside the Boeotians.

2.527 The Locrians were led by swift Ajax, son of Oïleus, the lesser Ajax, not nearly so big as Telamonian Ajax, but much smaller. He was small and wore a linen corslet, but with the spear he excelled all the Hellenes and Achaeans. His men lived in Cynus, Opoeis and Calliarus, Bessa, Scarphe and lovely Augeiae, Tarphe and Thronium around the streams of the Boagrius. With him followed forty black ships of the Locrians who live across from holy Euboea. Those who held Euboea, the Abantes breathing fury, who held Chalcis, Eretria and Histiaea rich in vines, Cerinthus by the sea and the steep citadel of Dium, those who held Carystus and those who lived in Styra, were led by Elephenor, offshoot of Ares, son of Chalcodon, commander of the great-hearted Abantes.

2.542 With him followed the swift Abantes, their hair long at the back, spearmen eager to tear the corslets on their enemies' chests with outstretched ash spears. With him followed forty

black ships. Those who held Athens, the well-built citadel, the land of great-hearted Erechtheus, were led by Menestheus, son of Peteos. Athena, daughter of Zeus, once reared Erechtheus, though the grain-giving earth bore him, and she settled him in Athens in her own rich temple. There the young men of the Athenians win his favor with bulls and rams as the years come round. No man on earth was ever Menestheus' equal at marshaling horses and shield-bearing men. Nestor alone could rival him, for he was older. With him followed fifty black ships.

2.557 Ajax brought twelve ships from Salamis, and he brought them and stationed them where the battalions of the Athenians stood. Those who held Argos and walled Tiryns, Hermione and Asine, which lie along a deep gulf, Troezen, Eiones and Epidaurus rich in vines, and the young men of the Achaeans who held Aegina and Mases, were led by Diomedes, good at the war cry, and Sthenelus, dear son of glorious Capaneus. With them came a third, Euryalus, a godlike man, son of lord Mecisteus, son of Talaus. But over them all Diomedes, good at the war cry, was the leader. With them followed eighty black ships.

2.569 Those who held Mycenae, the well-built citadel, and wealthy Corinth and well-built Cleonae, who lived in Orneiae and lovely Araethyrea and Sicyon, where Adrastus was king in the beginning, and those who held Hyperesia and steep Gonoessa and Pellene, and lived around Aegium and all along Aegialus and around broad Helice: a hundred ships of these were led by lord Agamemnon, son of Atreus. With him followed by far the most and the best troops. He himself put on his gleaming bronze, exulting, and stood out among all the warriors, because he was the best and led by far the most troops.

2.581 Those who held hollow Lacedaemon with its many ravines, Pharis and Sparta and Messe of the many doves, who lived in Bryseae and lovely Augeae, who held Amyclae and Helos, a citadel by the sea, and who held Laas and dwelt around Oetylus, were led by his brother, Menelaus, good at the war cry, with sixty ships. They armed themselves apart. He himself went among them, trusting in his own eagerness, urging them on to

war. More than any of them he longed in his heart to take vengeance for the struggles and the groans over Helen.

2.591 Those who dwelt in Pylos and lovely Arene, and Thryon, the ford of the Alpheus, and well-built Aepy, and who lived in Cyparisseis and Amphigeneia, and Pteleos and Helos and Dorion—where the Muses met Thamyris the Thracian and put an end to his singing, as he was coming from Oechalia, from the house of Eurytus of Oechalia. He had boasted and vowed that he would win even if the Muses themselves were to sing against him, the daughters of Zeus who bears the aegis. In their anger they maimed him, took away his wondrous song and made him forget his lyre-playing. These in turn were led by Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, and with him ninety hollow ships were drawn up in line.

2.603 Those who held Arcadia beneath the steep mountain of Cyllene, beside the tomb of Aepytus, where men fight hand to hand; who dwelt in Pheneus and Orchomenus rich in flocks, Rhipe and Stratie and windy Enispe; who held Tegea and lovely Mantinea, held Stymphalus and dwelt in Parrhasia, were led by the son of Ancaeus, lord Agapenor, with sixty ships. In each ship went many Arcadian men skilled in war. For Agamemnon, lord of men, the son of Atreus, had himself given them well-benched ships to cross the wine-dark sea, since the work of the sea was no concern of theirs.

2.615 Those who lived in Buprasium and bright Elis, all the land that Hyrmine and Myrsinus at the borders and the Olenian rock and Alesium enclose between them, had in their turn four leaders. Ten swift ships followed each man, and many Epeians went aboard. Two of these divisions were led by Amphimachus and Thalpius, of the line of Actor, one the son of Cteatus, the other of Eurytus. The third was commanded by mighty Diores, son of Amarynceus, and the fourth by godlike Polyxenus, son of lord Agasthenes, son of Augeas.

2.625 Those from Dulichium and the holy Echinae, islands that lie across the sea opposite Elis, were led in turn by Meges, a match for Ares, son of Phyleus. The horseman Phyleus, dear to

Zeus, had fathered him—Phyleus, who once went off to settle in Dulichium, angry with his father. With him forty black ships followed. Odysseus led the great-hearted Cephallenians, who held Ithaca and Neritum with its quivering leaves, who dwelt in Crocyleia and rugged Aegilips, who held Zacynthus and dwelt around Samos, and who held the mainland and dwelt along the facing shore. These were led by Odysseus, a match for Zeus in counsel, and with him followed twelve ships with cheeks painted red.

2.638 The Aetolians were led by Thoas son of Andraemon, those who dwelt in Pleuron and Olenus and Pylene, in Chalcis by the sea and rocky Calydon. For the sons of great-hearted Oeneus were no longer living, nor was he himself, and fair-haired Meleager was dead, and so full charge had been given to Thoas to rule the Aetolians. With him forty black ships followed. The Cretans were led by Idomeneus, famed for his spear: those who held Cnossos and walled Gortyn, Lyctus and Miletus and chalk-white Lycastus, Phaestus and Rhytium, well-peopled cities, and others who dwelt about Crete of the hundred cities. These were led by Idomeneus, famed for his spear, and by Meriones, a match for Enyalius the man-slayer, and with them eighty black ships followed.

2.653 Tlepolemus son of Heracles, a fine man and tall, brought nine ships of the proud Rhodians from Rhodes. They dwelt about Rhodes in three divisions, in Lindos and Ialysus and chalk-white Cameirus. These were led by Tlepolemus, famed for his spear, whom Astyocheia bore to mighty Heracles. He had brought her from Ephyra, from the river Selleïs, after sacking many cities of vigorous men cherished by Zeus. When Tlepolemus had grown up in the well-built hall, he straightaway killed his own father's dear uncle, Licymnius, offshoot of Ares, who was already growing old. Quickly he built ships, gathered a large host and set off over the sea in flight, for the other sons and grandsons of mighty Heracles were threatening him. 2.667 He came to Rhodes after wandering and suffering hardships. There his people settled in three groups by tribes, and they were loved

by Zeus, who rules over gods and men, and the son of Cronus poured down wondrous wealth upon them. Nireus brought three well-balanced ships from Syme—Nireus, son of Aglaea and lord Charopus, Nireus, the most handsome man of all the Danaans who came beneath Ilium, after the flawless son of Peleus. But he was a weakling, and few men followed him. Those who held Nisyrus and Crapathus and Casus, and Cos, the city of Eurypylus, and the Calydnian islands were led in turn by Pheidippus and Antiphus, the two sons of lord Thessalus, son of Heracles. With them thirty hollow ships were drawn up in line.

2.681 Now, in turn, all those who dwelt in Pelasgian Argos, who lived in Alos and Alope and Trachis, and who held Phthia and Hellas, land of beautiful women—they were called Myrmidons and Hellenes and Achaeans—of their fifty ships the commander was Achilles. But these men gave no thought to grim-sounding war, for there was no one to lead them into the ranks. Swift-footed godlike Achilles lay among the ships, angry over the girl, lovely-haired Briseis, whom he had won out of Lyrnessus after much toil, when he sacked Lyrnessus and the walls of Thebe and struck down Mynes and Epistrophus, spearmen both, sons of lord Evenus, son of Selepius. For her sake he lay grieving, but soon he was to rise up.

2.695 Those who held Phylace and flowery Pyrasus, the sanctuary of Demeter, and Iton, mother of flocks, Antron by the sea and grassy Pteleos, were led in turn by warlike Protesilaus while he lived, but by then the black earth already held him. His wife had been left behind in Phylace with both her cheeks torn in grief, and his house half-finished. A Dardanian man had killed him as he leapt from his ship, by far the first of the Achaeans. Yet these men were not leaderless either, though they longed for their leader. Podarces, offshoot of Ares, marshaled them, son of Iphiclus, son of Phylacus rich in flocks, the full brother of great-hearted Protesilaus, younger by birth. The elder, and the better man too, was the hero Protesilaus, warlike. So the men did not lack a leader, though they longed for the one they had lost, brave as he was. With Podarces forty black ships followed.

2.711 Those who dwelt in Pherae beside Lake Boebeïs, in Boebe and Glaphyrae and well-built Iolcus, were led with eleven ships by Admetus' dear son Eumelus, whom Alcestis, noblest of women, bore to Admetus, the most beautiful of the daughters of Pelias. Those who dwelt in Methone and Thaumacia and held Meliboea and rugged Olizon were led by Philoctetes, well skilled with the bow, with seven ships. In each of them fifty oarsmen had gone aboard, well skilled with the bow for fighting hard.

2.721 But he lay on an island suffering harsh pains, on holy Lemnos, where the sons of the Achaeans had left him, tormented by the evil wound of a deadly water-snake. There he lay grieving, but soon the Argives beside the ships were to remember lord Philoctetes. Yet these men were not leaderless either, though they longed for their leader. Medon marshaled them, the illegitimate son of Oïleus, whom Rhene bore to Oïleus, sacker of cities. Those who held Tricca and craggy Ithome, and who held Oechalia, the city of Eurytus of Oechalia, were led in turn by the two sons of Asclepius, the good healers Podalirius and Machaon. With them thirty hollow ships were drawn up in line.

2.734 Those who held Ormenius and the spring Hypereia, and who held Asterius and the white peaks of Titanus, were led by Eurypylus, the splendid son of Euaemon, and with him forty black ships followed. Those who held Argissa and dwelt in Gyrtone, Orthe and Elone and the white city of Oloosson, were led in turn by Polypoetes, steadfast in war, son of Pirithous, whom immortal Zeus fathered. Glorious Hippodameia bore Polypoetes to Pirithous on the day he took vengeance on the shaggy beast-men, drove them from Pelion and pushed them off to the land of the Aethices. He was not alone: with him was Leonteus, offshoot of Ares, son of high-hearted Coronus, son of Caeneus. With them forty black ships followed.

2.748 Guneus brought twenty-two ships from Cyphus. With him followed the Enienes and the Perrhaebians, steadfast in war, who had made their homes around Dodona of the harsh winters, and who worked the fields around lovely Titaressus. It sends its fair-flowing water into the Peneius, but does not mingle with the

silver-eddying Peneius; it flows along on top of it like olive oil, for it is a branch of the Styx, the water of the dread oath. The Magnetes were led by Prothous son of Tenthredon, those who lived around the Peneius and Pelion with its quivering leaves. These were led by swift Prothous, and with him forty black ships followed. These, then, were the leaders and lords of the Danaans. Now tell me, Muse, who was by far the best of them, of the men themselves and of the horses that went with the sons of Atreus.

2.763 The best horses by far were those of the grandson of Pheres, which Eumelus drove. They were swift-footed as birds, alike in coat, alike in age, their backs as even as if set by a level. Apollo of the silver bow had reared them in Pereia, both mares, carrying the panic of Ares with them. Of the men, the best by far was Telamonian Ajax, while Achilles kept up his wrath; for Achilles was much the strongest, and so were the horses that carried the flawless son of Peleus. But he lay among his curved seafaring ships, nursing his wrath against Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, the son of Atreus. His men along the surf-line of the sea amused themselves throwing discuses and javelins and shooting with bows. Their horses, each beside its own chariot, stood munching lotus and marsh-grown parsley, and the lords' chariots lay well covered in the huts. The men, longing for their leader dear to Ares, roamed here and there through the camp and did not fight.

THE TROJANS AND THEIR ALLIES

Iris rouses the Trojans, and the poet lists the Trojan and allied leaders.

2.780 So they marched on, as if the whole land were being devoured by fire, and the earth groaned beneath them, as it does for Zeus who delights in thunder when in his anger he lashes the ground around Typhoeus in the land of the Arimi, where they say Typhoeus has his bed. So the earth groaned greatly beneath their feet as they went, and very swiftly they crossed the plain. To the Trojans came a messenger, wind-swift Iris, from Zeus

who bears the aegis, with painful news. They were holding assembly at Priam's doors, all gathered together, young and old alike. Standing near, swift-footed Iris spoke. She had made her voice like that of Polites, son of Priam, who used to sit as the Trojans' lookout, trusting in his speed, on top of the tomb of old Aesyetes, waiting for the moment the Achaeans would set out from their ships. In his likeness swift-footed Iris spoke to him:[6]

2.796 "Old man, endless talk is always dear to you, as it once was in peacetime; but war has risen that there's no escaping. I have gone into a great many battles of men, but never yet have I seen an army like this one, or so large. They are all too like leaves or grains of sand as they advance across the plain to fight against the city. Hector, it's to you above all that I give this charge—do as I say. There are many allies in the great city of Priam, and one man's tongue differs from another's, for they come from widely scattered peoples. Let each man give the signals to those he commands, and lead them out once he has marshaled his own countrymen." So she spoke, and Hector did not fail to recognize the goddess's word. At once he broke up the assembly, and they rushed to arms. All the gates were opened, and out poured the army, foot soldiers and horsemen, and a great din arose.

2.811 There is a steep mound in front of the city, out on the plain, standing apart, with open ground around it on every side. Men call it Batieia, but the immortals call it the tomb of nimble Myrine. There the Trojans and their allies were now marshaled into their divisions. The Trojans were led by great Hector of the flashing helmet, son of Priam, and with him by far the most numerous and the best of the fighting men were arming, eager with their spears. The Dardanians in turn were led by the noble son of Anchises, Aeneas, whom bright Aphrodite bore to Anchises on the slopes of Ida, a goddess lying with a mortal. He was not alone: with him were the two sons of Antenor, Archelochus and Acamas, well skilled in every kind of fighting.

6 Typhoeus was a monstrous adversary of Zeus, struck down by his thunderbolts and buried beneath the earth.

2.824 Those who dwelt in Zeleia, under the lowest foot of Ida, wealthy men who drink the dark water of the Aesepus—Trojans—were led in turn by the splendid son of Lycaon, Pandarus, to whom Apollo himself had given his bow. Those who held Adrasteia and the land of Apaesus, and held Pityeia and the steep mountain of Tereia, were led by Adrastus and Amphius of the linen corslet, the two sons of Merops of Percote. He knew the art of prophecy beyond all men, and would not let his sons go to war, the destroyer of men. But they would not obey him at all, for the dooms of black death were leading them on.

2.835 Those who dwelt around Percote and Practius, and held Sestos and Abydos and bright Arisbe, were led in turn by Asius son of Hyrtacus, a leader of men—Asius son of Hyrtacus, whom great fiery horses had carried from Arisbe, from the river Selleïs. Hippothous led the tribes of the Pelasgian spearmen who lived in fertile Larisa. These were led by Hippothous and Pylaeus, offshoot of Ares, the two sons of Pelasgian Lethus, son of Teutamus. Acamas and the hero Peiroös led the Thracians, all whom the strong-flowing Hellespont shuts in. Euphemus was commander of the Ciconian spearmen, son of Troezenus, the Zeus-cherished son of Ceas. Pyraechmes led the Paeonians with their curved bows from far away, from Amydon, from the broad-flowing Axius—the Axius, whose water is the fairest that spreads over the earth.

2.851 The Paphlagonians were led by Pylaemenes, shaggy of heart, from the land of the Eneti, where the breed of wild mules comes from. They held Cytorus and dwelt around Sesamus, and lived in famous homes about the river Parthenius, and in Cromna and Aegialus and lofty Erythini. The Halizones were led by Odius and Epistrophus from far away, from Alybe, where silver has its birth. The Mysians were led by Chromis and by Ennomus the augur. But his birds did not save him from black doom: he was brought down at the hands of the swift-footed grandson of Aeacus in the river, where Achilles cut down Trojans and others too. Phorcys and godlike Ascanius led the

Phrygians from far away, from Ascania, and they were eager to fight in the press of battle.

2.864 The Maeonians in turn were led by Mesthles and Antiphus, the two sons of Talaemenes, whose mother was the Gygaean lake. They led the Maeonians, born beneath Tmolus. Nastes in turn led the Carians, men of foreign speech, who held Miletus and the mountain of Phthires with its leaves past counting, and the streams of the Maeander and the steep peaks of Mycale. These were led by Amphimachus and Nastes—Nastes and Amphimachus, the splendid children of Nomion. He went to war wearing gold, like a girl, the fool, but it did nothing to ward off grim destruction from him. He was brought down at the hands of the swift-footed grandson of Aeacus in the river, and war-minded Achilles carried off the gold. Sarpedon and flawless Glaucus led the Lycians from far away, from Lycia, from the eddying Xanthus.

Book 3

Paris and Menelaus
A duel for Helen; Helen names the Greek heroes from the wall;
Aphrodite rescues Paris.

3.1 Now when each contingent had been marshaled with its leaders, the Trojans came on with clamor and cries, like birds. So the clamor of cranes rises before the face of heaven when they have fled the winter and its endless rain, and fly clamoring toward the streams of Ocean, bringing slaughter and doom to the Pygmy men; and at early dawn they bring on a grim fight. But the Achaeans came on in silence, breathing fury, eager in their hearts to defend one another. As when the South Wind spreads a mist over the mountain peaks, no friend to shepherds but better than night for a thief, and a man can see only as far as he can throw a stone, so the dust rose in a thick cloud under their feet as they went; and very swiftly they made their way across the plain.[1]

3.15 When they had come close, advancing on each other, godlike Alexander stepped out as champion for the Trojans. He had a leopard skin on his shoulders, his curved bow and a sword, and he brandished two spears tipped with bronze, challenging all the best of the Argives to fight him face to face in grim combat. When Menelaus, dear to Ares, caught sight of him striding with long steps out in front of the throng, he was glad. A lion is glad in the same way when he comes upon a great body, finding a horned stag or a wild goat when he is starving: he devours it

1 The Pygmies were a legendary race of tiny people at the edge of the world, said to be at war with the cranes.

greedily, even though swift hounds and lusty young men are trying to drive him off. So Menelaus was glad when his eyes saw godlike Alexander, for he thought he would take vengeance on the wrongdoer. At once he leapt to the ground from his chariot in his armor.[2]

3.30 But when godlike Alexander caught sight of him appearing among the front fighters, his heart was struck with dismay, and he drew back into the crowd of his comrades, shunning death. As when a man sees a snake in the glens of a mountain and starts back, and trembling seizes his limbs, and he retreats, and pallor takes hold of his cheeks, so godlike Alexander shrank back into the throng of the proud Trojans, afraid of the son of Atreus. Hector saw him and rebuked him with shaming words: "Evil Paris, so fine to look at, mad for women, seducer! I wish you had never been born, or had died unmarried. Yes, I'd wish for that, and it would be far better than for you to be a disgrace like this, and looked at askance by others.

3.43 How the long-haired Achaeans must be laughing! They thought you a champion, a man of the front ranks, because you have a handsome look—but there is no strength in your heart, and no courage. Was this what you were like when you sailed over the sea in seafaring ships, gathered your trusty comrades, mixed with foreigners, and brought back a beautiful woman from a distant land, the daughter-in-law of spearmen? She is a great bane to your father, to your city and all the people, a joy to our enemies and a shame to yourself. Won't you stand up to Menelaus, dear to Ares? You'd learn what kind of man he is whose lovely wife you have. Your lyre wouldn't help you then, nor the gifts of Aphrodite, your hair and your looks, when you were rolling in the dust. But the Trojans are great cowards; otherwise you'd be wearing a tunic of stone by now for all the harm you've done."[3]

3.58 Then godlike Alexander spoke to him in turn: "Hector, you rebuke me fairly and not beyond what's fair. Your heart is

2 Alexander is Paris, son of Priam, who carried off Helen, wife of Menelaus; the poem uses both names.

always unyielding, like an axe that goes through a beam in the hands of a man who skillfully cuts out a ship's timber, and it multiplies the force of his stroke; so fearless is the mind in your chest. But don't throw in my face the lovely gifts of golden Aphrodite. The glorious gifts of the gods are not to be tossed aside, whatever they themselves may give; no one could get them just by wanting them. But now, if you want me to fight and do battle, make the rest of the Trojans and all the Achaeans sit down, and set me and Menelaus, dear to Ares, in the middle to fight over Helen and all her possessions.

3.71 Whichever of us wins and proves the stronger, let him take all the possessions fairly, and the woman, and lead them home; and may the rest of you, having sworn friendship and binding oaths, live on in fertile Troy, while they go back to horse-pasturing Argos and Achaea, land of beautiful women." So he spoke, and Hector was very glad to hear his words. He went out into the middle and held back the Trojan battalions, gripping his spear by the middle, and they all sat down. But the long-haired Achaeans kept aiming at him with their bows, trying to hit him with arrows, and throwing stones. Then Agamemnon, lord of men, shouted loudly: "Hold off, Argives! Stop throwing, young men of the Achaeans! Hector of the flashing helmet is making it plain he has something to say."

3.84 So he spoke, and they held off from fighting and quickly fell silent. And Hector spoke between the two armies: "Hear me, Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans, hear the word of Alexander, on whose account this strife has arisen. He bids the rest of the Trojans and all the Achaeans lay their fine armor down on the bountiful earth, while he himself and Menelaus, dear to Ares, fight alone in the middle over Helen and all her possessions. Whichever of them wins and proves the stronger, let him take all the possessions fairly, and the woman, and lead them home; and let the rest of us swear friendship and binding oaths." So he spoke, and they all fell hushed and silent. Then Menelaus, good at the war cry, spoke among them:

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3 A "tunic of stone" means death by stoning.

3.97 "Hear me now as well, for pain has come most of all to my heart. I think the Argives and Trojans should be parted now at last, since you have suffered many evils because of my quarrel, and because Alexander began it. Whichever of us two death and fate are prepared for, let him die; and the rest of you be parted as quickly as you can. Bring two lambs, a white male and a black female, for Earth and Sun; and we will bring another for Zeus. And bring the mighty Priam, so that he may seal the oaths himself, since his sons are arrogant and not to be trusted—so that no one may wreck the oaths of Zeus by some transgression. Young men's minds are always flighty; but where an old man takes part, he looks both before and after, so that things turn out far the best for both sides."

HELEN ON THE WALL

Helen joins the elders on the tower and names the Achaean leaders for Priam.

3.111 So he spoke, and both Achaeans and Trojans were glad, hoping to be done with miserable war. They drew up their horses in the ranks and stepped out themselves, and took off their armor and laid it on the ground, close together, with little ground between. Hector sent two heralds to the city in haste to bring the lambs and summon Priam; and lord Agamemnon sent Talthybius off to go to the hollow ships, and told him to bring a lamb; and he did not disobey godlike Agamemnon. Meanwhile Iris came as a messenger to white-armed Helen, in the likeness of her sister-in-law, the wife of Antenor's son—Laodice, the most beautiful of Priam's daughters, whom lord Helicaon, son of Antenor, had married.

3.125 She found her in the hall, weaving a great purple cloth of double width and working into it the many contests of the horse-taming Trojans and bronze-clad Achaeans, which they were suffering for her sake at the hands of Ares. Swift-footed Iris stood close by and said: "Come here, dear bride, so you can see the wonderful doings of the horse-taming Trojans and bronze-

clad Achaeans. Just now they were bringing tearful war against each other on the plain, eager for deadly battle; now they sit in silence, the fighting has stopped, and they lean on their shields with their long spears planted beside them. But Alexander and Menelaus, dear to Ares, are going to fight over you with long spears, and you will be called the dear wife of the one who wins."

3.139 With these words the goddess put sweet longing into her heart for her former husband, her city and her parents. At once she covered herself in shining linen and hurried out of her chamber, shedding soft tears. She was not alone: two handmaids went with her, Aethra, daughter of Pittheus, and ox-eyed Clymene; and quickly they came to where the Scaean Gates stood. There Priam and Panthous and Thymoetes, Lampus and Clytius and Hicetaon, offshoot of Ares, and Ucalegon and Antenor, both men of good sense, sat as elders of the people at the Scaean Gates. Old age had ended their fighting, but they were fine speakers, like cicadas that sit on a tree in the woods and send out their lily-soft voice; such were the leaders of the Trojans who sat on the tower. When they saw Helen coming up onto the tower, they spoke winged words softly to one another:[4]

3.156 "It's no cause for blame that the Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans should suffer pains for so long over such a woman; she is terribly like the immortal goddesses to look at. But even so, beautiful as she is, let her go home in the ships, and not be left here as a bane to us and to our children after us." So they spoke, and Priam called out to Helen: "Come here, dear child, and sit in front of me, so you can see your former husband, your kinsmen and your friends. You are not to blame in my eyes; it is the gods who are to blame, who stirred up against me this tearful war with the Achaeans. And you can name this huge man for me too, tell me who this Achaean is, so noble and tall.

3.168 There are others taller by a head, it's true, but I have never seen with my eyes a man so handsome, or so majestic; he looks

4 The Scaean Gates were the main gate of Troy, facing the plain and the Achaean camp.

like a king." Then Helen, radiant among women, answered him: "Dear father-in-law, you are a man I revere and stand in awe of. If only evil death had pleased me when I followed your son here, leaving my bridal chamber and my kin, my darling daughter and the lovely companions of my own age. But that did not happen, and so I waste away in weeping. But I'll tell you what you ask and want to know: that is the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, both a good king and a strong spearman. And he was my brother-in-law—shameless creature that I am—if that life was ever real."

3.181 So she spoke, and the old man gazed at him in wonder and said: "Blessed son of Atreus, child of destiny, favored by fortune! So many young men of the Achaeans are under your command. Once before I went to Phrygia, rich in vines, and there I saw great numbers of Phrygian men with their quick horses, the peoples of Otreus and godlike Mygdon, who were encamped then along the banks of the Sangarius. I too was counted among them as an ally on the day the Amazons came, a match for men. But not even they were as many as the bright-eyed Achaeans." Next the old man saw Odysseus and asked:

3.192 "Come, dear child, tell me about this one too, who he is. He's shorter by a head than Agamemnon son of Atreus, but broader in the shoulders and chest to look at. His armor lies on the bountiful earth, but he himself goes ranging through the ranks of men like a bellwether. I'd liken him to a thick-fleeced ram moving through a great flock of white sheep." Then Helen, born of Zeus, answered him: "And that is the son of Laertes, resourceful Odysseus, who was raised in the land of Ithaca, rugged as it is, and knows every kind of trick and shrewd plan." Then Antenor, a man of good sense, answered her face to face:

3.204 "Lady, that is very true, what you've said. Once before, godlike Odysseus came here too, on an embassy about you, with Menelaus, dear to Ares. I received them as guests and made them welcome in my halls, and came to know the build and the shrewd plans of both. When they mixed with the assembled Trojans, standing, Menelaus overtopped him with his broad

shoulders; but when both were seated, Odysseus was the more majestic. And when they began to weave their words and plans before everyone, Menelaus spoke fluently—few words, but very clear, since he was not a man of many words, nor one who rambled off the point; and he was the younger too.[5] 3.216 But whenever resourceful Odysseus sprang up to speak, he would stand and look down, his eyes fixed on the ground, and he moved his staff neither back nor forward but held it stiff, like a man without skill; you would have said he was some sullen fellow, and a fool besides. But when he let his great voice out of his chest, and words like winter snowflakes, then no other mortal could rival Odysseus; then we no longer marveled so much at Odysseus' looks." Third, the old man saw Ajax and asked: "Who is this other Achaean, so noble and tall, standing out among the Argives by his head and broad shoulders?"

3.228 Then long-robed Helen, radiant among women, answered him: "That is huge Ajax, the bulwark of the Achaeans. And over on the other side Idomeneus stands among the Cretans like a god, with the leaders of the Cretans gathered around him. Menelaus, dear to Ares, often entertained him as a guest in our house whenever he came over from Crete. Now I can see all the other bright-eyed Achaeans, whom I would know well and could tell you their names. But two marshals of the people I cannot see, Castor the horse-tamer and Polydeuces, good with his fists: my own brothers, whom one mother bore along with me.[6]

THE OATHS

Priam comes down to the plain, and Agamemnon swears the oaths over the lambs.

3.239 Either they did not come with the army from lovely Lacedaemon, or they did come here in their seafaring ships but now refuse to enter the battle of men, because they dread the shame

5 Before the war Odysseus and Menelaus came to Troy as envoys to demand Helen's return.

6 Castor and Polydeuces (Pollux), the twin sons of Leda, were Helen's brothers.

and the many reproaches that are mine." So she spoke. But the life-giving earth already held them fast, back there in Lacedaemon, in their own dear native land. Meanwhile the heralds were carrying through the city the offerings for the binding oaths sworn by the gods: two lambs, and wine that cheers the heart, the fruit of the field, in a goatskin bag. The herald Idaeus carried a shining mixing bowl and golden cups. He came and stood beside the old man and urged him with these words:

3.250 "Rise, son of Laomedon. The best of the horse-taming Trojans and of the bronze-clad Achaeans are calling you to come down to the plain, so that you can make binding oaths. Alexander and Menelaus, dear to Ares, are going to fight with long spears over the woman, and the woman and the possessions are to go with whoever wins. The rest of us, having sworn friendship and binding oaths, would go on living in fertile Troy, while they go back to horse-pasturing Argos and Achaea, land of beautiful women." So he spoke, and the old man shuddered. He told his companions to yoke the horses, and they quickly obeyed. Priam mounted and pulled back the reins, and Antenor mounted the beautiful chariot beside him. And the two of them drove the swift horses through the Scaean Gates out onto the plain.[7]

3.264 When they reached the Trojans and the Achaeans, they stepped down from the chariot onto the nourishing earth and walked out into the space between the Trojans and the Achaeans. At once Agamemnon, lord of men, rose to his feet, and resourceful Odysseus rose too. The noble heralds brought together the offerings for the binding oaths sworn by the gods, mixed wine in the mixing bowl, and poured water over the kings' hands. The son of Atreus drew with his hand the knife that always hung beside the great sheath of his sword, and cut hair from the heads of the lambs, and the heralds of the Trojans and the Achaeans then handed it out to the chiefs. And the son of Atreus raised his hands and prayed aloud on their behalf:

3.276 "Father Zeus, ruling from Ida, most glorious, greatest; and you, Sun, who see all things and hear all things; and you rivers,

and you earth; and you two below who punish dead men, whoever has sworn a false oath: be our witnesses, and guard these binding oaths. If Alexander kills Menelaus, then let him keep Helen and all her possessions himself, and we will sail home in our seafaring ships. But if fair-haired Menelaus kills Alexander, then the Trojans must give back Helen and all the possessions, and pay the Argives the honor-price that is fitting, one that will be remembered even among men yet to come.[8] 3.288 And if Priam and Priam's sons refuse to pay me the honor-price once Alexander has fallen, then I will go on fighting for the penalty, staying right here until I reach the end of the war." He spoke, and cut the lambs' throats with the pitiless bronze, and laid them on the ground gasping, robbed of life, for the bronze had taken away their strength. Then they drew wine from the mixing bowl in cups and poured it out, and prayed to the gods who live forever. And this is what one or another of the Achaeans and Trojans would say:

3.298 "Zeus, most glorious, greatest, and you other immortal gods: whichever side is first to do harm in breach of these oaths, may their brains pour out on the ground like this wine, theirs and their children's, and may their wives be taken by other men." So they spoke, but the son of Cronus was not yet bringing it to pass for them. Then Priam, descendant of Dardanus, spoke among them: "Hear me, Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans. I am going back to windy Ilium, since I cannot bear to watch with my own eyes my dear son fighting Menelaus, dear to Ares. Zeus surely knows, and the other immortal gods, for which of the two the end of death is fated."

3.310 He spoke, and the godlike man put the lambs into the chariot, then mounted it himself and pulled back the reins, and Antenor mounted the beautiful chariot beside him. So the two of them went back again toward Ilium. Then Hector, son of Priam,

7 Priam is addressed by his father's name: he was the son of Laomedon, an earlier king of Troy.

8 The two powers below who punish perjurers are probably Hades and Persephone, or the Furies.

and godlike Odysseus first measured out the ground, and next they took lots and shook them in a bronze-plated helmet, to decide which of the two should be first to throw his bronze spear. And the people prayed and lifted their hands to the gods, and this is what one or another of the Achaeans and Trojans would say: "Father Zeus, ruling from Ida, most glorious, greatest: whichever of the two brought this trouble on both sides, grant that he perish and go down into the house of Hades, and that for us there may be friendship and binding oaths."

THE DUEL

Paris and Menelaus fight; Aphrodite snatches Paris away just as he is losing.

3.324 So they spoke, and great Hector of the flashing helmet shook the lots, looking away behind him, and the lot of Paris quickly leapt out. Then the men sat down in their ranks, where each had his high-stepping horses and his intricate armor laid. And godlike Alexander, husband of lovely-haired Helen, put on his beautiful armor about his shoulders. First he fastened the greaves around his shins, beautiful ones, fitted with silver ankle-pieces. Next he put on around his chest the corslet of his brother Lycaon, and fitted it to himself. Around his shoulders he slung his bronze sword with its silver studs, and then his great, heavy shield. On his mighty head he set a well-made helmet with a horsehair crest, and the plume nodded terribly above it. And he took up a valiant spear that fitted his grip. In the same way warlike Menelaus put on his armor.

3.340 When they had armed themselves on either side of the throng, they walked out into the space between the Trojans and the Achaeans, glaring terribly, and amazement held all who watched, horse-taming Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans alike. They took their stand close to each other on the measured ground, brandishing their spears, each furious at the other. Alexander threw first. He hurled his long-shadowed spear and struck the shield of the son of Atreus, round on every side. But

the bronze did not break through: its point was bent back in the strong shield. Then the son of Atreus, Menelaus, rushed in second with his bronze, praying to father Zeus:

3.351 "Lord Zeus, grant that I may take vengeance on the man who wronged me first, godlike Alexander, and bring him down under my hands, so that even among men born later anyone may shudder to do wrong to a host who has offered him friendship." He spoke, and poised his long-shadowed spear and threw it, and struck the shield of the son of Priam, round on every side. Through the shining shield went the heavy spear, and through the elaborately worked corslet it forced its way, and straight on beside his flank the spear sheared through his tunic; but he swerved aside and escaped black doom. Then the son of Atreus drew his silver-studded sword, raised it high, and struck the ridge of his helmet; but the sword shattered around it into three and four pieces and fell from his hand. And the son of Atreus groaned aloud, looking up to the wide sky:

3.365 "Father Zeus, no other god is more destructive than you! I truly thought I would make Alexander pay for his wickedness. Now my sword is broken in my hands, and my spear flew from my grip for nothing, and I never hit him." He spoke, and leaping forward seized him by the helmet with its thick horsehair crest, swung him around, and began dragging him toward the well-greaved Achaeans. The richly embroidered strap under his soft throat was choking him, the one stretched tight beneath his chin to fasten his helmet. And now he would have dragged him off and won unspeakable glory, had not Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, been quick to notice. She broke the strap, made from the hide of an ox slain by force, and the empty helmet came away in his strong hand.

HELEN AND PARIS

Aphrodite forces Helen to go to Paris, who takes her to bed.

3.377 Then the warrior whirled it around and flung it among the well-greaved Achaeans, and his trusty companions picked it up.

And he sprang back at him again, eager to kill him with his bronze spear. But Aphrodite snatched him away, very easily, as a god can, hid him in thick mist, and set him down in his fragrant, incense-scented bedroom. Then she went herself to call Helen. She found her on the high tower, with the Trojan women crowding around her. With her hand she took hold of her nectar-scented robe and tugged it, and spoke to her in the likeness of an aged woman, a wool-worker, who used to card fine wool for her when she lived in Lacedaemon, and who loved her best of all. In her likeness bright Aphrodite spoke to her:

3.390 "Come here. Alexander is calling you to come home. There he is in the bedroom, on the inlaid bed, gleaming with beauty and fine clothes. You'd never say he had come from fighting a man. You'd think he was on his way to a dance, or had just stopped dancing and sat down." So she spoke, and stirred the heart in Helen's breast. And when she noticed the goddess's beautiful neck, her lovely breasts and her flashing eyes, she was amazed, and spoke to her, calling her by name:

3.399 "Strange one, why do you want to deceive me like this? Will you take me further on still, to some well-peopled city of Phrygia or lovely Maeonia, if you have some favorite among mortal men there too? Is it because Menelaus has now beaten godlike Alexander and wants to take me home, hateful as I am, that you have now come and stood here with treachery in your mind? Go and sit beside him yourself. Give up the road of the gods; never again turn your feet back to Olympus. Spend your days fretting over him and looking after him, until he makes you his wife—or else his slave. I will not go there to share his bed; that would deserve blame. The Trojan women would all reproach me afterward, and I have endless griefs in my heart."[9]

3.413 Then bright Aphrodite spoke to her in anger: "Don't provoke me, wretched woman, or I may grow angry and abandon you, and come to hate you as much as I now love you beyond measure, and contrive grim hatred between both sides, Trojans

9 Phrygia and Maeonia (later called Lydia) were regions of Asia Minor, inland from Troy.

and Danaans; and then you would perish by an evil fate." So she spoke, and Helen, born of Zeus, was afraid. She went, wrapping herself in her shining white robe, in silence, unnoticed by all the Trojan women; and the goddess led the way. When they reached Alexander's beautiful house, the handmaids quickly turned to their work, while she, radiant among women, went up into the high-roofed bedroom.

3.424 Then laughter-loving Aphrodite took a chair, and the goddess carried it and set it down facing Alexander. There Helen sat, daughter of Zeus who holds the aegis, turning her eyes away, and she reproached her husband: "You've come back from the war. I wish you had died there, brought down by the strong man who was once my husband. Before this you used to boast that you were better than Menelaus, dear to Ares, in strength and hands and spear. Well, go now and challenge Menelaus, dear to Ares, to fight you face to face again. No—I tell you to stop, and not to fight fair-haired Menelaus head-on and do battle with him recklessly, or you may soon be brought down by his spear."

3.437 Then Paris answered her: "Wife, don't wound my heart with harsh reproaches. This time Menelaus has won, with Athena's help; another time I will beat him, for we have gods on our side too. But come, let us go to bed and turn to love. Never before has desire so wrapped my mind, not even when I first carried you off from lovely Lacedaemon and sailed away in seafaring ships, and on the island of Cranae lay with you in love and bed, as I love you now, and sweet longing takes hold of me." He spoke, and led the way to the bed, and his wife followed.

3.448 So the two of them lay down on the corded bed. But the son of Atreus was ranging through the throng like a wild beast, looking to see if he could catch sight of godlike Alexander anywhere. Yet none of the Trojans or their famous allies could show Alexander to Menelaus, dear to Ares, at that moment. Not that they would have hidden him out of friendship, if anyone had seen him, for he was as hateful to them all as black doom. Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke among them: "Hear me, Trojans, Dardanians and allies. Victory clearly belongs to Menelaus,

dear to Ares. So give back Argive Helen and the possessions with her, and pay the honor-price that is fitting, one that will be remembered even among men yet to come." So the son of Atreus spoke, and the other Achaeans shouted their approval.

Book 4

The truce broken
Pandarus wounds Menelaus with an arrow, and the armies close in battle.

4.1 Now the gods sat beside Zeus, holding assembly on the golden floor, and among them queenly Hebe poured out nectar like wine. They pledged one another with golden cups as they looked out at the city of the Trojans. At once the son of Cronus set about provoking Hera with taunting words, speaking slyly: "Menelaus has two goddesses to help him, Hera of Argos and Athena of Alalcomenae. But they sit apart and take their pleasure in watching, while laughter-loving Aphrodite is always at that other man's side and wards off doom from him. Just now she saved him, when he thought he was going to die.[1]

4.13 But the victory, at any rate, belongs to Menelaus, dear to Ares. So let us consider how these things are to turn out: whether we should stir up evil war and dread battle once more, or set friendship between the two sides. And if somehow this should be welcome and pleasing to all, then the city of lord Priam might go on being lived in, and Menelaus might take Argive Helen home again." So he spoke, and Athena and Hera muttered at it. They sat close together, plotting evil for the Trojans. Athena kept silent and said nothing, sullen at Zeus her father, though a savage anger had hold of her. But Hera's breast could not contain her anger, and she spoke out:

4.25 "Most dread son of Cronus, what sort of thing is this you've said? How can you want to make my labor vain and fruitless,

and the sweat I sweated in my toil, when my horses wore themselves out as I gathered the army to bring evil on Priam and his sons? Do it, then. But not all of us other gods approve." Then, deeply angered, Zeus the cloud-gatherer spoke to her: "Strange goddess, what great wrongs can Priam and Priam's sons be doing you, that you are so relentlessly bent on sacking the well-built citadel of Ilium? If you could go in through the gates and the long walls and eat Priam raw, and Priam's sons and the other Trojans, then perhaps you might cure your anger. Do as you like. Only don't let this quarrel become a great source of strife between the two of us hereafter.

4.39 And I'll tell you something else, and you lay it to heart: whenever I in my turn am eager to sack a city where men dear to you were born, don't try to thwart my anger, but let me be. For I too have granted you this willingly, though with an unwilling heart. Of all the cities of men on earth that lie beneath the sun and the starry sky, holy Ilium was the one most honored in my heart, and Priam, and the people of Priam with the fine ash spear. For my altar never lacked its fair share of the feast, the libation and the savor of burnt fat; that is the prize of honor we gods have been allotted." Then ox-eyed queenly Hera answered him:

4.51 "For my part, there are three cities far dearer to me than any: Argos and Sparta and Mycenae of the broad streets. Sack them whenever they become hateful to your heart. I won't stand up for them against you, or begrudge you. For even if I do grudge it and refuse to let you sack them, I'll get nowhere by grudging, since you are far the stronger. Still, my labor too should not be made fruitless. I too am a god, and my birth comes from the same source as yours: crooked-counseling Cronus fathered me as his eldest, first in rank on both counts—by birth, and because I am called your wife, while you are lord among all the immortals. 4.62 So let us give way to each other in this, I to you and you to me, and the other immortal gods will

1 Hebe is the goddess of youth, a daughter of Zeus and Hera. Alalcomenae was a town in Boeotia with an ancient cult of Athena.

follow. And you, be quick and order Athena to go into the dread battle of Trojans and Achaeans, and to try to make the Trojans be the first to harm the glory-proud Achaeans in breach of the oaths." So she spoke, and the father of men and gods did not disobey. At once he spoke winged words to Athena: "Go at once, quickly, to the armies, among the Trojans and Achaeans, and try to make the Trojans be the first to harm the glory-proud Achaeans in breach of the oaths."

4.73 With these words he urged on Athena, who was eager already, and she went darting down from the peaks of Olympus. Like a star that the son of crooked-counseling Cronus sends as a portent for sailors or for a broad army of men, a bright one, throwing off a shower of sparks—like that Pallas Athena darted down to earth and leapt into their midst. Amazement held those who looked on, the horse-taming Trojans and the well-greaved Achaeans, and one would glance at his neighbor and say: "Surely there will be evil war and dread battle once more—or else Zeus is setting friendship between the two sides, Zeus, who has been made the steward of war for men."

THE TRUCE BROKEN

Athena persuades Pandarus to shoot Menelaus, and Machaon tends the wound.

4.85 So one or another of the Achaeans and Trojans would say. But she, in the likeness of a man—Laodocus son of Antenor, a mighty spearman—slipped into the throng of the Trojans, searching for godlike Pandarus, to see if she might find him somewhere. She found the son of Lycaon, peerless and mighty, standing there, and around him were the strong ranks of shield-bearing men who had followed him from the streams of Aesepus. Standing close, she spoke winged words: "Would you listen to me now, fiery-hearted son of Lycaon? Then you would dare to let fly a swift arrow at Menelaus, and win gratitude and

glory among all the Trojans, and most of all from Prince Alexander.[2]

4.97 From him above all you would carry off splendid gifts, if he sees Menelaus, the warlike son of Atreus, laid low by your arrow and mounted on the grievous pyre. Come, shoot an arrow at glorious Menelaus, and vow to Lycian-born Apollo, famed for his bow, to offer a splendid hecatomb of firstborn lambs when you return home to the city of holy Zeleia." So Athena spoke, and she persuaded his mind, fool that he was. At once he uncovered his polished bow, made from the horns of a wild ibex that he himself had once shot in the chest: he had waited in ambush, and as it came out from a rock he hit it under the breastbone, and it fell back upon the rock. Its horns grew sixteen palms long from its head; a craftsman who worked in horn had shaped them and fitted them together, smoothed the whole thing well, and set a golden hook at the tip.

4.112 He strung it, bracing it against the ground, and laid it carefully down; and his noble comrades held their shields in front of him, so that the warlike sons of the Achaeans would not spring up before Menelaus, the warlike son of Atreus, was hit. Then he pulled the lid off his quiver and took out an arrow, feathered and never shot, the source of black pains. Quickly he fitted the bitter arrow to the string, and vowed to Lycian-born Apollo, famed for his bow, to offer a splendid hecatomb of firstborn lambs when he returned home to the city of holy Zeleia. He drew, gripping the notched end and the ox-gut string together, and brought the string to his breast and the iron head to the bow. And when he had bent the great bow into a circle, the bow twanged, the string sang out loud, and the sharp-pointed arrow leapt forth, eager to fly into the throng.

4.127 But the blessed immortal gods did not forget you, Menelaus, and first of all the daughter of Zeus, the bringer of spoil, who stood before you and warded off the sharp arrow. She turned it aside from his skin as when a mother keeps a fly away

2 Pandarus leads the contingent from Zeleia, near the river Aesepus at the foot of Mount Ida.

from her child as he lies in sweet sleep, and she herself guided it to where the golden buckles of the belt held fast and the corslet, doubled over, met it. The bitter arrow struck the fastened belt. It drove through the intricately worked belt, and forced its way on through the richly worked corslet and the guard he wore as a defense for his skin, a barrier against missiles, which protected him best of all; but it went on through even that. The arrow grazed the very surface of the man's skin, and at once blood, dark as a cloud, flowed from the wound.

4.141 As when a woman of Maeonia or Caria stains ivory with crimson dye, to make a cheekpiece for horses; it lies in a storeroom, and many horsemen long to wear it, but it lies there as a treasure for a king, both an ornament for the horse and a glory for its driver—so, Menelaus, your shapely thighs were stained with blood, and your shins, and the fine ankles beneath. Then Agamemnon, lord of men, shuddered when he saw the dark blood flowing down from the wound, and Menelaus himself, dear to Ares, shuddered too. But when he saw that the binding and the barbs were still outside, his spirit gathered back again in his breast.

4.153 Groaning heavily, lord Agamemnon spoke among them, holding Menelaus by the hand, and his comrades groaned with him: "Dear brother, it was your death, it seems, I was making when I cut the oaths, setting you out alone before the Achaeans to fight the Trojans—since the Trojans have shot you and trampled on the sworn oaths. Yet there is no way an oath is made void, or the blood of lambs, or the unmixed libations and the handshakes we trusted. For even if the Olympian does not bring it to fulfillment at once, he will fulfill it in full, late though it be, and they pay a heavy price, with their own heads, and their wives and children.

4.163 For I know this well in my mind and in my heart: there will come a day when holy Ilium is destroyed, and Priam, and the people of Priam with the fine ash spear, and Zeus son of Cronus, enthroned on high, who dwells in the upper air, will himself shake his dark aegis over them all, in anger at this deceit.

These things will not go unfulfilled. But I will have terrible grief for you, Menelaus, if you die and fill out the measure of your life. And I would come back to thirsty Argos in utter disgrace, for the Achaeans will at once remember their native land, and we would leave Argive Helen behind for Priam and the Trojans to boast of. Your bones will rot in the soil as you lie in Troy, with the work left unfinished. And one of the arrogant Trojans will say something like this, leaping on the barrow of glorious Menelaus:

4.178 'If only Agamemnon would fulfill his anger like this in every case, as now he has led an army of Achaeans here for nothing, and has gone off home to his own native land with empty ships, leaving noble Menelaus behind.' So someone will say one day—and then may the wide earth gape open for me." Then fair-haired Menelaus spoke to him, encouraging him: "Take heart, and don't frighten the army of the Achaeans yet. The sharp arrow didn't lodge in a deadly spot. Before it got there, the gleaming belt stopped it, and beneath it the waistband and the guard that the bronzesmiths made." Then lord Agamemnon answered him: "If only it may be so, dear Menelaus! A healer will examine the wound and put drugs on it that may stop the black pains." He spoke, and said to Talthybius, the godlike herald:

4.193 "Talthybius, call Machaon here as quickly as you can, the son of Asclepius the peerless healer, so that he may see Menelaus, the warlike son of Atreus, whom someone skilled in archery has hit with an arrow, one of the Trojans or the Lycians —glory for him, grief for us." So he spoke, and the herald heard and did not disobey him, but went off through the army of the bronze-clad Achaeans, looking all around for the warrior Machaon. He caught sight of him standing there, and around him were the strong ranks of shield-bearing men who had followed him from Tricca, pasture of horses. Standing close, he spoke winged words: "Up, son of Asclepius! Lord Agamemnon is calling you, so that you may see Menelaus, the warlike leader of the Achaeans, whom someone skilled in archery has hit with an

arrow, one of the Trojans or the Lycians—glory for him, grief for us."[3]

4.208 So he spoke, and stirred the heart in his breast, and they went off through the throng across the broad army of the Achaeans. And when they came to where fair-haired Menelaus had been hit, with all the best men gathered around him in a circle, the godlike man came and stood in their midst, and at once drew the arrow from the fastened belt; and as it was drawn out, the sharp barbs bent back. He loosened the gleaming belt, and beneath it the waistband and the guard that the bronzesmiths made. And when he saw the wound where the bitter arrow had struck, he sucked out the blood and skillfully sprinkled on soothing drugs, which Chiron had once given his father out of friendship.[4]

AGAMEMNON REVIEWS THE ARMY

Agamemnon goes through the ranks, praising some leaders and rebuking others.

4.220 While they were busy tending Menelaus, good at the war cry, the ranks of the shield-bearing Trojans came on; and the Achaeans put on their armor again and turned their minds to battle. Then you would not have seen godlike Agamemnon drowsing, or cowering, or unwilling to fight, but hurrying eagerly to the battle where men win glory. He left his horses and his chariot, ornamented with bronze; his attendant Eurymedon, son of Ptolemaeus son of Peiraeus, held them, snorting, off to the side, and Agamemnon charged him again and again to keep them close at hand for whenever weariness should take hold of his limbs as he marshaled so many men. He himself went on foot among the ranks of men, and whenever he saw any of the

3 Machaon, son of the healer Asclepius, leads the contingent from Tricca in Thessaly and serves as the army's surgeon.

4 Chiron, the wise centaur, was famed as a teacher of healing; he taught Asclepius and Achilles.

Danaans with swift horses hurrying on, he would stand beside them and urge them on all the more with words:

4.234 "Argives, don't slacken your fierce courage now! Father Zeus will be no helper to liars. Those who were the first to do harm in breach of the oaths—their tender flesh the vultures will devour, while we carry off their dear wives and little children in our ships, once we take the citadel." But any he saw shrinking back from hateful war he would berate fiercely with angry words: "Argives, you arrow-fighters, you disgraces, have you no shame? Why do you stand like this, dazed, like fawns that have tired themselves out running across a wide plain and stand still, with no courage left in their hearts? Just so you stand there dazed, and do not fight.

4.247 Or are you waiting for the Trojans to come close to where our well-sterned ships are drawn up on the shore of the gray sea, to see whether the son of Cronus will hold his hand over you?" So he went among the ranks of men, marshaling them, and making his way through the throng of men he came to the Cretans. They were arming around fiery-hearted Idomeneus: Idomeneus among the foremost fighters, like a boar in his strength, while Meriones was urging on the rearmost battalions for him. When he saw them, Agamemnon, lord of men, was glad, and at once addressed Idomeneus with gentle words: "Idomeneus, I honor you beyond the Danaans with swift horses, in war and in every other kind of work, and at the feast, when the best men of the Argives mix the gleaming wine of the elders in the mixing bowl.

4.261 For even if the other long-haired Achaeans drink their allotted portion, your cup always stands full, as mine does, to drink whenever your heart bids you. So rouse yourself for war, the man you've always claimed to be." Then Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, answered him in turn: "Son of Atreus, I will indeed be your trusty comrade, just as I promised at first and confirmed with my nod. But urge on the other long-haired Achaeans, so that we may fight as soon as possible, since the Trojans have made havoc of the oaths. For them, in turn, there

will be death and sorrows hereafter, since they were the first to do harm in breach of the oaths."

4.272 So he spoke, and the son of Atreus passed on, glad at heart. He came to the two Ajaxes, going through the press of men. The two were arming, and a cloud of foot soldiers followed with them. As when a goatherd from a lookout sees a cloud coming over the sea under the blast of the West Wind: to him, far off as he is, it looks blacker than pitch as it moves over the sea, and it brings a great storm with it; he shudders at the sight and drives his flocks into a cave. So with the two Ajaxes the dense battalions of young men nurtured by Zeus moved into hateful war, dark, bristling with shields and spears. Lord Agamemnon was glad when he saw them, and he called out to them and spoke winged words:[5]

4.285 "Ajaxes, leaders of the bronze-clad Argives, I give you two no orders, since it isn't right to urge you on. You yourselves are driving the army hard to fight with all their strength. Father Zeus, Athena and Apollo, if only all of them had such spirit in their breasts! Then the city of lord Priam would soon bow its head, captured and sacked at our hands." So saying, he left them there and went on to others. There he found Nestor, the clear-voiced speaker of the Pylians, marshaling his comrades and urging them to fight under tall Pelagon, Alastor and Chromius, lord Haemon, and Bias, shepherd of the people. He placed the horsemen in front with their horses and chariots, and behind them he set the foot soldiers, many and brave, to be a bulwark in the war. The cowards he drove into the middle, so that even a man who didn't want to would have no choice but to fight.

4.301 First he gave his orders to the horsemen. He told them to keep their horses in hand and not get tangled in the throng: "Let no one, trusting in his horsemanship and his manhood, be eager to fight the Trojans alone, out ahead of the rest; and let no one fall back either, for that way you'll be weaker. Whoever comes from his own chariot within reach of an enemy's, let him thrust

5 "The two Ajaxes" are the two warriors of that name: the great Ajax, son of Telamon, and the lesser Ajax, son of Oïleus.

with the spear, since that is far the better way. This is how the men of earlier times sacked cities and walls, with this mind and this spirit in their breasts." So the old man urged them on, long skilled in war. Lord Agamemnon was glad when he saw him, and he called out to him and spoke winged words:

4.313 "Old man, if only your knees could keep pace with the spirit in your breast, and your strength stay firm! But age, which comes to all alike, wears you down. If only some other man had it, and you were one of the young!" Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, answered him: "Son of Atreus, I too would very much like to be the man I was when I killed godlike Ereuthalion. But the gods never give men everything at once. If I was young then, now old age is upon me. Even so I'll be among the horsemen and direct them with counsel and words, for that is the prize of the old. The younger men will ply the spears, men born after me who trust in their strength."[6]

4.326 So he spoke, and the son of Atreus passed on, glad at heart. He found Menestheus, son of Peteos, driver of horses, standing still, and around him the Athenians, masters of the war cry. Close by stood resourceful Odysseus, and beside him, all around, stood the ranks of the Cephallenians, no weaklings. Their troops had not yet heard the battle cry, for the battalions of the horse-taming Trojans and of the Achaeans had only just begun to stir and move against each other; so they stood waiting for some other column of Achaeans to advance, charge the Trojans and begin the fighting. When he saw them, Agamemnon, lord of men, rebuked them, and he called out to them and spoke winged words:

4.338 "Son of Peteos, the king nurtured by Zeus, and you, master of wicked tricks, crafty-minded one: why do you stand apart cowering, waiting for others? It's fitting for you two to stand among the foremost and meet the blazing battle head-on. You're the first to hear my invitation to the feast whenever we Achaeans prepare a feast for the elders. There you're happy enough to

6 Ereuthalion was an Arcadian champion whom Nestor killed in single combat in his youth; he tells the story later in the poem.

eat roast meat and drink cups of honey-sweet wine for as long as you like. But now you'd be happy to look on even if ten columns of Achaeans were fighting in front of you with the pitiless bronze." Then, with an angry glance from under his brows, resourceful Odysseus said to him:

4.350 "Son of Atreus, what kind of word has escaped the fence of your teeth? How can you say we hang back from war, whenever we Achaeans rouse keen Ares against the horse-taming Trojans? You'll see, if you want to and if it matters to you, the dear father of Telemachus mixing with the front-line fighters of the horse-taming Trojans. What you're saying is empty wind." Lord Agamemnon smiled and spoke to him, seeing that he was angry, and took back his words: "Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many wiles, I don't rebuke you beyond measure, and I give you no orders; for I know that the spirit in your breast is kindly disposed: you think as I do. Come, we'll make this right later, if anything harsh has been said now. May the gods make it all come to nothing."

4.364 So saying, he left them there and went on to others. He found the son of Tydeus, high-hearted Diomedes, standing among his horses and his well-joined chariots, and beside him stood Sthenelus, son of Capaneus. When he saw him, lord Agamemnon rebuked him, and he called out to him and spoke winged words: "Ah, son of fierce-hearted Tydeus, the horse-tamer, why are you cowering? Why are you peering at the gaps between the battle lines? Tydeus never liked to cower like this; he liked to fight the enemy far out ahead of his dear comrades. So say those who saw him at work; I never met him or saw him myself, but they say he was beyond all others.

4.376 Once he came to Mycenae, not in war but as a guest, with godlike Polynices, gathering an army. They were marching then against the sacred walls of Thebes, and they begged hard to be given famous allies. The people were willing to give them and agreed to what they asked, but Zeus turned them aside by showing unfavorable signs. So the two went off, and when they were well on their way and had reached the Asopus, deep in reeds

and lush with grass, the Achaeans sent Tydeus ahead from there with a message. He went, and found many Cadmeans feasting in the house of mighty Eteocles. There, though he was a stranger, Tydeus the charioteer felt no fear, alone among so many Cadmeans. He challenged them to contests and won every one of them easily, so strong a helper was Athena to him.[7] 4.391 But the Cadmeans, goaders of horses, were enraged, and as he was going back they set a close-packed ambush for him, leading fifty young men. There were two leaders, Maeon son of Haemon, like the immortals, and the son of Autophonus, Polyphontes, steadfast in battle. On these too Tydeus brought a shameful fate: he killed them all and let only one go home. Maeon he sent away, obeying the portents of the gods. Such was Tydeus the Aetolian; but the son he fathered is worse than he was in battle, though better in the assembly." So he spoke, and mighty Diomedes made no reply, out of respect for the rebuke of the king he revered. But the son of glorious Capaneus answered him:

4.404 "Son of Atreus, don't tell lies when you know how to speak the plain truth. We claim to be far better than our fathers. We actually took the seat of seven-gated Thebes, though we led a smaller army against a stronger wall, trusting in the portents of the gods and the help of Zeus; but they perished through their own reckless folly. So don't you ever put our fathers in the same honor as us." Then, with an angry glance from under his brows, mighty Diomedes said to him: "Friend, sit quiet and do as I say. I don't blame Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, for urging the well-greaved Achaeans to fight. The glory will go with him if the Achaeans cut down the Trojans and take holy Ilium, and the great grief will be his if the Achaeans are cut down. Come, then, let the two of us also set our minds on furious valor."[8]

7 Polynices, exiled son of Oedipus, was raising an army against his brother Eteocles, king of Thebes; the Thebans are called Cadmeans after the city's founder, Cadmus.

8 Sthenelus and Diomedes were among the Epigoni, the "Descendants": sons of the Seven against Thebes who took the city where their fathers had failed.

THE ARMIES MEET

The two armies clash, and the killing begins.

4.419 He spoke, and leapt from his chariot to the ground in his armor, and the bronze on the king's chest rang terribly as he moved: fear would have gripped even a man of steady heart. As when on a loud-echoing shore the waves of the sea rise one after another, driven by the West Wind: out at sea a wave first lifts its crest, and then, breaking on the land, it roars loudly, and around the headlands it swells and arches to a peak and spits out the salt foam. So then the battalions of the Danaans moved one after another, without pause, into war. Each of the leaders gave orders to his own men; the rest went in silence, and you would not have said that so great an army followed with voices in their breasts, silent as they were in fear of their commanders. On all of them shone the intricate armor they wore as they marched in their ranks.

4.433 And the Trojans: as ewes in the fold of a rich man stand in their thousands to be milked of their white milk, bleating without end as they hear the voices of their lambs, so the clamor of the Trojans rose throughout the broad army. For they did not all have the same speech or a single language; their tongues were mixed, and the men had been called from many lands. These were roused by Ares, those by gray-eyed Athena, and by Terror and Rout and Strife, insatiably eager, sister and companion of man-slaying Ares. She at first lifts her crest only a little, but then she plants her head in the sky while she walks upon the earth. It was she who then too cast strife that falls alike on all into their midst, going through the throng and swelling the groans of men.

4.446 When they had come together and met in one place, they clashed their shields of hide together, and their spears, and the fury of bronze-corsleted men; the bossed shields pressed against one another, and a great din arose. Then there rose together the groans and the boasts of men killing and being

killed, and the earth ran with blood. As when two winter torrents, running down the mountains, hurl their mighty waters together where the valleys meet, from great springs inside a hollow ravine, and far off in the mountains a shepherd hears their thunder, so from the armies as they mingled rose shouting and struggle.

4.457 Antilochus was the first to kill a helmeted Trojan, a fine warrior among the front-line fighters, Echepolus son of Thalysius. He struck him first on the ridge of his helmet with its horsehair plume, and drove it into his forehead, and the bronze spear point passed through into the bone. Darkness covered his eyes, and he crashed down like a tower in the fierce combat. As he fell, lord Elephenor caught him by the feet, the son of Chalcodon, leader of the great-hearted Abantes, and dragged him out from under the missiles, eager to strip his armor as fast as he could. But his effort was short-lived. Great-hearted Agenor saw him dragging the body, and where his side showed beside his shield as he stooped, he stabbed him with his bronze-tipped spear and loosened his limbs. So his spirit left him, and over him a grim struggle broke out between Trojans and Achaeans. They sprang at each other like wolves, and man grappled with man.

4.473 Then Telamonian Ajax struck the son of Anthemion, Simoeisius, an unmarried youth in his prime, whom his mother had once borne beside the banks of the Simoeis as she came down from Ida, where she had gone with her parents to see to the flocks. That is why they called him Simoeisius. But he never repaid his dear parents for his rearing; his life was brief, cut down by the spear of great-hearted Ajax. As he came on, Ajax struck him first in the chest beside the right nipple, and the bronze spear went straight through and out at the shoulder. He fell to the ground in the dust like a poplar that has grown up in the low-lying land of a great marsh, smooth, with its branches growing at the very top: a chariot-maker has cut it down with the gleaming iron to bend it into a wheel rim for a beautiful chariot, and it lies drying by the banks of a river. 4.488 So Ajax,

sprung from Zeus, killed Simoeisius son of Anthemion. At him Antiphus of the glittering corslet, son of Priam, threw his sharp spear through the throng. He missed him, but hit Leucus, Odysseus' brave comrade, in the groin as he was dragging the body away to his own side. He crashed down over it, and the body fell from his hand. Odysseus was furiously angry at heart at his death. He strode through the front-line fighters, armored in gleaming bronze, came up very close, stood, and threw his shining spear, glancing around him; and the Trojans shrank back as the man threw. He did not send his missile in vain, but struck an illegitimate son of Priam, Democoon, who had come to him from Abydos, from his swift horses there. 4.501 Him Odysseus, angry for his comrade, struck with his spear on the temple, and the bronze spear point passed out through the other temple. Darkness covered his eyes; he fell with a thud, and his armor clattered upon him. The front-line fighters and shining Hector gave ground, and the Argives shouted aloud, dragged off the bodies, and pushed on much farther. But Apollo was indignant as he looked down from Pergamus, and he shouted aloud to the Trojans: "Rise up, horse-taming Trojans, and don't give way in the fight to the Argives! Their skin isn't stone or iron, to withstand the flesh-cutting bronze when they're struck. And Achilles, son of lovely-haired Thetis, isn't fighting at all; he sits by the ships nursing his heart-galling anger." So the dread god spoke from the city. But the Achaeans were roused by the daughter of Zeus, most glorious Tritogeneia, going through the throng wherever she saw them holding back.[9]

4.517 Then fate shackled Diores son of Amarynceus. He was struck by a jagged stone on the right shin, by the ankle; the one who threw it was the leader of the Thracian men, Peirous son of Imbrasus, who had come from Aenus. The ruthless stone crushed both tendons and the bones completely. He fell on his back in the dust, stretching out both hands to his dear comrades, gasping out his life. Then the man who had struck him,

9 Pergamus is the citadel of Troy, where Apollo had a temple. Tritogeneia is a title of Athena of uncertain meaning.

Peirous, ran up and stabbed him with his spear beside the navel, and all his bowels poured out on the ground, and darkness covered his eyes. As Peirous sprang back, Thoas the Aetolian struck him with his spear in the chest above the nipple, and the bronze stuck fast in his lung. Thoas came up close, pulled the heavy spear out of his chest, drew his sharp sword, and with it struck him in the middle of the belly and took away his life.

4.532 But he did not strip his armor, for the dead man's comrades stood around him, Thracians with their hair in topknots, holding long spears in their hands; and big and strong and splendid as he was, they thrust him away from them, and he gave ground, staggering. So the two lay stretched in the dust side by side, one the leader of the Thracians, the other of the bronze-clad Epeians; and many others too were killed around them. Then no man who came into that fighting could have made light of it any longer—a man still unhit and unwounded by the sharp bronze who went whirling through the thick of it, with Pallas Athena leading him by the hand and warding off the rush of missiles. For on that day many Trojans and Achaeans lay stretched face down in the dust side by side.

Book 5

Diomedes' great day
Helped by Athena, Diomedes routs the Trojans and wounds Aphrodite and Ares.

5.1 Then Pallas Athena gave Diomedes, son of Tydeus, fury and daring, so that he would stand out among all the Argives and win noble glory. She kindled a tireless fire from his helmet and shield, like the star of late summer that shines brightest of all once it has bathed in Ocean. Such was the fire she kindled from his head and shoulders, and she drove him into the middle of the fighting, where the most men were in turmoil. Among the Trojans there was a certain Dares, a rich and blameless man, a priest of Hephaestus. He had two sons, Phegeus and Idaeus, both well skilled in every kind of fighting. These two broke away from the rest and charged at Diomedes. They attacked from their chariot, while he came at them on foot from the ground.[1]

5.14 When they had come close, advancing on each other, Phegeus was the first to hurl his long-shadowed spear. Its point passed over the left shoulder of the son of Tydeus and did not hit him. Then the son of Tydeus rushed in with the bronze, and the weapon did not fly from his hand in vain. It struck Phegeus in the chest between the nipples and knocked him from the horses. Idaeus leapt down and left the beautiful chariot, and he did not dare to stand over his slain brother. Nor would he himself have escaped black doom, but Hephaestus guarded him and saved him by covering him in night, so that the old man would not be

1 The star of late summer is Sirius, the Dog Star, whose rising the Greeks linked with the hottest season of the year.

utterly stricken with grief. The son of great-hearted Tydeus drove off the horses and gave them to his comrades to take down to the hollow ships. 5.27 When the great-hearted Trojans saw Dares' two sons, one in flight and the other killed beside the chariot, every man's heart was shaken. But gray-eyed Athena took furious Ares by the hand and spoke to him: "Ares, Ares, bane of mortals, blood-stained stormer of walls, couldn't we leave the Trojans and the Achaeans to fight it out, whichever side father Zeus grants glory to, while the two of us draw back and avoid the wrath of Zeus?" So she spoke, and led furious Ares out of the battle. Then she sat him down on the high banks of Scamander, and the Danaans turned the Trojans to flight. Each of the leaders killed his man. First Agamemnon, lord of men, hurled great Odius, chief of the Halizones, from his chariot. Odius was the first to turn, and Agamemnon fixed the spear in his back between the shoulders and drove it on through his chest. He fell with a thud, and his armor clanged upon him.

5.43 Idomeneus killed Phaestus, son of Borus the Maeonian, who had come from fertile Tarne. Idomeneus, famed for his spear, stabbed him with his long spear in the right shoulder as he was mounting his chariot. He toppled from the chariot, and hateful darkness seized him. Idomeneus' attendants stripped him of his armor. And Scamandrius, son of Strophius, skilled in the hunt, fell to Menelaus son of Atreus and his sharp spear. He was a fine hunter, for Artemis herself had taught him to shoot every wild thing that the forest nurtures on the mountains. But Artemis, who showers arrows, was no help to him then, nor was the long-range shooting in which he had excelled before. Menelaus son of Atreus, famed for his spear, stabbed him in the back with his spear as he fled ahead of him, between the shoulders, and drove it on through his chest. He fell headlong, and his armor clanged upon him.

5.59 Meriones killed Phereclus, son of Harmonides the builder, who knew how to make every kind of intricate thing with his hands, for Pallas Athena loved him above all others. It was he who built for Alexander the balanced ships that began the

trouble. Those ships became a bane to all the Trojans and to Phereclus himself, since he knew nothing of the oracles of the gods. Meriones caught up with him in the chase and struck him in the right buttock. The point passed clean through, under the bone and into the bladder. He dropped to his knees with a cry, and death enfolded him. And Meges killed Pedaeus, Antenor's son. He was born out of wedlock, but noble Theano had raised him with care, just like her own children, to please her husband.

5.72 The son of Phyleus, famed for his spear, came close and struck him at the back of the head with his sharp spear. The bronze cut straight through, under the tongue and out between the teeth. He fell in the dust and bit down on the cold bronze with his teeth. And Eurypylus son of Euaemon went after godlike Hypsenor, son of high-spirited Dolopion, who had been made priest of Scamander and was honored like a god by the people. As Hypsenor fled ahead of him, Eurypylus, Euaemon's splendid son, darted after him and struck his shoulder with his sword in mid-chase, shearing off the heavy arm. The bloody arm fell to the plain, and dark death and mighty fate closed down over his eyes.

5.84 So they toiled in the fierce combat. But as for the son of Tydeus, you could not have told which side he was on, whether he was mingling with the Trojans or with the Achaeans. For he raged across the plain like a river in flood, a winter torrent that runs fast and scatters the dikes. The close-built dikes cannot hold it back, and the walls of the flourishing vineyards cannot check it as it comes suddenly, when the rain of Zeus pours heavily down, and many fine works of young men collapse beneath it. So the close ranks of the Trojans were thrown into confusion under the son of Tydeus, and many as they were, they could not stand against him.

DIOMEDES WOUNDED

Pandarus wounds Diomedes, who prays to Athena and is given the power to see gods.

5.95 When the splendid son of Lycaon saw him raging across the plain, driving the ranks in confusion before him, he quickly bent his curved bow at the son of Tydeus. He hit him as he charged, striking the plate of the corslet at the right shoulder. The bitter arrow flew through and held straight on its way, and the corslet was spattered with blood. Over him the splendid son of Lycaon gave a loud shout: "Rise up, great-hearted Trojans, drivers of horses! The best of the Achaeans is hit, and I don't think he'll hold out long against the mighty shaft, if it was really the lord, the son of Zeus, who sped me on my way from Lycia." So he spoke, boasting. But the swift shaft did not bring Diomedes down. He drew back, stood in front of his horses and chariot, and spoke to Sthenelus, son of Capaneus:

5.109 "Up, my friend, son of Capaneus, get down from the chariot and pull this bitter arrow out of my shoulder." So he spoke, and Sthenelus leapt from the chariot to the ground, stood beside him, and drew the swift shaft clean out through the shoulder. The blood spurted up through the pliant tunic. Then Diomedes, good at the war cry, prayed: "Hear me, child of Zeus who bears the aegis, Unwearied One! If ever you stood beside my father with kindness in your heart amid the fury of war, now be kind to me in turn, Athena. Grant that I kill this man, and that he come within my spear's cast—the one who hit me first and is boasting over it, and says I won't see the bright light of the sun much longer."

5.121 So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard him. She made his limbs light, his feet and his arms above them, and standing close by she spoke winged words: "Fight the Trojans with confidence now, Diomedes. I have put your father's fury in your chest, fearless, the kind that Tydeus the horseman, wielder of the shield, used to have. And I have taken from your eyes the

mist that was on them before, so that you can clearly tell god from man. So now, if any god comes here to test you, don't fight face to face with the other immortal gods. But if Zeus' daughter Aphrodite enters the battle, wound her with the sharp bronze."

5.133 When she had spoken, gray-eyed Athena went away. The son of Tydeus went back and mingled with the front-line fighters. His heart had been eager to fight the Trojans before, but now a fury three times as great took hold of him. He was like a lion that a shepherd, out in the fields guarding his woolly sheep, has grazed as it leapt over the fold but has not overpowered. He has only roused its strength, and after that he no longer fights it off but slips in among the farm buildings, and the abandoned sheep panic. They lie heaped on one another in crowds, while the lion, still raging, leaps out of the high-walled fold. So, raging, mighty Diomedes mingled with the Trojans.

5.144 Then he killed Astynous and Hypeiron, shepherd of the people. He hit the one above the nipple with his bronze-tipped spear. The other he struck with his great sword on the collarbone beside the shoulder, and severed the shoulder from the neck and back. He left them and went after Abas and Polyidus, sons of Eurydamas, the old reader of dreams. But when they set out, the old man read no dreams for them, and mighty Diomedes killed them and stripped their armor. He went on after Xanthus and Thoon, the two sons of Phaenops, both born late in his life. Phaenops was worn down by grievous old age and had fathered no other son to leave his possessions to. There Diomedes killed them and took the dear life from them both, and he left their father lamentation and bitter grief, since he would not welcome them home alive from the battle. Distant kinsmen divided his property.

AENEAS AND PANDARUS

Aeneas and Pandarus charge Diomedes together; Pandarus is killed.

5.159 Then he caught two sons of Priam, descendant of Dardanus, Echemmon and Chromius, riding in a single chariot. As a lion

leaps among cattle and breaks the neck of a heifer or a cow grazing in a thicket, so the son of Tydeus knocked them both from their chariot, roughly, against their will, and then stripped their armor. The horses he gave to his comrades to drive to the ships. Aeneas saw him wrecking the ranks of men, and set off through the battle and the din of spears, looking for godlike Pandarus in the hope of finding him somewhere. He found Lycaon's son, blameless and strong, stood in front of him, and spoke to him face to face:

5.171 "Pandarus, where are your bow and your winged arrows, and your fame? No man here can rival you in archery, and no one in Lycia claims to be better than you. Come, lift your hands to Zeus and let fly an arrow at this man, whoever he is, who is overpowering us and has already done the Trojans so much harm, since he has loosed the knees of many fine men—unless he is some god angry with the Trojans, in wrath over sacrifices. A god's wrath weighs heavy." Then the splendid son of Lycaon spoke to him in turn:

5.180 "Aeneas, counselor of the bronze-clad Trojans, in every respect I'd say he is the warlike son of Tydeus. I recognize him by his shield and his helmet with its socketed crest, and by the look of his horses. But I don't know for certain whether he is a god. If he is the man I say he is, the warlike son of Tydeus, then he isn't raging like this without a god's help. One of the immortals is standing beside him, his shoulders wrapped in cloud, and turned my swift shaft aside just as it reached him. I've already shot at him, and I hit him in the right shoulder, straight through the plate of his corslet. I thought I would send him down to Hades, but even so I didn't bring him down. There must be some god who is angry. 5.192 And I have no horses or chariot here to mount. Yet in Lycaon's halls there are eleven chariots, fine, first-built, newly made, with cloths spread over them, and beside each one stands a pair of horses, munching white barley and spelt. Old Lycaon the spearman gave me plenty of advice, I can tell you, as I was leaving his well-built house. He told me to mount horses and chariot and lead the Trojans in the fierce com-

bat. But I didn't listen—it would have been much better if I had. I wanted to spare the horses, in case they went short of fodder with the men penned in, when they were used to eating their fill. So I left them behind and came to Ilium on foot, trusting in my bow. And it was not going to do me any good after all. 5.206 I've already shot at two of their best, the son of Tydeus and the son of Atreus. I hit them both and drew real blood, but I only roused them more. It was an evil hour when I took my curved bow down from its peg that day I led my Trojans to lovely Ilium, to please godlike Hector. If I ever get home and see with my own eyes my country and my wife and my great high-roofed house, then let some stranger cut off my head on the spot if I don't break this bow with my hands and throw it on the blazing fire. It's no more use to me than the wind." Then Aeneas, leader of the Trojans, spoke to him face to face:

5.218 "Don't talk like that. Nothing will change until the two of us go up against this man with horses and chariot and try him in arms. Come, get into my chariot, so you can see what Trojan horses are like, how well they know the plain, and how swiftly they can pursue this way and that, or flee. They'll get us both safely back to the city, too, if Zeus once again grants glory to Diomedes son of Tydeus. So come now, take the whip and the shining reins, and I'll get down from the chariot to fight. Or else you take him on, and I'll see to the horses." Then the splendid son of Lycaon spoke to him in turn:

5.230 "Aeneas, keep the reins yourself, and your own horses. They'll pull the curved chariot better under the driver they're used to, if we have to flee from the son of Tydeus again. I'm afraid they might take fright and balk, and refuse to carry us out of the battle because they miss your voice. Then the son of great-hearted Tydeus would charge at us, kill us both, and drive off the single-hoofed horses. No, you drive your own chariot and your own horses, and I'll take him on with my sharp spear as he comes at us." So they spoke, and they mounted the intricately worked chariot and eagerly drove the swift horses against the

son of Tydeus. Sthenelus, splendid son of Capaneus, saw them and at once spoke winged words to the son of Tydeus:

5.243 "Diomedes son of Tydeus, dear to my heart, I see two mighty men eager to fight you, with boundless strength. One is Pandarus, skilled with the bow, who claims to be Lycaon's son. The other is Aeneas, who claims to be the son of blameless Anchises, and his mother is Aphrodite. Come, let's fall back to the chariot, and please don't rage like this among the front-line fighters, or you may lose your life." Mighty Diomedes scowled at him and said: "Don't talk to me of flight. I don't think you'll persuade me. It's not in my blood to fight while shirking or to cower. My strength is still steady. I'm not inclined to mount the chariot; just as I am, I'll go to meet them. Pallas Athena won't let me tremble.

5.257 As for these two, their swift horses won't carry both of them back away from us again, even if one does escape. And I'll tell you something else, and you take it to heart. If Athena of many counsels grants me the glory of killing them both, then hold these swift horses of ours right here, with the reins pulled taut from the chariot rail, and remember to rush at Aeneas' horses and drive them away from the Trojans to the well-greaved Achaeans. They come from the breed that far-seeing Zeus gave Tros in payment for his son Ganymede, because they are the best of all horses beneath the dawn and the sun. Anchises, lord of men, stole from that breed by putting his mares to them without Laomedon's knowledge, and from them a brood of six was born in his halls.[2] 5.271 Four of them he kept for himself and reared at the manger, and two he gave to Aeneas, masters of rout. If we could take those two, we would win noble glory." So they talked like this with each other, and the other two quickly came close, driving their swift horses. The splendid son of Lycaon spoke to him first: "Stout-hearted, warlike son of splendid Tydeus, so my swift shaft, the bitter arrow, didn't bring

2 Zeus carried off Ganymede, son of the Trojan king Tros, to be the gods' cupbearer and compensated his father with these horses; Laomedon, a later king of Troy, inherited them.

you down after all. Now I'll try with the spear, and see if I can hit you." He spoke, drew back, and hurled his long-shadowed spear, and he struck the shield of the son of Tydeus. The bronze point flew straight through it and reached the corslet. Over him the splendid son of Lycaon gave a loud shout:

5.284 "You're hit clean through the flank, and I don't think you'll hold out much longer. You've given me a great triumph." But mighty Diomedes, not at all afraid, said to him: "You missed—you didn't hit. But I don't think the two of you will stop until one of you has fallen and glutted Ares, the warrior with the oxhide shield, with his blood." So saying, he let fly, and Athena guided the shaft onto the nose beside the eye, and it went through the white teeth. The unyielding bronze cut off the tongue at its root, and the point came out at the base of the chin. He toppled from the chariot, and his armor clanged upon him, gleaming and glittering. The swift-footed horses shied aside, and there his life and his strength were undone.

APHRODITE WOUNDED

Diomedes wounds Aeneas, then Aphrodite, who flees to Olympus; Apollo saves Aeneas.

5.297 Aeneas leapt down with his shield and his long spear, afraid that the Achaeans might somehow drag the body away from him. He strode around it like a lion trusting in its strength, and held his spear and his shield, balanced on every side, in front of it, eager to kill whoever came to face him, and shouting terribly. But the son of Tydeus picked up a stone in his hand, a huge thing that two men could not carry, men such as mortals are now; but he swung it easily, even alone. 5.305 With it he struck Aeneas on the hip, where the thigh turns in the hip-bone, the part men call the cup. It crushed the cup and tore both tendons as well, and the jagged stone pushed back the skin. The warrior dropped to his knees and stayed there, propping himself on the ground with his heavy hand, and black night covered his eyes. And now Aeneas, lord of men, would have died there, had not

Zeus' daughter Aphrodite been quick to see it: his mother, who bore him to Anchises while he tended his cattle. She threw her white arms around her dear son and spread a fold of her shining robe in front of him as a screen against missiles, so that none of the Danaans with their swift horses could strike bronze into his chest and take away his life.

5.318 So she was carrying her dear son quietly out of the battle. But the son of Capaneus did not forget the instructions that Diomedes, good at the war cry, had given him. He held back his own single-hoofed horses away from the din, pulling the reins tight from the chariot rail, then rushed at the fine-maned horses of Aeneas and drove them from the Trojans into the ranks of the well-greaved Achaeans. He gave them to Deïpylus, his dear companion, whom he honored above all the men of his age because they thought alike, to drive to the hollow ships. Then the warrior mounted his own chariot, took up the shining reins, and at once drove his strong-hoofed horses eagerly after the son of Tydeus. Diomedes, meanwhile, was going after Cypris with the pitiless bronze, knowing that she was a feeble goddess, not one of the goddesses who rule over men's warfare, neither Athena nor Enyo, sacker of cities.[3] 5.334 When he had chased her through the dense crowd and caught up with her, the son of great-hearted Tydeus reached out, lunged, and wounded her delicate hand at its tip with his sharp spear. At once the spear pierced the skin, through the ambrosial robe that the Graces themselves had made for her, above the base of the palm. The goddess's immortal blood flowed: ichor, the kind that flows in the blessed gods. For they do not eat bread or drink gleaming wine, and so they are bloodless and are called immortals. With a loud scream she let her son fall from her arms. Phoebus Apollo caught him up in his hands, in a dark cloud, so that none of the Danaans with their swift horses could strike bronze into his chest and take away his life. And Diomedes, good at the war cry, shouted loudly after her:

3 The son of Capaneus is Sthenelus, Diomedes' charioteer. Cypris is a name for Aphrodite, from her island of Cyprus; Enyo is a goddess of war.

5.348 "Keep out of war and slaughter, daughter of Zeus! Isn't it enough for you to lead weak women astray? If you go roaming into war, I think you'll shudder at the very word, even if you only hear it somewhere far away." So he spoke, and she went off, dazed and in terrible pain. Wind-footed Iris took her and led her out of the throng, weighed down with her pains, her lovely skin darkening. Then she found furious Ares sitting to the left of the battle, his spear and his swift horses resting in a mist. She fell to her knees and begged her dear brother again and again for his horses with their golden headbands: "Dear brother, help me, and give me your horses, so that I can reach Olympus, where the immortals have their home.

5.361 I'm in terrible pain from a wound a mortal man gave me, the son of Tydeus, who now would fight even with father Zeus." So she spoke, and Ares gave her his horses with their golden headbands. She climbed into the chariot, grieving at heart, and Iris climbed in beside her, took the reins in her hands, and whipped the horses on, and the pair flew off willingly. Quickly they reached the seat of the gods, steep Olympus. There wind-footed, swift Iris halted the horses, unyoked them from the chariot, and set ambrosial fodder before them. And bright Aphrodite fell at the knees of Dione, her mother. Dione took her daughter in her arms, stroked her with her hand, and spoke to her, calling her by name:[4]

5.373 "Which of the heavenly gods has done this to you, my dear child, so wantonly, as if you'd been caught doing something wrong in plain sight?" Then laughter-loving Aphrodite answered her: "The son of Tydeus wounded me, high-spirited Diomedes, because I was carrying my dear son out of the battle, Aeneas, who is by far the dearest of all to me. This is no longer a terrible battle between Trojans and Achaeans: now the Danaans are fighting even the immortals." Then Dione, noble among goddesses, answered her: "Bear it, my child, and endure, hurt as you are. Many of us who have our homes on Olympus have had

4 In Homer, Aphrodite is the daughter of Zeus and the goddess Dione.

to bear suffering at the hands of men, while bringing cruel pains on one another.

5.385 Ares had to bear it, when Otus and mighty Ephialtes, the sons of Aloeus, tied him up in strong chains; he lay chained in a bronze jar for thirteen months. And Ares, who never has enough of war, would have perished there, had not their stepmother, the lovely Eëriboea, brought word to Hermes; and Hermes stole Ares away, already worn out, for the cruel chains were overpowering him. Hera had to bear it, when the mighty son of Amphitryon struck her in the right breast with a three-barbed arrow; then pain past healing took hold of her too. And among them monstrous Hades had to bear a swift arrow, when the same man, the son of Zeus who bears the aegis, shot him at Pylos among the dead and gave him over to pain. He went to the house of Zeus and to high Olympus, grieving at heart, pierced through with pain, for the arrow had been driven into his massive shoulder and it tormented his spirit.[5] 5.401 Paeon spread pain-killing herbs on it and healed him, for he was not made to die. Reckless, violent man, who thought nothing of doing wicked things, who with his bow brought pain to the gods who hold Olympus! And now the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, has set this man on you. The fool! The son of Tydeus doesn't know in his heart that the man who fights the immortals doesn't live long, and his children don't climb on his knees and call him 'papa' when he comes home from war and terrible slaughter. So now let the son of Tydeus, strong as he is, take care that someone stronger than you doesn't fight him, or before long Aegialeia, the wise daughter of Adrastus, will be wailing and waking her household from sleep, longing for the husband she married, the best of the Achaeans: the noble wife of horse-taming Diomedes."[6]

5.416 She spoke, and with both her hands wiped the ichor from Aphrodite's hand: the hand was healed and the heavy pains

5 The son of Amphitryon is Heracles, Amphitryon's son by name but in fact the son of Zeus.

6 Paeon is the physician of the gods.

eased. But Athena and Hera, watching, began teasing Zeus, son of Cronus, with mocking words. The goddess, gray-eyed Athena, was the first to speak: "Father Zeus, will you be angry with me for what I'm going to say? Cypris must have been coaxing some Achaean woman to run off with the Trojans, whom she loves so madly now, and while she was stroking one of these well-robed Achaean women, she scratched her slender hand on a golden brooch." So she spoke, and the father of men and gods smiled, and he called golden Aphrodite to him and said:

5.428 "My child, the works of war are not for you. You see to the lovely works of marriage; all this will be the business of swift Ares and Athena." So they talked together in this way. Meanwhile Diomedes, good at the war cry, sprang at Aeneas, though he knew that Apollo himself was holding his hands over him. But he had no awe even for the great god, and kept trying to kill Aeneas and strip off his famous armor. Three times he sprang at him, eager to kill him, and three times Apollo beat back his shining shield. But when he rushed on him the fourth time, like a god, Apollo who works from afar gave a terrible shout and spoke to him:

5.440 "Think, son of Tydeus, and draw back! Don't try to think yourself the equal of the gods; the race of immortal gods and the race of men who walk the earth will never be alike." So he spoke, and the son of Tydeus drew back a little, to avoid the wrath of far-shooting Apollo. And Apollo set Aeneas apart from the throng in holy Pergamus, where his temple stood. There in the great inner sanctuary Leto and Artemis, the archer, healed him and made him glorious. Meanwhile Apollo of the silver bow made a phantom that looked like Aeneas himself, with armor just like his, and around the phantom Trojans and godlike Achaeans hacked at the oxhide shields on each other's chests, the round shields and the light, fluttering bucklers. Then Phoebus Apollo spoke to furious Ares:

5.455 "Ares, Ares, bane of mortals, blood-stained stormer of walls, won't you go and pull this man out of the fight, the son of Tydeus, who now would fight even with father Zeus? First he

came close and wounded Cypris on the hand at the wrist, and then he rushed at me myself, like a god." So he spoke, and he himself sat down on the heights of Pergamus, while deadly Ares went among the Trojan ranks and urged them on, in the likeness of Acamas, the swift leader of the Thracians. He called on the sons of Priam, cherished by Zeus: "Sons of Priam, king cherished by Zeus, how much longer will you let the Achaeans slaughter your people? Until they're fighting around our well-built gates? A man lies fallen whom we honored as much as godlike Hector: Aeneas, son of great-hearted Anchises. Come, let's save our good comrade from the din of battle."

THE TROJANS RALLY

Sarpedon rebukes Hector, and with Ares' help the Trojans drive the Achaeans back.

5.470 So he spoke, and stirred the fury and spirit of every man. Then Sarpedon sharply rebuked godlike Hector: "Hector, where has the fury gone that you used to have? You said, I believe, that you could hold the city without the army or the allies, alone with your brothers-in-law and your brothers. But I can't see a single one of them now, or catch sight of one; they cower like dogs around a lion, while we, who are only allies here, do the fighting. I too am an ally, and I've come from very far away: Lycia is far off, by the eddying Xanthus, where I left my dear wife and my infant son, and great possessions, the kind a man in need longs for.[7]

5.482 Even so I urge the Lycians on, and I'm eager myself to fight my man, though I have nothing here of the kind the Achaeans could carry off or drive away. But you just stand there, and don't even tell the rest of the army to hold their ground and defend their wives. Take care that you're not caught, as if in the meshes of a net that catches everything, and become prey and plunder for your enemies; they'll soon sack your well-built city.

7 Sarpedon, a son of Zeus, leads the Lycians, allies of Troy from southwestern Asia Minor; this Xanthus is the river of Lycia.

All this should be your concern night and day: you should be begging the leaders of your far-famed allies to hold firm without flinching, and so put an end to harsh reproach."

5.493 So Sarpedon spoke, and his words stung Hector to the heart. At once he leapt from his chariot to the ground in his armor and, brandishing his sharp spears, went everywhere through the army, urging them to fight, and roused the terrible battle. The Trojans rallied and stood facing the Achaeans, and the Argives held their ground in a mass and did not run. As the wind carries chaff across the holy threshing floors when men are winnowing, when fair-haired Demeter separates the grain from the chaff in the rush of the winds, and the heaps of chaff grow white—so then the Achaeans grew white on top with the dust that the horses' hooves kicked up through them into the bronze sky, as they met again in battle and the charioteers wheeled them round. 5.506 They carried the fury of their hands straight forward. Furious Ares covered the battle in night to help the Trojans, ranging everywhere; he was carrying out the commands of Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, who had ordered him to rouse the Trojans' spirit when he saw that Pallas Athena had gone, for she was the Danaans' helper. And Apollo himself sent Aeneas out from the rich inner sanctuary and put fury in the chest of the shepherd of the people. Aeneas took his place among his companions, and they were glad when they saw him coming toward them alive and unhurt and full of fine fury; but they asked him nothing, for the other labor would not let them, the labor stirred up by the god of the silver bow, by Ares, bane of mortals, and by Strife, raging without end.

5.519 On the other side the two Ajaxes, Odysseus and Diomedes urged the Danaans to fight, and the Danaans themselves had no fear of the Trojans' violence or their charges, but stood firm like clouds that the son of Cronus sets on the mountain peaks in windless weather, motionless, while the fury of the North Wind sleeps, and of the other blustering winds that scatter the shadowy clouds with their shrill blasts when they blow—so the Danaans waited for the Trojans steadfastly and did not run. And

the son of Atreus ranged through the throng, giving many orders:

5.529 "My friends, be men, take courage into your hearts, and feel shame before one another in the fierce combat. When men feel shame, more are saved than killed; but when men run, no glory comes of it and no defense." He spoke, and quickly hurled his spear, and hit a man in the front line, Deïcoon son of Pergasus, a comrade of great-hearted Aeneas, whom the Trojans honored as much as the sons of Priam, since he was quick to fight among the foremost. Lord Agamemnon struck him on the shield with his spear; the shield did not stop the spear, the bronze went right through it, and he drove it through the belt into the lower belly. He fell with a thud, and his armor clattered upon him.

5.541 Then Aeneas in his turn killed two of the best men of the Danaans, the sons of Diocles, Crethon and Orsilochus. Their father lived in well-built Phere, a man rich in livelihood, and his lineage went back to the river Alpheus, which flows broad through the land of the Pylians. The river fathered Ortilochus, lord over many men; Ortilochus fathered great-hearted Diocles; and to Diocles were born twin sons, Crethon and Orsilochus, skilled in every kind of fighting. When they reached manhood they followed the Argives on the black ships to Ilium of the fine horses, to win honor for Agamemnon and Menelaus, the sons of Atreus; but there the end that is death covered them. 5.554 Like two lions on the mountain peaks that were reared by their mother in the thickets of the deep forest, and went snatching cattle and fat sheep and ravaging the farmsteads of men, until they themselves were killed at men's hands by the sharp bronze —so these two were beaten down under the hands of Aeneas and fell like tall fir trees. As they fell, Menelaus, dear to Ares, pitied them, and he strode through the front ranks, armed in gleaming bronze, shaking his spear; and Ares stirred up his fury, intending him to be beaten down under the hands of Aeneas. But Antilochus, son of great-hearted Nestor, saw him and strode through the front ranks, for he was very afraid for the shepherd of the

people, that something might happen to him and wreck all their labor.

5.568 The two of them were holding their hands and sharp spears out toward each other, eager to fight, while Antilochus took his stand close beside the shepherd of the people. Aeneas did not stand his ground, swift fighter though he was, when he saw two men standing side by side. So they dragged the dead men back to the Achaean army, laid the two unfortunates in the arms of their comrades, and themselves turned and fought among the foremost. Then they killed Pylaemenes, the equal of Ares, leader of the great-hearted Paphlagonian shieldmen. Menelaus son of Atreus, famed for his spear, stabbed him with his spear as he stood, hitting him at the collarbone; and Antilochus struck Mydon, his charioteer and attendant, the brave son of Atymnius, as he was wheeling the single-hoofed horses round, hitting him with a stone square on the elbow; and the reins, white with ivory, fell from his hands to the ground in the dust.

5.584 Antilochus sprang at him and struck him on the temple with his sword, and he, gasping, toppled headfirst from the well-made chariot into the dust, onto his head and shoulders. He stood stuck there a long time, for he had landed in deep sand, until the horses kicked him and knocked him flat in the dust. Antilochus whipped them and drove them off to the Achaean army. Hector caught sight of them across the ranks and rushed at them, shouting, and the strong battalions of the Trojans followed with him. Ares and queenly Enyo led them: she brought with her shameless Uproar of battle, while Ares wielded a monstrous spear in his hands and ranged now in front of Hector, now behind.

5.596 When he saw him, Diomedes, good at the war cry, shuddered. As when a man crossing a wide plain, at a loss, stops at a swift-flowing river that runs down to the sea, and seeing it seething with foam, runs back—so then the son of Tydeus drew back, and said to the army: “My friends, how we marvel at godlike Hector for being such a spearman and so bold a warrior! But

there's always one of the gods beside him to ward off destruction, and now Ares is there beside him in the likeness of a mortal man. So keep your faces toward the Trojans and give way backward, and don't be eager to fight the gods with force."

5.607 So he spoke, and the Trojans came very close to them. Then Hector killed two men skilled in battle, riding in a single chariot, Menesthes and Anchialus. Great Telamonian Ajax pitied them as they fell. He came up and stood very near, hurled his shining spear, and struck Amphius, son of Selagus, who lived in Paesus, rich in possessions and rich in grain; but fate had led him to come as an ally to Priam and his sons. Telamonian Ajax struck him at the belt, and the long-shadowed spear stuck fast in the lower belly, and he fell with a thud. Shining Ajax ran up to strip his armor, but the Trojans poured their spears on him, sharp and gleaming, and his shield caught many.

SARPEDON AND TLEPOLEMUS

Sarpedon kills Tlepolemus, son of Heracles, and is wounded himself.

5.620 But he set his heel on the corpse and pulled out his bronze spear. He could not, though, take the rest of the fine armor from its shoulders, for he was hard pressed by missiles. He feared the strong defense of the proud Trojans standing over the body, many and brave, holding their spears. Great as he was, mighty and splendid, they thrust him away from them, and he gave ground, shaken. So they toiled in the fierce combat. Then mighty fate roused Tlepolemus, son of Heracles, brave and tall, against godlike Sarpedon. When they had come close, advancing on each other, the son and the grandson of Zeus the cloud-gatherer, Tlepolemus was the first to speak:[8]

5.633 "Sarpedon, counselor of the Lycians, what need is there for you to cower here, a man with no knowledge of battle? They lie when they say you are the offspring of aegis-bearing Zeus, since you fall far short of the men who were born of Zeus in the

8 Tlepolemus, a son of Heracles, leads the contingent from Rhodes; Sarpedon, the Lycian leader, is a son of Zeus.

days of earlier men. What a man they say mighty Heracles was, my father, bold and staunch, with the heart of a lion! He came here once for the horses of Laomedon, with only six ships and fewer men, and sacked the city of Ilium and widowed its streets. But yours is a coward's heart, and your men are dying off. I don't think you'll be any defense to the Trojans by coming from Lycia, not even if you are very strong. No, beaten down by me, you will pass through the gates of Hades." Then Sarpedon, leader of the Lycians, spoke to him in turn:[9]

5.648 "Tlepolemus, that man did destroy holy Ilium, but through the folly of a man, proud Laomedon, who answered his good service with harsh words and did not give him the horses he had come so far to get. But for you, I tell you, slaughter and black doom will come here from my hand; beaten down by my spear, you will give glory to me, and your life to Hades of the famous horses." So Sarpedon spoke, and Tlepolemus raised his ash spear, and their long spears darted from their hands at the same moment. Sarpedon struck him in the middle of the neck, and the painful point went clean through, and dark night covered his eyes. But Tlepolemus had struck Sarpedon's left thigh with his long spear, and the point sped through, raging, grazing the bone; but his father still kept destruction from him.

5.663 His noble companions carried godlike Sarpedon out of the fighting, and the long spear weighed him down as it dragged. No one thought, no one noticed, to pull the ash spear from his thigh so that he could stand on his feet, in their haste; such was the toil they had as they tended him. On the other side the well-greaved Achaeans carried Tlepolemus out of the fighting. Godlike Odysseus, with his enduring heart, saw it, and the heart within him raged. Then he pondered in his mind and in his heart whether to pursue the son of loud-thundering Zeus further, or to take the lives of more of the Lycians. But it was not fated for great-hearted Odysseus to kill the mighty son of Zeus

9 Laomedon, Priam's father, promised Heracles his divine horses for saving his daughter from a sea monster, then refused to pay; Heracles sacked Troy in revenge.

with the sharp bronze, and so Athena turned his heart toward the mass of the Lycians.

5.677 There he killed Coeranus, Alastor and Chromius, Alcandrus, Halius, Noëmon and Prytanis. And godlike Odysseus would have killed still more of the Lycians, had great Hector of the flashing helmet not been quick to notice. He strode through the front ranks, armed in gleaming bronze, bringing terror to the Danaans. Sarpedon, son of Zeus, was glad as he came near, and spoke a piteous word: "Son of Priam, don't leave me lying here as prey for the Danaans—come to my defense! After that, let my life leave me in your city, since it seems I was never to return home to my own native land and gladden my dear wife and my infant son."

5.689 So he spoke, but Hector of the flashing helmet said nothing to him. He rushed past, eager to drive back the Argives as quickly as he could and take the lives of many. Then his noble companions set godlike Sarpedon down under the beautiful oak of aegis-bearing Zeus, and mighty Pelagon, his dear companion, pushed the ash spear out through his thigh. His life left him, and a mist poured down over his eyes. But he breathed again, and the breath of the North Wind, blowing on him, brought back the spirit he had so grievously gasped away. Before Ares and bronze-armored Hector the Argives neither turned to flee to the black ships nor pushed forward to fight; they kept giving ground, once they learned that Ares was among the Trojans.

HERA AND ATHENA ARM

Hera and Athena drive down from Olympus to help the Achaeans.

5.703 Then who was the first, and who the last, that Hector son of Priam and bronze Ares killed and stripped? Godlike Teuthras, and then Orestes, driver of horses, Trechus, the Aetolian spearman, and Oenomaus, Helenus son of Oenops, and Oresbius of the gleaming belt, who lived in Hyle, intent on his wealth, on the shore of the Cephisian lake, and near him lived other Boeotians who held a very rich land. Now when the goddess white-armed

Hera saw them destroying the Argives in the fierce combat, at once she spoke winged words to Athena: "Ah, child of aegis-bearing Zeus, Unwearied One, it was an empty promise we made to Menelaus, that he would sack well-walled Ilium and return home, if we let murderous Ares rage like this. Come, let the two of us turn our minds to furious fighting too."

5.719 So she spoke, and the goddess gray-eyed Athena did not disobey. Hera, the venerable goddess, daughter of great Cronus, went and made ready the horses with their frontlets of gold, while Hebe quickly fitted the curved wheels to the chariot, eight-spoked and of bronze, at either end of the iron axle. Their rims are of imperishable gold, and on them are fitted tires of bronze, a marvel to see; the hubs that spin on either side are of silver; the body is strung with straps of gold and silver, and two rails run around it. From it ran out a pole of silver, and at its end she bound the fine golden yoke and fastened to it the fine golden breast-straps; and Hera led the swift-footed horses under the yoke, eager for strife and the battle cry.

5.733 But Athena, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, let her soft robe slip down onto her father's floor, the embroidered robe she had made and worked with her own hands, and putting on the tunic of Zeus the cloud-gatherer she armed herself for tearful war. Around her shoulders she flung the tasseled aegis, a terror, ringed all about with Rout. On it is Strife, on it Valor, on it chilling Onslaught, and on it the head of the Gorgon, that dread monster, terrible and grim, the portent of aegis-bearing Zeus. 5.743 On her head she set her golden helmet, double-ridged with four bosses, adorned with the fighting men of a hundred cities. She stepped onto the blazing chariot and took up her spear, heavy, huge and thick, with which she beats down the ranks of warriors when she is angry with them, she, the daughter of a mighty father. Hera quickly touched the horses with the whip, and the gates of heaven groaned open of themselves, the gates the Seasons keep, to whom great heaven and Olympus are entrusted, to throw back the thick cloud or close it. Through them they drove the horses, spurred on by the goad, 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 halted her horses, and questioned Zeus, the highest, son of Cronus, and said to him:

5.757 "Father Zeus, aren't you indignant at Ares for these violent deeds—how many Achaeans he has destroyed, and what men, recklessly, with no regard for order, to my grief? Meanwhile the Cyprian and Apollo of the silver bow sit at their ease, enjoying it, having let loose this madman, who knows no law at all. Father Zeus, will you be angry with me at all if I strike Ares hard and chase him out of the battle?" Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her: "Go on, then, set Athena, bringer of spoil, on him; she more than anyone is used to bringing him into cruel pain." So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not disobey. She whipped the horses, and the pair flew, not unwillingly, between the earth and the starry heaven.

5.770 As far as a man can see with his eyes into the haze, sitting on a lookout and gazing over the wine-dark sea, so far do the high-neighing horses of the gods leap at a bound. But when they reached Troy and its two flowing rivers, where the Simoeis and the Scamander join their streams, there the goddess white-armed Hera halted the horses, unyoked them from the chariot, and poured a thick mist around them; and the Simoeis made ambrosia spring up for them to graze. The two goddesses went on their way, in their steps like timid doves, eager to defend the Argive men. When they came to where the most and the best stood packed around mighty Diomedes, tamer of horses, like flesh-eating lions or wild boars, whose strength is not feeble, there the goddess white-armed Hera stood and shouted, taking the likeness of great-hearted Stentor of the bronze voice, who could shout as loud as fifty other men:

5.787 "Shame, Argives, you sorry disgraces, admirable only in looks! As long as godlike Achilles went into battle, the Trojans never once came out in front of the Dardanian gates, so much they dreaded his mighty spear. But now they are fighting far from the city, at the hollow ships." With these words she roused

the strength and spirit of every man. And the goddess gray-eyed Athena sped to the son of Tydeus. She found the lord beside his horses and chariot, cooling the wound Pandarus had dealt him with his arrow. The sweat was wearing him down under the broad strap of his round shield; it wore him down, and his arm was weary, and he was lifting the strap and wiping away the dark blood. The goddess took hold of the horses' yoke and said:

5.800 "Tydeus fathered a son not much like himself. Tydeus was small in build, but he was a fighter. Even when I would not let him fight or make a show of himself—when he went alone, apart from the Achaeans, as a messenger to Thebes, among the many Cadmeans—I told him to feast at his ease in the halls. But he, with that strong spirit of his, as always, challenged the young men of the Cadmeans and beat them all easily: such a helper I was to him. Now you, I stand beside you and guard you, and I gladly urge you to fight the Trojans. But either weariness from all your charging has sunk into your limbs, or else some spiritless fear holds you back. Then you are no offspring of Tydeus, the fiery-hearted son of Oeneus."

5.814 Then mighty Diomedes answered her: "I know you, goddess, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, so I'll speak my word to you freely and hide nothing. No spiritless fear holds me, and no hesitation either; I still remember the orders you gave me. You would not let me fight face to face with the other blessed gods; but if Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, came into the battle, her I was to wound with the sharp bronze. That's why I am giving ground myself now, and have told the other Argives, all of them, to gather here: I can see that Ares is lording it over the battle."

5.825 Then the goddess gray-eyed Athena answered him: "Diomedes, son of Tydeus, dear to my heart, don't you fear Ares for that, or any other of the immortals; such a helper I am to you. Come, drive your single-hoofed horses at Ares first; strike him at close quarters, and have no awe of furious Ares, this madman, a born evil, a turncoat, who only lately was telling me and Hera, swearing to it, that he would fight the Trojans and

help the Argives; and now he keeps company with the Trojans and has forgotten the others."

ARES WOUNDED

With Athena in his chariot Diomedes wounds Ares, who complains to Zeus.

5.835 With these words she pushed Sthenelus from the chariot to the ground, pulling him back with her hand, and he leaped down at once. She stepped into the chariot beside godlike Diomedes, a goddess eager for battle, and the oaken axle groaned loud under the weight, for it carried a dread goddess and the best of men. Pallas Athena took the whip and the reins, and at once drove the single-hoofed horses at Ares first. He was stripping huge Periphas, by far the best of the Aetolians, the splendid son of Ochesius; bloodstained Ares was stripping him. But Athena put on the cap of Hades, so that mighty Ares would not see her. When Ares, bane of mortals, saw godlike Diomedes, he left huge Periphas lying there where he had first killed him and taken his life, and went straight for Diomedes, tamer of horses.[10]

5.850 When they had come close, advancing on each other, Ares lunged first over the yoke and the horses' reins with his bronze spear, eager to take his life. But the goddess gray-eyed Athena caught it in her hand and thrust it up and away from the chariot, to fly off in vain. Next Diomedes, good at the war cry, lunged with his bronze spear, and Pallas Athena drove it home into the lowest part of the belly, where he was girded with his war-belt. There he struck and wounded him, tore through his fair skin, and drew the spear out again. And bronze Ares bellowed, as loud as nine thousand or ten thousand men shout in war when they join in the strife of Ares. Trembling seized Achaeans and Trojans alike in their fear, so loud did Ares bellow, insatiable of war.

5.864 As a darkness shows out of the clouds when, after heat, a gusty wind springs up, so bronze Ares appeared to Diomedes son of Tydeus as he went up with the clouds into the broad heaven. Swiftly he came to the seat of the gods, steep Olympus, and sat down beside Zeus son of Cronus, grieving at heart. He showed him the immortal blood flowing down from the wound and, lamenting, spoke winged words: "Father Zeus, aren't you indignant to see these violent deeds? We gods are forever suffering the most horrible things through one another's will, when we do favors for men. We are all at odds with you, because you fathered that senseless girl, that destructive one, whose mind is always on wicked deeds.

5.877 All the other gods there are on Olympus obey you, and each of us is subject to you; but her you never check, by word or deed—you let her loose, since you yourself fathered this destructive child. Now she has let loose the son of Tydeus, arrogant Diomedes, to rage against the immortal gods. First he came close and wounded the Cyprian on the hand at the wrist, and then he rushed at me myself, like a god. But my swift feet carried me off; otherwise I would have long suffered agonies there among the grim heaps of the dead, or lived on, strengthless, from the blows of the bronze." Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer, looking at him darkly, said:

5.889 "Don't sit here beside me whining, you turncoat. To me you're the most hateful of all the gods who hold Olympus, for strife is always dear to you, and wars and battles. You have your mother's temper, uncontrollable, unyielding—Hera's; I can barely keep her down with my words. So I think it's at her prompting that you're suffering this. Still, I won't put up with you being in pain any longer, for you are my offspring, and it was to me your mother bore you. But if you'd been born this destructive from any other god, you'd long ago have been lower than the sons of Heaven."

5.899 So he spoke, and ordered Paeon to heal him. Paeon spread pain-killing herbs on him and cured him, for he was in no way

10 The cap of Hades made its wearer invisible.

made mortal. As when fig juice, briskly stirred in, curdles white milk, liquid as it is, and it thickens very fast for the one who stirs, so swiftly did he heal furious Ares. Hebe bathed him and dressed him in lovely clothes, and he sat down beside Zeus son of Cronus, exulting in his glory. And the two goddesses went back to the house of great Zeus, Argive Hera and Athena of Alalcomenae, having stopped Ares, bane of mortals, from his slaughter of men.

Book 6

Hector and Andromache
Glaucus and Diomedes exchange armor; Hector goes into Troy and says farewell to his wife and son.

6.1 So the dread battle of Trojans and Achaeans was left to itself, and the fighting surged this way and that across the plain as they aimed their bronze-tipped spears at one another between the streams of Simoeis and Xanthus. Telamonian Ajax, bulwark of the Achaeans, was the first to break a Trojan battalion and bring light to his comrades. He struck the man who was best among the Thracians, Acamas son of Eussorus, a brave man and a tall one. He was first to hit him, on the ridge of his helmet thick with horsehair, and drove the spear into his forehead. The bronze point pierced in through the bone, and darkness covered his eyes.[1]

6.12 Diomedes, good at the war cry, killed Axylus son of Teuthras, who lived in well-built Arisbe. He was rich in livelihood and a friend to people, for he made everyone welcome in his house beside the road. But none of them came out to meet him then and keep grim destruction from him. Diomedes took the life of both, Axylus himself and his attendant Calesius, who was driving his horses that day, and the two of them went down beneath the earth. Euryalus killed and stripped Dresus and Opheltius. Then he went after Aesepus and Pedasus, whom the water-nymph Abarbarea once bore to blameless Bucolion.

6.23 Bucolion was the son of proud Laomedon, his eldest born, but his mother bore him in secret. While he was tending his

sheep he lay with the nymph in love and in bed, and she conceived and bore twin boys. Now the son of Mecisteus loosened their strength and their shining limbs, and stripped the armor from their shoulders. Polypoetes, steadfast in battle, killed Astyalus. Odysseus killed and stripped Pidytes of Percote with his bronze spear, and Teucer killed godlike Aretaon. Antilochus son of Nestor killed Ablerus with his shining spear, and Agamemnon, lord of men, killed Elatus, who lived in steep Pedasus by the banks of fair-flowing Satnioeis. The warrior Leitus caught Phylacus as he fled, and Eurypylus killed and stripped Melanthius.

6.37 Then Menelaus, good at the war cry, took Adrestus alive. His horses, bolting in terror across the plain, caught on a tamarisk branch and broke the curved chariot at the end of the pole. They ran on by themselves toward the city, where the others too were fleeing in terror, while he was rolled out of the chariot beside the wheel, face down in the dust. Over him stood Menelaus son of Atreus, holding his long-shadowed spear. Then Adrestus clasped him by the knees and begged him: "Take me alive, son of Atreus, and accept a worthy ransom. Many treasures lie stored in my rich father's house—bronze and gold and iron worked with great labor. From these my father would gladly give you ransom past counting, if he learned that I was alive by the ships of the Achaeans."

6.51 So he spoke, and he was swaying the heart in Menelaus' breast. Menelaus was just about to hand him to his attendant to take down to the swift ships of the Achaeans, when Agamemnon came running to meet him and shouted at him: "Soft-hearted Menelaus, why do you care so much for these men? Did the Trojans do such fine things for you in your house? Let not one of them escape sheer destruction at our hands—not even the boy a mother carries in her womb, not even he—but let all the people of Ilium perish together, unmourned and leaving no trace."

6.61 With these words the warrior turned his brother's mind, for what he urged was right. Menelaus pushed the warrior Adre-

1 Xanthus is another name for the Scamander, the main river of the Trojan plain.

stus away from him with his hand, and lord Agamemnon stabbed him in the flank. He toppled backward, and the son of Atreus set his heel on his chest and pulled out the ash spear. Nestor called to the Argives, shouting loud: "Friends, Danaan warriors, servants of Ares, let no one now throw himself on the spoils and hang back, so as to reach the ships carrying the most. Let us kill men. Afterward you can strip the dead along the plain at your leisure."

HECTOR SENT TO TROY

Helenus sends Hector into the city to have the women pray to Athena.

6.72 So he spoke, and roused the strength and spirit of every man. Then once again the Trojans would have been driven back up into Ilium by the war-loving Achaeans, beaten by their own cowardice, had not Priam's son Helenus, far the best of the augurs, come up beside Aeneas and Hector and spoken to them: "Aeneas and Hector, the toil of war rests on you above all, of Trojans and Lycians alike, because you are the best in every venture, in fighting and in counsel. Stand your ground here, and go everywhere among the troops and hold them in front of the gates, before they turn and flee and fall into their women's arms, and become a joy to the enemy.

6.83 Once you two have roused all the battalions, we will stay here and fight the Danaans, hard-pressed as we are, for necessity drives us. But you, Hector, go to the city, and then tell our mother, yours and mine. Let her gather the old women at the temple of gray-eyed Athena on the citadel, open the doors of the holy house with the key, and take the robe that seems to her the loveliest and largest in the hall, the one she herself loves best by far, and lay it on the knees of lovely-haired Athena. And let her promise to sacrifice to her in the temple twelve yearling heifers that have never felt the goad, if she will take pity on the city and the wives of the Trojans and their little children, and hold the son of Tydeus back from holy Ilium, that savage spearman, that mighty maker of rout—the man I say has proved the strongest of

the Achaeans. 6.99 Not even Achilles did we ever fear like this, that leader of men, though they say he is born of a goddess. But this man rages beyond all measure, and no one can match him in fury." So he spoke, and Hector did not disobey his brother. At once he leapt from his chariot to the ground in his armor, and brandishing sharp spears he went everywhere through the army, urging them to fight, and stirred up the dread battle. They rallied and stood to face the Achaeans. The Argives gave ground and stopped their slaughter; they thought some one of the immortals had come down from the starry sky to defend the Trojans, so suddenly had they rallied. And Hector called out to the Trojans, shouting loud:

GLAUCUS AND DIOMEDES

Glaucus tells his lineage; Diomedes finds they are guest-friends, and they exchange armor.

6.111 "High-hearted Trojans, and allies famed far and wide, be men, my friends, and remember your furious valor, while I go to Ilium and tell the elders of the council and our wives to pray to the gods and promise them hecatombs." So he spoke, and Hector of the flashing helmet went away; and as he went the black hide struck against his ankles and his neck, the rim that ran around the outer edge of his bossed shield. Then Glaucus son of Hippolochus and the son of Tydeus came together into the space between the two armies, eager to fight. And when they had come close, advancing on each other, Diomedes, good at the war cry, was the first to speak:[2]

6.123 "Who are you, my good friend, among mortal men? I have never seen you before in the battle where men win glory. But now you have stepped far out in front of everyone in your daring, since you have stood up to my long-shadowed spear. It is the sons of unhappy fathers who meet my fury. But if you are one of the immortals come down from the sky, I would not fight with

2 Glaucus is, with Sarpedon, a leader of the Lycians, allies of Troy from southwestern Asia Minor.

the gods of heaven. No—not even the son of Dryas, mighty Lycurgus, lived long, once he took on the gods of heaven. He chased the nurses of frenzied Dionysus down the holy slopes of Nysa, and they all at once let their sacred wands fall to the ground as man-slaying Lycurgus struck them with an ox-goad. Dionysus fled in terror and plunged beneath the wave of the sea, and Thetis took him, frightened, to her bosom, for strong trembling had seized him at the man's shout. 6.138 Then the gods who live at ease grew angry with him, and the son of Cronus struck him blind. He did not live long after that, since he was hated by all the immortal gods. So I would not want to fight the blessed gods. But if you are one of the mortals who eat the fruit of the field, come closer, so that you may reach the bounds of destruction the sooner." Then the glorious son of Hippolochus answered him: "Great-hearted son of Tydeus, why do you ask about my lineage? As is the generation of leaves, so is that of men. Some leaves the wind scatters on the ground, but the forest burgeons and puts forth others, when the season of spring comes on. So it is with the generations of men: one springs up and another passes away.

6.150 But if you want to learn this too, and know my lineage well—and many men know it—there is a city, Ephyre, in a corner of horse-pasturing Argos. There lived Sisyphus, the craftiest of men, Sisyphus son of Aeolus. He fathered a son, Glaucus, and Glaucus fathered blameless Bellerophon. To him the gods granted beauty and lovely manliness. But Proetus plotted evil against him in his heart, and since he was far mightier he drove him out of the land of the Argives, for Zeus had brought them under his scepter. Proetus' wife, the noble Anteia, was mad with desire to lie with him in secret love, but she could not persuade wise-hearted Bellerophon, for his thoughts were honorable. So she went to King Proetus and lied to him:

6.164 'Die, Proetus, or else kill Bellerophon, who wanted to lie with me in love against my will.' So she spoke, and anger seized the king at what he heard. He shrank from killing him, for in his heart he feared to do that; but he sent him to Lycia, and gave

him baneful signs, scratching many deadly things in a folded tablet, and told him to show it to his father-in-law, so that he would perish. So Bellerophon went to Lycia under the blameless escort of the gods. And when he reached Lycia and the flowing Xanthus, the lord of broad Lycia honored him with a ready heart: for nine days he entertained him and sacrificed nine oxen.[3]

6.175 But when the tenth rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, he questioned him and asked to see the sign he was bringing from his son-in-law Proetus. And when he had received his son-in-law's evil sign, first he ordered him to kill the invincible Chimaera. She was of divine stock, not human: a lion in front, a serpent behind, a goat in the middle, breathing out the terrible fury of blazing fire. Bellerophon killed her, trusting in the portents of the gods. Next he fought the glorious Solymi—the hardest battle with men, he said, that he ever entered. Third, he killed the Amazons, women a match for men. 6.187 As he was coming back, the king wove another cunning trap against him. He chose the best men from broad Lycia and set an ambush. But they never came home again, for blameless Bellerophon killed them all. When the king realized that he was the noble offspring of a god, he kept him there and gave him his own daughter, and gave him half of all his royal honor; and the Lycians marked off for him a domain finer than all others, good land for orchards and plowing, for him to hold. She bore three children to wise-hearted Bellerophon: Isander and Hippolochus and Laodameia. Zeus the counselor lay with Laodameia, and she bore godlike Sarpedon, armored in bronze. 6.200 But when Bellerophon too became hated by all the gods, he wandered alone over the Aleian plain, eating out his heart and shunning the paths of men. His son Isander was killed by Ares, insatiable of war, as he fought the glorious Solymi, and his daughter was killed by Artemis of the golden reins in her anger. Hippolochus fathered me, and I say that I am his son. He sent me to Troy and laid many charges on me:

3 These "signs" scratched on a folded tablet are Homer's only reference to anything like writing. This Xanthus is a river in Lycia, not the Trojan one.

always to be the best and to excel above others, and not to shame the race of my fathers, who were by far the best in Ephyre and in broad Lycia. That is the lineage, and the blood, I claim as mine."

6.212 So he spoke, and Diomedes, good at the war cry, was glad. He planted his spear in the bountiful earth and spoke with gentle words to the shepherd of the people: "Why, then you are my guest-friend from my father's house, from long ago! Godlike Oeneus once entertained blameless Bellerophon in his halls and kept him there twenty days, and they gave each other fine gifts of friendship. Oeneus gave a war-belt bright with crimson, and Bellerophon a golden two-handled cup, which I left in my house when I set out. Tydeus I do not remember, since he left me when I was still small, when the army of the Achaeans perished at Thebes.[4]

6.224 So now I am your dear guest-friend in the heart of Argos, and you are mine in Lycia, whenever I come to that land. Let us keep clear of each other's spears, even in the thick of the fighting. There are plenty of Trojans and famous allies for me to kill, whomever a god grants me and my feet overtake, and plenty of Achaeans for you to kill, whomever you can. And let us exchange armor with each other, so that these men too may know that we claim to be guest-friends from our fathers' time." So they spoke, and leaping down from their chariots they clasped each other's hands and pledged their faith. But then Zeus son of Cronus took away Glaucus' wits, for he exchanged armor with Diomedes son of Tydeus, gold for bronze, the worth of a hundred oxen for the worth of nine.

4 Oeneus, king of Calydon, was Diomedes' grandfather. Guest-friendship was a hereditary bond between families of different lands, sealed by gifts and binding on their descendants.

HECTOR IN TROY

Hector asks his mother to offer a robe to Athena, who refuses the prayer.

6.237 When Hector reached the Scaean Gates and the oak tree, the wives and daughters of the Trojans came running around him, asking after their sons and brothers, their kinsmen and husbands. He told them all, one after another, to pray to the gods; but sorrows hung over many. Then he came to the beautiful house of Priam, built with polished colonnades. In it were fifty chambers of polished stone, built close to one another, where Priam's sons slept beside their wedded wives; and on the other side, facing them within the courtyard, were his daughters' twelve roofed chambers of polished stone, built close to one another, where Priam's sons-in-law slept beside their modest wives. There his mother, generous with gifts, came to meet him, bringing in Laodice, the most beautiful of her daughters. She clung to his hand and spoke to him, calling him by name:

6.254 "My child, why have you left the bold fighting and come here? Surely the sons of the Achaeans, curse their name, are pressing you hard as they fight around the city, and your heart has sent you here to climb to the city's height and lift your hands to Zeus. But wait while I bring you honey-sweet wine, so that you can pour an offering to Zeus the father and the other immortals first, and then you'll be refreshed yourself, if you drink. Wine greatly increases a weary man's strength, and you are weary from defending your kinsmen." Then great Hector of the flashing helmet answered her: "Don't bring me honey-hearted wine, my queenly mother, or you'll drain my limbs of strength and I'll forget my courage. And I shrink from pouring gleaming wine to Zeus with unwashed hands. There's no way a man spattered with blood and gore can pray to the son of Cronus of the dark clouds.

6.269 But you go to the temple of Athena, bringer of spoil, with offerings, once you've gathered the old women. Take the robe

that is loveliest and largest in the hall, the one you yourself love best by far, and lay it on the knees of lovely-haired Athena. Promise to sacrifice to her in the temple twelve yearling heifers that have never felt the goad, if she will take pity on the city and the wives of the Trojans and their little children, if she will hold the son of Tydeus back from holy Ilium, that savage spearman, that mighty maker of rout. So you go to the temple of Athena, bringer of spoil, and I'll go after Paris to call him, if he's willing to listen when I speak. If only the earth would gape open for him on the spot! The Olympian raised him to be a great bane to the Trojans and to great-hearted Priam and his sons. 6.284 If I could see him gone down into the house of Hades, I would say my heart had forgotten its joyless misery." So he spoke, and she went to the hall and called to her handmaids, and they gathered the old women throughout the city. She herself went down into the fragrant storeroom, where her robes were, richly embroidered work of Sidonian women whom godlike Alexander himself had brought from Sidon, sailing over the broad sea on the same voyage on which he carried off Helen, daughter of a noble father. Hecuba lifted out one of these and carried it as a gift for Athena, the one that was loveliest in its embroidery and largest; it shone like a star, and it lay beneath all the others. She set off, and many old women hurried after her.

6.297 When they reached Athena's temple on the city's height, fair-cheeked Theano opened the doors for them, daughter of Cisseus and wife of horse-taming Antenor, for the Trojans had made her Athena's priestess. With a loud ritual cry all the women lifted their hands to Athena, and fair-cheeked Theano took the robe and laid it on the knees of lovely-haired Athena, and she prayed, calling on the daughter of great Zeus: "Queenly Athena, protector of the city, noblest of goddesses, break the spear of Diomedes now, and grant that he himself fall headlong before the Scaean Gates, so that right away we may sacrifice to you in your temple twelve yearling heifers that have never felt the goad, if you will take pity on the city and the wives of the Trojans and their little children."

HECTOR, PARIS AND HELEN

Hector rebukes Paris for staying out of the fighting, and Helen speaks of her shame.

6.311 So she spoke in prayer, but Pallas Athena shook her head in refusal. So they prayed to the daughter of great Zeus, while Hector went to the house of Alexander, a fine house that he himself had built with the men who were then the best craftsmen in fertile Troy; they had made him a bedchamber, a hall and a courtyard close to those of Priam and Hector on the city's height. There Hector, dear to Zeus, went in, holding in his hand a spear eleven cubits long; at its tip the bronze point of the spear gleamed, and a ring of gold ran around it. 6.321 He found him in the bedchamber, busy with his splendid armor, his shield and corslet, and handling his curved bow; and Argive Helen sat among her serving women, directing her handmaids in their glorious handiwork. When Hector saw him, he rebuked him with shaming words: "You strange man, it isn't right, this anger you've set in your heart. The people are dying around the city and the steep wall as they fight, and it's because of you that the war cry and the war blaze up around this city. You yourself would fight with any other man you saw holding back from hateful war. Up, then, before the city soon goes up in blazing fire." Then godlike Alexander answered him:

6.333 "Hector, since you have rebuked me fairly and not beyond what's fair, I'll tell you; take it in and listen to me. It wasn't so much out of anger or resentment against the Trojans that I sat in my chamber; I wanted to give myself up to grief. But just now my wife, coaxing me with soft words, urged me toward the war, and it seems to me too that it will be better so. Victory shifts from man to man. So come, wait now while I put on my armor of war; or go, and I'll come after you. I think I'll catch you up." So he spoke, but Hector of the flashing helmet said nothing in reply. Then Helen spoke to him with gentle words:

6.344 "Brother-in-law of mine—of me, a dog, a schemer of evil, a horror—how I wish that on the day my mother first bore me some evil blast of wind had come and swept me away to a mountain or into the waves of the loud-roaring sea, where the wave would have carried me off before these things happened. But since the gods have ordained these evils this way, I wish I had been the wife of a better man, one who felt people's indignation and their many reproaches. But this man's mind isn't steady now, and it never will be hereafter; and so I think he'll reap what comes of it. But come in now and sit on this chair, brother-in-law, since toil has gripped your heart more than anyone's for the sake of me, a dog, and for Alexander's blindness. On us Zeus has set an evil fate, so that hereafter we may be a theme of song for men yet to be."

6.359 Then great Hector of the flashing helmet answered her: "Don't ask me to sit, Helen, kind as you are; you won't persuade me. My heart is already eager to bring help to the Trojans, who miss me sorely when I'm away. But you rouse this man, and let him hurry himself, so that he catches up with me while I'm still inside the city. For I'm going home too, to see my household, my dear wife and my infant son. I don't know if I'll ever come back to them again, or if the gods will now bring me down at the hands of the Achaeans."

HECTOR AND ANDROMACHE

Hector finds his wife and son at the gate, says farewell, and returns to battle with Paris.

6.369 So speaking, Hector of the flashing helmet went away, and he soon reached his well-appointed house, but he did not find white-armed Andromache in the hall; she had gone with her child and a well-robed handmaid and was standing on the tower, weeping and wailing. When Hector did not find his excellent wife inside, he went and stood on the threshold and spoke among the serving women: "Come, women, tell me truthfully: where has white-armed Andromache gone from the hall? Has

she gone to one of my sisters, or to my brothers' well-robed wives, or to Athena's temple, where the other lovely-haired Trojan women are appeasing the dread goddess?"

6.381 Then the busy housekeeper answered him: "Hector, since you insist that we tell the truth, she hasn't gone to any of your sisters or your brothers' well-robed wives, nor to Athena's temple, where the other lovely-haired Trojan women are appeasing the dread goddess. She has gone to the great tower of Ilium, because she heard that the Trojans were hard pressed and the Achaeans' strength was great. She is hurrying to the wall like a woman gone mad, and the nurse is carrying the child with her." So the housekeeper spoke, and Hector hurried from the house back the same way he had come, along the well-built streets.

6.392 When he had passed through the great city and reached the gates, the Scaean Gates, by which he meant to go out onto the plain, his wife, who had brought him rich gifts, came running to meet him there: Andromache, daughter of great-hearted Eëtion—Eëtion who lived beneath wooded Placus, in Thebe-under-Placus, ruling the Cilician men. It was his daughter who was married to bronze-armored Hector. She met him then, and with her came a handmaid holding the child against her breast, a tender-hearted little baby, Hector's beloved son, lovely as a star. Hector called him Scamandrius, but everyone else called him Astyanax, for Hector alone protected Ilium. Hector smiled as he looked at his son in silence; but Andromache came and stood close beside him, shedding tears, and she clasped his hand and spoke to him, calling him by name:[5]

6.407 "You strange man, your own strength will destroy you, and you have no pity for your infant child, or for me, ill-fated, who will soon be your widow; for soon the Achaeans will all rush at you together and kill you. And if I lose you, it would be better for me to go down beneath the earth. There will be no other comfort for me once you meet your fate, only sorrows. I

5 Astyanax means "lord of the city"; Scamandrius is named for the river Scamander.

have no father now, and no queenly mother. My father was killed by godlike Achilles, who sacked the well-peopled city of the Cilicians, Thebe of the high gates. He killed Eëtion, but he didn't strip him of his armor, for his heart shrank in awe from that; instead he burned him in his richly worked armor and heaped up a mound over him, and the mountain nymphs, daughters of Zeus who bears the aegis, planted elm trees around it. 6.421 And the seven brothers I had in our halls all went down into the house of Hades on a single day, for swift-footed godlike Achilles killed every one of them among their shambling cattle and white sheep. And my mother, who was queen beneath wooded Placus, he brought here with the rest of the spoils, and then set her free again, taking a ransom beyond counting; but Artemis the archer struck her down in her father's halls. Hector, you are father to me, and queenly mother, and brother, and you are my young husband. So come now, have pity, and stay here on the tower, so that you don't make your child an orphan and your wife a widow. Station the army by the fig tree, where the city is easiest to scale and the wall most open to attack. 6.435 Three times their best men have come there and tried it, those around the two Ajaxes and renowned Idomeneus, around the sons of Atreus and the valiant son of Tydeus. Either someone well versed in prophecies told them, or their own heart urges them on and drives them." Then great Hector of the flashing helmet spoke to her in turn: "All this weighs on me too, wife. But I would feel terrible shame before the Trojans and the Trojan women with their trailing robes if I skulked away from the fighting like a coward. Nor does my heart tell me to, since I have learned always to be brave and to fight among the foremost Trojans, winning great glory for my father and for myself.

6.447 For I know this well in my mind and in my heart: there will come a day when holy Ilium is destroyed, and Priam, and the people of Priam with the fine ash spear. But the pain to come for the Trojans doesn't trouble me so much—not Hecuba's own, nor lord Priam's, nor my brothers', who may fall in the dust, many and brave, at the hands of their enemies—as yours, when

some bronze-clad Achaean leads you away in tears and robs you of your day of freedom. And in Argos you may weave at the loom at another woman's bidding, and carry water from Messeïs or Hypereia, much against your will, and harsh necessity will weigh on you. And someday someone may say, seeing you shed tears:[6]

6.460 'This is the wife of Hector, who was the best in battle of the horse-taming Trojans when they fought around Ilium.' So someone will say someday; and for you there will be fresh pain, for lack of such a man to ward off the day of slavery. But may I be dead, and the heaped-up earth cover me, before I hear your screams as you are dragged away." So speaking, glorious Hector reached out for his son; but the child shrank back crying against the bosom of his well-girdled nurse, frightened by the sight of his dear father, terrified of the bronze and the horsehair crest he saw nodding terribly from the top of the helmet.

6.471 His dear father and queenly mother burst out laughing. At once glorious Hector took the helmet from his head and set it down on the ground, all gleaming; then he kissed his dear son and tossed him in his arms, and spoke in prayer to Zeus and the other gods: "Zeus and you other gods, grant that this boy, my son, may become as I am, outstanding among the Trojans, as good in strength, and rule Ilium in power. And someday may someone say, 'He is far better than his father,' as he comes back from war; and may he carry home the bloody spoils of an enemy he has killed, and may his mother's heart rejoice."

6.482 So speaking, he placed his son in his dear wife's arms, and she took him to her fragrant bosom, laughing through her tears. Her husband saw it and was moved to pity, and he stroked her with his hand and spoke to her, calling her by name: "Dearest, don't grieve too much in your heart for me. No man will send me down to Hades beyond what is fated; and no man, I tell you, has ever escaped his fate, coward or brave, once he has been born. So go home and see to your own work, the loom and the distaff, and tell your handmaids to set about their work. War will be the

6 Messeïs and Hypereia are springs in mainland Greece.

concern of men, of all the men who were born in Ilium, and of me most of all."

6.494 So speaking, glorious Hector took up his helmet with its horsehair crest, and his dear wife went home, turning back again and again, shedding big tears. She soon reached the well-appointed house of man-slaying Hector, and found many handmaids inside, and stirred up lamentation in them all. So they mourned for Hector in his own house while he was still alive; for they thought he would never again come back from the war, escaping the fury and the hands of the Achaeans. Nor did Paris linger in his lofty house; once he had put on his glorious armor, intricately worked with bronze, he rushed through the city, trusting in his swift feet.

6.506 As when a stalled horse, fed full of barley at the manger, breaks his tether and gallops pounding over the plain, used to bathing in the fair-flowing river, exulting; he holds his head high, and his mane streams about his shoulders, and trusting in his splendor, his knees carry him lightly to the haunts and pastures of the horses: so Paris, son of Priam, strode down from the height of Pergamus, gleaming in his armor like the shining sun, laughing for joy, and his swift feet carried him on. And quickly then he came upon godlike Hector, his brother, just as he was about to turn from the place where he had been talking with his wife. Godlike Alexander spoke to him first:

6.518 "Brother, I'm really holding you back with my dawdling when you're in a hurry, aren't I? I didn't come in good time, as you told me." Then Hector of the flashing helmet answered him: "You strange man, no fair-minded man would belittle your work in battle, since you are valiant. But you hang back willingly and won't fight; and my heart grieves within me when I hear the Trojans say shameful things about you, the Trojans who bear so much toil because of you. But let's go. We'll make all this good later, if Zeus ever grants that we set up the mixing bowl of freedom in our halls to the heavenly gods who live forever, once we've driven the well-greaved Achaeans out of Troy."

Book 7

Hector and Ajax
A duel ends in a draw; a truce to bury the dead; the Greeks build a wall.

HECTOR'S CHALLENGE

Apollo and Athena halt the fighting, and Hector challenges the best of the Achaeans to single combat.

7.1 So he spoke, and glorious Hector rushed out through the gates, and with him went his brother Alexander; and in their hearts both were eager to make war and to fight. As when a god gives sailors who long for it a fair wind, when they have grown weary driving over the sea with polished oars of pine, and their limbs are undone with toil, so did these two appear to the Trojans who longed for them. Then each of them killed a man: Alexander killed Menesthius, son of lord Areïthous, who lived in Arne, whom Areïthous the Mace-man and ox-eyed Phylomedusa bore; and Hector struck Eioneus with his sharp spear in the neck beneath the rim of his bronze helmet, and his limbs were loosed. And Glaucus son of Hippolochus, leader of the Lycian men, struck Iphinous son of Dexius with his spear in the shoulder amid the fierce fighting, as he was leaping onto his swift horses; and he fell from his chariot to the ground, and his limbs were loosed.

7.17 But when the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, saw them killing the Argives in the fierce fighting, she went darting down from the peaks of Olympus to holy Ilium. Apollo rose up to meet her, having looked down from Pergamus, for he wanted victory for the Trojans, and the two of them met each other by the oak tree.

Lord Apollo, son of Zeus, spoke to her first: "Why have you come again so eagerly from Olympus, daughter of great Zeus? What great passion has driven you on? Is it to give the Danaans victory that turns the tide of battle? For you have no pity at all for the Trojans as they perish.

7.28 But if you would listen to me, it would be far better. Let us stop the war and the fighting now, for today. Later they will fight again, until they reach the end set for Ilium, since this is what pleases the hearts of you immortal goddesses: to sack this city utterly." Then the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, spoke to him in turn: "So be it, you who work from afar. I came down from Olympus among the Trojans and Achaeans with just this in mind myself. But come, how do you mean to stop the men's fighting?" Then lord Apollo, son of Zeus, spoke to her in turn: "Let us rouse the mighty fury of horse-taming Hector, in the hope that he will challenge one of the Danaans to face him alone, man to man, in grim combat. Then the bronze-greaved Achaeans, indignant, may rouse up one man alone to fight against godlike Hector."

7.43 So he spoke, and the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, did not disobey. And Helenus, Priam's dear son, understood in his heart the plan the gods had agreed on in their counsel. He went and stood beside Hector and spoke to him: "Hector, son of Priam, equal to Zeus in counsel, will you listen to me now? I am your brother. Make the other Trojans sit down, and all the Achaeans, and challenge whoever is best of the Achaeans to face you man to man in grim combat. For it is not yet your fate to die and meet your end. So I heard the voice of the gods who live forever."[1]

7.54 So he spoke, and Hector in turn rejoiced greatly when he heard his words. He went into the middle and held back the Trojan ranks, gripping his spear by the middle, and they all sat down. Agamemnon made the well-greaved Achaeans sit; and Athena and Apollo of the silver bow sat down in the likeness of vultures on the tall oak of father Zeus who bears the aegis, delighting in the men. The ranks of the men sat close-packed,

1 Helenus, a son of Priam, is a seer; that is how he perceives the gods' plan.

bristling with shields and helmets and spears. As the ripple of the West Wind spreads over the sea when it first rises, and the sea darkens beneath it, so sat the ranks of Achaeans and Trojans on the plain. And Hector spoke among them both:

7.67 "Hear me, Trojans and well-greaved Achaeans, so that I may say what the heart in my chest bids me. The oaths were not brought to fulfillment by the son of Cronus, throned on high; instead he plans evil for both sides, until either you take Troy of the fine towers or are yourselves beaten beside your seafaring ships. Among you are the best of all the Achaeans. Let whichever of them his heart bids fight me come here out of them all to be the champion against godlike Hector. And this is what I say—let Zeus be our witness: if that man takes me with the long-edged bronze, let him strip my armor and carry it to the hollow ships, but give my body back to be taken home, so that the Trojans and the Trojans' wives may give me my share of fire when I am dead.[2] 7.81 But if I take him, and Apollo grants me the glory, I will strip his armor and carry it to holy Ilium and hang it up at the temple of Apollo the far-shooter; but the corpse I will give back to be taken to the well-benched ships, so that the long-haired Achaeans may give him burial and heap up a mound for him beside the broad Hellespont. And someday someone among men born later will say, as he sails his many-oared ship over the wine-dark sea: 'This is the mound of a man who died long ago, whom glorious Hector killed as he fought at his best.' So someone will say someday, and my glory will never perish." So he spoke, and they all fell hushed in silence: they were ashamed to refuse, and afraid to accept. At long last Menelaus stood up and spoke among them, rebuking them with reproaches, and groaning deeply in his heart:

7.96 "Ah me, you braggarts, you women of Achaea—Achaean men no longer! This will surely be a disgrace, dreadful beyond dreadful, if no one of the Danaans goes out now to face Hector. Well, may you all turn to water and earth, sitting here, every one

2 The oaths of the truce sworn in Book 3, which were broken in Book 4 when the Trojan ally Pandarus shot an arrow at Menelaus.

of you, heartless and utterly without glory! I myself will arm against this man; but the outcome of victory is held on high among the immortal gods." So he spoke, and put on his fine armor. Then, Menelaus, the end of your life would have shown itself at Hector's hands, since he was far stronger, had not the kings of the Achaeans sprung up and taken hold of you; and the son of Atreus himself, wide-ruling Agamemnon, took him by the right hand, and spoke and called him by name:

7.109 "You're out of your mind, Menelaus, nurtured by Zeus, and you've no need of this folly. Hold back, though it pains you, and don't, out of rivalry, try to fight a man better than you, Hector son of Priam, whom others too shudder at. Even Achilles shrank from meeting this man in battle where men win glory, and he is far better than you. No, go now and sit down among your company of comrades; the Achaeans will raise up another champion against this man. Even if he is fearless and can't get his fill of the din of battle, I say he'll be glad to bend his knees in rest, if he escapes from the hostile war and grim combat."

7.120 So the warrior spoke and won over his brother's mind with right advice, and he obeyed. Then his attendants gladly took the armor from his shoulders. And Nestor stood up among the Argives and spoke: "Alas, truly a great grief is coming upon the land of Achaea. Loudly would old Peleus the horseman groan, the fine counselor and speaker of the Myrmidons, who once questioned me in his house and rejoiced greatly as he asked about the lineage and birth of all the Argives. If he were to hear that they all cower before Hector now, again and again he would lift his hands to the immortals, praying that his spirit might leave his limbs and go down into the house of Hades.

7.132 If only, father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, I were young as I was when the Pylians and the Arcadians, famed for the spear, gathered and fought beside the swift-flowing Celadon, under the walls of Pheia, around the streams of the Iardanus. Their champion stood out before them, Ereuthalion, a man equal to the gods, wearing on his shoulders the armor of lord Areïthous—godlike Areïthous, whom men and fair-belted

women called by the name of the Mace-man, because he did not fight with bows or the long spear, but broke the battalions with an iron mace. Lycurgus killed him by trickery, not by strength at all, in a narrow road, where his iron mace could not save him from destruction: Lycurgus got in first and pierced him through the middle with his spear, and he was thrown on his back on the ground. And Lycurgus stripped him of the armor that bronze Ares had given him.[3] 7.147 Then he wore it himself in the toil of Ares; but when Lycurgus grew old in his halls, he gave it to Ereuthalion, his dear attendant, to wear. Wearing that armor, Ereuthalion challenged all the best men. But they trembled badly and were afraid, and no one dared. Yet my much-enduring heart drove me to fight in its boldness—and by birth I was the youngest of them all. And I fought him, and Athena granted me the glory. He was the tallest and strongest man I ever killed: he lay sprawled out, a huge bulk, this way and that. I wish I were young like that, and my strength still firm! Then Hector of the flashing helmet would soon find his fight. 7.159 But of you, who are the best of all the Achaeans, not one is eager with a ready heart to go and face Hector." So the old man rebuked them, and nine in all stood up. First by far rose Agamemnon, lord of men; after him rose the son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes; after them the two Ajaxes, clothed in furious valor; after them Idomeneus and Idomeneus' companion Meriones, a match for Enyalius the man-slayer; after them Eurypylus, the splendid son of Euaemon; and up stood Thoas son of Andraemon, and godlike Odysseus. All these were willing to fight godlike Hector. And Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, spoke to them again:[4]

3 Nestor, king of Pylos in the western Peloponnese, recalls a war of his youth against the neighboring Arcadians.

4 Enyalius is a name for Ares, or for a war god closely identified with him.

HECTOR AND AJAX

Ajax wins the draw and fights Hector until the heralds part them at nightfall.

7.171 "Now shake the lots, one after another, to see who wins the draw. For he will help the well-greaved Achaeans, and he will also help his own heart, if he escapes from the hostile war and grim combat." So he spoke, and they each marked a lot and threw it into the helmet of Agamemnon son of Atreus. The people prayed and lifted their hands to the gods; and this is what one would say, looking up into the wide sky: "Father Zeus, let it fall to Ajax, or to the son of Tydeus, or to the king of Mycenae rich in gold himself."

7.181 So they spoke, and Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, shook the helmet, and out of it leaped the very lot they wanted, the lot of Ajax. The herald carried it through the crowd in every direction and showed it from left to right to all the best of the Achaeans; and not recognizing it, each of them disowned it. But when, carrying it through the crowd in every direction, he reached the man who had scratched his mark on it and thrown it into the helmet, glorious Ajax, Ajax held out his hand, and the herald stood beside him and dropped it in; and he saw the mark on the lot and knew it, and rejoiced in his heart. He threw it on the ground beside his foot and said: "Friends, the lot is mine, and I'm glad of it in my heart myself, since I think I'll beat godlike Hector.

7.193 But come, while I put on my battle armor, you pray to lord Zeus, son of Cronus—silently, to yourselves, so the Trojans don't learn of it, or even openly, since we fear no one anyway. For no one will drive me back by force, his will against mine, nor by skill either, since I don't think I was born and raised in Salamis such a novice as that." So he spoke, and they prayed to lord Zeus, son of Cronus; and this is what one would say, looking up into the wide sky: "Father Zeus, ruling from Ida, most glorious, greatest, grant victory to Ajax, and let him win shining glory;

but if you love Hector too and care for him, give equal strength and glory to them both."

7.206 So they spoke, and Ajax armed himself in gleaming bronze. And when he had put all the armor on around his body, he rushed forward; as huge Ares goes when he enters the war among men whom the son of Cronus has brought together to fight in the fury of heart-devouring strife, so huge Ajax rose up, the bulwark of the Achaeans, smiling with his grim face; below, his feet strode with long steps, as he brandished his long-shadowed spear. The Argives rejoiced as they watched him, but a dreadful trembling crept over the limbs of every Trojan, and the heart pounded in Hector's own chest. But he could no longer shrink back in any way, or slip back into the crowd of his men, since he had issued the challenge to battle. 7.219 Ajax came near, carrying his shield like a tower, bronze, of seven ox-hides, which Tychius had toiled to make for him, by far the best of leatherworkers, who lived in Hyle. He made him the glittering shield of seven hides of well-fed bulls, and over them he hammered an eighth layer of bronze. Holding this before his chest, Telamonian Ajax came and stood very close to Hector, and spoke threateningly: "Hector, now you'll know clearly, one to one, what kind of best men the Danaans have among them, even besides Achilles, breaker of men, lion-hearted. He lies among his curved seafaring ships, nursing his wrath against Agamemnon, shepherd of the people; but we are men who can face you—and many of us. So begin the battle and the fighting."

7.233 Then great Hector of the flashing helmet spoke to him in turn: "Telamonian Ajax, sprung from Zeus, lord of the people, don't test me as if I were some feeble boy, or a woman who knows nothing of the work of war. I know battles well, and the killing of men. I know how to swing my dry ox-hide shield to the right, and I know how to swing it to the left: that's what fighting with a tough shield means to me. I know how to charge into the press of swift horses; I know how, in close standing fight, to dance to grim Ares. But I don't want to strike you, a man such as

you are, by watching for a chance in secret, but openly, if I can hit you."

7.244 He spoke, and drawing back his long-shadowed spear he hurled it, and struck Ajax's terrible seven-ox-hide shield on its outermost bronze, the eighth layer, which lay over the rest. Through six folds the tireless bronze went cutting, but in the seventh hide it was stopped. Then in his turn Ajax, sprung from Zeus, hurled his long-shadowed spear and struck the son of Priam on his shield, balanced on every side. Through the shining shield went the heavy spear, and it forced its way on through the richly worked corslet; straight on, beside his flank, the spear sheared through his tunic, but he swerved aside and escaped black doom. Then the two of them, both together pulling the long spears out with their hands, fell on each other like flesh-eating lions or wild boars, whose strength is no feeble thing. 7.258 The son of Priam then stabbed the shield in the middle with his spear, but the bronze did not break through; its point was bent back. Ajax sprang forward and pierced Hector's shield; the spear went right through it and jolted him back in his eager rush, and it reached his neck, cutting it, and dark blood welled up. But even so Hector of the flashing helmet did not give up the fight. He drew back and with his massive hand picked up a stone that lay on the plain, black, jagged and huge, and with it he struck Ajax's terrible seven-ox-hide shield in the middle, on the boss, and the bronze rang all around. Then in his turn Ajax lifted a far larger stone, whirled it and let it fly, putting immeasurable force behind it. He broke the shield inward with that millstone of a rock and struck Hector's knees from under him; he was stretched out on his back, pressed against his shield. But Apollo at once set him on his feet. 7.273 And now they would have been stabbing at each other with swords at close quarters, had not the heralds, messengers of Zeus and of men, come up, one from the Trojans, the other from the bronze-clad Achaeans—Talthybius and Idaeus, both men of good sense. Between the two fighters they held out their staffs, and the herald Idaeus, skilled in sensible counsel, spoke: "Fight no more, dear sons, battle no longer.

Zeus the cloud-gatherer loves you both, and you are both spearmen—that much we all know. Night is already coming on; it is good to heed the night as well." Then Telamonian Ajax answered him: "Idaeus, tell Hector to say these things. It was he himself who challenged all our best men to combat. Let him be the first, and I'll readily do just as he does." Then in turn great Hector of the flashing helmet spoke to him:[5]

7.288 "Ajax, since a god has given you stature and strength and good sense, and with the spear you are the strongest of the Achaeans, let us stop our fighting and combat now, for today. Later we'll fight again, until a god decides between us and gives victory to one side or the other. Night is already coming on; it is good to heed the night as well. So you can gladden all the Achaeans beside the ships, and most of all your own kinsmen and companions; and I, throughout the great city of lord Priam, will gladden the Trojans and the Trojan women with their trailing robes, who will go into the sacred gathering-place of the gods to pray for me. But come, let us give each other glorious gifts, so that someone among the Achaeans and Trojans may say this:

7.301 'They fought in heart-devouring strife, and then they parted again, joined in friendship.'" So he spoke, and he gave him a silver-studded sword, bringing it with its scabbard and well-cut baldric; and Ajax gave him a belt bright with crimson. Then the two parted, one going to the host of the Achaeans, the other to the throng of the Trojans. And the Trojans rejoiced when they saw him coming toward them alive and unharmed, escaped from the fury of Ajax and his invincible hands; and they led him to the city, though they had no longer hoped that he was safe. Ajax, on the other side, the well-greaved Achaeans led to godlike Agamemnon, rejoicing in his victory.

5 Idaeus is the Trojan herald, Talthybius Agamemnon's. Heralds were held to be under the protection of Zeus, and the staff they carried marked their sacred office.

THE TRUCE AND THE WALL

Both sides burn their dead, and the Achaeans build a wall and ditch around their ships.

7.313 When they came to the huts of the son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, sacrificed a bull for them, a male five years old, to the mighty son of Cronus. They flayed it and dressed it and cut it all into joints; skillfully they chopped it into pieces and pierced them on spits, roasted them carefully, and drew them all off. Then, when they had finished the work and prepared the meal, they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share of the feast. And the warrior son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, honored Ajax with the long chine. But when they had put from themselves the desire for drink and food, the old man was the first of all to begin weaving a plan for them—Nestor, whose counsel had shown itself the best before as well. With good intent he addressed the assembly and spoke among them:

7.327 "Son of Atreus, and you other chiefs of all the Achaeans: many long-haired Achaeans are dead, whose dark blood fierce Ares has now spilled around the fair-flowing Scamander, and their spirits have gone down to Hades. So you must stop the Achaeans' fighting at dawn, and we ourselves will gather and bring the dead here on carts, with oxen and mules. Then we will burn them a little way off from the ships, so that each man may carry their bones home to their children when we return again to our native land. And around the pyre let us heap up a single mound, raising it from the plain, for all alike; and next to it let us quickly build high towers, a protection for the ships and for ourselves. 7.339 In them let us make well-fitted gates, so that there may be a road through them for driving chariots; and outside, close by, let us dig a deep ditch, which, running all around, will hold back horses and men, so that the war of the proud Trojans never bears down on us." So he spoke, and all the kings approved. The Trojans, for their part, held an assembly in Ilium,

on the height of the city, fearful and in turmoil, beside Priam's doors; and among them sensible Antenor began to speak: "Hear me, Trojans and Dardanians and allies, so that I may say what the heart in my chest bids me. Come now, let us give Argive Helen and the possessions with her to the sons of Atreus to take away. As it is, we are fighting after breaking our solemn oaths; so I don't expect anything good to come of it for us, unless we do as I say."

7.354 When he had spoken he sat down, and among them rose godlike Alexander, husband of lovely-haired Helen, who answered him and spoke winged words: "Antenor, what you say no longer pleases me. You know how to think of a better speech than this. But if you really are saying this in earnest, then the gods themselves have destroyed your wits. Now I will speak out among the horse-taming Trojans: I refuse outright—the woman I will not give back. But the possessions I brought from Argos to our house—all of them I am willing to give, and to add more from my own house."

7.365 When he had spoken he sat down, and among them rose Priam, descendant of Dardanus, a counselor equal to the gods, who with good intent addressed the assembly and spoke among them: "Hear me, Trojans and Dardanians and allies, so that I may say what the heart in my chest bids me. For now, take your supper throughout the city as before, and remember to keep watch, and let each man stay awake. And at dawn let Idaeus go to the hollow ships to tell the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus, the word of Alexander, on whose account this quarrel has arisen. And let him also put this shrewd proposal to them: whether they are willing to stop the harsh-sounding war until we have burned the dead. Later we'll fight again, until a god decides between us and gives victory to one side or the other."

7.379 So he spoke, and they listened closely and obeyed. Then they took their supper throughout the army, company by company; and at dawn Idaeus went to the hollow ships. He found the Danaans, attendants of Ares, in assembly beside the stern of Agamemnon's ship; and standing in their midst the loud-voiced

herald spoke: "Son of Atreus, and you other chiefs of all the Achaeans, Priam and the other noble Trojans bade me tell you—in the hope that it may prove welcome and pleasing to you—the word of Alexander, on whose account this quarrel has arisen. The possessions that Alexander brought to Troy in his hollow ships—how I wish he had perished first!—all of them he is willing to give, and to add more from his own house. But the wedded wife of glorious Menelaus he says he will not give, though the Trojans, for their part, urge him to.

7.394 And they bade me put this proposal to you too: whether you are willing to stop the harsh-sounding war until we have burned the dead. Later we'll fight again, until a god decides between us and gives victory to one side or the other." So he spoke, and they all fell hushed in silence. At last Diomedes, good at the war cry, spoke out among them: "Let no one accept Alexander's possessions now, nor Helen either. It's plain even to a complete fool that the cords of destruction are already fastened on the Trojans." So he spoke, and all the sons of the Achaeans shouted aloud, admiring the words of horse-taming Diomedes. And then lord Agamemnon spoke to Idaeus:

7.406 "Idaeus, you hear for yourself the word of the Achaeans, how they answer you; and so it pleases me as well. But as for the dead, I don't begrudge you burning them: when men have died, no one should stint the dead of the swift comfort of fire. As for the oaths, let Zeus be witness, loud-thundering husband of Hera." So saying, he raised his staff to all the gods, and Idaeus went back to holy Ilium. The Trojans and Dardanians sat in assembly, all gathered together, waiting for Idaeus to come; and he came and delivered his message, standing in their midst. And they made ready very quickly to do both things, some to bring in the dead, others to fetch wood; and the Argives on their side hurried from their well-benched ships, some to bring in the dead, others to fetch wood.

7.421 Then the sun, just rising into the sky from gently gliding, deep-flowing Ocean, was first striking the fields, and the two sides met each other. There it was hard to recognize each man;

but they washed the clotted blood away with water and, shedding hot tears, lifted them onto the wagons. Great Priam would not let his people wail aloud; so in silence they heaped the dead on the pyre, grieving at heart, and when they had burned them in the fire they went back to holy Ilium. In the same way, on the other side, the well-greaved Achaeans heaped the dead on the pyre, grieving at heart, and when they had burned them in the fire they went back to the hollow ships.

7.433 When it was not yet dawn, but still the half-light of night, a picked band of the Achaean host roused itself around the pyre, and about it they made a single mound, raising it from the plain, for all alike; and next to it they built a wall and high towers, a protection for the ships and for themselves. In them they made well-fitted gates, so that there might be a road through them for driving chariots; and outside, along the wall, they dug a ditch, deep, wide and great, and planted stakes in it. So the long-haired Achaeans labored; and the gods, seated beside Zeus, lord of the lightning, gazed at the great work of the bronze-clad Achaeans. Among them Poseidon the Earth-shaker began to speak:

7.446 "Father Zeus, is there anyone left among mortals on the boundless earth who will still tell the immortals his mind and his plans? Don't you see that the long-haired Achaeans have built a wall to protect their ships and driven a ditch around it, and have not given the gods glorious hecatombs? Its fame will reach as far as the dawn spreads, and men will forget the wall that Phoebus Apollo and I toiled to build for the hero Laomedon." Then, deeply troubled, Zeus the cloud-gatherer spoke to him: "Ah, Earth-shaker of wide strength, what a thing you've said! Some other god might fear this device, one far feebler than you in his hands and his strength; but your fame, surely, will reach as far as the dawn spreads.[6]

7.459 Come now: when the long-haired Achaeans have gone off with their ships to their own native land, break up the wall and sweep it all into the sea, and cover the great beach over again

6 Laomedon was Priam's father; Poseidon and Apollo built the walls of Troy for him.

with sand, so that the great wall of the Achaeans may be wiped out for you." So they spoke to each other; and the sun set, and the Achaeans' work was finished, and they slaughtered cattle throughout the huts and took their supper. And ships came in from Lemnos, many of them, bringing wine; Euneus son of Jason had sent them, whom Hypsipyle bore to Jason, shepherd of the people.[7]

7.470 Separately, for the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus, the son of Jason gave a thousand measures of wine to be carried off. From these ships the long-haired Achaeans bought their wine, some with bronze, some with gleaming iron, some with hides, some with the cattle themselves, and some with slaves; and they set out a rich feast. Then all night long the long-haired Achaeans feasted, and the Trojans and their allies in the city; and all night long Zeus the counselor devised evils against them, thundering terribly, and pale fear took hold of them. They poured the wine from their cups onto the ground, and no one dared to drink until he had poured a libation to the mighty son of Cronus. Then they lay down to rest and took the gift of sleep.

7 Lemnos is an island in the northern Aegean; Jason, leader of the Argonauts, fathered Euneus with its queen Hypsipyle.

Book 8

The Trojans gain
Zeus forbids the gods to fight and drives the Greeks back to their ships.

ZEUS FORBIDS THE GODS TO FIGHT

Zeus threatens any god who helps either side and weighs the two armies' fates on Ida.

8.1 Saffron-robed Dawn was spreading over all the earth, and Zeus, who delights in thunder, held an assembly of the gods on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus. He spoke to them himself, and all the gods listened: "Hear me, all you gods and all you goddesses, so that I may say what the heart in my chest bids me. Let no goddess, then, and no god either, try to cut my word short. All of you together, agree to it, so that I can bring these things to their end as quickly as possible. If I see anyone going off on his own, apart from the gods, wanting to help either the Trojans or the Danaans, he will be struck down and come back to Olympus in disgrace. Or I will seize him and hurl him into murky Tartarus, very far away, where the deepest pit lies beneath the earth. Its gates are iron and its threshold bronze, and it lies as far below Hades as heaven is above the earth. Then he will know how far I am the strongest of all the gods.[1]

8.18 Come, try it, gods, so that you all may know. Hang a golden rope from heaven and take hold of it, all you gods and all you goddesses. Even so, you could not drag Zeus, the highest counselor, down from heaven to the plain, however hard you

1 Tartarus: the deepest region of the underworld, a prison far below Hades.

strained. But if I wished in earnest to pull, I would haul you up, earth and sea and all. Then I would tie the rope around a peak of Olympus, and everything would hang there in midair. That is how far I am above the gods, and above men."

8.28 So he spoke, and they all fell hushed and silent, amazed at his words, for he had spoken with great force. At last the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, spoke among them: "Our father, son of Cronus, highest of rulers, we too know well that your strength cannot be resisted. Even so, we grieve for the Danaan spearmen, who will meet an evil fate and perish. We will keep out of the war, as you command. But we will give the Argives advice that will help them, so that they do not all perish because of your anger." Then, smiling at her, Zeus the cloud-gatherer said: "Take heart, Tritogeneia, dear child. I do not speak with my whole heart in it, and I want to be kind to you."[2]

8.41 So saying, he yoked to his chariot his bronze-hoofed horses, swift-flying, with flowing manes of gold. He clothed himself in gold, took up his well-made golden whip, mounted his chariot, and lashed the horses to start them; and they flew, not unwilling, between the earth and the starry heaven. He came to Ida of many springs, mother of wild beasts, to Gargarus, where he has a sacred precinct and a fragrant altar. There the father of men and gods halted his horses, loosed them from the chariot, and poured thick mist around them. He himself sat on the peaks, exulting in his glory, looking out over the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Achaeans.[3]

8.53 The long-haired Achaeans took their meal in haste among the huts, and straight after it they armed themselves. On the other side the Trojans armed throughout the city. They were fewer, but even so they were eager to fight in the battle, under hard necessity, for their children and their wives. All the gates were opened and the army rushed out, men on foot and men in chariots, and a great din arose. When they came together and met in one place, they dashed together their shields of hide and

2 Tritogeneia: an ancient title of Athena, of uncertain meaning.
3 Gargarus: the highest peak of Mount Ida, overlooking the plain of Troy.

their spears and the fury of bronze-corsleted men. The bossed shields pressed against one another, and a great din arose. Then the groans and the boasts of men rose up together, of those who killed and those who were killed, and the earth ran with blood.

8.66 As long as it was morning and the holy day was growing, the missiles of both sides struck home and men fell. But when the Sun had bestridden the middle of heaven, then the father held up his golden scales. In them he set two dooms of death that lays men low, one for the horse-taming Trojans and one for the bronze-clad Achaeans. He took the scales by the middle and lifted them, and the fated day of the Achaeans sank down. The dooms of the Achaeans settled on the nourishing earth, and those of the Trojans rose up toward broad heaven. Then he himself thundered loudly from Ida and sent a blazing flash among the army of the Achaeans. When they saw it they were stunned, and pale fear took hold of them all.

DIOMEDES RESCUES NESTOR

Diomedes saves Nestor and charges Hector until thunderbolts from Zeus turn him back.

8.78 Then neither Idomeneus nor Agamemnon had the heart to stand his ground, nor did the two Ajaxes stand, attendants of Ares. Only Gerenian Nestor stayed, the Achaeans' guardian, and not by choice: one of his horses was disabled. Godlike Alexander, husband of lovely-haired Helen, had shot it with an arrow on the very top of the head, where a horse's mane first grows from the skull and a wound is most deadly. It reared up in agony as the arrow sank into its brain, and writhing around the bronze it threw the other horses into confusion. While the old man was lunging with his sword to cut away the trace-horse's harness, Hector's swift horses came through the rout, carrying a bold charioteer, Hector himself. And now the old man would have lost his life there, had not Diomedes, good at the war cry, been quick to notice. He gave a terrible shout, urging on Odysseus:

8.93 "Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many wiles, where are you running, turning your back like a coward in the crowd? Watch out that no one plants a spear in your back as you run. Stay, so we can drive this savage man off the old one." So he spoke, but much-enduring godlike Odysseus did not hear him and darted past toward the hollow ships of the Achaeans. The son of Tydeus, alone as he was, threw himself among the front-fighters and took his stand in front of the horses of the old son of Neleus. He called to him and spoke winged words: "Old sir, these young fighters are really wearing you down. Your strength is spent, hard old age weighs on you, your attendant is a weakling, and your horses are slow.

8.105 Come, get up into my chariot, so you can see what the horses of Tros' breed are like: how well they know the plain, how fast they can chase this way and that, or run away. I took them once from Aeneas—they are masters of rout. Let our attendants look after your horses, while we two drive these against the horse-taming Trojans, so that Hector too may find out whether my spear also rages in my hands." So he spoke, and Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, did not disobey. The two attendants, mighty Sthenelus and brave Eurymedon, then took charge of Nestor's horses, and the two men mounted Diomedes' chariot. Nestor took the shining reins in his hands and lashed the horses, and soon they were close to Hector.

8.118 As Hector came charging straight at them, the son of Tydeus threw his spear. He missed Hector, but hit his attendant, the charioteer Eniopeus, son of high-hearted Thebaeus, in the chest beside the nipple, as he held the horses' reins. He toppled from the chariot, and his swift-footed horses shied back; and there his life and strength were undone. Terrible grief for his charioteer clouded Hector's mind, but grieving though he was for his comrade, he left him lying there and went in search of a bold charioteer. The horses did not lack a driver for long, for he quickly found Archeptolemus, the bold son of Iphitus, set him up behind the swift-footed horses, and put the reins into his hands.

8.130 Then there would have been havoc and deeds past mending, and the Trojans would have been penned inside Ilium like lambs, had not the father of men and gods been quick to notice. He thundered terribly and let fly a dazzling thunderbolt, hurling it to the ground in front of Diomedes' horses. A terrible flame of burning sulfur shot up, and the two horses cowered in terror against the chariot. The shining reins slipped from Nestor's hands, and he was afraid in his heart and said to Diomedes:

8.139 "Son of Tydeus, come, turn the single-hoofed horses to flight. Can't you see that no help from Zeus is with you? Today Zeus, son of Cronus, grants glory to this man; another time he will give it to us too, if he wishes. No man can thwart the mind of Zeus, however mighty he is, since Zeus is far stronger." Then Diomedes, good at the war cry, answered him: "Yes, old sir, all you've said is right. But this bitter pain comes over my heart and spirit: one day Hector will say, speaking among the Trojans, 'The son of Tydeus ran from me all the way to the ships.' That is how he'll boast one day—and then may the wide earth gape for me."

8.151 Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, answered him: "Ah, son of fiery Tydeus, what a thing to say! Even if Hector calls you a coward and a weakling, the Trojans and the Dardanians won't believe him, nor will the wives of the great-hearted Trojan shield-men, whose husbands in their prime you have flung in the dust." So saying, he turned the single-hoofed horses to flight, back through the rout; and the Trojans and Hector, with an unearthly din, poured their grievous missiles after them. Then great Hector of the flashing helmet gave a long shout after Diomedes:

8.161 "Son of Tydeus, the Danaans with their swift horses used to honor you above others, with the best seat, with meat and with brimming cups. Now they'll despise you: it seems you're no better than a woman. Off with you, you cowardly doll! I won't give way and let you climb our towers, or carry off our women in your ships. Before that, I'll deal you your doom." So he spoke, and the son of Tydeus was torn in two: should he turn his horses and fight him face to face? Three times he pondered it in his

mind and in his heart, and three times Zeus the counselor thundered from the mountains of Ida, giving the Trojans a sign that victory in the battle had swung their way. And Hector gave a long shout and called to the Trojans:

8.173 "Trojans and Lycians and Dardanians, fighters at close quarters, be men, my friends, and remember your furious valor! I know that the son of Cronus has nodded his willing assent to victory and great glory for me, and disaster for the Danaans. Fools! They built these walls, feeble things, not worth a thought, and they won't hold back our fury. Our horses will easily leap the ditch they dug. But when I reach the hollow ships, let someone remember to bring destroying fire, so that I can set the ships ablaze and kill the Argives themselves beside the ships, bewildered by the smoke." So saying, he called to his horses and spoke to them:

8.185 "Xanthus, and you, Podargus, and Aethon and noble Lampus, now repay me for all the care that Andromache, daughter of great-hearted Eëtion, lavished on you. She set honey-sweet wheat before you and mixed wine for you to drink whenever your heart desired, before she served me—and I am proud to be her husband in his prime. Come, follow hard and hurry, so that we can take Nestor's shield, whose fame now reaches heaven, that it is all of gold, both its rods and the shield itself; and from the shoulders of horse-taming Diomedes the richly worked corslet that Hephaestus labored to make. If we could take these two, I would hope to make the Achaeans board their swift ships this very night."

8.198 So he spoke, boasting, and queenly Hera was indignant. She shook on her throne and made high Olympus quake, and she spoke to Poseidon, the great god, face to face: "Ah, mighty Earth-shaker, doesn't even your heart grieve within you for the Danaans as they perish? Yet they bring you gifts at Helice and Aegae, many and lovely. You ought to want victory for them. For if all of us who help the Danaans were willing to drive the Trojans back and hold off far-seeing Zeus, he could sit there and sulk all alone on Ida." Then the lord Earth-shaker, deeply

troubled, said to her: "Hera, reckless in speech, what kind of thing is this you've said? I wouldn't want the rest of us to fight with Zeus, son of Cronus, since he is far stronger."[4]

TEUCER'S ARROWS

Agamemnon rallies the Achaeans, and Teucer shoots down Trojans until Hector stuns him with a stone.

8.212 So they talked with each other. Meanwhile all the space that the ditch shut off, from the ships to the wall, was packed with horses and shield-bearing men, crowded together; and the man who crowded them in was Hector, son of Priam, equal of swift Ares, now that Zeus had given him glory. And he would have burned the balanced ships with blazing fire, had not queenly Hera put it into Agamemnon's mind to bestir himself and quickly rouse the Achaeans. He set off along the huts and ships of the Achaeans, holding a great purple cloak in his strong hand, and stood by Odysseus' huge-hulled black ship, which lay in the middle, so that a shout from there could be heard at either end: at the huts of Ajax son of Telamon and at those of Achilles, who had drawn up their balanced ships at the far ends, trusting in their courage and the strength of their hands. He gave a piercing shout, calling to the Danaans:

8.228 "Shame, Argives, vile disgraces, admirable only in looks! What has become of our boasts, when we said we were the best? You made them in Lemnos, you empty braggarts, as you ate plenty of the meat of straight-horned cattle and drank bowls brimming with wine: each of you would stand up in battle against a hundred, two hundred Trojans! Now we aren't a match for one of them, Hector, who will soon burn the ships with blazing fire. Father Zeus, have you ever before blinded any of the mighty kings with such ruin as this, and robbed him of great glory? Yet I swear I never passed by your beautiful altar in my many-oared ship on my ill-fated way here, but on every one I burned the fat and thighs of cattle, longing to sack well-walled

4 Helice and Aegae: towns on the Gulf of Corinth with famous cults of Poseidon.

Troy. 8.242 So, Zeus, at least grant me this wish: let us at least escape and get away, and don't let the Achaeans be beaten down like this by the Trojans." So he spoke, and the father pitied him as he wept, and nodded to him that his army would be saved and not perish. At once he sent an eagle, the surest omen among birds, holding in its talons a fawn, the young of a swift deer. It dropped the fawn beside the beautiful altar of Zeus, where the Achaeans used to sacrifice to Zeus, source of all omens. When they saw that the bird had come from Zeus, they sprang all the harder at the Trojans and remembered the joy of battle.

8.253 Then none of the Danaans, many as they were, could boast that he had driven his swift horses ahead of the son of Tydeus, out across the ditch, and fought face to face. Far ahead of all, Diomedes killed a helmeted Trojan, Agelaus son of Phradmon. Agelaus had turned his horses to flight, and as he wheeled around, Diomedes planted his spear in his back between the shoulders and drove it out through his chest. He toppled from the chariot, and his armor clattered around him. After him came the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus; after them the two Ajaxes, clothed in furious valor; after them Idomeneus and Idomeneus' companion Meriones, a match for Enyalius the man-slayer; after them Eurypylus, the splendid son of Euaemon. Teucer came ninth, stretching his back-bent bow, and took his stand under the shield of Ajax son of Telamon.

8.268 Then Ajax would lift his shield aside, and the warrior would peer around; and when he had shot someone in the crowd with an arrow, that man would fall on the spot and lose his life, while Teucer would go back, like a child to its mother, and duck behind Ajax, and Ajax would hide him with his shining shield. Which of the Trojans did flawless Teucer kill first? Orsilochus first, then Ormenus and Ophelestes, Daetor and Chromius and godlike Lycophontes, Amopaon son of Polyaemon, and Melanippus: all of them, one after another, he brought down to the nourishing earth. Agamemnon, lord of men, was glad at the sight of him destroying the ranks of the Trojans with

his mighty bow, and he went and stood beside him and spoke to him:

8.281 "Teucer, dear heart, son of Telamon, commander of men, keep shooting like that, and you may become a light of hope to the Danaans and to your father Telamon, who reared you when you were small and took you into his own house, illegitimate though you were. Far off as he is, raise him to glory. And I'll tell you this, and it will surely come to pass: if Zeus who bears the aegis and Athena grant me to sack the well-built citadel of Ilium, I'll put a prize of honor in your hands first after my own: a tripod, or two horses with their chariot, or a woman to go up into your bed with you." Then flawless Teucer answered him:

8.293 "Most glorious son of Atreus, why are you urging me on when I'm eager already? I'm not letting up, not as long as I have any strength in me. Ever since we pushed them back toward Ilium I've been lying in wait with my bow and killing men. Eight long-barbed arrows I've let fly already, and every one has lodged in the flesh of young men quick in battle. But this one I can't hit, this mad dog." He spoke, and let fly another arrow from the string straight at Hector, his heart set on hitting him. He missed him, but with the arrow he struck flawless Gorgythion, a fine son of Priam, in the chest. His mother had borne him, a wife brought from Aesyme, lovely Castianeira, like the goddesses in form. As a poppy in a garden droops its head to one side, heavy with its seed and the showers of spring, so his head sank to one side, weighed down by his helmet.

8.309 Teucer let fly another arrow from the string straight at Hector, his heart set on hitting him. But this time too he missed, for Apollo turned it aside. Instead he struck Archeptolemus, Hector's bold charioteer, as he charged into battle, in the chest beside the nipple. He toppled from the chariot, and his swift-footed horses shied back; and there his life and strength were undone. Terrible grief for his charioteer clouded Hector's mind, but grieving though he was for his comrade, he left him lying there and ordered his brother Cebriones, who was close by, to take the horses' reins, and he heard and did not disobey. Hector

himself leapt to the ground from his gleaming chariot with a terrible shout. He grabbed a rock in his hand and went straight for Teucer, his heart urging him to strike him. 8.323 Teucer had just drawn a bitter arrow from his quiver and set it on the string. But as he drew it back beside his shoulder, Hector of the flashing helmet struck him with the jagged stone where the collarbone parts the neck from the chest, the place where a blow is deadliest. There he hit him as Teucer strained to shoot at him, and snapped his bowstring. His hand went numb at the wrist, he dropped to his knees, and the bow fell from his hand. But Ajax did not neglect his fallen brother. He ran and stood over him and covered him with his shield. Then two trusty comrades, Mecisteus son of Echius and godlike Alastor, stooped under him and carried him, groaning heavily, to the hollow ships.

8.335 Once more the Olympian roused fury in the Trojans, and they drove the Achaeans straight back to the deep ditch. Hector went among the foremost, exulting in his strength. As when a hound, chasing a wild boar or a lion on swift feet, snaps at it from behind, at hips and haunches, and watches for it as it wheels, so Hector pressed on the long-haired Achaeans, always killing the hindmost, and they fled. But when in their flight they had crossed the stakes and the ditch, and many had gone down under the hands of the Trojans, they halted by the ships and stood their ground, calling to one another, and each man lifted his hands to all the gods and prayed aloud. And Hector wheeled his fine-maned horses this way and that, with the eyes of the Gorgon or of Ares, bane of mortals.

HERA AND ATHENA TURNED BACK

Hera and Athena set out to help the Achaeans, but Zeus sends Iris to stop them.

8.350 Seeing them, the goddess white-armed Hera pitied them, and at once she spoke winged words to Athena: "Ah, child of Zeus who bears the aegis, are we two no longer going to care about the Danaans as they perish, even at this last hour? They'll

fill out an evil fate and perish under the onrush of one man, Hector son of Priam, who rages past all bearing and has already done great harm." Then the goddess gray-eyed Athena answered her: "How I'd like to see this man lose his fury and his spirit, destroyed at the hands of the Argives in his native land! But my father rages, and his mind is not good. He's cruel, always perverse, a thwarter of my efforts. He doesn't remember at all how many times I saved his son when he was worn down by the labors Eurystheus set him. He would cry out to heaven, and Zeus would send me down from heaven to defend him.[5]

8.366 If I had known this in my shrewd mind when Eurystheus sent him to the house of Hades the gatekeeper, to bring from Erebus the hound of hateful Hades, he would never have escaped the steep streams of the water of Styx. But now Zeus hates me, and he has carried out the wishes of Thetis, who kissed his knees and took his chin in her hand, begging him to honor Achilles, sacker of cities. Well, the day will come when he calls me his dear gray-eyed girl again. But you, now, harness our single-hoofed horses for us, while I go into the house of Zeus who bears the aegis and arm myself for war. Then I'll see whether Priam's son, Hector of the flashing helmet, will be glad when we two appear along the lanes of battle, or whether some Trojan too will glut the dogs and birds with his fat and flesh, fallen by the ships of the Achaeans."

8.381 So she spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not disobey. She went about harnessing the horses with their golden headbands: Hera, the honored goddess, daughter of great Cronus. Meanwhile Athena, daughter of Zeus who bears the aegis, let fall on her father's floor her soft robe, richly worked, which she had made and labored over with her own hands. She put on the tunic of Zeus the cloud-gatherer and armed herself for tearful war. She stepped into the blazing chariot and took up her spear, heavy, huge and stout, with which she beats down the ranks of warriors when she is angry with them, she of the

5 Athena means Heracles, Zeus' son, who was made to perform his labors for Eurystheus, king of Mycenae.

mighty father. Hera quickly touched the horses with the whip, and of their own accord the gates of heaven groaned open, the gates kept by the Seasons, to whom great heaven and Olympus are entrusted, to roll back the thick cloud or to set it in place. Through these they drove the horses on with the goad.

8.397 But when Father Zeus saw them from Ida, he was terribly angry, and he sent golden-winged Iris off with a message: "Go, swift Iris, on your way. Turn them back, and don't let them come face to face with me, for it would go badly if we met in war. For this I'll tell you, and it will surely come to pass: I'll lame their swift horses under the chariot, hurl them out of the car, and smash the chariot, and not in ten circling years will they heal the wounds the thunderbolt deals them. Then the gray-eyed one will know what it means to fight her own father. With Hera I'm not so indignant or so angry, for she has always been in the habit of thwarting whatever I say."

8.409 So he spoke, and storm-footed Iris rushed off with the message. She went from the mountains of Ida to high Olympus, and meeting them at the outer gates of many-folded Olympus, she held them back and gave them the word of Zeus: "Where are you two rushing? Why is the heart in your breasts raging? The son of Cronus won't allow you to help the Argives. For this is what the son of Cronus has threatened, and he will make it good: he'll lame your swift horses under the chariot, hurl you out of the car, and smash the chariot, and not in ten circling years will you heal the wounds the thunderbolt deals you. Then you, gray-eyed one, will know what it means to fight your own father.

8.421 With Hera he isn't so indignant or so angry, for she has always been in the habit of thwarting whatever he says. But you are the most dreadful of all, you shameless dog, if you really dare to raise your huge spear against Zeus." When she had said this, swift-footed Iris went away, and Hera spoke to Athena: "Ah, child of Zeus who bears the aegis, I won't let the two of us fight against Zeus any longer for the sake of mortals. Let one of them die and another live, as chance falls. Let Zeus follow his own

thoughts in his heart and judge between Trojans and Danaans, as is fitting."

8.432 With these words she turned back the single-hoofed horses. The Seasons unyoked the fine-maned horses for them and tethered them at their ambrosial mangers, and leaned the chariot against the gleaming walls of the entrance. The goddesses themselves sat down on golden chairs among the other gods, their hearts sorely troubled. Father Zeus drove his well-wheeled chariot and horses from Ida to Olympus and came to the seats of the gods. For him the glorious Earth-shaker unyoked the horses, set the chariot on its stand, and spread a cloth over it. Wide-seeing Zeus himself sat down on his golden throne, and great Olympus shook beneath his feet. Only Athena and Hera sat apart from Zeus, and they did not speak to him or ask him anything. But he knew it in his mind, and spoke:

8.447 "Why are you so downcast, Athena and Hera? You surely haven't worn yourselves out in the battle where men win glory, destroying the Trojans you've conceived such terrible spite against. Whatever happens, such is my fury and such are my invincible hands that all the gods on Olympus could not turn me back. But trembling seized your shining limbs before you ever saw the war and the grim work of war. For this I'll tell you, and it would surely have come to pass: struck by the thunderbolt, you would never have come back in your chariot to Olympus, where the seat of the immortals is."

8.457 So he spoke, and Athena and Hera muttered under their breath. They sat close together, plotting evil for the Trojans. Athena kept silent and said nothing, sullen toward Father Zeus, though savage anger gripped her. But Hera's breast could not contain her anger, and she spoke out: "Most dread son of Cronus, what a thing to say! We know well enough ourselves that your strength is not feeble. But all the same we grieve for the Danaan spearmen, who will fill out an evil fate and perish. Still, we'll keep out of the war, since you order it. But we'll offer the Argives advice that will help them, so they don't all perish

because of your anger." Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her:

8.470 "At dawn, if you like, ox-eyed queenly Hera, you'll see the mighty son of Cronus destroying even more of the great host of Argive spearmen. For mighty Hector won't stop fighting until the swift-footed son of Peleus is roused beside the ships, on the day when they'll be fighting at the sterns in the direst straits over the dead Patroclus. That is how it is decreed. As for you, I don't care about your anger, not even if you go to the lowest limits of earth and sea, where Iapetus and Cronus sit and have no joy in the rays of Hyperion the Sun or in the winds, and deep Tartarus lies all around them. Not even if you wander all the way there do I care about your sulking, since there is nothing more shameless than you."[6]

THE TROJANS CAMP ON THE PLAIN

Night falls, and Hector's army camps near the Achaean ships around a thousand fires.

8.484 So he spoke, and white-armed Hera made no reply. The bright light of the sun sank into Ocean, drawing black night over the grain-giving earth. For the Trojans the light went down against their will, but for the Achaeans the dark night came welcome, thrice prayed for. Then glorious Hector held an assembly of the Trojans, leading them away from the ships beside the eddying river, to an open space where the ground showed clear of corpses. They stepped down from their chariots to the ground and listened to the speech that Hector, dear to Zeus, delivered. In his hand he held a spear eleven cubits long. Before him gleamed its bronze point, and a golden ring ran round it. Leaning on it, he spoke to the Trojans:

8.497 "Hear me, Trojans, Dardanians and allies! I thought just now that I would destroy the ships and all the Achaeans and return to windy Ilium. But darkness came first, and that more

6 Iapetus and Cronus are Titans, older gods whom Zeus overthrew and imprisoned in Tartarus.

than anything has saved the Argives and their ships on the seashore. So now let's yield to black night and make ready our supper. Unyoke the fine-maned horses from the chariots and throw fodder down beside them. Bring cattle and fat sheep from the city, quickly, and fetch honey-sweet wine and bread from your houses, and gather plenty of wood. Then all night long, until early-born Dawn, we'll burn many fires, and their glare will reach the sky, in case the long-haired Achaeans try to flee even by night over the broad back of the sea. 8.512 They mustn't board their ships at their ease, without a struggle. No, let some of them nurse a wound at home too, hit by an arrow or a sharp spear as they leap onto their ships, so that others too will dread bringing tearful Ares against the horse-taming Trojans. And let heralds, dear to Zeus, announce through the city that boys in their first youth and gray-templed old men are to gather around the city on the god-built towers. Let the women, each in her own hall, burn a great fire. And let a steady watch be kept, so that no ambush slips into the city while the army is away. Let it be so, great-hearted Trojans, as I say. Let the word I have spoken now stand as sound, and at dawn I'll speak again among the horse-taming Trojans. 8.526 I hope, with prayers to Zeus and the other gods, to drive these dogs out of here, these dogs carried here by their dooms, whom the dooms bring on their black ships. But for tonight let's guard ourselves, and early, at daybreak, armed in our gear, let's wake fierce Ares beside the hollow ships. I'll find out whether the son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes, will push me back from the ships to the wall, or whether I'll cut him down with the bronze and carry off his bloody spoils. Tomorrow he'll learn what his prowess is worth, whether he can stand up to my spear as it comes at him. But I think he'll be lying among the foremost, wounded, with many of his comrades around him, when the sun rises tomorrow. If only I were as surely immortal and ageless all my days, and honored as Athena and Apollo are honored, as this coming day brings evil to the Argives!"

8.542 So Hector spoke, and the Trojans roared their approval. They unyoked the sweating horses from under the yoke and

tethered them with straps, each man by his own chariot. They brought cattle and fat sheep from the city, quickly, and fetched honey-sweet wine and bread from their houses, and gathered plenty of wood. [They offered perfect hecatombs to the immortals,] and the winds carried the savor from the plain up into the sky, [sweet savor; but the blessed gods took no share of it,] [nor did they wish to, for holy Ilium was utterly hateful to them,] [and Priam, and the people of Priam of the good ash spear.][7]

8.553 And they, high-hearted, sat all night along the lanes of battle, and many fires burned for them. As when in the sky the stars shine out brilliant around the bright moon, when the air is windless, and all the lookout peaks and high headlands and glens stand clear, and the boundless air breaks open from heaven, and all the stars are seen, and the shepherd rejoices in his heart, so many were the fires the Trojans burned between the ships and the streams of Xanthus, shining out before Ilium. A thousand fires were burning on the plain, and by each sat fifty men in the glow of the blazing fire. And the horses, munching white barley and spelt, stood by the chariots and waited for Dawn on her lovely throne.

7 Lines in square brackets are not in the manuscripts of the poem; they are preserved in a later quotation, and most editors reject them.

Book 9

The embassy
Odysseus, Phoenix and Ajax offer Achilles amends; he refuses.

AGAMEMNON IN DESPAIR

Agamemnon proposes going home; Diomedes refuses, and Agamemnon offers Achilles rich gifts on Nestor's advice.

9.1 So the Trojans kept their watch. But the Achaeans were gripped by a wondrous panic, the companion of chilling fear, and all their best men were stricken with grief past bearing. As when two winds stir up the fish-filled sea, the North Wind and the West Wind, which blow from Thrace and come on suddenly, and at once the dark wave rears up in a crest and flings much seaweed out along the shore, so the spirit in the breasts of the Achaeans was torn. The son of Atreus, his heart stricken with great grief, went about ordering the clear-voiced heralds to summon every man to the assembly by name, but not to shout, and he himself was busy among the foremost. They sat in the assembly, dejected. Then Agamemnon stood up, shedding tears like a spring of dark water that pours its murky stream down a rock too sheer for goats. So, groaning heavily, he spoke words among the Argives:

9.17 "My friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, Zeus son of Cronus has bound me fast in heavy ruin. He is cruel. Once he promised me, and nodded his assent, that I would sack well-walled Ilium and return home. But now he has devised an evil deception, and bids me go back to Argos in disgrace, after I have lost so many men. That, it seems, must be the pleasure of almighty Zeus, who has brought down the heights of many cities

and will bring down more yet, for his power is the greatest. Come, then, let us all do as I say: let us flee with our ships to our dear native land. We will never take Troy of the wide streets now."

9.29 So he spoke, and they all fell hushed and silent. For a long time the sons of the Achaeans sat speechless in their dejection, but at last Diomedes, good at the war cry, spoke among them: "Son of Atreus, it's you I'll fight first, for your folly, as is my right, my lord, in the assembly; so don't be angry. You were the first to reproach my courage among the Danaans, calling me unwarlike and a coward, and all this the Argives know, both young and old. But the son of crooked-counseling Cronus gave you only half: with the scepter he granted you honor above all men, but courage he did not give you, and that is the greatest power of all. Strange man, do you really believe the sons of the Achaeans are as unwarlike and cowardly as you say?

9.42 If your own heart is so set on going home, then go. The road is open to you, and your ships stand close to the sea, the great many that followed you from Mycenae. But the rest of the long-haired Achaeans will stay until we sack Troy. And if they want to go as well, let them flee with their ships to their dear native land. The two of us, Sthenelus and I, will fight on until we reach the end of Ilium, for we came here with a god's help." So he spoke, and all the sons of the Achaeans shouted aloud, admiring the words of horse-taming Diomedes. Then Nestor the horseman rose and spoke among them:

9.53 "Son of Tydeus, in war you are mighty beyond others, and in counsel you are the best of all your age-mates. No one among all the Achaeans will find fault with what you say, or speak against it; but you have not reached the end of the matter. True, you are young; you might even be my son, the youngest of my children. Yet you speak sensibly to the kings of the Argives, for what you said was fitting. But come, let me, who can claim to be older than you, speak out and go through it all. No one will slight my words, not even lord Agamemnon. Clanless, lawless, hearthless is the man who loves the chilling horror of war

among his own people. 9.65 But for now let us give way to the black night and make ready our supper, and let the sentries each take their places along the ditch we dug, outside the wall. That is my charge to the young men. After that, son of Atreus, you take the lead, for you are the most kingly. Give a feast for the elders; that is fitting for you, not unseemly. Your huts are full of wine, which the ships of the Achaeans bring you every day from Thrace over the wide sea. You have all you need to entertain them, and you rule over many. When many have gathered, you will follow whoever gives the best counsel; and all the Achaeans have great need of counsel that is good and shrewd, now that the enemy are burning their many fires close to the ships. Who could take any joy in that? This night will either shatter the army or save it."

9.79 So he spoke, and they listened closely and obeyed. Out went the sentries in their armor, around Thrasymedes son of Nestor, shepherd of the people, around Ascalaphus and Ialmenus, sons of Ares, around Meriones, Aphareus and Deïpyrus, and around the son of Creon, godlike Lycomedes. Seven were the captains of the watch, and with each of them went a hundred young men holding long spears in their hands. They went and sat down midway between the ditch and the wall, and there they kindled a fire, and each made ready his supper. The son of Atreus led the elders of the Achaeans all together to his hut, and set before them a feast to satisfy the heart.

9.91 They put out their hands to the good things lying ready before them. But when they had put from themselves the desire for drink and food, the old man was the first of all to begin weaving a plan for them—Nestor, whose counsel had shown itself the best before as well. With good intent he addressed them and spoke among them: "Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, with you I will end and with you begin, because you are lord of many peoples, and Zeus has put into your hands the scepter and the laws, so that you may take counsel for them. So you above all must speak your word and also listen, and

carry out another man's word too, whenever his heart bids him speak for the good. Whatever he proposes will rest with you.

9.103 But I will say what seems to me best. No one else will think of a better plan than the one I have in mind, as I have had it long ago and have it still, ever since you, sprung from Zeus, went and took the girl Briseis from the hut of angry Achilles. That was not at all what we wanted; I, for my part, strongly urged you against it. But you gave way to your proud heart and dishonored the bravest of men, a man the immortals themselves honored, for you took his prize and keep it. Yet even now let us consider how we may appease him and win him over with gentle gifts and soothing words." Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke to him in turn:

9.115 "Old man, you have told no lie in recounting my blindness. I was blind; I don't deny it myself. A man whom Zeus loves in his heart is worth many troops, as now he has honored this man and beaten down the army of the Achaeans. But since I was blind and gave in to my wretched thoughts, I am willing to make amends and give a boundless ransom. Before you all I will name the glorious gifts: seven tripods untouched by fire, ten talents of gold, twenty gleaming cauldrons, and twelve horses, strong and prize-winning, who have won prizes with their feet. No man would be without wealth, nor lacking in precious gold, who had as many prizes as my single-hoofed horses have won for me. 9.128 I will give seven women skilled in flawless handiwork, women of Lesbos, whom I chose for myself when he himself took well-built Lesbos, and who surpassed all womankind in beauty. These I will give him, and with them will be the one I took from him then, the daughter of Briseus; and I will swear a great oath besides that I never went up into her bed or lay with her, as is the way of human beings, of men and women. All these things will be his at once. And if hereafter the gods grant us to sack the great city of Priam, let him go in and load his ship high with gold and bronze when we Achaeans divide the spoil, and let him choose for himself twenty Trojan women, the most beautiful after Argive Helen. 9.141 And if we reach Achaean Argos, richest of

lands, he could be my son-in-law, and I will honor him equally with Orestes, my late-born son, who is being raised in great abundance. I have three daughters in my well-built hall, Chrysothemis, Laodice and Iphianassa. Of these let him lead whichever he likes to the house of Peleus as his own, without bride-price, and I will give a dowry besides, a very great one, such as no man ever yet gave with his daughter. And I will give him seven well-peopled cities, Cardamyle and Enope and grassy Hire, sacred Pherae and Antheia with its deep meadows, lovely Aepeia and vine-rich Pedasus.[1] 9.153 All lie near the sea, at the edge of sandy Pylos, and in them live men rich in flocks and rich in cattle, who will honor him with gifts as though he were a god, and beneath his scepter will pay him rich dues. All this I would accomplish for him if he leaves off his anger. Let him yield. Hades, after all, is relentless and unyielding, and that is why of all the gods he is the most hateful to mortals. And let him submit to me, inasmuch as I am more kingly, and inasmuch as I can claim to be the elder by birth." Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, answered him: "Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, the gifts you offer lord Achilles can no longer be scorned. Come, then, let us send out chosen men to go as quickly as they can to the hut of Achilles son of Peleus. Come, let those I pick out obey.

9.168 First let Phoenix, dear to Zeus, lead the way, and after him great Ajax and godlike Odysseus; and of the heralds let Odius and Eurybates go with them. Bring water for our hands, and call for holy silence, so that we may pray to Zeus son of Cronus, in the hope that he will take pity." So he spoke, and the words he spoke pleased them all. At once the heralds poured water over their hands, and young men filled the mixing bowls to the brim with drink and served it out to all, first pouring a few drops into each cup. But when they had poured libations and drunk as much as their hearts desired, they set out from the hut of Agamemnon son of Atreus. Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, gave them many instructions, glancing at each in turn and at Odys-

1 Normally a suitor gave gifts to the bride's father as a bride-price; Agamemnon waives this and adds a dowry of his own.

seus most of all, that they should try to win over the peerless son of Peleus.[2]

THE EMBASSY TO ACHILLES

Achilles welcomes Odysseus, Ajax and Phoenix, and Odysseus repeats Agamemnon's offer.

9.182 The two went along the shore of the loud-roaring sea, praying earnestly to the Earth-holder, the Earth-shaker, that they might easily win over the great heart of the grandson of Aeacus. They came to the huts and ships of the Myrmidons, and found him delighting his heart with a clear-toned lyre, beautiful and finely worked, with a silver crossbar on it, which he had taken from the spoils when he destroyed the city of Eëtion. With it he was delighting his heart, and he was singing the glorious deeds of men. Patroclus alone sat facing him in silence, waiting for the grandson of Aeacus to stop singing. The two came forward, godlike Odysseus leading, and stood before him. Achilles sprang up in amazement, lyre and all, leaving the seat where he had been sitting, and Patroclus likewise stood up when he saw the men. Greeting the two of them, swift-footed Achilles spoke:[3]

9.197 "Welcome! You come as friends—surely the need is great—you who, even in my anger, are the dearest of the Achaeans to me." So speaking, godlike Achilles led them in and seated them on chairs spread with purple rugs. And at once he called to Patroclus, who was close by: "Set out a larger mixing bowl, son of Menoetius, mix the wine stronger, and get a cup ready for each man; for these are the dearest of men who are under my roof." So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear companion. Then he set down a great chopping block in the firelight, and laid on it the chine of a sheep and of a fat goat, and the chine of a fattened hog, rich with lard. Automedon held them for him, and godlike Achilles carved.

2 Phoenix was Achilles' old tutor, who came with him to Troy from Phthia.
3 Eëtion was king of Thebe near Troy and the father of Andromache; Achilles sacked his city before the poem begins.

9.210 He cut the meat up well and pierced it on spits, while the son of Menoetius, a man like a god, made the fire blaze high. But when the fire had burned down and the flame had died, he spread out the embers and laid the spits above them, and sprinkled them with holy salt, lifting them from the supports. When he had roasted the meat and heaped it on platters, Patroclus took bread and set it out on the table in fine baskets, and Achilles served the meat. He himself sat facing godlike Odysseus, by the opposite wall, and told Patroclus, his companion, to make offering to the gods; and Patroclus threw the offerings into the fire. They put out their hands to the good things lying ready before them. But when they had put from themselves the desire for drink and food, Ajax nodded to Phoenix. Godlike Odysseus saw it, and filling a cup with wine he drank to Achilles:

9.225 "Your health, Achilles! We have no lack of a fair share in the feast, either in the hut of Agamemnon son of Atreus or here now, for there is plenty here to satisfy the heart. But it is not the pleasures of a lovely feast that concern us. No, you whom Zeus cherishes, we are looking on a disaster all too great, and we are afraid. It is in doubt whether we save the well-benched ships or they are lost, unless you clothe yourself in your might. The high-hearted Trojans and their far-famed allies have pitched camp close to the ships and the wall, lighting many fires throughout their host, and they say they will be held back no longer, but will fall upon the black ships. Zeus son of Cronus flashes lightning for them, showing signs on the right; and Hector, exulting mightily in his strength, rages terribly, trusting in Zeus, and respects neither men nor gods. A fierce frenzy has entered him. 9.240 He is praying for bright Dawn to appear as soon as may be, for he vows he will hack the high ornaments off the ships' sterns and burn the ships themselves with raging fire, and slaughter the Achaeans beside them as they reel in confusion from the smoke. I fear this terribly in my heart: that the gods may fulfill his threats, and it may be our fate to perish in Troy, far from horse-pasturing Argos. Up, then, if you mean, late though it is, to rescue the sons of the Achaeans, worn down as they are by

the onslaught of the Trojans. You yourself will feel the pain of it hereafter, and once harm is done there is no way to find a cure for it. Instead, long before that, think how you will ward off the day of evil from the Danaans. My friend, your father Peleus surely charged you, on the day he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon:

9.254 'My child, Athena and Hera will give you strength, if they wish it; but you must restrain the proud spirit in your breast, for kindliness is better. Keep away from mischief-making strife, so that the Argives will honor you the more, both young and old.' So the old man charged you, but you forget. Yet even now stop, and let go of your heart-grieving anger. Agamemnon is offering you worthy gifts if you leave off your anger. Come, listen to me, and I will list for you all the gifts that Agamemnon promised in his hut: seven tripods untouched by fire, ten talents of gold, twenty gleaming cauldrons, and twelve horses, strong and prize-winning, who have won prizes with their feet.

9.267 No man would be without wealth, nor lacking in precious gold, who had as many prizes as Agamemnon's horses have won with their feet. He will give seven women skilled in flawless handiwork, women of Lesbos, whom he chose for himself when you yourself took well-built Lesbos, and who surpassed all womankind in beauty then. These he will give you, and with them will be the one he took from you then, the daughter of Briseus; and he will swear a great oath besides that he never went up into her bed or lay with her, as is the way, my lord, of men and of women. All these things will be yours at once. And if hereafter the gods grant us to sack the great city of Priam, you may go in and load your ship high with gold and bronze when we Achaeans divide the spoil, and choose for yourself twenty Trojan women, the most beautiful after Argive Helen. 9.283 And if we reach Achaean Argos, richest of lands, you could be his son-in-law, and he will honor you equally with Orestes, his late-born son, who is being raised in great abundance. He has three daughters in his well-built hall, Chrysothemis, Laodice and Iphianassa. Of these you may lead whichever you like to the

house of Peleus as your own, without bride-price, and he will give a dowry besides, a very great one, such as no man ever yet gave with his daughter. And he will give you seven well-peopled cities, Cardamyle and Enope and grassy Hire, sacred Pherae and Antheia with its deep meadows, lovely Aepeia and vine-rich Pedasus. 9.295 All lie near the sea, at the edge of sandy Pylos, and in them live men rich in flocks and rich in cattle, who will honor you with gifts as though you were a god, and beneath your scepter will pay you rich dues. All this he would accomplish for you if you leave off your anger. But if the son of Atreus is too hateful to your heart, he and his gifts alike, at least take pity on all the other Achaeans, worn down throughout the army, who will honor you like a god; for you would surely win very great glory in their eyes. Now you might even kill Hector, since he would come right up close to you in his deadly frenzy, for he says there is no one his equal among the Danaans whom the ships brought here." Then swift-footed Achilles answered him:

ACHILLES REFUSES

Achilles rejects the gifts and says he will sail home, choosing a long life over glory.

9.308 "Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many wiles, I must give you my answer bluntly, just as I think and as it will be carried out, so that you don't all sit beside me coaxing, one from this side and another from that. Hateful to me as the gates of Hades is the man who hides one thing in his heart and says another. So I'll tell you what seems best to me. I don't think Agamemnon son of Atreus will persuade me, or the other Danaans either, since it turns out there was no thanks for fighting the enemy without rest, forever. The man who hangs back gets the same share as the one who fights his hardest. Coward and brave man are held in the same honor. The idle man dies just the same as the one who has done much. 9.321 Nothing is left over for me after all the pain I have suffered at heart, always staking my life in battle. As a bird brings to her unfledged chicks

every morsel she catches, while she herself fares badly, so I have lain through many sleepless nights and spent bloody days in battle, fighting men for the sake of their wives. Twelve cities of men I have sacked with my ships, and eleven, I say, on foot across the fertile land of Troy. From all of them I took a great deal of fine treasure, and all of it I would bring and give to Agamemnon son of Atreus. And he, who stayed behind beside the swift ships, would take it, hand out a little, and keep most. 9.334 Some prizes he gave to the chiefs and the kings, and theirs stay safe with them. But from me alone of the Achaeans he took mine away. He has the wife dear to my heart: let him lie beside her and enjoy her. Why must the Argives fight the Trojans? Why did the son of Atreus gather an army and lead it here? Wasn't it for the sake of lovely-haired Helen? Are the sons of Atreus the only mortal men who love their wives? Any good and sensible man loves his own and cares for her, just as I loved her from my heart, though she was won by my spear. But now that he has taken my prize out of my hands and cheated me, let him not try me. I know him too well. He won't persuade me. No, Odysseus, let him take thought with you and the other kings how to keep the enemy's fire from the ships. 9.348 He has certainly done a great deal of work without me. He has built a wall and dug a ditch along it, wide and great, and planted stakes in it. But even so he can't hold back the strength of man-slaying Hector. As long as I was fighting among the Achaeans, Hector had no wish to push the battle far from the wall. He came only as far as the Scaean gates and the oak tree. There he once waited for me alone, and he barely escaped my charge. But now, since I have no wish to fight with godlike Hector, tomorrow I will make sacrifice to Zeus and all the gods, load my ships well, and drag them down to the sea. Then you will see, if you care to and if it matters to you, my ships sailing at early dawn on the fish-filled Hellespont, with men in them eager at the oars. And if the glorious Earth-shaker grants a good voyage, on the third day I would reach fertile Phthia. 9.364 I have a great many things there that I left behind when I came here to my cost. And from here I will

take more gold, and red bronze, and well-girdled women, and gray iron, all that fell to me by lot. But my prize, the one he gave me, lord Agamemnon son of Atreus took back again in his arrogance. Tell him everything just as I charge you, and tell him openly, so that the other Achaeans may be indignant too, if he still hopes to cheat some other Danaan, wrapped as he always is in shamelessness. Though he would not dare, dog-faced as he is, to look me in the eye. I will not join him in any plan, or in any action. He cheated me and wronged me. He won't trick me with words again; once is enough for him. Let him go to ruin in peace, for Zeus the counselor has taken away his wits. His gifts are hateful to me, and I value him at a hair's worth. 9.379 Not even if he gave me ten times, twenty times as much as he has now, and more besides from somewhere else; not all the wealth that comes into Orchomenus, or into Egyptian Thebes, where the most treasure lies stored in the houses—Thebes with its hundred gates, and through each of them two hundred men drive out with horses and chariots; not even if he gave me as much as there is sand and dust: not even so would Agamemnon win over my heart, until he has paid me back in full for the outrage that pains my heart. And I will not marry a daughter of Agamemnon son of Atreus, not even if she rivaled golden Aphrodite in beauty and matched gray-eyed Athena in handiwork. Even so I won't marry her. Let him choose another of the Achaeans, one who suits him and is more of a king.[4] 9.393 For if the gods keep me safe and I reach home, Peleus himself will surely find me a wife. There are many Achaean women throughout Hellas and Phthia, daughters of chieftains who guard their cities, and whichever of them I want I will make my dear wife. Back there my proud heart has often longed to marry a properly wooed wife, a fitting partner, and enjoy the possessions old Peleus has won. For nothing is worth as much to me as my life—not all the wealth they say Ilium held, that well-peopled city, in the days of peace before the sons of the Achaeans came, nor all that the stone threshold of the archer Phoebus Apollo encloses in rocky

4 Orchomenus in Boeotia and Thebes in Egypt were proverbial for their wealth.

Pytho.[5] 9.406 Cattle and fat sheep can be had by raiding, and tripods and the tawny heads of horses can be won, but a man's life cannot come back again. It can't be raided or seized, once it has passed the barrier of his teeth. My mother, the goddess silver-footed Thetis, tells me that two fates are carrying me toward the end that is death. If I stay here and fight around the Trojans' city, my homecoming is lost, but my glory will never die. But if I go home to my dear native land, my noble glory is lost, but my life will be long, and the end that is death will not come on me quickly. 9.417 And I would advise the rest of you, too, to sail back home, since you will never reach your goal of steep Ilium. Far-seeing Zeus has held his hand over it, and its people have taken heart. But you go and report my message to the chiefs of the Achaeans—that is the privilege of elders—so that they may think up some other, better plan, one that will save their ships and the army of the Achaeans beside the hollow ships, since this one they have devised while I keep apart in my wrath is no use to them. But let Phoenix stay here with us and sleep, so that he can follow me in my ships to our dear native land tomorrow, if he wishes. I won't take him by force."

PHOENIX'S PLEA

Phoenix recalls raising Achilles and tells the story of Meleager to persuade him.

9.430 So he spoke, and they all fell hushed in silence, astonished at his words, for he had refused them very forcefully. At last the old horseman Phoenix spoke among them, bursting into tears, for he greatly feared for the ships of the Achaeans: "If you are really setting your mind on going home, glorious Achilles, and refuse altogether to keep destroying fire from the swift ships, because anger has fallen on your heart, how could I be left here without you, dear child, alone? The old horseman Peleus sent me with you on the day he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon, a child who knew nothing yet of leveling war, or of assemblies,

5 Pytho is the old name of Delphi, Apollo's sanctuary, famous for its riches.

where men win distinction. That is why he sent me along, to teach you all these things, to make you a speaker of words and a doer of deeds.

9.444 So I would not want to be left behind without you, dear child, not even if a god himself promised to scrape away my old age and make me young again, in my prime, as I was when I first left Hellas, land of lovely women, fleeing the quarrel with my father Amyntor son of Ormenus. He was furious with me over his concubine with the lovely hair. He loved her himself and slighted his wife, my mother. And my mother kept clasping my knees and begging me to sleep with the concubine first, so that she would come to hate the old man. I listened to her and did it. My father found out at once and cursed me again and again, and called on the hateful Erinyes that no dear son born of me should ever sit on his knees. And the gods fulfilled his curses, Zeus of the underworld and dread Persephone. Then the heart in my chest could not bear at all to go on living in the halls while my father was angry.[6] 9.464 My kinsmen and cousins all around me pleaded hard with me and kept me there in the halls. They slaughtered many fat sheep and shambling cattle with twisted horns, many hogs rich with fat were stretched out to singe over the flame of Hephaestus, and much wine was drunk from the old man's jars. For nine nights they slept around me, taking turns to keep watch, and the fires never went out, one under the portico of the well-walled courtyard, the other in the porch in front of the doors of my chamber. But when the tenth dark night came upon me, I broke through the tight-fitted doors of the chamber and got out, and leaped the courtyard wall easily, unseen by the watchmen and the slave women. 9.478 Then I fled far away across spacious Hellas and came to fertile Phthia, mother of flocks, to lord Peleus. He welcomed me gladly and loved me as a father loves his son, his only, darling son, heir to great possessions. He made me rich and gave me many people to rule, and I lived on the borders of Phthia as lord of the Dolopi-

6 The Erinyes (Furies) are avenging spirits who punish wrongs within a family, above all wrongs against parents.

ans. And I made you what you are, Achilles, like the gods, loving you from my heart. You would not go to a feast with anyone else, or eat in the halls, until I had set you on my knees, cut up your meat, fed you your fill, and held the wine to your lips. 9.490 Many times you soaked the tunic on my chest, sputtering out wine in your troublesome infancy. So I have suffered much for you and toiled much, knowing that the gods would never grant me a child of my own. Instead I made you my child, Achilles, like the gods, so that someday you might keep shameful destruction away from me. Come, Achilles, master your great spirit. You should not have a pitiless heart. Even the gods themselves can be moved, and theirs is greater excellence, honor and strength. Even them men turn aside with sacrifices and gentle prayers, with libations and the savor of burnt offerings, when they plead with them, whenever someone has overstepped and done wrong. 9.502 For Prayers are daughters of great Zeus, lame and wrinkled and squinting, and they take care to follow along behind Ruin. But Ruin is strong and sound of foot, so she far outruns them all and gets ahead of them over all the earth, harming men, and they come behind and heal the harm. Whoever respects the daughters of Zeus when they come near, they help him greatly and hear him when he prays. But whoever refuses them and stubbornly turns them away, they go to Zeus son of Cronus and pray that Ruin follow that man, so that he may be harmed and pay the price. 9.513 Come, Achilles, you too grant the daughters of Zeus the honor that is their due, the honor that bends the minds of other good men. If the son of Atreus were not offering gifts and naming more to come, but were still fiercely angry, I would not tell you to throw off your wrath and defend the Argives, however badly they need it. But now he is offering many things at once and has promised more later, and he has sent the best men to plead with you, choosing them out of the Achaean army, the ones of all the Argives who are dearest to you. Don't you put their words to shame, or their journey here. Before now, no one could blame you for being angry. 9.524 That is how we have heard it in the glorious tales of men of old,

the warriors, whenever furious anger came upon one of them: they could be won over with gifts and talked round with words. I remember this deed from long ago, not recent at all, how it happened, and I will tell it among you, since you are all my friends. The Curetes and the steadfast Aetolians were fighting around the city of Calydon and slaying one another, the Aetolians defending lovely Calydon, the Curetes eager to sack it in war. For Artemis of the golden throne had sent trouble on them, angry because Oeneus had not offered her the first fruits from the slope of his orchard. The other gods feasted on hecatombs; to her alone, the daughter of great Zeus, he made no sacrifice.[7] 9.537 Either he forgot, or it never occurred to him; but he was badly blinded in his heart. And in her anger the archer goddess, the divine child of Zeus, sent against him a fierce wild boar with white tusks, which did great harm, ravaging Oeneus' orchard. It threw many tall trees headlong to the ground, roots, apple blossoms and all. Meleager son of Oeneus killed it, after gathering huntsmen and hounds from many cities, for it could not have been brought down by a few men, so huge was it, and it had set many on the painful pyre. But the goddess raised a great clamor and battle cry over it, over the boar's head and shaggy hide, between the Curetes and the great-hearted Aetolians. 9.550 Now as long as Meleager, dear to Ares, was fighting, things went badly for the Curetes, and for all their numbers they could not hold their ground outside the wall. But when anger entered Meleager, the anger that swells in the breasts of others too, even those who think wisely, then, furious at heart with his dear mother Althaea, he lay idle beside his wedded wife, beautiful Cleopatra. She was the daughter of Marpessa of the lovely ankles, Euenus' daughter, and of Idas, who was the strongest of men on earth in those days; he even took up his bow against lord Phoebus Apollo for the sake of his lovely-ankled bride. In their halls her father and queenly mother used to call Cleopatra by another name, Alcyone, because her mother, sharing the fate of the mournful

7 Phoenix tells the story of Meleager, son of King Oeneus of Calydon in Aetolia; the Curetes were a neighboring people.

halcyon, had wept when Phoebus Apollo who works from afar snatched her away. 9.565 Beside her Meleager lay, nursing his heart-grieving anger, enraged by his mother's curses. For she, grieving over her brother's killing, prayed earnestly to the gods; again and again she beat the bountiful earth with her hands, calling on Hades and dread Persephone, down on her knees, her bosom wet with tears, to give her son death. And the Erinys who walks in darkness, whose heart is relentless, heard her from Erebus. Soon the roar and din of the enemy rose around the gates as the towers were battered. Then the elders of the Aetolians begged Meleager, and sent the best priests of the gods, to come out and defend them, and they promised a great gift: where the plain of lovely Calydon was richest, there they urged him to choose a beautiful estate of fifty acres, half of it vineyard and half of it open plowland, to be cut from the plain. 9.581 Many times the old horseman Oeneus implored him, standing on the threshold of his high-roofed chamber, shaking the jointed doors, begging his son. Many times his sisters and his queenly mother pleaded with him, but he refused all the more. Many times his companions pleaded, the most loyal and dearest to him of all. But even so they could not win over the heart in his chest, until his chamber was being pelted thick and fast, and the Curetes were climbing the towers and setting fire to the great city. Then at last Meleager's well-girdled wife pleaded with him, weeping, and told him all the sorrows that come to people whose city is taken: they kill the men, fire levels the city, and strangers carry off the children and the deep-girdled women. 9.595 His heart was stirred as he heard of those evil deeds, and he went and put on his gleaming armor. So he kept the evil day from the Aetolians, yielding to his own spirit. But they never paid him those gifts, many and gracious, and he kept off the evil all the same. Don't you think that way in your mind, and may no god turn you that way, my friend. It would be worse to defend the ships once they are burning. No, come while the gifts are offered, and the Achaeans will honor you like a god. But if you enter man-destroying war without the gifts, you won't be held in the same honor, even

if you beat back the fighting." Then swift-footed Achilles answered him:

THE ENVOYS RETURN

Achilles turns away Phoenix and Ajax, and the envoys report his refusal to the Achaeans.

9.607 "Phoenix, old father, cherished by Zeus, I have no need of that honor. I think I am honored by the portion Zeus has given me, and it will keep me beside the beaked ships as long as breath stays in my chest and my knees can move. And I'll tell you something else; take it to heart. Don't trouble my heart with weeping and grieving as a favor to the warrior son of Atreus. You shouldn't love him, or you may become hateful to me, who love you. It's right for you to stand with me and vex the man who vexes me. Be king equally with me, and take half my honor. These men will carry the message. You stay here and sleep in a soft bed, and at the break of dawn we will consider whether to go home or stay."

9.620 He spoke, and with his brows he nodded silently to Patroclus to spread a thick bed for Phoenix, so that the others would soon think of leaving the hut. Then Ajax, godlike son of Telamon, spoke among them: "Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many wiles, let's go. I don't think the purpose of our talk will be accomplished on this trip. We must report his answer to the Danaans as quickly as we can, though it isn't good, for they must be sitting there now waiting for it. But Achilles has made the great-hearted spirit in his chest savage. He is a hard man, and he isn't moved by the friendship of his companions, though we honored him beside the ships above all others—pitiless. Yet a man accepts the blood-price even from the killer of his brother, or for his own son who has died;

9.634 and the killer stays on among his own people after paying a great price, and the other's heart and proud spirit are restrained, once he has received the blood-price. But in you the gods have put a spirit that is relentless and cruel, and all for the

sake of a girl, just one. Now we are offering you seven, by far the finest, and much else besides. So make your spirit gracious, and respect your own roof. We are under it as your guests, sent from the host of the Danaans, and we want, more than anyone, to be the closest and dearest to you of all the Achaeans." Then swift-footed Achilles answered him:

9.644 "Telamonian Ajax, sprung from Zeus, lord of the people, everything you have said seems after my own heart. But my heart swells with anger whenever I remember how the son of Atreus treated me with contempt among the Argives, as if I were some vagrant without honor. So go and report my message. I will not think of bloody war until the son of wise Priam, godlike Hector, reaches the huts and ships of the Myrmidons, killing Argives, and sets the ships ablaze. But around my own hut and black ship, I think, Hector will be held back, however eager for battle he is."

9.656 So he spoke, and each of them took a two-handled cup, poured a libation, and went back along the ships, with Odysseus leading the way. Patroclus ordered his companions and the slave women to spread a thick bed for Phoenix as quickly as they could. They obeyed and spread the bed as he ordered, with fleeces and a rug and the fine fluff of linen. There the old man lay down and waited for the bright dawn. But Achilles slept in the corner of his well-built hut, and beside him lay a woman he had brought from Lesbos, Phorbas' daughter, fair-cheeked Diomede. Patroclus lay down on the other side, and beside him too lay well-girdled Iphis, whom godlike Achilles had given him when he took steep Scyros, the city of Enyeus.

9.669 When they reached the huts of the son of Atreus, the sons of the Achaeans stood up on every side to greet them with golden cups and question them. Agamemnon, lord of men, was the first to ask: "Come, tell me, much-praised Odysseus, great glory of the Achaeans: is he willing to keep the enemy's fire from the ships, or has he refused, and does anger still grip his great-hearted spirit?" Then much-enduring, godlike Odysseus answered him in turn: "Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamem-

non, lord of men, that man won't quench his anger. He is filled with fury even more than before, and he rejects you and your gifts.

9.680 He tells you to work out for yourself, among the Argives, how you can save the ships and the army of the Achaeans. And he himself threatened that at the break of dawn he will drag his well-benched ships, curved at both ends, down to the sea. He said, too, that he would advise the rest of you to sail back home, since you will never reach your goal of steep Ilium. Far-seeing Zeus has held his hand over it, and its people have taken heart. So he spoke. These men who came with me are here to tell it too, Ajax and the two heralds, both men of good sense. But old Phoenix lay down there, as Achilles told him to, so that he can follow him in his ships to his dear native land tomorrow, if he wishes. He won't take him by force."

9.693 So he spoke, and they all fell hushed in silence, astonished at his words, for he had spoken very forcefully. For a long time the sons of the Achaeans sat speechless in their distress. At last Diomedes, good at the war cry, spoke among them: "Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, I wish you had never pleaded with the matchless son of Peleus and offered him countless gifts. He is proud enough as it is, and now you have driven him much deeper into his pride. Still, let's leave him alone, whether he goes or stays. He will fight again whenever the heart in his chest commands him and a god stirs him on.

9.704 Come, let us all do as I say. Now go to sleep, once you have satisfied your hearts with food and wine, for that is strength and valor. But when lovely rosy-fingered Dawn appears, you must quickly marshal the army and the horses in front of the ships, urging them on, and fight among the foremost yourself." So he spoke, and all the kings approved, admiring the words of horse-taming Diomedes. Then they poured libations and went each to his own hut, and there they lay down and took the gift of sleep.

Book 10

The night raid
Odysseus and Diomedes capture the spy Dolon and kill Rhesus and his Thracians.

A SLEEPLESS NIGHT

Agamemnon and Menelaus rouse Nestor and the other leaders and inspect the sentries.

10.1 The other best men of all the Achaeans slept the whole night long beside the ships, overcome by soft sleep. But sweet sleep did not hold Agamemnon son of Atreus, shepherd of the people, as he turned many things over in his mind. As when the husband of lovely-haired Hera flashes his lightning, bringing on a great unspeakable rain, or hail, or snow, when the flakes sprinkle the fields, or somewhere the great mouth of bitter war, so thick and fast did Agamemnon groan in his chest, from deep down in his heart, and his mind trembled within him. Whenever he gazed out over the Trojan plain, he marveled at the many fires burning in front of Ilium, at the sound of pipes and panpipes and the din of men. 10.14 But whenever he looked toward the ships and the army of the Achaeans, he tore many hairs from his head by the roots, holding them up to Zeus on high, and his proud heart groaned aloud. And this seemed to him in his heart the best plan: to go first of all to Nestor son of Neleus, to see whether he might work out with him some flawless scheme that would ward off evil from all the Danaans. He stood up, pulled his tunic on over his chest, bound fine sandals beneath his shining feet, and then flung around himself the red-

brown skin of a great tawny lion, reaching to his feet, and took up a spear.

10.25 In the same way trembling gripped Menelaus, for sleep would not settle on his eyelids either. He feared that something might happen to the Argives, who for his sake had come over the wide water to Troy, intent on bold war. First he covered his broad back with a spotted leopard skin, then lifted a bronze helmet and set it on his head, and took a spear in his strong hand. He went to rouse his brother, who ruled mightily over all the Argives and was honored like a god by the people. He found him putting his fine armor on his shoulders beside the stern of his ship, and his coming was welcome to him. Menelaus, good at the war cry, was the first to speak:

10.37 "Why are you arming like this, brother? Are you going to send one of our comrades to spy on the Trojans? I'm terribly afraid no one will take this task on for you, to go alone and spy on enemy men through the ambrosial night. He'd have to be a very bold-hearted man." Then lord Agamemnon answered him: "You and I both need shrewd counsel, Menelaus, cherished by Zeus—counsel that will defend and save the Argives and the ships, since the mind of Zeus has turned. It seems he has set his heart more on Hector's sacrifices. I've never seen, nor heard anyone tell, of one man devising in a single day as many grim deeds as Hector, dear to Zeus, has done to the sons of the Achaeans—and all on his own, though he's no dear son of a goddess or of a god.

10.51 He has done deeds that I say will weigh on the Argives long and for many days to come, such harm has he devised against the Achaeans. But go now, run quickly along the ships and call Ajax and Idomeneus, while I go to godlike Nestor and urge him to get up, in case he's willing to go to the sacred company of the sentries and give them orders. They would listen to him most of all, for his son commands the sentries, along with Meriones, Idomeneus' companion; it was to them above all that we entrusted the task." Then Menelaus, good at the war cry, answered him: "What exactly are you instructing and ordering

me to do? Shall I stay there with them, waiting until you come, or run back after you once I've given them their orders properly?"

10.64 Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke to him again: "Stay there, so we don't somehow miss each other as we go; there are many paths through the camp. Call out wherever you go and tell them to stay awake, naming each man by his father and his family, giving them all honor. Don't be proud in your heart; let us do the work ourselves. This, it seems, is the heavy hardship Zeus laid on us at our birth." So he spoke, and sent his brother off with clear instructions. He himself went off to Nestor, shepherd of the people. He found him beside his hut and his black ship, on a soft bed; beside him lay his richly worked armor, a shield and two spears and a shining helmet.

10.77 Beside it lay the gleaming belt the old man girded on whenever he armed for man-destroying war and led his people, for he did not give in to grim old age. He raised himself on his elbow, lifted his head, and spoke to the son of Atreus, questioning him: "Who are you, going alone by the ships through the camp in the dark of night, when other mortals are asleep? Are you looking for one of your mules, or one of your comrades? Speak up—don't come at me in silence. What do you need?" Then Agamemnon, lord of men, answered him: "Nestor son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, you'll recognize Agamemnon son of Atreus, whom Zeus has plunged beyond all men into toils without end, as long as breath remains in my chest and my knees still move.

10.91 I'm wandering like this because sweet sleep won't settle on my eyes; the war and the troubles of the Achaeans weigh on me. I'm terribly afraid for the Danaans. My spirit isn't steady, I'm distraught, my heart is leaping out of my chest, and my shining limbs tremble beneath me. But if you mean to do something, since sleep isn't coming to you either, let's go down to the sentries and see whether, worn out with exhaustion and sleepiness, they've dozed off and forgotten their watch completely. Enemy men are camped close by, and we don't know whether

they might be eager to fight even during the night." Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, answered him:

10.103 "Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, Zeus the counselor surely won't fulfill for Hector all the plans he's hoping for now. No, I believe he'll struggle with even more troubles, if Achilles turns his heart from its grievous anger. I'll gladly follow you. And let's rouse others too: the son of Tydeus, famed with the spear, and Odysseus, and swift Ajax, and the valiant son of Phyleus. And I wish someone would go and call these men as well, godlike Ajax and lord Idomeneus; their ships are farthest off, not close at all. But Menelaus, dear and respected as he is, I will reproach, even if you're angry with me, and I won't hide it: he's sleeping, and has left you to toil alone. He should be toiling now among all the best men, begging them; the need that has come on us is no longer bearable."[1]

10.119 Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke to him again: "Old man, at other times I'd even urge you to blame him. He often holds back and isn't willing to toil—not giving way to sluggishness or thoughtlessness, but looking to me and waiting for me to take the lead. But this time he woke well before me and came to me, and I've sent him ahead to summon the very men you're asking about. Let's go; we'll find them in front of the gates among the sentries, since that's where I told them to gather." Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, answered him: "In that case none of the Argives will resent him or disobey him, whenever he urges anyone on and gives orders."

10.131 So he spoke, and pulled his tunic on over his chest, bound fine sandals beneath his shining feet, and pinned around himself a purple cloak, double and wide, thick with woolly nap. He took a valiant spear tipped with sharp bronze and went off along the ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans. Then first of all Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, woke Odysseus from his sleep—Odysseus, equal to Zeus in counsel—by calling out to him. At once the voice reached his mind, and he came out of his hut and spoke to them: "Why are you wandering alone like this by the

1 The son of Phyleus is Meges, leader of the contingent from Dulichium.

ships through the camp in the ambrosial night? What need so great has come upon you?" Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, answered him:

10.144 "Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many wiles, don't be angry; such grief has overpowered the Achaeans. Come with us, so we can rouse another man too, one whom it suits to take counsel, whether to flee or to fight." So he spoke, and resourceful Odysseus went into his hut, put his richly worked shield about his shoulders, and went after them. They came to Diomedes son of Tydeus and found him outside his hut with his armor. Around him his comrades were sleeping, with their shields under their heads; their spears were driven upright into the ground on their butt-spikes, and the bronze flashed far off like the lightning of father Zeus. The hero himself was asleep, with the hide of a field-dwelling ox spread beneath him, and a shining rug stretched out under his head.

10.157 Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, stood beside him and woke him, nudging him with his foot, and spurred him on and scolded him to his face: "Wake up, son of Tydeus! Why are you sleeping the whole night through? Don't you hear that the Trojans are camped on the rise of the plain near the ships, and only a little space still holds them off?" So he spoke, and Diomedes leapt up out of his sleep very quickly and spoke winged words to him: "You're relentless, old man; you never stop working. Aren't there other, younger sons of the Achaeans who could go around everywhere and wake each of the kings? There's no managing you, old man." Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, spoke to him again:

10.169 "Yes, friend, all of this you've said rightly. I do have fine sons, and I have men too, many of them, any of whom could go around and call people. But a very great need has overpowered the Achaeans. Now for all of us it stands on a razor's edge: grim destruction for the Achaeans, or life. Come now, go and rouse swift Ajax and the son of Phyleus—you're younger—if you pity me." So he spoke, and Diomedes flung around his shoulders the skin of a great tawny lion, reaching to his feet, and took up a

spear. He set off, and the hero roused the men from there and brought them.

10.180 When they came among the gathered sentries, they did not find the sentries' leaders asleep; all of them were sitting awake with their weapons. As dogs keep anxious watch over sheep in a fold when they hear a fierce-hearted wild beast coming through the woods over the mountains, and a great uproar of men and dogs goes up against it, and their sleep is lost—so sweet sleep was lost from these men's eyelids as they kept watch through the evil night; for they kept turning toward the plain, whenever they heard the Trojans coming. The old man was glad when he saw them, and encouraged them with his words, and spoke winged words to them:

10.192 "Keep watch just like this now, dear children; don't let sleep take any of you, or we'll become a joy to our enemies." So he spoke, and hurried across the ditch, and with him went the kings of the Argives, all who had been called to the council. Along with them went Meriones and Nestor's splendid son, for the kings themselves had called them to share in the counsel. Once they had crossed the dug ditch, they sat down in an open place, where the ground showed clear of the bodies of the fallen. It was from there that mighty Hector had turned back from destroying the Argives, when night covered everything over. There they sat and spoke to one another, and Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, began the talk among them:

DIOMEDES AND ODYSSEUS VOLUNTEER

Nestor asks for a spy; Diomedes chooses Odysseus, and the two arm and set out.

10.204 "Friends, isn't there a man who would trust his own daring spirit enough to go among the great-hearted Trojans? He might catch some straggler of the enemy, or perhaps hear some talk among the Trojans: what they're planning among themselves—whether they mean to stay out here by the ships, away from the city, or will withdraw to the city again, now that they've beaten

the Achaeans. He could learn all this and come back to us unharmed. Great would be his glory under heaven among all men, and he'll have a fine gift: every one of the best men who command the ships will give him a black ewe with a lamb at her udder. No possession is equal to that, and he'll always have a place at feasts and banquets."

10.218 So he spoke, and all of them fell hushed in silence. Then Diomedes, good at the war cry, spoke among them: "Nestor, my heart and my proud spirit urge me to slip into the camp of the enemy men close by, the Trojans. But if some other man would come along with me, there'd be more comfort and more confidence. When two go together, one sees before the other where the advantage lies; but a man alone, even if he notices, still has a slower mind and slighter cunning."

10.227 So he spoke, and many were willing to follow Diomedes. The two Ajaxes, attendants of Ares, were willing; Meriones was willing, and Nestor's son very much so; the son of Atreus, Menelaus famed for the spear, was willing; and enduring Odysseus was willing to slip into the throng of Trojans, for the spirit in his heart was always daring. Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke among them: "Diomedes son of Tydeus, dear to my heart, you'll choose for yourself whichever comrade you like, the best of those who've come forward, since many are eager. Don't out of deference leave the better man behind and take the worse one with you, giving way to shame and looking to birth—not even if he's more kingly." So he spoke, for he feared for fair-haired Menelaus. Then Diomedes, good at the war cry, spoke among them again:

10.242 "If you really are telling me to choose my comrade myself, how could I forget godlike Odysseus, whose heart and proud spirit are eager beyond all others in every toil, and whom Pallas Athena loves? If he comes with me, we two could make it home even out of a blazing fire, since he knows better than anyone how to use his wits." Then much-enduring godlike Odysseus spoke to him again: "Son of Tydeus, don't praise me too much, or blame me either; you're saying these things among Argives who

know them already. Let's go. The night is passing fast and dawn is near; the stars have moved on, and most of the night has gone by—two of its portions—and a third portion is still left."

10.254 With these words the two of them put on their fearsome armor. Thrasymedes, steadfast in battle, gave the son of Tydeus a two-edged sword—his own had been left by his ship—and a shield; and he set on his head a helmet of bull's hide, without boss or crest, the kind called a skullcap, which protects the heads of vigorous young men. Meriones gave Odysseus a bow and a quiver and a sword, and set on his head a helmet made of hide. Inside, it was stretched tight with many thongs; outside, the white tusks of a white-tusked boar were set thickly on this side and that, well and skillfully, and in the middle a felt lining was fitted. Autolycus had once stolen it out of Eleon from Amyntor son of Ormenus, breaking into his solid house, and he gave it to Amphidamas of Cythera at Scandeia; Amphidamas gave it to Molus as a guest-gift, and Molus gave it to his son Meriones to wear. Now it was set on Odysseus' head and covered it.[2]

10.272 When the two had put on their fearsome armor, they set off, and left all the best men there. Pallas Athena sent them a heron on the right, close to their path; they could not see it with their eyes through the dark night, but they heard it cry. Odysseus rejoiced at the bird and prayed to Athena: "Hear me, child of aegis-bearing Zeus, you who always stand by me in all my toils, and I never move without your knowing. Now love me again, Athena, more than ever, and grant that we come back to the ships with glory, having done a great deed that will weigh on the Trojans." Second, Diomedes, good at the war cry, prayed:

10.284 "Hear me too now, child of Zeus, Atrytone. Go with me as you once went with my father, godlike Tydeus, to Thebes, when he went ahead of the Achaeans as a messenger. He left the bronze-clad Achaeans by the Asopus and carried a gentle message to the Cadmeans there; but on his way back he devised very grim deeds with your help, bright goddess, because you stood

2 Autolycus, a famous thief, was Odysseus' maternal grandfather. Boar's-tusk helmets like this one are known from finds of the Mycenaean age.

by him with a willing heart. So now stand by me willingly and protect me. And I in turn will sacrifice to you a yearling heifer, broad of brow, unbroken, which no man has yet led under the yoke. I will sacrifice her to you, with gold poured around her horns."[3]

DOLON

Hector sends Dolon to spy; Odysseus and Diomedes catch him, question him and kill him.

10.295 So they spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard them. When they had prayed to the daughter of great Zeus, they set off like two lions through the black night, through the slaughter, among the corpses, through armor and black blood. Nor did Hector let the proud Trojans sleep either. He called together all the best of them, all who were leaders and rulers of the Trojans, and when he had called them together he put forward a shrewd plan: "Who will promise me this task and carry it out, for a great gift? His reward will be ample.

10.305 I will give a chariot and two horses with proud arching necks, the best there are at the swift ships of the Achaeans, to the man who dares to go close to the fast-sailing ships, and win glory for himself as well. He must find out whether the swift ships are guarded as before, or whether, already beaten down under our hands, they are planning flight among themselves and have no wish to keep watch through the night, worn out by dreadful weariness." So he spoke, and they all fell hushed and silent. Now there was among the Trojans a man called Dolon, son of Eumedes the godlike herald, rich in gold, rich in bronze. He was ugly to look at, it's true, but he was swift of foot, and he was the only son among five sisters. It was he who now spoke to the Trojans and to Hector:

10.319 "Hector, my heart and my proud spirit urge me to go close to the fast-sailing ships and find out. Come, hold up the

3 Atrytone ("the Unwearying") is a title of Athena. Tydeus took part in the war of the Seven against Thebes, the city of the Cadmeans.

scepter and swear to me that you'll give me the horses and the chariot inlaid with bronze that carry the peerless son of Peleus. I'll be no useless scout for you, and I won't disappoint your hopes. I'll go right through their camp until I reach Agamemnon's ship, where the best of them, I suppose, will be holding council whether to flee or to fight." So he spoke, and Hector took the scepter in his hands and swore to him:

10.329 "Now let Zeus himself be my witness, the loud-thundering husband of Hera: no other man of the Trojans shall ride behind those horses. I declare that you shall glory in them forever." So he spoke, and swore a false oath, and spurred him on. At once Dolon slung his curved bow over his shoulders, put on the pelt of a gray wolf over it, set a helmet of marten-skin on his head, took a sharp javelin, and set off from the camp toward the ships. But he was not going to come back from the ships and bring word to Hector. When he had left the throng of horses and men behind, he went eagerly along the road. But Odysseus, sprung from Zeus, noticed him coming and said to Diomedes:

10.341 "Diomedes, here's a man coming from the camp. I don't know whether he's out to spy on our ships or to strip one of the dead. Let's let him go past us a little way across the plain first. Then we can rush on him and catch him quickly. And if he outruns us, keep pressing him away from his camp toward the ships, rushing at him with your spear, so that he can't somehow escape to the city." So the two of them spoke, and lay down off the road among the dead; and he ran quickly past them, suspecting nothing. But when he was as far off as the stretch of a mule team—for mules are better than oxen at drawing the jointed plow through deep fallow—the two ran after him, and he stopped when he heard the thud of their feet.[4]

10.355 For he hoped in his heart that they were comrades coming from the Trojans to turn him back, sent by Hector. But when they were a spear's throw away or even less, he knew them for enemies and plied his nimble knees to flee; and they quickly

4 The "stretch" of a mule team is the length of a furrow plowed before the team turns, a common Greek measure of distance.

rushed in pursuit. As when two sharp-toothed hounds, skilled in the hunt, press hard on a fawn or a hare through wooded country, never letting up, and it runs ahead of them squealing, so the son of Tydeus and Odysseus, sacker of cities, cut him off from his people and chased him, never letting up. But when he was just about to run in among the guards in his flight toward the ships, Athena put fury into the son of Tydeus, so that none of the bronze-clad Achaeans could boast of striking him first, and Diomedes come second. Rushing at him with his spear, mighty Diomedes said:

10.370 "Stop, or my spear will catch you, and I tell you, you won't escape sheer destruction at my hand for long." He spoke and let fly his spear, but missed the man on purpose: the point of the well-polished spear passed over his right shoulder and stuck in the ground. Dolon stopped, terrified and stammering, his teeth chattering in his mouth, pale with fear. The two came up panting and seized his hands, and he burst into tears and said: "Take me alive, and I'll ransom myself. At home there is bronze and gold and hard-wrought iron, and from these my father would gladly give you ransom beyond counting, if he heard I was alive at the ships of the Achaeans." Then resourceful Odysseus answered him:

10.383 "Take heart, and don't let death weigh on your mind. Come, tell me this and give me an exact account: why are you coming like this from the camp toward the ships alone, through the dark night, when other mortals are asleep? Is it to strip one of the dead? Or did Hector send you out to spy out everything at the hollow ships? Or did your own spirit drive you?" Then Dolon answered him, his limbs trembling beneath him: "With much blind folly Hector led me out of my senses. He promised to give me the single-hoofed horses of the noble son of Peleus and his chariot inlaid with bronze, and he ordered me to go through the swift black night close to the enemy and find out whether the swift ships are guarded as before, or whether, already beaten down under our hands, they are planning flight among them-

selves and have no wish to keep watch through the night, worn out by dreadful weariness."

10.400 Then resourceful Odysseus smiled at him and said: "So your heart was set on great gifts—the horses of the war-minded grandson of Aeacus! But those horses are hard for mortal men to master or to drive, for anyone but Achilles, whom an immortal mother bore. Come, tell me this and give me an exact account: where did you leave Hector, shepherd of the people, when you came here? Where does his war gear lie, and where are his horses? And how are the watches and the sleeping-places of the other Trojans arranged? What are they planning among themselves—do they mean to stay out here by the ships, away from the city, or will they withdraw to the city again, now that they've beaten the Achaeans?"

10.412 Then Dolon son of Eumedes spoke to him in turn: "Very well, I'll tell you all this quite exactly. Hector is holding council with those who are counselors by the tomb of godlike Ilus, away from the din. As for the watches you ask about, warrior, no picked guard protects or watches over the army. At the Trojans' hearth-fires, those who must are awake and urge each other to keep watch. But the allies, called from many lands, are asleep. They leave the watch to the Trojans, since their children and wives are not close by." Then resourceful Odysseus answered him:[5]

10.424 "How do they sleep, then—mixed in with the horse-taming Trojans, or apart? Tell me clearly, so I know." Then Dolon son of Eumedes answered him: "Very well, I'll tell you this too quite exactly. Toward the sea are the Carians and the Paeonians with their curved bows, the Leleges and Caucones and the noble Pelasgians. The ground toward Thymbre fell to the Lycians and the proud Mysians, the Phrygians who fight on horseback and the Maeonians who fight from chariots. But why are you questioning me about all this in detail? If you two are eager to slip into the Trojan host, there are the Thracians, newly arrived,

5 Ilus was Priam's grandfather and the founder of Ilium; his tomb stood out on the plain.

apart from the rest, at the very end; and among them is their king Rhesus, son of Eioneus.

10.436 His horses are the finest and biggest I've ever seen, whiter than snow, and they run like the winds. His chariot is finely worked with gold and silver, and he came with golden armor, huge, a wonder to see; it isn't fit for mortal men to wear, but for the immortal gods. Now take me to the fast-sailing ships, or tie me up with a pitiless bond and leave me here, until you've gone and put me to the test, whether I've told you the truth or not." Then mighty Diomedes, glowering at him, said:

10.447 "Don't put the thought of escape into your heart, Dolon, good as your news is, now that you've fallen into our hands. If we release you now or let you go, you'll come back later to the swift ships of the Achaeans, either to spy or to fight face to face. But if you're beaten down under my hands and lose your life, you'll never be a bane to the Argives again." He spoke, and Dolon was about to touch his chin with his heavy hand and beg him; but Diomedes rushed at him with his sword and struck the middle of his neck, cutting through both tendons, and while he was still speaking his head was mingled with the dust.[6]

THE KILLING OF RHESUS

The two kill the Thracian king Rhesus and twelve of his men and drive his horses back to camp.

10.458 They took the marten-skin helmet from his head, and the wolf-skin, the back-bent bow and the long spear; and godlike Odysseus held them up high in his hand to Athena, giver of spoil, and prayed and said: "Rejoice in these, goddess! For you first of all the immortals on Olympus we will call upon. But guide us again, to the horses and the sleeping-places of the Thracian men." So he spoke, and lifting them high he set them on a tamarisk bush, and beside it he put a mark that stood out clearly, gathering reeds and the luxuriant branches of the tamar-

6 Touching the chin or knees of the person addressed was the ritual gesture of a suppliant begging for mercy.

isk, so that they wouldn't miss the spot when they came back through the swift black night. The two went on through armor and black blood, and soon they came to the company of the Thracian men.

10.471 They were sleeping, worn out with weariness, and their fine armor lay beside them on the ground, neatly arranged in three rows, and beside each man stood his pair of horses. Rhesus slept in the middle, and beside him his swift horses were tied by the reins to the topmost rail of the chariot. Odysseus saw him first and pointed him out to Diomedes: "There, Diomedes, is the man, and there are the horses that Dolon, whom we killed, told us about. Come on now, bring out your mighty strength. You mustn't stand idle with your weapons. Untie the horses—or else you kill the men, and I'll see to the horses."

10.482 So he spoke, and gray-eyed Athena breathed fury into Diomedes, and he began to kill, turning this way and that. An ugly groaning rose from the men as they were struck by the sword, and the earth grew red with blood. As when a lion comes upon flocks with no shepherd, goats or sheep, and springs on them meaning harm, so the son of Tydeus went at the Thracian men until he had killed twelve. And resourceful Odysseus—whomever the son of Tydeus came up to and struck with his sword, Odysseus would seize from behind by the foot and drag away, with this thought in his heart: that the fine-maned horses should pass through easily and not take fright as they stepped over the dead, for they were not used to them yet. But when the son of Tydeus came to the king, he was the thirteenth whom Diomedes robbed of honey-sweet life, as he lay breathing hard; for that night an evil dream stood over his head—the grandson of Oeneus—by Athena's design. 10.498 Meanwhile enduring Odysseus untied the single-hoofed horses, tied them together with the reins and drove them out of the throng, striking them with his bow, since he hadn't thought to take the shining whip from the inlaid chariot; and he whistled as a signal to godlike Diomedes. But Diomedes stayed, pondering what was the most daring thing he could do: whether to take the chariot, where the

inlaid armor lay, and drag it out by the pole or lift it high and carry it off, or to take the lives of still more Thracians. While he was turning this over in his mind, Athena came and stood close by and spoke to godlike Diomedes: "Think of your homecoming now, son of great-hearted Tydeus, back to the hollow ships, or you may get there in flight, if some other god wakes the Trojans too."

10.512 So she spoke, and he knew the voice of the goddess as she spoke, and quickly mounted the horses; Odysseus struck them with his bow, and they flew toward the swift ships of the Achaeans. But Apollo of the silver bow kept no blind watch, and he saw Athena attending the son of Tydeus. In anger at her he went down into the great throng of the Trojans and roused Hippocoon, a counselor of the Thracians, the noble cousin of Rhesus. He sprang up out of sleep, and when he saw the place empty where the swift horses had stood, and the men gasping in the dreadful slaughter, he groaned aloud and called his dear comrade by name. A clamor and an indescribable uproar rose from the Trojans as they came rushing together, and they gazed at the terrible deeds the men had done before going off to the hollow ships.

10.526 When they came to the place where they had killed Hector's scout, Odysseus, dear to Zeus, reined in the swift horses, and the son of Tydeus leapt to the ground, put the bloody spoils into Odysseus' hands, and mounted the horses again. He lashed the horses, and the pair flew willingly toward the hollow ships, for that was where their hearts wanted to go. Nestor was the first to hear the sound, and he said: "Friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, will I be wrong, or am I telling the truth? Still, my heart tells me to speak. The sound of swift-footed horses is beating about my ears. If only it were Odysseus and mighty Diomedes, driving single-hoofed horses from the Trojans so soon! But I am terribly afraid in my heart that the best of the Argives may have come to some harm in the Trojans' uproar."

10.540 He hadn't yet finished speaking when the men themselves arrived. They stepped down to the ground, and the others

greeted them joyfully with handclasps and kindly words. First to question them was Gerenian Nestor, the horseman: "Come, tell me, much-praised Odysseus, great glory of the Achaeans, how did you two get these horses? Did you slip into the throng of the Trojans, or did some god meet you and give them to you? They're terribly like the rays of the sun. I'm always out among the Trojans—I don't think I hang back by the ships, old warrior though I am—but never yet have I seen or noticed horses like these. No, I think some god met you and gave them to you; for Zeus the cloud-gatherer loves you both, and so does the daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, gray-eyed Athena."

10.554 Then resourceful Odysseus answered him: "Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, a god, if he wished, could easily give us horses even better than these, since the gods are far stronger than we are. But these horses you ask about, old man, are newly come from Thrace. Their master was killed by brave Diomedes, and beside him twelve of his comrades, all of them the best. The thirteenth we took was a scout near the ships, one whom Hector and the other noble Trojans had sent out to spy on our army." So saying, he drove the single-hoofed horses across the ditch, exulting, and the other Achaeans went along with him rejoicing.

10.566 When they came to the well-built hut of the son of Tydeus, they tied the horses with well-cut reins at the horses' manger, where Diomedes' swift-footed horses stood eating honey-sweet wheat. In the stern of his ship Odysseus put Dolon's bloody spoils, until they could prepare a sacred offering to Athena. Then the two of them waded into the sea and washed the heavy sweat from their shins and necks and thighs. And when the sea-wave had washed the heavy sweat from their skin and their hearts were refreshed, they stepped into polished bathtubs and bathed. When they had bathed and anointed themselves richly with oil, they sat down to their meal, and drawing honey-sweet wine from the full mixing bowl, they poured libations to Athena.

Book 11

Agamemnon's day
Agamemnon, Diomedes and Odysseus are wounded; Nestor urges Patroclus to act.

AGAMEMNON'S DAY

Agamemnon arms and routs the Trojans, killing many, until he is wounded and leaves the field.

11.1 Dawn rose from her bed beside lordly Tithonus, to bring light to immortals and to mortals. And Zeus sent Strife down to the swift ships of the Achaeans, cruel Strife, holding in her hands the portent of war. She stood on Odysseus' huge-hulled black ship, which lay in the middle, so that a shout from there could be heard at either end: at the huts of Ajax son of Telamon and at those of Achilles, who had drawn up their balanced ships at the far ends, trusting in their courage and the strength of their hands. There the goddess stood and let out a great and terrible cry, shrill and high, and put great strength into the heart of each of the Achaeans, to fight and do battle without ceasing. And at once war became sweeter to them than going home in the hollow ships to their own native land.[1]

11.15 The son of Atreus shouted and ordered the Argives to arm themselves, and he himself put on the gleaming bronze. First he put the greaves around his shins, fine ones, fitted with silver ankle-pieces. Next he put on the corslet around his chest, which Cinyras had once given him as a guest-gift. For the great report had reached him on Cyprus that the Achaeans were about to sail

1 Tithonus, a Trojan prince, was the mortal husband of the goddess Dawn.

off to Troy in their ships, and so he gave it to him to please the king. On it were ten bands of dark blue enamel, twelve of gold and twenty of tin. Dark blue serpents stretched up toward the neck, three on either side, like the rainbows that the son of Cronus fixes in the clouds, a portent for mortal men.[2] 11.29 Around his shoulders he slung his sword. Gold studs gleamed on it, and the scabbard around it was silver, fitted with golden straps. Then he took up his fierce shield, richly worked, that covered a man all round, a fine one. Ten circles of bronze ran around it, and on it were twenty bosses of white tin, and in the middle one of dark blue enamel. On it, like a crown, was set the Gorgon, grim-faced, glaring terribly, and around her Terror and Rout. From the shield hung a silver baldric, and on it coiled a dark blue serpent with three heads, turned this way and that, growing from a single neck. On his head he set a helmet with two ridges and four bosses and a horsehair crest, and the plume nodded terribly above. 11.43 He took two valiant spears, sharp and tipped with bronze, and the bronze flashed from them far up into the sky. And Athena and Hera thundered in answer, honoring the king of Mycenae rich in gold. Then each man ordered his charioteer to hold the horses there at the ditch in good order, while they themselves, on foot and armed in their gear, rushed forward, and an unquenchable clamor rose in the early morning. They were drawn up at the ditch well ahead of the charioteers, and the charioteers followed a little behind. And the son of Cronus stirred up an evil turmoil among them, and from on high, out of the upper air, he sent down dewdrops wet with blood, because he meant to hurl many mighty heads down to Hades.

11.56 The Trojans, on the other side, on the rise of the plain, were gathered around great Hector and excellent Polydamas and Aeneas, whom the Trojans honored in the land like a god, and the three sons of Antenor, Polybus and godlike Agenor and young Acamas, who was like the immortals. Hector carried his shield, balanced on every side, among the foremost. As a baleful

2 Cinyras was a legendary king of Cyprus.

star appears out of the clouds, blazing bright, and then sinks back into the shadowy clouds, so Hector would appear now among the foremost and now among the hindmost, giving orders; and all of him shone with bronze like the lightning of father Zeus who bears the aegis.

11.67 And they, like reapers who face each other and drive their swaths across a rich man's field of wheat or barley, while the handfuls fall thick and fast—so the Trojans and Achaeans leapt at each other and cut each other down, and neither side gave a thought to ruinous flight. The battle held their heads level, and they raged like wolves. And Strife, bringer of much grief, rejoiced to see it, for she alone of the gods was there among the fighters. The other gods were not with them, but sat at ease in their own halls, where each had a fine house built in the folds of Olympus. All of them blamed the son of Cronus of the dark clouds, because he wanted to grant glory to the Trojans. But the father paid them no heed. He had turned aside and sat apart from the others, exulting in his glory, looking out on the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Achaeans, on the flash of bronze, on men killing and men being killed.

11.84 As long as it was morning and the holy day was growing, the missiles of both sides struck home and men fell. But at the hour when a woodcutter makes ready his meal in the mountain glens, when his arms have had their fill of felling tall trees, and weariness has come over his spirit, and desire for sweet food takes hold of his heart—at that hour the Danaans by their prowess broke the battalions, calling to their comrades along the ranks. Agamemnon leapt in first and killed Bianor, shepherd of the people, and then his comrade Oïleus, driver of horses. Oïleus had leapt down from his chariot and stood facing him, and as he came straight on in his fury Agamemnon stabbed him in the forehead with his sharp spear. The helmet's rim, heavy with bronze, did not stop the spear, but it went through it and through the bone, and the brain inside was all spattered; and he cut him down for all his fury. 11.99 These two Agamemnon, lord of men, left lying there, their chests gleaming, since he had

stripped off their tunics. Then he went on to kill Isus and Antiphus, two sons of Priam, one born out of wedlock and the other legitimate, both in one chariot. The illegitimate one was driving, and famous Antiphus stood beside him. These two Achilles had once bound with pliant willow shoots on the spurs of Ida, having caught them tending sheep, and had released them for ransom. Now the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, struck the one with his spear on the chest above the nipple, and hit Antiphus beside the ear with his sword and threw him from the chariot. 11.110 In haste he stripped the fine armor from the two, recognizing them, for he had seen them before beside the swift ships, when swift-footed Achilles brought them from Ida. As a lion easily crushes the young fawns of a swift deer, seizing them in his strong teeth when he comes to their lair, and takes their tender life; and the mother, even if she happens to be very near, cannot help them, for a dreadful trembling comes over her, and quickly she darts away through the thick brush and the woods, hurrying and sweating before the onrush of the mighty beast—so none of the Trojans could save these two from destruction, for they themselves were fleeing before the Argives.

11.122 Next came Pisander and Hippolochus, steadfast in battle, sons of war-minded Antimachus, the man who more than anyone, having taken gold from Alexander, splendid gifts, would not allow Helen to be given back to fair-haired Menelaus. It was his two sons that lord Agamemnon caught, both in one chariot, driving the swift horses together; for the shining reins had slipped from their hands, and they were thrown into confusion. And the son of Atreus rushed at them like a lion. But they begged him on their knees from the chariot: "Take us alive, son of Atreus, and accept a worthy ransom. Many treasures lie stored in the house of Antimachus, bronze and gold and iron wrought with toil. From these our father would gladly give you a boundless ransom, if he heard that we were alive by the ships of the Achaeans."

11.136 So the two of them, weeping, addressed the king with gentle words; but the voice they heard was far from gentle: "If

you really are the sons of war-minded Antimachus, who once in the Trojans' assembly urged that Menelaus, when he came as an envoy with godlike Odysseus, be killed on the spot and not let go back to the Achaeans, now you will pay for your father's shameful outrage." He spoke, and thrust Pisander from the chariot to the ground, striking him in the chest with his spear, and he crashed on his back on the earth. Hippolochus leapt down, and him he killed on the ground, slicing off his arms with his sword and lopping off his head, and he sent it rolling through the throng like a log. He left them there, and where the most battalions were in turmoil, there he rushed in, and with him the other well-greaved Achaeans.

11.150 Foot soldiers killed foot soldiers who fled under compulsion, and charioteers killed charioteers, and beneath them the dust rose from the plain, raised by the thundering hooves of the horses, as they slaughtered with the bronze. And lord Agamemnon followed, killing all the while, urging on the Argives. As when destructive fire falls on a dense, uncut wood, and the whirling wind carries it everywhere, and the thickets fall uprooted, overwhelmed by the onrush of the fire—so under Agamemnon son of Atreus fell the heads of the fleeing Trojans. Many horses with arching necks rattled empty chariots along the lanes of battle, longing for their excellent charioteers. But they lay on the ground, far dearer to the vultures than to their wives.

11.163 But Zeus drew Hector out of range of the missiles and out of the dust, out of the slaughter of men, out of the blood and the turmoil; and the son of Atreus followed, furiously urging on the Danaans. The Trojans went rushing past the tomb of ancient Ilus, son of Dardanus, across the middle of the plain, past the wild fig tree, straining to reach the city; and the son of Atreus kept following, shouting, his invincible hands spattered with gore. But when they reached the Scaean gates and the oak tree, there at last they halted and waited for one another. 11.172 But others were still fleeing in panic across the middle of the plain, like cows that a lion has scattered, all of them, coming on them in

the dead of night; and to one of them sheer destruction appears. First he seizes her neck in his strong teeth and breaks it, and then he gulps down the blood and all the innards—so lord Agamemnon son of Atreus pursued them, always killing the hindmost, and they fled. Many fell from their chariots, face down or on their backs, at the hands of the son of Atreus, for he raged out in front with his spear beyond all others. But when he was just about to reach the city and its steep wall, then the father of men and gods came down from heaven and sat on the peaks of Ida with its many springs, holding the lightning bolt in his hands. And he sent Iris of the golden wings to carry a message:

11.186 "Go on your way, swift Iris, and tell Hector this message. As long as he sees Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, raging among the front-fighters, cutting down the ranks of men, let him hold back, and order the rest of the army to fight the enemy in the fierce battle. But when that man, struck by a spear or hit by an arrow, leaps into his chariot, then I will hand Hector the strength to kill, until he reaches the well-benched ships and the sun sets and sacred darkness comes on." So he spoke, and wind-footed swift Iris did not disobey, but went down from the mountains of Ida to holy Ilium. She found the son of war-minded Priam, godlike Hector, standing among the horses and the well-jointed chariots; and standing near, swift-footed Iris spoke to him:

11.200 "Hector, son of Priam, equal to Zeus in counsel, Zeus the father has sent me to tell you this. As long as you see Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, raging among the front-fighters, cutting down the ranks of men, give ground from the battle, and order the rest of the army to fight the enemy in the fierce battle. But when that man, struck by a spear or hit by an arrow, leaps into his chariot, then Zeus will hand you the strength to kill, until you reach the well-benched ships and the sun sets and sacred darkness comes on."

11.210 When she had spoken so, swift-footed Iris went away, and Hector leapt from his chariot to the ground in his armor. Bran-

dishing his sharp spears he went everywhere through the army, urging them to fight, and roused up dreadful battle. They wheeled around and stood facing the Achaeans, and the Argives on the other side strengthened their battalions. The battle was set in order and they stood face to face; and Agamemnon leapt in first, wanting to fight far in front of everyone. Tell me now, Muses who have your homes on Olympus, who was the first to come against Agamemnon, whether of the Trojans themselves or of their famous allies.

11.221 It was Iphidamas son of Antenor, brave and tall, who was raised in fertile Thrace, mother of flocks. Cisses raised him in his house when he was small, his mother's father, who fathered fair-cheeked Theano. And when he reached the measure of glorious youth, Cisses kept him there and gave him his own daughter. Newly married, he left the bridal chamber and came after the news of the Achaeans, with twelve curved ships that followed him. Those balanced ships he left at Percote, and he himself came to Ilium on foot. He it was who now came against Agamemnon son of Atreus. When they had come close, advancing on each other, the son of Atreus missed, and his spear turned aside past him; but Iphidamas stabbed him at the belt below the corslet, and leaned on the spear himself, trusting in his heavy hand. Yet he did not pierce the gleaming war-belt: long before that, the point struck the silver and bent like lead.[3]

11.238 Wide-ruling Agamemnon grasped the spear in his hand and dragged it toward himself, furious as a lion, and wrenched it out of his grip; then he struck him on the neck with his sword and loosened his limbs. So he fell there and slept the sleep of bronze, poor man, far from the wife he had courted, helping his townsmen—far from his wedded wife, from whom he had seen no joy, though he had given much for her. First he gave a hundred cattle, and then promised a thousand goats and sheep together, from the countless flocks that grazed for him. Then

3 Theano, wife of Antenor, was Iphidamas' mother, so the daughter Cisses gave him was his mother's sister.

Agamemnon son of Atreus stripped him, and went off through the throng of the Achaeans carrying the fine armor.

11.248 When Coön saw him, Coön, conspicuous among men, Antenor's eldest son, strong grief clouded his eyes for his fallen brother. He took his stand off to one side with his spear, unseen by godlike Agamemnon, and stabbed him in the middle of the arm below the elbow, and the point of the shining spear went clean through. Then Agamemnon, lord of men, shuddered; but even so he did not leave off from battle and war, but sprang at Coön, holding his wind-nurtured spear. Coön was eagerly dragging Iphidamas, his brother by the same father, by the foot, and calling out to all the best men; and as he dragged him through the throng, Agamemnon stabbed him beneath the bossed shield with his bronze-tipped spear and loosened his limbs, and standing over him he cut off his head across the body of Iphidamas. There the sons of Antenor, fulfilling their fate at the hands of the son of Atreus, the king, went down into the house of Hades.

11.264 But he went ranging through the ranks of the other men with spear and sword and great stones, as long as the blood still welled up warm from the wound. But when the wound dried and the blood stopped, sharp pains entered the strength of the son of Atreus. As when the sharp arrow of labor grips a woman in childbirth, a piercing arrow sent by the Eileithyiae, who bring on the pangs of birth, daughters of Hera, who have bitter pains in their keeping—so sharp pains entered the strength of the son of Atreus. He leapt into his chariot and ordered his charioteer to drive to the hollow ships, for he was distressed at heart. And he shouted piercingly, calling out to the Danaans:

11.276 "Friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, now it is you who must ward off the cruel battle from the seafaring ships, since Zeus the counselor has not allowed me to fight the Trojans all day long." So he spoke, and the charioteer lashed the fine-maned horses toward the hollow ships, and they flew on, not unwillingly. Their chests were flecked with foam and their bellies spattered with dust as they carried the wounded king away from the battle. When Hector saw Agamemnon going off, he

called to the Trojans and Lycians with a far-reaching shout: "Trojans and Lycians and Dardanians who fight hand to hand, be men, my friends, and remember your furious valor. The best man of them is gone, and Zeus son of Cronus has given me a great triumph. Come, drive your single-hoofed horses straight at the mighty Danaans, so that you may win a still greater triumph."

11.291 So he spoke, and stirred the fury and spirit of every man. As when a huntsman somewhere sets his white-toothed hounds on a wild boar or a lion, so Hector son of Priam, the equal of Ares the bane of mortals, set the great-hearted Trojans on the Achaeans. He himself strode among the foremost, his heart high with pride, and fell on the fighting like a storm blowing hard from above, which leaps down and churns up the violet-dark sea. Then whom did Hector son of Priam kill first, and whom last, when Zeus gave him glory? Asaeus first, and Autonous and Opites, and Dolops son of Clytius, and Opheltius and Agelaus, and Aesymnus and Orus and Hipponous, staunch in battle.

DIOMEDES AND ODYSSEUS WOUNDED

Paris wounds Diomedes, and Odysseus fights alone until Menelaus and Ajax rescue him.

11.304 These were the leaders of the Danaans he cut down, and after them the common mass. As when the West Wind batters the clouds of the clearing South Wind, striking them with a deep squall, and many a swollen wave rolls on, and the spray is flung high under the blast of the wandering wind, so thick and fast were the heads of the people brought down beneath Hector. Then there would have been havoc and deeds past mending, and the Achaeans would have fled and fallen among their ships, had not Odysseus called to Diomedes son of Tydeus: "Son of Tydeus, what's happened to us, that we've forgotten our furious valor? Come here, my friend, stand by me. It will be a disgrace for sure if Hector of the flashing helmet takes the ships."

11.316 Then mighty Diomedes answered him: "I'll stay, of course, and I'll hold out. But our pleasure won't last long, since Zeus the cloud-gatherer wants to give the mastery to the Trojans rather than to us." He spoke, and thrust Thymbraeus from his horses to the ground, hitting him with his spear in the left breast; and Odysseus struck Molion, that lord's godlike attendant. These they left lying, since they had put an end to their fighting, and the two went on through the throng making havoc, as when two boars, proud of heart, fall upon the hunting hounds; so they turned back and cut down the Trojans; and the Achaeans, fleeing from godlike Hector, were glad to catch their breath.

11.328 Then they took a chariot and two men, the best of their people, the two sons of Merops of Percote, who beyond all men knew the art of prophecy and would not let his sons go into the war that destroys men. But they would not listen to him at all, for the doom of black death was leading them on. These two Diomedes son of Tydeus, famed for his spear, robbed of spirit and life, and took their glorious armor; and Odysseus killed Hippodamus and Hypeirochus. Then the son of Cronus, looking down from Ida, drew the battle taut and even between them, and they went on killing one another. The son of Tydeus wounded the warrior Agastrophus son of Paeon in the hip with his spear. His horses were not near enough for him to escape; he had blundered badly in his heart.

11.341 For his attendant was holding them off at a distance, while he rushed on foot through the front-fighters until he lost his dear life. But Hector was quick to see them across the ranks, and charged at them shouting, and with him came the battalions of the Trojans. At the sight of him Diomedes, good at the war cry, shuddered, and at once spoke to Odysseus, who was near: "Here it comes rolling down on us, this disaster—mighty Hector. Come on, let's stand our ground and hold him off." He spoke, and poising his long-shadowed spear he hurled it, and hit, not missing, for he aimed at the head, on the top of the helmet. But bronze glanced off bronze and never reached his fair

skin, for the helmet stopped it, three-layered, with its socket for the crest, which Phoebus Apollo had given him.

11.354 Hector ran back swiftly a long way and merged with the throng, and there he stopped, dropping to his knee, and propped himself on the ground with his heavy hand; and black night covered his eyes. But while the son of Tydeus went after the cast of his spear, far through the front-fighters, where it had plunged into the earth, Hector meanwhile came to his senses, and springing back into his chariot he drove off into the mass of men and escaped black doom. Then mighty Diomedes, rushing at him with his spear, said: "So once again you've escaped death, you dog! Disaster came close to you, all right; but now once again Phoebus Apollo has saved you—the god you must pray to whenever you go into the thud of spears. I'll finish you off yet when I meet you later, if some god is on my side too. For now I'll go after the others, whoever I can catch."

11.368 He spoke, and set about stripping the son of Paeon, famed for his spear. But Alexander, husband of lovely-haired Helen, aimed his bow at the son of Tydeus, shepherd of the people, leaning against a pillar on the man-made mound of Ilus son of Dardanus, an elder of the people in days gone by. Diomedes was taking the gleaming corslet from the chest of mighty Agastrophus, and the shield from his shoulders, and his heavy helmet; and Alexander drew back the grip of his bow and shot, and the shaft did not fly from his hand in vain: it struck the flat of his right foot, and the arrow went straight through and stuck fast in the ground. Then, laughing with delight, Alexander leapt out of his hiding place and spoke in triumph:

11.380 "You're hit! My shot didn't fly in vain. How I wish I'd hit you low in the flank and taken your life! Then the Trojans too would have had a respite from their misery—they who shudder at you as bleating goats shudder at a lion." Then mighty Diomedes, unafraid, said to him: "Archer, foul-mouthed, proud of your bow, you ogler of girls—if you ever tried me face to face, in armor, your bow and your showers of arrows wouldn't do you any good. As it is, you've scratched the flat of my foot, and you

boast for nothing. I don't care, any more than if a woman had hit me or a silly child. Blunt is the shaft of a worthless coward.

11.391 It's different with mine: even if it only grazes a man, it proves sharp, and quickly lays him lifeless. Then his wife's cheeks are torn on both sides, and his children are orphans, and he rots there, reddening the earth with his blood, with more birds than women around him." So he spoke; and Odysseus, famed for his spear, came up close and stood in front of him, and Diomedes, sitting down behind him, drew the swift arrow out of his foot, and a bitter pain shot through his flesh. He sprang into his chariot and ordered his charioteer to drive to the hollow ships, for he was sick at heart.

11.401 Odysseus, famed for his spear, was left alone, and not one of the Argives stayed beside him, since panic had seized them all. Deeply troubled, he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit: "Ah me, what will become of me? It's a great evil if I run, afraid of their numbers; but it's worse if I'm caught alone—and the son of Cronus has put the rest of the Danaans to flight. But why does my heart argue these things with me? I know that it's cowards who leave the fighting, while whoever means to be the best in battle must stand his ground hard, whether he's hit or hits another."

11.411 While he was turning this over in his mind and in his spirit, the ranks of shield-bearing Trojans came on and hemmed him in their midst—setting a bane among themselves. As when hounds and lusty young men rush around a boar, and he comes out of a deep thicket, whetting his white tusk in his curving jaws, and they dart in around him, and the gnashing of tusks rises from beneath, yet they stand up to him at once, terrible though he is, so then the Trojans rushed around Odysseus, dear to Zeus. First he leapt at blameless Deiopites and wounded him from above in the shoulder with his sharp spear, and then he killed Thoon and Ennomus. 11.423 Next, as Chersidamas leapt down from his chariot, he stabbed him with his spear in the navel beneath his bossed shield; and he fell in the dust and clutched the earth in his palm. These he left, and wounded with

his spear Charops son of Hippasus, full brother of wealthy Socus. Socus, a godlike man, came to defend him, and stood very close, and spoke a word to him: "Odysseus, much-praised, never sated with tricks and toil, today either you'll boast over both sons of Hippasus, for killing two such men and stripping their armor, or struck by my spear you'll lose your life."

11.434 So saying, he struck him on his shield, balanced on every side. Through the shining shield went the heavy spear, and through the intricately worked corslet it forced its way, and it tore the skin clean off his ribs; but Pallas Athena did not let it reach the man's vitals. Odysseus knew it had not struck him fatally, and drawing back he said to Socus: "Ah, poor wretch, sheer destruction is overtaking you now. Yes, you've stopped me from fighting the Trojans; but I tell you that slaughter and black doom will be yours here this very day, and beaten down by my spear you'll give glory to me, and your spirit to Hades of the famous horses."

11.446 He spoke, and Socus had turned and was starting to run; and as he turned, Odysseus fixed the spear in his back between the shoulders and drove it out through his chest. He fell with a thud, and godlike Odysseus boasted over him: "Socus, son of battle-minded, horse-taming Hippasus, death's end has caught you first, and you haven't escaped it. Poor wretch, your father and your queenly mother won't close your eyes in death; no, the flesh-eating birds will tear at you, beating their wings thick about you. But if I die, the godlike Achaeans will give me burial." So saying, he pulled the heavy spear of battle-minded Socus out of his flesh and out of his bossed shield; and as it was drawn out his blood spurted up, and his spirit was troubled.

11.459 When the great-hearted Trojans saw Odysseus' blood, they called to one another through the throng and all came at him together. He gave ground backward and shouted for his comrades. Three times he shouted, as loud as a man's head could hold, and three times Menelaus, dear to Ares, heard him crying out. At once he spoke to Ajax, who was near: "Ajax, sprung from Zeus, son of Telamon, lord of the people, the cry of

Odysseus of the enduring heart has reached me, as if the Trojans had cut him off alone in the fierce fighting and were overpowering him. Come, let's go through the throng; it's better to defend him. I'm afraid something may happen to him, left alone among the Trojans, brave as he is, and the Danaans will miss him sorely." So saying, he led the way, and the other followed, a godlike man.

11.473 Then they found Odysseus, dear to Zeus; and around him the Trojans pressed like tawny jackals in the mountains around a wounded horned stag that a man has shot with an arrow from his bowstring. The stag has escaped him by running, as long as its blood is warm and its knees can move; but when the swift arrow at last overpowers it, the flesh-eating jackals tear it apart in the mountains in a shady glen; then some god brings a ravaging lion, and the jackals scatter in terror, and he devours it. So then the Trojans, many and valiant, pressed around battle-minded Odysseus of subtle counsel; but the hero, darting out with his spear, kept off the pitiless day. Then Ajax came near, carrying his shield like a tower, and stood beside him; and the Trojans scattered in terror, one this way, one that. Then warlike Menelaus led Odysseus out of the throng, holding him by the hand, until his attendant drove the horses up close.

AJAX HOLDS THE LINE

Machaon is wounded, and Ajax gives ground slowly while Eurypylus comes to his aid and is hit.

11.489 Ajax leapt upon the Trojans and killed Doryclus, an illegitimate son of Priam; then he wounded Pandocus, wounded Lysander and Pyrasus and Pylartes. As when a river in flood comes down onto the plain, a torrent from the mountains swollen by the rain of Zeus, and carries along many dry oaks and many pines, and casts a mass of debris into the sea, so then glorious Ajax swept over the plain, driving them in rout, cutting down horses and men. Hector had not yet heard of it, for he was fighting on the left of the whole battle, by the banks of the river

Scamander, where most of all men's heads were falling and an unquenchable clamor had risen around great Nestor and warlike Idomeneus. 11.502 Hector was in the thick of them, doing grim work with spear and horsemanship, and he was laying waste the battalions of young men. Even so the godlike Achaeans would not yet have given way from their path, had not Alexander, husband of lovely-haired Helen, stopped Machaon, shepherd of the people, in the midst of his prowess, hitting him in the right shoulder with a three-barbed arrow. The Achaeans, breathing fury, were terribly afraid for him, that the tide of battle might turn and the enemy seize him. At once Idomeneus spoke to godlike Nestor: "Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, come, get up into your chariot, and let Machaon mount beside you, and drive your single-hoofed horses to the ships as fast as you can. A healer is a man worth many others, for cutting out arrows and spreading soothing remedies on wounds."[4]

11.516 So he spoke, and Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, did not disobey. At once he mounted his chariot, and beside him mounted Machaon, son of Asclepius the blameless healer; and he lashed the horses, and the pair flew not unwillingly toward the hollow ships, for there their hearts were set on going. Then Cebriones, standing beside Hector in the chariot, saw the Trojans being thrown into confusion, and spoke a word to him: "Hector, here we two are engaging the Danaans at the far edge of this harsh-sounding war, while the other Trojans are being thrown into confusion, horses and men all mixed together. It's Telamonian Ajax driving them; I know him well, for he carries that broad shield about his shoulders. Let's steer our horses and chariot over there too, where most of all the horsemen and foot soldiers have flung themselves into vicious strife and are slaughtering one another, and an unquenchable clamor has risen."

11.531 So speaking, he lashed the fine-maned horses with the shrill whip; and they, feeling the stroke, swiftly carried the swift

4 Machaon, son of the healer Asclepius, was both a fighter and the Achaeans' physician.

chariot among the Trojans and Achaeans, trampling on corpses and shields. The whole axle beneath was spattered with blood, and the rails around the chariot, struck by the drops thrown up from the horses' hooves and from the wheel rims. And Hector was eager to plunge into the throng of men, to leap in and break it. He sent a deadly tumult among the Danaans, and seldom drew back from the spear. He ranged among the ranks of the other men with spear and sword and great stones, but he avoided battle with Ajax son of Telamon.

11.544 But father Zeus, throned on high, roused panic in Ajax. He stood stunned, and swung his shield of seven oxhides onto his back, and he trembled, glancing at the throng like a wild beast, turning this way and that, shifting slowly one knee past the other. As when dogs and countrymen drive a tawny lion away from the cattle-yard, men who won't let him carry off the fattest of the cattle, keeping watch all night long; and he, craving meat, charges straight in, but gets nowhere, for thick javelins fly at him from bold hands, and blazing torches, which he dreads for all his fury; and at dawn he goes off with a sorrowing heart; so Ajax then went back from the Trojans, sorrowing at heart, much against his will, for he feared greatly for the ships of the Achaeans. 11.558 As when a donkey going past a field gets the better of the boys—a stubborn beast on whose sides many a stick has been broken—and goes in and crops the deep grain, and the boys beat him with sticks, but their strength is a child's, and only with effort do they drive him out once he has had his fill of fodder, so then the high-hearted Trojans and their allies gathered from many lands kept following great Ajax, son of Telamon, jabbing at the middle of his shield with their spears. And Ajax would at times remember his furious valor, turning back again, and hold off the battalions of horse-taming Trojans; and at times he would turn to flee. But he kept all of them from making their way to the swift ships, and he himself stood and raged between the Trojans and the Achaeans. And of the spears hurled by bold hands, some stuck fast in his great shield as they sped

on, and many, before they could reach his white flesh, stood fixed in the ground midway, longing to glut themselves on flesh.

11.575 But when Eurypylus, the splendid son of Euaemon, saw him being forced back by the thick-flying missiles, he went and stood beside him and let fly with his shining spear. He hit Apisaon son of Phausius, shepherd of the people, in the liver beneath the midriff, and at once loosed his knees beneath him. Eurypylus sprang on him and began stripping the armor from his shoulders. But when godlike Alexander saw him stripping Apisaon's armor, he instantly drew his bow against Eurypylus and hit him in the right thigh with an arrow. The reed shaft broke off, and the thigh grew heavy. He drew back into the throng of his comrades, avoiding doom, and gave a piercing shout, calling out to the Danaans:

11.587 "Friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, turn and stand, and keep the pitiless day from Ajax. He is being overwhelmed by missiles, and I don't think he will get out of this harsh-sounding war alive. Stand firm, facing the enemy, around great Ajax, son of Telamon!" So spoke Eurypylus, wounded as he was. They came and stood close beside him, tilting their shields against their shoulders and holding their spears up, and Ajax came to meet them. When he reached the throng of his comrades, he turned and stood. So they fought on, like blazing fire. Meanwhile the mares of Neleus, dripping with sweat, were carrying Nestor out of the battle, and with him they brought Machaon, shepherd of the people. Swift-footed, godlike Achilles saw him and took note, for he was standing on the stern of his huge-hulled ship, watching the sheer toil and the tearful rout.

PATROCLUS AT NESTOR'S HUT

Achilles sends Patroclus to Nestor, who tells of his youth and urges Patroclus to fight in Achilles' armor.

11.602 At once he called to his comrade Patroclus, shouting from beside the ship. Patroclus heard him inside the hut and came out, like Ares—and this was the beginning of evil for him. The

valiant son of Menoetius spoke first: "Why are you calling me, Achilles? What do you need me for?" Then swift-footed Achilles answered him: "Godlike son of Menoetius, dear to my heart, now I think the Achaeans will come and stand around my knees, begging, for a need has come on them that can no longer be borne. But go now, Patroclus, dear to Zeus, and ask Nestor who this wounded man is that he's bringing out of the battle. From behind he looks exactly like Machaon, the son of Asclepius, but I didn't see the man's face. The horses rushed past me, straining forward."

11.616 So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear comrade and set off running past the huts and ships of the Achaeans. Now when the others reached the hut of Neleus' son, they stepped down onto the bountiful earth, and Eurymedon, the old man's attendant, unyoked the horses from the chariot. The two men let the sweat dry from their tunics, standing in the breeze by the shore of the sea, and then they went into the hut and sat down on chairs. Lovely-haired Hecamede made a kykeon for them. The old man had taken her from Tenedos when Achilles sacked it. She was the daughter of great-hearted Arsinous, and the Achaeans had picked her out for him because he excelled them all in counsel.[5]

11.628 First she drew up before them a fine table, well polished, with feet of dark blue enamel, and on it a bronze basket, and an onion as a relish for the drink, and pale honey, and beside them meal of sacred barley; and next to these a beautiful cup that the old man had brought from home, studded with golden rivets. It had four handles, and around each two golden doves were feeding, and beneath there were two bases. Another man could barely shift it from the table when it was full, but Nestor, old as he was, lifted it without effort. In it the woman, like the goddesses, mixed them a drink of Pramnian wine; she grated goat's cheese over it with a bronze grater, sprinkled white barley meal on top, and told them to drink once she had prepared the

5 A kykeon was a restorative mixed drink; here, as described next, wine with grated cheese and barley meal.

kykeon. 11.642 When the two had drunk and driven off their parching thirst, they were enjoying themselves in talk, speaking to one another, when Patroclus stood in the doorway, a godlike man. When the old man saw him, he rose from his shining chair, took him by the hand and led him in, and told him to sit down. But Patroclus, for his part, refused, and said: "No seat for me, old man cherished by Zeus, and you won't persuade me. The man who sent me to find out who this wounded man is that you're bringing is one I must respect, and one quick to take offense. But I know him myself: I see it's Machaon, shepherd of the people. Now I'll go back as a messenger to tell Achilles. You know well, old man cherished by Zeus, what kind of man he is—a formidable one. He'd be quick to blame even a man who is blameless." Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, answered him:

11.656 "Why is Achilles grieving like this for the sons of the Achaeans, all those who've been hit by missiles? He knows nothing of the grief that has arisen throughout the army. The best men are lying among the ships, hit by missiles or wounded by thrusts. The son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes, has been hit; Odysseus, famed for his spear, has been wounded, and Agamemnon too; Eurypylus has also been hit in the thigh by an arrow; and here is this other man I've just brought out of the battle, hit by an arrow from a bowstring. But Achilles, brave as he is, has no care for the Danaans and no pity. Is he waiting until the swift ships near the sea are burned by the enemy's fire, in spite of all the Argives can do, and we ourselves are killed one after another? For my strength is not what it used to be in my supple limbs. 11.670 If only I were young again and my strength as firm as when a quarrel broke out between the Eleans and us over a cattle raid, when I killed Itymoneus, the brave son of Hypeirochus, who lived in Elis, as I was driving off cattle in reprisal. He was defending his cows when he was hit among the foremost by a javelin from my hand; he fell, and the country folk around him fled in terror. We drove together a vast amount of plunder from the plain: fifty herds of cattle, as many flocks of sheep, as many

droves of pigs, as many wide-ranging herds of goats, and a hundred and fifty chestnut horses, all mares, and many with foals beneath them. All these we drove into Neleian Pylos, into the city, by night. And Neleus was glad at heart that so much had fallen to me, young as I was when I went to war.[6] 11.685 As dawn appeared, the heralds called out clearly for all who were owed a debt in bright Elis to come. The leading men of the Pylians gathered and divided the spoil, for the Epeians owed a debt to many of us, since we in Pylos were few and had been badly used. Mighty Heracles had come and done us harm in the years before, and all our best men had been killed. We were twelve sons of excellent Neleus; of them I alone was left, and all the others perished. Puffed up by this, the bronze-clad Epeians treated us with outrage and devised reckless wrongs. From the spoil the old man chose out for himself a herd of cattle and a great flock of sheep, picking three hundred, along with their herdsmen. 11.698 For a great debt was owed to him, too, in bright Elis: four prize-winning horses with their chariot, which had gone there for the games—they were to race for a tripod. But Augeas, lord of men, kept them there and sent the driver away, grieving for his horses. The old man, angered by those words and deeds, chose out an enormous share for himself, and gave the rest to the people to divide, so that no one should go away cheated of his fair share. We were seeing to everything in turn and offering sacrifices to the gods around the city. And on the third day they all came at once, many men and single-hoofed horses, in full force; and among them the two Moliones armed themselves, still boys, not yet well skilled in furious fighting.[7] 11.711 There is a city called Thryoessa, on a steep hill, far off on the Alpheus, the last town of sandy Pylos. They laid siege to it, eager to smash it apart. But when they had swept over the whole plain, Athena came running down from Olympus to us by night as a messen-

6 Nestor tells of a border war from his youth between Pylos and its northern neighbor Elis, whose people are called the Epeians.

7 Augeas was king of the Epeians in Elis; the Moliones were his nephews, twin sons of Molione, called sons of Actor though fathered, as Nestor says below, by Poseidon.

ger, telling us to arm, and the army she gathered throughout Pylos was not unwilling, but very eager to fight. Neleus would not let me arm, and he hid my horses away, for he said I knew nothing yet of the work of war. Yet even so I stood out among our horsemen, though I was on foot, because that was how Athena guided the fighting. 11.722 There is a river, the Minyeius, that flows into the sea near Arene. There we horsemen of the Pylians waited for bright Dawn, and the companies of foot soldiers streamed in. From there, armed in full force with our gear, we came at midday to the sacred stream of the Alpheus. There we offered fine sacrifices to Zeus, mighty in strength, a bull to the Alpheus and a bull to Poseidon, and a cow from the herd to gray-eyed Athena. Then we took our supper throughout the army, rank by rank, and lay down to sleep, each man in his own armor, beside the river's streams. Meanwhile the great-hearted Epeians had surrounded the city, eager to smash it apart; but before they could, a great work of Ares confronted them. For when the shining sun rose above the earth, we joined battle, praying to Zeus and Athena. 11.737 When the battle between the Pylians and Epeians had begun, I was the first to kill a man and take his single-hoofed horses—Mulius the spearman. He was a son-in-law of Augeas, married to his eldest daughter, fair-haired Agamede, who knew all the drugs the wide earth grows. As he came at me I struck him with my bronze-tipped spear, and he fell in the dust; and I leapt into his chariot and took my stand among the front-fighters. The great-hearted Epeians fled this way and that when they saw the man fall, the leader of their horsemen, who was the best of them in fighting. Then I sprang on them like a black whirlwind, and took fifty chariots, and beside each of them two men bit the earth, beaten down by my spear. 11.750 And I would have killed the two Moliones, sons of Actor, had not their father, the wide-ruling Earth-shaker, saved them from the battle, hiding them in a thick mist. Then Zeus put great might into the hands of the Pylians. For we kept following them over the broad plain, killing the men and gathering up their fine armor, until we drove our horses to Buprasium, rich in

wheat, and the Olenian rock, and the place called the hill of Alesium; from there Athena turned the army back. There I killed the last man and left him. And the Achaeans drove their swift horses back from Buprasium to Pylos, and all of them gave glory to Zeus among the gods and to Nestor among men. 11.762 That is how I was among men, if I ever was. But Achilles will have the benefit of his prowess all alone. I think he'll weep bitterly for it afterward, when the army has perished. My friend, this was surely the charge Menoetius gave you on the day he sent you from Phthia to Agamemnon. The two of us, godlike Odysseus and I, were inside, and in the hall we heard every charge he gave you. We had come to the well-built house of Peleus, gathering an army throughout bountiful Achaea. There we found the hero Menoetius inside, and you, and Achilles beside you. The old horseman Peleus was burning the fat thighbones of an ox to Zeus who delights in thunder, in the enclosure of the courtyard, and he held a golden cup, pouring libations of gleaming wine on the burning offerings. 11.776 You two were busy with the ox's meat, and then we two came and stood in the doorway. Achilles sprang up in amazement, took us by the hand and led us in, and told us to sit down, and he set before us gifts of hospitality in full, as is right for guests. When we had had our fill of food and drink, I began to speak, urging you both to come with us. You two were very willing, and the two old men gave you many charges. Old Peleus charged his son Achilles always to be the best and to excel above others; and to you, in turn, Menoetius son of Actor gave this charge: 'My child, Achilles is above you in birth, but you are the elder; in strength he is far the better. But speak shrewd words to him and give him counsel, and guide him; and he will listen to you, for his own good.'

11.790 That was the old man's charge, and you are forgetting it. But even now you could say this to fiery-hearted Achilles, in case he'll be persuaded. Who knows whether, with some god's help, you might stir his heart by persuading him? A friend's persuasion is a good thing. But if in his mind he is shunning some prophecy, and his queenly mother has told him something from

Zeus, then let him send you out at least, and let the rest of the Myrmidon army follow with you, in case you might become a light of deliverance to the Danaans. And let him give you his fine armor to wear into battle, in case the Trojans take you for him and hold off from the fighting, and the warlike sons of the Achaeans, worn out as they are, get their breath back—brief is the breathing space in war. You who are fresh could easily drive men worn out by battle back toward the city, away from the ships and huts."

11.804 So he spoke, and stirred the heart in Patroclus' chest, and he set off running along the ships toward Achilles, grandson of Aeacus. But when Patroclus came running to the ships of godlike Odysseus, where the Achaeans held their assembly and gave judgment, and where they had also built altars to the gods, there Eurypylus met him, sprung from Zeus, the son of Euaemon, wounded in the thigh by an arrow, limping out of the battle. Damp sweat poured down from his shoulders and head, and from the cruel wound the dark blood gushed; but his mind stayed steady. When the valiant son of Menoetius saw him he pitied him, and with grief he spoke winged words:

11.816 "Ah, wretched leaders and rulers of the Danaans! So this was your fate: far from your friends and your native land, to glut the swift dogs in Troy with your white fat! But come, tell me this, Eurypylus, hero cherished by Zeus: will the Achaeans still somehow hold back huge Hector, or will they perish now, beaten down by his spear?" Then the wounded Eurypylus answered him in turn: "No longer, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, will there be any defense for the Achaeans; they will fall among the black ships. All those who used to be the best are lying among the ships, hit by missiles or wounded by thrusts at the hands of the Trojans, whose strength keeps rising.

11.828 But you, save me: take me to my black ship, cut the arrow out of my thigh, wash the dark blood from it with warm water, and sprinkle soothing drugs on it, good ones, which they say you learned from Achilles, whom Chiron taught, the most just of the Centaurs. For as for the healers, Podalirius and Machaon,

one of them, I think, is lying wounded in the huts, himself in need of an excellent healer, and the other is out on the plain, withstanding the sharp war-fury of the Trojans." Then the valiant son of Menoetius spoke to him in turn:[8]

11.838 "How can this turn out? What are we to do, Eurypylus, my hero? I'm on my way to tell fiery-hearted Achilles the message that Gerenian Nestor, the Achaeans' guardian, charged me with. But even so I won't abandon you in your distress." He spoke, and taking the shepherd of the people under the chest, he led him to the hut; and an attendant, seeing them, spread ox-hides beneath him. There Patroclus laid him out and with a knife cut the sharp, piercing arrow from his thigh, washed the dark blood from it with warm water, and on it he put a bitter, pain-killing root, crushed between his hands, which stopped all his pains. The wound dried, and the blood ceased.

8 Chiron, the wise centaur, raised and taught Achilles, including the art of healing.

Book 12

Battle at the wall
Hector breaks through the Greek wall.

THE FIGHT FOR THE WALL

The poet foretells the wall's destruction, and the Trojans leave their chariots to attack on foot.

12.1 So the valiant son of Menoetius tended the wounded Eurypylus in the huts, while the Argives and Trojans fought on in a dense mass. Nor would the Danaans' ditch hold the Trojans back much longer, or the broad wall above it. They had built that wall to protect the ships and had dug the ditch around it, but they had not offered the gods glorious hecatombs so that it might keep their swift ships and their great plunder safe within it. It had been made against the will of the immortal gods, and so it did not stand firm for long. As long as Hector was alive and Achilles kept up his wrath, and the city of lord Priam remained unsacked, so long the great wall of the Achaeans also stood firm.[1] 12.13 But when all the best of the Trojans had died, and many of the Argives too, some killed and some left alive, and Priam's city had been sacked in the tenth year, and the Argives had sailed back in their ships to their own dear native land, then Poseidon and Apollo planned to wipe out the wall by turning the force of the rivers against it. These were all the rivers that flow down from the mountains of Ida to the sea: Rhesus and Heptaporus, Caresus and Rhodius, Granicus and Aesepus, and godlike

1 The Achaeans built this wall and ditch in Book 7, on Nestor's advice, to protect their beached ships.

Scamander, and Simoeis, where many ox-hide shields and helmets fell in the dust, and a race of men who were demigods. Phoebus Apollo turned the mouths of all of them together, and for nine days he drove their flood against the wall. And Zeus rained without pause, so that he might sink the wall in the sea all the sooner. 12.27 The Earth-shaker himself led the way, holding his trident in his hands. He swept out into the waves all the foundations of logs and stones that the Achaeans had laid with such toil, and made everything smooth along the strong-flowing Hellespont. Once he had wiped out the wall, he covered the great beach with sand again, and turned the rivers back to flow in the channels where they had sent their lovely-flowing water before. That is what Poseidon and Apollo were to do in time to come. But at that moment battle and clamor blazed around the well-built wall, and the beams of the towers rang as they were struck. The Argives, beaten down by the lash of Zeus, were penned in beside their hollow ships and held back there, afraid of Hector, the mighty master of rout. And he fought as he had before, like a whirlwind. As when a boar or a lion, surrounded by hounds and huntsmen, wheels about, exulting in his strength,

12.43 and they form themselves up like a tower and stand against him, hurling spear after spear from their hands; but his glorious heart never trembles or takes fright, and it is his own courage that kills him. Again and again he wheels about, testing the ranks of men, and wherever he charges, the ranks of men give way. So Hector went through the throng, turning this way and that, urging his comrades to cross the ditch. But his swift-footed horses did not dare. They neighed loudly, standing at the very edge of the lip, for the ditch frightened them back. It was wide, not easy to leap across from close up, nor easy to cross through, for overhanging banks rose all along it on both sides, and on top it was fitted with sharp stakes that the sons of the Achaeans had planted there, large and close-set, as a defense against their enemies. A horse pulling a well-wheeled chariot could not easily get into it, but the men on foot were eager to see

whether they could manage it. Then Polydamas came up beside bold Hector and said:

12.61 "Hector, and you other leaders of the Trojans and the allies, it's senseless of us to drive our swift horses through the ditch. It's very hard to cross. There are sharp stakes set in it, and right up against them is the Achaeans' wall, where there's no way for charioteers to get down and fight. It's a narrow place, and I think they'd be wounded there. If Zeus who thunders on high is set on crushing the Achaeans utterly, meaning them harm, and wants to help the Trojans, then I for one would wish it to happen this very moment, and the Achaeans to perish here without a name, far from Argos. But if they turn on us and drive us back from the ships, and we get entangled in the dug ditch, then I don't think even a messenger will make it back to the city, once the Achaeans have rallied against us. 12.75 Come on, let's all do as I say. Let the attendants hold the horses at the ditch, and let us ourselves go on foot, armed in our gear, and all follow Hector in one body. The Achaeans won't stand their ground, if the bonds of destruction really are fastened on them now." So spoke Polydamas, and his sound advice pleased Hector, and at once he leapt from his chariot to the ground in his armor. Nor did the other Trojans stay massed on their chariots. They all jumped down when they saw godlike Hector. Then each man ordered his charioteer to hold the horses there at the ditch in good order. They separated and formed themselves up in five companies, and followed their leaders.

12.88 Some went with Hector and the excellent Polydamas. These were the most numerous and the best, and the most eager to break through the wall and fight at the hollow ships. Cebriones went with them as a third leader, for Hector had left another man, a weaker one than Cebriones, beside his chariot. The second company was led by Paris, Alcathous and Agenor; the third by Helenus and godlike Deiphobus, two sons of Priam, and the third leader with them was the warrior Asius—Asius son of Hyrtacus, whom his great sorrel horses had carried from Arisbe, from the river Selleis. 12.98 The fourth was led by Aeneas,

the fine son of Anchises, and with him two sons of Antenor, Archelochus and Acamas, well skilled in every kind of fighting. Sarpedon led the famous allies, and chose Glaucus and warlike Asteropaeus to join him, for these seemed to him clearly the best of the rest, after himself; but he stood out above them all. When they had locked their shields of well-made ox-hide together, they went straight at the Danaans, eager for battle. They thought they would be held back no longer, but would fall upon the black ships.

12.108 Then the other Trojans and their far-famed allies followed the advice of blameless Polydamas. But Asius son of Hyrtacus, leader of men, would not leave his horses there, and his attendant who drove them. He drove up to the swift ships with them—the fool. He was not going to escape his evil doom and return from the ships to windy Ilium, glorying in his horses and chariot. Before that, fate of the hateful name wrapped him round, by the spear of Idomeneus, the proud son of Deucalion. For he made for the left of the ships, where the Achaeans used to come back from the plain with their horses and chariots. There he drove his horses and chariot through, and he did not find the doors of the gates closed and the long bar shot. Men were holding them open, in case they could save any of their comrades fleeing from the battle to the ships. 12.124 He steered his horses straight for that spot, set on his purpose, and his men followed him with shrill cries, for they thought the Achaeans would hold out no longer, but would fall among their black ships—the fools. In the gateway they found two of the best men, the high-hearted sons of the spear-fighting Lapiths: one the son of Pirithous, mighty Polypoetes, the other Leonteus, a match for Ares, the bane of mortals. These two stood in front of the high gates like oaks on the mountains with lofty crowns, which withstand the wind and the rain all their days, held fast by great roots that run far and wide. So these two, trusting in their hands and their strength, stood their ground against great Asius as he came on, and did not run. The others came straight at the well-built wall, holding their dry ox-hide shields high, with a great war cry,

around lord Asius and Iamenus and Orestes, and Adamas son of Asius, and Thoon and Oenomaus.[2] 12.141 For a while these two had stayed inside, rousing the well-greaved Achaeans to fight in defense of the ships. But when they saw the Trojans rushing at the wall, and a cry went up from the Danaans as they turned to flight, the two of them charged out and fought in front of the gates. They were like wild boars in the mountains that await the oncoming din of men and hounds, and dart at them sideways, breaking the timber around them and cutting it off at the root, and the gnashing of their tusks goes up, until someone hits them and takes their life. So the shining bronze rang on the chests of these two as they were struck from the front, for they fought very hard, trusting in the troops above them and in their own strength. 12.154 The men up on the well-built towers threw stones, defending themselves, their huts and their swift-sailing ships, and the stones fell to the ground like snowflakes that a blustering wind, shaking the shadowy clouds, pours down thick upon the bountiful earth. So the missiles poured from their hands, from the Achaeans and from the Trojans too, and helmets and bossed shields rang harshly as boulders struck them. Then Asius son of Hyrtacus groaned and struck both his thighs, and in his distress he spoke out: "Father Zeus, so you too have turned out to be a lover of lies, through and through! I never thought the Achaean warriors could hold back our fury and our invincible hands.

12.167 But they, like wasps with nimble waists, or bees, that have made their home beside a rocky road and won't abandon their hollow house, but stand their ground and fight off the hunters to protect their young—so these men, though there are only two of them, refuse to give way from the gates until they either kill or are killed." So he spoke, but saying this did not sway the mind of Zeus, for his heart was set on granting glory to Hector. Others were fighting the battle at other gates; it would be hard for me to tell all of it as a god could. For everywhere

2 The Lapiths were a people of Thessaly; their king Pirithous was famous for their battle against the Centaurs.

around the wall of stone a monstrous blaze had risen. The Argives, in distress as they were, had no choice but to defend their ships, and all the gods who were the Danaans' helpers in battle were grieved at heart. And the Lapiths joined in the war and the combat.

12.182 Then the son of Pirithous, mighty Polypoetes, struck Damasus with his spear through his bronze-cheeked helmet. The bronze helmet did not stop it: the bronze point went right through and broke the bone, and the brain inside was all spattered. So he brought him down in the midst of his charge. Then he killed Pylon and Ormenus and stripped them. And Leonteus, offshoot of Ares, struck Hippomachus son of Antimachus with his spear, hitting him at the belt. Then he drew his sharp sword from its scabbard, darted through the throng, and first struck Antiphates at close range, and he was flung on his back on the ground. Then he brought down Menon and Iamenus and Orestes, all of them one after another, to the bountiful earth.

THE OMEN OF THE EAGLE

An eagle drops a snake among the Trojans; Polydamas urges retreat, and Hector refuses.

12.195 While these men were stripping the dead of their gleaming armor, the young men who followed Polydamas and Hector—the most numerous and the best, and the most eager to break the wall and set the ships on fire—were still hesitating as they stood by the ditch. For a bird had come to them as they were eager to cross, an eagle flying high, skirting the army on the left, carrying in its talons a monstrous blood-red snake, still alive and writhing. The snake had not yet forgotten the fight: it bent itself back and struck the bird that held it on the breast beside the neck, and the eagle, stung with pain, let it go and dropped it to the ground in the middle of the throng, and with a scream flew off on the gusts of the wind. The Trojans shuddered when they saw the glistening snake lying in their midst, a portent from

Zeus who bears the aegis. Then Polydamas came up beside bold Hector and said:[3]

12.211 "Hector, somehow you always rebuke me in the assemblies when I give good advice, since it isn't fitting, you think, for a man of the people to speak against you, either in council or in war; he should always be adding to your power. But now once again I'll say what seems to me best. Let's not go on to fight the Danaans for the ships. For this is how I think it will turn out, if this bird really did come to the Trojans as they were eager to cross—an eagle flying high, skirting the army on the left, carrying in its talons a monstrous blood-red snake, still alive. But it let it go at once, before it reached its own home, and never managed to carry it back and give it to its young. So it will be with us: even if we break the gates and the wall of the Achaeans with our great strength, and the Achaeans give way, we won't come back from the ships by the same road in good order. We'll leave many Trojans behind, whom the Achaeans will cut down with the bronze as they fight to defend their ships. 12.228 That is how a seer would interpret it, one who truly understood portents and whom the people trusted." Then Hector of the flashing helmet glared at him from under his brows and said: "Polydamas, what you say no longer pleases me. You know how to think of a better speech than this. But if you really are saying this in earnest, then the gods themselves have destroyed your wits, since you tell me to forget the counsels of loud-thundering Zeus, which he himself promised me and confirmed with a nod. And you tell me to put my trust in long-winged birds! I don't heed them or care about them at all, whether they go to the right, toward the dawn and the sun, or to the left, toward the murky dark.

12.241 Let us trust in the counsel of great Zeus, who rules over all mortals and immortals. One omen is best: to fight for one's country. Why are you so afraid of war and combat? Even if all the rest of us are killed beside the ships of the Argives, you're in no danger of dying, for your heart is not steadfast in battle, nor

3 Birds appearing on the left were generally taken as a bad omen, and those on the right as a good one.

made for fighting. But if you hold back from the combat, or talk anyone else into turning away from the war, you'll be struck by my spear at once and lose your life."

12.251 So he spoke and led the way, and they followed him with a wondrous din. And Zeus who delights in thunder roused a blast of wind from the mountains of Ida that carried the dust straight at the ships. He beguiled the minds of the Achaeans and granted glory to the Trojans and to Hector. Trusting in his portents and in their own strength, they tried to break through the great wall of the Achaeans. They tore at the copings of the towers, pulled down the battlements, and levered up the jutting buttresses that the Achaeans had set first in the ground as props for the towers. These they dragged out, hoping to break the wall of the Achaeans. Even now the Danaans did not give way. They fenced the battlements with ox-hides, and from them they pelted the enemy as they came up beneath the wall.

12.265 Both Ajaxes went everywhere along the towers, giving orders and stirring the fury of the Achaeans. Whenever they saw a man slackening altogether from the fight, they rebuked him, one with gentle words, another with harsh ones: "Friends, Argives, whoever is outstanding, whoever is middling, whoever is inferior, since men are not all equal in war: now there's work for every one of you, and you know it yourselves, I think. Let no one be turned back toward the ships when he hears someone shouting threats. Press forward and urge each other on, in the hope that Olympian Zeus, lord of the lightning, will grant us to beat back the attack and drive the enemy to their city."

12.277 So the two of them shouted out and urged the Achaeans on to battle. As when flakes of snow fall thick on a winter's day, when Zeus the counselor has risen up to snow on men and show them these arrows of his: he lulls the winds and pours it down steadily, until it covers the peaks of the high mountains and the jutting headlands, the clover-rich plains and the rich tilled fields of men, and it is shed over the harbors and shores of the gray sea, though the wave that washes against it holds it back, and all else is wrapped over from above when the storm of Zeus bears

down—so their stones flew thick in both directions, some at the Trojans, some from the Trojans at the Achaeans, as they pelted each other, and over the whole wall a din arose.

SARPEDON STORMS THE WALL

Sarpedon tells Glaucus why kings must fight, and the Lycians attack Menestheus' tower.

12.290 Even then the Trojans and glorious Hector would not yet have broken the gates of the wall and the long bar, had not Zeus the counselor roused his own son Sarpedon against the Argives, like a lion against cattle with crooked horns. At once he held his shield before him, balanced on every side, a beautiful shield of beaten bronze, which a bronzesmith had hammered out; inside, he had stitched ox-hides thick, with golden rods running unbroken all around the rim. Holding this before him and brandishing two spears, he set out like a mountain-bred lion that has long gone without meat, and his bold spirit urges him to make an attempt on the flocks and enter even a close-built fold; 12.302 for even if he finds herdsmen right there, guarding the flocks with dogs and spears, he has no mind to be driven from the farmstead without an attempt: either he leaps in and seizes one, or he himself is struck among the first by a javelin from a swift hand. So then his spirit drove godlike Sarpedon to rush the wall and break through the battlements. At once he spoke to Glaucus, son of Hippolochus: "Glaucus, why is it that we two are honored above all others in Lycia, with the seat of honor and choice meats and fuller cups, and everyone looks on us as gods, and we hold a great estate by the banks of the Xanthus, fine land of orchard and wheat-bearing plowland?[4]

12.315 That is why we must now take our stand among the foremost Lycians and meet the blazing battle head-on, so that one of the close-armored Lycians may say: 'They are not without glory, these kings of ours who rule over Lycia, eating fat sheep and

4 Sarpedon and Glaucus lead the Lycians, allies of Troy from southwestern Asia Minor; the Xanthus here is the Lycian river of that name, not the Trojan river.

choice wine, honey-sweet. There is noble strength in them too, since they fight among the foremost Lycians.' My friend, if by escaping this war we two were going to live forever, ageless and immortal, I would not fight among the foremost myself, nor would I send you into the battle that brings men glory. But as it is, the dooms of death stand over us all the same, countless, and no mortal can escape them or avoid them. So let us go, and either hand someone else his glory, or someone will hand it to us."

12.329 So he spoke, and Glaucus did not turn away or disobey. The two of them went straight ahead, leading the great host of the Lycians. Menestheus, son of Peteos, shuddered at the sight of them, for it was to his tower that they were coming, bringing disaster. He peered along the Achaeans' tower, to see if he could catch sight of any of the leaders who might ward off ruin from his comrades. He made out the two Ajaxes, insatiable for war, standing there, and Teucer, who had just come from his hut, close by. But there was no way for him to make himself heard by shouting, so great was the din, and the clamor reached heaven, from the battering on shields and horsehair-crested helmets and on the gates; for all of them were shut, and the enemy stood against them, trying to break them down by force and get in. Quickly he sent Thootes the herald to Ajax:[5]

12.343 "Go, godlike Thootes, run and call Ajax—or rather both of them; that would be best of all, since sheer destruction will soon be wrought here. The leaders of the Lycians have pressed in so hard, and they have always been fierce in the mighty clashes of battle. But if toil and strife have arisen there too, then at least let valiant Telamonian Ajax come alone, and let Teucer, skilled with the bow, come along with him." So he spoke, and the herald heard and did not disobey. He set off running along the wall of the bronze-clad Achaeans, came and stood beside the two Ajaxes, and spoke at once:

12.354 "Ajaxes, leaders of the bronze-clad Argives, the dear son of Peteos, nurtured by Zeus, bids you go over there, to face the

toil for a little while at least—or rather both of you; that would be best of all, since sheer destruction will soon be wrought there. The leaders of the Lycians have pressed in so hard, and they have always been fierce in the mighty clashes of battle. But if war and strife have arisen here too, then at least let valiant Telamonian Ajax come alone, and let Teucer, skilled with the bow, come along with him." So he spoke, and great Telamonian Ajax did not disobey. At once he spoke winged words to the son of Oïleus:

12.366 "Ajax, you two stay here, you and mighty Lycomedes, and stand firm and urge the Danaans to fight with all their strength. I'll go over there and face the fighting, and I'll come back quickly, once I've given them good help." So he spoke, and Telamonian Ajax went off, and Teucer went with him, his brother by the same father, and Pandion went with them carrying Teucer's curved bow. When they reached the tower of great-hearted Menestheus, going along inside the wall, they came to men hard pressed: the Lycians were climbing onto the battlements like a dark whirlwind, the mighty leaders and rulers of the Lycians. They clashed together to fight face to face, and the battle cry went up.

12.378 Telamonian Ajax was the first to kill his man: Sarpedon's comrade, great-hearted Epicles. He struck him with a jagged boulder that lay inside the wall, a huge one, topmost by the battlement. No man could easily hold it in both hands, not even one in the prime of youth, such as mortals are now; but Ajax lifted it high and hurled it down. It smashed the four-ridged helmet and crushed all the bones of his head together, and Epicles dropped like a diver from the high tower, and his spirit left his bones. And Teucer struck mighty Glaucus, son of Hippolochus, with an arrow as he rushed at the high wall, where he saw his arm laid bare, and put an end to his fighting. 12.390 Glaucus leapt back from the wall unnoticed, so that none of the Achaeans would see that he had been hit and boast over him. Sarpedon was grieved at

5 Menestheus leads the Athenian contingent; his stretch of the wall is now under attack from the Lycians.

Glaucus' going as soon as he noticed it, but even so he did not forget the fight. He hit Alcmaon, son of Thestor, with his spear, stabbing him, and pulled the spear out; and the man, following the spear, fell headlong, and his armor, intricate with bronze, rang around him. Then Sarpedon seized the battlement in his strong hands and pulled, and it came away whole, all of it; above, the wall was laid bare, and he made a way for many.

12.400 Ajax and Teucer went at him together. Teucer hit him with an arrow on the shining strap around his chest, the strap of his body-covering shield; but Zeus warded off the dooms from his son, so that he would not be laid low beside the sterns of the ships. Ajax sprang at him and stabbed his shield. The spear did not go through, but it jolted him back in his eagerness. He gave ground a little from the battlement, but did not draw back altogether, since his spirit hoped to win glory. He turned and called to the godlike Lycians: "Lycians, why are you slackening like this in your rushing valor? It's hard for me, mighty as I am, to break through alone and make a way to the ships. Come on, follow with me: many hands do better work."

12.413 So he spoke, and they, fearing their lord's rebuke, pressed on harder around their lord, the counselor. On the other side the Argives strengthened their ranks inside the wall, and a great task loomed before them. For neither could the mighty Lycians break through the Danaans' wall and make a way to the ships, nor could the Danaan spearmen push the Lycians back from the wall, once they had first come near it. But as two men quarrel over boundary stones, measuring rods in hand, in a field held in common, and in a narrow space contend for an equal share, so the battlements kept these apart; and over them they hacked at the ox-hide shields about each other's chests, the well-rounded shields and the light, fluttering bucklers. 12.427 Many were wounded in the flesh by the pitiless bronze: anyone who, as he turned, left his back bare in the fighting, and many right through the shield itself. Everywhere the towers and battlements were spattered with men's blood on both sides, from Trojans and Achaeans. But even so they could not put the Achaeans

to flight. They held, as an honest working woman holds the scales: she keeps the weight on one side and the wool on the other and lifts them, balancing them, to earn a pitiful wage for her children. So evenly was their battle and war stretched tight, until Zeus gave the greater glory to Hector, son of Priam, who was the first to leap inside the wall of the Achaeans. He gave a piercing shout, calling out to the Trojans: "Rise up, horse-taming Trojans, break the Argives' wall, and hurl wondrous blazing fire on the ships!"

HECTOR BREAKS THE GATE

Hector smashes the gate with a huge stone, and the Trojans pour over the wall.

12.442 So he spoke, urging them on, and they all heard him with their own ears and charged at the wall in a mass. Then they climbed onto the copings, holding sharpened spears, while Hector snatched up a stone and carried it, a stone that stood in front of the gates, thick at the base and sharp at the top. Two men, the best in a town, could not easily lever it from the ground onto a wagon, such as mortals are now; but he swung it easily, even alone. The son of Cronus of the crooked counsels made it light for him. As when a shepherd easily carries the fleece of a ram, taking it in one hand, and the weight bears little on him, so Hector lifted the stone and carried it straight at the planks that guarded the gates, close-fitted and solidly joined, tall double gates. Inside, two crossbars held them, overlapping each other, and a single bolt fastened them. 12.457 He came and stood close, and bracing himself, legs set well apart so that his throw would not be feeble, he hit them in the middle and broke off both hinges. The stone fell inside with its weight, the gates groaned loudly all around, the bars did not hold, and the planks were split apart this way and that under the force of the stone. Glorious Hector leapt in, his face like swift night. He gleamed with the terrible bronze he wore about his body, and he held two spears in his hands. No one could have checked him meeting

him head-on, except the gods, when he leapt in through the gates; and his eyes blazed with fire. He turned and called to the Trojans through the throng to climb over the wall, and they obeyed his urging. At once some climbed over the wall, while others poured in through the well-built gates themselves. The Danaans fled in terror among the hollow ships, and an unceasing uproar arose.

Book 13

Battle at the ships
Poseidon secretly rallies the Greeks.

13.1 When Zeus had brought the Trojans and Hector close to the ships, he left them there to bear toil and misery without respite. He himself turned his shining eyes away and looked far off, at the land of the horse-tending Thracians and of the Mysians who fight hand to hand, and of the proud Hippemolgi, who drink mares' milk, and of the Abii, the most just of men. To Troy he no longer turned his shining eyes at all, for he did not expect in his heart that any of the immortals would come to help either the Trojans or the Danaans.

13.10 But the lordly Earth-shaker was not keeping blind watch either. He too sat marveling at the war and the battle, high on the topmost peak of wooded Samos, the Thracian one, for from there all of Ida could be seen, and Priam's city could be seen, and the ships of the Achaeans. There he had come up out of the sea and sat, and he pitied the Achaeans as they were beaten down by the Trojans, and he was fiercely indignant with Zeus. At once he came down from the rugged mountain, striding swiftly on his feet, and the tall mountains and the forest trembled beneath the immortal feet of Poseidon as he went. Three strides he took, and with the fourth he reached his goal, Aegae, where his famous palace has been built in the depths of the sea, golden, gleaming, imperishable forever.[1]

13.23 There he yoked to his chariot his two bronze-hoofed horses, swift-flying, with flowing manes of gold. He himself put

on gold about his body, took up his well-made golden whip, stepped into his chariot, and drove out over the waves. The sea creatures frolicked beneath him on every side, coming up from their lairs, and they did not fail to know their lord, and the sea parted in gladness. The horses flew on very lightly, and the bronze axle beneath was not even wetted, and the high-bounding horses carried him to the ships of the Achaeans. There is a wide cave in the depths of the deep sea, between Tenedos and rugged Imbros. There Poseidon the Earth-shaker halted his horses and loosed them from the chariot, and he threw ambrosial fodder before them to eat. Around their feet he put golden hobbles, unbreakable, not to be loosed, so that they would stay there steadfast until their lord came back. Then he went off to the army of the Achaeans.

POSEIDON RALLIES THE GREEKS

Disguised as Calchas, Poseidon fills the two Ajaxes with strength and rouses the weary Greeks.

13.39 The Trojans, massed together like flame or a whirlwind, followed Hector son of Priam in tireless eagerness, roaring and shouting. They hoped to take the ships of the Achaeans and to kill all the best men there beside them. But Poseidon, Earth-holder and Earth-shaker, came up out of the deep sea and urged on the Argives, likening himself to Calchas in form and tireless voice. First he spoke to the two Ajaxes, who were already eager themselves: "You two Ajaxes will save the army of the Achaeans if you remember your courage and not chilling flight. Elsewhere I do not fear the invincible hands of the Trojans who have climbed over the great wall in a throng; the well-greaved Achaeans will hold them all. But here I am terribly afraid that something may happen to us, here where that raging man leads them like a flame—Hector, who boasts that he is the son of mighty Zeus.

1 "Thracian Samos" is Samothrace, an island in the northern Aegean within sight of Troy. Aegae was a coastal place in the Greek world sacred to Poseidon.

13.55 May some god put it in your hearts like this, to stand firm yourselves and to urge the others on. Then you could drive him back from the swift-sailing ships, eager though he is, even if the Olympian himself is rousing him." He spoke, and the Earth-holder and Earth-shaker struck them both with his staff and filled them with mighty strength, and made their limbs light, their feet and their hands above. Then he himself darted off to fly, like a swift-winged hawk that rises from a sheer, towering rock and swoops across the plain to chase some other bird: so Poseidon the Earth-shaker sped away from them. Of the two, swift Ajax son of Oïleus was the first to recognize him, and at once he spoke to Ajax, son of Telamon:

13.68 "Ajax, since one of the gods who hold Olympus, in the likeness of the seer, is bidding us fight beside the ships—and that was no Calchas, the prophet and reader of birds: I easily knew the tracks of his feet and legs from behind as he went away, and gods are easy to recognize—my own heart in my breast is all the more eager to make war and to fight, and my feet below and my hands above are straining to go." Then Telamonian Ajax answered him: "So too now my invincible hands are straining around my spear, and my strength is roused, and both my feet below are rushing forward. I long, even alone, to fight with Hector son of Priam, for all his tireless rage."

13.81 So they spoke such words to one another, rejoicing in the battle-lust that the god had cast into their hearts. Meanwhile the Earth-holder roused the Achaeans in the rear, who were refreshing their hearts beside the swift ships. Their limbs had been loosened by grievous weariness, and grief rose in their hearts as they watched the Trojans, who had climbed over the great wall in a throng. As they looked at them, tears fell from under their brows, for they thought they would not escape disaster. But the Earth-shaker went easily among them and roused their strong battalions. First he came urging on Teucer and Leitus, and the warrior Peneleos, and Thoas and Deipyrus, and Meriones and Antilochus, masters of the war cry. Urging them on, he spoke winged words:

13.95 "Shame, Argives, you young men! It was in your fighting that I trusted to save our ships. But if you are going to hold back from grievous war, then the day has come now for us to be beaten by the Trojans. Oh, this is a great and terrible marvel I see with my eyes, one I never thought would come to pass: the Trojans coming at our ships! Before, they were like panicky deer that wander in the forest as food for jackals and leopards and wolves, aimless, without courage, with no fight in them. So the Trojans before were never willing to stand face to face against the strength and hands of the Achaeans, not even a little. But now, far from their city, they are fighting at the hollow ships, through the fault of our leader and the slackness of the men, who have quarreled with him and will not defend the swift-sailing ships, but are being killed among them. 13.111 But even if it is truly and wholly the fault of the warrior son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, because he dishonored the swift-footed son of Peleus, there is still no way that we may hold back from war. Let us mend it quickly: the hearts of good men can be mended. But you are not doing well to let your furious courage go any longer, all of you, the best men in the army. I would not quarrel with a man who held back from war if he were a weakling; but with you I am angry to my heart. Friends, soon you will make some evil greater by this slackness. Let each of you set shame in your heart, and fear of blame; a great contest has arisen. Hector, good at the war cry, is fighting at the ships in his might, and he has broken the gates and the long bar."

13.125 So the Earth-holder, urging them on, roused the Achaeans. Around the two Ajaxes stood strong battalions, which neither Ares could have found fault with if he came among them, nor Athena who rouses armies. For the best men, picked out, awaited the Trojans and godlike Hector, fencing spear with spear, and shield with shield, layer upon layer. Shield pressed on shield, helmet on helmet, man on man; the horsehair-crested helmets with their bright ridges touched as men nodded their heads, so close they stood to one another. The spears, bran-

dished in bold hands, overlapped in a dense array; and their minds were set straight ahead, and they were eager to fight.

13.136 The Trojans drove forward all together, and Hector led them, pressing straight on, like a boulder rolling from a cliff, which a winter torrent has pushed down from a ridge, breaking the hold of the stubborn rock with its boundless downpour. It leaps up high and flies, and the forest crashes beneath it, and it runs on steadily, unchecked, until it reaches the level ground, and then it rolls no farther, for all its speed. So Hector for a while threatened to sweep easily through the huts and ships of the Achaeans all the way to the sea, killing as he went. But when he came against the dense battalions, he stopped, pressed close against them. The sons of the Achaeans faced him, thrusting at him with swords and two-pointed spears, and pushed him away from them; and he gave ground and was shaken. Then he gave a piercing shout, calling out to the Trojans:

13.150 "Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians who fight hand to hand, stand fast! The Achaeans won't hold me back for long, even though they have drawn themselves up like a tower. No, I think they will give way before my spear, if it is true that the best of the gods has roused me, the loud-thundering husband of Hera." So saying he roused the strength and spirit of each man. Among them Deiphobus son of Priam strode in high spirits, and he held before him his shield, balanced on every side, stepping lightly and advancing under cover of the shield.

13.159 Meriones took aim at him with his shining spear, and he threw and did not miss: he struck the bull's-hide shield, balanced on every side. But he did not drive through it; long before that, the long spear broke off at the socket. Deiphobus held the bull's-hide shield away from himself, for in his heart he was afraid of the spear of warlike Meriones. But the warrior Meriones drew back into the throng of his companions, terribly angry on two counts, both for the victory and for the spear he had shattered. He set off along the huts and ships of the Achaeans to fetch a long spear, which he had left in his hut.

13.169 The others fought on, and an unquenchable clamor arose. Teucer son of Telamon was the first to kill a man, Imbrius the spearman, son of Mentor rich in horses. He had lived in Pedaeum before the sons of the Achaeans came, and had as his wife Medesicaste, a daughter of Priam born out of wedlock. But when the curved ships of the Danaans arrived, he came back to Ilium and stood out among the Trojans, and he lived with Priam, who honored him as one of his own children. The son of Telamon stabbed him under the ear with his long spear and pulled the spear out again, and he fell like an ash tree on the peak of a mountain that is seen from far off on every side, when it is cut down by the bronze and brings its tender leaves to the ground: so he fell, and his armor, intricate with bronze, clanged about him. 13.182 Teucer rushed forward, eager to strip off his armor; but as he rushed, Hector threw at him with his shining spear. Teucer, looking straight at it, just avoided the bronze spear, and Hector struck Amphimachus, son of Cteatus the son of Actor, in the chest with the spear as he was coming into the battle. He fell with a thud, and his armor clanged upon him. Hector rushed to tear from great-hearted Amphimachus' head the helmet that fitted close to his temples; but as he rushed, Ajax lunged at Hector with his shining spear. Nowhere could he see any skin, for he was all covered in terrifying bronze; but he struck the boss of his shield and pushed him back with great force. Hector gave ground, away from both corpses, and the Achaeans dragged them off. 13.195 Amphimachus was carried back among the Achaean army by Stichius and godlike Menestheus, leaders of the Athenians; and Imbrius by the two Ajaxes, eager with furious courage. As two lions snatch a goat from sharp-toothed dogs and carry it through the thick brush, holding it high above the ground in their jaws, so the two armed Ajaxes held him high and stripped his armor. And the son of Oïleus, angry over Amphimachus, cut the head from his tender neck and, with a swing, sent it spinning like a ball through the throng, and it fell in the dust before Hector's feet.

IDOMENEUS AND MERIONES

Poseidon spurs on Idomeneus, who arms and sets out with Meriones for the left of the line.

13.206 Then Poseidon's heart was angered deep within him for his grandson, fallen in the dreadful fighting, and he set off along the huts and ships of the Achaeans to rouse the Danaans, and he was devising sorrows for the Trojans. Idomeneus, famed with the spear, met him as he was coming from a companion who had just come out of the fighting, wounded behind the knee by the sharp bronze. His companions had carried the man off, and Idomeneus, after giving instructions to the healers, was going to his hut, for he was still eager to face the battle. The lordly Earth-shaker spoke to him, likening his voice to that of Thoas, son of Andraemon, who ruled the Aetolians in all of Pleuron and steep Calydon and was honored by the people like a god:[2]

13.219 "Idomeneus, counselor of the Cretans, where have they gone, the threats the sons of the Achaeans used to make against the Trojans?" Then Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, answered him: "Thoas, no man is to blame now, so far as I know, for we all know how to fight. No one is held back by spiritless fear, and no one gives way to hesitation and shrinks from evil war. No, it must be, I suppose, the pleasure of the overmighty son of Cronus that the Achaeans perish here without a name, far from Argos. But, Thoas—since in the past you have always stood firm in battle, and you urge on any other man you see holding back—don't stop now, and urge on every man." Then Poseidon the Earth-shaker answered him:

13.232 "Idomeneus, may that man never come home from Troy, but stay here to be sport for dogs, whoever on this day willingly holds back from fighting. Come, get your armor and go; we must make haste together in this, in the hope that we may be of some use, even though we are only two. Prowess grows when men

2 Amphimachus' father Cteatus was said in some traditions to be a son of Poseidon, which makes Amphimachus the god's grandson.

join together, even quite poor ones, and we two would know how to fight even against good men." So saying the god went back into the toil of men. And Idomeneus, when he reached his well-built hut, put the fine armor on his body, took up two spears, and set off like lightning, which the son of Cronus takes in his hand and brandishes from shining Olympus, showing a sign to mortals, and its flashes are brilliant: so the bronze shone around his chest as he ran.

13.246 Meriones, his good attendant, met him still near the hut, for he was going to fetch a bronze spear; and mighty Idomeneus spoke to him: "Meriones, son of Molus, swift of foot, dearest of my companions, why have you come here, leaving the war and the fighting? Are you wounded, and is the point of some missile wearing you down? Or have you come for me with a message? I myself have no wish to sit in the huts—I want to fight." Then prudent Meriones answered him: "Idomeneus, counselor of the bronze-clad Cretans, I am coming to fetch a spear, if you have one left in your huts; I've just shattered the one I had before, when I struck the shield of overbearing Deiphobus." Then Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, answered him:

13.260 "Spears? If you want them, you'll find one and twenty, standing in my hut against the shining wall—Trojan spears, which I take from the men I kill. I don't intend to fight standing far off from hostile men. That's why I have spears, and bossed shields, and helmets, and corslets gleaming bright." Then prudent Meriones answered him: "I too have many spoils of the Trojans by my hut and my black ship, but they are not close at hand to take. For I say that I too have not forgotten my courage: I take my stand among the foremost in the battle that brings men glory, whenever the strife of war arises. Some other of the bronze-clad Achaeans might fail to notice me fighting, but you, I think, know it yourself."

13.274 Then Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, answered him: "I know your prowess, what kind of man you are; why do you need to tell me this? If now all the best of us were being picked beside the ships for an ambush, where men's prowess is seen most

clearly, where the coward and the brave man show themselves for what they are—for the coward's color changes this way and that, and the spirit in his breast cannot hold him to sit still, but he shifts from one crouch to another and settles on both his feet, and the heart beats loudly in his chest as he pictures his doom, and his teeth start chattering;

13.284 but the brave man's color does not change, nor is he too much afraid once he takes his place in the ambush of men, and he prays to join at once in grim combat—even there no one would make light of your strength and your hands. For even if you were hit by a missile or struck at close quarters in the toil of battle, the weapon would not fall on the back of your neck or on your back; it would meet your chest or your belly as you pressed forward into the close exchanges of the front-line fighters. But come, let's not talk like this any longer, standing here like children, or someone may be outrageously indignant. Go to the hut and take a heavy spear."

13.295 So he spoke, and Meriones, a match for swift Ares, quickly took a bronze spear from the hut and went after Idomeneus, his mind set firmly on war. As man-destroying Ares goes into war, and with him follows Rout, his dear son, strong and fearless, who routs even a steadfast warrior—the two of them arm themselves and set out from Thrace against the Ephyri or the great-hearted Phlegyes, and they do not listen to both sides, but give glory to one—like them, Meriones and Idomeneus, leaders of men, went into battle, armed in gleaming bronze. And Meriones was the first to speak to him:

13.307 "Son of Deucalion, where do you mean to enter the throng? On the right of the whole army, or in the middle, or on the left? For nowhere else, I expect, are the long-haired Achaeans so short of fight." Then Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, answered him: "At the middle of the ships there are others to defend them, the two Ajaxes, and Teucer, who is the best of the Achaeans at archery, and good in the stand-up fight as well. They will give Hector son of Priam his fill of it, however eager for battle he is, and however strong.

13.317 It will be a steep climb for him, much as he longs to fight, to overcome their strength and invincible hands and set fire to the ships—unless the son of Cronus himself should hurl a blazing brand onto the swift ships. Great Telamonian Ajax would not give way to any man who is mortal and eats Demeter's grain and can be broken by bronze and great stones. He would not yield even to Achilles, breaker of men, at least in a stand-up fight; in speed of foot there is no competing with him. But you, steer us this way, to the left of the army, so that we may know quickly whether we shall give the glory to someone, or someone to us." So he spoke, and Meriones, a match for swift Ares, led the way until they reached the part of the army where Idomeneus told him to go;

13.330 and when they saw Idomeneus, like a flame in his might, him and his attendant in their intricately worked armor, they all called out through the throng and went at him; and the strife of both sides met by the sterns of the ships. As when gales rush on under shrill winds, on a day when the dust lies thickest on the roads, and they raise up a great cloud of dust all together, so their battle came together, and they were eager in their hearts to kill one another in the throng with the sharp bronze. The man-destroying battle bristled with the long, flesh-cutting spears they held, and the bronze glare from shining helmets, newly polished corslets, and bright shields as they came on together dazzled the eyes. Very bold of heart would he be who could rejoice at the sight of that toil and not be grieved.

IDOMENEUS' GREAT DAY

As Zeus and Poseidon pull the war both ways, Idomeneus kills Othryoneus, Asius and Alcathous.

13.345 So the two mighty sons of Cronus, with minds set against each other, were contriving grievous pains for the warriors. Zeus wanted victory for the Trojans and Hector, to give glory to swift-footed Achilles; yet he did not at all wish the Achaean army to perish utterly before Ilium, but was giving glory to

Thetis and her strong-hearted son. Poseidon went among the Argives and roused them, having slipped up secretly out of the gray sea, for he was grieved that they were being beaten down by the Trojans, and he was fiercely indignant with Zeus. Both of them, it is true, were of one lineage and one fatherland, but Zeus was born first and knew more. That is why Poseidon avoided helping them openly, but secretly he kept rousing the army, in the likeness of a man. And the two gods had looped the rope of mighty strife and evenly matched war around both sides and drawn it taut—a rope unbreakable and not to be loosed, which loosened the knees of many.

13.361 Then Idomeneus, half-gray though he was, called to the Danaans and, leaping among the Trojans, stirred them to flight. For he killed Othryoneus, a man from Cabesus who was in the city, who had recently come in pursuit of the glory of war. He had asked for the most beautiful of Priam's daughters, Cassandra, without bride-price, and had promised a great deed: to drive the sons of the Achaeans out of Troy against their will. And old Priam had promised and nodded his assent to give her, so he fought, trusting in those promises. Idomeneus took aim at him with his shining spear, and threw, and hit him as he strode proudly along; the bronze corslet he wore did not protect him, and the spear stuck in the middle of his belly. He fell with a thud, and Idomeneus boasted over him and spoke:[3]

13.374 "Othryoneus, I would praise you above all mortals if you truly accomplish everything you promised Dardanian Priam; and he promised you his daughter. We too would make you such a promise and keep it: we would give you the most beautiful of the son of Atreus' daughters, bringing her from Argos for you to marry, if you will join us in sacking the well-built city of Ilium. Come along, then, so that we can meet beside the seafaring ships about the marriage; we're not stingy when it comes to wedding gifts." So saying the warrior Idomeneus dragged him by the foot through the fierce fighting. Asius came to his defense,

3 A suitor normally gave gifts, the bride-price, to the bride's father; Othryoneus offered military service instead.

on foot in front of his horses, which his attendant, the charioteer, kept always so close that they breathed on his shoulders; and he longed in his heart to strike Idomeneus. But Idomeneus was quicker and struck him with his spear in the throat under the chin, and drove the bronze straight through.

13.389 He fell as an oak falls, or a white poplar, or a tall pine, which carpenters in the mountains cut down with newly sharpened axes to be timber for a ship: so he lay stretched out in front of his horses and chariot, roaring, clutching at the bloody dust. His charioteer was struck out of the wits he had before, and he did not dare to turn the horses back and escape from the hands of the enemy. Antilochus, steadfast in battle, hit him and pierced him through the middle with his spear; the bronze corslet he wore did not protect him, and the spear stuck in the middle of his belly. Gasping, he fell out of the well-made chariot, and Antilochus, son of great-hearted Nestor, drove the horses away from the Trojans toward the well-greaved Achaeans.

13.402 Deiphobus came very close to Idomeneus, grieving for Asius, and threw at him with his shining spear. But Idomeneus, looking straight at it, avoided the bronze spear, for he hid beneath his shield, balanced on every side, the rounded shield he carried, made of oxhide and gleaming bronze and fitted with two cross-rods. Under it he crouched completely, and the bronze spear flew over him, and his shield gave a dry, harsh ring as the spear grazed it. Yet not in vain did Deiphobus send it from his heavy hand: he struck Hypsenor son of Hippasus, shepherd of the people, in the liver under the midriff, and at once loosened his knees. And Deiphobus boasted terribly, with a great shout:

13.414 "So Asius doesn't lie there unavenged after all! No, I tell you, even on his way to the house of Hades, the mighty gatekeeper, he'll be glad at heart, since I've sent him an escort." So he spoke, and his boasting brought grief to the Argives, and above all it stirred the heart of war-minded Antilochus. Grieving as he was, he did not neglect his comrade. He ran and stood over him and covered him with his shield. Then two trusty comrades, Mecisteus son of Echius and godlike Alastor, stooped

beneath him and carried him, groaning heavily, to the hollow ships. But Idomeneus did not let his great fury slacken. He strove always either to shroud one of the Trojans in murky night or to fall himself with a crash, warding off ruin from the Achaeans.

13.427 Then there was the dear son of Aesyetes, nurtured by Zeus, the warrior Alcathous. He was son-in-law to Anchises and had married the eldest of his daughters, Hippodameia, whom her father and her queenly mother loved with all their hearts in the hall, for she surpassed all the girls of her age in beauty, in handiwork and in good sense. That was why the best man in broad Troy had married her. Now Poseidon overpowered him at the hands of Idomeneus, bewitching his bright eyes and fettering his shining limbs. He could neither flee back nor dodge aside, but as he stood motionless like a pillar or a tree with towering leaves, the warrior Idomeneus stabbed him with his spear in the middle of the chest and split the bronze tunic about him that until then had kept destruction from his flesh. Now it rang out harshly as it was torn around the spear.[4] 13.442 He fell with a thud, and the spear stuck fast in his heart, which was still beating and made even the butt of the spear quiver, until mighty Ares stilled its force. And Idomeneus boasted terribly, shouting loudly: "Deiphobus, shall we call it a fair trade, then—three killed for one? Since you boast like that. Strange fellow, come and stand against me yourself, so you can see what kind of offspring of Zeus has come here. Zeus first fathered Minos, guardian of Crete; Minos in turn fathered a son, the excellent Deucalion; and Deucalion fathered me, lord over many men in broad Crete. And now the ships have brought me here to be a bane to you and your father and the other Trojans."[5]

4 Anchises was the father of Aeneas, so Alcathous was Aeneas' brother-in-law, which matters a few lines below.

5 Minos was the legendary king of Crete, Idomeneus' grandfather.

AENEAS JOINS THE FIGHT

Deiphobus fetches Aeneas, and the battle surges around Alcathous; Menelaus kills Peisander.

13.455 So he spoke, and Deiphobus was torn two ways: should he fall back and take one of the great-hearted Trojans as his comrade, or try it alone? As he pondered, this seemed the better course: to go to Aeneas. He found him standing at the very back of the throng, for he was forever angry with godlike Priam, because Priam gave him no honor at all, good man though he was among men. Standing close, he spoke winged words: "Aeneas, counselor of the Trojans, now you really must defend your brother-in-law, if grief for your kin touches you at all. Come, let's go to the defense of Alcathous, who as your sister's husband raised you in his house when you were small. Idomeneus, famed for his spear, has killed him."

13.468 So he spoke, and stirred the heart in his chest, and he went after Idomeneus, intent on war. But fear did not seize Idomeneus as if he were some pampered child. He stood his ground, as when a boar in the mountains, trusting in his strength, awaits a great rabble of men coming at him in a lonely place, and bristles along his back; his eyes blaze with fire, and he whets his tusks, eager to fend off dogs and men alike: so Idomeneus, famed for his spear, stood his ground and did not give way as Aeneas came on to the rescue. He shouted to his comrades, looking to Ascalaphus and Aphareus and Deipyrus, and to Meriones and Antilochus, masters of the war cry, and urging them on he spoke winged words:

13.481 "Come here, friends, and help me—I'm on my own! I'm terribly afraid of swift-footed Aeneas, who is coming at me. He is very strong in battle at killing men, and he has the flower of youth, which is the greatest strength there is. If only we were the same age, with the spirit I have now, then soon either he would carry off a great victory, or I would." So he spoke, and all of them, with one spirit in their hearts, took their stand close

beside him, slanting their shields against their shoulders. On the other side Aeneas called to his own comrades, looking to Deiphobus and Paris and godlike Agenor, who were leaders of the Trojans along with him; and then the troops followed, as sheep follow the ram from pasture to drink, and the shepherd is glad at heart: so Aeneas' heart rejoiced in his chest when he saw the host of troops following him.

13.496 Around Alcathous they rushed at each other at close quarters with their long thrusting spears, and the bronze on their chests rang terribly as they aimed at one another through the throng. Two men, warlike above the rest, Aeneas and Idomeneus, equal to Ares, strove to cut each other's flesh with the pitiless bronze. Aeneas first hurled his spear at Idomeneus, but Idomeneus saw it coming and dodged the bronze spear, and Aeneas' spearpoint went quivering into the ground, since it had sped in vain from his strong hand. Idomeneus then struck Oenomaus in the middle of the belly and broke the plate of his corslet, and the bronze let out his guts; he fell in the dust and clutched the earth with his palm. Idomeneus pulled his long-shadowing spear from the corpse, but he could not strip the rest of the fine armor from the man's shoulders, for he was hard pressed by missiles. 13.512 His legs were no longer steady under him for a charge, either to rush after his own spear or to dodge a missile. So in close, standing combat he warded off the pitiless day, but his feet no longer carried him swiftly to run from the battle. As he retreated step by step, Deiphobus hurled his shining spear at him, for he had always borne him a steady grudge. But this time too he missed, and instead struck Ascalaphus, son of Enyalius, with his spear; the heavy spear went through his shoulder, and he fell in the dust and clutched the earth with his palm. Loud-voiced, mighty Ares had not yet heard that his son had fallen in the fierce combat. He was sitting on the peak of Olympus under golden clouds, held back by the will of Zeus, where the other immortal gods were too, kept away from the war.

13.526 Around Ascalaphus they rushed at each other at close quarters. Deiphobus snatched the shining helmet from Ascalaphus, but Meriones, equal to swift Ares, leapt at him and struck his arm with the spear, and the crested helmet with its eye-holes dropped from his hand and fell ringing to the ground. Meriones, leaping in again like a vulture, pulled the heavy spear out of the top of his arm and drew back into the throng of his comrades. Then Polites, Deiphobus' own brother, put his arms around his waist and led him out of the harsh-sounding battle until he reached his swift horses, which stood behind the fighting and the battle with a charioteer and the ornate chariot. They carried him toward the city, groaning heavily, worn out, and the blood ran down from his freshly wounded arm.

13.540 The others fought on, and an unquenchable roar went up. Then Aeneas rushed at Aphareus son of Caletor and struck him in the throat, which was turned toward him, with his sharp spear. His head lolled to one side, his shield and helmet fell with him, and death that shatters the spirit poured round him. Antilochus watched for Thoön as he turned away, rushed at him and stabbed him, and sliced right through the vein that runs all the way up the back and reaches the neck—he sliced right through it. Thoön fell on his back in the dust, stretching out both hands to his dear comrades. 13.550 Antilochus sprang on him and began to strip the armor from his shoulders, glancing about him. The Trojans stood around him and from every side stabbed at his broad, gleaming shield, but they could not graze through to the tender flesh of Antilochus with the pitiless bronze, for Poseidon the Earth-shaker guarded Nestor's son all round, even amid so many missiles. He was never clear of the enemy, but kept turning about in their midst; nor was his spear ever still, but it was always shaking and brandished, and he was taking aim in his mind either to hurl it at someone or to rush at him at close quarters. But as he took aim through the throng he did not escape the notice of Adamas son of Asius, who rushed at him from close by and stabbed the middle of his shield with sharp bronze. But

dark-haired Poseidon made the spearpoint powerless, begrudging him Antilochus' life.

13.564 Half the spear stayed there in Antilochus' shield like a fire-hardened stake, and the other half lay on the ground. Adamas drew back into the throng of his comrades, avoiding doom. But Meriones followed him as he went and struck him with his spear between the genitals and the navel, where Ares is most painful for wretched mortals. There he fixed the spear, and Adamas, doubled over the spear, writhed as an ox writhes when herdsmen in the mountains have bound it with ropes of withy and lead it off by force against its will: so he writhed when he was struck, for a little while, not very long, until the warrior Meriones came close and pulled the spear out of his flesh; and darkness covered his eyes.

13.576 Helenus came close and struck Deipyrus on the temple with a great Thracian sword and knocked off his helmet. It flew off and fell to the ground, and one of the Achaeans picked it up as it rolled among the feet of the fighters; and murky night covered Deipyrus' eyes. Grief seized the son of Atreus, Menelaus, good at the war cry. He went at the lord Helenus, the warrior, with threats, brandishing his sharp spear, while Helenus drew back the grip of his bow. The two let fly at the same moment, one eager to hurl his sharp spear, the other to shoot an arrow from the string. Priam's son struck him on the chest with his arrow, on the plate of the corslet, and the bitter arrow flew off.

13.588 As when from a broad winnowing shovel across a great threshing floor dark-skinned beans or chickpeas leap under a whistling wind and the winnower's sweep, so from the corslet of glorious Menelaus the bitter arrow glanced off and flew far away. Then the son of Atreus, Menelaus, good at the war cry, struck the hand in which Helenus held his polished bow, and the bronze spear was driven clean through the hand and into the bow. Helenus drew back into the throng of his comrades, avoiding doom, his hand hanging at his side, and the ash-wood spear trailed along with it. Great-hearted Agenor pulled it from his

hand and bound the hand with a sling of well-twisted sheep's wool, which an attendant carried for him, the shepherd of the people.

13.601 Peisander went straight at glorious Menelaus; an evil fate was leading him to the end that is death, to be overcome by you, Menelaus, in dread combat. When they were close, advancing on each other, the son of Atreus missed, and his spear swerved aside; Peisander stabbed the shield of glorious Menelaus, but could not drive the bronze clean through, for the broad shield held it, and the spear snapped off at the socket. Yet he rejoiced in his heart and hoped for victory. The son of Atreus drew his silver-studded sword and leapt at Peisander, who from under his shield took out a fine axe of good bronze on a long, well-polished handle of olive wood. They reached each other at the same moment. 13.614 Peisander struck the ridge of the helmet thick with horsehair, right up under the crest itself; Menelaus struck him as he came on, on the forehead above the base of the nose. The bones cracked, and his two eyes fell bloody to the ground at his feet in the dust, and he doubled up as he fell. Menelaus set his heel on his chest, stripped off his armor, and spoke boasting words: "This, I suppose, is how you'll leave the ships of the Danaans with their swift horses, you arrogant Trojans, never sated with the dread war cry! Nor are you short of other outrage and shame, the outrage you did to me, you vile dogs, with no fear in your hearts of the harsh wrath of loud-thundering Zeus, the god of guests, who will one day destroy your steep city. You carried off my wedded wife and many possessions, for no reason, after she had welcomed you as a guest; and now again you're eager to throw deadly fire on our seafaring ships and kill the Achaean warriors.[6]

13.630 But somewhere you'll be stopped, eager as you are for war. Father Zeus, they say you surpass all others in wisdom, men and gods alike, and all these things come from you. Yet see how you favor these arrogant men, the Trojans, whose fury is

6 Zeus protects the bond between host and guest; Paris carried off Helen while a guest in Menelaus' house.

always reckless, who can never have their fill of the din of war that treats all alike! There is a fill of everything—of sleep and lovemaking, of sweet song and fine dancing, things a man would far rather have his fill of than of war; but the Trojans are insatiable for battle." So he spoke, and peerless Menelaus stripped the bloody armor from the body and gave it to his comrades, and went back again himself and joined the front-line fighters.

13.643 There the son of King Pylaemenes leapt at him, Harpalion, who had followed his dear father to Troy to fight and never came home to his native land. From close by he stabbed the middle of the son of Atreus' shield with his spear, but could not drive the bronze clean through, and he drew back into the throng of his comrades, avoiding doom, glancing all about lest someone graze his flesh with bronze. But as he went off Meriones shot a bronze-tipped arrow at him and hit him in the right buttock, and the arrow went clean through under the bone into the bladder. He sank down right there in the arms of his dear comrades, breathing out his life, and lay stretched on the ground like a worm, and the dark blood flowed out and soaked the earth. The great-hearted Paphlagonians tended him, lifted him into a chariot and took him toward holy Ilium, grieving, and his father went with them shedding tears; and no requital came for his dead son.[7]

13.660 Paris was deeply angered at his death, for the man had been his guest-friend among the many Paphlagonians, and in his anger he let fly a bronze-tipped arrow. There was a certain Euchenor, son of the seer Polyidus, wealthy and noble, whose home was in Corinth. He had boarded his ship knowing well his deadly doom, for the good old Polyidus had often told him that he would either waste away from a painful disease in his own halls, or be overcome by the Trojans among the ships of the Achaeans. So he avoided both the heavy fine of the Achaeans and the hateful disease, so as not to suffer pain in his heart.

7 The Paphlagonians were Trojan allies from the southern coast of the Black Sea.

Paris struck him under the jaw and the ear, and quickly his life went from his limbs, and hateful darkness took him.[8]

13.673 So they fought like blazing fire. But Hector, dear to Zeus, had not heard and did not know at all that on the left of the ships his men were being slaughtered by the Argives. Soon the glory might even have gone to the Achaeans, so hard did the Earth-holder, the Earth-shaker, urge on the Argives, and he himself helped them with his strength. But Hector kept to the place where he had first leapt through the gates and the wall, breaking the close ranks of Danaan shield-bearers, where the ships of Ajax and Protesilaus were drawn up on the shore of the gray sea. Above them the wall had been built at its lowest, and there the men themselves and their horses were fiercest in battle.[9]

13.685 There the Boeotians and the Ionians with their trailing tunics, the Locrians and Phthians and the glorious Epeians, struggled to hold him off from the ships as he charged, but they could not thrust godlike Hector, like a flame, away from them. There were the picked men of the Athenians, and among them Menestheus son of Peteos led, and with him followed Pheidas and Stichius and brave Bias; and of the Epeians, Meges son of Phyleus, and Amphion and Dracius; and at the head of the Phthians, Medon and Podarces, steadfast in war. Medon was the illegitimate son of godlike Oïleus and brother of Ajax, but he lived in Phylace, away from his native land, because he had killed a man, a kinsman of his stepmother Eriopis, Oïleus' wife. Podarces was the son of Iphiclus, son of Phylacus.[10] 13.699 These, armed at the head of the great-hearted Phthians, fought alongside the Boeotians in defense of the ships. But Ajax, the swift son of Oïleus, no longer stood apart from Telamonian Ajax at all, not even a little, but as two wine-dark oxen in a fallow field strain with equal spirit at the jointed plow, and around the roots of their horns the sweat streams up in plenty; only the polished

8 The fine was the penalty levied on those who refused to join the expedition against Troy.
9 Protesilaus was the first Achaean killed at Troy; his ship still stood on the shore.
10 These Phthians are not Achilles' Myrmidons but the contingents once led by Protesilaus and Philoctetes, now under Podarces and Medon.

yoke keeps them apart as they press along the furrow, and the plow cuts through to the edge of the field: so the two stood close, side by side with each other. But the son of Telamon had many brave troops following him as comrades, who took his shield from him whenever weariness and sweat came upon his knees.

POLYDAMAS ADVISES HECTOR

Polydamas urges Hector to regroup; Hector rallies his men and trades threats with Ajax.

13.712 The Locrians did not follow the great-hearted son of Oïleus, for their hearts did not hold firm in close, standing combat. They had no bronze helmets thick with horsehair, no round shields or ash-wood spears; they had followed him to Ilium trusting in bows and slings of well-twisted sheep's wool, and with these, shooting thick and fast, they broke the Trojan battalions. So then the men in front, in their ornate armor, fought against the Trojans and bronze-helmeted Hector, while the others shot from behind, out of sight; and the Trojans forgot all thought of fighting, for the arrows threw them into confusion. Then the Trojans would have retreated miserably from the ships and huts toward windy Ilium, if Polydamas had not stood beside bold Hector and said:

13.726 "Hector, you're impossible to persuade with advice. Because the god has given you surpassing deeds of war, you want to know more than others in counsel too. But you can't possibly take everything for yourself at once. To one man the god has given deeds of war, to another dancing, to another the lyre and song; and in another's chest far-seeing Zeus puts a good mind, and many people profit from it, and he saves many, and knows its worth best of all himself. So I'll tell you what seems best to me. All around you the ring of war is ablaze, and the great-hearted Trojans, since they came over the wall, are some of them standing apart with their weapons, while others fight, fewer against more, scattered among the ships. 13.740 Fall back, and call all the best men here. Then we can weigh every plan:

whether to fall on the ships with their many oars, if the god is willing to grant us victory, or else to come away from the ships unharmed. For I truly fear the Achaeans will repay yesterday's debt, since by the ships waits a man insatiable for war, who I don't think will hold back from battle much longer." So spoke Polydamas, and his sound advice pleased Hector. At once he leapt from his chariot to the ground in his armor and spoke to him winged words: "Polydamas, you keep all the best men here, while I go over there and face the battle. I'll come back again soon, once I've given them clear orders."[11]

13.754 He spoke, and set off like a snow-capped mountain, shouting, and flew through the Trojans and their allies. And all of them hurried to Panthous' son, kindly Polydamas, when they heard Hector's voice. Hector ranged among the front-line fighters, searching for Deiphobus and the mighty lord Helenus, and Adamas son of Asius and Asius son of Hyrtacus, to see if he could find them anywhere. He found them no longer quite unharmed or unscathed: some were lying by the sterns of the Achaean ships, having lost their lives at the hands of the Argives, while others were within the wall, hit or wounded. But soon, on the left of the tearful battle, he found godlike Alexander, husband of lovely-haired Helen, encouraging his comrades and urging them to fight; and standing near he spoke to him with words of reproach:

13.769 "Paris, you disgrace, so fine to look at, mad for women, seducer! Where are Deiphobus and the mighty lord Helenus, and Adamas son of Asius and Asius son of Hyrtacus? Where is Othryoneus? Now all of steep Ilium has perished, from top to bottom; now your sheer destruction is certain." Then godlike Alexander spoke to him in turn: "Hector, since you have a mind to blame someone who's blameless—there may be other times when I hold back from the fighting, but not now, since my mother didn't bear me altogether a coward either. Ever since you roused your comrades to battle by the ships, from then on

11 The man 'insatiable for war' is Achilles.

we've been here, engaging the Danaans without a pause. The comrades you ask about have been killed.

13.781 Only Deiphobus and the mighty lord Helenus have gone off, both wounded in the hand by long spears; but the son of Cronus kept death away. Now lead wherever your heart and spirit bid you, and we'll follow you eagerly. I tell you we won't fall short in courage, as far as our strength allows; but beyond his strength no one can fight, however eager he is." So speaking the warrior won his brother's mind over, and they went where the battle and the fighting were thickest, around Cebriones and peerless Polydamas, Phalces and Orthaeus and godlike Polyphetes, Palmys and Ascanius and Morys son of Hippotion, who had come from fertile Ascania as relief troops the morning before; and now Zeus roused them to fight.

13.795 They went like a blast of cruel winds that sweeps down to the plain beneath the thunder of father Zeus and with a wondrous din mingles with the sea, and in it are many seething waves of the loud-roaring sea, arching, white-crested, some in front and others after: so the Trojans, some in front in close array and others after, gleaming with bronze, followed their leaders. Hector led them, equal to Ares, the bane of mortals, Priam's son. In front of him he held his shield, balanced on every side, dense with hides, with much bronze beaten over it, and around his temples his shining helmet shook. All along the battalions he probed them, stepping forward, to see if they would give way before him as he advanced under cover of his shield; but he did not shake the spirit in the Achaeans' chests. Ajax was the first to challenge him, striding out with long strides:

13.810 "Strange fellow, come closer! Why try to frighten the Argives like this, for nothing? We are not unskilled in battle at all; it is the cruel whip of Zeus that has beaten us Achaeans down. I suppose your heart hopes to sack the ships; but we too have hands ready to defend them. Long before that your well-settled city will be captured and sacked at our hands. And for you yourself, I tell you, the time is near when you'll be running

away and praying to father Zeus and the other immortals that your fine-maned horses may be swifter than falcons—the horses that will carry you to the city, raising dust across the plain." As he spoke, a bird flew by on the right, a high-flying eagle, and the Achaean army shouted, heartened by the omen. And glorious Hector answered:

13.824 "Ajax, you blundering talker, you braggart, what have you said! I wish I were as surely the son of aegis-bearing Zeus for all my days, born of queenly Hera, and honored as Athena and Apollo are honored, as surely as this day brings evil to the Argives, every one of them. And you will be killed among them, if you dare to stand up to my long spear, which will tear your lily-white flesh; and you will glut the dogs and birds of the Trojans with your fat and flesh, fallen by the ships of the Achaeans." So he spoke and led the way, and they followed with a wondrous din, and the army behind them shouted. On the other side the Argives shouted back; they did not forget their courage, but awaited the best of the Trojans as they came on. And the noise of both armies reached the bright upper air and the radiance of Zeus.

Book 14

Zeus deceived
Hera lulls Zeus to sleep, and the Greeks drive Hector back.

14.1 The shouting did not escape Nestor, though he was drinking, and he spoke winged words to the son of Asclepius: "Consider, godlike Machaon, how all this will turn out. The shouting of the strong young men beside the ships is growing louder. You, for now, sit and drink the gleaming wine, until fair-haired Hecamede heats a warm bath and washes the clotted blood from you. I'll go to a lookout and find out quickly." So he spoke, and took up the well-made shield of his son, horse-taming Thrasymedes, which lay in the hut, gleaming with bronze; Thrasymedes had his father's shield.[1]

14.12 He took a valiant spear tipped with sharp bronze and stood outside the hut, and at once he saw a shameful sight: the Achaeans routed, and behind them the high-hearted Trojans driving them on; and the wall of the Achaeans was thrown down. As when the great sea darkens with a silent swell, sensing the swift paths of the shrill winds, but only so, and does not roll forward in either direction until some settled wind comes down from Zeus, so the old man pondered, his heart torn two ways: whether to go into the throng of the Danaans with their swift horses, or to go to the son of Atreus, Agamemnon, shepherd of the people. And as he thought it over, this seemed the better course: to go to the son of Atreus. Meanwhile the others were killing one another as they fought, and the unyielding bronze

1 Machaon, the Achaeans' healer, was wounded by an arrow in Book 11 and brought to Nestor's hut; Hecamede is Nestor's serving woman.

rang about their bodies as they thrust at one another with swords and two-pointed spears.

NESTOR AND THE WOUNDED KINGS

Agamemnon proposes escape by sea; Odysseus rebukes him, and Diomedes leads them back to the field.

14.27 Nestor was met by the kings nurtured by Zeus as they came up from the ships, all who had been wounded by the bronze: the son of Tydeus, Odysseus, and Agamemnon son of Atreus. For their ships were drawn up far from the battle, on the shore of the gray sea; the first ships had been hauled up onto the plain, and the wall built along their sterns. Wide as it was, the beach could not hold all the ships, and the troops were cramped; so they drew them up row behind row and filled the long mouth of the whole shore, as much as the headlands enclosed between them. So these men, wanting to see the shouting and the war, came all together, leaning on their spears, and the spirit in their chests was grieved. Then the old man Nestor met them, and his coming made the spirit in the Achaeans' chests cower. Lord Agamemnon spoke to him:

14.42 "Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of the Achaeans, why have you left the man-destroying war and come here? I'm afraid that mighty Hector will now make good his word against me, the threat he once made speaking among the Trojans: that he would not go back from the ships to Ilium until he had burned the ships with fire and killed the men themselves. That is how he spoke, and now it is all coming true. Ah, no! So the other well-greaved Achaeans too are storing up anger against me in their hearts, as Achilles is, and have no wish to fight by the sterns of the ships." Then Gerenian Nestor, the horseman, answered him:

14.53 "Yes, all this is here and done, and not even high-thundering Zeus himself could shape it otherwise. The wall has fallen, the wall we trusted would be an unbreakable defense for the ships and for ourselves; and at the swift ships they keep up a relentless battle without pause. However hard you looked, you

could no longer tell from which side the Achaeans are being routed and driven, so confusedly are they being killed, and the shouting reaches heaven. But let us consider how all this will turn out, if thought can achieve anything. I don't advise that we enter the war ourselves: a wounded man can't fight at all."

14.64 Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke to him in turn: "Nestor, since they are fighting at the sterns of the ships, and the wall we built was no help, nor the trench either, over which the Danaans toiled so much, hoping in their hearts it would be an unbreakable defense for the ships and for themselves, then this, I suppose, must be the pleasure of Zeus, mighty beyond measure: that the Achaeans perish here without a name, far from Argos. I knew it when he was eagerly defending the Danaans, and I know it now, when he gives glory to these men as if they were the blessed gods, and has bound our strength and our hands. But come, let us all do as I say.

14.75 The ships that are drawn up first, near the sea, let us drag down and launch them all into the bright sea, and moor them out in deep water on anchor stones, until immortal night comes, if for night's sake the Trojans will hold off from war. Then we could drag down all the ships. There's no blame in fleeing from ruin, not even by night. Better to flee and escape ruin than to be caught." Then, with a dark look from under his brows, resourceful Odysseus spoke to him: "Son of Atreus, what a word has slipped past the fence of your teeth! Ruinous man, I wish you were commanding some other, sorry army, and not ruling us, to whom Zeus has given it, from youth until old age, to wind out the skein of grievous wars, until we perish every one.

14.88 Are you really so eager to abandon the wide-streeted city of the Trojans, for whose sake we endure so many hardships? Be quiet, so that no other Achaean hears this speech—a speech no man would ever let pass his lips at all, if he knew in his heart how to speak to the point, and bore a scepter, and had as many troops obeying him as you rule among the Argives. As it is, I utterly despise your wits, judging by what you've said: you tell us, with war and battle cry joined, to drag the well-benched

ships down to the sea, so that the Trojans, who are winning already, may get still more of what they pray for, and sheer destruction may tip down upon us. For the Achaeans won't keep up the fighting while the ships are being dragged down to the sea; they'll be glancing around for a way out, and they'll slacken in the battle. Then your plan would be our ruin, leader of the people."

14.103 Then Agamemnon, lord of men, answered him: "Odysseus, you've struck me to the heart with that harsh rebuke. But I'm not ordering the sons of the Achaeans to drag the well-benched ships down to the sea against their will. Now let someone come forward who can propose a better plan than this, young or old: I would welcome it." Then Diomedes, good at the war cry, spoke among them: "The man is close at hand; we won't search long—if you're willing to listen, and none of you resents me in anger because I am the youngest in years among you. I too can claim descent from a noble father, Tydeus, whom the heaped-up earth covers at Thebes.

14.115 Portheus had three excellent sons, and they lived in Pleuron and steep Calydon: Agrius and Melas, and the third was Oeneus the horseman, my father's father, who was outstanding among them in prowess. He stayed there, but my father wandered and settled in Argos; so, I suppose, Zeus and the other gods willed it. He married one of the daughters of Adrastus and lived in a house rich in livelihood; he had plenty of wheat-bearing fields, and many orchards of trees all around, and many flocks were his; and he surpassed all the Achaeans with the spear. You must have heard of this, and whether it is true. 14.126 So you can't say my birth is base and cowardly, and scorn the advice I give, if I speak well. Come, let us go into the battle, wounded though we are, since we must. Once there, let us keep out of the fighting ourselves, beyond the range of missiles, so that no one takes a wound on top of a wound; but we'll spur on the others and send them in, those who even before now have been indulging their feelings, standing aside and not fighting." So he spoke, and they listened closely and obeyed. They set off,

and Agamemnon, lord of men, led them. Nor did the famous Earth-shaker keep watch like a blind man: he came among them in the likeness of an old man, took the right hand of Agamemnon son of Atreus, and spoke winged words to him:

14.139 "Son of Atreus, now, I think, the destructive heart of Achilles rejoices in his chest as he watches the slaughter and rout of the Achaeans, since he has no sense in him, not even a little. Well, let him perish so, and may a god bring him to nothing! But with you the blessed gods are not yet altogether angry. No, the leaders and rulers of the Trojans will yet, I think, raise the dust across the wide plain, and you yourself will see them fleeing toward the city from the ships and huts." So he spoke, and gave a great shout as he sped across the plain. As loud as nine thousand men shout, or ten thousand, in war, when they join the strife of Ares, so great a voice did the lordly Earth-shaker send from his chest; and he put great strength into the heart of each of the Achaeans, to war and fight without ceasing.

HERA'S PLAN

Hera adorns herself, borrows Aphrodite's charm and bribes Sleep to help her beguile Zeus.

14.153 Hera of the golden throne looked out with her eyes, standing on a peak of Olympus, and at once she recognized him bustling through the battle where men win glory, her own brother and her husband's brother, and she rejoiced in her heart. And she saw Zeus sitting on the topmost peak of Ida with its many springs, and he was hateful to her heart. Then ox-eyed queenly Hera pondered how she might deceive the mind of Zeus who bears the aegis. And this seemed to her heart the best plan: to go to Ida, having adorned herself well, in the hope that he might long to lie beside her body in love, and she might pour a gentle, harmless sleep over his eyelids and his shrewd mind. 14.166 She went to her chamber, which her dear son Hephaestus had built for her; he had fitted close-set doors to the doorposts with a secret bolt, which no other god could open. There she went in

and closed the shining doors. First, with ambrosia, she cleansed every stain from her lovely skin, and anointed herself with rich olive oil, ambrosial and sweet, that had been perfumed for her; if it were only stirred in the bronze-floored house of Zeus, its fragrance would still reach to earth and heaven. With this she anointed her beautiful skin, combed her hair, and with her hands plaited the shining braids, beautiful and ambrosial, that hung from her immortal head. 14.178 Around her she put an ambrosial robe, which Athena had smoothed and worked for her, setting many intricate designs in it; and she fastened it at her breast with golden brooches. She girded herself with a belt fitted with a hundred tassels, and in her well-pierced earlobes she set earrings of three clustered drops, glittering, and abundant grace shone from them. Over all the glorious goddess veiled herself with a headdress, beautiful and fresh-made, white as the sun; and under her gleaming feet she bound beautiful sandals. And when she had put all her finery about her body, she went out of her chamber, and calling Aphrodite apart from the other gods, she spoke to her:

14.190 "Would you do something I ask of you, dear child, or would you refuse, angry at heart because I help the Danaans and you the Trojans?" Then Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, answered her: "Hera, revered goddess, daughter of great Cronus, say what you have in mind. My heart urges me to do it, if I can do it and if it can be done." Then with crafty intent queenly Hera spoke to her: "Give me now love and desire, with which you overpower all the immortals and mortal men.

14.200 I am going to see the ends of the bountiful earth, and Oceanus, from whom the gods are sprung, and mother Tethys, who raised me well and cared for me in their house, after they took me from Rhea, when far-seeing Zeus thrust Cronus down beneath the earth and the barren sea. I am going to see them, and I will settle their endless quarrel; for a long time now they have kept apart from each other's bed and love, since anger fell upon their hearts. If I could win their hearts over with words and bring them back to bed to be joined in love, I would be

called dear and honored by them forever." Then laughter-loving Aphrodite spoke to her in turn:

14.212 "It isn't possible, nor would it be right, to refuse your request, since you sleep in the arms of Zeus, the greatest of the gods." She spoke, and loosed from her breast the embroidered strap, intricately worked, in which all her enchantments were fashioned: in it was love, in it desire, in it the whispered talk of lovers, the beguilement that steals the wits even of the wise. She put it into Hera's hands and spoke to her, calling her by name: "Here, take this strap and put it in your bosom, this embroidered strap in which all things are fashioned. I tell you, you won't come back without accomplishing whatever your heart is set on." So she spoke, and ox-eyed queenly Hera smiled, and smiling, put it in her bosom.

14.224 Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, went to her house, and Hera darted away and left the peak of Olympus. She set foot on Pieria and lovely Emathia, and sped over the snowy mountains of the horse-rearing Thracians, over their topmost peaks, and her feet never touched the ground. From Athos she stepped out over the swelling sea and came to Lemnos, the city of godlike Thoas. There she met Sleep, the brother of Death, and clasped his hand, and spoke to him, calling him by name: "Sleep, lord of all gods and all men, if ever before you listened to a word of mine, obey me now as well, and I will be grateful to you all my days. Put Zeus's shining eyes to sleep for me under his brows, as soon as I have lain down beside him in love.

14.238 And I will give you gifts: a beautiful throne, golden and imperishable forever. Hephaestus, my son, the lame god, will make it with all his skill, and set a footstool beneath it for your feet, where you can rest your shining feet as you feast." Then sweet Sleep answered her: "Hera, revered goddess, daughter of great Cronus, any other of the gods who live forever I would easily lull to sleep, even the streams of the river Oceanus, who is the origin of all things. But Zeus son of Cronus I would not come near, nor lull him to sleep, unless he himself told me to. Once before now a command of yours taught me a lesson, on the day

when that high-hearted son of Zeus was sailing from Ilium, after sacking the city of the Trojans.[2]

14.252 I lulled the mind of Zeus who bears the aegis, pouring myself sweetly around him, while you plotted harm in your heart for his son: you roused blasts of grievous winds over the sea and then carried him off to well-settled Cos, far from all his friends. But Zeus woke and raged, hurling the gods about his house, and he looked for me above all; he would have flung me from the upper air into the sea, never to be seen again, if Night, the tamer of gods and men, had not saved me. I came to her in my flight, and he stopped, angry though he was, for he shrank from doing anything that would displease swift Night. And now again you are telling me to do this other impossible thing." Then ox-eyed queenly Hera spoke to him in turn:

14.264 "Sleep, why are you turning these things over in your mind? Do you really think that Zeus, who sees far and wide, will stand by the Trojans the way he raged for the sake of Heracles, his own son? But come, I will give you one of the younger Graces to marry and to be called your wife." So she spoke, and Sleep was glad, and answered her: "Come then, swear to me by the inviolable water of the Styx. With one hand take hold of the nourishing earth, and with the other the shimmering sea, so that all the gods below, who dwell with Cronus, may be witnesses for us both. Swear that you will give me one of the younger Graces, Pasithea, whom I myself have longed for all my days."[3]

14.277 So he spoke, and the goddess, white-armed Hera, did not disobey. She swore as he told her, and named all the gods beneath Tartarus who are called Titans. But when she had sworn and completed the oath, the two of them set out, leaving the city of Lemnos and Imbros, clothed in mist, swiftly making their way. They came to Ida of many springs, mother of wild beasts, at Lectum, where they first left the sea; then they went on over dry

2 The son of Zeus is Heracles, who sacked Troy a generation earlier.
3 The Graces are goddesses of beauty and charm. An oath by the Styx, the river of the underworld, was the most binding oath a god could swear.

land, and the tops of the forest shook beneath their feet. There Sleep stayed behind, before the eyes of Zeus could see him, and climbed up into a towering fir tree, the tallest then growing on Ida, which reached up through the mist into the bright upper air. There he sat, hidden by the fir's branches, like the clear-voiced bird of the mountains that the gods call chalcis and men call cymindis.

ZEUS AND HERA ON IDA

Overcome by desire, Zeus lies with Hera on Mount Ida and falls asleep.

14.292 Hera went swiftly up to Gargarus, the peak of lofty Ida, and Zeus the cloud-gatherer saw her. And as soon as he saw her, desire enveloped his shrewd mind, just as when they had first mingled in love, going to bed together without their dear parents knowing. He stood before her, spoke to her and called her by name: "Hera, what are you so eager for, that you come down here from Olympus? Your horses and chariot aren't here for you to ride." Then queenly Hera, with crafty intent, spoke to him:

14.301 "I am going to see the ends of the bountiful earth, and Oceanus, from whom the gods are sprung, and mother Tethys, who raised me well and cherished me in their halls. I am going to see them, and I will settle their endless quarrels; for a long time now they have kept apart from each other's bed and love, since anger fell upon their hearts. My horses are standing at the foot of Ida of many springs, to carry me over land and water. But now I have come down here from Olympus on your account, so that you won't be angry with me afterward if I go off without a word to the house of deep-flowing Oceanus." Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her:

14.313 "Hera, you can set out there later too. Come, let us two lie down and take our pleasure in love. For never yet has desire for goddess or woman so flooded the heart in my chest and overpowered it—not when I loved the wife of Ixion, who bore Pirithous, equal to the gods in counsel; nor when I loved Danaë of the lovely ankles, daughter of Acrisius, who bore Perseus,

most renowned of all men; nor the daughter of far-famed Phoenix, who bore me Minos and godlike Rhadamanthys; nor Semele, nor Alcmene in Thebes, who gave birth to Heracles, her strong-hearted son, while Semele bore Dionysus, a joy to mortals; nor when I loved Demeter, the queen with lovely hair, nor glorious Leto, nor you yourself—as I love you now, and sweet desire takes hold of me."[4]

14.329 Then queenly Hera, with crafty intent, spoke to him: "Most dread son of Cronus, what a thing to say! If you now long to lie down in love on the peaks of Ida, where everything is in plain view, how would it be if one of the gods who live forever saw us two sleeping, and went and told all the gods? I could never get up from that bed and go back to your house; it would be a thing to be ashamed of. But if you really want this, and it is dear to your heart, you have a chamber that your dear son Hephaestus built for you, and he fitted close-set doors to the doorposts. Let us go there and lie down, since bed is what pleases you."

14.341 Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her: "Hera, have no fear that any god or any man will see this: I will wrap such a cloud around us, a golden one, that not even the Sun could see through it to us, though his light is the sharpest of all for seeing." He spoke, and the son of Cronus took his wife in his arms; and beneath them the divine earth sent up fresh-sprouting grass, and dewy lotus, and crocus, and hyacinth, thick and soft, which held them up off the ground. On this they lay, and drew over themselves a cloud, beautiful and golden, and glistening drops of dew fell from it.

HECTOR STRUCK DOWN

Poseidon leads the Greeks forward; Ajax fells Hector with a stone, and the Trojans are routed.

14.352 So the father slept peacefully on the peak of Gargarus, overcome by sleep and love, holding his wife in his arms. And sweet

Sleep set off at a run for the ships of the Achaeans, to bring the news to the Earth-holder, the Earth-shaker. He stood close by and spoke winged words: "Now, Poseidon, help the Danaans with all your heart, and give them glory, if only for a little while, while Zeus is still asleep; for I have wrapped soft slumber around him, and Hera has beguiled him into lying down in love." With these words he went off to the famous tribes of men, but he had spurred Poseidon on still more to defend the Danaans. At once Poseidon sprang far out in front among the foremost and called out:

14.364 "Argives, are we once again going to hand victory to Hector son of Priam, so that he can take the ships and win glory? That is what he says and boasts, because Achilles stays by the hollow ships, angry at heart. But no one will miss him much, if the rest of us rouse ourselves to defend one another. Come, let us all do as I say. Let us put on the best and largest shields in the army, cover our heads with all-gleaming helmets, take the longest spears in our hands, and go. I will lead the way, and I don't think Hector son of Priam will stand his ground any longer, for all his eagerness. And any man who is steady in battle but carries a small shield on his shoulder, let him give it to a weaker fighter and get into a bigger shield himself."

14.378 So he spoke, and they listened closely to him and obeyed. The kings themselves marshaled them, wounded though they were—the son of Tydeus, Odysseus, and Agamemnon son of Atreus. Going among them all, they exchanged the battle gear: the good fighter put on good armor, and to the worse they gave the worse. Then, when they had clothed their bodies in gleaming bronze, they set out; and Poseidon the Earth-shaker led them, holding in his heavy hand a terrible long-edged sword, like lightning. No one may close with it in grim battle; fear holds men back.

14.388 On the other side glorious Hector marshaled the Trojans. Then dark-haired Poseidon and glorious Hector pulled tight the

4 This Phoenix is not Achilles' old tutor but the father of Europa, the mother of Minos and Rhadamanthys.

most terrible strife of war, the one helping the Trojans, the other the Argives. The sea surged up toward the huts and ships of the Argives, and the armies clashed with a great war cry. Not so loud does the wave of the sea roar against the shore, driven up from the deep by the bitter blast of the North Wind; not so loud is the roar of blazing fire in the glens of a mountain, when it rushes up to burn the forest; not so loud does the wind howl among the high-leafed oaks, the wind that roars the loudest in its rage—as the voices of the Trojans and Achaeans rose when they shouted terribly and rushed at one another.

14.402 Glorious Hector was the first to cast his spear at Ajax, since Ajax had turned straight toward him, and he did not miss. It struck where the two straps were stretched across his chest, one for his shield and the other for his silver-studded sword, and these protected his tender flesh. Hector was angry that his swift shaft had flown from his hand for nothing, and he drew back into the throng of his comrades, avoiding doom. Then, as he was going off, great Telamonian Ajax hit him with a stone—many of these, the props of the swift ships, lay rolling about the fighters' feet. Lifting one, he struck him in the chest above the shield rim, close to the neck, and the blow sent him spinning like a top, and he reeled round and round. 14.414 As when, under the stroke of father Zeus, an oak crashes down uprooted, and a terrible smell of sulfur rises from it, and whoever stands nearby and sees it loses all his courage, for the thunderbolt of great Zeus is a fearsome thing—so the strength of mighty Hector fell swiftly to the ground in the dust. The spear dropped from his hand, his shield and helmet fell with him, and his armor, inlaid with bronze, clanged about him. With loud shouts the sons of the Achaeans ran up, hoping to drag him away, and they hurled spears thick and fast; but no one could stab the shepherd of the people or hit him, for before they could the best men stood over him: Polydamas and Aeneas and godlike Agenor, and Sarpedon, leader of the Lycians, and peerless Glaucus. 14.427 And none of the others neglected him, but they held their round shields in front of him. Then his comrades lifted him in their arms and carried

him out of the struggle until he reached his swift horses, which stood behind the battle and the fighting with their charioteer and the inlaid chariot; and these carried him toward the city, groaning heavily. But when they came to the ford of the fair-flowing river, eddying Xanthus, whom immortal Zeus fathered, there they lifted him from the chariot onto the ground and poured water over him. He came to and looked up with his eyes, and, raising himself onto his knees, he vomited dark blood; then he sank back again to the ground, and black night covered his eyes. The blow still overpowered his spirit.

14.440 When the Argives saw Hector going off, they leapt at the Trojans all the harder and turned their minds to battle. Then far the first, swift Ajax son of Oïleus leapt in and stabbed Satnius with his sharp spear—Satnius son of Enops, whom a peerless Naiad nymph bore to Enops as he herded cattle by the banks of the Satnioeis. The son of Oïleus, famed with the spear, came close and stabbed him in the flank, and he fell backward; and around him Trojans and Danaans joined in fierce combat. Polydamas, wielder of the spear, son of Panthous, came to defend him, and struck Prothoenor son of Areilycus on the right shoulder; the heavy spear held its course through the shoulder, and he fell in the dust and clutched the earth with his palm. And Polydamas exulted terribly over him, shouting loud:

14.454 "This time again, I think, the spear has not leapt in vain from the strong hand of the great-hearted son of Panthous. No, some Argive has caught it in his flesh, and I think he'll lean on it like a staff as he goes down into the house of Hades." So he spoke, and grief came over the Argives at his boasting; and above all it stirred the heart of war-minded Ajax, son of Telamon, for the man had fallen closest to him. Quickly he cast with his shining spear at Polydamas as he drew back. Polydamas himself escaped black doom by darting aside, but Antenor's son Archelochus caught it instead, for the gods had planned his destruction.

14.465 Ajax hit him where the head joins the neck, on the topmost vertebra, and cut through both tendons; and as he fell, his

head, mouth and nose hit the ground well before his shins and knees. Then Ajax in turn shouted to peerless Polydamas: "Think it over, Polydamas, and tell me truly: isn't this man worth killing in exchange for Prothoenor? He doesn't look to me like a low man, or born of low men; he's a brother of horse-taming Antenor, or a son, for in his looks he was the very image of him." He spoke knowing full well, and grief seized the hearts of the Trojans. Then Acamas, standing over his brother, stabbed Promachus the Boeotian with his spear, as he was dragging the body away by the feet. And Acamas exulted terribly over him, shouting loud:[5]

14.479 "Argives, you arrow-fighters, never sated with threats—we won't be the only ones to have toil and misery, believe me; some day you too will be killed like this. Look how your Promachus sleeps, overpowered by my spear, so that the price for my brother would not go long unpaid. That is why a man prays to leave a kinsman behind in his halls, to ward off ruin." So he spoke, and grief came over the Argives at his boasting; and above all it stirred the heart of war-minded Peneleos. He rushed at Acamas, but Acamas did not stand up to the onset of lord Peneleos. Peneleos stabbed Ilioneus instead, son of Phorbas rich in flocks, whom Hermes loved above all the Trojans and to whom he had given wealth; and Ilioneus was the only child his mother bore him.

14.493 Peneleos stabbed him then under the brow, at the roots of the eye, and forced the eyeball out; the spear went right through the eye and out through the nape of the neck, and he sank down, spreading out both his hands. Peneleos drew his sharp sword, drove it into the middle of his neck, and struck the head, helmet and all, off onto the ground; and the heavy spear was still in the eye. Holding it up like the head of a poppy, he showed it to the Trojans and spoke in triumph: "Trojans, tell the dear father and mother of proud Ilioneus for me to wail for him in their halls; for neither will the wife of Promachus son of Alegenor rejoice at her dear husband's coming, when we sons of the Achaeans

5 Acamas is another son of Antenor, so the dead Archelochus was his brother.

return with our ships from Troy." So he spoke, and trembling seized the limbs of them all, and each looked about for a way to escape sheer destruction.

14.508 Tell me now, Muses who have your homes on Olympus, who was the first of the Achaeans to carry off bloodstained spoils from men, once the famous Earth-shaker had turned the tide of battle. Telamonian Ajax was the first: he stabbed Hyrtius son of Gyrtius, leader of the stout-hearted Mysians. Antilochus killed Phalces and Mermerus and stripped them; Meriones killed Morys and Hippotion; Teucer slew Prothoon and Periphetes. Then the son of Atreus stabbed Hyperenor, shepherd of the people, in the flank, and the bronze tore through and drained out his entrails; his life rushed out in haste through the gaping wound, and darkness covered his eyes. But Ajax, the swift son of Oïleus, killed the most; for there was no one his equal at chasing down fleeing men on foot, when Zeus stirs up panic among them.

Book 15

The Trojans at the ships
Zeus wakes, and Hector, backed by Apollo, carries fire to the ships.

15.1 But when in their flight they had crossed the stakes and the ditch, and many had been brought down at the hands of the Danaans, they halted and stood their ground beside their chariots, pale and terror-stricken. Then Zeus awoke on the peaks of Ida beside Hera of the golden throne. He sprang up and stood, and saw the Trojans and the Achaeans: the one side driven in rout, the other, the Argives, driving them on from behind, and among them lord Poseidon. And he saw Hector lying on the plain, his companions sitting around him. He was gripped by painful gasping, dazed in his heart, vomiting blood, for it was not the feeblest of the Achaeans who had hit him. Seeing him, the father of men and gods felt pity, and with a terrible scowl he spoke to Hera:

15.14 "Truly, Hera, you impossible one, your mischief-making trickery has stopped godlike Hector from fighting and put his men to flight. I wouldn't be surprised if you were the first to reap the fruits of your painful scheming once again, and I flogged you with lashes. Don't you remember when you hung from on high? I fastened two anvils to your feet and bound your hands with a golden chain that could not be broken, and you hung in the bright air and the clouds. The gods throughout high Olympus were outraged, but they couldn't come near and set you free. Anyone I caught I would seize and hurl from the threshold, until he reached the earth with little strength left in him. Even so, the

ceaseless pain I felt for godlike Heracles did not leave my heart. You had won over the storm-winds with the help of the North Wind and sent him across the barren sea, plotting evil, and then carried him off to well-settled Cos. 15.29 I rescued him from there and brought him back to horse-pasturing Argos, though he had suffered much. I'm reminding you of these things again so that you'll stop your deceptions, and see whether your lovemaking and your bed do you any good, the bed you came from the other gods to share with me, and so deceived me." So he spoke, and ox-eyed queenly Hera shuddered, and raising her voice she spoke winged words to him: "Let Earth be my witness now, and broad Heaven above, and the down-flowing water of the Styx, which is the greatest and most terrible oath for the blessed gods, and your own sacred head, and the bed of our marriage, by which I would never swear falsely:

15.41 it is not by my will that Poseidon the Earth-shaker is harming the Trojans and Hector and giving aid to the others. No, it must be his own heart that urges and drives him on: he saw the Achaeans hard pressed beside their ships and pitied them. For my part, I would even advise him to go wherever you lead, lord of the dark clouds." So she spoke, and the father of men and gods smiled, and answering her he spoke winged words: "If from now on, ox-eyed queenly Hera, you would sit among the immortals thinking as I do, then Poseidon, however much he wants otherwise, would quickly turn his mind to follow your heart and mine.

15.53 But if you really are speaking the truth, and frankly, go now among the tribes of the gods and summon Iris here, and Apollo famed for his bow. Let her go among the host of the bronze-clad Achaeans and tell lord Poseidon to stop fighting and go home to his own halls; and let Phoebus Apollo rouse Hector to battle, breathe strength into him again, and make him forget the pains that are now wearing him down in his heart. Then let him turn the Achaeans back once more, stirring up a strengthless panic in them, so that they flee and fall back among the many-benched ships of Achilles son of Peleus. And Achilles will

send out his comrade Patroclus; and shining Hector will kill him with the spear before Ilium, after Patroclus has destroyed many other young men, among them my own son, godlike Sarpedon. 15.68 In anger over him, godlike Achilles will kill Hector. From then on, I tell you, I will bring about a counterattack from the ships, steadily and without a break, until the Achaeans take steep Ilium through the plans of Athena. But until then I will not give up my anger, nor will I let any other of the immortals help the Danaans here, until the desire of the son of Peleus is fulfilled, as I promised him at the first and nodded assent with my head, on the day when the goddess Thetis took hold of my knees and begged me to honor Achilles, sacker of cities."

HERA AMONG THE GODS

Hera brings Zeus's anger to Olympus, Athena restrains Ares, and Poseidon is ordered out of the battle.

15.78 So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera did not disobey, but went from the mountains of Ida to high Olympus. As when the mind of a man darts off—a man who has traveled over much of the earth, and in his shrewd mind thinks of being here, or there, and longs for many things—so swiftly did queenly Hera fly in her eagerness. She came to steep Olympus and found the immortal gods gathered together in the house of Zeus. When they saw her they all sprang up and greeted her, holding out their cups. She passed by the others, but took the cup from fair-cheeked Themis, since she was the first to come running to meet her, and raising her voice she spoke winged words to her: "Hera, why have you come? You look distraught. Surely the son of Cronus, your husband, has given you a bad fright."

15.92 Then the goddess white-armed Hera answered her: "Don't ask me about this, goddess Themis. You know yourself what his temper is like, how overbearing and harsh. But you go ahead and begin the feast for the gods in the halls, the feast where all share alike, and you'll hear, along with all the immortals, what evil deeds Zeus is announcing. I don't think everyone's heart

will be equally glad, mortals' or gods', even if someone is still feasting in good cheer now." So saying, queenly Hera sat down, and the gods throughout the house of Zeus were troubled. She laughed with her lips, but her forehead above her dark brows did not relax; and in her indignation she spoke among them all:

15.104 "Fools that we are, raging against Zeus in our folly! Do we still mean to go up close and stop him, by words or by force? He sits apart and doesn't care or give it a thought, for he says that among the immortal gods he is clearly the greatest in might and strength. So put up with whatever evil he sends each of you. Already, I think, grief has been dealt to Ares: his son has died in battle, the dearest of men to him, Ascalaphus, whom mighty Ares calls his own." So she spoke, and Ares struck both his sturdy thighs with the flats of his hands, and lamenting he spoke:[1]

15.115 "Don't blame me now, you who have your homes on Olympus, if I go to the ships of the Achaeans to avenge the killing of my son—even if it is my fate to be struck by Zeus's thunderbolt and lie among the corpses in the blood and dust." So he spoke, and ordered Terror and Rout to yoke his horses, while he himself put on his gleaming armor. Then yet another anger and wrath, still greater and more grievous, would have come from Zeus upon the immortals, had not Athena, fearing for all the gods, rushed out through the doorway, leaving the chair where she sat. She took the helmet from his head and the shield from his shoulders, took the bronze spear from his heavy hand and stood it upright, and she rebuked impetuous Ares with these words:

15.128 "Madman, crazed in your wits, you're lost! Have you got ears only for nothing, and have your sense and your shame perished? Don't you hear what the goddess white-armed Hera says, who has just come from Olympian Zeus? Or do you want to fill up your own measure of many evils and then come back to Olympus under compulsion, for all your grief, and sow a great evil for all the rest of us? For at once he will leave the high-

1 Ascalaphus, son of Ares, was killed by the Trojan Deiphobus in Book 13.

hearted Trojans and the Achaeans and come to Olympus to throw us into turmoil, and he will seize us one after another, the guilty and the guiltless alike. So now I tell you again: let go of your anger over your son. Already many a man better than he in strength and might of hand has been slain, or will be slain hereafter; and it is hard to save the lineage and offspring of all men."

15.142 So saying, she sat impetuous Ares down on his chair. And Hera called Apollo out of the house, and Iris, who is messenger for the immortal gods, and raising her voice she spoke winged words to them: "Zeus orders you both to come to Ida as fast as you can. And when you have come and looked upon the face of Zeus, do whatever he urges and commands." So saying, queenly Hera went back and sat down on her chair; and the two of them sprang up and flew off. They reached Ida of the many springs, mother of wild beasts, and found the far-seeing son of Cronus sitting on the summit of Gargarus, with a fragrant cloud wreathed around him. The two came and stood before Zeus the cloud-gatherer; and seeing them he was not angry in his heart, since they had promptly obeyed the words of his dear wife. And he spoke winged words to Iris first:

15.158 "Go on, swift Iris, report all this to lord Poseidon, and don't be a false messenger. Order him to leave off fighting and war and go among the tribes of the gods, or into the shining sea. And if he won't obey my words but disregards them, then let him consider in his mind and heart that, strong as he is, he may not dare to stand his ground when I come against him; for I say I am far greater than he in strength, and the elder by birth. Yet his heart does not shrink from calling himself my equal, though the others too shudder at me." So he spoke, and wind-footed swift Iris did not disobey, but went down from the mountains of Ida to holy Ilium.

15.170 As when snow or chill hail flies from the clouds under the blast of the North Wind, born in the bright air, so swiftly flew swift Iris in her eagerness; and standing close she spoke to the famous Earth-shaker: "I have come here with a message for you, dark-haired Earth-holder, from aegis-bearing Zeus. He

orders you to leave off fighting and war and go among the tribes of the gods, or into the shining sea. And if you won't obey his words but disregard them, he threatens that he too will come here to fight you face to face; and he tells you to keep out of reach of his hands, for he says he is far greater than you in strength, and the elder by birth. Yet your heart does not shrink from calling yourself his equal, though the others too shudder at him."

15.184 Then, deeply angered, the famous Earth-shaker spoke to her: "Well now! Great as he is, he has spoken arrogantly, if he means to hold me back by force against my will, when I am his equal in honor. For we are three brothers born of Cronus, whom Rhea bore: Zeus and I, and the third is Hades, who rules over the dead. All things were divided in three, and each received his share of honor. When we shook the lots, I won the gray sea to dwell in forever, Hades won the misty dark, and Zeus won the broad sky in the bright air and the clouds; but the earth is still common to all, and high Olympus too.

15.194 So I will not live by Zeus's will at all; strong as he is, let him stay quietly in his own third share. And let him not try to frighten me with his hands, as if I were an utter coward. It would be better for him to berate with violent words the daughters and sons he fathered himself, who will heed his urging even if they must." Then wind-footed swift Iris answered him: "Am I really to carry this message to Zeus, dark-haired Earth-holder, so harsh and so defiant? Or will you change it a little? The minds of the noble can be turned. You know how the Furies always side with the elder." Then Poseidon the Earth-shaker spoke to her in turn:[2]

15.206 "Goddess Iris, what you have said is quite right; it is a good thing, too, when a messenger knows what is proper. But this bitter grief comes upon my heart and spirit whenever he wants to rail with angry words at one who has an equal share and is allotted an equal portion. Still, for now I will give way,

2 The Furies uphold, among other things, the rights of elders; Zeus is Poseidon's elder brother.

though I resent it. But I will tell you something else, and this threat I mean from the heart: if, against the will of me and of Athena who brings the spoil, of Hera, Hermes, and lord Hephaestus, he spares steep Ilium and refuses to sack it and give great might to the Argives, let him know this: between the two of us there will be anger past healing." So saying, the Earth-shaker left the Achaean host and went and plunged into the sea, and the Achaean warriors missed him.

APOLLO REVIVES HECTOR

Apollo restores Hector and, shaking the aegis, drives the Greeks back over their wall.

15.220 And then Zeus the cloud-gatherer spoke to Apollo: "Go now, dear Phoebus, to bronze-armored Hector. The Earth-holder, the Earth-shaker, has now gone off into the shining sea, shunning my towering anger; otherwise the others would certainly have heard of our fight, even the gods below who are gathered around Cronus. But this was far better both for me and for himself, that, resentful as he was, he gave way to my hands beforehand, since it would never have been settled without sweat. But you take the tasseled aegis in your hands, and shake it hard to rout the Achaean warriors; and you yourself, far-shooting god, take care of shining Hector. Rouse great fury in him until the Achaeans in their flight reach their ships and the Hellespont.

15.234 From then on I myself will devise both deed and word, so that the Achaeans may catch their breath again from their toil." So he spoke, and Apollo did not disregard his father, but went down from the mountains of Ida like a swift hawk, killer of doves, the swiftest of winged things. He found the son of wise Priam, godlike Hector, sitting up—he was no longer lying down—and just gathering his spirit again, recognizing his comrades around him; and his gasping and sweating had stopped, since the mind of aegis-bearing Zeus had roused him. Standing close, Apollo who works from afar spoke to him: "Hector, son of Priam,

why are you sitting here apart from the others, with your strength failing? Has some trouble come upon you?"

15.246 Then, barely able, Hector of the flashing helmet spoke to him: "Who are you, best of gods, who question me face to face? Haven't you heard how, as I was killing his comrades by the sterns of the Achaean ships, Ajax, good at the war cry, hit me in the chest with a stone and stopped my furious fighting? I truly thought I would reach the dead and the house of Hades this very day, since I was gasping out my life." Then lord Apollo who works from afar spoke to him in turn: "Take heart now: such is the helper the son of Cronus has sent out from Ida to stand by you and defend you—Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword, I who have protected you before now, both you and your steep city.

15.258 But come now, urge your many charioteers to drive their swift horses at the hollow ships; and I will go ahead and make the whole path smooth for the horses, and turn the Achaean warriors to flight." So saying, he breathed great strength into the shepherd of the people. As when a stalled horse, fed on barley at the manger, breaks his tether and gallops over the plain with drumming hooves, used to bathing in a fair-flowing river, exulting; he holds his head high, and his mane streams about his shoulders, and trusting in his splendor his knees carry him lightly to the haunts and pastures of the horses: so Hector moved his feet and knees swiftly, urging on the charioteers, once he had heard the god's voice.

15.271 And as when dogs and country men give chase to a horned stag or a wild goat, but a sheer rock or a shady thicket saves it, and it is not their lot to catch it; and at their shouting a bearded lion appears in their path and at once turns them all back, eager though they are: so the Danaans for a while kept following in a mass, thrusting with swords and two-pointed spears; but when they saw Hector going along the ranks of men, they were afraid, and all their hearts sank to their feet. Then Thoas son of Andraemon spoke among them, by far the best of the Aetolians, skilled with the javelin and good in the stand-up fight; and in the assembly few of the Achaeans could beat him when

the young men contended in speeches. With good intent he addressed them and spoke:

15.286 "Look at this! What a great marvel I see with my own eyes: Hector has risen up again, escaping his doom. Surely each of us hoped in his heart that he had died at the hands of Ajax son of Telamon. But some god has again rescued and saved Hector, who has loosened the knees of many Danaans, as I think he will now too; for it isn't without Zeus the loud-thunderer that he stands there in the front line, so eager. But come, let's all do as I say. Let's order the main body to go back to the ships; and we ourselves, all of us who claim to be the best in the army, let's stand firm, and see whether we can check him first by meeting him with our spears raised. I think that, eager as he is, he'll be afraid in his heart to plunge into the throng of the Danaans."

15.300 So he spoke, and they listened readily and obeyed him. Those around Ajax and lord Idomeneus, Teucer, Meriones, and Meges, equal of Ares, called the best fighters together and set the battle in array against Hector and the Trojans, while behind them the main body made their way back to the ships of the Achaeans. The Trojans charged forward in a mass, and Hector led them, taking long strides; and before him went Phoebus Apollo, his shoulders wrapped in cloud, holding the furious aegis, terrible, shaggy all around, magnificent, which the smith Hephaestus gave to Zeus to carry to put men to rout. Holding this in his hands he led the troops.

15.312 The Argives stood their ground in a mass. A shrill cry rose from both sides, and arrows leapt from the bowstrings. Of the many spears flung from bold hands, some stuck in the flesh of young men swift in battle, but many fell short in between, before they could taste the white flesh, and stood fixed in the ground, longing to glut themselves on flesh. As long as Phoebus Apollo held the aegis motionless in his hands, the missiles of both sides struck home and men fell. But when he looked the Danaans of the swift horses in the face and shook it, and himself gave a tremendous shout, he bewitched the hearts in their breasts, and they forgot their furious fighting. 15.323 And as when

two wild beasts throw a herd of cattle or a great flock of sheep into confusion in the dead of black night, coming on them suddenly when the herdsman is not there: so the Achaeans fled in panic, strengthless; for Apollo sent panic among them and gave glory to the Trojans and Hector. Then man killed man as the battle scattered. Hector killed Stichius and Arcesilaus, the one a leader of the bronze-clad Boeotians, the other a trusted comrade of great-hearted Menestheus; and Aeneas killed Medon and Iasus. Medon was the illegitimate son of godlike Oïleus and brother of Ajax, but he lived in Phylace, away from his native land, because he had killed a man, a kinsman of his stepmother Eriopis, Oïleus' wife. Iasus, for his part, was a leader of the Athenians, and was called the son of Sphelus, son of Bucolus.

15.339 Polydamas killed Mecisteus, and Polites killed Echius in the front line of battle, and godlike Agenor killed Clonius. And Paris hit Deïochus from behind, at the base of the shoulder, as he fled among the front fighters, and drove the bronze clean through. While the Trojans were stripping the armor from these, the Achaeans, tangled in the dug ditch and the stakes, fled this way and that, and were forced back behind the wall. And Hector shouted far and wide to the Trojans to rush on the ships and leave the bloody spoils: "Anyone I see away from the ships, on the other side, I'll contrive his death right there; and his kinsmen and kinswomen won't give him his share of fire when he's dead, but dogs will tear him apart before our city."

15.352 So saying, he brought the whip down from his shoulder and lashed his horses, calling to the Trojans along the ranks; and they all shouted with him and drove their chariot-pulling horses on with an unearthly roar. Ahead of them Phoebus Apollo easily kicked the banks of the deep ditch down into the middle with his feet, and bridged it with a path long and wide, as far as a spear flies when a man throws it to test his strength. Along it they poured forward rank on rank, with Apollo before them holding the precious aegis; and he threw down the wall of the Achaeans with great ease, as a boy does with sand by the sea, who makes playthings in his childishness and then, still

playing, knocks them down again with his feet and hands. So you, lord Phoebus, wrecked the great toil and labor of the Argives, and stirred up panic among them.

THE TROJANS REACH THE SHIPS

Patroclus runs to rouse Achilles; Hector and Ajax fight over one ship, and Zeus snaps Teucer's bowstring.

15.367 So they were held back beside the ships and stood their ground, calling to one another, and each man lifted his hands to all the gods and prayed aloud. And most of all Gerenian Nestor, the guardian of the Achaeans, prayed, stretching out his hand to the starry sky: "Father Zeus, if ever any of us in Argos, rich in wheat, burned the fat thigh-pieces of an ox or a sheep for you and prayed to come home, and you promised and nodded your assent, remember those things, Olympian, and ward off the pitiless day. Don't let the Achaeans be beaten down like this by the Trojans." So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus, wise in counsel, thundered loudly when he heard the prayers of the old man, the son of Neleus.

15.379 When the Trojans heard the thunder of Zeus who bears the aegis, they leapt all the more fiercely at the Argives and set their minds on battle. As a great wave of the wide-pathed sea comes crashing down over the sides of a ship when the force of the wind drives it on, for that is what swells the waves most of all, so the Trojans with a great shout came down over the wall. They drove their horses in and fought at the sterns hand to hand with two-pointed spears, some from their chariots, the others from high up on the black ships they had climbed. These fought with long pikes that lay ready for them on the ships, jointed pikes made for fighting at sea and clad with bronze at the tip.

15.390 As long as the Achaeans and Trojans were fighting around the wall, away from the swift ships, Patroclus sat in the hut of brave Eurypylus and cheered him with talk, and spread on his grievous wound the herbs that heal dark pains. But when he saw the Trojans surging over the wall, and the shouting and

panic of the Danaans rose, then he groaned, struck both his thighs with the flat of his hands, and spoke in lament: "Eurypylus, I can't stay here with you any longer, however much you need me. A great struggle has broken out. Let your attendant cheer you, while I hurry to Achilles to urge him to fight.

15.403 Who knows whether, with some god's help, I might stir his heart by my persuading? A friend's persuasion is a good thing." So he spoke, and his feet carried him away. The Achaeans held firm against the advancing Trojans, yet they could not thrust them back from the ships, though the Trojans were fewer. Nor could the Trojans ever break through the ranks of the Danaans and get in among the huts and the ships. As a carpenter's line makes a ship's timber straight in the hands of a skilled craftsman, who knows his whole craft well by the promptings of Athena, so the battle and the war between them were stretched evenly. Some fought around one ship, others around another, but Hector went straight at glorious Ajax.

15.416 The two of them struggled over a single ship. Hector could not drive Ajax off and set the ship on fire, and Ajax could not thrust Hector back, since a god had brought him there. Then shining Ajax struck Caletor, son of Clytius, in the chest with his spear as he carried fire toward the ship. He fell with a thud, and the torch dropped from his hand. When Hector saw with his own eyes his cousin fallen in the dust in front of the black ship, he called to the Trojans and Lycians with a loud shout: "Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians who fight hand to hand, don't give way from the battle yet in this tight place. Save the son of Clytius, so the Achaeans don't strip him of his armor, now that he has fallen where the ships are gathered."

15.429 So he spoke, and hurled his shining spear at Ajax. He missed him, but then hit Lycophron, son of Mastor, Ajax's attendant from Cythera, who lived with him because he had killed a man in holy Cythera. Hector struck him on the head above the ear with the sharp bronze as he stood close by Ajax, and he fell on his back from the ship's stern to the ground in the dust, and his limbs went slack. Ajax shuddered and said to his

brother: "Teucer, my friend, our trusted companion has been killed, the son of Mastor, who came to us from Cythera and lived in our house, and whom we honored in our halls just as we honored our own dear parents. Great-hearted Hector has killed him. Where now are your arrows of swift death, and the bow that Phoebus Apollo gave you?"

15.442 So he spoke, and Teucer understood. He came running and stood beside him, holding in his hand his back-bent bow and the quiver that held his arrows, and very quickly he began shooting at the Trojans. He hit Cleitus, splendid son of Peisenor and companion of Polydamas, the noble son of Panthous, as he held the reins in his hands. He was busy with the horses, driving them where the ranks were thrown into the greatest confusion, to do Hector and the Trojans a favor. But disaster came upon him swiftly, and no one could ward it off from him, though they longed to. The arrow of many groans struck him in the back of the neck. He tumbled from the chariot, and the horses shied back, rattling the empty chariot. Lord Polydamas saw it at once, and was the first to go and meet the horses. He gave them to Astynous, son of Protiaon, and urged him again and again to keep them close by and watch him; and he himself went back and mingled with the foremost fighters.

15.458 Teucer took another arrow for Hector, armored in bronze, and he would have ended the battle at the ships of the Achaeans if he had hit him in his moment of triumph and taken his life. But he did not escape the shrewd mind of Zeus, who was guarding Hector and robbed Telamonian Teucer of that glory: he snapped the well-twisted string on Teucer's flawless bow just as he was drawing it. The bronze-weighted arrow went wide, astray, and the bow fell from his hand. Teucer shuddered and said to his brother: "Ah, no! Surely some god is cutting short all our plans for battle. He struck the bow out of my hand and snapped the new-twisted string I tied on this morning, so that it would bear the arrows leaping from it one after another." Then great Telamonian Ajax answered him:

15.472 "My friend, let the bow and the swarm of arrows lie, since a god has wrecked them out of spite for the Danaans. Take a long spear in your hands and a shield on your shoulder, fight the Trojans, and rouse the rest of the troops. Even if they do overpower us, don't let them take the well-benched ships without a struggle. Let us set our minds on battle." So he spoke, and Teucer laid the bow away in the huts. He set a four-layered shield around his shoulders, and on his mighty head he placed a well-made helmet with a horsehair crest, and the plume nodded terribly above it. He took a valiant spear tipped with sharp bronze and set off, and running very fast he came and stood beside Ajax. When Hector saw that Teucer's arrows had been foiled, he called to the Trojans and Lycians with a loud shout:

15.486 "Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians who fight hand to hand, be men, my friends, and remember your fierce courage among the hollow ships. I have seen with my own eyes the arrows of their best man foiled by Zeus. The help Zeus gives to men is easy to recognize, both when he grants some men the greater glory and when he diminishes others and is unwilling to defend them, as he is diminishing the strength of the Argives now and helping us. So fight at the ships all together. Whoever of you is hit or stabbed and meets his death and his fate, let him die. It is no disgrace for him to die defending his fatherland. His wife and children after him are safe, and his house and his land untouched, if the Achaeans go off with their ships to their own dear native land."

15.500 So he spoke, and stirred the strength and spirit of each man. On the other side Ajax called to his companions: "Shame, Argives! Now the choice is plain: either we perish, or we are saved and thrust this disaster back from the ships. Do you expect, if Hector of the flashing helmet takes the ships, that you will each walk home to your native land on foot? Don't you hear Hector urging on his whole army, Hector who is mad to burn the ships? It isn't to a dance he's calling them, but to battle. For us there's no better thought or plan than this: to close with them hand to hand, our fists and fury against theirs. Better to settle it

once and for all, whether we die or live, than to be ground down for a long while in grim combat, like this, beside the ships, at the hands of lesser men."

15.514 So he spoke, and stirred the strength and spirit of each man. Then Hector killed Schedius, son of Perimedes, leader of the Phocians, and Ajax killed Laodamas, leader of the foot soldiers, splendid son of Antenor. Polydamas killed and stripped Otus of Cyllene, companion of the son of Phyleus and leader of the great-hearted Epeians. Meges saw it and sprang at him, but Polydamas ducked away beneath the blow, and Meges missed him, for Apollo would not let the son of Panthous be beaten down among the foremost fighters. Instead he stabbed Croesmus in the middle of the chest with his spear. He fell with a thud, and Meges began stripping the armor from his shoulders. 15.525 Meanwhile Dolops sprang at him, a man skilled with the spear, son of Lampus, the finest son that Lampus, son of Laomedon, ever fathered, and well versed in fierce courage. Rushing at him from close by, he stabbed the son of Phyleus with his spear in the middle of the shield; but the solid corslet he wore, fitted with curved plates, protected him. Phyleus had once brought it from Ephyra, from the river Selleïs. A guest-friend of his, Euphetes, lord of men, had given it to him to wear into war as a defense against enemy men, and now it kept destruction from his son's body too. Then Meges stabbed with his sharp spear at the very top of the ridge of Dolops' bronze helmet, thick with horsehair, and broke off the horsehair plume; and it fell whole to the ground in the dust, shining with fresh scarlet dye. 15.539 While Dolops stood his ground fighting Meges and still hoped for victory, warlike Menelaus came to Meges' defense. He took his stand off to one side with his spear, unseen, and struck Dolops in the shoulder from behind. The point drove eagerly through his chest, pressing onward, and he pitched forward on his face. The two of them rushed to strip the bronze armor from his shoulders. But Hector called on all his kinsmen, and first of all he rebuked the son of Hicetaon, mighty Melanippus. Melanippus used to graze his shambling cattle in Percote

while the enemy were still far away; but when the curved ships of the Danaans arrived, he came back to Ilium and stood out among the Trojans, and he lived with Priam, who honored him as one of his own children. Hector rebuked him, and spoke to him, and called him by name:

15.553 "Is this how we're going to give way, Melanippus? Isn't your own heart moved at all by your cousin's death? Don't you see how busy they are over Dolops' armor? Follow me, then! We can't fight the Argives from a distance any longer—not until we've killed them, or they take steep Ilium from top to bottom and kill its citizens." So he spoke, and led the way, and Melanippus followed, a man like a god. And great Telamonian Ajax urged on the Argives: "Friends, be men, put shame in your hearts, and feel shame before one another in the fierce clashes of battle. When men feel shame, more of them are saved than killed; but when they run, no glory comes of it, and no help either."

15.565 So he spoke, and they too were eager to defend themselves. They took his words to heart and fenced the ships with a wall of bronze; but Zeus roused the Trojans against them. And Menelaus, good at the war cry, urged on Antilochus: "Antilochus, no other Achaean is younger than you, or faster on his feet, or as valiant as you are in battle. If only you would leap out and hit some Trojan!" So he spoke, and hurried back again, but he had stirred Antilochus. He leapt out from among the foremost fighters and, glancing warily around him, hurled his shining spear, and the Trojans shrank back as the man threw. He did not let fly the weapon in vain, but hit the son of Hicetaon, proud Melanippus, in the chest beside the nipple as he was coming into the battle. He fell with a thud, and darkness covered his eyes.

15.579 Antilochus sprang at him like a dog that darts at a wounded fawn which a hunter has hit as it leapt from its lair, and loosened its limbs: so at you, Melanippus, Antilochus, staunch in battle, leapt to strip your armor. But he did not escape the notice of godlike Hector, who came running through

the fighting to face him. Antilochus did not stand his ground, quick warrior though he was, but fled, like a wild beast that has done some harm, that has killed a dog or a herdsman beside his cattle, and runs off before a crowd of men can gather: so the son of Nestor fled, and the Trojans and Hector, with an unearthly din, poured their missiles of many groans after him. He turned and stood when he reached the throng of his companions.

HECTOR BRINGS FIRE TO THE SHIPS

Driven on by Zeus, Hector breaks into the Greek ranks, and Ajax defends the ships from their decks.

15.592 The Trojans, like flesh-eating lions, rushed at the ships, carrying out the commands of Zeus, who kept rousing great strength in them, while he bewitched the spirit of the Argives, robbed them of glory, and spurred the Trojans on. For his heart was set on giving glory to Hector, son of Priam, so that he might hurl wondrous, tireless fire onto the curved ships and bring to pass the whole of Thetis' prayer, a prayer beyond all measure. Zeus, wise in counsel, was waiting to see with his own eyes the glare of a burning ship. From that moment he meant to drive the Trojans back from the ships and give glory to the Danaans. 15.603 With this in mind he roused Hector, son of Priam, against the hollow ships, though Hector was more than eager himself. He raged like Ares, brandisher of the spear, or like deadly fire raging in the mountains, in the thickets of a deep forest. Foam formed around his mouth, his eyes blazed beneath his fierce brows, and the helmet shook terribly around his temples as Hector fought. For Zeus himself, from the upper air, was his defender, and he honored and glorified him, one man alone among many; for Hector was to be short-lived. Already Pallas Athena was driving his day of doom upon him, at the hands of the mighty son of Peleus. 15.615 He kept testing the ranks of men, wanting to break through wherever he saw the thickest throng and the finest armor; but even so he could not break through, eager as he was. For they held firm, locked together like a tower,

like a great sheer cliff close by the gray sea, which stands up to the swift paths of the shrill winds and the swollen waves that belch against it: so the Danaans withstood the Trojans steadfastly and did not flee. But Hector, blazing with fire all over, leapt into the throng and fell upon them as a wave falls on a swift ship, a violent wave raised by the wind beneath the clouds, and the ship is hidden entirely in foam, and the wind's terrible blast roars in the sail, and the sailors tremble in their hearts with fear, for they are being carried out from under death by the narrowest margin: so the spirit in the breasts of the Achaeans was torn. 15.630 He was like a murderous lion that falls upon cattle grazing in countless numbers in the low meadow of a great marsh, and among them is a herdsman who does not yet really know how to fight a wild beast over the slaughter of a crooked-horned cow. He keeps pace always with the first and the last of the cattle, but the lion springs into the middle and devours a cow, and all the rest scatter in terror: so then all the Achaeans were routed, wondrously, by Hector and father Zeus. Yet Hector killed only one, Periphetes of Mycenae, dear son of Copreus, who used to carry the messages of lord Eurystheus to mighty Heracles. 15.641 From that far worse father was born a better son, in every kind of excellence, both in running and in fighting, and in mind he was among the first men of Mycenae. And now he gave Hector the greater glory. For as he turned back he tripped on the rim of his shield, which he carried reaching to his feet as a defense against spears. Tangled in it, he fell on his back, and the helmet around his temples rang terribly as he fell. Hector was quick to see it. He came running and stood beside him, drove his spear into his chest, and killed him right beside his own companions. They could not help him, grieved as they were for their companion, for they themselves were badly afraid of godlike Hector.

15.653 The Achaeans were now face to face with the ships, and the outermost ships, those drawn up first, closed around them, while the Trojans poured in after them. Under compulsion the Argives gave way from the first line of ships, but stayed right

there beside the huts in a mass, and did not scatter through the camp, for shame and fear held them, and they kept calling to one another without pause. And most of all Gerenian Nestor, the guardian of the Achaeans, pleaded with each man, imploring him by his parents: "Friends, be men, and put in your hearts shame before other people. Remember, each of you, your children and wives, your property and your parents, whether your parents are living or dead. For their sake, though they are not here, I beg you on my knees: stand firm, and don't turn to flight."

15.667 So he spoke, and stirred the strength and spirit of each man. And Athena thrust the wondrous cloud of mist from their eyes, and light came strongly to them on both sides, both toward the ships and toward the battle that spares no one. They could make out Hector, good at the war cry, and his companions, both those who stood back behind and were not fighting and those who were fighting the battle beside the swift ships. Nor did it please the heart of great-hearted Ajax any longer to stand where the other sons of the Achaeans had drawn back. He ranged along the decks of the ships with long strides, wielding in his hands a great pike for fighting at sea, jointed with rivets, twenty-two cubits long.

15.679 As when a man well skilled at riding horses picks out four from many and yokes them together, and drives them at full speed from the plain toward a great city along a busy road, and many men and women gaze at him, while he, steady and secure, keeps leaping from one horse to another as they fly along: so Ajax ranged over many decks of the swift ships with long strides, and his voice reached to the sky, and always with terrible shouts he ordered the Danaans to defend the ships and the huts. Nor did Hector stay in the throng of the close-armored Trojans. As a tawny eagle swoops on a flock of winged birds feeding beside a river, geese or cranes or long-necked swans, so Hector made straight for a dark-prowed ship, rushing at it head-on; and Zeus pushed him on from behind with his huge hand, and urged on the troops along with him.

15.696 Once again bitter battle broke out beside the ships. You would have said they met each other in war unwearied and untiring, so furiously did they fight. And this was their thinking as they fought: the Achaeans did not believe they would escape from disaster, but thought they would perish, while the heart in each Trojan's breast hoped to burn the ships and kill the Achaean warriors. With these thoughts in mind they set upon one another. Hector took hold of the stern of a seafaring ship, a fine, swift-sailing ship that had brought Protesilaus to Troy and never carried him back to his native land. 15.707 Around his ship the Achaeans and Trojans were killing one another hand to hand. They no longer stood apart waiting for the rush of arrows and javelins, but stood close, all of one spirit, and fought with sharp battle-axes and hatchets, with great swords and two-pointed spears. Many fine swords with black-bound hilts fell to the ground, some from men's hands, some from the shoulders of men as they fought; and the black earth ran with blood. Once Hector had taken hold of the stern, he would not let go, but kept the stern-post ornament in his grip, and he called to the Trojans:

15.718 "Bring fire, and raise the war cry yourselves, all together! Now Zeus has given us a day worth all the rest, to take the ships that came here against the will of the gods and brought us so many sorrows, because of the cowardice of the elders, who held me back when I wanted to fight at the sterns of the ships, and restrained the army. But if wide-seeing Zeus led our minds astray back then, now he himself urges us on and commands us." So he spoke, and they leapt all the more fiercely at the Argives. Ajax no longer held his ground, for he was being forced back by missiles. Thinking he was going to die, he drew back a little onto the seven-foot bench and left the deck of the balanced ship. There he stood on the watch, and with his spear he kept warding off from the ships any Trojan who brought tireless fire; and always with terrible shouts he ordered the Danaans:

15.733 "Friends, Danaan warriors, servants of Ares, be men, my friends, and remember your fierce courage. Do we think there are helpers somewhere behind us, or some stronger wall that

might ward off ruin from men? There's no city near at hand, fitted with towers, where we could defend ourselves with people to turn the tide. No: we are camped on the plain of the close-armored Trojans, with our backs to the sea, far from our native land. So our deliverance lies in our hands, not in going soft in battle." He spoke, and pressed on furiously with his sharp spear. Whatever Trojan rushed at the hollow ships with blazing fire, to please Hector who urged them on, Ajax would wait for him and stab him with his long spear; twelve men he stabbed hand to hand in front of the ships.

Book 16

Patroclus
In Achilles' armor Patroclus routs the Trojans and kills Sarpedon, and is killed by Hector.

16.1 So they fought around the well-benched ship. But Patroclus came and stood beside Achilles, shepherd of the people, shedding hot tears like a spring of dark water that pours its murky stream down a sheer rock face where not even goats can climb. When swift-footed godlike Achilles saw him, he pitied him, and he addressed him and spoke winged words: "Why are you in tears, Patroclus, like a little girl who runs beside her mother and begs to be picked up? She clutches at her dress and holds her back as she hurries along, and looks up at her tearfully until she lifts her up. Like her, Patroclus, you are letting the soft tears fall. Do you have something to tell the Myrmidons, or me myself? Or have you heard some news from Phthia that no one else has?

16.14 They say Menoetius, son of Actor, is still alive, and Peleus, son of Aeacus, lives on among the Myrmidons, doesn't he? Those are the two whose deaths would grieve us most deeply. Or is it the Argives you are mourning, because they are dying beside the hollow ships for their own transgression? Speak out, don't hide it in your mind, so that we both may know." Then with a heavy groan you spoke to him, horseman Patroclus: "Achilles, son of Peleus, by far the mightiest of the Achaeans, don't be angry with me. Such grief has overpowered the Achaeans! All those who used to be the best of them are lying among the ships, hit by arrows or wounded by spears.

16.25 The son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes, has been hit; Odysseus, famed for his spear, has been wounded, and Agamemnon too; and Eurypylus as well has been hit in the thigh by an arrow. Healers skilled in many drugs are tending them, treating their wounds. But you, Achilles, there is no dealing with you. May such an anger as the one you nurse never take hold of me—you whose courage is a curse! What good will anyone else ever get from you, even in generations to come, if you will not ward off shameful ruin from the Argives? Pitiless man, the horseman Peleus was not your father after all, and Thetis was not your mother: the gray sea bore you, and the towering cliffs, so harsh is your mind. 16.36 But if in your heart you are shying away from some prophecy, and your queenly mother has told you something from Zeus, then at least send me out quickly, and let the rest of the Myrmidon army go with me, in the hope that I may be some light of rescue for the Danaans. And give me your armor to strap on my shoulders, in case the Trojans take me for you and hold off from the fighting, and the warlike sons of the Achaeans, worn out as they are, can catch their breath—there is little breathing space in war. We who are fresh could easily push men worn out with fighting back toward the city, away from the ships and the huts." So he spoke, pleading—the great fool! For he was pleading for his own evil death and doom. Then, deeply stirred, swift-footed Achilles spoke to him:

ACHILLES LENDS HIS ARMOR

Achilles sends Patroclus out in his armor, warning him to turn back once the ships are saved.

16.49 "Ah, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, what a thing to say! I pay no heed to any prophecy that I know of, nor has my queenly mother told me anything from Zeus. But this terrible grief comes over my heart and spirit whenever a man sets out to rob his equal and take back his prize, just because he is greater in power. That is a terrible grief to me, since I have suffered pain in my heart. The girl the sons of the Achaeans chose out for me as

my prize, whom I won with my own spear when I sacked a well-walled city—lord Agamemnon, son of Atreus, took her back out of my hands as if I were some vagrant without honor. 16.60 But we will let all that be past and done. It was never possible, I see, to keep up one's anger forever. And yet I did say I would not end my wrath until the war cry and the fighting reached my own ships. So you, put my famous armor on your shoulders, and lead the war-loving Myrmidons into battle, since a dark cloud of Trojans has settled around the ships in force, and the Argives are pinned against the edge of the sea with only a small strip of land left to them, and the whole city of Troy has come out against them, full of confidence—because they do not see the front of my helmet blazing close at hand. They would soon run and fill the gullies with their dead, if lord Agamemnon were kindly disposed to me. As it is, they are fighting all around our camp. 16.74 For the spear no longer rages in the hands of Diomedes, son of Tydeus, to ward off ruin from the Danaans; nor have I yet heard the voice of the son of Atreus shouting from that hateful head of his. It is the voice of man-slaying Hector that breaks all around, urging on the Trojans, and they hold the whole plain with their war cry, beating the Achaeans in battle. Even so, Patroclus, ward off ruin from the ships and fall on them in force, so that they do not set the ships ablaze with burning fire and rob us of the homecoming we long for. But do as I tell you—I will put the sum of what I have to say in your mind—so that you may win me great honor and glory in the eyes of all the Danaans, and they may send the beautiful girl back to me and give me splendid gifts besides. 16.87 Once you have driven them from the ships, come back. And even if the loud-thundering husband of Hera grants you to win glory, do not be eager to go on fighting the war-loving Trojans without me—you will make me less honored. And do not, exulting in war and slaughter as you kill Trojans, lead the way on toward Ilium, in case one of the gods who live forever steps in from Olympus: Apollo who works from afar loves them dearly. No, turn back once you have brought light of rescue to the ships, and let the others go on fighting across the

plain. Oh, Father Zeus and Athena and Apollo, if only not one of the Trojans, of all there are, might escape death, and not one of the Argives, but we two might escape destruction, so that we alone could strip away the sacred crown of Troy!"

16.101 So they talked together. But Ajax could hold his ground no longer, for he was hard pressed by missiles. The will of Zeus was beating him down, and the proud Trojans with their throwing; his shining helmet rang terribly about his temples as it was hit, hit again and again on its well-made plates. His left shoulder was tiring from holding his glittering shield steady all the time; yet for all their pressing with missiles they could not shake it from around him. He was gripped by painful gasping, sweat poured down in streams from all his limbs, and there was no chance anywhere to catch his breath: on every side trouble was piled on trouble. Tell me now, Muses, who have your homes on Olympus, how fire first fell on the ships of the Achaeans.

16.114 Hector came up close and struck Ajax's ash spear with his great sword just behind the head, where it meets the shaft, and lopped it clean off. Telamonian Ajax was left brandishing a headless spear in his hand to no purpose, while far away from him the bronze spearhead fell clanging to the ground. Ajax knew in his flawless heart, and shuddered, that this was the work of the gods—that high-thundering Zeus was cutting short all his plans for battle and wanted victory for the Trojans. He drew back out of range. And they threw untiring fire onto the swift ship, and at once an unquenchable flame poured over it. So the fire wrapped itself around the stern. But Achilles struck both his thighs and said to Patroclus:

16.126 "Up, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, master of horses! I can see the blaze of destroying fire by the ships. They mustn't take the ships and leave us no way of escape. Put on the armor, quickly, and I will gather the men." So he spoke, and Patroclus armed himself in gleaming bronze. First he put the greaves around his shins, fine ones, fitted with silver ankle-pieces; next he put on around his chest the corslet of the swift-footed grandson of Aeacus, intricately worked and spangled with stars.

Around his shoulders he slung the bronze sword with its silver studs, and then the great, sturdy shield; on his mighty head he set the well-made helmet with its horsehair crest, and the plume nodded terribly above it. He took two valiant spears that fitted his grip.[1]

16.140 Only the spear of the peerless grandson of Aeacus he did not take, heavy, huge and sturdy. No other Achaean could wield it; Achilles alone knew how to wield it—the Pelian ash, which Chiron had given to his dear father from the peak of Pelion, to be death to warriors. He told Automedon to yoke the horses quickly, the man he honored most after Achilles, breaker of men, and the most loyal to him for standing firm against the enemy's onset in battle. So Automedon led the swift horses under the yoke for him, Xanthus and Balius, who flew as fast as the winds; the Harpy Podarge bore them to the West Wind as she grazed in a meadow beside the stream of Ocean. And in the side traces he put the peerless Pedasus, whom Achilles had once brought away when he took Eëtion's city; mortal though he was, he kept pace with immortal horses.

THE MYRMIDONS MARCH OUT

Achilles marshals the Myrmidons under five leaders and prays to Zeus for Patroclus' safe return.

16.155 Achilles went among the Myrmidons and armed them, all of them, throughout the huts. They were like ravening wolves, with boundless strength in their hearts, who have killed a great horned stag in the mountains and are tearing it apart, and all their jaws are red with blood; then they go in a pack to a spring of dark water to lap the surface of the dark water with their thin tongues, belching up blood and gore, and the heart in their chests is fearless, and their bellies are crammed full. Such were the leaders and rulers of the Myrmidons as they swarmed around the noble attendant of the swift-footed grandson of Aea-

1 The "grandson of Aeacus" is Achilles, whose father Peleus was a son of Aeacus.

cus. And in their midst stood warlike Achilles, urging on the horses and the shield-bearing men.

16.168 There were fifty swift ships that Achilles, dear to Zeus, had led to Troy, and in each there were fifty men at the oars, his comrades. He had appointed five leaders whom he trusted to give the orders, while he himself, in his great power, was lord over all. One company was led by Menesthius of the glittering corslet, son of Spercheius, the river fed by Zeus's rain. Lovely Polydora, Peleus' daughter, bore him to tireless Spercheius, a mortal woman who had lain with a god—but in name he was the son of Borus, son of Perieres, who married her openly after giving countless bride-gifts. The second was led by warlike Eudorus, born to an unmarried girl: Polymele, lovely in the dance, daughter of Phylas, bore him. Strong Argeïphontes fell in love with her when he saw her with his own eyes among the girls singing in the dance of Artemis of the golden distaff, goddess of the echoing hunt. 16.184 At once Hermes the helper went up to her upper room and lay with her in secret, and gave her a splendid son, Eudorus, outstanding as a fast runner and as a fighter. And when Eileithyia of the birth pangs had brought him out into the light, and he saw the rays of the sun, mighty Echecles, son of Actor, took her to his house after giving countless bride-gifts, while old Phylas raised the boy well and cherished him, loving him as if he were his own son. The third company was led by warlike Pisander, son of Maemalus, who stood out among all the Myrmidons for fighting with the spear, second only to the comrade of the son of Peleus. The fourth was led by the old horseman Phoenix, the fifth by Alcimedon, the peerless son of Laerces. 16.198 When Achilles had drawn them all up with their leaders, sorting them well, he laid a stern command on them: "Myrmidons, let none of you forget the threats you made against the Trojans by the swift ships all through my wrath, when each of you blamed me: 'Cruel son of Peleus, it was on anger your mother nursed you, pitiless man, keeping your comrades by the ships against their will! Let us at least go home again with our seafaring ships, since such evil anger has fallen

on your heart.' That is what you kept saying to me when you gathered together. Now the great work of battle has come into view, the battle you used to long for. So let every man who has a valiant heart fight the Trojans!"

16.210 So he spoke, and roused the strength and spirit of each. The ranks closed up tighter still when they heard their king. As when a man builds the wall of a high house with close-fitted stones to keep out the force of the winds, so closely fitted were their helmets and bossed shields. Shield pressed on shield, helmet on helmet, man on man; the horsehair-crested helmets touched with their bright ridges as the men nodded, so close they stood to one another. In front of them all two men were arming, Patroclus and Automedon, of one mind, to fight ahead of the Myrmidons. But Achilles went into his hut and opened the lid of a chest, beautiful and finely worked, which silver-footed Thetis had put on his ship for him to take, filling it well with tunics and cloaks to keep off the wind and woolly rugs. 16.225 In it he kept a well-made cup. No other man drank gleaming wine from it, and he poured libations from it to none of the gods except father Zeus. He took it from the chest and first cleansed it with sulfur, then rinsed it in fair streams of water; he washed his own hands, and drew gleaming wine. Then he stood in the middle of the courtyard and prayed, and poured out the wine, looking up to heaven; and Zeus who delights in the thunderbolt did not fail to see him:

16.233 "Lord Zeus of Dodona, Pelasgian, who live far away, ruler of wintry Dodona, where your interpreters the Selli live around you, men with unwashed feet who sleep on the ground: as once before you heard my words when I prayed, and honored me, and struck hard at the army of the Achaeans, so now again fulfill this wish for me. I myself will stay where the ships are gathered, but I am sending my comrade out with many Myrmidons to fight. Send glory with him, wide-seeing Zeus; make the heart in his breast bold, so that Hector too may find out whether our attendant knows how to fight even on his own, or whether his hands rage invincible only when I myself go into the turmoil of

Ares.[2] 16.246 But once he has driven the battle and its din away from the ships, then let him come back to me unharmed at the swift ships, with all his armor and his comrades who fight at close quarters." So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus the counselor heard him. One thing the father granted him, and the other he refused: that Patroclus should drive war and battle back from the ships he granted, but he refused that he should come back safe from the battle. Achilles, when he had poured the libation and prayed to father Zeus, went back into his hut and put the cup away in the chest; then he came out and stood in front of the hut, for he still longed in his heart to watch the terrible conflict of Trojans and Achaeans.

PATROCLUS ROUTS THE TROJANS

The Myrmidons put out the fire, and Patroclus drives the Trojans from the ships across the trench.

16.257 And the men who had armed with great-hearted Patroclus marched out, until in high spirit they charged in among the Trojans. At once they came pouring out like roadside wasps that boys like to provoke, always teasing them where they have their homes beside the road—foolish children, they make trouble for many people at once. If some traveler passing by stirs them up without meaning to, they fly out with valiant hearts, every one of them, and fight to defend their young. With the heart and spirit of these the Myrmidons came pouring out from the ships, and an unquenchable clamor arose. And Patroclus called to his comrades with a great shout:

16.269 "Myrmidons, comrades of Achilles son of Peleus, be men, my friends, and remember your furious valor, so that we may bring honor to the son of Peleus, who is by far the best of the Argives by the ships—he and his close-fighting attendants—and so that the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, may recognize his own blindness, when he gave no honor at all to the best

2 Dodona, in northwestern Greece, was the site of an ancient oracle of Zeus; the Selli were its priests.

of the Achaeans." So he spoke, and roused the strength and spirit of each, and they fell on the Trojans in a mass, and all around them the ships echoed terribly with the shouting of the Achaeans. When the Trojans saw the valiant son of Menoetius, himself and his attendant, gleaming in their armor, the hearts of all of them were shaken and their battalions wavered, for they thought that the swift-footed son of Peleus had cast off his wrath there by the ships and chosen friendship; and each man looked about for a way to escape sheer destruction.

16.284 Patroclus was the first to throw his shining spear, straight into the middle, where they were thronging thickest, beside the stern of great-hearted Protesilaus' ship; and he hit Pyraechmes, who had led the Paeonians, fighters from chariots, from Amydon, from the wide-flowing Axius. He hit him in the right shoulder, and he fell on his back in the dust with a groan, and his comrades, the Paeonians, scattered in panic around him, for Patroclus had struck terror into them all by killing their leader, always the best of them in battle. He drove them from the ships and put out the blazing fire. 16.294 The ship was left there half-burned, and the Trojans fled with an awful din; the Danaans poured in among the hollow ships, and an incessant uproar arose. As when Zeus the lightning-gatherer moves a thick cloud from the high summit of a great mountain, and all the lookouts and jutting headlands and glens stand out clear, and the boundless bright air breaks open beneath the sky, so the Danaans, having thrust the destroying fire from the ships, caught their breath for a little; but there was no letup in the fighting. For the Trojans were not yet fleeing headlong from the black ships before the Achaeans dear to Ares; they still stood against them, and gave ground from the ships only because they had to.

16.306 Then, as the battle scattered, leader killed leader, man by man. First the valiant son of Menoetius struck Areilycus in the thigh with his sharp spear just as he turned, and drove the bronze clean through. The spear shattered the bone, and he fell face down on the ground. Then warlike Menelaus stabbed Thoas in the chest, where it was left bare beside the shield, and loosed

his limbs. The son of Phyleus watched Amphiclus as he charged and struck first, reaching for the top of his leg, where a man's muscle is thickest. Around the spear's point the sinews were torn apart, and darkness covered his eyes. 16.317 Of the sons of Nestor, Antilochus stabbed Atymnius with his sharp spear, driving the bronze spear through his flank, and he pitched forward. Maris, enraged for his brother, rushed at Antilochus with his spear at close quarters, standing in front of the corpse. But godlike Thrasymedes struck first, reaching out before Maris could stab, and he did not miss: at once he hit the shoulder. The spear's point tore the upper arm away from the muscles and wrenched the bone clean off. He fell with a thud, and darkness covered his eyes. So these two, beaten down by two brothers, went down to Erebus. They were noble companions of Sarpedon, spearmen, sons of Amisodarus, who reared the raging Chimaera, a bane to many men. Ajax son of Oïleus sprang on Cleobulus and took him alive, caught as he was in the crush; but there and then he loosed his strength, striking him on the neck with his hilted sword.[3] 16.333 The whole sword grew warm with his blood, and down over his eyes came dark death and mighty fate. Peneleos and Lycon ran at each other. They had missed each other with their spears, both throwing in vain, so they ran at each other again with swords. Lycon struck the ridge of the horsehair-crested helmet, but his sword shattered at the hilt. Peneleos struck him on the neck below the ear, and the whole sword sank in, so that only the skin held. The head hung to one side, and his limbs gave way. Meriones overtook Acamas on his quick feet and stabbed him in the right shoulder as he was about to mount his chariot. He toppled from the chariot, and mist poured down over his eyes. 16.345 Idomeneus stabbed Erymas in the mouth with the pitiless bronze. The bronze spear passed clean through, below the brain, and split the white bones. His teeth were shaken out, and both his eyes filled with blood. Gaping, he spurted it up through his mouth and nostrils,

3 The Chimaera was a fire-breathing monster, part lion, part goat, part serpent, killed in Lycia by the hero Bellerophon.

and the black cloud of death wrapped him round. So these leaders of the Danaans each killed his man. As wolves fall on lambs or kids, ravaging, snatching them out from the flock, when they have been scattered on the mountains through a shepherd's carelessness, and the wolves see them and at once tear them apart, for they have no courage in their hearts—so the Danaans fell on the Trojans. And the Trojans remembered harsh-sounding panic and forgot their furious valor.

16.358 Great Ajax kept trying all the while to hurl his spear at bronze-helmeted Hector. But Hector, skilled in war, his broad shoulders covered by his bull's-hide shield, watched for the whizz of arrows and the thud of spears. He knew well that victory in the battle had swung the other way; but even so he stood his ground and tried to save his trusty companions. As when a cloud moves from Olympus into the sky, out of the bright upper air, when Zeus stretches out a storm, so from the ships rose their shouting and panic, and they crossed back in no good order. Hector's swift-footed horses carried him off, armor and all, and he left behind the Trojan people, whom the dug trench held back against their will.

16.370 Many swift chariot-pulling horses snapped their poles at the tip in the trench and left their masters' chariots, while Patroclus followed, fiercely urging on the Danaans, intent on harm for the Trojans. They filled all the roads with shouting and panic, now that they had been cut apart. High up a whirl of dust spread beneath the clouds, and the single-hoofed horses strained back toward the city, away from the ships and huts. Wherever Patroclus saw the people in the greatest turmoil, he drove that way with a shout; and men fell head first from their chariots under the axles, and the cars overturned with a crash. Straight over the trench leapt the swift horses, the immortal ones the gods gave to Peleus as splendid gifts, straining onward; and his heart urged Patroclus on against Hector, for he longed to strike him. But Hector's swift horses carried him away. 16.384 As the whole black earth is weighed down under a storm on an autumn day, when Zeus pours down the most violent rain, when

in anger he rages against men who by force give crooked judgments in the assembly and drive out justice, caring nothing for the gods' regard; and all their rivers run in flood, and torrents then cut away many hillsides and, groaning loudly, rush headlong from the mountains into the dark-gleaming sea, and the works of men are wasted—so the Trojans' mares groaned loudly as they ran. Now when Patroclus had cut off the foremost battalions, he hemmed them back toward the ships and would not let them climb into the city, eager as they were; but between the ships and the river and the high wall he rushed among them, killing, and exacted vengeance for many.

16.399 There first he struck Pronous with his shining spear, in the chest where it was left bare beside the shield, and loosed his limbs. He fell with a thud. Next he charged at Thestor son of Enops, who sat huddled in his well-polished chariot, for his wits had been knocked out of him and the reins had slipped from his hands. Patroclus came up beside him and stabbed him with his spear in the right jaw, driving it through his teeth, and gripping the spear he hauled him over the chariot rail—as when a man sitting on a jutting rock hauls a sacred fish out of the sea with line and gleaming bronze hook—so he hauled him gaping from the chariot on his shining spear and threw him down on his face; and as he fell, his spirit left him.

THE DEATH OF SARPEDON

Zeus considers saving his son Sarpedon, but lets Patroclus kill him.

16.411 Next, as Erylaus rushed at him, he struck him with a stone square on the head, and the whole head split in two inside the heavy helmet. He fell face down on the ground, and life-destroying death poured round him. Then Erymas, Amphoterus and Epaltes, Tlepolemus son of Damastor, Echius and Pyris, Ipheus and Euippus and Polymelus son of Argeas—all of them, one after another, he brought down to the nourishing earth. When Sarpedon saw his companions, who wore no belts under their tunics, beaten down at the hands of Patroclus son of Menoetius,

he called out, rebuking the godlike Lycians: "Shame, Lycians! Where are you running? Now be swift! I will face this man myself, so that I may learn who he is who prevails here and has done the Trojans so much harm, since he has loosed the knees of many good men."

16.426 He spoke, and leapt from his chariot to the ground in his armor. Patroclus, on the other side, sprang from his chariot when he saw him. As vultures with hooked talons and curved beaks fight on a high rock, screaming loudly, so they rushed at each other with shouts. The son of crooked-counseling Cronus saw them and pitied them, and said to Hera, his sister and wife: "Ah me, that it is fated for Sarpedon, dearest of men to me, to be beaten down by Patroclus son of Menoetius! My heart is torn two ways as I ponder in my mind, whether I should snatch him up alive out of the tearful battle and set him down in the rich land of Lycia, or beat him down now at the hands of the son of Menoetius."

16.439 Then ox-eyed queenly Hera answered him: "Most dread son of Cronus, what a thing you've said! A man who is mortal, long since doomed by fate—do you want to set him free again from harsh-sounding death? Do it; but not all of us other gods will approve. And I'll tell you something else, and you lay it to heart: if you send Sarpedon home alive to his own house, consider whether some other god will then want to send his own dear son away from the fierce fighting too. For many sons of the immortals are fighting around the great city of Priam, and you will rouse dreadful resentment in them.

16.450 But if he is dear to you and your heart grieves for him, let him be beaten down in the fierce fighting at the hands of Patroclus son of Menoetius; and when life and breath have left him, send Death and sweet Sleep to carry him until they reach the land of broad Lycia, where his brothers and kinsmen will give him burial with a mound and a gravestone; for that is the prize of honor due the dead." So she spoke, and the father of men and gods did not disobey. He shed bloody raindrops on the earth,

honoring his dear son, whom Patroclus was about to kill in fertile Troy, far from his homeland.

16.462 When they were close, advancing on each other, Patroclus struck the famous Thrasymelus, the brave attendant of lord Sarpedon, low in the belly, and loosed his limbs. Sarpedon, charging second, missed him with his shining spear, but hit the horse Pedasus in the right shoulder with his spear. It screamed, gasping out its life, and fell in the dust with a groan, and its spirit flew away. The other two horses shied apart, the yoke creaked, and their reins were tangled, since the trace horse lay in the dust. Automedon, famed for the spear, found a remedy for this. Drawing the long-edged sword from beside his stout thigh, he sprang and cut the trace horse loose, and did not fail; and the two righted themselves and strained in the reins, and the two men came together again in heart-devouring strife.

16.477 Then again Sarpedon missed with his shining spear: the point of the spear passed over Patroclus' left shoulder and did not hit him. Then Patroclus rushed in second with the bronze, and the shot did not fly from his hand in vain, but struck where the midriff closes round the throbbing heart. He fell as an oak falls, or a white poplar, or a tall pine, which carpenters in the mountains cut down with newly sharpened axes to be timber for a ship: so he lay stretched out in front of his horses and chariot, roaring, clutching at the bloody dust. As a lion comes among a herd and kills a bull, tawny and great-hearted, among the shambling cattle, and it dies groaning under the lion's jaws, so beneath Patroclus the leader of the Lycian shieldmen raged as he was killed, and called his dear companion by name:

16.492 "Glaucus, dear friend, warrior among men, now you must truly be a spearman and a bold warrior; now let evil war be your desire, if you are swift. First go everywhere and rouse the leaders of the Lycians to fight around Sarpedon; and then fight for me yourself with the bronze. For I will be a disgrace and a reproach to you hereafter, all your days without end, if the Achaeans strip me of my armor, fallen at the gathering place of

the ships. Hold fast with all your strength, and rouse the whole army."

16.502 As he spoke, the end that is death covered his eyes and nostrils. Patroclus, setting his heel on his chest, drew the spear out of his flesh, and the midriff came with it; so he drew out together his life and the spear's point. The Myrmidons held the snorting horses there, eager to bolt now that they had left their masters' chariot. Dreadful grief came over Glaucus as he heard the voice, and his heart was stirred because he could not help him. He gripped his arm with his hand and squeezed it, for the wound wore him down, the one Teucer had dealt him with an arrow as he rushed at the high wall, while Teucer was warding off ruin from his companions. And praying, he spoke to far-shooting Apollo:

16.514 "Hear me, lord, who are somewhere in the rich land of Lycia or in Troy; you can hear from anywhere a man in distress, as distress has come upon me now. I have this grievous wound; my arm is pierced all round with sharp pains, my blood cannot dry, and my shoulder is heavy with it. I cannot hold my spear steady, or go and fight the enemy. And the best of men has perished, Sarpedon, son of Zeus—and Zeus does not defend his own son. But you, lord, heal me of this grievous wound, lull my pains, and give me strength, so that I may call on my Lycian companions and urge them to fight, and myself fight around the body of the dead."

16.527 So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him. At once he stopped the pains, dried the dark blood from the painful wound, and put strength into his heart. Glaucus knew it in his mind, and he rejoiced that the great god had quickly heard his prayer. First he went everywhere and roused the leaders of the Lycians to fight around Sarpedon; then he went among the Trojans with long strides, to Polydamas son of Panthous and godlike Agenor, and went after Aeneas and bronze-helmeted Hector, and standing close he spoke winged words: "Hector, now you have utterly forgotten your allies, who for your sake, far from their

friends and their native land, are wasting away their lives; and you are not willing to help them.

16.541 Sarpedon lies dead, the leader of the Lycian shieldmen, who guarded Lycia by his judgments and his strength; bronze Ares has beaten him down by the spear of Patroclus. Come, friends, stand by him, and let indignation fill your hearts, so that the Myrmidons don't strip his armor and defile his corpse, in anger for all the Danaans who perished, whom we killed with our spears by the swift ships." So he spoke, and grief seized the Trojans utterly, unbearable, not to be withstood; for he had been a bulwark of their city, foreigner though he was. Many troops followed with him, and he himself was the best of them in the fighting. They went straight for the Danaans, eager, and Hector led them, angry for Sarpedon. But the shaggy heart of Patroclus son of Menoetius roused the Achaeans, and he spoke first to the two Ajaxes, who were eager themselves:

16.556 "Ajaxes, now let it be your desire to defend yourselves, as you were before among men, or even better. There lies the man who first leapt over the wall of the Achaeans, Sarpedon. If only we could seize him and defile him, strip the armor from his shoulders, and beat down with the pitiless bronze one of his companions who are defending him!" So he spoke, and they too were eager to fight back. When on both sides they had strengthened their battalions, Trojans and Lycians, Myrmidons and Achaeans, they clashed in battle around the body of the dead, shouting terribly, and the men's armor rang loudly. And Zeus stretched deadly night over the fierce fighting, so that there might be deadly toil of battle around his dear son.

16.569 The Trojans were the first to drive back the quick-eyed Achaeans, for a man who was by no means the worst among the Myrmidons was struck: godlike Epeigeus, son of great-hearted Agacles. He had once been king in well-settled Budeion. But he had killed a noble cousin of his, and so he came as a suppliant to Peleus and to silver-footed Thetis, and they sent him to follow Achilles, breaker of men, to Ilium of the fine horses, to fight against the Trojans. As he was laying hold of the corpse, glorious

Hector struck him on the head with a stone, and the whole head split in two inside the heavy helmet. He fell face down upon the corpse, and death that destroys the spirit poured around him.[4] 16.581 Then grief came over Patroclus for his fallen comrade, and he darted straight through the front-fighters like a swift hawk that scatters jackdaws and starlings. So straight at the Lycians and the Trojans you rushed, Patroclus, master of horses, angered at heart for your comrade. He struck Sthenelaus, the dear son of Ithaemenes, on the neck with a stone and snapped the tendons. The front-fighters gave way, and glorious Hector with them. As far as a long javelin flies when a man lets it go, testing his strength at the games or in war with deadly enemies pressing him, so far the Trojans gave way, and the Achaeans pushed them back.[5] 16.593 Glaucus, leader of the Lycian shield-men, was the first to turn. He killed great-hearted Bathycles, the dear son of Chalcon, who had his home in Hellas and stood out among the Myrmidons for his wealth and prosperity. Glaucus turned suddenly, just as Bathycles was catching up with him in pursuit, and stabbed him with his spear in the middle of the chest. He fell with a thud, and heavy grief seized the Achaeans that so good a man had fallen, while the Trojans rejoiced greatly and came and stood around him in a mass. But the Achaeans did not forget their courage either, and carried their fury straight at them. Then Meriones in turn killed a Trojan warrior in full armor, Laogonus, bold son of Onetor, who was priest of Zeus of Ida and was honored by the people like a god. 16.606 Meriones struck him under the jaw and the ear. Quickly the spirit went from his limbs, and hateful darkness seized him. Aeneas threw his bronze spear at Meriones, hoping to hit him as he advanced under cover of his shield. But Meriones, looking straight at it, avoided the bronze spear: he ducked forward, and the long spear stuck in the ground behind him, and the butt of the spear

4 A man who killed a kinsman had to go into exile. He could find a new home by coming as a suppliant to a foreign king, as Epeigeus did with Peleus.

5 Here, and several times in the rest of this book, the poet turns from narrating to address Patroclus directly.

quivered, until mighty Ares stilled its force. So Aeneas' spear-point went quivering down into the earth, since it had sped from his strong hand in vain. And Aeneas grew angry at heart and spoke:

16.617 "Meriones, dancer though you are, my spear would soon have stopped you for good, if I had hit you." Then Meriones, famed for his spear, answered him in turn: "Aeneas, strong as you are, it's hard for you to quench the fury of every man who comes against you to defend himself. You too, after all, are made mortal. If I were to hit you square in the middle with the sharp bronze, then quickly, for all your strength and your trust in your hands, you'd give me the triumph, and your life to Hades of the famous horses." So he spoke, but the valiant son of Menoetius rebuked him:

16.627 "Meriones, why do you talk like this, good man that you are? My friend, taunting words won't make the Trojans give way from the corpse; before that, the earth will hold many a man. The outcome of war lies in our hands, the outcome of words in council. So there's no need to pile up talk; what we need is to fight." With these words he led the way, and the other went with him, a man equal to the gods. And as the din rises from wood-cutters in the glens of a mountain, and the sound is heard far off, so the thudding rose from the wide-wayed earth, of bronze and leather and well-made oxhide shields, as they were struck with swords and with two-pointed spears.

16.638 Not even a sharp-eyed man would have recognized god-like Sarpedon any longer, since he was wrapped in missiles and blood and dust from his head right down to the soles of his feet. And they kept swarming around the corpse, as when flies in a farmstead buzz around the brimming milk pails in springtime, when the milk wets the vessels: so they swarmed around the corpse. And Zeus never once turned his shining eyes away from the mighty combat, but kept looking down at them and pondering in his heart, debating long over the killing of Patroclus: whether glorious Hector should now kill him too with the bronze, right there in the mighty combat over godlike Sarpedon,

and strip the armor from his shoulders, or whether he should increase the steep toil for still more men. 16.652 And as he pondered, this seemed to him the better course: that the noble attendant of Achilles son of Peleus should once more drive the Trojans and Hector armed in bronze back toward the city, and take the life of many. Into Hector first of all he put a cowardly spirit. Hector mounted his chariot and turned to flight, and called on the other Trojans to flee, for he recognized the holy scales of Zeus. Then not even the mighty Lycians stood their ground; they were all routed, when they saw their king struck to the heart, lying in the heap of corpses, for many had fallen on top of him when the son of Cronus drew the harsh strife taut. Then they took from Sarpedon's shoulders the gleaming bronze armor, and the valiant son of Menoetius gave it to his comrades to carry to the hollow ships. And then Zeus the cloud-gatherer spoke to Apollo:

16.667 "Come now, dear Phoebus, go and take Sarpedon out of range of the missiles and cleanse the dark blood from him. Then carry him far away, wash him in the streams of a river, anoint him with ambrosia, and put immortal clothing around him. And send him to be carried by swift escorts, the twins Sleep and Death, who will quickly set him down in the rich land of broad Lycia. There his brothers and kinsmen will give him burial with a mound and a gravestone; for that is the prize of honor due the dead."

PATROCLUS GOES TOO FAR

Ignoring Achilles' warning, Patroclus pursues the Trojans to the walls, where Apollo thrusts him back.

16.676 So he spoke, and Apollo did not disobey his father. He went down from the mountains of Ida into the dreadful battle, and at once lifted godlike Sarpedon out of range of the missiles, carried him far away, washed him in the streams of a river, anointed him with ambrosia, and put immortal clothing around him. And he sent him to be carried by swift escorts, the twins Sleep and

Death, who quickly set him down in the rich land of broad Lycia. But Patroclus, calling to his horses and to Automedon, went after the Trojans and Lycians, and was badly blinded, the fool. Had he kept the word of the son of Peleus, he would have escaped the evil doom of black death.

16.688 But the mind of Zeus is always stronger than the mind of men. He puts even a valiant man to flight and takes away his victory with ease, and at other times he himself rouses him to fight; and it was he who now stirred up the spirit in Patroclus' breast. Then whom did you kill first, and whom last, Patroclus, when the gods called you to your death? Adrestus first, and Autonous and Echeclus, and Perimus son of Megas, and Epistor and Melanippus, and after them Elasus and Mulius and Pylartes. These he killed; the rest each thought only of flight.

16.698 Then the sons of the Achaeans would have taken high-gated Troy at the hands of Patroclus, for he raged all around and ahead with his spear, had not Phoebus Apollo taken his stand on the well-built tower, intent on his destruction and helping the Trojans. Three times Patroclus set foot on the angle of the high wall, and three times Apollo thrust him back, striking the shining shield with his immortal hands. But when he rushed on for the fourth time, like a god, Apollo shouted terribly and spoke winged words: "Give way, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus! It is not your fate that the city of the proud Trojans be sacked under your spear, nor under Achilles', who is far better than you." So he spoke, and Patroclus drew back a long way, avoiding the wrath of far-shooting Apollo.

16.712 Hector was holding his single-hoofed horses at the Scaean Gates, for he was debating whether to drive back into the turmoil and fight, or to call out to his people to gather inside the wall. As he was pondering this, Phoebus Apollo came and stood beside him in the likeness of a man young and strong, Asius, who was uncle to horse-taming Hector, own brother of Hecuba and son of Dymas, who lived in Phrygia by the streams of the Sangarius. In his likeness Apollo, son of Zeus, spoke to him: "Hector, why are you holding back from battle? You've no busi-

ness doing that. I wish I were as much stronger than you as I am weaker; then you'd soon be sorry for holding back from the war. Come on, drive your strong-hoofed horses at Patroclus, in case somehow you may take him, and Apollo may give you the triumph."

16.726 With these words the god went back into the toil of men, and glorious Hector ordered skilled Cebriones to lash the horses into the battle. But Apollo went and plunged into the throng, and sent an evil confusion among the Argives, and granted glory to the Trojans and to Hector. Hector let the other Danaans alone and did not kill them; it was at Patroclus that he drove his strong-hoofed horses. Patroclus, on the other side, leaped from his chariot to the ground, holding his spear in his left hand. With the other he grasped a stone, jagged and gleaming, which his hand closed around, and he threw it, putting his weight behind it. He did not hold back long from the man, nor was his throw wasted: he struck Hector's charioteer Cebriones, an illegitimate son of glorious Priam, as he held the horses' reins—struck him on the forehead with the sharp stone. 16.740 The stone crushed both his brows together, and the bone did not hold; his eyes fell to the ground in the dust right there before his feet, and like a diver he toppled from the well-made chariot, and the spirit left his bones. Then, mocking him, you spoke, Patroclus, horseman: "Well, look at that! What a nimble man he is—how easily he dives! If he were ever out on the fish-filled sea, this man could feed a crowd by diving for shellfish, leaping from a ship even in rough weather, the way he dives so easily now from his chariot on the plain. So the Trojans have divers among them too."

16.751 So saying, he went at the warrior Cebriones with the spring of a lion that is struck in the chest while ravaging the farmsteads, and its own courage destroys it: so you leaped at Cebriones, Patroclus, in your fury. And Hector, on the other side, leaped from his chariot to the ground. The two fought over Cebriones like lions that fight on the peaks of a mountain over a slain deer, both hungry, both high-hearted: so over Cebriones

the two masters of the war cry, Patroclus son of Menoetius and glorious Hector, strove to cut each other's flesh with the pitiless bronze. Hector, once he had caught hold of the head, would not let go, and Patroclus on the other side held on to a foot; and the rest of the Trojans and Danaans joined in the fierce combat.

16.765 As the East Wind and the South Wind contend with each other in the glens of a mountain to shake a deep wood—oak and ash and thin-barked cornel—and the trees hurl their long-pointed boughs against one another with an unearthly roar, and there is a crash as they break: so the Trojans and Achaeans leaped at each other and slew, and neither side gave a thought to ruinous flight. Many sharp spears were fixed in the ground around Cebriones, and feathered arrows that sprang from the bowstrings, and many great stones battered the shields of the men fighting around him. And he lay in the whirling dust, a great man stretched over a great space, forgetful of his horsemanship.

THE DEATH OF PATROCLUS

Apollo strikes Patroclus and strips him of his armor; Euphorbus wounds him and Hector kills him.

16.777 As long as the Sun bestrode the middle of the sky, so long the missiles of both sides struck home and men fell. But when the Sun moved on toward the time for unyoking oxen, then the Achaeans proved stronger, beyond what was fated. They dragged the warrior Cebriones out from among the missiles, away from the shouting of the Trojans, and stripped the armor from his shoulders; and Patroclus leaped among the Trojans, intent on harm. Three times then he charged, a match for swift Ares, yelling terribly, and three times he killed nine men. But when he rushed on for the fourth time, like a god, then, Patroclus, the end of your life appeared; for Phoebus came to meet you in the mighty combat, terrible. Patroclus did not see him coming through the turmoil, for he came to meet him wrapped in thick mist. He stood behind him and struck his back and

broad shoulders with the flat of his hand, and Patroclus' eyes spun. 16.793 Phoebus Apollo knocked the helmet from his head, and it rolled clanging under the horses' hooves, the crested helmet with its eye-holes, and the plumes were fouled with blood and dust. Before this it had not been allowed that the horsehair-crested helmet be fouled with dust; it had guarded the head and handsome brow of a godlike man, Achilles. But now Zeus gave it to Hector to wear on his head, and his destruction was near. The long-shadowed spear was shattered to pieces in Patroclus' hands, heavy, huge, sturdy, tipped with bronze; and from his shoulders the long shield fell to the ground with its strap. And lord Apollo, son of Zeus, loosened his corslet. 16.805 Blindness seized his mind, his shining limbs went slack beneath him, and he stood there dazed. From behind, at close range, a Dardanian struck him in the back between the shoulders with a sharp spear: Euphorbus son of Panthous, who surpassed all the men of his age with the spear and in horsemanship and in speed of foot. That day, the first time he had come out with his chariot, still learning war, he had already brought twenty men down from their chariots. He was the first to cast a weapon at you, Patroclus, horseman, but he did not bring you down. He ran back and mingled with the throng, snatching the ash spear out of the flesh, and did not stand up to Patroclus, unarmored though he was, in the fighting. And Patroclus, overcome by the god's blow and by the spear, drew back into the crowd of his comrades, avoiding doom.

16.818 When Hector saw great-hearted Patroclus drawing back, wounded by the sharp bronze, he came close to him through the ranks and stabbed him with his spear low in the belly, and drove the bronze clean through. He fell with a thud, and the army of the Achaeans was deeply grieved. As when a lion overpowers a tireless boar in fight, when the two fight in high spirit on the peaks of a mountain over a little spring—both want to drink—and the lion by force overcomes the boar as it pants hard: so Hector son of Priam, at close quarters, with his spear took the

spirit from the valiant son of Menoetius, who had killed so many. And boasting over him he spoke winged words:

16.830 "Patroclus, I suppose you thought you would sack our city, take the day of freedom from the Trojan women, and carry them off in your ships to your own native land—you fool! In front of them Hector's swift horses stretch their legs to fight, and I myself stand out with the spear among the war-loving Trojans, I who ward off from them the day of bondage. But you—here the vultures will eat you. Poor wretch, not even Achilles, great as he is, was any help to you. I suppose he stayed behind and gave you many orders as you went: 'Don't come back to me at the hollow ships, Patroclus, master of horses, until you have torn the bloody tunic around the chest of man-slaying Hector.' That, I suppose, is what he said to you, and he persuaded your mind, fool that you were."

16.843 Then, with his strength ebbing, you answered him, Patroclus, horseman: "Go ahead and boast big now, Hector; for Zeus son of Cronus and Apollo have given you the victory. They overpowered me easily; they themselves took the armor from my shoulders. If twenty men like you had come against me, they would all have died right here, beaten down under my spear. No—deadly fate and the son of Leto killed me, and among men Euphorbus; you're only the third to strip me. And I'll tell you something else, and you lay it to heart: you yourself won't live long. Already death and mighty fate stand close beside you, to be overpowered at the hands of noble Achilles, grandson of Aeacus."

16.855 As he spoke, the end that is death covered him. His spirit, flying from his limbs, went down to Hades, lamenting its fate, leaving manhood and youth behind. And glorious Hector spoke to him, though he was dead: "Patroclus, why do you prophesy sheer destruction for me? Who knows whether Achilles, son of lovely-haired Thetis, may not be struck by my spear first and lose his life?" So he spoke, and he drew the bronze spear out of the wound, setting his foot on him, and pushed him off the spear onto his back. And at once he went with his spear after

Automedon, the godlike attendant of the swift-footed grandson of Aeacus, for he was eager to strike him. But the swift immortal horses carried him away, the splendid gifts the gods had given to Peleus.

Book 17

The fight for the body
Menelaus and the Greeks fight to bring back Patroclus' body.

17.1 Nor did it escape Atreus' son, Menelaus dear to Ares, that Patroclus had been brought down by the Trojans in the fighting. He strode out through the front ranks, armed in gleaming bronze, and stood astride him the way a mother cow stands lowing over her calf, her first-born, when she has never known birth before: so fair-haired Menelaus stood astride Patroclus. He held out his spear before him and his shield, balanced on every side, eager to kill any man who might come against him. Nor did the son of Panthous, of the fine ash spear, fail to mark the fall of peerless Patroclus. He came and stood close by him, and spoke to Menelaus, dear to Ares:[1]

17.12 "Menelaus, son of Atreus, cherished by Zeus, leader of the people, give way! Leave the body, and let the bloodstained spoils be. No one among the Trojans or their famous allies struck Patroclus with a spear before I did in the fierce fighting. So let me win fine glory among the Trojans, or I'll strike you and take away your honey-sweet life." Then, deeply angered, fair-haired Menelaus said to him: "Father Zeus, it isn't fine to boast beyond all measure! Neither the panther nor the lion nor the murderous wild boar, whose spirit is the greatest of all and rages in its chest, exulting in its strength, has fury as great as the pride these sons of Panthous with their fine ash spears carry in their hearts.

1 The son of Panthous here is Euphorbus, who first wounded Patroclus.

17.24 Even mighty Hyperenor, the horse-tamer, had no joy of his youth when he scorned me and stood up to me and called me the most contemptible fighter among the Danaans. I don't think he went home on his own feet to gladden his dear wife and his devoted parents. Just so will I break your strength too, if you stand against me. No—I tell you to fall back into the mass of men and not stand up to me, before you come to some harm. Even a fool learns once the thing is done." So he spoke, but did not persuade him; and the other answered and said:

17.34 "Now, Menelaus, cherished by Zeus, you will pay in full for my brother, whom you killed—and you boast of it as you talk. You made his wife a widow in the depths of her new bridal chamber, and brought cursed weeping and grief on his parents. I would surely put an end to the weeping of those poor wretches if I brought them your head and your armor and laid them in the hands of Panthous and noble Phrontis. But the struggle won't go untried much longer, or undecided, whether it ends in courage or in rout." So saying, he struck him on his shield, balanced on every side; but the bronze did not break through, and its point bent back against the stout shield. Then Menelaus son of Atreus made his rush in turn with the bronze, praying to father Zeus.

17.47 As the other drew back, he stabbed him at the base of the throat and leaned his own weight into it, trusting in his heavy hand; the point went straight through the soft neck. He fell with a thud, and his armor clanged upon him. His hair, like the hair of the Graces, was drenched with blood, and his braids, pinched in with gold and silver. As when a man raises a flourishing olive sapling in a lonely spot where water wells up in plenty, a fine young tree, thriving, and the breaths of every kind of wind shake it, and it bursts into white blossom; but suddenly a wind comes with a great whirlwind, wrenches it out of its trench and lays it out along the ground: so it was with Panthous' son Euphorbus of the fine ash spear when Menelaus son of Atreus killed him and began to strip his armor.

MENELAUS GIVES WAY

Apollo rouses Hector, and Menelaus falls back from Patroclus' body to look for Ajax.

17.61 As when a lion reared in the mountains, trusting in his strength, snatches the finest cow from a grazing herd; he seizes her in his powerful jaws and breaks her neck first, then gulps down the blood and all the innards, tearing her apart; and around him dogs and herdsmen raise a great clamor from far off, but they are unwilling to come against him, for pale fear grips them: so no one's heart in his chest dared to come against glorious Menelaus. Then the son of Atreus would easily have carried off the famous armor of Panthous' son, had not Phoebus Apollo begrudged it to him. He roused Hector against him, a match for swift Ares, taking the likeness of a man, Mentes, leader of the Cicones; and he spoke winged words to him:

17.75 "Hector, here you are running after what can't be caught, the horses of Aeacus' warlike grandson. They are hard for mortal men to master or to drive, for anyone but Achilles, whom an immortal mother bore. Meanwhile Menelaus, warlike son of Atreus, standing astride Patroclus, has killed the best of the Trojans, Euphorbus son of Panthous, and put an end to his furious valor." So saying, the god went back again into the toil of men; but dreadful grief shrouded Hector's dark heart. Then he looked across the ranks, and at once he recognized them: the one stripping off the famous armor, the other lying on the ground, the blood flowing from the wound where he had been stabbed.

17.87 He strode out through the front ranks, armed in gleaming bronze, shouting shrilly, like the unquenchable flame of Hephaestus. Nor did his shrill shout escape the son of Atreus; deeply troubled, he said to his own great-hearted spirit: "Ah me! If I leave this fine armor behind, and Patroclus, who lies here for the sake of my honor, I'm afraid any of the Danaans who sees it will blame me. But if, for shame, I fight Hector and the Trojans alone, I'm afraid they'll somehow surround me, many against

one—and Hector of the flashing helmet is leading all the Trojans here. But why does my heart debate these things with me?

17.98 When a man is willing to fight against a god's will with a man whom a god honors, great disaster soon rolls down on him. So no Danaan who sees me give way before Hector will blame me, since he fights with the gods behind him. But if only I could find Ajax, good at the war cry, somewhere, the two of us would go back and put our minds to battle, even against a god, in the hope of dragging the body back for Achilles son of Peleus. Of these bad choices, that would be the best." While he was turning this over in his mind and heart, the ranks of the Trojans came on, and Hector led them.

17.108 So he drew back and left the body, turning around again and again, like a bearded lion that dogs and men drive away from the farmstead with spears and shouting; the valiant heart in his chest turns cold, and he leaves the farmyard against his will: so fair-haired Menelaus went from Patroclus. When he reached the throng of his comrades he turned and stood, looking about for great Ajax, son of Telamon. Very quickly he spotted him on the far left of the whole battle, encouraging his comrades and urging them to fight, for Phoebus Apollo had cast an unearthly panic into them. He set off running, and coming up beside him at once he said:

17.120 "Ajax, come here, my friend. Let's hurry to fight over dead Patroclus, in the hope of at least carrying his body to Achilles—stripped, since Hector of the flashing helmet has his armor." So he spoke, and stirred the spirit of warlike Ajax. He strode out through the front ranks, and fair-haired Menelaus with him. Hector, once he had stripped the famous armor from Patroclus, was dragging him off, meaning to cut the head from his shoulders with the sharp bronze, haul the corpse away and give it to the dogs of Troy. But Ajax came close, carrying his shield like a tower; and Hector fell back into the throng of his comrades and leapt into his chariot. He gave the fine armor to the Trojans to carry to the city, to be a great glory for him.

HECTOR TAKES ACHILLES' ARMOR

Glaucus accuses Hector of cowardice; Hector puts on Achilles' armor as Zeus foresees his death.

17.132 Ajax covered the son of Menoetius with his broad shield and stood like a lion over its cubs, when hunters come upon it in the forest as it leads its young; it exults in its strength and draws its whole brow down to cover its eyes: so Ajax stood astride the warrior Patroclus. On the other side stood Menelaus son of Atreus, dear to Ares, nursing great grief in his chest. But Glaucus son of Hippolochus, leader of the Lycian men, glared at Hector and rebuked him with harsh words: "Hector, finest in looks, you fall far short in battle. Your fine fame is empty—you're a runaway.

17.144 Think now how you'll save your city and its town on your own, with only the people born in Ilium. None of the Lycians, at least, will go out to fight the Danaans for your city, since it seems there's no thanks for fighting enemy men relentlessly, forever. How would you save a lesser man in the throng, you heartless man, when you left Sarpedon, your guest-friend and comrade both, to become the Argives' prey and plunder? He was a great help to you, to your city and to yourself, while he lived; and now you didn't dare to keep the dogs off him. So now, if any of the Lycian men will listen to me, we're going home, and sheer destruction will stand revealed for Troy. 17.156 If only the Trojans now had the bold, unflinching fury that enters men who take on toil and struggle against their enemies for the sake of their fatherland, we would quickly drag Patroclus into Ilium. And if he came, dead as he is, to the great city of lord Priam, and we dragged him out of the battle, the Argives would quickly give up Sarpedon's fine armor, and we would bring Sarpedon himself into Ilium. For the man whose attendant has been killed is far the best of the Argives by the ships, and his close-fighting attendants are too. But you didn't dare to stand up to great-hearted Ajax, look him in the eye amid the shouting of the

enemy, and fight him head on, since he's a better man than you." Glaring at him, Hector of the flashing helmet said to him:

17.170 "Glaucus, why has a man like you said something so arrogant? Well, really! I thought your sense surpassed that of all the others who live in fertile Lycia; but now I find nothing to praise at all in your sense, from what you've said—you who claim I didn't stand up to huge Ajax. I'm not one to shudder at battle or the thunder of horses. But the mind of Zeus who bears the aegis is always stronger; he puts even a valiant man to flight and takes away his victory with ease, and at other times he himself rouses him to fight. Come here, my friend, stand by me and watch my work: see whether I'll be a coward all day long, as you say, or whether I'll stop some of the Danaans, however eager for battle, from defending dead Patroclus." So saying, he called out to the Trojans with a far-reaching shout:

17.184 "Trojans, Lycians and Dardanians who fight hand to hand, be men, my friends, and remember your furious valor, while I put on the fine armor of peerless Achilles, which I stripped from mighty Patroclus when I killed him." So saying, Hector of the flashing helmet went off out of the bitter war. Running on swift feet, he very quickly caught up with his comrades, who were not far off yet—the men carrying the famous armor of Peleus' son toward the city. Standing apart from the battle with all its tears, he exchanged armor. His own he gave to the war-loving Trojans to carry to holy Ilium, and he put on the immortal armor of Achilles son of Peleus, which the gods of heaven had given to his dear father; and his father, when he grew old, gave it to his son. But the son did not grow old in his father's armor.

17.198 When Zeus the cloud-gatherer saw him from afar arming himself in the armor of the godlike son of Peleus, he shook his head and spoke to his own heart: "Ah, poor wretch, death isn't on your mind at all, and yet it is coming close to you now. You're putting on the immortal armor of a man who is the best of all, before whom others too tremble. It was his comrade you killed, gentle and strong, and you took the armor from his head and

shoulders in no seemly way. Still, for now I will put great power in your hands, to make up for this: that you won't come home from the battle, and Andromache won't receive from you the famous armor of Peleus' son."

17.209 He spoke, and the son of Cronus nodded his dark brows. The armor fitted Hector's body, and Ares entered into him, dread Enyalius, and his limbs were filled within with valor and strength. He went among the famous allies with a great shout, and he appeared to them all gleaming in the armor of the great-hearted son of Peleus. He went from one to another, urging each of them on with words—Mesthles and Glaucus and Medon and Thersilochus, Asteropaeus and Deisenor and Hippothous, Phorcys and Chromius and Ennomus the augur—and urging them on he spoke winged words:

17.220 "Hear me, countless tribes of allies who live around us! It wasn't in search of numbers, or for lack of them, that I gathered each of you here from your cities, but so that you would eagerly protect the wives and little children of the Trojans from the war-loving Achaeans. With this in mind I drain my own people for the gifts and food I give you, and build up the spirit of each of you. So now let every man turn straight at the enemy, and either perish or be saved: that is the close converse of war. Whoever drags Patroclus, dead as he is, back among the horse-taming Trojans, and makes Ajax give way, I'll share out half the spoils to him and keep half myself; and his glory will be as great as mine."

THE FIGHT OVER THE BODY

Ajax and Menelaus call the Greek leaders as the Trojans and their allies charge for the body.

17.233 So he spoke, and they charged straight at the Danaans with all their weight, holding their spears up high; and their hearts had high hopes of dragging the corpse away from Ajax son of Telamon—fools! Over it he took the life from many. And then Ajax said to Menelaus, good at the war cry: "My dear friend

Menelaus, cherished by Zeus, I no longer expect that we two ourselves will come home from the war. I'm not so much afraid for the corpse of Patroclus, who will soon glut the dogs and birds of the Trojans, as I'm afraid for my own head, that something may happen to it, and for yours, since Hector, a cloud of war, covers everything around, and sheer destruction stands revealed for us. Come on, call the best of the Danaans, in case anyone hears."

17.246 So he spoke, and Menelaus, good at the war cry, did not disobey; he raised a piercing shout, calling out to the Danaans: "Friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, you who drink at the public expense beside the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus, and each give orders to your own people, and whom honor and glory from Zeus attend: it's hard for me to pick out each of the leaders, so fiercely has the strife of war blazed up. But let each man come of his own accord, and feel indignation in his heart that Patroclus should become a plaything for the dogs of Troy." So he spoke, and swift Ajax son of Oïleus heard him clearly. He was the first to come running to meet him through the fighting, and after him Idomeneus and Idomeneus' companion Meriones, a match for Enyalius the man-slayer. But as for the others, who could tell from his own mind the names of all who came after them and roused the battle of the Achaeans?

17.262 The Trojans drove forward in a mass, and Hector led them. As when, at the mouth of a river fed from Zeus, a great wave roars against the current, and the headlands of the shore boom all around as the sea belches out spray: with such a roar the Trojans came on. But the Achaeans stood around the son of Menoetius with a single spirit, fenced in by their bronze-plated shields; and around their shining helmets the son of Cronus poured a thick mist, since he had not hated the son of Menoetius before either, while he was alive and the attendant of Aeacus' grandson. He loathed the thought of his becoming prey for the dogs of his Trojan enemies; so he roused his comrades to defend him.

17.274 At first the Trojans drove back the quick-eyed Achaeans; they abandoned the body and shrank back. But the high-spirited Trojans killed none of them with their spears, eager as they were; instead they began dragging the corpse away. Yet the Achaeans were not to be away from it for long, for Ajax very quickly rallied them—Ajax, who in looks and in deeds surpassed all the other Danaans after the peerless son of Peleus. He charged straight through the front ranks, like a wild boar in its strength, which in the mountains easily scatters dogs and lusty young men, wheeling on them through the glens: so shining Ajax, son of noble Telamon, easily went in among the battalions of the Trojans and scattered them, the men who stood astride Patroclus and were most intent on dragging him to their city and winning glory.

17.288 Now Hippothous, the shining son of Pelasgian Lethus, was dragging him by the foot through the fierce fighting, having tied a strap around the tendons by the ankle, to win favor with Hector and the Trojans. But disaster came upon him quickly, and none of them could keep it off, eager as they were. The son of Telamon sprang at him through the throng and struck him at close range through his bronze-cheeked helmet. The horsehair-crested helmet split around the spear point, struck by the great spear and the massive hand, and the brain spurted from the wound along the spear-socket, bloody. His strength was loosed on the spot, and he let the foot of great-hearted Patroclus fall from his hands to the ground to lie there; and he himself fell headlong beside it, on top of the corpse, far from fertile Larisa. He never repaid his dear parents for his rearing; his life was short, brought down by the spear of great-hearted Ajax.

17.304 Hector in turn threw his shining spear at Ajax; but Ajax, looking straight at him, just managed to avoid the bronze spear. Instead it hit Schedius, son of great-hearted Iphitus, by far the best of the Phocians, who lived in a house in famous Panopeus and ruled over many men. It struck him under the middle of the collarbone, and the bronze point went clean through and came out by the base of the shoulder. He fell with a thud, and his

armor clanged upon him. Ajax in turn struck warlike Phorcys, son of Phaenops, in the middle of the belly as he stood astride Hippothous. He broke the plate of his corslet, and the bronze let out his guts; he fell in the dust and clutched the earth with his palm.

17.316 The front fighters and shining Hector gave ground; the Argives raised a great shout and dragged off the dead, Phorcys and Hippothous, and began stripping the armor from their shoulders. Then the Trojans in turn would have gone back up into Ilium before the Achaeans, dear to Ares, overcome by their own cowardice, and the Argives would have won glory even beyond what Zeus had allotted, by their own might and strength. But Apollo himself roused Aeneas, taking the likeness of the herald Periphas, son of Epytus, who had grown old as herald in the service of Aeneas' aged father, and whose mind was full of kindly thoughts toward him. In his likeness Apollo, son of Zeus, said to him:

17.327 "Aeneas, how could you ever protect steep Ilium even against a god's will? I've seen other men do it, trusting in their might and strength and courage and their own numbers, with a people who feared nothing. But Zeus wants victory for us far more than for the Danaans—and yet you yourselves are terribly afraid and won't fight." So he spoke, and Aeneas, looking him in the face, recognized far-shooting Apollo, and he called out loudly to Hector: "Hector, and you other leaders of the Trojans and the allies, this is a disgrace, to go back up into Ilium before the Achaeans, dear to Ares, overcome by our own cowardice. But one of the gods has come and stood beside me, and he says that Zeus most high, the master of battle, is our helper. So let's go straight at the Danaans, and not let them bring dead Patroclus to the ships unhindered."

17.342 So he spoke, and he leapt out far in front of the front ranks and stood there; and they rallied and stood facing the Achaeans. Then Aeneas stabbed Leocritus with his spear, son of Arisbas and the good comrade of Lycomedes. As he fell, Lycomedes, dear to Ares, felt pity for him. He came and stood

very close, threw his shining spear, and hit Apisaon son of Hippasus, shepherd of the people, in the liver under the midriff, and at once loosed his knees. He had come from fertile Paeonia, and after Asteropaeus he was the best of them in battle. As he fell, warlike Asteropaeus felt pity for him, and he too charged eagerly to fight the Danaans. But he could no longer make any headway, for they stood all around Patroclus, fenced in with their shields, holding their spears out before them.

17.356 For Ajax went round to every one of them, giving orders again and again. He told no one to fall back from the corpse, nor any of the Achaeans to fight out in front ahead of the others, but to stand close around it and fight at close quarters. So huge Ajax commanded; and the earth was soaked with crimson blood, and the dead fell thick and close together, Trojans and their mighty allies, and Danaans too; for they weren't fighting without bloodshed either, though far fewer of them were dying, since they always remembered to keep sheer slaughter off one another throughout the throng. So they fought, like fire; you wouldn't have said the sun was still safe, or the moon, for over the part of the battle where the best of them stood around the dead son of Menoetius they were held fast in mist.

17.370 But the rest of the Trojans and the well-greaved Achaeans fought at their ease under a clear sky. The sharp radiance of the sun was spread over them, and no cloud showed over the whole earth or the mountains. They fought with pauses, avoiding each other's grievous missiles, standing far apart. But those in the middle were suffering from the mist and the war, worn down by the pitiless bronze, all who were the best. Two men, though, the glorious warriors Thrasymedes and Antilochus, had not yet heard that peerless Patroclus was dead; they still thought he was alive and fighting the Trojans in the forefront of the throng. Those two, keeping watch for death or flight among their comrades, were fighting apart, as Nestor had instructed them when he urged them into battle from the black ships.[2]

2 Thrasymedes and Antilochus are sons of Nestor; Antilochus was among Achilles' closest friends.

17.384 But for those men the great contest of grievous strife went on all day long. With toil and sweat, ceaselessly and without a break, the knees and shins and feet beneath each man, and his hands and eyes, were spattered as the two sides fought over the noble attendant of the swift-footed grandson of Aeacus. As when a man gives the hide of a great bull, soaked through with fat, to his people to stretch, and they take it, stand apart in a circle and stretch it, and at once the moisture goes out of it and the fat sinks in as many hands pull, and the whole hide is stretched taut through and through: so they dragged the body this way and that in a small space, both sides at once. Their hearts were full of hope, the Trojans' to drag it off to Ilium, the Achaeans' to bring it to the hollow ships. Around it a savage tumult rose. Not Ares, rouser of armies, not Athena either, would have found fault with it if they had seen it, not even if anger had come over them in full. 17.400 Such was the evil toil of men and horses that Zeus stretched out over Patroclus on that day. And godlike Achilles still knew nothing of Patroclus' death, for they were fighting far off from the swift ships, beneath the wall of the Trojans. So he never expected in his heart that he was dead; he thought that he would press up to the gates and come back again alive, since he did not expect at all that Patroclus would sack the city without him, nor with him either. He had often heard as much from his mother, listening to her in private, when she reported to him the purpose of great Zeus. But this time his mother did not tell him of the evil, great as it was, that had come about: that his dearest companion by far had perished. And the others, holding their sharpened spears around the body, kept pressing in on each other ceaselessly and killing one another, and one of the bronze-clad Achaeans would say something like this:

THE HORSES OF ACHILLES

Achilles' immortal horses weep for Patroclus, and Zeus sends them back into the fight with Automedon.

17.415 "Friends, there's no glory for us in going back to the hollow ships. Rather let the black earth gape open for us all, right here. That would be far better for us, here and now, than to let the horse-taming Trojans drag this man to their city and win the glory." And one of the great-hearted Trojans, in his turn, would cry out like this: "Friends, even if it is our fate to be cut down beside this man, all of us together, let no one draw back from the fighting yet." So one would speak, and stir up each man's fury. So they fought, and the iron din went up through the barren air to the bronze sky. But the horses of Aeacus' grandson, standing apart from the battle, were weeping, ever since they had first learned that their charioteer had fallen in the dust at the hands of man-slaying Hector.

17.429 Automedon, the valiant son of Diores, did all he could with them. Again and again he lashed them with his quick whip, again and again he spoke to them with gentle words, and again and again with threats. But the two would neither go back to the ships by the broad Hellespont nor into the fighting among the Achaeans. As a gravestone stands fixed, set on the tomb of a dead man or woman, so they stood unmoving, holding the beautiful chariot, their heads bowed down to the ground. Warm tears ran from under their eyelids to the ground as they mourned in longing for their charioteer, and their rich manes were fouled, streaming down from under the yoke-pad on either side of the yoke. Seeing them mourn, the son of Cronus pitied them, and shaking his head he spoke to his own heart:

17.443 "Poor creatures, why did we give you to lord Peleus, a mortal, when you are ageless and immortal? Was it so that you should have your share of sorrows among wretched men? For of all the things that breathe and creep upon the earth, there is surely nothing more miserable than man. But Hector son of

Priam will not ride behind you in your intricate chariot. I will not allow it. Isn't it enough that he has the armor and boasts of it as he does? I will put strength into your knees and into your hearts, so that you may also bring Automedon safe out of the battle to the hollow ships. For I will still grant the Trojans glory, to go on killing until they reach the well-benched ships and the sun goes down and holy darkness comes on."

17.456 So he spoke, and breathed noble fury into the horses. They shook the dust from their manes to the ground and swiftly carried the quick chariot among the Trojans and Achaeans. Behind them Automedon fought, grieving though he was for his companion, swooping with his horses like a vulture among geese. Easily he would flee out of the din of the Trojans, and easily he would charge in again, pressing hard through the great throng. But he could not kill men when he rushed to pursue them, for there was no way, alone in the holy chariot, to attack with the spear and also hold in the swift horses. At last a companion caught sight of him with his own eyes, Alcimedon, son of Laerces son of Haemon. He stood behind the chariot and spoke to Automedon:

17.469 "Automedon, which of the gods put this useless plan in your breast and took away your good sense? Look how you're fighting the Trojans in the front of the throng, all alone! Your companion has been killed, and Hector himself wears the armor of Aeacus' grandson on his shoulders and glories in it." Then Automedon son of Diores answered him: "Alcimedon, which other of the Achaeans is a match for you at keeping immortal horses under control and their fury in check, except Patroclus, a counselor equal to the gods, while he lived? But now death and fate have overtaken him. Come, you take the whip and the shining reins, and I'll get down from the chariot so that I can fight." So he spoke, and Alcimedon leapt onto the war chariot and quickly took the whip and the reins in his hands, and Automedon leapt down. Glorious Hector saw it, and at once called to Aeneas, who was near him:

17.485 "Aeneas, counselor of the bronze-clad Trojans, I've seen those two horses of the swift-footed grandson of Aeacus showing up in the battle with poor charioteers. So I would hope to capture them, if you are willing in your heart, since if the two of us charge them, they won't dare to stand against us and fight it out in battle." So he spoke, and the brave son of Anchises did not disobey. The two went straight ahead, their shoulders covered with shields of oxhide, dry and tough, with much bronze beaten over them. And with them went Chromius and godlike Aretus, both of them, and their hearts were full of hope that they would kill the two men and drive off the high-necked horses—fools, for they were not going to get back from Automedon without bloodshed. He prayed to father Zeus, and the dark depths of his heart were filled with valor and strength. At once he spoke to Alcimedon, his trusted companion:

17.501 "Alcimedon, don't keep the horses far away from me. Keep them right behind me, breathing on my back. For I don't think Hector son of Priam will hold back his fury until he has killed the two of us and mounted behind the fine-maned horses of Achilles, and put the ranks of Argive men to flight—or else is brought down himself among the foremost." So saying, he called to the two Ajaxes and Menelaus: "Ajaxes, leaders of the Argives, and Menelaus, leave the body to the best men, to stand around it and hold off the ranks of the enemy, but keep the pitiless day away from the two of us who are still alive. For Hector and Aeneas, who are the best of the Trojans, have come pressing heavily this way through the tearful war. Still, these things lie on the knees of the gods. I too will throw, and Zeus will see to all the rest."

17.516 He spoke, and poising his long-shadowed spear he hurled it, and struck the shield of Aretus, balanced on every side. The shield did not stop the spear; the bronze went right through, and he drove it through the belt into the lower belly. As when a strong young man with a sharp axe strikes a field-dwelling ox behind the horns and cuts right through the sinew, and the ox lunges forward and falls: so Aretus lunged forward and fell on

his back, and the spear, very sharp, quivering in his guts, loosened his limbs. Then Hector threw at Automedon with his shining spear. But Automedon, looking straight at it, avoided the bronze spear: he ducked forward, and the long spear stuck in the ground behind him, and the butt of the spear quivered, until mighty Ares stilled its force. 17.530 And now they would have rushed at each other with swords at close quarters, if the two Ajaxes had not parted them, for all their eagerness, coming through the throng at their companion's call. In fear of them Hector and Aeneas and godlike Chromius drew back again, and left Aretus lying there, torn to the heart. Automedon, the equal of swift Ares, stripped off his armor and spoke a word in boast: "Well, I've eased my heart a little of its grief for the dead son of Menoetius, even if the man I've killed is a lesser one." So saying, he took the bloody spoils and put them in the chariot, and climbed in himself, his feet and his hands above them bloody, like a lion that has devoured a bull.

17.543 Once more the fierce battle was stretched tight over Patroclus, grievous and full of tears, and Athena roused the strife, coming down from heaven. For wide-seeing Zeus had sent her to stir up the Danaans, since his mind had now turned. As when Zeus stretches a purple rainbow across the sky for mortals, to be a sign either of war or of a chill winter storm, which makes men stop their work on the earth and harms the flocks: so she wrapped herself in a purple cloud and entered the throng of the Achaeans, and roused each man. First she spoke to the son of Atreus, urging him on, mighty Menelaus, since he was close to her, taking on the form and tireless voice of Phoenix:

17.556 "Menelaus, it will be shame and disgrace for you if swift dogs tear the trusted companion of noble Achilles beneath the wall of the Trojans. Hold on with all your strength, and spur on the whole army." Then Menelaus, good at the war cry, answered her: "Phoenix, old father, man of an earlier generation, if only Athena would give me strength and keep off the rush of missiles! Then I would gladly stand beside Patroclus and defend him, for his death has touched my heart deeply. But Hector has the ter-

rible fury of fire, and he doesn't stop slaughtering with the bronze, for Zeus is granting him glory." So he spoke, and the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, was glad that of all the gods he had prayed to her first.

17.569 She put strength into his shoulders and his knees, and set in his breast the daring of a fly, which, however often it is brushed away from a man's skin, keeps trying to bite, since human blood is sweet to it. With such daring she filled the dark depths of his heart, and he strode to stand over Patroclus and hurled his shining spear. There was among the Trojans a man named Podes, son of Eëtion, rich and brave. Hector honored him most of all the people, since he was his companion, a dear friend at feasts. Fair-haired Menelaus struck him on the belt as he darted away to flee, and drove the bronze right through. He fell with a thud, and Menelaus son of Atreus dragged the body away from the Trojans into the throng of his companions.

17.582 But Apollo came and stood near Hector and urged him on, in the likeness of Phaenops son of Asius, who of all his guest-friends was dearest to him and lived in a house at Abydos. Taking his likeness, Apollo who works from afar spoke to him: "Hector, which other Achaean would be afraid of you anymore, now that you've shrunk back from Menelaus, who until now was a soft spearman? Now he's going off alone, carrying the body away from the Trojans, and he has killed your trusted companion, a good man among the foremost fighters, Podes son of Eëtion." So he spoke, and a black cloud of grief covered Hector, and he went through the foremost fighters, armed in gleaming bronze. And then the son of Cronus took up the tasseled aegis, shimmering bright, and covered Ida with clouds; he flashed lightning and thundered very loudly, and shook the aegis, and gave victory to the Trojans and put the Achaeans to flight.

17.597 The first to begin the rout was Peneleos the Boeotian. He was struck by a spear on the shoulder, a grazing blow on its top, while he was still facing forward, and the point of Polydamas' spear scratched him to the bone; for Polydamas had come up close and struck him. Next Hector, at close range, wounded

Leitus, son of great-hearted Alectryon, on the hand at the wrist, and put an end to his fighting. He looked around and fled in fear, since he no longer hoped in his heart to fight the Trojans with a spear in his hand. As Hector rushed after Leitus, Idomeneus struck him on the corslet, on the chest beside the nipple, but the long spear broke off at the socket, and the Trojans shouted. Hector threw at Idomeneus son of Deucalion as he stood in his chariot, and missed him by a little, 17.610 but he hit Meriones' attendant and charioteer, Coeranus, who had followed him from well-built Lyctus. Meriones had come on foot at first, when he left the curved ships, and would have handed the Trojans a great triumph if Coeranus had not quickly driven up the swift-footed horses. He came as a light of rescue to Meriones and kept the pitiless day away from him, but he himself lost his life at the hands of man-slaying Hector. Hector struck him under the jaw and the ear, and the spear, driven deep, knocked out his teeth and cut through the middle of his tongue. He toppled from the chariot and let the reins pour down to the ground. Meriones bent and picked them up off the plain in his own hands, and spoke to Idomeneus:[3]

A MESSAGE FOR ACHILLES

Ajax prays to Zeus to lift the mist, and Menelaus sends Antilochus to tell Achilles the news.

17.622 "Whip them on now, until you reach the swift ships. You can see for yourself that the Achaeans no longer have the upper hand." So he spoke, and Idomeneus lashed the fine-maned horses toward the hollow ships, for fear had fallen on his heart. Nor did great-hearted Ajax and Menelaus fail to see that Zeus was now giving the Trojans victory and turning the tide. Great Telamonian Ajax was the first of them to speak: "Oh, no! By now even a complete fool could see that father Zeus himself is helping the Trojans. Their missiles all hit, whoever throws them,

3 Lyctus was a city in Crete.

coward or brave—Zeus guides them all the same—while ours all fall to the ground like this, for nothing.

17.634 But come, let us ourselves think of the best plan, both how we may drag away the body and how we ourselves may get back and be a joy to our dear companions, who must be grieving as they look over here, and saying that the fury and the irresistible hands of man-slaying Hector will be checked no longer, but will fall upon the black ships. If only there were some companion to take the news quickly to the son of Peleus, since I don't think he has even heard the grievous news, that his dear companion has perished. But I can't see anyone like that anywhere among the Achaeans, for they are held fast in mist, the men and their horses alike. 17.645 Father Zeus, rescue the sons of the Achaeans from the mist. Make the sky clear, and let us see with our eyes; and then destroy us in the light, at least, since that is now your pleasure." So he spoke, and the father pitied him as he shed tears. At once he scattered the mist and drove away the haze, and the sun shone out, and the whole battle came into view. And then Ajax spoke to Menelaus, good at the war cry: "Look now, Menelaus, nurtured by Zeus, and see if you can spot Antilochus still alive, son of great-hearted Nestor, and urge him to go quickly to war-minded Achilles and tell him that his dearest companion by far has perished."

17.656 So he spoke, and Menelaus, good at the war cry, did not disobey, but went off like a lion leaving a farmyard, when he has worn himself out provoking the dogs and the men who won't let him carry off the fattest of the cattle, keeping watch all night long; and he, craving meat, charges straight in, but achieves nothing, for javelins dart thick against him from bold hands, and blazing torches, which he dreads for all his eagerness; and at dawn he goes away with a sullen heart. So Menelaus, good at the war cry, went away from Patroclus, very much against his will, for he was terribly afraid that the Achaeans, in the grip of grievous panic, would leave him behind as spoil for the enemy. Again and again he urged Meriones and the two Ajaxes:

17.669 "Ajaxes, leaders of the Argives, and Meriones, now let each of you remember the gentleness of poor Patroclus. He knew how to be kind to everyone while he lived. But now death and fate have overtaken him." So speaking, fair-haired Menelaus went off, peering everywhere like an eagle, which they say has the keenest sight of all the winged creatures under heaven; even from high above, the swift-footed hare does not escape it as it crouches under a leafy bush, but the eagle swoops on it, quickly seizes it and takes its life. So then, Menelaus, nurtured by Zeus, your bright eyes kept turning everywhere through the throng of your many companions, to see if you might spot Nestor's son somewhere still alive.

17.682 Very soon he spotted him on the left of the whole battle, encouraging his companions and urging them to fight. Fair-haired Menelaus came and stood near him and said: "Antilochus, nurtured by Zeus, come over here and hear grievous news —I wish it had never happened. I think you can already see for yourself, and know, that a god is rolling disaster on the Danaans, and victory is with the Trojans. The best of the Achaeans has been killed, Patroclus, and a great sense of loss has fallen on the Danaans. But you, run quickly to the ships of the Achaeans and tell Achilles, in case he can quickly bring the body safe to his ship—the naked body, for Hector of the flashing helmet has the armor."

17.694 So he spoke, and Antilochus shuddered to hear the words. For a long time he was struck speechless; his eyes filled with tears, and his full voice was choked. But even so he did not neglect Menelaus' command. He set off running, and gave his armor to his excellent companion Laodocus, who was wheeling his single-hoofed horses close by. His feet carried him out of the battle, shedding tears, to bring the evil message to Achilles son of Peleus. Nor did your heart, Menelaus nurtured by Zeus, want to stay and defend the hard-pressed companions Antilochus had left behind—and a great sense of loss fell on the Pylians. Instead he sent godlike Thrasymedes to them, and went back himself to

stand over the warrior Patroclus. He ran up and stood beside the two Ajaxes, and at once spoke to them:

CARRYING PATROCLUS BACK

Menelaus and Meriones lift the body while the two Ajaxes hold off Hector and Aeneas.

17.708 "I've sent him on to the swift ships to go to swift-footed Achilles. But I don't think he will come now, however angry he is with godlike Hector, for there's no way he could fight the Trojans without armor. So let us ourselves think of the best plan, both how we may drag away the body and how we ourselves may escape death and doom from the Trojans' battle cry." Then great Telamonian Ajax answered him: "Everything you've said is right, glorious Menelaus. You and Meriones, then, get under the body quickly, lift it and carry it out of the struggle, and behind you the two of us will fight the Trojans and godlike Hector, one in heart as we are one in name, we who before now have stood up to fierce Ares, standing side by side."

17.722 So he spoke, and they took the body up from the ground in their arms, lifting it high with a mighty effort. Behind them the Trojan army shouted when they saw the Achaeans lifting the body. They charged straight at them like dogs that rush at a wounded boar ahead of the young huntsmen: for a while they run on, eager to tear it apart, but when it wheels around among them, trusting in its strength, they fall back and scatter in terror, one this way, one that. So the Trojans for a while kept following in a mass, stabbing with swords and two-pointed spears; but whenever the two Ajaxes turned and stood against them, their color changed, and no one dared to dash forward and fight over the body.

17.735 So the two of them carried the body eagerly out of the war toward the hollow ships, and the battle strained after them, savage as a fire that sweeps on a city of men, springing up suddenly and blazing, and the houses dwindle away in the great glare while the force of the wind roars over it: so on them, as

they went, came the ceaseless din of horses and spearmen. And they, like mules that put forth all their strong might and drag down from the mountain along a rugged path a beam or a great ship's timber, and the heart in them is worn down with toil and sweat alike as they strain on: 17.746 so they carried the body eagerly. And behind them the two Ajaxes held back the enemy, as a wooded ridge holds back water, lying right across a plain, and checks even the grievous streams of mighty rivers, and at once turns all their currents aside and sends them wandering over the plain, and for all their force they cannot break through it as they flow: so the two Ajaxes kept holding back the battle of the Trojans behind them. But the Trojans kept following, and two among them most of all, Aeneas son of Anchises and glorious Hector. As a cloud of starlings or jackdaws goes shrieking wildly when they see a hawk coming, that brings death to small birds: so before Aeneas and Hector the young men of the Achaeans went shrieking wildly, and forgot their fighting. Many fine pieces of armor fell around and about the trench as the Danaans fled, and there was no rest from the war.

Book 18

The shield of Achilles
Achilles mourns, and Hephaestus forges him new armor at Thetis' request.

18.1 So they fought on, like blazing fire, and Antilochus came to Achilles as a swift-footed messenger. He found him in front of the ships with their upswept horns, brooding in his heart over the very things that had already come to pass. Deeply troubled, he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit: "Ah me, why are the long-haired Achaeans being driven back again toward the ships, routed in panic across the plain? May the gods not bring to pass the cruel sorrows of my heart, as my mother once made known to me, when she told me that while I was still alive the best of the Myrmidons would leave the light of the sun at the hands of the Trojans. Surely the valiant son of Menoetius is dead now, the headstrong man! And yet I told him, once he had driven off the enemy's fire, to come back to the ships and not to fight Hector with all his might."

ACHILLES HEARS THE NEWS

Antilochus tells Achilles that Patroclus is dead, and Achilles falls to the ground in grief.

18.15 While he was turning this over in his mind and in his heart, the son of noble Nestor came up close to him, shedding hot tears, and spoke his painful message: "Ah, son of war-minded Peleus, you are about to hear grievous news, news that should never have been. Patroclus lies dead, and they are fighting over

his body, his naked body; Hector of the flashing helmet has his armor." So he spoke, and a black cloud of grief covered Achilles. With both hands he took the sooty dust and poured it down over his head, and disfigured his handsome face, and the black ash settled on his fragrant tunic.

18.26 And he himself lay in the dust, a mighty man stretched out at his mighty length, and with his own hands he tore and defiled his hair. The slave women whom Achilles and Patroclus had taken as plunder, grief-stricken at heart, cried aloud and ran out of doors to gather around war-minded Achilles; all of them beat their breasts with their hands, and the limbs of each gave way beneath her. On the other side Antilochus mourned, shedding tears and holding Achilles' hands as he groaned in his noble heart, for he was afraid Achilles might cut his own throat with the iron. Achilles gave a terrible cry, and his queenly mother heard him as she sat in the depths of the sea beside her old father, and she wailed in answer; and the goddesses gathered around her, all the Nereids who were in the depths of the sea.[1]

THETIS COMES TO HER SON

Thetis and the Nereids come to Achilles, who chooses to avenge Patroclus though it means his own death.

18.39 There were Glauce and Thaleia and Cymodoce, Nesaea and Speio and Thoe and ox-eyed Halie, Cymothoe and Actaea and Limnoreia, and Melite and Iaera and Amphithoe and Agave, Doto and Proto and Pherusa and Dynamene, Dexamene and Amphinome and Callianeira, Doris and Panope and glorious Galatea, Nemertes and Apseudes and Callianassa; and there were Clymene and Ianeira and Ianassa, Maera and Oreithyia and Amatheia of the lovely hair, and the other Nereids who were in the depths of the sea. The gleaming cave was filled with them,

1 Thetis is a sea-goddess, daughter of Nereus, the "old man of the sea"; the Nereids are her sisters, sea-nymphs whose names, listed next, mostly evoke the sea.

and all together they beat their breasts, and Thetis led the lament:

18.52 "Listen, my sisters, daughters of Nereus, so that you may all hear and know well how many sorrows are in my heart. Ah me, wretched that I am, ah me, unhappy mother of the best of sons! I bore a son flawless and strong, outstanding among warriors, and he shot up like a sapling. I raised him like a young tree on the high ground of an orchard, and sent him off in the beaked ships to Ilium to fight the Trojans; but I shall never welcome him again, come home to the house of Peleus. And while he lives and sees the light of the sun, he grieves, and I can do nothing to help him by going to him. Still, I will go, to see my dear child and hear what sorrow has come upon him while he stays away from the war."

18.65 So she spoke and left the cave, and the others went with her in tears, and around them the wave of the sea broke apart. When they reached the fertile land of Troy, they came up onto the shore one after another, where the ships of the Myrmidons had been drawn up close together around swift Achilles. As he groaned heavily, his queenly mother came and stood beside him, and with a shrill wail she took her son's head in her hands, and lamenting she spoke winged words: "My child, why are you weeping? What sorrow has come to your heart? Speak out, don't hide it. These things have been brought to pass for you by Zeus, just as you prayed before, lifting up your hands: that all the sons of the Achaeans should be penned in at the sterns of the ships for want of you, and suffer cruel things."

18.78 Then, groaning heavily, swift-footed Achilles answered her: "My mother, the Olympian has brought these things to pass for me, it is true. But what joy do I have in them, now that my dear companion has perished, Patroclus, whom I honored above all my companions, as much as my own life? I have lost him; and Hector killed him and stripped off the armor, huge, a wonder to see, beautiful—the armor the gods gave Peleus as a splendid gift on the day they put you in the bed of a mortal man. If only you

had stayed where you were, living among the immortal women of the sea, and Peleus had married a mortal wife!

18.88 As it is, it was so that there might be boundless grief in your heart as well, for your dead son, whom you will never welcome home again; for my heart does not bid me go on living or stay among men, unless Hector is first struck down by my spear and loses his life, and pays the price for making Menoetius' son Patroclus his prey." Then Thetis spoke to him in turn, shedding tears: "Then you will be swift to die, my child, from what you say; for right after Hector your own death stands ready." Then, deeply troubled, swift-footed Achilles answered her:

18.98 "Then let me die at once, since I was not to help my companion when he was being killed. He perished far from his homeland, and he needed me to be his defender against ruin. Now, since I am not going home to my own dear native land, and I was no light of rescue to Patroclus, nor to my other companions, the many who were brought down by godlike Hector, but I sit here by the ships, a useless weight on the earth—I, who am such as no other of the bronze-clad Achaeans in war, though in the assembly there are others better—oh, may strife perish from among gods and men, and anger, which drives even a man of good sense to fury, and which, far sweeter than trickling honey, swells up like smoke in men's chests, just as Agamemnon, lord of men, has now made me angry. 18.112 But we will let these things be, done and past, grieved as we are, forcing down the heart in our chests because we must. Now I will go, to find the destroyer of that dear life, Hector; and I will accept my doom whenever Zeus and the other immortal gods are willing to bring it to pass. For not even mighty Heracles escaped his doom, though he was dearest of all to lord Zeus, son of Cronus; fate overcame him, and the cruel anger of Hera. So I too, if a like fate has been fashioned for me, will lie dead when I die. But now let me win noble glory, and make some Trojan woman or some deep-bosomed Dardanian woman wipe the tears from her soft cheeks with both hands and sob without end, and let them know that I have stayed away from the war for a long time. Don't hold

me back from battle, though you love me; you will not persuade me."

18.127 Then the goddess, silver-footed Thetis, answered him: "Yes, my child, this is true: it is no bad thing to ward off sheer destruction from your companions when they are hard pressed. But your beautiful armor is in the Trojans' hands, bronze and gleaming. Hector of the flashing helmet wears it on his own shoulders and glories in it; yet I tell you he will not glory in it long, for his death is close to him. But you, do not go down into the turmoil of Ares yet, not until you see me come back here with your own eyes; for at dawn I will return, with the rising sun, bringing beautiful armor from lord Hephaestus." So she spoke, and turned away from her son, and turning, she spoke to her sisters of the sea:

18.140 "Now you go down into the broad bosom of the sea, to see the old man of the sea and our father's house, and tell him everything; and I will go to high Olympus, to Hephaestus the famous craftsman, to see if he is willing to give my son glorious, all-shining armor." So she spoke, and at once they dove beneath the wave of the sea, and the goddess, silver-footed Thetis, went in turn to Olympus, to bring her dear son glorious armor. So her feet were carrying her to Olympus. But the Achaeans, fleeing with an unearthly clamor before man-slaying Hector, reached the ships and the Hellespont. Nor would the well-greaved Achaeans have dragged the body of Patroclus, Achilles' attendant, out from among the missiles; for once more the army and the horses caught up with him, and Hector son of Priam, like a flame in his strength.

ACHILLES AT THE TRENCH

Sent by Iris, Achilles shows himself at the trench, and his shout lets the Greeks recover the body.

18.155 Three times glorious Hector seized him from behind by the feet, eager to drag him off, and shouted loudly to the Trojans; and three times the two Ajaxes, clothed in furious valor, beat

him back from the body. But he stood firm, trusting in his strength; now he would charge into the thick of the fray, and now again stand his ground, shouting loudly, and he did not give way backward at all. As herdsmen who camp in the fields cannot drive a tawny lion away from a carcass when he is starving, so the two Ajaxes, armed warriors though they were, could not frighten Hector son of Priam away from the body. And now he would have dragged it off and won unspeakable glory, had not wind-footed swift Iris come running from Olympus as a messenger to the son of Peleus, to tell him to arm, without the knowledge of Zeus and the other gods; for Hera had sent her. Standing close by, she spoke winged words:

18.170 "Up, son of Peleus, most terrible of all men! Go to the defense of Patroclus, for whose sake dread battle has risen before the ships. They are killing one another, the one side defending the dead man's body, while the others, the Trojans, are bent on dragging it off to windy Ilium; and glorious Hector above all is eager to drag it away, and his heart bids him cut the head from the tender neck and fix it on the stakes. Up, then, lie here no longer! Let shame come into your heart at the thought of Patroclus becoming a plaything for the dogs of Troy. The disgrace is yours, if the body comes back to you defiled in any way." Then swift-footed godlike Achilles answered her: "Goddess Iris, which of the gods sent you to me as a messenger?"

18.183 Then wind-footed swift Iris spoke to him in turn: "Hera sent me, the glorious wife of Zeus. The son of Cronus, throned on high, does not know of it, nor does any other of the immortals who dwell around snowy Olympus." Then swift-footed Achilles answered her: "How can I go into the turmoil? Those men have my armor. And my dear mother would not let me arm myself until I see her come back with my own eyes; for she promised to bring me beautiful armor from Hephaestus. I don't know of anyone else whose glorious armor I could put on, unless it were the shield of Ajax son of Telamon. But he himself, I expect, is busy among the front-fighters, slaughtering with his spear over the dead Patroclus."

18.196 Then wind-footed swift Iris spoke to him in turn: "We too know well that they have your glorious armor. But go to the ditch just as you are and show yourself to the Trojans, in case the Trojans take fright at you and hold back from the fighting, and the warlike sons of the Achaeans get their breath, worn out as they are; for breathing space in war is short." So spoke swift-footed Iris, and went away; and Achilles, dear to Zeus, rose up. Around his mighty shoulders Athena flung the tasseled aegis, and the bright goddess wreathed his head with a golden cloud, and from it she kindled a blazing flame.

18.207 As when smoke rises from a city and reaches the upper air, far off from an island that enemies are fighting around, and all day long the islanders contend in hateful war from their own city; but with the setting of the sun the signal fires blaze one after another, and the glare shoots up high for the neighbors to see, in the hope that they may come in their ships as defenders against ruin: so from Achilles' head the blaze reached the upper air. He went from the wall and stood at the ditch, but did not mix with the Achaeans, for he heeded his mother's wise command. There he stood and shouted, and apart from him Pallas Athena gave voice; and she raised unspeakable confusion among the Trojans. 18.219 As when a voice rings out clear, when a trumpet sounds as murderous enemies surround a city, so clear then rang the voice of the grandson of Aeacus. And when they heard the bronze voice of Aeacus' grandson, the hearts of all were shaken, and the horses with beautiful manes turned their chariots back, for they foresaw suffering in their hearts. And the charioteers were struck with terror when they saw the tireless fire blazing dreadfully above the head of the great-hearted son of Peleus; gray-eyed Athena kindled it. Three times over the ditch godlike Achilles gave a great shout, and three times the Trojans and their famous allies were thrown into confusion. 18.230 And there and then twelve of their best men perished, among their own chariots and spears. But the Achaeans gladly dragged Patroclus out from among the missiles and laid him on a bier, and his dear companions stood around him, mourning; and

with them followed swift-footed Achilles, shedding hot tears, when he saw his trusted companion lying on the litter, torn by the sharp bronze—the man he had sent off to war with horses and chariot, and never welcomed home again. Then ox-eyed queenly Hera sent the unwearying Sun, against his will, to go down into the streams of Ocean. The sun set, and the godlike Achaeans ceased from the fierce fighting and the war that spares no one.

HECTOR REJECTS RETREAT

Polydamas urges a return to the city, but Hector insists on fighting on, and the Trojans cheer him.

18.243 The Trojans in turn, on the other side, withdrew from the fierce combat, unyoked their swift horses from the chariots, and gathered in assembly before they gave any thought to supper. It was an assembly held standing up, and no one dared to sit down; for trembling held them all, because Achilles had appeared, after holding back so long from the painful fighting. Among them sensible Polydamas began to speak, the son of Panthous; for he alone could see both forward and back. He was Hector's comrade, and they were born on the same night; but the one far excelled in words, the other with the spear. With good intent toward them he addressed the assembly and said:

18.254 "Think it over well on every side, my friends. For my part, I urge you to go back to the city now, and not to wait for bright dawn on the plain beside the ships; we are far from the wall. As long as this man raged in wrath against godlike Agamemnon, the Achaeans were easier to fight. I too was glad to spend the night beside the swift ships, hoping we would take the curved ships. But now I am terribly afraid of the swift-footed son of Peleus. So overbearing is that man's spirit that he will not be willing to stay on the plain, where Trojans and Achaeans both, in the middle ground, share between them the fury of Ares; no, he will fight for our city and our women. 18.266 Come, let us go to the city; trust me, for this is how it will be. For now ambrosial

night has halted the swift-footed son of Peleus; but if he finds us still here tomorrow when he rushes out in his armor, many a man will come to know him well. Gladly will he reach holy Ilium, whoever escapes, and dogs and vultures will eat many of the Trojans. May such news stay far from my ears! But if we obey my words, troubled though we are, tonight we will keep our strength together in the place of assembly, and the city will be guarded by its towers and high gates and the doors fitted to them, long and well polished and bolted shut. And early tomorrow at dawn, armed in our armor, we will take our stand along the towers. Then it will be the worse for him, if he wants to come from the ships and fight with us around the wall. 18.280 He will go back to the ships again, once he has worn out his high-necked horses with every kind of running, driving them to and fro beneath the city. His spirit will not let him charge inside, and he will never sack it; the swift dogs will eat him first." Then, glaring at him from under his brows, Hector of the flashing helmet spoke to him: "Polydamas, what you say no longer pleases me, when you urge us to go back and be penned up in the city. Haven't you had enough yet of being cooped up inside the towers? Once all mortal men used to speak of Priam's city as rich in gold, rich in bronze; but now the fine treasures have vanished from our houses, and many possessions have gone off to Phrygia and lovely Maeonia to be sold, since great Zeus grew angry.

18.293 But now, when the son of crooked-counseling Cronus has granted me to win glory at the ships and to pen the Achaeans against the sea, don't put such thoughts before the people any longer, you fool. No Trojan will listen to you; I won't allow it. Come, let us all do as I say. For now, take your supper throughout the army, company by company, and remember to keep watch, and each of you stay awake. And any Trojan who is excessively anxious about his possessions, let him gather them up and give them to the people to consume in common; better that one of them should have the good of them than the Achaeans. And early tomorrow at dawn, armed in our armor, we will rouse sharp Ares beside the hollow ships. 18.305 And if godlike

Achilles has truly risen up beside the ships, it will be the worse for him, if he wants it so. I for one will not run from him out of the harsh-sounding war, but will stand up to him face to face, to see whether he carries off great victory, or I do. Enyalius is impartial, and he kills the man who would kill." So Hector spoke, and the Trojans roared their approval—fools! For Pallas Athena had taken away their wits. They praised Hector, who was planning disaster, but no one praised Polydamas, who was offering good counsel. Then they took their supper throughout the army; but the Achaeans mourned for Patroclus all night long, groaning and lamenting.

18.316 Among them the son of Peleus led the vehement lament, laying his man-slaying hands on his companion's chest and groaning without pause, like a bearded lion whose cubs a deer-hunter has snatched away out of the dense wood; and the lion grieves when he comes back too late, and ranges through many glens, tracking the man's footprints, in the hope of finding him somewhere, for very bitter anger takes hold of him: so, groaning heavily, he spoke among the Myrmidons: "Ah, how empty were the words I let fall that day, when I tried to reassure the warrior Menoetius in his halls! I told him I would bring his glorious son back home to Opoeis, once he had sacked Ilium and won his share of the spoils.[2]

18.328 But Zeus does not bring all men's purposes to fulfillment. For both of us are fated to redden the same earth, here in Troy; since I too will never come home to be welcomed in his halls by the old horseman Peleus, nor by my mother Thetis, but the earth will hold me here. But now, Patroclus, since I am going under the earth after you, I will not give you your funeral until I bring here the armor and the head of Hector, your great-hearted killer; and before your pyre I will cut the throats of twelve splendid sons of the Trojans, in my anger at your killing. Until then you will lie as you are beside the beaked ships, and around you Trojan women and deep-bosomed Dardanian women will weep night and day, shedding tears—women whom we ourselves won

2 Opoeis, in Locris in central Greece, was the home of Patroclus' father Menoetius.

by hard labor, with our strength and our long spears, sacking rich cities of mortal men."

18.343 So speaking, godlike Achilles called to his companions to set a great tripod over the fire, so that they could wash the clotted blood from Patroclus as quickly as possible. They set a tripod for bathwater on the blazing fire, poured water into it, and took wood and kindled it underneath. The fire played around the belly of the tripod, and the water grew warm. And when the water came to the boil in the gleaming bronze, they washed him and anointed him richly with olive oil, and filled his wounds with ointment nine years old. Laying him on a bier, they covered him with fine linen from head to foot, and over that a white cloak. Then all night long, around swift-footed Achilles, the Myrmidons mourned and lamented Patroclus. And Zeus spoke to Hera, his sister and his wife:

18.357 "So you've had your way after all, ox-eyed queenly Hera: you've roused swift-footed Achilles. The long-haired Achaeans must surely be your own children, born from you yourself." Then ox-eyed queenly Hera answered him: "Most dread son of Cronus, what a thing to say! Why, even a mortal, I suppose, will try to bring about what he wants against another man, though he is only mortal and doesn't have so much cunning. How then should I, who claim to be the highest of goddesses on both counts—by birth, and because I am called your consort, while you are lord among all the immortals—how should I not, in my anger at the Trojans, have stitched together trouble for them?"

THETIS VISITS HEPHAESTUS

Thetis asks Hephaestus to forge new armor for her son, and he sets to work.

18.368 So they talked together in this way. Meanwhile silver-footed Thetis reached the house of Hephaestus, imperishable, starry, outstanding among the immortals, made of bronze, which the crook-footed god had built for himself. She found him sweating as he bustled about his bellows, hard at work; for he was making

twenty tripods in all, to stand around the wall of his well-built hall, and he had fitted golden wheels under the base of each, so that they could roll of their own accord into the gathering of the gods and back again to his house—a wonder to see. They were finished to that point, but the ornamented handles were not yet attached; he was fitting these, and hammering the rivets. While he toiled at this work with his skilled mind, the goddess, silver-footed Thetis, came up close to him. 18.382 Charis of the shining headdress saw her as she came forward—lovely Charis, whom the famous lame god had married. She clasped her hand, spoke, and called her by name: "Why, Thetis of the long robe, have you come to our house, honored and dear as you are? You haven't been a frequent visitor before. But come further in, so that I can set hospitality before you." So saying, the noble goddess led her forward. Then she seated her on a silver-studded chair, beautiful and finely made, with a footstool under her feet; and she called to Hephaestus, the famous craftsman, and said: "Hephaestus, come here: Thetis needs something from you." Then the famous lame god answered her:[3]

18.394 "So there is a dread and honored goddess in my house—the one who saved me when pain came on me after my long fall, by the will of my dog-faced mother, who wanted to hide me away because I was lame. I would have suffered agonies at heart then, if Eurynome and Thetis had not taken me into their bosom—Eurynome, daughter of Ocean that flows back on itself. With them for nine years I worked as a smith, making many intricate things, brooches and spiral bracelets, bud-shaped earrings and necklaces, in their hollow cave; and around it the stream of Ocean flowed endlessly, murmuring with foam. No one else knew of it, neither god nor mortal man; only Thetis and Eurynome knew, the ones who saved me. 18.406 Now she has come to our house; so I certainly must repay lovely-haired Thetis in full for saving my life. But you set fine hospitality before her now, while I put away my bellows and all my tools." He spoke, and rose from the anvil-block, a huge, panting bulk, limping;

3 Charis ("Grace") is Hephaestus' wife here; in the *Odyssey* his wife is Aphrodite.

but beneath him his thin legs moved nimbly. He set the bellows away from the fire, and gathered all the tools he had been working with into a silver chest; with a sponge he wiped his face and both his hands, his sturdy neck and his shaggy chest. Then he put on a tunic, took up a thick staff, and went out of the door, limping. Golden handmaids moved quickly to support their master, like living young women.

18.419 There is understanding in their minds, and speech and strength, and they have learned their handiwork from the immortal gods. They bustled about supporting their master, and he, hobbling, came near to where Thetis was and sat down on a shining chair. He clasped her hand, spoke, and called her by name: "Why, Thetis of the long robe, have you come to our house, honored and dear as you are? You haven't been a frequent visitor before. Tell me what's on your mind. My heart urges me to do it, if I can do it and if it can be done." Then Thetis answered him, shedding tears:

18.429 "Hephaestus, is there any goddess, of all the goddesses on Olympus, who has endured in her heart as many grim sorrows as the pains Zeus son of Cronus has given me beyond all others? Out of all the sea-goddesses he made me alone subject to a man, Peleus son of Aeacus, and I endured a man's bed, much against my will. Now he lies in his halls, worn down by grim old age; but now I have other sorrows. He gave me a son to bear and to raise, outstanding among warriors, and he shot up like a sapling. I raised him like a young tree on the high ground of an orchard, and sent him off in the beaked ships to Ilium to fight the Trojans; but I shall never welcome him again, come home to the house of Peleus. 18.442 And while he lives and sees the light of the sun, he grieves, and I can do nothing to help him by going to him. The girl whom the sons of the Achaeans picked out for him as a prize, lord Agamemnon took back out of his hands. He was wasting his heart away in grief for her; but the Trojans penned the Achaeans in at the sterns of their ships and would not let them come out, and the elders of the Argives begged him and named many splendid gifts. Then, though he himself refused to

ward off destruction, he put his own armor on Patroclus and sent him into the war, and many men along with him. 18.453 All day long they fought around the Scaean Gates, and that very day they would have sacked the city, if Apollo had not killed the valiant son of Menoetius among the front-line fighters after he had done great harm, and given glory to Hector. That is why I come to your knees now, to ask if you will be willing to give my son, who is doomed to die soon, a shield and a helmet, and fine greaves fitted with ankle-pieces, and a corslet; for what he had was lost by his trusted companion when he was brought down by the Trojans, and he lies on the ground, grieving at heart." Then the famous lame god answered her:

18.463 "Take heart; don't let these things trouble your mind. If only I could hide him away from grim death when dread fate comes upon him, as surely as he will have fine armor—such that many a man hereafter will marvel at it, whoever sees it." So speaking he left her there and went to his bellows; he turned them toward the fire and ordered them to work. The bellows, twenty in all, blew on the crucibles, sending out a well-kindling blast of every strength, now to serve him as he hurried, now the other way, however Hephaestus wished and the work went forward. He threw unyielding bronze into the fire, and tin, and precious gold and silver; then he set a great anvil on the anvil-block, and took a mighty hammer in one hand, and in the other he took the tongs.

THE SHIELD OF ACHILLES

Hephaestus decorates the shield with the heavens, two cities, the farming year, a dance and the river Ocean.

18.478 First of all he made a shield, great and strong, decorating it all over, and around it he set a shining rim, triple-layered and gleaming, and from it a silver baldric. There were five layers to the shield itself, and on it he made many intricate designs with his skilled mind. On it he made the earth, on it the sky, on it the sea, the tireless sun and the full moon, and on it all the constel-

lations with which the sky is crowned, the Pleiades and the Hyades and mighty Orion, and the Bear, which men also call by the name of the Wagon, which turns in the same place and keeps watch on Orion, and alone has no share in the baths of Ocean.[4]

18.490 On it he made two beautiful cities of mortal men. In one there were weddings and feasts: by the light of blazing torches they were leading the brides from their chambers through the town, and the wedding song rose loud. Young men were whirling in the dance, and among them pipes and lyres kept up their sound; and the women stood each at her front door and marveled. The people were gathered in the place of assembly. A quarrel had arisen there: two men were disputing over the blood-price for a man who had been killed. One claimed he had paid it all, declaring it to the people; the other denied he had received anything. Both were eager to have the matter settled before an arbitrator.[5] 18.502 The people were shouting for both, taking sides to support one or the other, and heralds were holding the people back. The elders sat on polished stones in the sacred circle, holding in their hands the staffs of the clear-voiced heralds; with these they then rose up and gave their judgments in turn. In the middle lay two talents of gold, to be given to whichever of them spoke the straightest judgment. Around the other city lay two armies of men, gleaming in their armor. They were divided between two plans: either to sack it utterly, or to divide into two shares all the wealth the lovely city held within it. But the townspeople would not yet give in; they were arming secretly for an ambush.

18.514 Their dear wives and little children stood on the wall and guarded it, and with them the men whom old age held; the others went out. Ares and Pallas Athena led them, both in gold, and golden were the clothes they wore, beautiful and tall in their armor, as gods are, conspicuous on every side; the people

4 The Bear (the Big Dipper) never sinks below the horizon at Greek latitudes, so it never "bathes" in Ocean, the river believed to circle the earth.

5 A killer could pay compensation to the dead man's kin instead of facing revenge or exile; the scene shows such a payment being disputed.

beneath them were smaller. When they came to the place where it seemed best to lie in ambush, at a river where there was a watering-place for all the herds, there they settled down, wrapped in gleaming bronze. Then two scouts sat posted apart from the troops, waiting for the moment when they would catch sight of the sheep and the crook-horned cattle. 18.525 Soon the herds came into view, and two herdsmen walked along with them, delighting in their pipes; they had no inkling of the trap. The men in ambush saw them coming and ran at them, quickly cut off the herds of cattle and the beautiful flocks of white sheep, and killed the shepherds besides. But the besiegers, sitting before the places of assembly, when they heard the loud uproar among the cattle, at once mounted their high-stepping horses and went after them, and swiftly arrived. Taking their stand, they fought a battle along the banks of the river, and struck at one another with bronze-tipped spears. Strife and Uproar joined the throng, and deadly Doom, holding one man alive but newly wounded, another unwounded, and dragging another, dead, through the turmoil by the feet; and the cloak on her shoulders was red with the blood of men. 18.539 They mingled in the fray and fought like living mortals, and dragged away each other's dead. On it he set a soft fallow field, rich plowland, broad, plowed three times; many plowmen in it were wheeling their teams and driving them up and down. Whenever they turned and reached the edge of the field, a man would come up and put into their hands a cup of honey-sweet wine; and they would turn back along the furrows, eager to reach the edge of the deep fallow. The field grew black behind them and looked like plowed earth, though it was made of gold; that was a special marvel of the work.

18.550 On it he set a king's estate, where hired laborers were reaping, with sharp sickles in their hands. Some handfuls fell thick to the ground along the swath, while sheaf-binders were tying others with bands of straw. Three sheaf-binders stood over the work, and behind them boys gathering up the handfuls and carrying them in their arms kept supplying them without pause.

Among them the king, holding his staff, stood in silence by the swath, glad at heart. Apart, under an oak, heralds were preparing a feast; they had sacrificed a great ox and were busy over it, while the women were sprinkling plenty of white barley for the laborers' supper.

18.561 On it he set a vineyard heavy with clusters of grapes, beautiful, golden; the grapes on it were dark, and it stood propped on silver poles throughout. Around it he ran a ditch of dark blue enamel, and around that a fence of tin. A single path led to it, by which the carriers went when they gathered the vintage. Girls and young men, with carefree hearts, carried the honey-sweet fruit in woven baskets. In their midst a boy played charmingly on a clear-toned lyre, and sang the lovely Linus song to it in a delicate voice; and they, stamping in time, followed with song and cries, skipping on their feet.[6]

18.573 On it he made a herd of straight-horned cattle; the cows were made of gold and tin, and lowing they hurried from the farmyard dung to pasture beside a rushing river, beside the swaying reed-beds. Golden herdsmen marched along with the cattle, four of them, and nine swift-footed dogs followed them. But two terrible lions among the foremost cows had seized a bellowing bull, and he was being dragged away, roaring loudly; the dogs and the young men went after him. The two lions had torn open the great bull's hide and were gulping down his innards and black blood, while the herdsmen tried in vain to set the swift dogs on them, urging them on. But the dogs shrank from biting the lions; they stood close by and barked, and kept out of the way.

18.587 On it the famous lame god made a pasture in a lovely glen, a great one, for white sheep, with steadings and roofed huts and pens. On it the famous lame god worked in a dancing-floor, like the one that Daedalus once fashioned in broad Cnossos for lovely-haired Ariadne. There young men and girls who would bring in many cattle as bride-price were dancing, holding

6 The Linus song was a traditional lament for Linus, a youth who died young, sung at the harvest.

one another by the wrist. The girls wore fine linen, the young men well-spun tunics, glistening softly with oil; the girls had beautiful garlands, and the young men had golden daggers hanging from silver baldrics. Now they would run round on skilled feet, very lightly, as when a potter sits and tries out the wheel that fits his hands, to see if it will run; and now they would run in lines toward one another.[7]

18.603 A great crowd stood around the lovely dance, delighting in it, and among them a godlike singer sang to the lyre; and two acrobats, leading off the song and dance, whirled about in their midst. On it he set the great might of the river Ocean, along the outermost rim of the strongly made shield. And when he had made the shield, great and strong, he made for him a corslet brighter than the blaze of fire, and made for him a heavy helmet fitted to his temples, beautiful and finely wrought, and set a golden crest on it, and made for him greaves of pliant tin. And when the famous lame god had finished all the armor, he lifted it and set it before the mother of Achilles. And she sprang down like a hawk from snowy Olympus, carrying the gleaming armor from Hephaestus.

7 Daedalus was the legendary master craftsman of Crete; Ariadne was the daughter of Minos, king of Cnossos.

Book 19

The quarrel ends
Achilles renounces his anger and arms for battle.

19.1 Saffron-robed Dawn was rising from the streams of Ocean to bring light to immortals and to mortals, and she came to the ships carrying the gifts from the god. She found her dear son lying across Patroclus, weeping loudly, and many of his companions were lamenting around him. She, bright among goddesses, came and stood beside him among them, clasped his hand, and spoke to him, calling him by name: "My child, we must let this man lie, for all our grief, since he has been struck down once and for all by the will of the gods. But you, take this glorious armor from Hephaestus, very beautiful, such as no man has ever yet worn on his shoulders."

19.12 So the goddess spoke, and set the armor down in front of Achilles, and all its intricate work rang out. Trembling seized all the Myrmidons, and none of them dared to look straight at it; they shrank away. But when Achilles saw it, anger sank deeper into him, and his eyes blazed terribly beneath his lids like a flame. He took delight in holding the god's splendid gifts in his hands. And when he had taken his fill of delight in his heart, gazing at the intricate work, at once he spoke winged words to his mother: "Mother, the god has given me armor such as befits the work of immortals, and no mortal man could have made.

19.23 Now I will arm myself. But I am terribly afraid that meanwhile flies will settle on the valiant son of Menoetius, creep into the wounds the bronze has cut, and breed worms there, and defile the corpse—now that the life has been torn out of him—

and all his flesh will rot." Then the goddess, silver-footed Thetis, answered him: "My child, don't let these things trouble your mind. I will try to ward off from him the savage swarms of flies that feed on men killed in battle. Even if he lies here a full year round, his flesh will always stay sound, or better still. But you, call the Achaean warriors to assembly, renounce your wrath against Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, and then arm at once for war and put on your strength."

19.37 So she spoke, and put into him a fury full of daring; and into Patroclus she dripped ambrosia and red nectar through the nostrils, so that his flesh would stay sound. But godlike Achilles went along the shore of the sea, shouting terribly, and roused the Achaean warriors. Even those who used to stay behind in the gathering of the ships—the helmsmen who handled the ships' steering-oars, and the stewards by the ships who dealt out the food—even they came to the assembly then, because Achilles had appeared after holding back so long from the painful fighting. Two attendants of Ares came limping, the son of Tydeus, staunch in battle, and godlike Odysseus, leaning on their spears, for they still had grievous wounds; and they came and sat down at the front of the assembly.

19.51 Last of all came Agamemnon, lord of men, nursing his wound; for in the fierce fighting Coön, son of Antenor, had wounded him with his bronze-tipped spear. And when all the Achaeans had gathered, swift-footed Achilles stood up among them and said: "Son of Atreus, was this really the better thing for us both, for you and for me—that we two, grieved at heart, raged in heart-devouring strife over a girl? I wish Artemis had killed her with an arrow among the ships on the day I took her, when I sacked Lyrnessus. Then not so many Achaeans would have bitten the boundless earth at the hands of their enemies while I kept up my wrath. For Hector and the Trojans this was the gain; but the Achaeans, I think, will long remember the strife between you and me.[1]

1 Lyrnessus was a town near Troy sacked by Achilles; there he captured Briseis, the girl Agamemnon later took from him.

19.65 But we will let all that be, past and done, for all our grief, mastering the heart in our chests because we must. Now I put an end to my anger; it is not right for me to go on raging stubbornly forever. Come, quickly rouse the long-haired Achaeans to war, so that I can go out against the Trojans and test them once again, to see if they still want to bed down by the ships. No, I think any of them will be glad to bend his knees and rest, whoever escapes from the deadly war and my spear." So he spoke, and the well-greaved Achaeans rejoiced that the great-hearted son of Peleus had renounced his wrath. Then Agamemnon, lord of men, spoke among them, from where he sat, without standing up in their midst:

AGAMEMNON'S APOLOGY

Agamemnon blames Ruin for his folly, tells how she blinded Zeus, and offers amends.

19.78 "My friends, Danaan warriors, attendants of Ares, it is right to listen to a man who stands to speak, and it is not fitting to interrupt him; that makes it hard even for a practiced speaker. In a great uproar of men, how could anyone hear or speak? Even a clear-voiced speaker is thrown off. I will make my mind plain to the son of Peleus; but you other Argives, pay attention, and each of you mark my words well. Many times the Achaeans have said this to me and reproached me. But I am not to blame: Zeus and Fate and the Fury who walks in the mist are, for they cast savage blindness into my mind in the assembly on the day I myself took away Achilles' prize.[2] 19.90 But what could I do? It is a god who brings all things to their end. Ruin is the eldest daughter of Zeus, who blinds everyone, the accursed one. Her feet are soft, for she does not walk on the ground but treads upon the heads of men, bringing harm to mortals, and she snares one or another. Yes, once she blinded even Zeus, who they say is the greatest of men and gods. Yet even him Hera, female though she

2 The Fury (Erinys) is a spirit of vengeance who punishes crimes, especially wrongs within families and broken oaths.

was, deceived with her cunning, on the day when Alcmene was to give birth to mighty Heracles in Thebes with its fine walls. He spoke proudly among all the gods:

19.101 'Hear me, all you gods and all you goddesses, so that I may say what the heart in my chest commands. Today Ilithyia of the birth pangs will bring into the light a man who will rule over all who dwell around him, one of the race of men who are of my blood.' Then queenly Hera, with cunning in her heart, said to him: 'You'll be proved a liar, and you won't make good your word. Come now, Olympian, swear me a mighty oath that he truly will rule over all who dwell around him, whoever falls between a woman's feet on this day, of the men who are of the stock of your blood.'

19.112 So she spoke, and Zeus did not see her cunning at all, but swore a great oath, and then was greatly blinded. Hera darted down and left the peak of Olympus, and quickly came to Achaean Argos, where she knew the stately wife of Sthenelus, son of Perseus. She was carrying a dear son, and the seventh month had come; Hera brought him out into the light though he was short of his months, and stopped Alcmene's labor, holding back the Ilithyias. Then she herself went with the news and said to Zeus, son of Cronus: 'Father Zeus of the bright lightning, I have something to put in your mind. A noble man is now born who will rule over the Argives: Eurystheus, son of Sthenelus son of Perseus, your own stock. It is not unfitting for him to rule over the Argives.'[3]

19.125 So she spoke, and sharp pain struck him deep in his mind. At once he seized Ruin by her head of shining braids, angry in his heart, and swore a mighty oath that never again would Ruin, who blinds everyone, come to Olympus and the starry sky. So saying, he whirled her round in his hand and flung her from the starry sky, and she soon came down among the tilled fields of men. Over her he would always groan whenever he saw his dear son doing degrading work in the

3 Eurystheus, a cousin of Heracles, became king in Argos; Heracles had to perform his famous labors at his command.

labors set by Eurystheus. So it was with me too: when great Hector of the flashing helmet was again destroying the Argives at the sterns of the ships, I could not forget Ruin, by whom I was first blinded. But since I was blinded and Zeus took away my wits, I am willing to make amends and give a boundless ransom. Come, rouse yourself for war, and rouse the rest of the people. 19.140 I am here to provide all the gifts that godlike Odysseus came to your hut yesterday and promised you. Or, if you like, wait, eager though you are for war, and attendants will take the gifts from my ship and bring them, so that you may see that what I give will satisfy your heart." Then swift-footed Achilles answered him: "Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men, as for the gifts, give them if you wish, as is proper, or keep them with you. But now let us think of battle, at once. We shouldn't waste time in talk here or delay, for a great work is still undone—so that someone may see Achilles once again among the foremost, destroying the ranks of the Trojans with his bronze spear. Let each of you keep that in mind as he fights his man." Then resourceful Odysseus answered him:

19.155 "No, not like that, brave as you are, godlike Achilles: don't send the sons of the Achaeans to Ilium fasting to fight the Trojans, since the battle will last no short time once the ranks of men have met and a god breathes fury into both sides. Instead, tell the Achaeans to take their fill of food and wine by the swift ships, for that is strength and valor. A man won't be able to fight face to face the whole day until the sun goes down without eating. Even if his heart is eager to fight, still his limbs grow heavy before he knows it, thirst and hunger overtake him, and his knees give way as he goes. But a man who has had his fill of wine and food and fights the enemy all day long—his heart in his chest is bold, and his limbs don't tire until everyone has drawn back from the fighting. 19.171 Come, dismiss the army and order them to prepare their meal. As for the gifts, let Agamemnon, lord of men, bring them into the middle of the assembly, so that all the Achaeans may see them with their own eyes and your heart may be warmed. And let him stand up among the Argives

and swear you an oath that he never went up into her bed or lay with her, as is the custom, my lord, between men and women. And you, let the heart in your chest be gracious. Then let him make amends to you with a rich feast in his huts, so that you lack nothing of what is your due. And you, son of Atreus, will be more just to others too hereafter. For it is no cause for blame that a king should make amends to a man when he was the first to give offense."

19.184 Then Agamemnon, lord of men, said to him in turn: "I'm glad to hear your words, son of Laertes; you have gone through everything and set it out as is fitting. This oath I am willing to swear, and my heart urges me to, and I will not swear falsely before the god. But let Achilles wait here for a while, eager though he is for war, and all you others wait here together, until the gifts come from my hut and we seal a binding oath with sacrifice. And to you yourself I give this charge and command: choose young men, the best of all the Achaeans, and bring from my ship the gifts, all that we promised yesterday to give Achilles, and bring the women too. And let Talthybius quickly prepare me a boar, in the broad camp of the Achaeans, to sacrifice to Zeus and the Sun."

19.198 Then swift-footed Achilles answered him: "Son of Atreus, most glorious, Agamemnon, lord of men, you ought to busy yourselves with these things some other time, when there comes some pause in the fighting and the fury in my breast is not so great. But now they lie mangled, the men whom Hector son of Priam struck down when Zeus gave him glory, and you two are urging us to eat! For my part, I would bid the sons of the Achaeans fight now, fasting and unfed, and at sunset make ready a great supper, once we have avenged the outrage.

19.209 Until then no drink or food could pass down my throat, not with my comrade dead, who lies in my hut mangled by the sharp bronze, turned toward the doorway, while our comrades mourn around him. That is why these things mean nothing to my heart, but only slaughter and blood and the grievous groaning of men." Then resourceful Odysseus answered him:

"Achilles, son of Peleus, by far the mightiest of the Achaeans, you are stronger than I am and better with the spear by no small margin, but I would surpass you by far in counsel, since I was born before you and know more. So let your heart bear with my words.

19.221 Men quickly have their fill of battle, where the bronze strews the most straw on the ground and the harvest is scantiest, once Zeus tips his scales, Zeus who is the steward of men's wars. It is not with their bellies that the Achaeans can mourn the dead. Far too many fall, one after another, every day; when could anyone get a breath of rest from the toil? No: we must bury whoever dies, hardening our hearts and weeping for a day, but all who are left alive from hateful war must remember drink and food, so that we can fight our enemies all the harder, relentlessly, without end, our bodies clothed in unyielding bronze. And let no one in the army hold back waiting for some further summons; this summons will go hard with anyone left behind by the ships of the Argives. Let us move out all together and rouse sharp Ares against the horse-taming Trojans."

THE GIFTS AND THE OATH

The gifts and Briseis are brought out, Agamemnon swears an oath, and Briseis mourns Patroclus.

19.238 He spoke, and took with him the sons of glorious Nestor, and Meges son of Phyleus, and Thoas and Meriones, and Lycomedes son of Creion, and Melanippus, and they set off for the hut of Agamemnon son of Atreus. No sooner was the word spoken than the deed was done. From the hut they brought the seven tripods he had promised, and twenty gleaming cauldrons, and twelve horses; and quickly they led out the women skilled in fine handiwork, seven of them, and the eighth was Briseis of the lovely cheeks. Odysseus weighed out ten talents of gold in all and led the way, and the other young men of the Achaeans carried the gifts with him. They set them down in the middle of the assembly, and Agamemnon rose; and Talthybius, whose voice

was like a god's, stood beside the shepherd of the people, holding the boar in his hands. 19.252 The son of Atreus drew with his hands the knife that always hung beside the great scabbard of his sword, and cutting the first hairs from the boar he lifted up his hands to Zeus and prayed; and all the Argives sat there in silence, as was right, listening to their king. And in prayer he spoke, looking up into the broad sky: "Let Zeus be my witness first, highest and best of gods, and Earth and Sun, and the Furies, who under the earth punish men, whoever swears a false oath: I never laid a hand on the girl Briseis, whether wanting her for my bed or for anything else. She has remained untouched in my huts.

19.264 And if any of this is falsely sworn, may the gods give me pains, very many, all that they give to anyone who sins against them in his oath." He spoke, and cut the boar's throat with the pitiless bronze. Talthybius whirled it round and flung it into the great gulf of the gray sea, food for the fishes; but Achilles stood up and spoke among the war-loving Argives: "Father Zeus, truly you send men great blindness. Never would the son of Atreus have stirred up the spirit in my breast so thoroughly, nor led the girl away against my will, obstinate as he was, if Zeus had not somehow wanted death to come to many Achaeans. Now go to your meal, so that we can join battle."

19.276 So he spoke, and quickly broke up the assembly. The men scattered, each to his own ship, while the great-hearted Myrmidons saw to the gifts and carried them off to the ship of godlike Achilles. They stowed them in the huts and seated the women, and noble attendants drove the horses to the herd. Then Briseis, like golden Aphrodite, when she saw Patroclus mangled by the sharp bronze, threw herself around him and wailed shrilly, and with her hands she tore at her breasts and her tender neck and her beautiful face. And weeping, the woman who was like the goddesses spoke:

19.287 "Patroclus, dearest by far to my wretched heart, I left you alive when I went from the hut, and now, leader of the people, I come back and find you dead. So evil follows evil for me, always.

The husband my father and queenly mother gave me to I saw before our city, mangled by the sharp bronze, and my three brothers, whom one mother bore with me, my dear ones, who all met their day of destruction. Yet when swift Achilles killed my husband and sacked the city of godlike Mynes, you would not even let me weep; you kept telling me you would make me the wedded wife of godlike Achilles, and take me in the ships to Phthia, and give a wedding feast among the Myrmidons. So I weep for you without end, now that you are dead, you who were always gentle."[4]

19.301 So she spoke, weeping, and the women lamented with her, for Patroclus in name, but each for her own sorrows. Around Achilles the elders of the Achaeans gathered, begging him to eat; but he refused, groaning: "I beg you, if any of my dear comrades will listen to me, don't tell me to satisfy my heart with food or drink before then, since terrible grief has come over me. I will wait until the sun goes down and hold out all the same." With these words he sent the other kings away, but the two sons of Atreus stayed, and godlike Odysseus, Nestor and Idomeneus, and the old horseman Phoenix, trying hard to comfort him in his grief; but his heart would take no comfort until he had plunged into the mouth of bloody war. And remembering, he heaved a deep sigh and spoke:

19.315 "Ah, you too, ill-fated one, dearest of my comrades, used to set a pleasant meal before me yourself here in the hut, quickly and briskly, whenever the Achaeans were hurrying to carry tearful war against the horse-taming Trojans. But now you lie mangled, and my heart goes without drink and food, though they are here inside, out of longing for you. I could suffer nothing worse than this, not even if I learned that my father had died, who now, I suppose, is shedding tender tears in Phthia for want of such a son, while I in a foreign land make war on the Trojans for the sake of hateful Helen; or my dear son who is being raised for me on Scyros, if godlike Neoptolemus is still alive. 19.328 Until now the heart in my breast hoped that I alone

4 Mynes was the lord of Lyrnessus, Briseis' city.

would perish far from horse-pasturing Argos, here in Troy, and that you would return to Phthia, so that you could bring my son from Scyros in a swift black ship and show him everything, my possessions, my servants, and my great high-roofed house. For Peleus by now, I think, is either dead altogether, or barely still alive and in misery, worn by hateful old age and by always waiting for the grim news of me, the day he hears that I have died."

19.338 So he spoke, weeping, and the elders lamented with him, each remembering what he had left behind in his halls. Seeing them mourning, the son of Cronus pitied them, and at once spoke winged words to Athena: "My child, you have quite deserted your own warrior. Does Achilles no longer matter to your heart at all? There he sits before the high-horned ships, mourning his dear comrade; the others have gone off to their meal, but he is fasting and has tasted nothing. Go, then, and drip nectar and lovely ambrosia into his breast, so that hunger does not come upon him."

ACHILLES ARMS

Achilles puts on his new armor, and his horse Xanthus foretells his death.

19.349 With these words he urged on Athena, who was eager already; and like a long-winged, shrill-voiced falcon she leapt down from heaven through the bright air. Meanwhile the Achaeans were arming at once throughout the army; and she dripped nectar and lovely ambrosia into Achilles' breast, so that joyless hunger would not come upon his knees, and then went off herself to the solid house of her mighty father, while the men poured out away from the swift ships. As when thick snowflakes fly down from Zeus, cold, under the blast of the North Wind born in the clear sky, so then, thick-crowding, helmets shining brightly streamed out from the ships, and bossed shields and corslets with strong plates and spears of ash. 19.362 The gleam reached the sky, and all the earth around laughed under the flash of bronze, and from beneath the feet of the men a thunder

rose; and in their midst godlike Achilles armed himself. His teeth ground together, and his eyes blazed like the glare of fire, and unbearable grief sank into his heart; and so, raging against the Trojans, he put on the gifts of the god, which Hephaestus had toiled to make for him. First he put the greaves around his shins, beautiful ones, fitted with silver ankle-pieces; next he put on the corslet around his chest. Around his shoulders he slung the silver-studded sword of bronze, and then he took up the shield, great and sturdy, and from it a gleam shone far, like the moon's. 19.375 As when out at sea a gleam appears to sailors from a burning fire, one that burns high in the mountains at a lonely farmstead, while storm winds carry them against their will over the teeming sea, far from their loved ones, so from the shield of Achilles, beautiful and finely wrought, the gleam reached up into the bright air. He lifted the massive helmet and set it on his head, and it shone like a star, the helmet with its horsehair crest, and around it waved the golden plumes that Hephaestus had set thick about the crest. Godlike Achilles tried himself in his armor, to see whether it fitted him and his shining limbs moved freely in it; and it became like wings for him, and lifted up the shepherd of the people. 19.387 Then he drew from its case his father's spear, heavy, great and sturdy, which no other Achaean could brandish; Achilles alone knew how to wield it, the Pelian ash that Chiron had given his dear father from the peak of Pelion, to be death for warriors. Automedon and Alcimus busied themselves with the horses and yoked them; they put the fine breast-straps on them, set the bits in their jaws, and stretched the reins back to the jointed chariot. Then Automedon took in his hand the shining whip that fitted his grip and sprang up behind the horses; and behind him Achilles mounted in his armor, blazing in it like the shining sun, Hyperion, and he called out terribly to his father's horses:[5]

19.400 "Xanthus and Balius, far-famed children of Podarge, take care this time to bring your charioteer back safe in a different

5 Chiron was the wise centaur who lived on Mount Pelion in Thessaly, near Peleus' home.

way to the throng of the Danaans, when we have had our fill of war, and don't leave him lying dead out there as you left Patroclus." Then from under the yoke the horse with flashing feet answered him, Xanthus; he bowed his head at once, and all his mane, streaming down from the yoke-pad beside the yoke, reached the ground; the goddess, white-armed Hera, had given him a voice: "Yes, this time at least we will keep you safe, mighty Achilles; but the day of your destruction is near, and we are not to blame for it, but a great god and powerful Fate. It was not through our slowness or sluggishness that the Trojans stripped the armor from Patroclus' shoulders; no, the best of the gods, whom lovely-haired Leto bore, killed him among the front fighters and gave Hector the glory.[6]

19.415 We two could run even with the blast of the West Wind, which they say is the swiftest of all; but it is your own fate to be brought down by force, by a god and a man." As he said this the Furies checked his voice. Then, deeply troubled, swift-footed Achilles answered him: "Xanthus, why do you prophesy my death? There's no need for you to. I know well enough myself that it is my fate to perish here, far from my dear father and mother; but even so I will not stop until I have given the Trojans their fill of war." He spoke, and with a shout drove his single-hoofed horses on among the foremost.

6 Xanthus and Balius were immortal horses, sired by the West Wind on Podarge, a Harpy.

Book 20

The gods join battle
The gods take sides; Achilles fights Aeneas, who is saved by Poseidon.

20.1 So beside the curved ships the Achaeans were arming themselves around you, son of Peleus, who could never have enough of battle, and the Trojans on the other side, on the rise of the plain. And Zeus ordered Themis to call the gods to assembly from the peak of many-ridged Olympus. She went everywhere and told them to come to the house of Zeus. Not one of the rivers was missing except Oceanus, and none of the nymphs who live in the lovely groves and at the springs of rivers and in the grassy meadows. When they came to the house of Zeus the cloud-gatherer, they sat down in the polished colonnades that Hephaestus had built for father Zeus with his skillful mind. So they were gathered inside the house of Zeus. Nor did the Earth-shaker ignore the goddess's summons: he came up out of the sea to join them, sat down in their midst, and asked about Zeus's purpose:[1]

20.16 "Why, lord of the bright lightning, have you called the gods to assembly again? Are you pondering something about the Trojans and Achaeans? Their battle and their war are now very close to blazing up." Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered him: "You have recognized, Earth-shaker, the purpose in my breast for which I have gathered you all. I care about them, dying though they are. But I will stay here, seated in a fold of

1 Themis is the goddess of right order and custom; here she acts as herald, summoning the gods.

Olympus, where I will watch and delight my heart. All the rest of you, go until you reach the Trojans and Achaeans, and help either side, as each of you has a mind to. For if Achilles fights the Trojans on his own, they won't hold off the swift-footed son of Peleus even for a moment.

20.28 Even before this they used to tremble at the sight of him. Now that he is terribly angry at heart over his comrade, I'm afraid he may even storm the wall in defiance of fate." So spoke the son of Cronus, and he roused unrelenting war. The gods went to the war, their hearts divided. Hera went to the gathering of the ships, with Pallas Athena, and Poseidon the Earth-holder, and Hermes the helper, who excels in shrewd thinking. Hephaestus went along with them, exulting in his strength, limping, his thin legs moving nimbly beneath him. To the Trojans went Ares of the flashing helmet, and with him Phoebus of the unshorn hair, and Artemis who delights in arrows, and Leto, and Xanthus, and laughter-loving Aphrodite.

20.41 As long as the gods stayed apart from mortal men, the Achaeans exulted greatly, because Achilles had appeared after long holding back from painful battle. A terrible trembling crept into the limbs of every Trojan in their fear, when they saw the swift-footed son of Peleus blazing in his armor, like Ares, bane of mortals. But when the Olympians came into the throng of men, mighty Strife, rouser of armies, sprang up, and Athena shouted, standing now beside the trench dug outside the wall, now on the thundering shore, raising a long cry. On the other side Ares shouted, like a dark whirlwind, urging on the Trojans in piercing tones, now from the top of the citadel, now running along the Simoeis toward Callicolone.

20.54 So the blessed gods urged both sides on and drove them together, and among themselves they let loose heavy strife. The father of men and gods thundered terribly from on high, and from below Poseidon shook the boundless earth and the steep peaks of the mountains. All the foothills of many-fountained Ida were shaken, and its summits, and the city of the Trojans and the ships of the Achaeans. Beneath them Hades, lord of the

dead, was afraid; in his fear he leapt from his throne and cried out, afraid that Poseidon the Earth-shaker would split open the earth above him and his dwelling would be laid bare to mortals and immortals—dreadful and dank, a place even the gods loathe. So great was the din that rose as the gods clashed in strife. 20.67 For against lord Poseidon stood Phoebus Apollo with his winged arrows, and against Enyalius the goddess, gray-eyed Athena. Against Hera stood Artemis of the golden distaff, of the loud hunt, who delights in arrows, sister of the far-shooter. Against Leto stood the strong helper Hermes, and against Hephaestus the great deep-eddying river whom the gods call Xanthus and men Scamander. So gods went out against gods. But Achilles longed above all to plunge into the throng to face Hector, son of Priam, for it was with his blood above all that his spirit urged him to glut Ares, the warrior with the tough oxhide shield. But Apollo, rouser of armies, drove Aeneas straight at the son of Peleus and filled him with noble strength. He made his voice like that of Priam's son Lycaon, and in his likeness Apollo, son of Zeus, spoke to him:[2]

20.83 "Aeneas, counselor of the Trojans, where are those threats you made to the Trojan princes over your wine, that you would fight face to face with Achilles, son of Peleus?" Then Aeneas answered him in turn: "Son of Priam, why are you telling me to do this, to fight the proud-hearted son of Peleus, when I don't want to? It won't be the first time I stand against swift-footed Achilles. Once before he drove me with his spear from Ida, when he came upon our cattle and sacked Lyrnessus and Pedasus. But Zeus saved me: he roused my strength and made my knees quick. Otherwise I would have been brought down at the hands of Achilles and Athena, who went ahead of him and gave him light, and urged him to slaughter Leleges and Trojans with his bronze spear.[3]

20.97 So no man can fight against Achilles: there is always one of the gods beside him to ward off destruction. And besides, his

2 Enyalius is a name of Ares, the war god.
3 Pedasus, like Lyrnessus, was a town near Troy sacked by Achilles.

weapon flies straight and doesn't stop until it has gone through human flesh. But if a god would stretch the outcome of the fight evenly between us, he wouldn't beat me very easily, not even if he claims to be made all of bronze." Then lord Apollo, son of Zeus, spoke to him in turn: "Come, warrior, you too pray to the gods who live forever. They say you were born of Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, while he comes from a lesser goddess: one is the daughter of Zeus, the other of the old man of the sea. So carry your unyielding bronze straight at him, and don't let him turn you back at all with his grim words and threats."

20.110 With these words he breathed great strength into the shepherd of the people, and Aeneas strode through the front ranks, armed in gleaming bronze. Nor did Anchises' son escape the notice of white-armed Hera as he went through the throng of men to face the son of Peleus. She gathered the gods together and spoke to them: "Think it over now, you two, Poseidon and Athena, in your minds, how these things are going to turn out. Here is Aeneas, gone out armed in gleaming bronze to face the son of Peleus, and it was Phoebus Apollo who sent him. Come, let us turn him back from right here. Or else one of us should stand beside Achilles and give him great might, and let him lack nothing in his heart, so that he knows that those who love him are the best of the immortals, and those who have so far kept war and slaughter away from the Trojans are as empty as the wind.

20.125 We have all come down from Olympus to take part in this battle, so that he suffers no harm among the Trojans today. Later he will suffer whatever Fate spun for him with her thread at his birth, when his mother bore him. But if Achilles doesn't hear this from a voice of the gods, he will be afraid when some god comes against him in battle; for gods are hard to face when they appear in plain sight." Then Poseidon the Earth-shaker answered her: "Hera, don't be angry beyond reason; there's no need for it. I, for one, wouldn't want to drive the gods into strife, us against the rest, since we are far stronger. Let us rather go off

the path and sit down on a lookout, and war will be the business of men.

20.138 But if Ares or Phoebus Apollo start the fighting, or hold Achilles back and don't let him fight, then right away the strife of battle will arise for us too, there on the spot. And very quickly, I think, they'll break off and go back to Olympus, to the company of the other gods, beaten by force under our hands." So speaking, the dark-haired god led the way to the high earthwork of godlike Heracles, heaped up all around, which the Trojans and Pallas Athena had made for him so that he could escape from the sea monster and avoid it whenever it chased him from the shore onto the plain. There Poseidon and the other gods sat down, and wrapped an unbreakable cloud about their shoulders. The others sat on the other side, on the brows of Callicolone, around you, Phoebus, lord of the cry, and Ares, sacker of cities.[4]

ACHILLES AND AENEAS

Aeneas faces Achilles, recites his lineage, and is snatched away by Poseidon.

20.153 So they sat on either side, devising plans; but both sides shrank from beginning grievous war, though Zeus, seated on high, was urging them on. The whole plain was filled with them, men and horses, and it blazed with bronze, and the earth rumbled under their feet as they surged forward together. Two men, by far the best, came together into the space between the two armies, eager to fight: Aeneas son of Anchises and godlike Achilles. Aeneas came forward first, menacing, his heavy helmet nodding. He held his fierce shield before his chest and brandished his bronze spear.

20.164 From the other side the son of Peleus rose to meet him like a lion, a ravager, that men are eager to kill, a whole people gathered together. At first he goes on his way, paying them no

4 When Heracles came to Troy to save King Laomedon's daughter from a sea monster sent by Poseidon, the Trojans built him this earthwork as a refuge.

heed; but when one of the battle-swift young men strikes him with a spear, he crouches with jaws agape, foam gathers around his teeth, and his valiant heart groans in his breast. With his tail he lashes his ribs and flanks on both sides, rousing himself to fight, and with glaring eyes he charges straight on in his fury, to see if he will kill one of the men or perish himself in the front of the throng. So his fury and his proud spirit drove Achilles to go against great-hearted Aeneas. When they were close, advancing on each other, swift-footed godlike Achilles was the first to speak:

20.178 "Aeneas, why have you come out so far in front of the throng to take your stand? Does your heart urge you to fight me, in the hope of ruling the horse-taming Trojans with the honor Priam holds? But even if you kill me, Priam won't put that prize into your hand for it: he has sons, and he is steady, not foolish. Or have the Trojans marked off a domain for you, finer than all the rest, good orchard and plowland, to be yours if you kill me? You'll find that hard to do, I think. I tell you, I've already put you to flight with my spear once before. 20.188 Don't you remember when you were on your own and I chased you away from your cattle down the hills of Ida, running fast on my swift feet? That time you didn't look back as you fled. From there you escaped to Lyrnessus; but I charged after you and sacked it with the help of Athena and father Zeus, and I took away the women's day of freedom and led them off as captives. But Zeus and the other gods saved you. They won't save you now, I think, as you imagine in your heart. No—I tell you to go back into the mass of men and not stand against me, before you come to some harm. Even a fool learns once the thing is done." Then Aeneas answered him in turn and said:

20.200 "Son of Peleus, don't hope to frighten me with words, as if I were a little child, since I know well enough myself how to speak taunts and insults. We know each other's lineage, we know each other's parents, from hearing the famous tales of mortal men; but you have never yet seen mine with your eyes, nor I yours. They say you are the offspring of excellent Peleus,

and that your mother is Thetis of the lovely hair, the sea-born. And I claim to be the son of great-hearted Anchises, and my mother is Aphrodite. One pair or the other will mourn a dear son today; for I tell you we two won't part from the fight like this, with childish words, and go home. 20.213 But if you want to learn this too, so that you know our lineage well—and many men know it: first, Zeus the cloud-gatherer fathered Dardanus, and he founded Dardania, since holy Ilium had not yet been built on the plain as a city of mortal men; they still lived on the slopes of many-fountained Ida. Dardanus in turn fathered a son, King Erichthonius, who became the richest of mortal men. He had three thousand mares grazing in the marshland, delighting in their tender foals. Boreas fell in love with them as they grazed, and in the likeness of a dark-maned stallion he lay with them; and they conceived and bore twelve foals. Whenever these frolicked over the grain-giving plowland, they would run along the tips of the ears of grain and not break them; and whenever they frolicked over the broad back of the sea, they would run along the crests of the breakers of the gray salt sea.[5] 20.230 Erichthonius fathered Tros, lord of the Trojans; and from Tros in turn were born three excellent sons, Ilus and Assaracus and godlike Ganymede, who became the most beautiful of mortal men. The gods carried him off to be Zeus's cupbearer, for the sake of his beauty, so that he might live among the immortals. Ilus in turn fathered a son, excellent Laomedon; and Laomedon fathered Tithonus and Priam, Lampus and Clytius, and Hicetaon, scion of Ares. Assaracus fathered Capys, and Capys fathered his son Anchises; Anchises fathered me, and Priam fathered godlike Hector. That is the lineage and the blood I claim. But it is Zeus who increases men's prowess and diminishes it, however he wills; for he is the mightiest of all. 20.244 But come, let's not talk about these things any longer like children, standing in the middle of the press of battle. There are insults enough for both of us to hurl, a great many, so many that not even a ship of a hundred benches could carry the load. The tongue of mortals is

5 Boreas is the North Wind.

a twisting thing; there are many words in it, of every kind, and wide is the range of speech, this way and that. Whatever kind of word you speak, that kind you'll hear back. But what need is there for us two to wrangle and quarrel with each other face to face, like women who, enraged by some heart-devouring quarrel, go out into the middle of the street and wrangle with each other, saying much that is true and much that isn't—for anger prompts that too? You won't turn me back from the fight with words, eager as I am, until we have fought face to face with bronze. Come on, quickly, let's taste each other with our bronze-tipped spears."

20.259 He spoke, and drove his mighty spear against the dread and fearsome shield, and the great shield rang loud around the spear-point. The son of Peleus held the shield away from himself with his massive hand, afraid, for he thought the long-shadowed spear of great-hearted Aeneas would easily pass through it. The fool! He did not realize in his mind and heart that the glorious gifts of the gods are not easy for mortal men to overpower, and they do not give way. Nor did the mighty spear of war-minded Aeneas break the shield then, for the gold held it back, the god's gift. It drove through two layers, but there were still three left, since the club-footed god had hammered out five layers: two of bronze, two of tin on the inside, and one of gold, and it was in the gold that the ash spear was stopped.

20.273 Then Achilles in his turn hurled his long-shadowed spear and struck Aeneas' shield, balanced on every side, just under the outer rim, where the bronze ran thinnest and the oxhide over it was thinnest. The Pelian ash shot straight through, and the shield cracked under it. Aeneas crouched and held the shield up away from himself, afraid, and the spear flew over his back and stood fixed in the ground, still straining, after tearing through both circles of the body-covering shield. He had escaped the long spear, and he stood there, and boundless grief poured down over his eyes, terrified that the shaft had stuck so close to him. But Achilles rushed at him furiously, drawing his sharp sword and giving a terrible shout. Aeneas took a boulder

in his hand, a huge thing that two men could not carry, such as mortals are now; but he hefted it easily, even alone. 20.288 Then Aeneas would have struck him with the stone as he charged, on the helmet or on the shield, which had kept grim destruction from him, and the son of Peleus would have closed in and taken his life with his sword, if Poseidon the Earth-shaker had not been quick to notice. At once he spoke out among the immortal gods: "Ah, I truly grieve for great-hearted Aeneas, who will soon go down to Hades, brought down by the son of Peleus, because he trusted the words of far-shooting Apollo. The fool! Apollo will do nothing to keep grim destruction from him. But why should this man, who is guiltless, suffer pain now, for nothing, because of other men's troubles, when he always gives pleasing gifts to the gods who hold broad heaven?

20.300 Come, let us ourselves lead him out from death, or the son of Cronus too may be angry if Achilles kills this man. It is his destiny to escape, so that the line of Dardanus may not perish without seed and vanish—Dardanus, whom the son of Cronus loved above all the children born to him of mortal women. For by now the son of Cronus has come to hate the line of Priam, and now mighty Aeneas will rule over the Trojans, and his children's children, who will be born hereafter." Then ox-eyed queenly Hera answered him: "Earth-shaker, think it over yourself, in your own mind, about Aeneas, whether you will rescue him or let him be brought down by Achilles son of Peleus, good man though he is.

20.313 For the two of us, I and Pallas Athena, have sworn many oaths before all the immortals never to ward off the evil day from the Trojans, not even when all Troy is burning, ablaze with raging fire, and the warlike sons of the Achaeans are the ones who set it burning." But when Poseidon the Earth-shaker heard this, he set off through the battle and through the clash of spears, and came to where Aeneas was, and glorious Achilles. At once he poured a mist over the eyes of Achilles son of Peleus. Then he drew the bronze-tipped ash spear out of the shield of

great-hearted Aeneas and laid it before Achilles' feet, and he lifted Aeneas high off the ground and sent him flying.

20.326 Over many ranks of warriors and many of horses too Aeneas vaulted, launched from the god's hand, and came to the far edge of the furious battle, where the Caucones were arming for war. Poseidon the Earth-shaker came close up to him, and he addressed him and spoke winged words: "Aeneas, which of the gods is urging you in your folly to fight face to face with the overbearing son of Peleus, who is both stronger than you and dearer to the immortals? No—fall back whenever you come up against him, or you may reach the house of Hades even beyond your fate. But once Achilles has met death and his doom, then take courage and fight among the foremost, for no other of the Achaeans will kill you and strip your armor."

20.340 So he spoke, and left him there, once he had explained everything. Then at once he scattered the wondrous mist from Achilles' eyes, and Achilles stared hard, and troubled, he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit: "Ah, this is surely a great wonder I see with my eyes. Here lies my spear on the ground, but I can't see the man I hurled it at, eager to kill him. So Aeneas too was dear to the immortal gods after all—and I thought his boasting was just empty talk. Let him go! He won't have the heart to try me again, when even now he was glad to escape from death. Come on, I'll give the war-loving Danaans their orders, then go out against the rest of the Trojans and try them."

20.353 He spoke, and leapt into the ranks, and urged on each man: "Don't stand back from the Trojans any longer now, godlike Achaeans. Come, let man go against man, and let each be eager to fight. It's hard for me, strong as I am, to go after so many men and fight them all. Not even Ares, immortal god though he is, nor Athena, could go after the jaws of so great a battle and toil through it. But as far as I can with my hands and my feet and my strength, I tell you, I won't hold back any more, not even a little. I'll go straight through their ranks, and I don't think any Trojan who comes near my spear will be glad of it."

ACHILLES ON THE RAMPAGE

Apollo saves Hector from Achilles, who cuts down Trojan after Trojan.

20.364 So he spoke, urging them on. And shining Hector called out to the Trojans with a shout and said he would go against Achilles: "Proud-hearted Trojans, don't be afraid of the son of Peleus. I too could fight even the immortals with words; with the spear it's hard, since they are far stronger. Achilles won't bring all his words to fulfillment either: one he'll fulfill, and another he'll cut short halfway. I'll go against him, even if his hands are like fire—even if his hands are like fire, and his fury like flashing iron." So he spoke, urging them on, and the Trojans raised their spears to face the enemy. The fury of both sides met and mingled, and the war cry rose. And then Phoebus Apollo came and stood beside Hector and said:

20.376 "Hector, don't go out in front to fight Achilles at all any more. Wait for him in the crowd, out of the din, or he may hit you with a spear or strike you close up with his sword." So he spoke, and Hector sank back into the throng of men, afraid, when he heard the voice of the god speaking. But Achilles sprang among the Trojans, his heart clothed in valor, with a terrible shout, and first he killed Iphition, the brave son of Otrynteus, leader of many men, whom a Naiad nymph bore to Otrynteus, sacker of cities, beneath snowy Tmolus, in the rich land of Hyde. As he came straight on, eager to fight, godlike Achilles struck him with his spear full on the head, and it was split clean in two. He fell with a thud, and godlike Achilles boasted over him:[6]

20.389 "There you lie, son of Otrynteus, most fearsome of all men! Here is your death—though your birthplace is on the Gygaean lake, where your father's estate lies, by the Hyllus full of fish and the eddying Hermus." So he spoke, boasting, and darkness covered the other's eyes. The horses of the Achaeans

6 Tmolus, Hyde, and the places named in the next speech (the Gygaean lake, the rivers Hyllus and Hermus) lie in Lydia, in western Asia Minor.

cut him to pieces with the rims of their wheels in the front line of battle. And next Achilles stabbed Demoleon, a fine bulwark in battle, son of Antenor, in the temple, through the bronze-cheeked helmet. The bronze helmet did not stop it: the point drove on through it and broke the bone, and the brain inside was all spattered; so he brought him down in his eagerness.

20.401 Then Hippodamas, as he leapt down from his horses and fled before him, he wounded in the back with his spear. And he breathed out his life with a bellow, as a bull bellows when young men drag it around the Heliconian lord, and the Earth-shaker delights in them; so he bellowed as his proud spirit left his bones. Then Achilles went with his spear after godlike Polydorus, son of Priam. His father would never let him fight, because he was the youngest of his sons and the dearest to him, and he beat them all at running. And now, in his boyish folly, showing off his speed of foot, he was rushing through the front ranks, until he lost his life.[7] 20.413 Swift-footed godlike Achilles hit him full with his javelin in the back as he darted past, where the golden clasps of his belt fastened and the corslet's two layers met. The spear-point went straight through and came out by the navel, and he fell to his knees with a cry. A dark cloud covered him all round, and as he sank down he clutched his entrails to him with his hands. When Hector saw his brother Polydorus holding his entrails in his hands and sinking to the ground, a mist poured over his eyes, and he could no longer bear to keep ranging far off, but came against Achilles, brandishing his sharp spear, like a flame. And Achilles, the moment he saw him, leapt up and spoke a word in exultation:

20.425 "Here, close by, is the man who has struck my heart more deeply than any other, who killed my honored companion. We won't shrink from each other much longer along the bridges of war." He spoke, and glaring from under his brows, he addressed godlike Hector: "Come nearer, so you may reach the bounds of destruction all the sooner." Then, unafraid, Hector of the flash-

7 The "Heliconian lord" is Poseidon, who had a famous shrine at Helice on the Gulf of Corinth, where bulls were sacrificed to him.

ing helmet said to him: "Son of Peleus, don't hope to frighten me with words, as if I were a little child, since I know well enough myself how to speak taunts and insults. I know that you are a great warrior, and I am far weaker than you. But these things lie on the knees of the gods, whether, weaker though I am, I may take your life with a cast of my spear; for my weapon too is sharp at the point."

20.438 He spoke, and poising his spear he hurled it; but Athena turned it back from glorious Achilles with a breath, blowing very gently, and it came back to godlike Hector and fell right there before his feet. Then Achilles rushed at him furiously, eager to kill him, with a terrible shout; but Apollo snatched him away, very easily, as a god can, and hid him in thick mist. Three times swift-footed godlike Achilles rushed at him with his bronze spear, and three times he struck the deep mist. But when he charged a fourth time, like a god, he shouted terribly and spoke winged words:

20.449 "Once again you've escaped death, you dog! Evil came close to you, all right, but now once more Phoebus Apollo has saved you—I suppose you pray to him whenever you go into the thud of spears. I'll surely finish you yet when I meet you later, if some god is my helper too. For now I'll go after the others, whoever I can catch." So saying, he stabbed Dryops with his javelin in the middle of the neck, and he fell before his feet. Achilles left him, and stopped Demuchus son of Philetor, a fine big man, with a spear-cast to the knee; then he struck him with his great sword and took his life. Then he charged at Laogonus and Dardanus, the two sons of Bias, and threw them both from their chariot to the ground, one with a cast of his spear, the other with a sword-stroke at close quarters.

20.463 And Tros son of Alastor—he came up to clasp Achilles' knees, hoping he might take him captive and spare him and let him go alive, and not kill him, out of pity for a man of his own age. The fool! He did not know that Achilles was not going to listen; for he was no gentle-hearted or kindly man, but in a fury. Tros was touching his knees with his hands, trying to beg him,

but Achilles stabbed him in the liver with his sword. The liver slipped out, and the dark blood from it filled the fold of his tunic, and darkness covered his eyes as his life left him. Then Achilles came up beside Mulius and stabbed him in the ear with his spear, and the bronze point came straight out through the other ear. Then he struck Echeclus son of Agenor full on the head with his hilted sword, and the whole sword grew warm with blood; and dark death and mighty fate seized his eyes. 20.478 Then Deucalion: where the tendons of the elbow join, there Achilles pierced him through the arm with the bronze point. He stood waiting for him, his arm weighed down, seeing death before him; and Achilles struck his neck with his sword and sent the head flying far off, helmet and all. The marrow spurted from the vertebrae, and he lay stretched out on the ground. Then he went after Rhigmus, the excellent son of Peires, who had come from fertile Thrace. He hit him full with his javelin, and the bronze stuck fast in his belly, and he toppled from his chariot. And Areithous, his attendant, as he was turning the horses back, Achilles stabbed in the back with his sharp spear and threw from the chariot; and the horses bolted in confusion.

20.490 As a monstrous fire rages through the deep glens of a parched mountain, and the deep forest burns, and the wind drives the flame everywhere and sends it rolling, so Achilles raged everywhere with his spear, like a god, hounding the men he was killing, and the black earth ran with blood. And as when a man yokes broad-browed bulls to thresh white barley on a well-laid threshing floor, and the grain is quickly husked under the feet of the loud-bellowing oxen, so under great-hearted Achilles his single-hoofed horses trampled corpses and shields alike. The whole axle underneath was spattered with blood, and the rails around the car, struck by drops thrown up from the horses' hooves and from the wheel-rims. And the son of Peleus pressed on to win glory, his invincible hands spattered with gore.

Book 21

The river fights
Achilles chokes the Scamander with the dead and battles the river itself.

21.1 But when they came to the ford of the fair-flowing river, eddying Xanthus, whom immortal Zeus fathered, there Achilles split them in two. Some he chased across the plain toward the city, the same way the Achaeans had fled in panic the day before, when glorious Hector was raging. Along that way these poured in flight, and Hera spread a thick mist in front of them to hold them back. The other half were penned into the deep-flowing river with its silver eddies, and they fell into it with a great crash. The steep streams roared, and the banks all around echoed loudly, while they swam this way and that, screaming, whirled around in the eddies. As when locusts, under the rush of fire, take wing to flee to a river, and the tireless fire blazes, springing up suddenly, and they cower down in the water: so before Achilles the roaring stream of deep-eddying Xanthus was filled with a jumble of horses and men.[1]

21.17 But he, sprung from Zeus, left his spear there on the bank, propped against the tamarisks, and leapt in like some god, holding only his sword. He planned grim work in his mind, and he struck out, turning this way and that. An ugly groaning rose from the men the sword hacked, and the water ran red with blood. As other fish flee before a huge dolphin and crowd the inmost corners of a harbor with good anchorage, in terror, for it

1 Xanthus ("Yellow") is the gods' name for the river that men call Scamander, the main river of the Trojan plain.

devours any it catches: so the Trojans cowered under the overhanging banks along the streams of the terrible river. And when his hands grew weary with killing, he picked twelve young men out of the river alive, as payment for the death of Patroclus, son of Menoetius. He led them out, dazed like fawns, and tied their hands behind them with well-cut thongs, the belts they themselves wore around their pliant tunics, and gave them to his comrades to take down to the hollow ships. Then he sprang back in, eager to cut men down.

THE DEATH OF LYCAON

Priam's son Lycaon begs for his life, and Achilles kills him without mercy.

21.34 There he met a son of Dardanian Priam escaping from the river: Lycaon, whom he himself had once caught and taken away against his will from his father's orchard, coming on him by night. Lycaon was cutting young shoots from a wild fig tree with sharp bronze, to make rails for a chariot, and godlike Achilles came upon him, an evil he never foresaw. That time Achilles took him by ship to well-built Lemnos and sold him there, and the son of Jason paid the price. From there a guest-friend ransomed him, paying a great deal—Eëtion of Imbros—and sent him to fair Arisbe; and slipping away from there, he reached his father's house. For eleven days after coming back from Lemnos he delighted his heart among his friends; but on the twelfth a god threw him once again into the hands of Achilles, who was going to send him to Hades, though he had no wish to go.[2] 21.49 Now when swift-footed godlike Achilles caught sight of him unprotected, without helmet or shield—he had no spear either, but had thrown it all on the ground, for sweat wore him down as he fled from the river, and weariness was breaking his knees beneath him—then, deeply stirred, Achilles spoke to his own great-hearted spirit: "Look at this! Here's a great marvel

2 The son of Jason is Euneus, king of Lemnos, who traded wine to the Achaeans at Troy.

before my eyes. Surely the great-hearted Trojans I have killed will rise up again from under the murky gloom, the way this man has come back, escaping his pitiless day, though he was sold off to holy Lemnos. The wide gray sea didn't hold him, though it holds back many against their will.

21.60 Well then, let him taste the point of my spear too, so I can see and learn for myself whether he'll come back from there just the same, or whether the life-giving earth will hold him, which holds down even the strong." So he pondered, waiting. And Lycaon came close to him, dazed, eager to clasp his knees, for in his heart he desperately wanted to escape evil death and black doom. Godlike Achilles raised his long spear, eager to stab him, but Lycaon ducked and ran in under it and caught his knees, and the spear passed over his back and stood in the earth, still longing to glut itself on human flesh. Then with one hand Lycaon held his knees and begged, and with the other he gripped the sharp spear and would not let it go; and he spoke to him winged words:[3]

21.74 "I clasp your knees, Achilles! Respect me and pity me. I stand before you, Zeus-nurtured one, as a suppliant who deserves respect, for it was at your table that I first ate the grain of Demeter, on the day you caught me in the well-kept orchard and took me far from my father and my friends and sold me off to holy Lemnos—and I fetched you the price of a hundred oxen. Now I've been set free for three times as much. This is the twelfth dawn since I came back to Ilium, after much suffering, and now deadly fate has put me in your hands again. Father Zeus must hate me, I think, to have given me to you a second time. My mother bore me to a short life—Laothoe, daughter of old Altes, Altes who rules the war-loving Leleges and holds steep Pedasus on the Satnioeis. 21.88 Priam had his daughter as a wife, and many other women besides. Two of us were born to her, and you'll cut both our throats. One of them you've already brought down among the foot soldiers in the front ranks—godlike Poly-

3 Clasping a man's knees was the gesture of a suppliant, who placed himself under the protection of Zeus and begged for mercy.

dorus, when you struck him with your sharp spear. And now evil will come to me here, for I don't think I'll escape your hands, since a god has brought me close to them. And I'll tell you something else, and you take it to heart: don't kill me, because I'm not from the same womb as Hector, who killed your comrade, the gentle and strong one." So the glorious son of Priam spoke to him, pleading with words; but the voice he heard had no mercy in it:

21.99 "Fool, don't offer me ransom, don't even talk about it. Before Patroclus met his day of destiny, it was dearer to my heart to spare Trojans, and I took many alive and sold them abroad. But now there isn't one who will escape death, of all those a god puts into my hands before Ilium—not one of all the Trojans, and least of all the sons of Priam. No, friend, you die too. Why wail like this? Patroclus died too, and he was a far better man than you. Don't you see what kind of man I am, how handsome and tall? 21.109 My father is a noble man, and the mother who bore me is a goddess. Yet death and overpowering fate are waiting for me too. There will come a dawn, or an evening, or a midday, when someone takes the life from me too in war, striking me with a spear or with an arrow from the string." So he spoke, and Lycaon's knees and heart went slack where he was. He let go of the spear and sank down, spreading out both his hands. And Achilles drew his sharp sword and struck him on the collarbone beside the neck, and the whole two-edged sword sank in. He lay stretched out face down on the ground, and the dark blood flowed out and soaked the earth. Achilles took him by the foot and flung him into the river to be carried off, and exulting over him spoke winged words:

21.122 "Lie there now among the fish, who'll lick the blood from your wound and care nothing for you. Your mother won't lay you on a bier and mourn you; no, eddying Scamander will carry you into the broad bosom of the sea. Some fish, leaping along the swell, will dart up under the dark ripple to eat the white fat of Lycaon. Perish, all of you, until we reach the city of holy Ilium—you running, and I behind, cutting you down. Not even

the fair-flowing river with its silver eddies will help you, though you've long sacrificed many bulls to it and thrown single-hoofed horses alive into its eddies. Even so you'll die an evil death, until all of you have paid for the killing of Patroclus and the slaughter of the Achaeans you killed by the swift ships while I was away."

21.136 So he spoke, and the river grew angrier still at heart, and pondered in his spirit how he might stop godlike Achilles from his toil and ward off ruin from the Trojans. Meanwhile the son of Peleus, holding his long-shadowed spear, leapt at Asteropaeus, eager to kill him—the son of Pelegon, whom broad-flowing Axius fathered with Periboea, eldest of the daughters of Acessamenus; for the deep-eddying river lay with her. At him Achilles sprang, and Asteropaeus came up out of the river and stood facing him, holding two spears. Xanthus had put fury in his heart, being angry over the young men slaughtered in battle, whom Achilles was butchering along his stream without pity. When they had come close, advancing on each other, swift-footed godlike Achilles spoke to him first:[4]

21.150 "Who are you, and where from, that you dare to come against me? It's the sons of unhappy fathers who face my fury." Then the glorious son of Pelegon spoke to him in turn: "Great-hearted son of Peleus, why do you ask about my birth? I come from rich-soiled Paeonia, far away, leading the Paeonian men with their long spears, and this is now the eleventh dawn since I came to Ilium. My lineage comes from broad-flowing Axius—Axius, who sends the loveliest water over the earth—who fathered Pelegon, famed for his spear; and Pelegon, they say, fathered me. Now let's fight, glorious Achilles."

21.161 So he spoke, threatening, and godlike Achilles raised his ash spear from Pelion. But the warrior Asteropaeus threw both his spears at once, for he could use either hand. With one spear he hit the shield, but did not break through it, for the gold held it back, the god's gift. With the other he grazed Achilles' right forearm, and the dark blood spurted out; but the spear passed

4 The Axius (the modern Vardar) is the great river of Paeonia, far to the north, whose people fought as allies of Troy.

beyond him and stuck fast in the ground, still longing to glut itself on flesh. Then Achilles in his turn hurled his straight-flying ash spear at Asteropaeus, eager to kill him. He missed him and hit the high bank, and left the ashwood spear sunk to half its length in the bank. 21.173 The son of Peleus drew the sharp sword from beside his thigh and sprang at him in fury. And Asteropaeus could not pull Achilles' ash spear out of the bank with his stout hand. Three times he shook it, straining to drag it out, and three times he gave up the effort; the fourth time he meant to bend and break the ashwood spear of the grandson of Aeacus, but before he could, Achilles closed in and took his life with the sword. He struck him in the belly beside the navel, and all his bowels poured out on the ground, and darkness covered his eyes as he gasped. And Achilles leapt on his chest and stripped off his armor, and exulting spoke a word:

21.184 "Lie like that. It's hard for you to contend with the sons of the mighty son of Cronus, even if you are sprung from a river. You claim to be of the race of a broad-flowing river, but I claim my lineage from great Zeus. The man who fathered me rules over many Myrmidons—Peleus, son of Aeacus—and Aeacus was born of Zeus. So as Zeus is mightier than rivers that murmur down to the sea, so the race of Zeus is made mightier than a river's. And here beside you is a great river, if he can help you at all; but there's no fighting Zeus, son of Cronus. Not even lordly Achelous matches him, nor the great strength of deep-flowing Ocean, from whom all rivers flow, and the whole sea, and all springs and deep wells. Even he fears the lightning of great Zeus and his terrible thunder, when it crashes down from the sky."

21.200 He spoke, and pulled the bronze spear out of the bank, and left him lying there on the sand, since he had taken his life, and the dark water soaked him. Eels and fish busied themselves over him, tearing and nibbling at the fat around his kidneys. But Achilles went off after the chariot-fighting Paeonians, who were still huddled in panic beside the eddying river, since they had seen their best man in the fierce combat beaten down by force under the hands and sword of the son of Peleus. There he killed

Thersilochus and Mydon and Astypylus, and Mnesus and Thrasius and Aenius and Ophelestes. And swift Achilles would have killed still more of the Paeonians, if the deep-eddying river had not spoken to him in anger, taking the likeness of a man, and called out from a deep eddy:

ACHILLES AND THE RIVER

The river Scamander attacks Achilles until Hephaestus drives it back with fire.

21.214 "Achilles, you're mightier than other men, and your deeds are more outrageous than theirs, for the gods themselves always stand by you. If the son of Cronus has granted you to destroy all the Trojans, at least drive them away from me and do your grim work on the plain. My lovely streams are full of corpses, and I can't pour my current anywhere into the bright sea, choked as I am with the dead, while you go on killing and destroying. Come, let it be now; I'm appalled, leader of the people." Then swift-footed Achilles answered him: "It will be as you command, Zeus-nurtured Scamander. But I won't stop killing the arrogant Trojans until I've penned them in the city and tried my strength against Hector face to face, to see whether he beats me or I him."

21.227 So saying, he rushed upon the Trojans like some god. And then the deep-eddying river spoke to Apollo: "For shame, lord of the silver bow, child of Zeus, you haven't kept to the will of Cronus' son, who urgently charged you to stand by the Trojans and defend them until evening comes, setting late, and casts its shadow over the rich-soiled land." He spoke; and Achilles, famed for his spear, leapt from the bank into the middle of him. But the river rushed at him with a surging swell and stirred up all his streams in turmoil, and pushed out the many corpses that crowded thick in him, those Achilles had killed. These he cast out onto dry land, bellowing like a bull; but the living he saved within his lovely streams, hiding them in his deep, wide eddies.

21.240 Around Achilles the terrible wave rose up in turmoil, and the current fell on his shield and pushed him back; he could get

no footing to stand firm. He grabbed an elm with his hands, a tall and well-grown one; but it fell, torn out by the roots, and ripped away the whole bank, and checked the lovely streams with its thick branches, and bridged the river itself, falling right into it. Then he leapt up out of the eddy and rushed to fly across the plain on his quick feet, in fear. But the great god did not let up; he surged after him, black at his crest, to stop godlike Achilles from his toil and ward off ruin from the Trojans. The son of Peleus sprang away as far as a spear's cast, with the swoop of a black eagle, the hunter, which is at once the strongest and the swiftest of birds. Like it he darted away, and on his chest the bronze clanged terribly; he slipped out from under the river and fled, and the river flowed on behind, following with a great roar. 21.257 As when a man cutting a channel leads a stream of water from a dark spring along his plants and garden plots, a mattock in his hands, clearing the blockages from the ditch; as it flows forward, all the pebbles beneath are swept along, and the water, running quickly down, gurgles over the sloping ground and outruns even the man who leads it: so the river's wave kept overtaking Achilles, swift as he was, for gods are stronger than men. And as often as swift-footed godlike Achilles set himself to stand against it and find out whether all the immortals who hold the broad sky were driving him in flight, so often the great wave of the heaven-fed river would strike his shoulders from above. He kept leaping upward with his feet, distressed at heart, but the river was breaking his knees beneath him, flowing violently underneath, and was eating away the ground from under his feet. The son of Peleus groaned aloud, looking up to the broad sky:

21.273 "Father Zeus, how not one of the gods has stood up to save me, pitiful as I am, from the river! After that I could suffer anything. No other of the gods of heaven is so much to blame for this as my own mother, who beguiled me with lies; she told me I would die beneath the wall of the armored Trojans by the swift arrows of Apollo. I wish Hector had killed me, the best man bred here: then a brave man would have been the killer, and a brave

man the one he stripped. But as it is, I was fated to be caught by a miserable death, trapped in a great river like a boy who herds pigs, swept away by a torrent as he tries to cross it in winter."

21.284 So he spoke, and very quickly Poseidon and Athena came and stood close by him, taking the shape of men; they took his hand in theirs and reassured him with their words. Poseidon the Earth-shaker began the speaking: "Son of Peleus, don't tremble too much or be afraid at all, for we two are your helpers from among the gods, with Zeus's approval—I and Pallas Athena. So it isn't your fate to be beaten down by a river; he'll soon give way, and you'll see it for yourself. But we'll give you shrewd advice, if you'll listen. Don't stop your hands from the leveling war until you've penned the Trojan host, whoever escapes, within the famous walls of Ilium. And once you've taken Hector's life, go back to the ships. We grant you to win glory."

21.298 So the two of them spoke, and went off to join the immortals. But he went on into the plain, for the gods' command had roused him mightily. The whole plain was flooded with water pouring over it, and many fine pieces of armor from young men killed in the fighting were floating there, and corpses too. His knees leaped high as he rushed straight against the current, and the wide-flowing river could not hold him back, for Athena had put great strength into him. Nor did Scamander let up his fury. He raged at the son of Peleus still more, reared himself up high and crested the wave of his stream, and called to Simoeis with a shout:

21.308 "Dear brother, let's both of us together check this man's strength, since he'll soon sack the great city of lord Priam, and the Trojans won't stand against him in the battle. Come and help me, quickly. Fill your streams with water from your springs, stir up all your torrents, raise a great wave, and rouse a thunderous roar of tree trunks and stones, so that we can stop this savage man who's now in command and has set his heart on matching the gods. For I tell you, his strength won't save him, nor his looks, nor that fine armor, which will lie somewhere deep at the bottom of the pool, covered over with mud. And him I'll roll in

sand and heap boundless shingle over him, and the Achaeans won't even know where to gather up his bones, so deep is the silt I'll pile on top of him. 21.322 Right there his tomb will be made, and he'll have no need of a heaped-up barrow when the Achaeans hold his funeral." He spoke, and rushed at Achilles, churning and surging high, seething with foam and blood and corpses. The dark wave of the heaven-fed river rose up and towered, and began to overpower the son of Peleus. Then Hera cried out loud, terrified for Achilles that the great deep-eddying river would sweep him away, and at once she called to Hephaestus, her own dear son: "Up, my crook-footed child! It was you we judged a match in battle for eddying Xanthus. Come and help, quickly, and make a great blaze shine out.

21.334 And I'll go and raise from the sea a hard storm of the West Wind and the South Wind that clears the skies, to carry the deadly blaze and burn up the heads and armor of the Trojans. You, along the banks of Xanthus, burn the trees, and set the river himself on fire. Don't let him turn you aside in any way with soothing words or threats. And don't stop your fury until I shout and call out to you; then check your tireless fire." So she spoke, and Hephaestus made ready his wondrous blazing fire. First the fire flared up in the plain and burned the many dead who lay thick across it, men Achilles had killed. The whole plain was dried out, and the bright water was checked.

21.346 As when in late summer the North Wind quickly dries out a freshly watered orchard, and whoever tends it is glad, so the whole plain was dried out, and he burned the dead. Then he turned his gleaming flame on the river. The elms were burning, and the willows and tamarisks; the lotus was burning, and the rushes and the galingale that grew in plenty around the river's lovely streams. The eels and the fish in the eddies were in distress, tumbling this way and that through the lovely streams, tormented by the blast of Hephaestus of many devices. The river's very strength was burning, and he spoke out and called him by name:

21.357 "Hephaestus, none of the gods can stand up to you, and I wouldn't fight you either, blazing with fire like this. Stop this strife—let godlike Achilles drive the Trojans out of their city this very moment, for all I care. What have I to do with strife and giving help?" So he spoke, burning with fire, and his lovely streams were boiling up. As a cauldron seethes inside, pressed by a great fire, as it melts the fat of a tender-fed hog, bubbling up all over, with dry wood laid beneath it, so his lovely streams were ablaze with fire, and the water boiled. He would not flow on, but was held back, worn down by the hot blast from the might of Hephaestus of many wits. Then, pleading earnestly, he spoke winged words to Hera:

21.369 "Hera, why has your son fallen on my stream to torment it, out of all the others? I'm surely not as much to blame as all the others who help the Trojans. Still, I'll stop, if you command it—but let him stop too. And I'll swear this oath besides: never to ward off the day of evil from the Trojans, not even when all Troy is burning in ravening fire, and it's the warlike sons of the Achaeans who are burning it." Now when the goddess white-armed Hera heard this, at once she called to Hephaestus, her own dear son: "Hephaestus, hold back, my glorious child. It isn't right to batter an immortal god like this for the sake of mortals."

THE GODS FIGHT

Athena fells Ares and Aphrodite, Apollo declines to fight Poseidon, and Hera beats Artemis.

21.381 So she spoke, and Hephaestus quenched his wondrous blazing fire, and the wave rushed back down along its lovely streams. Now when the fury of Xanthus was subdued, those two stopped, for Hera held them back, angry though she was. But among the other gods strife fell, heavy and grievous, and the spirit in their hearts blew two ways. They clashed together with a mighty crash; the wide earth rang, and all around the great sky blared like a trumpet. Zeus heard it as he sat on Olympus, and his dear heart laughed within him for joy as he watched the

gods coming together in strife. Then they stood apart no longer, for Ares, piercer of shields, began it. He was the first to leap at Athena, holding his bronze spear, and he spoke a word of insult:

21.394 "Why, you dog-fly, are you driving the gods together in strife again, with your boldness that knows no bounds, as your great spirit urges you on? Don't you remember when you set Diomedes, son of Tydeus, on to wound me, and you yourself took hold of the spear in full view of everyone, thrust it straight at me, and tore my fair skin? So now, I think, you'll pay me back for all you've done." With that he struck her on the tasseled aegis, the terrible aegis that not even Zeus's thunderbolt can overpower—there blood-stained Ares struck her with his long spear. But she drew back, and with her strong hand picked up a stone that lay on the plain, black, jagged and huge, which men of earlier times had set there as a boundary-mark for a field. With it she hit furious Ares on the neck, and his limbs went slack.

21.407 He fell and covered seven plethra, his hair was fouled with dust, and his armor clanged about him. Pallas Athena laughed, and vaunting over him she spoke winged words: "Fool, haven't you realized even yet how much stronger I claim to be than you, that you match your strength against mine? This is how you may pay off your mother's curses in full—she's angry with you and plotting harm, because you deserted the Achaeans and help the arrogant Trojans." So she spoke, and turned her shining eyes away. But Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, took him by the hand and led him off, groaning over and over; he could barely gather his spirit back. And when the goddess white-armed Hera noticed her, at once she spoke winged words to Athena:[5]

21.420 "Look, child of Zeus who bears the aegis, Atrytone: there goes that dog-fly again, leading Ares, the plague of mortals, out of the deadly war through the tumult. Go after her!" So she spoke, and Athena sped after her, glad at heart. She rushed at her and struck her on the breast with her strong hand, and right

5 A plethron was a measure of about a hundred feet.

there Aphrodite's knees and her dear heart gave way. So the two of them lay on the bountiful earth, and Athena vaunted over them and spoke winged words: "If only all who help the Trojans were like this when they fight the armored Argives, as bold and as steadfast as Aphrodite was when she came to help Ares and stood up to my fury! Then we would long ago have finished with the war, after sacking the well-built city of Ilium."

21.434 So she spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera smiled. Then the lordly Earth-shaker spoke to Apollo: "Phoebus, why do we two stand apart? It isn't fitting, now that the others have begun. It would be all the more shameful if we went back to Olympus, to Zeus's bronze-floored house, without a fight. You begin, since you're the younger; it wouldn't be right for me, since I was born first and know more. Fool, what a senseless heart you have! You don't even remember all the hardships we two alone of the gods suffered around Ilium, when we came at Zeus's bidding and served proud Laomedon for a year at an agreed wage, and he gave us our orders and set our tasks.[6]

21.446 I built the Trojans a wall around their city, broad and very fine, so that the city could never be broken; and you, Phoebus, herded his shambling, crook-horned cattle in the spurs of wooded Ida with its many folds. But when the joyful seasons brought round the end of our hire, then monstrous Laomedon robbed us of all our wages and sent us off with threats. He threatened to bind our feet and our hands together and sell us off to far-away islands, and he swore he'd lop off the ears of both of us with the bronze. So we two went back with angry hearts, furious over the wage he had promised and not paid. And it's his people you're now doing favors for, instead of joining us in trying to make the arrogant Trojans perish utterly and miserably, with their children and their honored wives."

21.461 Then lord Apollo who works from afar spoke to him in turn: "Earth-shaker, you wouldn't call me sound of mind if I fought with you for the sake of wretched mortals, who are like leaves: one moment they flourish in full vigor, eating the fruit of

6 Laomedon was king of Troy before his son Priam.

the field, and the next they waste away and die. No, let's stop fighting at once, and let them battle it out themselves." So he spoke, and turned away, for he was ashamed to come to blows with his father's brother. But his sister, the mistress of wild beasts, Artemis of the wilds, rebuked him harshly and spoke a word of insult: "So you run away, you who work from afar, and you've handed Poseidon the whole victory and given him a boast for nothing! Fool, why do you carry that bow, as useless as the wind?

21.475 Don't let me ever again hear you in our father's halls boasting, as you used to among the immortal gods, that you'd fight Poseidon face to face." So she spoke, but Apollo who works from afar said nothing to her. Instead the revered wife of Zeus, angered, rebuked the showerer of arrows with words of insult: "How dare you, you brazen dog, think to stand up against me now? I'm a hard one for you to match in strength, bow-bearer though you are, since Zeus made you a lion to women and allowed you to kill any one you please. Truly, it's better to kill wild beasts in the mountains and deer of the wilds than to fight with force against your betters. But if you want to learn what war is—then learn, and know full well how much stronger I am, since you match your strength against mine."

21.489 She spoke, and with her left hand caught both of Artemis's hands by the wrist, and with her right she took the bow from her shoulders, and with that very bow, smiling, boxed her about the ears as she twisted this way and that; and the swift arrows spilled out. The goddess slipped away and fled in tears, like a dove that flies from a hawk into a hollow rock, a cleft—for it was not her fate to be caught. So Artemis fled in tears, and left her bow there. Then the guide Argeïphontes spoke to Leto: "Leto, I won't fight you at all. It's hard to trade blows with the wives of Zeus the cloud-gatherer. No, go ahead and boast freely among the immortal gods that you beat me by sheer strength."[7]

21.502 So he spoke, and Leto gathered up the curved bow and the arrows that had fallen this way and that in the whirling dust.

7 Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis, had been paired against Hermes.

She took the bow and went back after her daughter. But the girl came to Olympus, to Zeus's bronze-floored house, and sat down in tears on her father's knees, and her ambrosial robe trembled about her. Her father, the son of Cronus, drew her to him and asked her, laughing gently: "Which of the heavenly gods has done such things to you, dear child, for no reason, as if you'd been caught doing something wrong in plain sight?" Then the fair-crowned goddess of the clamorous chase spoke to him in turn: "It was your wife who beat me, father, white-armed Hera—she's the one who has fastened strife and quarreling on the immortals."

21.514 So they talked with one another. But Phoebus Apollo went into holy Ilium, for he was anxious for the wall of the well-built city, that the Danaans might sack it that day, beyond what was fated. The other gods who live forever went to Olympus, some angry, some exulting greatly, and sat down beside their father of the dark clouds. But Achilles went on slaughtering the Trojans themselves and their single-hoofed horses alike. As when smoke goes up and reaches the wide sky from a burning city, and the wrath of the gods has driven it on, and it brings toil on all and sends sorrows on many, so Achilles brought toil and sorrows on the Trojans.

AGENOR AND APOLLO'S TRICK

Agenor stands against Achilles, and Apollo lures Achilles away while the Trojans escape.

21.526 Old Priam was standing on the god-built tower, and he caught sight of huge Achilles, and the Trojans before him being driven in rout at once, with no defense to be had. With a groan he came down from the tower to the ground, urging on the glorious gatekeepers along the wall: "Hold the gates wide open in your hands until the troops come fleeing to the city, for here's Achilles close at hand, driving them in rout. Now, I think, there will be disaster. But once they've crowded inside the wall and are catching their breath, put the close-fitted doors back in

place again; for I'm afraid this deadly man may leap inside the wall."

21.537 So he spoke, and they unbarred the gates and thrust back the bolts, and the gates, flung open, made a light of safety. Then Apollo leaped out to meet the Trojans, to ward off destruction. They fled straight for the city and the high wall, parched with thirst, coated with dust from the plain; and Achilles followed hard with his spear, for a violent frenzy held his heart unceasingly, and he was eager to win glory. Then the sons of the Achaeans would have taken high-gated Troy, had not Phoebus Apollo roused godlike Agenor, Antenor's son, a flawless and mighty warrior. He put courage into his heart, and stood beside him himself, leaning against the oak tree, to ward off the heavy hands of death; and he was shrouded in thick mist.

21.550 When Agenor caught sight of Achilles, sacker of cities, he stood still, and as he waited his heart churned with many thoughts. Deeply troubled, he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit: "Ah me! If I run from mighty Achilles the way the others are being driven in panic, he'll catch me even so, and cut my throat for a coward. Or what if I leave these men to be driven in rout by Achilles son of Peleus, and run away on foot from the wall in another direction, toward the plain of Ilium, until I reach the spurs of Ida and slip down into the thickets? Then in the evening, after bathing in the river and cooling off my sweat, I could make my way back to Ilium. But why does my heart debate these things with me?

21.563 I'm afraid he'll see me making off from the city toward the plain, and rush after me and catch me with his swift feet. Then there will be no more escaping death and doom, for he's far too strong, beyond all men. But what if I go and face him in front of the city? Surely even his flesh can be pierced by sharp bronze; there's only one life in him, and men say he's mortal. It's just that Zeus, son of Cronus, grants him glory." With that he drew himself together and waited for Achilles, and the valiant heart within him was eager for war and fighting.

21.573 Just as a leopard comes out of a deep thicket to face a hunter, and has no terror in her heart and does not run when she hears the baying of the hounds; for even if he is quicker and wounds her with a thrust or a throw, still, even with the spear stuck through her, she does not give up her fight until she has either closed with him or been brought down: so the son of noble Antenor, godlike Agenor, would not flee until he had tested Achilles. He held his shield in front of him, balanced on every side, took aim at Achilles with his spear, and shouted loudly: "No doubt you're hoping in your heart, glorious Achilles, that today you'll sack the city of the proud Trojans. Fool! There are many sorrows still to be suffered over it.

21.586 For there are many of us in it, valiant men, who will defend Ilium for our dear parents and our wives and sons; and it's you who will meet your fate here, terrible as you are and bold a warrior." He spoke, and let the sharp javelin fly from his heavy hand, and struck him on the shin below the knee, and did not miss. The greave of newly wrought tin rang terribly around it, but the bronze sprang back from the man it hit and did not pierce it, for the god's gifts held it off. Then the son of Peleus charged at godlike Agenor in his turn; but Apollo would no longer let him win glory. He snatched Agenor away, hid him in thick mist, and sent him off quietly out of the war.

21.599 Then by a trick he kept the son of Peleus away from the army: the god who works from afar made himself like Agenor in every way and stood before Achilles' feet, and Achilles sprang off in pursuit. While he chased him across the wheat-bearing plain, having turned him along the deep-eddying river Scamander, with the god running just a little ahead—for Apollo was luring him on by a trick, so that he kept hoping to catch him with his speed—meanwhile the other Trojans, routed, came crowding gladly to the city, and the town was filled with the men packing in. They no longer dared to wait for one another outside the city and the wall, and find out who had escaped and who had died in the battle; they poured into the city in haste, every one whose feet and knees could save him.

Book 22

The death of Hector
Hector faces Achilles alone before the walls of Troy.

22.1 So all through the city the Trojans, who had fled like fawns, were cooling off their sweat, drinking, and quenching their thirst, leaning against the fine battlements, while the Achaeans came up closer to the wall, their shields sloped against their shoulders. But deadly fate shackled Hector to stay where he was, in front of Ilium and the Scaean gates. Then Phoebus Apollo spoke to the son of Peleus: "Why, son of Peleus, are you chasing me with your swift feet, you a mortal and I an immortal god? You still haven't recognized that I'm a god, and you rage on relentlessly. You don't care at all, do you, about the struggle with the Trojans you routed? They've crowded into the city, while you've turned aside out here. You won't kill me, for I am not fated to die."

22.14 Then, deeply angered, swift-footed Achilles spoke to him: "You've thwarted me, Apollo who works from afar, most destructive of all the gods, by turning me away from the wall to this place. Otherwise many more would have bitten the dust before they got into Ilium. Now you've robbed me of great glory and saved them easily, since you have no vengeance to fear later on. I'd take my vengeance on you, if only I had the power." With these words he made for the city, his mind set on great things, rushing on like a prize-winning horse with its chariot that runs easily, stretching out at full speed across the plain. So swiftly did Achilles ply his feet and knees.

PRIAM AND HECUBA PLEAD

Hector's parents beg him to come inside the walls, and he debates with himself.

22.25 Old Priam was the first to see him with his eyes, blazing like a star as he sped across the plain, the star that comes at summer's end, whose rays shine out brilliantly among the many stars in the dead of night, the one they call by name Orion's Dog. It is the brightest of them all, but it is made a sign of evil, and it brings much fever to wretched mortals. So the bronze shone on Achilles' chest as he ran. The old man groaned and beat his head with his hands, raising them high, and with a great groan he called out, pleading with his dear son. But Hector stood in front of the gates, furiously eager to fight Achilles. And the old man stretched out his hands and spoke to him piteously:[1]

22.38 "Hector, my dear child, please don't wait for this man alone, away from the others, or you may soon meet your doom, brought down by the son of Peleus, since he is far the stronger, the cruel man. If only the gods loved him as much as I do! Then the dogs and vultures would soon be eating him where he lay, and the terrible grief would lift from my heart. He has bereaved me of many fine sons, killing them or selling them off to far-flung islands. Even now there are two sons, Lycaon and Polydorus, whom I can't see among the Trojans crowded into the city, the sons Laothoe bore me, a princess among women. If they're alive in the enemy camp, then we'll ransom them with bronze and gold, for there's plenty in the house: old Altes of famous name gave a great deal with his daughter.[2] 22.52 But if they're already dead and in the house of Hades, it is grief to my heart and to their mother's, we who brought them into the world. For the rest of the people, though, the grief will be shorter-lived,

1 Orion's Dog is Sirius, the Dog Star, whose rising in late summer was associated with heat and fever.

2 Priam does not yet know that Achilles has already killed both: Polydorus in Book 20 and Lycaon in Book 21.

unless you die too, brought down by Achilles. So come inside the wall, my child, so you can save the men and women of Troy, and not hand great glory to the son of Peleus and be robbed of your own dear life. And pity me as well, wretched as I am, while I still have my senses, ill-fated man whom father Zeus, son of Cronus, will destroy by a cruel fate on the threshold of old age, after I have lived to see many horrors: my sons killed, my daughters dragged away, the bedchambers ransacked, little children dashed to the ground in the terrible fighting, and my sons' wives dragged off by the deadly hands of the Achaeans. 22.66 And last of all the ravening dogs will tear at me at my own front doors, once someone has struck me with the sharp bronze, or hit me with a throw, and taken the life from my limbs. They are the dogs I raised in my halls to eat at my table and guard my doors, and they will drink my blood, maddened at heart, and lie in the forecourt. For a young man killed in battle, torn by the sharp bronze, it is all fitting that he lie there. Dead though he is, everything about him is beautiful, whatever is shown. But when dogs defile the gray head and the gray beard and the private parts of an old man who has been killed, that is the most pitiful thing that happens to wretched mortals."

22.77 So the old man spoke, and he pulled at his gray hair with his hands, tearing it from his head, but he could not persuade Hector's heart. Then on the other side his mother wailed, shedding tears. She loosened the fold of her robe, and with her other hand she held up her breast, and shedding tears she spoke winged words to him: "Hector, my child, respect this, and pity me, if ever I gave you the breast that soothes all cares. Remember those days, dear child, and fend off this enemy from inside the wall. Don't stand out in front to face him, the cruel man. For if he kills you, I will never mourn you on a bier, my dear young shoot, whom I bore myself, and neither will your richly courted wife. Far away from the two of us, beside the ships of the Argives, the swift dogs will devour you."

22.90 So the two of them, weeping, appealed to their dear son, pleading over and over, but they could not persuade Hector's

heart. He stood waiting for huge Achilles as he came closer. As a mountain snake waits by its hole for a man, gorged on evil poisons, with a terrible anger sunk into it, and glares fearsomely as it coils around its hole, so Hector, his fury unquenchable, would not give ground, but leaned his shining shield against a jutting tower; and deeply troubled, he spoke to his own great-hearted spirit:

22.99 "Ah me! If I go in through the gates and the walls, Polydamas will be the first to heap reproach on me. He urged me to lead the Trojans back to the city during this deadly night just past, when godlike Achilles rose up. But I wouldn't listen, and it really would have been far better. Now that I've destroyed the army through my own reckless folly, I feel shame before the Trojans and the Trojan women with their trailing robes, that some lesser man than I may say, 'Hector trusted in his own strength and destroyed the army.' That's what they'll say. And then it would be far better for me either to meet Achilles face to face, kill him and come home, or to die gloriously myself in front of the city.

22.111 Or what if I lay down my bossed shield and my heavy helmet, lean my spear against the wall, and go myself to meet peerless Achilles, and promise him Helen, and with her all the possessions, every one that Alexander brought to Troy in his hollow ships, which was the beginning of the quarrel, to give to the sons of Atreus to take away, and besides that, to share out with the Achaeans all the rest that this city holds? And then afterward take an oath from the Trojans, sworn by the elders, to hide nothing, but divide in two all the wealth this lovely citadel holds within? But why does my heart debate these things with me? 22.123 I might go up to him, and he would not pity me or respect me at all, but would kill me unarmed, just like a woman, once I've taken off my armor. There's no way now to chat with him from an oak or a rock, the way a girl and a young man, a girl and a young man, chat with each other. Better to clash in battle as quickly as possible. Let's see which of us the Olympian will grant the triumph." So he pondered as he waited, and Achilles

came close to him, the equal of Enyalius, the warrior with the shaking helmet, brandishing over his right shoulder his terrible spear of Pelian ash; and all around him the bronze gleamed like the glare of a blazing fire or the rising sun.

THE CHASE AROUND THE WALLS

Achilles chases Hector three times around Troy while Zeus weighs their fates.

22.136 As soon as Hector saw him, trembling seized him, and he could no longer bear to stay there. He left the gates behind him and ran in fear, and the son of Peleus rushed after him, trusting in his quick feet. As a falcon in the mountains, the swiftest of winged creatures, easily swoops after a timid dove, and she flees away below him while he, close behind, shrieking shrilly, darts at her again and again, and his heart urges him to seize her, so Achilles flew straight on in his eagerness, and Hector fled in terror below the Trojans' wall, plying his knees swiftly. Past the lookout point and the windswept fig tree they sped, always keeping out from under the wall, along the wagon track, and they came to the two fair-flowing springs where the twin sources of eddying Scamander gush up. 22.149 One of them flows with warm water, and steam rises all around it as if from a blazing fire. The other, even in summer, runs out cold as hail, or chill snow, or ice formed from water. And there by the springs are the broad washing-troughs, fine ones made of stone, where the wives and lovely daughters of the Trojans used to wash their shining clothes in the old days, in peacetime, before the sons of the Achaeans came. Past these they ran, one fleeing, the other in pursuit behind. A good man fled in front, but a far better one was pursuing him fast, since it was no sacrificial beast or oxhide they were striving for, the kind of things that are prizes for men's footraces: they were running for the life of horse-taming Hector. 22.162 As when prize-winning horses with single hooves race at full speed around the turning posts, and a great prize is set out, a tripod or a woman, in honor of a man who has died, so

these two circled three times around the city of Priam on swift feet, and all the gods were watching. The father of men and gods was the first to speak among them: "Ah! It's a man dear to me that I see with my own eyes being chased around the wall, and my heart grieves for Hector. He has burned many thighbones of oxen for me on the peaks of Ida with its many folds, and at other times on the heights of the city. And now godlike Achilles is chasing him around the city of Priam with swift feet.

22.174 But come, you gods, think it over and decide: shall we save him from death, or now, good man though he is, let him be brought down by Achilles, son of Peleus?" Then the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, spoke to him in turn: "Father, lord of the bright lightning and the dark clouds, what a thing to say! A man who is mortal, long since doomed by fate, and you want to release him from grim death? Do it; but not all of us other gods will approve." Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her: "Take heart, Tritogeneia, my dear child. I'm not speaking in earnest, and I want to be kind to you. Do as your mind is set, and hold back no longer." With these words he urged on Athena, who was eager already, and she went darting down from the peaks of Olympus.[3]

22.188 Swift Achilles kept relentlessly after Hector, harrying him. As when a dog in the mountains chases a deer's fawn it has started from its lair, through glens and through wooded valleys, and even if the fawn escapes notice for a while, cowering beneath a thicket, the dog keeps running, tracking it steadily until it finds it, so Hector could not escape the notice of the swift-footed son of Peleus. Every time he made a rush for the Dardanian gates, to dart in under the well-built towers in the hope that the men above might protect him with their missiles, each time Achilles got ahead of him and turned him back toward the plain, while he himself kept flying always on the side nearer the city. As in a dream a man cannot chase someone who flees, and the one cannot escape, nor the other pursue, so Achilles could not catch him with his feet, nor Hector get away.

3 Tritogeneia is an ancient title of Athena, of uncertain meaning.

22.202 And how could Hector have escaped the doom of death, if Apollo had not come close to him one last time, the very last, and roused his strength and his quick knees? Godlike Achilles kept shaking his head at his men, and would not let them hurl their bitter missiles at Hector, for fear someone else would win the glory by hitting him, and he himself would come second. But when they reached the springs for the fourth time, then the father held out his golden scales, and in them he set two dooms of grievous death, one for Achilles and one for horse-taming Hector, and he took the scales by the middle and lifted them. Hector's day of fate sank down and went toward Hades, and Phoebus Apollo abandoned him. Then the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, came to the son of Peleus, and standing close beside him she spoke winged words:

22.216 "Now at last, glorious Achilles, dear to Zeus, I hope that the two of us will carry great glory back to the Achaeans at the ships by slaying Hector, insatiable for battle though he is. There's no way now for him to escape us, not even if Apollo who works from afar should go through ever so much, groveling at the feet of father Zeus who holds the aegis. But you, stand still now and catch your breath, and I'll go to him and persuade him to fight you face to face." So Athena spoke, and he obeyed, glad at heart, and stood leaning on his ash spear with its bronze point. She left him there and came up to godlike Hector, looking like Deiphobus in form and in tireless voice, and standing close beside him she spoke winged words:

22.229 "Dear brother, swift Achilles is really pressing you hard, chasing you around the city of Priam with his swift feet. Come, let's make a stand and hold our ground against him." Then great Hector of the flashing helmet spoke to her in turn: "Deiphobus, you were always by far the dearest to me of all the brothers Hecuba and Priam had as sons. But now I mean to honor you in my heart even more, since for my sake, when you saw me with your own eyes, you dared to come out of the wall, while the others stay inside." Then the goddess, gray-eyed Athena, spoke to him in turn:

22.239 "Dear brother, it's true that our father and our queenly mother begged me over and over, clasping my knees, and our comrades all around me too, to stay there, so much do they all tremble before him. But my heart within me was worn down by bitter grief. Now let's charge straight at him and fight, and let there be no sparing of spears, so we can see whether Achilles kills the two of us and carries off our bloodstained spoils to the hollow ships, or is brought down by your spear." With these words Athena led him on by her cunning. And when they had come close, advancing on each other, great Hector of the flashing helmet was the first to speak:

THE DEATH OF HECTOR

Athena deceives Hector, and Achilles kills him and refuses to return his body.

22.250 "I won't run from you any longer, son of Peleus, as I did before, when I fled three times around the great city of Priam and never dared to wait for you as you came on. Now my heart moves me to stand and face you. I'll kill you or be killed. But come, let's call the gods to witness, for they will be the best witnesses and guardians of agreements. I won't do outrage to your body, terrible as you are, if Zeus grants me endurance and I take your life. When I've stripped you of your famous armor, Achilles, I'll give your body back to the Achaeans. And you do the same." Then, glaring at him from under his brows, swift-footed Achilles spoke to him:

22.261 "Hector, man I can never forgive, don't talk to me of agreements. There are no trustworthy oaths between lions and men, and wolves and lambs have no hearts that think alike, but are bent on evil against each other through and through. Just so, you and I cannot be friends, and there will be no oaths between us, not before one or the other has fallen and glutted Ares, the warrior with the tough oxhide shield, with his blood. Remember every kind of prowess you have. Now you really must be a spearman and a bold warrior. There is no escape for you any longer:

Pallas Athena will soon bring you down by my spear. Now you will pay back all at once for all the griefs of my comrades, whom you killed in the fury of your spear."

22.273 He spoke, and poised and hurled his long-shadowed spear. But shining Hector saw it coming straight at him and dodged it. He saw it in time and crouched, and the bronze spear flew over him and stuck in the ground. Pallas Athena snatched it up and gave it back to Achilles, unseen by Hector, shepherd of the people. And Hector spoke to the matchless son of Peleus: "You missed! So, Achilles, you who are like the gods, you didn't know my fate from Zeus after all, though you certainly said you did. You were just a glib talker, a cheat with words, trying to frighten me so I'd forget my fury and my courage.

22.283 You won't plant your spear in my back as I run. Drive it through my chest as I charge straight at you, if a god has granted you that. Now in your turn dodge my bronze spear—if only you'd take the whole of it into your flesh! The war would be lighter for the Trojans if you were dead, since you are their greatest bane." He spoke, and poised and hurled his long-shadowed spear, and struck the shield of the son of Peleus square in the middle and did not miss; but the spear rebounded far from the shield. Hector was angry that his swift shaft had flown from his hand in vain, and he stood there downcast, for he had no second ash spear. He called with a loud shout to Deiphobus of the white shield and asked him for a long spear. But Deiphobus was nowhere near him. Then Hector understood in his heart, and spoke:

22.297 "Ah, no! The gods have truly called me to my death. I thought the warrior Deiphobus was beside me, but he is inside the wall, and Athena has tricked me. Now evil death is close to me, no longer far off, and there is no way out. This, it seems, was long the will of Zeus and of Zeus's far-shooting son, who before now gladly protected me. But now my fate has caught me. Still, let me not die without a struggle and without glory, but after doing some great thing for men still to come to hear of."

22.306 So he spoke, and drew the sharp sword that hung at his flank, great and heavy. Gathering himself, he swooped like a high-flying eagle that dives to the plain through the dark clouds to snatch a tender lamb or a cowering hare: so Hector swooped, brandishing his sharp sword. And Achilles charged, his heart filled with savage fury. He covered his chest with his shield, beautiful and intricately worked, and nodded his shining helmet with its four ridges, and the beautiful golden plumes that Hephaestus had set thick about the crest tossed around it. 22.317 As the evening star moves among the stars in the dead of night, the most beautiful star set in the sky, so light flashed from the well-sharpened spearpoint that Achilles was brandishing in his right hand, intent on harm to godlike Hector, scanning his fair flesh for where it would best give way. Everywhere else his flesh was covered by the bronze armor, the beautiful armor he had stripped from mighty Patroclus when he killed him. But it showed where the collarbones divide the neck from the shoulders, at the throat, where life is most quickly destroyed. There, as Hector charged at him, godlike Achilles drove in his spear, and the point went straight through the soft neck. But the ash spear heavy with bronze did not cut his windpipe, so that he could still say something to him in answer. He fell in the dust, and godlike Achilles exulted over him:

22.331 "Hector, I suppose you thought, while you were stripping Patroclus, that you would be safe, and you gave no thought to me, since I was far away. You fool! Far from him, back by the hollow ships, a far better helper had been left behind—I, who have loosened your knees. The dogs and birds will tear you shamefully, but the Achaeans will give him his funeral rites." Then, his strength failing, Hector of the flashing helmet spoke to him: "I beg you by your life and your knees and your parents, don't let the dogs devour me by the ships of the Achaeans. Accept bronze and gold in plenty, the gifts my father and queenly mother will give you, and give my body back to be taken home, so that the Trojans and the Trojans' wives may give me my share of fire in death."

22.344 Then, with a dark look, swift-footed Achilles answered him: "Don't beg me by my knees, you dog, or by my parents. I wish my fury and my spirit would somehow drive me to carve your flesh and eat it raw for what you have done—as surely as there is no one who will keep the dogs from your head, not even if they bring here and weigh out ten and twenty times the ransom and promise more besides, not even if Priam son of Dardanus bids them pay your weight in gold. Not even so will your queenly mother lay you on a bier and mourn you, the son she bore herself. The dogs and birds will tear you all to pieces."

22.355 Then, dying, Hector of the flashing helmet spoke to him: "I know you well as I look at you, and I was never going to persuade you. Truly, the heart in your breast is iron. Think now, in case I become a cause of the gods' wrath against you on the day when Paris and Phoebus Apollo destroy you, for all your valor, at the Scaean Gates." As he said this, the end that is death covered him, and his spirit flew from his limbs and went down to Hades, lamenting its fate, leaving manhood and youth behind. And to him, though he was dead, godlike Achilles spoke: "Die! I will accept my own doom whenever Zeus and the other immortal gods wish to bring it about."

22.367 He spoke, and drew the bronze spear out of the corpse and set it aside, and stripped the bloody armor from its shoulders. The other sons of the Achaeans came running up and gazed at the stature and marvelous looks of Hector, and not one of them stood by him without stabbing him. And one would look at the man beside him and say: "Well now, Hector is a lot softer to handle than when he set the ships ablaze with burning fire." So one would say, and step up and stab him. And when swift-footed godlike Achilles had stripped him, he stood among the Achaeans and spoke winged words:

22.378 "Friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, since the gods have granted us to overpower this man, who did more harm than all the rest together, come, let's make an attempt on the city in our armor, so that we may learn what the Trojans have in mind—whether they will abandon their high city now that he

has fallen, or are determined to stay even with Hector gone. But why does my heart debate these things with me? Patroclus lies by the ships, a corpse unwept and unburied. I will not forget him as long as I am among the living and my knees can move. Even if in Hades the dead forget their dead, I will remember my dear comrade even there. 22.391 Now come, young men of the Achaeans, let's go back to the hollow ships singing a paean, and take this man with us. We have won great glory: we have killed godlike Hector, to whom the Trojans prayed throughout their city as to a god." He spoke, and devised shameful treatment for godlike Hector. He pierced the tendons at the back of both his feet from heel to ankle, threaded oxhide straps through them, and tied them to his chariot, leaving the head to drag. Then he mounted the chariot, lifted the glorious armor into it, and lashed the horses into a run, and the pair flew on, not unwilling. A cloud of dust rose from him as he was dragged, his dark hair spread out on either side, and his whole head lay in the dust, once so handsome. Now Zeus had given him to his enemies to defile in his own native land.

TROY MOURNS

Priam, Hecuba and Andromache lament as Hector's body is dragged to the ships.

22.405 So his whole head was fouled with dust. His mother tore her hair, flung her shining veil far from her, and let out a great shriek when she saw her son. His dear father groaned pitifully, and all around them the people throughout the city were gripped by shrieking and groaning. It was most like what it would be if all of beetling Ilium were smoldering in fire from its heights down. The people could barely hold back the old man in his anguish, frantic to go out through the Dardanian gates. He pleaded with them all, rolling in the dung, calling each man by name:

22.416 "Hold off, my friends, and for all your concern let me go out of the city alone to the ships of the Achaeans. Let me plead

with this reckless man of violent deeds, in case he may feel shame before my years and pity my old age. He too has a father like me, Peleus, who begot him and reared him to be a bane to the Trojans; and to me above all others he has brought grief. So many sons of mine he has killed in their prime! Yet for all of them, grieved as I am, I don't mourn as much as I do for one, whose sharp grief will bring me down to the house of Hades—Hector. If only he had died in my arms! Then the two of us would have had our fill of weeping and wailing, his mother, who bore him to her misfortune, and I myself."

22.429 So he spoke, weeping, and the citizens groaned in answer. And among the Trojan women Hecuba led the loud lament: "My child, how wretched I am! Why should I live on, after suffering so terribly, now that you are dead? Night and day you were my pride throughout the city, and a blessing to everyone, the Trojan men and women in the city, who greeted you like a god. For you were truly their great glory too while you lived. But now death and fate have caught up with you."

22.437 So she spoke, weeping. But Hector's wife had not yet heard anything; no true messenger had come to tell her that her husband was holding his ground outside the gates. She was weaving at her loom in the innermost room of the high house, a double-width purple cloth, and working flowers of many colors into it. She had called to the lovely-haired maids through the house to set a great tripod over the fire, so that there would be a hot bath for Hector when he came home from the battle—poor innocent, she did not know that far from any bath gray-eyed Athena had brought him down at the hands of Achilles. Then she heard the shrieking and groaning from the tower. Her limbs shook, and the shuttle fell from her hand to the ground, and she spoke again to her lovely-haired maids:

22.450 "Come, two of you, follow me. Let me see what has happened. I heard the voice of my honored mother-in-law; the heart in my own breast is leaping up into my mouth, and my knees beneath me are frozen stiff. Some evil is close upon Priam's children. May that word be far from my ear! But I am

terribly afraid that godlike Achilles has cut off my bold Hector from the city, alone, and is chasing him over the plain, and has by now put an end to the painful pride that possessed him—for he never stayed back in the mass of men, but always ran far out in front, yielding to no one in his fury."

22.460 So she spoke, and rushed through the hall like a maenad, her heart pounding, and her maids went with her. And when she reached the tower and the crowd of men, she stood on the wall, looking all around, and saw him being dragged before the city: the swift horses were dragging him ruthlessly toward the hollow ships of the Achaeans. Dark night covered her eyes. She fell backward and gasped out her spirit. Far from her head she threw her shining headdress—the diadem, the cap, the woven band, and the veil that golden Aphrodite had given her on the day when Hector of the flashing helmet led her from the house of Eëtion, after giving countless bride-gifts. Around her crowded her husband's sisters and his brothers' wives, who held her up among them, so stricken she seemed about to die.[4] 22.475 When she came to herself and her spirit gathered back into her breast, she spoke among the Trojan women, lamenting in broken sobs: "Hector, how wretched I am! So we were both born to one fate, you in Troy in Priam's house, and I in Thebe beneath wooded Placus, in the house of Eëtion, who raised me when I was small —an ill-fated father of a child with a cruel fate. I wish he had never fathered me! Now you are going to the house of Hades in the depths of the earth, and you leave me in hateful grief, a widow in the halls. And our son is still just a baby, the son you and I had, ill-starred as we are. You will be no help to him, Hector, now that you are dead, nor he to you.[5]

22.487 For even if he escapes the Achaeans' war of many tears, there will always be toil and sorrows for him in time to come, since others will move his boundary stones and take his fields. The day that makes a child an orphan cuts him off from all his

4 A maenad was a woman possessed by the ecstatic frenzy of Dionysus' worship.
5 Thebe, below Mount Placus, was Andromache's home city near Troy; Achilles sacked it and killed her father, King Eëtion.

friends of his own age. He always hangs his head, his cheeks are wet with tears, and in his need the boy goes up to his father's comrades, tugging one by the cloak, another by the tunic. Of those who take pity on him, one holds out a cup for a moment: he wets the boy's lips, but does not wet his palate. And a boy with both parents living drives him from the feast, beating him with his fists and taunting him with insults: 'Get out of here! Your father doesn't dine with us.'

22.499 And in tears the boy goes back to his widowed mother—Astyanax, who once, on his father's knees, ate nothing but marrow and the rich fat of sheep. And when sleep took him and he stopped his childish play, he would sleep in his bed, in his nurse's arms, on a soft mattress, his heart full of good things. But now he will suffer much, having lost his dear father—Astyanax, as the Trojans call him, because you alone guarded their gates and long walls. And now, by the beaked ships, far from your parents, wriggling worms will eat you, once the dogs have had their fill of you, naked. Yet clothes lie stored for you in the halls, fine and lovely, made by women's hands. But I will burn all of them in blazing fire—they are no use to you, since you will not lie in them—to be your glory before the Trojan men and women." So she spoke, weeping, and the women groaned in answer.[6]

6 The name Astyanax means "lord of the city." Hector himself called the boy Scamandrius (6.402).

Book 23

The funeral games
Patroclus is burned, and Achilles holds games in his honor.

23.1 So they lamented throughout the city. But the Achaeans, once they had reached the ships and the Hellespont, scattered, each to his own ship. Achilles, though, would not let the Myrmidons scatter, and he spoke among his war-loving comrades: "Myrmidons of the swift horses, my loyal comrades, let us not yet unyoke our single-hoofed horses from the chariots. Let us drive up close with horses and chariots just as they are, and weep for Patroclus, for that is the prize of honor due to the dead. Then, when we have taken our fill of grievous lament, we will unyoke the horses and all have supper here." So he spoke, and they wailed all together, and Achilles led them. Three times they drove their fine-maned horses around the body, mourning, and among them Thetis stirred a longing for lament.

23.15 The sands were wet, and the armor of the men was wet with tears, so great a master of rout was the man they missed. Among them the son of Peleus led the unceasing lament, laying his man-slaying hands on his comrade's chest: "Farewell, Patroclus, even in the house of Hades. For now I am fulfilling for you everything I promised before: that I would drag Hector here and give him to the dogs to tear raw, and that before your pyre I would cut the throats of twelve splendid sons of the Trojans, in my anger at your killing." He spoke, and devised shameful treatment for godlike Hector, stretching him face down in the dust beside the bier of the son of Menoetius. Then each of them took off his armor, gleaming bronze, and they unyoked their loud-

neighing horses and sat down beside the ship of the swift-footed grandson of Aeacus, in their thousands; and he gave them a funeral feast to their heart's content.

23.30 Many sleek oxen bellowed around the iron knife as they were slaughtered, many sheep and bleating goats; and many white-tusked hogs, rich with fat, were stretched out to singe over the flame of Hephaestus. Everywhere around the corpse the blood ran so thick you could have scooped it up in cups. But the kings of the Achaeans led the lord, the swift-footed son of Peleus, to godlike Agamemnon, having won him over with difficulty, his heart still raging for his comrade. When they had come to Agamemnon's hut, they at once ordered the clear-voiced heralds to set a great tripod over the fire, in the hope of persuading the son of Peleus to wash off the bloody gore. But he refused stubbornly, and swore an oath besides:

23.43 "No, by Zeus, who is highest and best of the gods, it is not right for water to come near my head until I have laid Patroclus on the fire, heaped up a mound for him, and cut my hair; for never a second time will grief like this reach my heart while I remain among the living. But for now let us give in to this hateful feast. And at dawn, Agamemnon, lord of men, give orders to bring wood and to provide everything that is fitting for a dead man to have when he goes down into the murky darkness, so that the tireless fire may burn him out of our sight the sooner, and the troops may turn to their work."

THE GHOST OF PATROCLUS

Patroclus appears to Achilles in a dream and asks to be buried.

23.54 So he spoke, and they listened closely and obeyed. Quickly each of them made supper ready, and they ate, and no one's heart went without a fair share of the feast. But when they had put from them the desire for drink and food, the others went off to lie down, each to his hut, while the son of Peleus lay on the shore of the loud-roaring sea, groaning heavily, among many Myrmidons, in an open space where the waves washed up on

the beach. When sleep took hold of him, loosening the cares of his heart, sweet sleep pouring over him—for his shining limbs were utterly weary from chasing Hector toward windy Ilium—there came the spirit of poor Patroclus, like him in every way, in stature, in his beautiful eyes and in his voice, and wearing the same clothes on his body. It stood over his head and spoke to him:

23.69 "You're asleep, and you have forgotten me, Achilles. While I was alive you never neglected me, but now that I'm dead you do. Bury me as quickly as you can, so that I may pass through the gates of Hades. The spirits, the phantoms of those whose toil is done, keep me far away, and they will not yet let me join them beyond the river; I just wander aimlessly through the wide-gated house of Hades. And give me your hand, I beg you through my tears; for never again will I come back from Hades, once you have given me my share of fire. Never again shall we sit apart from our dear comrades, alive, and make our plans together. No, the hateful doom that was my lot even at my birth has opened its jaws around me. And you too, Achilles, like the gods, have your fate: to die beneath the wall of the wealthy Trojans. 23.82 And I will tell you something else and lay it on you as a charge, if you will listen. Do not lay my bones apart from yours, Achilles, but together, just as we were raised together in your house, when Menoetius brought me there from Opoeis while I was still a small boy, because of a grievous killing—on the day I killed the son of Amphidamas, fool that I was, without meaning to, in anger over a game of knucklebones. Then Peleus the horseman took me into his house, raised me kindly, and named me your attendant. So too let a single vessel enfold the bones of us both, the golden two-handled jar your queenly mother gave you." Then swift-footed Achilles answered him:

23.94 "Why, dear heart, have you come here to me and laid all these charges on me? I will carry out every one of them and do as you ask. But come closer to me; let us put our arms around each other, if only for a moment, and take our fill of grievous lament." So he spoke, and reached out with his hands, but could

not grasp him; the spirit went off beneath the earth like smoke, gibbering. Achilles leapt up in amazement, struck his hands together, and spoke words of lament: "Ah me, so even in the house of Hades there is something, a spirit and a phantom, but no mind in it at all. For all night long the spirit of poor Patroclus stood over me, weeping and wailing, and charged me with each thing, and it looked marvelously like him."

23.108 So he spoke, and in them all he stirred the longing for lament. And as they mourned, rosy-fingered Dawn appeared to them around the pitiful corpse. But lord Agamemnon sent mules and men out from all the huts to bring wood, and a good man went along to oversee them, Meriones, the attendant of manly Idomeneus. They set out with woodcutting axes in their hands and well-woven ropes, and the mules went in front of them. Up and down, along and across they went; but when they reached the spurs of Ida with its many springs, they at once set about felling the high-leafed oaks with the long-edged bronze, in haste, and the trees came down with a great crash. Then the Achaeans split them and bound them behind the mules, and the mules tore up the ground with their feet, eager for the plain, through the dense thickets. 23.123 All the woodcutters carried logs, for that was the order of Meriones, the attendant of manly Idomeneus. They threw them down in a row on the shore, where Achilles had planned a great burial mound for Patroclus and for himself. And when they had thrown down the vast heap of wood on every side, they sat down there all together and waited. But Achilles at once ordered the war-loving Myrmidons to gird on their bronze, and each to yoke his horses to his chariot. They rose and put on their armor and mounted the chariots, fighters and drivers alike: the horsemen in front, and behind them followed a cloud of foot soldiers in their thousands, and in the middle his comrades carried Patroclus. They covered the whole corpse with their hair, which they cut off and threw on it; and behind, godlike Achilles held his head, grieving, for he was sending his blameless comrade to Hades.

THE PYRE

Achilles cuts his hair, sacrifices twelve Trojans, and the winds make the pyre burn.

23.138 When they came to the place Achilles had pointed out to them, they set him down, and quickly heaped up plenty of wood for him. Then swift-footed godlike Achilles thought of something else. Standing apart from the pyre, he cut off his fair hair, which he had been growing long for the river Spercheus, and deeply stirred, he spoke, looking out over the wine-dark sea: "Spercheus, it was for nothing that my father Peleus vowed to you that when I came home to my dear native land I would cut my hair for you and offer a holy hecatomb, and sacrifice fifty uncastrated rams there at your springs, where your sacred precinct and fragrant altar are. So the old man vowed, but you did not fulfill his wish.[1]

23.150 Now, since I am not going home to my dear native land, I would give my hair to the warrior Patroclus to take with him." So saying, he placed the hair in the hands of his dear comrade, and in them all he stirred the longing for lament. And now the light of the sun would have set on their weeping, had not Achilles quickly gone up to Agamemnon and said: "Son of Atreus—since it is your word above all that the army of the Achaeans will heed—there can be enough even of lament. Dismiss them now from the pyre and tell them to get their meal ready. We, whose chief care the dead man is, will see to things here; and let the leaders stay with us."

23.161 When Agamemnon, lord of men, heard this, he at once dismissed the troops to the balanced ships, but those who had the care of the dead stayed there and heaped up the wood. They made a pyre a hundred feet each way, and on the top of the pyre they laid the corpse, grieving at heart. Many fat sheep and shambling, crooked-horned oxen they flayed and dressed before

1 The Spercheus is the river of Achilles' homeland, Phthia; young men might grow their hair to dedicate to a local river on returning safely.

the pyre; and great-hearted Achilles took the fat from them all and covered the corpse with it from head to foot, and heaped the flayed carcasses around it. In it he set two-handled jars of honey and oil, leaning them against the bier; and four proud-necked horses he quickly threw onto the pyre, groaning deeply. 23.173 The lord had nine dogs that fed from his table, and he cut the throats of two of them and threw them on the pyre; and twelve noble sons of the great-hearted Trojans, cutting them down with the bronze—evil were the deeds he devised in his heart. Then he let loose the iron fury of the fire, to feed on it all. And he cried out and called his dear comrade by name: "Farewell, Patroclus, even in the house of Hades. For now I am fulfilling for you everything I promised before. Twelve noble sons of the great-hearted Trojans, all of them, the fire is devouring along with you; but Hector, son of Priam, I will not give to the fire to eat, but to the dogs."

23.184 So he spoke, threatening; but no dogs busied themselves over Hector. Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, kept the dogs away from him day and night, and anointed him with ambrosial rose-scented oil, so that Achilles would not tear his skin as he dragged him. And Phoebus Apollo drew a dark cloud from the sky down to the plain over him, and covered the whole space the corpse took up, so that the strength of the sun would not shrivel the flesh on his sinews and limbs before its time. But the pyre of dead Patroclus would not catch fire. Then swift-footed godlike Achilles thought of something else. Standing apart from the pyre, he prayed to the two winds, Boreas and Zephyrus, and promised them fine offerings; and pouring many libations from a golden cup, he begged them to come, so that the dead might blaze up in the fire as quickly as possible and the wood start burning. Swiftly Iris heard his prayers and went as messenger to the winds.[2]

23.200 They were gathered together in the house of stormy Zephyrus, feasting; and Iris came running and stood on the

2 Zephyrus is the West Wind; the winds are imagined here as gods with a house of their own.

stone threshold. When they saw her with their eyes they all sprang up, and each called her to come to him. But she refused to sit down and spoke: "No time to sit. I am going back to the streams of Ocean, to the land of the Ethiopians, where they are offering hecatombs to the immortals, so that I too may share in the sacrifices. But Achilles is praying for Boreas and loud Zephyrus to come, and promises fine offerings, so that you may rouse the pyre to burn on which Patroclus lies, for whom all the Achaeans are groaning."

23.212 So she spoke and went away, and they rose with an unearthly roar, driving the clouds before them. Quickly they came blowing over the sea, and the waves rose under their shrill blast; they reached fertile Troy and fell upon the pyre, and the fire roared up, blazing wondrously. All night long they tossed the flames of the pyre together, blowing shrilly; and all night long swift Achilles took a two-handled cup, drew wine from a golden mixing bowl and poured it on the ground, soaking the earth, calling on the spirit of poor Patroclus. As a father mourns as he burns the bones of his son, newly married, whose death has brought grief to his wretched parents, so Achilles mourned as he burned the bones of his comrade, dragging himself around the pyre and groaning without cease.

23.226 At the hour when the morning star goes out to herald light over the earth, and after it saffron-robed Dawn spreads over the sea, the pyre died down and the flame ceased. The winds went back again to their home across the Thracian sea, and it groaned, raging with its swell. The son of Peleus turned away from the pyre to one side and lay down, exhausted, and sweet sleep leapt upon him. But the others gathered in a body around the son of Atreus, and the din and tramping of their approach woke him; he sat up and spoke to them:

23.236 "Son of Atreus, and you other chiefs of all the Achaeans, first quench the pyre with gleaming wine, all of it, as far as the fury of the fire has reached; and then let us gather the bones of Patroclus, son of Menoetius, taking care to tell them apart. They are easy to make out, for he lay in the middle of the pyre, while

the others burned away from him at the edge, horses and men mixed together. Let us put them in a golden bowl, in a double layer of fat, until I myself am hidden in Hades. As for the mound, I don't ask you to labor over a very large one, just one that is fitting. Later the Achaeans can make it broad and high—those of you who are left behind me among the many-benched ships."

THE CHARIOT RACE

Achilles sets out prizes, and Diomedes wins a race full of divine interference and tricks.

23.249 So he spoke, and they obeyed the swift-footed son of Peleus. First they quenched the pyre with gleaming wine as far as the flame had gone, and the ash settled deep. Weeping, they gathered the white bones of their gentle comrade into a golden bowl, in a double layer of fat, set it in the hut, and covered it with a fine linen cloth. They marked out the circle of the mound and laid its foundations around the pyre, and at once heaped up loose earth; and when they had heaped up the mound, they went back. But Achilles kept the troops there and seated them in a wide gathering, and brought prizes out of the ships: cauldrons and tripods, horses and mules and sturdy oxen, well-belted women, and gray iron.

23.262 For the swift charioteers he first set out splendid prizes: a woman skilled in fine handiwork, to be taken away, and an eared tripod holding twenty-two measures, for the first; for the second he set out a mare six years old, unbroken, carrying a mule foal; for the third he set out a fine cauldron untouched by fire, holding four measures, still bright as new; for the fourth he set out two talents of gold, and for the fifth he set out a two-handled bowl untouched by fire. Then he stood up and spoke among the Argives: "Son of Atreus, and you other well-greaved Achaeans, these prizes lie in the gathering, waiting for the charioteers. If we Achaeans were competing now in honor of

someone else, I would certainly carry off the first prize to my hut.

23.276 For you know how far my horses surpass the rest in excellence: they are immortal, and Poseidon gave them to my father Peleus, and he in turn handed them on to me. But I will stay out of it, and so will my single-hoofed horses; for they have lost the noble glory of so fine a charioteer, a gentle one, who very often poured smooth oil over their manes after washing them in bright water. They stand there mourning him, their manes trailing on the ground, and they stand grieving at heart. The rest of you, get ready throughout the army, any of the Achaeans who trusts in his horses and well-jointed chariot."[3]

23.287 So the son of Peleus spoke, and the swift charioteers gathered. Far the first to rise was Eumelus, lord of men, the dear son of Admetus, who excelled in horsemanship. After him rose the son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes, and he led under the yoke the Trojan-bred horses he had once taken from Aeneas, though Apollo had rescued Aeneas himself. After him rose the son of Atreus, fair-haired Menelaus, sprung from Zeus, and he led under the yoke a pair of swift horses: Aethe, Agamemnon's mare, and his own Podargus. Echepolus son of Anchises had given her to Agamemnon as a gift, so that he would not have to follow him to windy Ilium but could stay at home and enjoy himself. Zeus had given him great wealth, and he lived in Sicyon with its broad dancing-floors. This mare Menelaus led under the yoke, and she was wild for the race.[4] 23.301 Fourth, Antilochus harnessed his horses with their fine manes. He was the splendid son of Nestor, the great-hearted lord, son of Neleus, and swift-footed horses bred in Pylos drew his chariot. His father came and stood beside him and gave him advice with good intent, though the young man had sense of his own: "Antilochus, young as you are, Zeus and Poseidon have loved you and taught you

3 The charioteer meant is Patroclus, who drove these horses into his last battle in Book 16.

4 Eumelus, son of Admetus and grandson of Pheres, led the men of Pherae in Thessaly. His mares were the finest among the Achaeans after Achilles' horses.

every kind of horsemanship, so there's no great need to teach you. You know well how to wheel around the turning-posts. But your horses are the slowest runners, and so I think you'll have trouble. The others' horses are faster, but the men themselves know no better than you how to plan.

23.313 Come then, my dear son, fill your mind with every kind of craft, so that the prizes don't slip past you. It's by craft, not by strength, that a woodcutter is far better. By craft a helmsman on the wine-dark sea steers a swift ship buffeted by the winds. And by craft one charioteer beats another. A man who trusts in his horses and his chariot swings wide this way and that without thinking, and his horses wander over the course, and he doesn't keep them in hand. But the man who knows the tricks, though he drives worse horses, always keeps his eye on the post and turns close. He doesn't forget how to keep them taut from the start with the oxhide reins, but holds them steadily and watches the man ahead. 23.326 I'll tell you a sign, a very clear one, and you won't miss it. There's a dry stump standing about a fathom above the ground, oak or pine, one that doesn't rot in the rain. Two white stones are propped against it on either side, where the track narrows, and there's smooth ground for driving all around it. Either it marks the grave of some man who died long ago, or it was made a turning-post by men of earlier times. Now swift-footed godlike Achilles has set it as the turn. Drive your chariot and horses close to it, almost grazing it. You yourself, in the well-woven car, lean a little to the left of the pair. Goad the right-hand horse with a shout, and give him rein with your hands. 23.338 At the post let your left horse hug it close, so that the hub of the well-made wheel seems to touch its edge. But be careful not to strike the stone, or you may injure the horses and smash the chariot. That would be a joy to the others and a disgrace to you. So, my dear son, keep your wits about you and be on your guard. If you get past at the post with the lead, there's no one who will catch you with a sudden spurt or pass you, not even if he were driving godlike Arion behind you, the swift

horse of Adrastus, who was of divine stock, or the horses of Laomedon, the fine ones bred here."[5]

23.349 So saying, Nestor son of Neleus sat back down in his place, once he had told his son the essentials of each thing. Meriones, fifth, harnessed his horses with their fine manes. They mounted their chariots and threw in their lots. Achilles shook them, and out leapt the lot of Antilochus, Nestor's son. After him lord Eumelus drew his place, and next the son of Atreus, Menelaus famed for the spear, and next Meriones drew his place to drive. Last of all the son of Tydeus, though he was by far the best, drew his place to drive his horses. They stood in a row, and Achilles pointed out the turning-post far off on the smooth plain. Beside it he set as umpire godlike Phoenix, his father's companion, to keep track of the running and report the truth.

23.362 All at once they raised their whips over their horses, lashed them with the reins, and shouted at them urgently. Swiftly the horses sped over the plain, quickly away from the ships. Beneath their chests the dust rose and hung like a cloud or a whirlwind, and their manes streamed out on the blasts of wind. One moment the chariots skimmed the bountiful earth, the next they bounded high into the air. The drivers stood in the cars, and each man's heart was pounding as they strained for victory. Each called to his horses, and they flew over the plain, raising the dust. But when the swift horses were running the last stretch, back toward the gray sea, then each one's excellence showed, and at once the horses stretched to their full pace. Quickly the swift-footed mares of the grandson of Pheres pulled ahead.

23.377 After them came Diomedes' Trojan-bred stallions, not far behind but very close. They always seemed about to mount Eumelus' chariot, and his back and broad shoulders were warmed by their breath, for they flew with their heads laid over him. And now Diomedes would have passed him or made it a

5 Arion was the divine horse of Adrastus, king of Argos. Laomedon, Priam's father, owned horses descended from those Zeus gave to Tros.

dead heat, had not Phoebus Apollo been angry with the son of Tydeus and knocked the shining whip out of his hands. Tears of rage poured from his eyes, because he saw the mares going on still faster, while his own horses were held back, running without the goad. 23.388 But Athena did not fail to notice Apollo cheating the son of Tydeus. Very quickly she sped after the shepherd of the people, gave him back his whip, and put strength into his horses. Then in her anger she went after the son of Admetus, and the goddess broke his horses' yoke. His mares ran apart off the track, and the pole slid to the ground. He himself was rolled out of the chariot beside the wheel. His elbows, his mouth and his nose were torn all around, and his forehead was battered above the brows. His eyes filled with tears, and his strong voice was choked. The son of Tydeus swerved past him and drove his single-hoofed horses on, springing far ahead of the others, for Athena had put strength into his horses and granted him glory. After him came the son of Atreus, fair-haired Menelaus. And Antilochus called out to his father's horses:

23.403 "Get on, you two as well! Stretch out as fast as you can. I'm not telling you to compete with those, the horses of the warlike son of Tydeus, to whom Athena has now given speed and granted him glory. But catch the horses of the son of Atreus, and don't be left behind—quickly, so that Aethe doesn't pour shame on you both, and she only a mare. Why are you falling behind, my fine ones? I'll tell you this straight out, and it will surely be done: you'll get no more care from Nestor, shepherd of the people, but he'll kill you on the spot with the sharp bronze if through your slackness we carry off a lesser prize. So keep after them and hurry as fast as you can. I myself will contrive and see to it how to slip past in the narrow part of the track, and I won't miss my chance."

23.417 So he spoke, and they, fearing their lord's rebuke, ran harder for a little while. Soon steadfast Antilochus saw where the sunken track narrowed. There was a gully in the ground, where winter water had collected and broken away part of the track and hollowed out the whole place. Menelaus was driving

there, trying to avoid a clash of wheels. But Antilochus swerved his single-hoofed horses off the track and, edging a little aside, pressed after him. The son of Atreus was alarmed and shouted to Antilochus: "Antilochus, you're driving recklessly! Hold your horses back. The track is narrow; soon it will be wider for passing. You'll wreck us both by crashing into my chariot."

23.429 So he spoke, but Antilochus drove on still harder, urging his horses with the goad, as if he hadn't heard. As far as the range of a discus swung from the shoulder, when a young man throws it testing his strength, so far they ran on side by side. Then the mares of the son of Atreus fell back, for he himself willingly let up on his driving, so that the single-hoofed horses would not collide on the track and overturn the well-woven chariots, and the men themselves fall in the dust in their eagerness for victory. Then fair-haired Menelaus spoke to him in reproach: "Antilochus, no other mortal is more destructive than you. Go to ruin! We Achaeans are wrong when we say you have sense. But even so you won't carry off the prize without an oath." So saying, he called to his horses and spoke:

23.443 "Don't hang back on me, and don't stand there grieving at heart. Their feet and knees will tire before yours; both of them are past their youth." So he spoke, and they, fearing their lord's rebuke, ran harder, and soon they came close to the other two. The Argives sitting in the gathering were watching the horses, and the horses flew over the plain, raising the dust. Idomeneus, leader of the Cretans, was the first to make out the horses, for he sat outside the gathering, highest of all, on a lookout point. He heard the driver shouting while he was still far off and recognized him, and he made out the leading horse, conspicuous, chestnut all over except for a white mark on its forehead, round like the moon. He stood upright and spoke among the Argives:

23.457 "Friends, leaders and rulers of the Argives, am I the only one who sees the horses, or do you see them too? It seems to me that different horses are in front, and a different driver can be seen. The mares must have come to harm somewhere out on the plain, the ones that were ahead on the way out. I saw them first

rounding the turning-post, but now I can't see them anywhere, though my eyes search all over the Trojan plain as I look. Perhaps the reins slipped from the driver and he couldn't hold them well around the post, and failed to make the turn. That's where I think he fell out and wrecked his chariot, and the mares swerved off wildly when frenzy seized their spirit. 23.469 But stand up and look for yourselves. I can't make it out clearly, but it seems to me it's a man of Aetolian birth who rules among the Argives, the son of horse-taming Tydeus, mighty Diomedes." Then swift Ajax son of Oïleus abused him shamefully: "Idomeneus, why bluster before it's time? Those high-stepping mares are still far off, racing over the wide plain. You're not so very much the youngest among the Argives, nor do the eyes in your head see the sharpest. But you're always blustering in your talk. You've no business being a blusterer; there are better men than you here. The mares in front are the same ones as before, Eumelus', and he's there in the car himself, holding the reins." Then the leader of the Cretans answered him in anger:

23.483 "Ajax, best at quarreling, wrong-headed, in everything else you fall short of the Argives, because your mind is harsh. Come on, then, let's wager a tripod or a cauldron, and let's both make Agamemnon son of Atreus the judge of which mares are in front, so that you'll learn by paying." So he spoke, and at once swift Ajax son of Oïleus rose up in anger to answer him with harsh words. And now the quarrel between the two of them would have gone still further, had not Achilles himself stood up and spoken: "Ajax and Idomeneus, stop trading harsh and ugly words; it isn't fitting. You'd be indignant with anyone else who behaved like this. Sit in the gathering and watch the horses. They'll soon be here themselves, pressing on for victory, and then each of you will know which of the Argives' horses are second and which are in front."

23.499 So he spoke, and the son of Tydeus came very close, driving hard, always lashing with the whip from the shoulder, and his horses leapt high as they swiftly covered the course. Showers of dust kept striking the driver, and the chariot, overlaid with

gold and tin, ran close behind the swift-footed horses. Behind them the wheel rims left hardly any track in the fine dust, as the pair flew on in their haste. He drew up in the middle of the gathering, and sweat streamed to the ground from the horses' necks and chests. He himself leapt down to the ground from the gleaming car and leaned his whip against the yoke. Nor was mighty Sthenelus slow, but eagerly he took the prize and gave it to his high-hearted companions, the woman to lead away and the eared tripod to carry. And he unyoked the horses.[6]

23.514 After him Antilochus of Neleus' line drove in his horses, having got ahead of Menelaus by trickery, not by speed. Even so, Menelaus kept his swift horses close behind him. As far as a horse is from the wheel when it pulls its master over the plain, straining with the chariot—the tips of its tail hairs brush the rim, and it runs very close, with no great space between, as it races over the wide plain—so far did Menelaus trail peerless Antilochus. At first he had been left behind by a full discus throw, but he quickly caught up, for the noble strength of Agamemnon's mare, fine-maned Aethe, kept growing. And if the race had gone on further for them both, he would have passed him and not left it in doubt.

DISPUTES OVER THE PRIZES

Antilochus claims his prize, Menelaus accuses him of cheating, and they settle it generously.

23.528 But Meriones, the noble attendant of Idomeneus, was a spear's throw behind glorious Menelaus, for his fine-maned horses were the slowest, and he himself was the least skilled at driving a chariot in a race. The son of Admetus came in last of all, dragging his fine chariot and driving his horses in front of him. When swift-footed godlike Achilles saw him, he pitied him, and standing among the Argives he spoke winged words: "The best man is driving his single-hoofed horses in last. But come, let's give him a prize, as is fitting—the second; and let the son of

6 Sthenelus is Diomedes' companion and usual charioteer.

Tydeus carry off the first." So he spoke, and they all approved what he proposed. And now he would have given him the mare, since the Achaeans approved, had not Antilochus, son of great-hearted Nestor, stood up and answered Achilles son of Peleus, claiming his right:

23.543 "Achilles, I'll be very angry with you if you do what you say. You mean to take away my prize because you think his chariot and swift horses came to grief, and he's a good man himself. But he should have prayed to the immortals; then he wouldn't have come in last of all. If you pity him and he's dear to your heart, there's plenty of gold in your hut, and bronze and sheep, and you have slave women and single-hoofed horses. Take something from these and give him an even greater prize later, or even right now, so that the Achaeans will praise you. But the mare I won't give up. Let any man who wants to fight me with his fists try for her."

23.555 So he spoke, and swift-footed godlike Achilles smiled, pleased with Antilochus, since he was his dear companion. And in answer he spoke winged words to him: "Antilochus, if you're telling me to give Eumelus something else from my own store, I'll do that too. I'll give him the corslet I took from Asteropaeus, made of bronze, with a band of shining tin running all around it. It will be worth a great deal to him." So he spoke, and told his dear companion Automedon to bring it from the hut. He went and brought it and put it in Eumelus' hands, and Eumelus received it gladly.[7]

23.566 Then Menelaus too rose up among them, grieved at heart and furiously angry with Antilochus. The herald put the staff into his hand and ordered the Argives to be silent. Then the godlike man spoke among them: "Antilochus, you used to have sense—what have you done? You've disgraced my prowess and hampered my horses by throwing your own in front, though yours were far worse. Come, leaders and rulers of the Argives, judge between the two of us impartially, without favor, so that none of the bronze-clad Achaeans may ever say, 'Menelaus over-

7 Automedon is Achilles' charioteer.

powered Antilochus with lies and went off with the mare, because his horses were far worse, but he himself was superior in prowess and might.'

23.579 Or come, I'll judge it myself, and I don't think any other Danaan will reproach me, for the judgment will be straight. Antilochus, come here, you who are nurtured by Zeus, as is the custom. Stand in front of your horses and chariot, hold in your hands the slender whip you drove with before, and touching the horses swear by the Earth-holder, the Earth-shaker, that you did not deliberately hinder my chariot by trickery." Then sensible Antilochus answered him in turn: "Bear with me now. I'm much younger than you, lord Menelaus, and you are older and better. You know how a young man oversteps the mark: his mind is quicker, but his judgment is thin.

23.591 So let your heart be patient. I'll give you the mare I won myself. And if you asked for something greater from my own home, I'd rather give it to you at once than fall out of your favor for all my days, you who are nurtured by Zeus, and be an offender against the gods." So he spoke, and the son of great-hearted Nestor led the mare and put her in Menelaus' hands. And his heart was warmed, as when dew falls on the ears of a growing crop, when the fields are bristling with grain: so, Menelaus, was the heart in your breast warmed. And he spoke winged words to him:

23.602 "Antilochus, angry as I was, I will give way to you myself, since you were never flighty or foolish before; this time youth got the better of your sense. Next time, beware of trying to cheat your betters. No other man of the Achaeans would have talked me round so quickly. But you have suffered much and toiled much for my sake, you and your good father and your brother. So I will yield to your entreaty, and I will even give you the mare, though she is mine, so that these men too may know that my heart is never arrogant or harsh."

23.612 So he spoke, and he gave the mare to Noemon, Antilochus' comrade, to lead away, and then he took the gleaming cauldron for himself. Meriones, fourth, took up the two talents

of gold, in the order he had driven in. The fifth prize was left, a two-handled bowl. Achilles carried it through the gathering of the Argives and gave it to Nestor, and he stood beside him and said: "Here, old man, let this be a treasure for you too, a memorial of Patroclus' funeral, for you will never see him among the Argives again. I give you this prize just as it is, since you will not box or wrestle, or enter the spear-throwing, or run in the footrace. Hard old age already presses on you."

23.624 So saying, he put it into his hands, and he received it gladly and spoke winged words to him: "Yes, my child, all that you have said is right. My limbs are no longer steady, my friend, nor my feet, and my arms no longer shoot out lightly from my shoulders on either side. If only I were young, and my strength as firm, as when the Epeians were burying lord Amarynceus at Buprasium, and his sons set out prizes in honor of the king! There no man proved my equal, not among the Epeians, nor among the Pylians themselves, nor among the great-hearted Aetolians. In boxing I beat Clytomedes son of Enops, and in wrestling Ancaeus of Pleuron, who stood up against me. In the footrace I outran Iphiclus, good as he was, and with the spear I outthrew Phyleus and Polydorus.[8]

23.638 Only in the chariot race did the two sons of Actor pass me, pushing ahead by force of numbers, because they begrudged me the victory, since the greatest prizes were still left there for that race. They were twins: one held the reins steadily, held the reins steadily, while the other urged the horses on with the whip. That is what I was once. Now let younger men take on such deeds; I must give way to grievous old age, but in those days I stood out among the warriors. But go on, and honor your comrade too with funeral games. I accept this gladly, and my heart rejoices that you always remember me as a friend and do not forget me, nor the honor with which it is right that I should be honored among the Achaeans. In return for this, may the gods give you a reward to satisfy your heart."

8 The Epeians were the people of Elis in the western Peloponnese, where Buprasium lay; Nestor's Pylians were their neighbors and rivals.

BOXING AND WRESTLING

Epeius wins the boxing, and Ajax and Odysseus wrestle to a draw.

23.651 So he spoke, and the son of Peleus went back through the great throng of the Achaeans, once he had heard out all the praise of Neleus' son. Then he set out the prizes for the painful boxing. He led a hardworking mule into the gathering and tethered it there, a six-year-old, unbroken, the hardest kind to break; and for the loser he set out a two-handled cup. He stood up straight and spoke his word among the Argives: "Son of Atreus, and you other well-greaved Achaeans, we call on two men, the very best, to put up their fists and strike at each other for these. The one to whom Apollo grants endurance, and all the Achaeans recognize it, let him lead the hardworking mule away to his hut; and the loser shall carry off the two-handled cup."

23.664 So he spoke, and at once a man rose up, strong and tall and skilled in boxing, Epeius son of Panopeus. He laid hold of the hardworking mule and said: "Let him come forward, whoever is going to carry off the two-handled cup. As for the mule, I say no other Achaean will lead it away by beating me with his fists, since I claim to be the best. Isn't it enough that I fall short in battle? It isn't possible, it seems, for a man to be skilled in every kind of work. So I'll tell you this straight out, and it will surely be done: I'll split his skin wide open and smash his bones together. Let the men who care for him wait here in a crowd, to carry him out when he's been beaten down under my hands."

23.676 So he spoke, and they all fell silent. Only Euryalus stood up to face him, a godlike man, son of lord Mecisteus, the son of Talaus. He had once come to Thebes for the burial of Oedipus after he fell, and there he beat all the Cadmeans. The son of Tydeus, famed for his spear, busied himself about him, encouraging him with words, for he dearly wanted him to win. First he put a belt on him, and then gave him thongs well cut from the hide of a field-ranging ox. The two of them, belted, stepped into the middle of the gathering, and both raising their heavy hands

at once against each other, they fell to it together, and their heavy fists clashed.[9] 23.688 There was a fearful grinding of jaws, and sweat poured from their limbs everywhere. Then godlike Epeius rushed in and struck the other on the cheek as he peered for an opening, and he did not stay standing long after that, for his glorious limbs sank under him where he stood. As when, under the North Wind's ruffling, a fish leaps up on a weedy beach, and a dark wave covers it, so he leaped up when he was struck. But great-hearted Epeius took him in his hands and set him upright, and his dear comrades stood around him and led him through the gathering with his feet trailing, spitting thick blood, his head lolling to one side. They brought him, dazed, and sat him down among them, and went off themselves to fetch the two-handled cup.

23.700 Then the son of Peleus at once set out other prizes, the third, showing them to the Danaans, for the painful wrestling. For the winner there was a great tripod to stand on the fire, which the Achaeans among themselves valued at twelve oxen; and for the man who lost he set a woman in their midst, skilled in many kinds of work, and they valued her at four oxen. He stood up straight and spoke his word among the Argives: "Up, you who will try for this prize too." So he spoke, and then great Telamonian Ajax rose up, and resourceful Odysseus, who knew every trick, stood up as well. The two of them, belted, stepped into the middle of the gathering and gripped each other in their arms with heavy hands, as when a famous builder fits together the crossing rafters of a high house, to ward off the force of the winds.

23.714 Their backs creaked as the bold hands gripped them and dragged them hard; the sweat ran down in streams, and thick weals sprang up along their ribs and shoulders, red with blood. And still they strained on and on for victory, for the well-made tripod. Odysseus could not trip Ajax and bring him to the ground, and Ajax could not do it either, for Odysseus' mighty strength held firm. But when they were beginning to weary the

9 The Cadmeans are the Thebans, named after Cadmus, the founder of Thebes.

well-greaved Achaeans, then great Telamonian Ajax said to him: "Son of Laertes, sprung from Zeus, Odysseus of many wiles, either you lift me, or I'll lift you; the rest will be up to Zeus."

23.725 So saying, he lifted him; but Odysseus did not forget his cunning. He struck him from behind, hitting the hollow of his knee squarely, and loosened his limbs and threw him down backward, and Odysseus fell on his chest. And the people watched and marveled. Then in turn much-enduring godlike Odysseus tried to lift him. He moved him a little off the ground but could not lift him, and he hooked his knee in behind his; and both fell to the ground side by side and were soiled with dust. And now they would have sprung up again and wrestled a third time, had not Achilles himself stood up and held them back: "Strain no longer, and don't wear yourselves out with punishment. Victory goes to both of you. Take equal prizes and go, so that the other Achaeans may compete as well."

THE FOOTRACE AND LAST CONTESTS

Athena helps Odysseus win the footrace, followed by armed combat, the weight throw, archery and the spear.

23.738 So he spoke, and they listened closely and obeyed, and they wiped off the dust and put on their tunics. The son of Peleus at once set out other prizes, for speed. There was a silver mixing bowl, finely wrought. It held six measures, and in beauty it far surpassed all others on earth, since skilled Sidonians had crafted it well, and Phoenician men had carried it over the misty sea, displayed it in harbors, and given it to Thoas as a gift; and Euneus son of Jason gave it to the hero Patroclus as the price of Lycaon, Priam's son. This too Achilles set out as a prize in honor of his comrade, for whoever proved lightest on quick feet. For the second he set out a great ox, rich with fat, and for the last a half-talent of gold. He stood up straight and spoke his word among the Argives: "Up, you who will try for this prize too."[10]

23.754 So he spoke, and at once swift Ajax son of Oïleus rose up, and resourceful Odysseus rose up, and after them Nestor's son Antilochus, for he beat all the young men in running. They stood in a row, and Achilles pointed out the turning post. The course was laid out for them from the starting line, and quickly the son of Oïleus shot into the lead, and godlike Odysseus sped on after him, very close: as when the rod is close to the breast of a well-belted woman as she draws it skillfully with her hands, pulling the spool through past the warp, and holds it near her breast, so close behind ran Odysseus, and his feet struck the other's footprints before the dust could settle round them. Godlike Odysseus poured his breath down on Ajax's head, running fast all the way, and all the Achaeans shouted for him as he strove for victory, and urged him on as he raced hard. 23.768 But when they were running the last stretch, Odysseus at once prayed in his heart to gray-eyed Athena: "Hear me, goddess, come and give my feet good help." So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard him and made his limbs light, his feet and his hands above them. But just as they were about to dart in for the prize, Ajax slipped as he ran—for Athena tripped him—where the dung lay spread from the loud-bellowing oxen that swift-footed Achilles had slaughtered in honor of Patroclus; and his mouth and nostrils were filled with cow dung. So much-enduring godlike Odysseus lifted up the mixing bowl, since he came in first, and glorious Ajax took the ox. He stood holding the horn of the field-ranging ox in his hands, spitting out dung, and spoke among the Argives:

23.782 "Curse it, the goddess tripped my feet, the one who all along has stood by Odysseus like a mother and helped him." So he spoke, and they all laughed heartily at him. Then Antilochus carried off the last prize, smiling, and spoke his word among the Argives: "You all know it already, friends, but I'll say it: even now the immortals honor older men. Ajax is only a little older than I am, but this man is from an earlier generation, from the men of earlier days. A green old age, they call it; and it's hard for

10 Thoas was a king of Lemnos and the grandfather of Euneus.

the Achaeans to rival him at running, except for Achilles." So he spoke, and gave glory to the swift-footed son of Peleus. Then Achilles answered him with words: "Antilochus, your praise will not have been spoken for nothing. I'll add a half-talent of gold for you."

23.797 So saying, he put it into his hands, and he received it gladly. Then the son of Peleus brought into the gathering and set down a long-shadowed spear, and set down a shield and helmet, the arms of Sarpedon, which Patroclus had stripped from him. He stood up straight and spoke his word among the Argives: "We call on two men, the very best, to put on their armor for these, take up the flesh-cutting bronze, and test each other in front of the throng. Whichever of them first reaches the other's fine flesh and touches the inner parts through armor and dark blood, to him I'll give this silver-studded sword, a fine Thracian blade, which I stripped from Asteropaeus. And let both carry off these arms to share; and we'll set a good feast before them in my huts."

23.811 So he spoke, and then great Telamonian Ajax rose up, and up rose the son of Tydeus, mighty Diomedes. When they had armed on either side of the throng, the two came together into the middle, eager to fight, glaring terribly, and amazement held all the Achaeans. But when they had come close, advancing on each other, three times they rushed in, three times they charged at close quarters. Then Ajax thrust at the other's shield, balanced on every side, but did not reach the flesh, for the corslet inside protected him. And the son of Tydeus, over the great shield, kept aiming at his neck with the point of his shining spear. And then the Achaeans, fearing greatly for Ajax, told them to stop and take equal prizes. 23.824 But to the son of Tydeus the hero gave the great sword, bringing it with its scabbard and its well-cut baldric. Then the son of Peleus set out a rough-cast lump of iron, which the mighty strength of Eëtion used to hurl in the old days. But swift-footed godlike Achilles killed him and brought the lump away in his ships with his other possessions. He stood up straight and spoke his word among the Argives: "Up, you who will try for this prize too. Even if the winner's rich

fields lie very far off, he'll have it to use for five rolling years; for his shepherd or his plowman won't have to go into town for lack of iron—this will supply it."

23.836 So he spoke, and then Polypoetes, staunch in battle, rose up, and up rose the mighty strength of godlike Leonteus, and up rose Ajax son of Telamon and godlike Epeius. They stood in a row, and godlike Epeius took the lump, whirled it and threw it, and all the Achaeans laughed at it. Second in turn Leonteus, offshoot of Ares, let it fly; and third great Telamonian Ajax threw it from his heavy hand and overshot the marks of all. But when Polypoetes, staunch in battle, took the lump, as far as a herdsman throws his throwing-stick, and it flies spinning over the herds of cattle, so far did he overshoot the whole gathering; and they shouted. And the comrades of mighty Polypoetes rose and carried their king's prize to the hollow ships.

23.850 Then for the archers he set out dark iron: he set down ten double axes and ten single axes. He set up the mast of a dark-prowed ship far off on the sand, and tied a timid dove to it by the foot with a thin cord, and told them to shoot at it: "Whoever hits the timid dove, let him pick up all the double axes and carry them home. But whoever hits the cord and misses the bird, since he is the lesser shot, shall take the single axes." So he spoke, and then the strength of lord Teucer rose up, and up rose Meriones, the good attendant of Idomeneus.

23.861 They took the lots and shook them in a bronze-fitted helmet, and Teucer won the first turn by lot. At once he shot an arrow with all his might, but he did not vow to the lord a glorious hecatomb of firstborn lambs. He missed the bird, for Apollo begrudged him that; but he hit the cord beside its foot, where the bird was tied, and the bitter arrow cut the cord clean through. The bird darted up toward the sky, and the cord fell slack toward the earth, and the Achaeans roared. Then Meriones in haste snatched the bow from his hand; he had been holding an arrow ready all along, while Teucer aimed. 23.872 At once he vowed to far-shooting Apollo a glorious hecatomb of firstborn lambs. High up under the clouds he saw the timid dove, and as

she circled he struck her full under the wing, and the shaft passed clean through. It fell back to earth and stuck in the ground in front of Meriones' foot; but the bird settled on the mast of the dark-prowed ship, and her neck hung down, and her thick feathers drooped with it. Swiftly the life flew from her limbs, and she fell far from the mast. And the people watched and marveled. Then Meriones picked up all ten double axes, and Teucer carried the single axes to the hollow ships.

23.884 Then the son of Peleus brought into the gathering and set down a long-shadowed spear, and set down a cauldron untouched by fire, worth an ox, embossed with flowers; and men who were spear-throwers stood up. Up rose the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, and up rose Meriones, the good attendant of Idomeneus. Then swift-footed godlike Achilles spoke among them: "Son of Atreus, we know how far you surpass everyone, and how far you are the best in power and in throwing. So take this prize and go to the hollow ships, and let us give the spear to the hero Meriones, if you are willing in your heart; that is what I urge." So he spoke, and Agamemnon, lord of men, did not disobey. He gave Meriones the bronze spear, and then the hero handed the beautiful prize to the herald Talthybius.

Book 24

Priam and Achilles
Priam ransoms Hector's body, and Troy mourns.

24.1 The games broke up, and the men scattered, each to go to his own swift ship. They turned their minds to supper and to taking their fill of sweet sleep. But Achilles wept, remembering his dear companion, and sleep that masters all did not take him. He tossed this way and that, longing for Patroclus' manhood and noble strength, and all that he had carried through with him and the pains he had suffered, passing through the wars of men and the cruel waves. Remembering these things he shed swelling tears, now lying on his side, now on his back, now on his face. Then he would rise to his feet and wander distraught along the shore of the sea. Nor did Dawn escape his notice as she appeared over the sea and the beaches. 24.14 But whenever he had yoked his swift horses beneath the chariot, he would tie Hector behind the car to be dragged. When he had hauled him three times around the mound of the dead son of Menoetius, he would rest again in his hut and leave him stretched face down in the dust. But Apollo kept all disfigurement from his flesh, pitying the man even though he was dead, and covered him all over with the golden aegis, so that Achilles would not tear his skin as he dragged him. So in his fury he kept defiling godlike Hector. The blessed gods watched and pitied him, and kept urging sharp-sighted Argeïphontes to steal him away.

THE GODS ARGUE

Apollo protests at Achilles' abuse of Hector, and Zeus sends for Thetis.

24.25 This pleased all the others, but never Hera, nor Poseidon, nor the gray-eyed maiden. They held firm, as when holy Ilium first became hateful to them, and Priam and his people, because of the blindness of Alexander, who insulted the goddesses when they came to his farmyard and praised the one who offered him grievous lust. But when the twelfth dawn after that had come, then Phoebus Apollo spoke among the immortals: "You are cruel, you gods, and destructive. Did Hector never burn for you the thighs of oxen and unblemished goats? And now you do not have the heart to save him, dead though he is, for his wife to see, and his mother and his child, and his father Priam and the people, who would quickly burn him in the fire and give him his funeral rites.[1]

24.39 No: you gods choose to help destructive Achilles, whose mind is not right and whose purpose in his breast will not bend. His thoughts are savage, like a lion that gives way to his great might and proud spirit and goes after the flocks of men to take his feast: so Achilles has lost all pity, and there is no shame in him—shame, which greatly harms men and also helps them. A man may well lose someone dearer still, a brother born of the same mother, or even a son; but when he has wept and mourned, he lets it go, for the Fates have given men an enduring heart. But this man, after robbing godlike Hector of his dear life, ties him to his horses and drags him around the mound of his dear companion. That is surely no finer for him, nor better. 24.53 Good man though he is, let him beware our indignation, for in his fury he is defiling the senseless earth." Then white-armed Hera spoke to him in anger: "This word of yours might hold, lord of the silver bow, if you gods are going to give Achilles and Hector equal honor. Hector is a mortal, and he sucked at a

1 The judgment of Paris: Hera, Athena and Aphrodite came to him to decide which was most beautiful, and he chose Aphrodite, who promised him Helen.

woman's breast. But Achilles is the child of a goddess, whom I myself nursed and raised and gave as wife to a man, to Peleus, who was dear to the immortals beyond all others. All you gods came to the wedding, and you were there among them feasting with your lyre in hand—you friend of the wicked, faithless always." Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer answered her:

24.65 "Hera, don't be so utterly angry with the gods. The two will not have the same honor; yet Hector too was the dearest to the gods of all the mortals in Ilium. He was to me, at least, for he never failed in the gifts I love. Never did my altar lack its fair share of the feast, the libation and the savor of burnt fat; for that is the prize of honor allotted to us. As for stealing bold Hector away, we will let it be—there is no way to do it without Achilles knowing, for his mother is always at his side, night and day alike. But if only one of the gods would call Thetis to me, so that I may tell her a shrewd plan: how Achilles may accept gifts from Priam and release Hector."

24.77 So he spoke, and storm-footed Iris rushed off with the message. Between Samos and rugged Imbros she leapt into the dark sea, and the waters groaned over her. She sped down into the depths like a lead weight that, set on the horn of an ox of the field, goes down carrying death to the ravenous fish. She found Thetis in a hollow cave, and around her sat the other goddesses of the sea, gathered together; and she in their midst was weeping for the fate of her peerless son, who was to perish in fertile Troy, far from his native land. Standing close, swift-footed Iris spoke to her: "Rise, Thetis: Zeus, whose plans never perish, is calling you." Then the goddess Thetis of the silver feet answered her:[2]

24.90 "Why does that great god summon me? I am ashamed to mingle with the immortals, for I have numberless sorrows in my heart. Still, I will go, and whatever he says will not be said in vain." So speaking, the bright goddess took a dark-blue veil; there was no garment blacker than this. She set out, and swift

2 Samos here is Samothrace, an island in the northern Aegean near Imbros, not the better-known Samos off Asia Minor.

Iris, wind-footed, led the way before her, and around them the waves of the sea parted. Climbing out onto the shore, they darted up to heaven and found the far-seeing son of Cronus, and around him sat all the other blessed gods who live forever, gathered together. She sat down beside father Zeus, and Athena made room for her. Hera put a beautiful golden cup in her hand and comforted her with words; and Thetis drank and handed it back. Then the father of men and gods began to speak among them:

24.104 "You have come to Olympus, goddess Thetis, for all your grief, with sorrow you cannot forget in your heart; I know it myself. Even so, I will tell you why I called you here. For nine days now a quarrel has raged among the immortals over Hector's body and Achilles, sacker of cities. They keep urging sharp-sighted Argeïphontes to steal it away; but I grant this glory to Achilles, keeping your respect and your love for me in the time to come. Go quickly to the army and give your son this order: tell him that the gods are displeased with him, and that I above all the immortals am angry, because in the madness of his heart he keeps Hector beside the beaked ships and has not released him—in the hope that he may somehow fear me and release Hector. 24.117 And I will send Iris to great-hearted Priam, to tell him to go to the ships of the Achaeans and ransom his dear son, and to bring gifts to Achilles that may soften his heart." So he spoke, and the goddess Thetis of the silver feet did not disobey. She went darting down from the peaks of Olympus and came to her son's hut. There she found him groaning heavily, while around him his dear companions were busily at work preparing their morning meal; a great shaggy sheep had been slaughtered for them in the hut. His queenly mother sat down close beside him, stroked him with her hand, and spoke and called him by name:

24.128 "My child, how long will you eat out your heart with weeping and grieving, with no thought for food or bed? It is good to lie in love with a woman too. For you will not live long for me: already death and mighty fate stand close beside you.

Now listen to me quickly: I am a messenger to you from Zeus. He says that the gods are displeased with you, and that he above all the immortals is angry, because in the madness of your heart you keep Hector beside the beaked ships and have not released him. Come, release him, and accept a ransom for the dead."

24.138 Then swift-footed Achilles answered her: "So be it. Whoever brings the ransom may take the body away, if the Olympian himself truly commands it with a willing heart." So, among the gathered ships, mother and son spoke many winged words to each other. And the son of Cronus urged Iris on to holy Ilium: "Up, go, swift Iris, leave the seat of Olympus and take the message to great-hearted Priam within Ilium: he is to go to the ships of the Achaeans and ransom his dear son, and bring gifts to Achilles that may soften his heart—alone, and let no other Trojan go with him.

24.149 Let a herald go with him, an older man, to drive the mules and the well-wheeled wagon, and to bring back to the city the dead man whom godlike Achilles killed. Let him have no thought of death in his heart, and no fear; such a guide will we send with him, Argeïphontes, who will lead him until he brings him to Achilles. And when he has brought him inside Achilles' hut, Achilles himself will not kill him, and will hold back all the others; for he is not senseless, nor heedless, nor wicked, but will spare a suppliant with all kindness."

IRIS COMES TO PRIAM

Iris tells Priam to ransom Hector, and he gathers treasure despite Hecuba's fears.

24.159 So he spoke, and storm-footed Iris rushed off with the message. She came to Priam's house and found clamor and lamentation there. His sons sat around their father inside the courtyard, soaking their clothes with tears, and the old man sat in their midst, wrapped tight in his cloak; and much dung lay on the old man's head and neck, which he had gathered up in his hands as he rolled on the ground. His daughters and his sons' wives were

wailing throughout the house, remembering the many brave men who lay dead at the hands of the Argives, having lost their lives. The messenger of Zeus stood beside Priam and spoke to him softly, and trembling seized his limbs:

24.171 "Take heart, Priam, son of Dardanus, and don't be afraid. I have not come here foreboding evil for you, but meaning you good. I am a messenger to you from Zeus, who, though he is far away, cares for you greatly and pities you. The Olympian bids you ransom godlike Hector, and bring gifts to Achilles that may soften his heart—alone, and let no other Trojan go with you. Let a herald go with you, an older man, to drive the mules and the well-wheeled wagon, and to bring back to the city the dead man whom godlike Achilles killed. 24.181 Have no thought of death in your heart, and no fear; such a guide will go with you, Argeïphontes, who will lead you until he brings you to Achilles. And when he has brought you inside Achilles' hut, Achilles himself will not kill you, and will hold back all the others; for he is not senseless, nor heedless, nor wicked, but will spare a suppliant with all kindness." So speaking, swift-footed Iris went away. And Priam ordered his sons to make ready the well-wheeled mule wagon and to bind the wicker body on it. He himself went down into the fragrant storeroom, high-roofed and made of cedar, which held many treasures, and he called his wife Hecuba and said:

24.194 "My dear wife, a messenger from Olympus has come to me from Zeus, telling me to go to the ships of the Achaeans and ransom my dear son, and to bring gifts to Achilles that may soften his heart. But come, tell me this: how does it seem to you? For my own strength and spirit are urging me terribly to go there, to the ships, into the wide camp of the Achaeans." So he spoke, and the woman shrieked aloud and answered him: "Oh, where has your good sense gone, the sense you were famous for before, among strangers and among those you rule? How can you want to go alone to the ships of the Achaeans, into the sight of the man who has killed so many of your brave sons? Your heart must be made of iron.

24.206 For if he gets you in his power and sets eyes on you, that savage, faithless man will not pity you or show you any respect. No, let us weep for him now, apart, sitting here in the hall. This is what mighty Fate spun for him with her thread when he was born, when I myself bore him: to glut the swift dogs far from his parents, in the hands of a violent man—I wish I could fasten onto the middle of his liver and devour it! Then there would be vengeance for my son, since it was not as a coward that he killed him: he was standing in defense of the Trojans and the deep-bosomed Trojan women, with no thought of flight or shelter."

24.217 Then old godlike Priam spoke to her in turn: "Don't try to hold me back when I want to go, and don't be a bird of ill omen in the halls yourself; you will not persuade me. If anyone else on earth had told me to do this, one of the seers who read the sacrifices, or the priests, we would call it a lie and turn away from it all the more. But now—for I heard the goddess myself and saw her face to face—I will go, and her word will not be in vain. And if it is my fate to die beside the ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans, then I am willing. Let Achilles kill me at once, when I have taken my son in my arms and had my fill of weeping."

24.228 He spoke, and opened the fine lids of the chests. From them he took out twelve beautiful robes, twelve single-folded cloaks, as many blankets, as many fine white mantles, and as many tunics besides. He weighed out ten full talents of gold and brought them, and two gleaming tripods and four cauldrons, and a beautiful cup that the men of Thrace had given him when he went there on an embassy, a great treasure. Not even this did the old man spare in his halls, so much did he long in his heart to ransom his dear son. Then he drove all the Trojans away from the colonnade, rebuking them with harsh words:

24.239 "Get out, you worthless wretches! Haven't you grief enough at home, that you come here to trouble me? Or do you think it a small thing that Zeus, son of Cronus, has given me this pain, to lose the best of my sons? You'll find out too: you will be far easier for the Achaeans to slaughter now that he is dead. But as for me, before I see with my own eyes the city sacked and laid

waste, may I go down into the house of Hades." He spoke, and drove the men off with his staff, and they went out before the old man in his urgency. Then he shouted at his sons, railing at Helenus and Paris and godlike Agathon, at Pammon and Antiphonus and Polites, good at the war cry, at Deiphobus and Hippothous and godlike Agauus; at these nine the old man shouted and gave his orders:

24.253 "Hurry, you bad children, you disgraces! I wish you had all been killed together at the swift ships instead of Hector. Ah me, I am utterly ill-fated: I fathered the best sons in wide Troy, and of them, I tell you, not one is left—Mestor the godlike, and Troilus, who fought from his chariot, and Hector, who was a god among men; he did not seem the son of a mortal man, but of a god. All these Ares has destroyed, and only these disgraces are left, liars and dancers, champions at beating the floor in the dance, robbers of lambs and kids from their own people. Won't you get a wagon ready for me at once, and put all these things on it, so that we can be on our way?"

24.265 So he spoke, and they, fearing their father's rebuke, brought out the well-wheeled mule wagon, a fine one, newly built, and bound the wicker body on it. They took down from its peg the boxwood mule yoke, with its knob and well fitted with guide rings, and brought out the yoke strap, nine cubits long, along with the yoke. They set the yoke carefully on the polished pole, at its front end, slipped the ring over the peg, lashed the strap three times on each side around the knob, then wound it on in turns and tucked the end under. Then they brought from the storeroom the countless ransom for Hector's head and heaped it on the polished wagon, and yoked the strong-hoofed mules that pull in harness, which the Mysians had once given Priam as splendid gifts. And for Priam they led under the yoke the horses that the old man kept for himself and tended at the polished manger.

24.281 The two of them, the herald and Priam, were yoking their teams in the high house, with shrewd thoughts in their minds, when Hecuba came near them, troubled at heart, holding

honey-sweet wine in her right hand in a golden cup, so that they might pour a libation before they went. She stood before the horses, and spoke and called him by name: "Here, pour a libation to father Zeus, and pray to come home again from the enemy, since your heart is driving you to the ships, though I do not want it. Then pray to the son of Cronus of the dark clouds, the god of Ida, who looks down over all Troy, and ask for a bird of omen, the swift messenger that is dearest to him of all birds and whose strength is greatest, on the right, so that you may see it with your own eyes and, trusting in it, go to the ships of the Danaans of the swift horses.

24.296 But if far-seeing Zeus does not give you his own messenger, then I for one would not urge you or bid you go to the ships of the Argives, however eager you are." Then godlike Priam answered her: "Wife, I will not disobey you in what you ask. It is good to lift up one's hands to Zeus, in the hope that he will have pity." He spoke, and the old man told the housekeeper, a maidservant, to pour pure water over his hands, and the maidservant came and stood beside him holding a basin and a pitcher. When he had washed, he took the cup from his wife. Then he prayed, standing in the middle of the courtyard, and poured out the wine, looking up toward heaven, and spoke aloud and said:

24.308 "Father Zeus, ruling from Ida, most glorious, greatest, grant that I come before Achilles as one welcome and pitied; and send a bird of omen, the swift messenger that is dearest to you yourself of all birds and whose strength is greatest, on the right, so that I may see it with my own eyes and, trusting in it, go to the ships of the Danaans of the swift horses." So he spoke in prayer, and Zeus the counselor heard him. At once he sent an eagle, the surest omen among winged birds, the dark hunter that men also call the dusky one. As wide as the door of a rich man's high-roofed storeroom is made, well fitted with bolts, so wide were its wings on either side. It appeared to them on the right, darting across the city, and when they saw it they rejoiced, and the hearts in all their breasts were warmed.

HERMES GUIDES PRIAM

Disguised as a young Myrmidon, Hermes leads Priam safely into the Greek camp.

24.322 The old man, in haste, mounted his chariot and drove out from the gateway and the echoing colonnade. In front the mules drew the four-wheeled wagon, driven by wise Idaeus; behind came the horses, which the old man urged with the whip swiftly through the city; and all his kin followed with him, lamenting much, as if he were going to his death. When they had come down from the city and reached the plain, the others, his sons and sons-in-law, turned back toward Ilium. But the two did not escape the notice of far-seeing Zeus as they appeared on the plain. He saw the old man and pitied him, and at once spoke to Hermes, his dear son:[3]

24.334 "Hermes, you more than anyone love to be a man's companion, and you listen to whomever you will. Up, go, and guide Priam to the hollow ships of the Achaeans in such a way that none of the other Danaans sees him or notices him until he reaches the son of Peleus." So he spoke, and the guide Argeïphontes did not disobey. At once he bound on his feet his beautiful sandals, immortal and golden, which carried him over the water and over the boundless earth together with the gusts of the wind; and he took the wand with which he charms the eyes of whatever men he wishes, and wakes others again from sleep. With this in his hands the mighty Argeïphontes flew off. Quickly he came to Troy and the Hellespont, and went on his way in the likeness of a young prince with the first beard on his lip, when youth is at its most graceful.

24.349 When they had driven past the great tomb of Ilus, they halted the mules and horses to drink in the river, for darkness had now come over the earth. The herald looked and saw Hermes close by, and spoke to Priam and said: "Take thought, son of Dardanus: this calls for a thoughtful mind. I see a man, and I

3 Idaeus is Priam's herald.

think we will soon be torn to pieces. Come, let us flee on the horses, or else clasp his knees and beg him, in the hope that he will have pity." So he spoke, and the old man's mind was confounded, and he was terribly afraid; the hair stood up on his bent limbs, and he stood dazed. But the kindly helper himself came near, took the old man's hand, and questioned him and said:[4]

24.362 "Where, father, are you driving your horses and mules like this through the immortal night, when other mortals are asleep? Aren't you afraid of the Achaeans who breathe fury, your bitter and hostile enemies, so close by? If one of them should see you bringing so many treasures through the swift dark night, what would you think then? You are not young yourself, and this companion of yours is old, to defend yourselves against a man if someone picks a quarrel first. But I will do you no harm; I would even protect you from another, for you remind me of my own dear father." Then old godlike Priam answered him:

24.373 "It is much as you say, dear child. But some god has held his hand over me even so, sending such a wayfarer to meet me, a lucky omen—such as you are, admirable in build and looks, and wise in mind; you must come of blessed parents." Then the guide Argeïphontes spoke to him in turn: "Yes, old sir, all this you have said rightly. But come, tell me this and recount it truly: are you sending away many fine treasures to foreign men, so that these at least may stay safe for you? Or are you all now abandoning holy Ilium in fear? For such a man, the best of you, has perished—your son, who never fell short of the Achaeans in battle."

24.386 Then old godlike Priam answered him: "Who are you, my good friend, and who are your parents? How rightly you have spoken of the fate of my ill-starred son." Then the guide Argeïphontes spoke to him in turn: "You are testing me, old sir, asking about godlike Hector. I have seen him very often with my own eyes in battle, where men win glory, and when he drove the

4 Ilus was Priam's grandfather and the founder of Ilium; his tomb stood on the Trojan plain.

Argives to the ships and kept killing them, cutting them down with the sharp bronze; and we stood and marveled, for Achilles would not let us fight, angry as he was with the son of Atreus. I am his attendant; one well-built ship brought us both. I am one of the Myrmidons, and my father is Polyctor.

24.398 He is a wealthy man, and old, just as you are. He has six sons, and I am the seventh; casting lots among them, I drew the lot to come here. Now I have come from the ships to the plain, for at dawn the bright-eyed Achaeans will set the battle around the city. They are chafing at sitting idle, and the kings of the Achaeans cannot hold them back in their eagerness for war." Then old godlike Priam answered him: "If you truly are an attendant of Achilles, son of Peleus, come, tell me the whole truth: is my son still beside the ships, or has Achilles already cut him limb from limb and thrown him to his dogs?" Then the guide Argeïphontes spoke to him in turn:

24.411 "Old sir, the dogs have not eaten him yet, nor the birds. He still lies beside Achilles' ship, just as he was, among the huts. This is the twelfth dawn he has lain there, and his flesh is not rotting at all, and the worms that devour men killed in battle are not eating him. True, whenever bright dawn appears, he drags him ruthlessly around the burial mound of his dear companion, but he does not disfigure him. You would marvel yourself if you went and saw how fresh as dew he lies. The blood has been washed away from around him, and he is nowhere defiled. All the wounds he was struck with have closed up, and many men drove their bronze into him. That is how the blessed gods care for your son, dead though he is, since he was dear to their hearts."

24.424 So he spoke, and the old man rejoiced and answered him: "My child, it truly is a good thing to give the immortals the gifts that are their due. My son, if he ever really lived, never forgot in our halls the gods who hold Olympus. That is why they have remembered him, even in death's portion. But come, accept this fine cup from me. Keep me safe, and with the gods' help escort me until I reach the hut of the son of Peleus." Then the guide

Argeïphontes answered him: "You're testing me, old sir, a younger man, but you won't persuade me. You want me to accept gifts from you behind Achilles' back.

24.435 He is the one I fear, and I would be deeply ashamed to rob him, in case some harm should come to me afterward. But I would be your escort all the way to famous Argos, attending you with care in a swift ship or walking at your side. No one would make light of your escort and attack you." He spoke, and the Helper sprang onto the chariot behind the horses, quickly took the whip and the reins in his hands, and breathed fine strength into the horses and mules. When they reached the towers and the trench that guarded the ships, the sentries had just begun busying themselves with their supper. The guide Argeïphontes poured sleep over them all, and at once he opened the gates, pushed back the bars, and brought in Priam and the splendid gifts on the wagon.

24.448 Then they came to the hut of the son of Peleus, the tall hut the Myrmidons had built for their lord. They had cut beams of fir for it and roofed it over with downy thatch mown from the meadow. Around it they had made a great courtyard for their lord with close-set stakes, and the gate was held by a single bar of fir. Three Achaeans were needed to drive home that great bolt of the gate, and three to draw it back, three of the other men, that is, for Achilles could drive it home even by himself. Hermes the Helper opened it for the old man and brought in the glorious gifts for the swift-footed son of Peleus. Then he stepped down from the chariot to the ground and spoke: "Old sir, I who have come to you am an immortal god, Hermes. My father sent me to go with you as your escort.

24.462 But now I will go back again, and I will not come before Achilles' eyes. It would be cause for indignation if an immortal god welcomed mortals face to face like this. But you go in, clasp the knees of the son of Peleus, and implore him by his father, by his mother with the lovely hair, and by his child, so that you may move his heart." So he spoke, and Hermes went away to high Olympus. Priam leapt from the chariot to the ground and

left Idaeus there, and he stayed behind holding the horses and mules. The old man went straight to the house where Achilles, dear to Zeus, used to sit. He found the man himself inside. His companions were sitting apart, and only two, the warrior Automedon and Alcimus, offshoot of Ares, were busy at his side. He had just finished his meal, eating and drinking, and the table still stood beside him.

PRIAM AND ACHILLES

Priam kisses Achilles' hands and begs for his son, and they weep together.

24.477 Great Priam came in unseen by them. Standing close, he clasped Achilles' knees in his hands and kissed his hands, the terrible, man-slaying hands that had killed many of his sons. As when deep ruin grips a man who has killed someone in his own country, and he comes to another people's land, to the house of some rich man, and wonder seizes those who look at him, so Achilles was astonished when he saw godlike Priam. The others were astonished too, and they looked at one another. And Priam, entreating him, spoke these words:

24.486 "Remember your father, Achilles, you who are like the gods. He is as old as I am, on the grim threshold of old age. No doubt the neighbors who live around him are pressing him hard, and there is no one to keep harm and destruction away from him. Yet he, at least, rejoices in his heart when he hears that you are alive, and he hopes all his days to see his dear son coming home from Troy. But I am utterly ill-fated: I fathered the best sons in wide Troy, and of them, I tell you, not one is left. I had fifty when the sons of the Achaeans came. Nineteen were born to me from one womb, and the others were borne to me by women in my halls. 24.498 Furious Ares has loosed the knees of most of them. And the one I had who stood alone, who guarded the city and its people, you killed just lately as he fought for his country: Hector. It is for his sake that I come now to the ships of the Achaeans, to win him back from you, and I bring a bound-

less ransom. Respect the gods, Achilles, and pity me, remembering your own father. I am more pitiable still. I have endured what no other mortal on earth has yet endured: to bring to my mouth the hand of the man who killed my sons." So he spoke, and stirred in Achilles a longing to weep for his father. He took the old man by the hand and gently pushed him away.

24.509 The two of them remembered. Priam, huddled at Achilles' feet, wept without restraint for man-slaying Hector, while Achilles wept for his own father, and then again for Patroclus, and their groaning rose through the house. But when godlike Achilles had had his fill of weeping, and the longing for it had left his heart and his limbs, he rose at once from his chair and raised the old man by the hand, pitying his gray head and gray beard. And he spoke to him winged words: "Ah, poor man, you have truly endured many evils in your heart. How did you dare to come alone to the ships of the Achaeans, into the sight of the man who killed so many of your brave sons? Your heart must be made of iron.

24.522 But come, sit down on this chair. Let us leave our sorrows lying quiet in our hearts, grieving as we are, since nothing comes of chill lament. This is the lot the gods have spun for wretched mortals: to live in grief, while they themselves are free of care. Two jars stand on the floor of Zeus's house, holding the gifts he gives, one of evils and the other of blessings. When Zeus who delights in thunder gives a man a mixture, that man meets now with evil, now with good. But when he gives a man only from the grievous jar, he makes him an outcast. Cruel hunger drives him over the bright earth, and he wanders honored neither by gods nor by mortals. 24.534 So the gods gave splendid gifts to Peleus from his birth. He outshone all men in prosperity and wealth, he ruled over the Myrmidons, and mortal though he was, they gave him a goddess for a wife. But on him too the god laid evil: no line of sons was born to him in his halls to rule after him. He fathered one son, doomed to an untimely death, and I am not even looking after him as he grows old, since I sit here in Troy, far from my country, bringing grief to you and your chil-

dren. And you, old sir, we hear, were once prosperous. Of all the land that Lesbos, seat of Macar, bounds out to sea, and Phrygia inland, and the boundless Hellespont, they say you stood out, old sir, for your wealth and your sons.[5] 24.547 But since the sons of Heaven brought this sorrow on you, there have always been battles and the slaughter of men around your city. Bear up, and do not grieve endlessly in your heart. You will achieve nothing by grieving for your son, and you will not raise him up. Sooner you will suffer some other evil." Then the old man, godlike Priam, answered him: "Don't make me sit on a chair yet, you who are nurtured by Zeus, while Hector lies uncared for in the huts. Give him back quickly, so that I may see him with my own eyes, and accept the great ransom we bring you. May you have joy of it and come home to your own native land, since from the first you have let me live and look on the light of the sun."

24.559 Then, with a dark look, swift-footed Achilles said to him: "Don't provoke me any further now, old man. I mean to give Hector back to you myself. A messenger came to me from Zeus, my mother who bore me, the daughter of the old man of the sea. And I know in my mind, Priam, and it does not escape me, that one of the gods led you to the swift ships of the Achaeans. No mortal would dare come into the camp, not even one in the prime of youth. He could not slip past the guards, and he could not easily push back the bar of our gate. So don't stir my heart any further in its pains, old man, or I may not spare even you here in my huts, suppliant though you are, and so sin against the commands of Zeus."

24.571 So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and obeyed his word. The son of Peleus sprang out of the door of the house like a lion, and he did not go alone. Two attendants went with him, the warrior Automedon and Alcimus, whom Achilles honored most of his companions now that Patroclus was dead. They loosed the horses and mules from under the yoke, led in the old man's herald and crier, and sat him on a seat. From the well-polished wagon they lifted out the boundless ransom for Hector's

5 Macar was the legendary founder-king of Lesbos.

head. But they left two cloaks and a well-woven tunic, so that he could wrap the body in them and give it back to be carried home. 24.582 He called the women servants out and told them to carry the body aside and wash and anoint it, so that Priam would not see his son. He feared that Priam, seeing his child, might not hold back his anger in his grieving heart, and that his own heart would be roused, and he would kill him and sin against the commands of Zeus. When the women had washed him and anointed him with oil, and had put a fine cloak and a tunic around him, Achilles himself lifted him and laid him on a bier, and his companions helped him lift it onto the well-polished wagon. Then he groaned and called his dear companion by name: "Don't be angry with me, Patroclus, if you learn, even in the house of Hades, that I have given godlike Hector back to his dear father, since the ransom he gave me was not unworthy. I will give you your share of this too, as much as is fitting."

THE MEAL AND THE TRUCE

Achilles tells the story of Niobe, they eat together, and he grants a truce for the funeral.

24.596 He spoke, and godlike Achilles went back into the hut and sat down on the richly carved chair he had risen from, against the opposite wall, and said to Priam: "Your son has been given back to you, old sir, as you asked. He lies on a bier. At the first light of dawn you will see him yourself as you take him away. But now let us think of supper. Even lovely-haired Niobe thought of food, though her twelve children perished in her halls, six daughters and six sons in the prime of youth. Apollo killed the sons with his silver bow, angry with Niobe, and Artemis the archer killed the daughters, because Niobe had compared herself with fair-cheeked Leto. She said Leto had borne only two, while she herself had borne many. And those two, though they were only two, destroyed them all.

24.610 For nine days they lay in their blood, and there was no one to bury them, for the son of Cronus had turned the people to

stone. On the tenth day the heavenly gods buried them. And Niobe thought of food when she was worn out with weeping. Now, somewhere among the rocks in the lonely mountains, on Sipylus, where they say the goddess nymphs who dance beside the Achelous have their resting places, there, though she is stone, she broods over the sorrows the gods sent her. So come, noble old sir, let us two think of food as well. Afterward you can weep for your dear son again, when you have brought him into Ilium. He will cost you many tears."[6]

24.621 He spoke, and swift Achilles sprang up and slaughtered a white sheep. His companions skinned it and dressed it well and properly. They cut it skillfully into pieces, spitted them, roasted them carefully, and drew them all off the spits. Automedon took the bread and set it out on the table in fine baskets, and Achilles served the meat. They reached out their hands to the good things ready before them. But when they had put away the desire for drink and food, Priam son of Dardanus marveled at Achilles, at how tall and how handsome he was, for he looked like the gods face to face. And Achilles marveled at Priam son of Dardanus, looking at his noble face and listening to his words. When they had had their fill of gazing at one another, the old man, godlike Priam, spoke first:

24.635 "Let me lie down now as quickly as you can, you who are nurtured by Zeus, so that at last we may lie down and take our rest in sweet sleep. My eyes have not closed under my lids since my son lost his life at your hands. I have been groaning constantly and brooding over countless sorrows, rolling in the dung in the enclosures of my courtyard. Only now have I tasted food and let gleaming wine go down my throat. Before this I had tasted nothing." He spoke, and Achilles ordered his companions and the women servants to set beds in the portico, lay fine purple rugs on them, spread blankets over these, and put thick woolly cloaks on top for covering.

24.647 The women went out of the hall with torches in their hands, and in haste they quickly made up two beds. Then swift-

footed Achilles spoke to him teasingly: "Sleep outside, dear old man, in case one of the Achaean counselors comes in here. They are always sitting beside me and laying their plans, as is the custom. If one of them saw you in the swift black night, he would tell Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, at once, and the ransoming of the body might be delayed. But come, tell me this and tell it truly: how many days do you mean to spend on the funeral of godlike Hector, so that for that long I may hold back myself and keep the army back?"

24.659 Then the old man, godlike Priam, answered him: "If you are willing for me to give godlike Hector a full funeral, you would do me a kindness, Achilles, by acting like this. You know how we are penned inside the city, and the wood must be fetched from far off in the mountains, and the Trojans are very much afraid. For nine days we would mourn him in our halls. On the tenth we would bury him and the people would feast. On the eleventh we would heap a mound over him, and on the twelfth we will fight, if we must." Then swift-footed godlike Achilles answered him: "This too will be as you ask, old Priam. I will hold off the war for as long as you request."

24.671 So saying, he took the old man's right hand by the wrist, so that he would not be afraid in his heart. So they lay down there in the forecourt of the house, the herald and Priam, with shrewd counsels in their minds, while Achilles slept in the inner part of the well-built hut, and beside him lay fair-cheeked Briseis. The other gods and the men who fight from chariots slept all night long, overcome by soft sleep. But sleep did not take hold of Hermes the Helper, as he pondered in his heart how he could escort King Priam away from the ships unseen by the sacred gatekeepers. He stood above his head and spoke to him:

24.683 "Old sir, you give no thought to danger, sleeping on like this among enemy men, since Achilles has spared you. Now you have ransomed your dear son, and you gave a great deal. But the sons you left behind would have to give three times as much

6 Sipylus is a mountain in Lydia, where a rock was pointed out as the weeping Niobe; the Achelous here is a river of that region.

ransom for you alive, if Agamemnon son of Atreus should learn you are here, and all the Achaeans learn of it." So he spoke, and the old man was afraid and roused the herald. Hermes yoked the horses and mules for them and drove swiftly through the camp himself, and no one knew.

HECTOR'S FUNERAL

Andromache, Hecuba and Helen lament Hector, and the Trojans burn and bury him.

24.692 But when they came to the ford of the fair-flowing river, eddying Xanthus, whom immortal Zeus fathered, Hermes went away to high Olympus, and saffron-robed Dawn spread over all the earth. They drove the horses toward the city with wailing and groaning, and the mules carried the body. No one else among the men and the fair-belted women noticed them before she did. Cassandra, like golden Aphrodite, had climbed up to Pergamus, and she caught sight of her dear father standing in the chariot, and the herald, crier to the city. Then she saw him lying on the bier on the mule-wagon, and she shrieked and cried out through the whole city:[7]

24.704 "Come and see Hector, men and women of Troy, if ever you rejoiced when he came home alive from battle, since he was a great joy to the city and to all its people." So she spoke, and not a man or a woman was left there in the city, for unbearable grief had come over them all. Close by the gates they met the man bringing in the dead. His dear wife and his queenly mother were the first to tear their hair for him, rushing to the well-wheeled wagon and touching his head, and the crowd stood around weeping. And they would have spent the whole day, until the sun went down, weeping and mourning for Hector before the gates, if the old man had not spoken to the people from the chariot:

24.716 "Make way for me to get through with the mules. Afterward you can have your fill of weeping, once I have brought him

7 Pergamus is the citadel of Troy; Cassandra is a daughter of Priam.

home." So he spoke, and they stood apart and made way for the wagon. When they had brought him into the famous house, they laid him on a corded bed and set singers beside him to lead the dirge, and these sang the mournful song of lament, and the women groaned in answer. Among them white-armed Andromache began the lament, holding the head of man-slaying Hector in her hands:

24.725 "Husband, you have lost your life young, and you leave me a widow in the halls. Our son is still only a baby, the son you and I had, ill-fated as we are, and I do not think he will reach manhood. Before that, this city will be sacked from top to bottom, because you, its guardian, are dead, you who used to protect it and kept its faithful wives and little children safe. Soon they will be carried off in the hollow ships, and I with them. And you, my child, will either go with me, to some place where you will do degrading work, toiling for a harsh master, or some Achaean will seize you by the arm and hurl you from the tower to a grim death. He will be angry because Hector killed his brother, perhaps, or his father or his son, for very many Achaeans bit the vast earth at Hector's hands. 24.739 Your father was not gentle in grim battle, and that is why the people mourn him throughout the city. You have brought unspeakable grief and mourning on your parents, Hector, but bitter sorrows will be left behind for me most of all. You did not stretch out your hands to me from your bed as you died, or speak some close word to me that I could always remember, night and day, as I shed tears." So she spoke, weeping, and the women groaned in answer. Then Hecuba led the loud lament among them:

24.748 "Hector, by far the dearest to my heart of all my children, while you were alive you were dear to the gods, and they have cared for you even in death's portion. My other sons, whichever ones he captured, swift-footed Achilles would sell across the barren sea, to Samos, to Imbros, and to hazy Lemnos. But you, when he had taken your life with his long-edged bronze, he dragged many times around the mound of his companion Patroclus, whom you killed, and even so he did not raise him up. And

now you lie in my halls fresh as dew and newly dead, like one whom Apollo of the silver bow has come upon and killed with his gentle arrows." So she spoke, weeping, and stirred unending lament. Then Helen, third, led the lament among them:[8]

24.762 "Hector, by far the dearest to my heart of all my husband's brothers, my husband is godlike Alexander, who brought me to Troy. I wish I had died before that! This is now the twentieth year since I went from there and left my own country, but I have never yet heard an unkind or spiteful word from you. If anyone else in the halls reproached me, one of my husband's brothers or sisters, or a brother's well-robed wife, or my mother-in-law (my father-in-law was always as gentle as a father), you would talk them out of it and hold them back with your gentleness and your gentle words. So I weep for you and for my unlucky self, grieving at heart. There is no one else in broad Troy who is kind to me or a friend. They all shudder at me."

24.776 So she spoke, weeping, and the countless people groaned in answer. And the old man Priam spoke to the people: "Now, Trojans, bring wood into the city, and don't be afraid in your hearts of any cunning ambush of the Argives. When Achilles sent me back from the black ships, he gave me his word that they would do us no harm until the twelfth dawn comes." So he spoke, and they yoked oxen and mules to wagons and quickly gathered before the city. For nine days they brought in vast amounts of wood. But when the tenth dawn appeared, bringing light to mortals, they carried out bold Hector, shedding tears, laid the body on top of the pyre, and set it alight.

24.788 When early-born Dawn appeared, rosy-fingered, the people gathered around the pyre of glorious Hector. When they had assembled and were all together, they first quenched the pyre with gleaming wine, as far as the fury of the fire had reached. Then his brothers and companions gathered up the white bones, mourning, and big tears ran down their cheeks. They took the bones and placed them in a golden chest, wrap-

8 A sudden, painless death was attributed to the "gentle arrows" of Apollo for men, or of Artemis for women.

ping them in soft purple robes, and quickly laid it in a hollow grave and covered it over with large close-set stones. Swiftly they heaped up the mound, and watchmen sat all around it, in case the well-greaved Achaeans attacked before the time. When they had heaped up the mound they went back. Then they gathered properly and feasted a glorious feast in the house of Priam, the king nurtured by Zeus. So they held the funeral of horse-taming Hector.