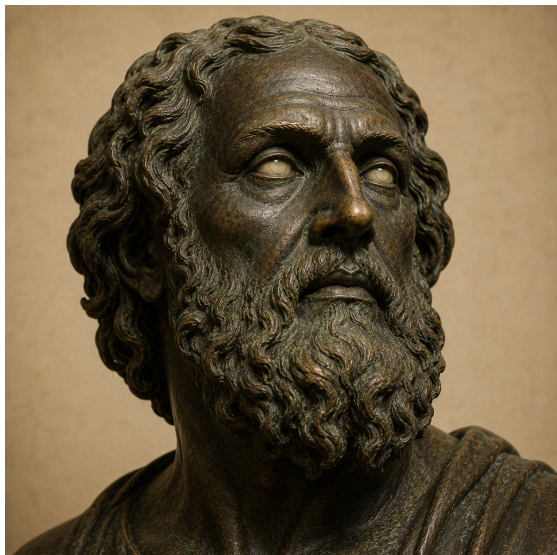




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Homer

The Epics

THE ILIAD AND THE ODYSSEY

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Iliad and the Odyssey are selective poems, not complete chronicles of the Trojan War or of Odysseus' travels. The Iliad takes up a crisis in the war's tenth year and traces the wrath of Achilles and its consequences. The Odyssey begins when its hero's return is almost accomplished. Both poems inhabit a shared story-world in which recollection, allusion and expectation are themselves forms of action. Troy's fall, Achilles' death, Agamemnon's murder and the returns of other leaders are everywhere present, though they occur beyond the poems' immediate action.

Modern habits can make it tempting to imagine a single author writing a finished book, and to seek a recoverable life or intention behind it. The poems instead emerge from a tradition of singing older than any surviving text. Their production, transmission and early reception cannot be fully reconstructed. Yet a long, mobile tradition and two exceptionally coherent poetic architectures need not be opposed. This volume provides historical, poetic and material points of reference, followed by notices for the individual poems. These are guides to reading, not substitutes for the poems themselves; they identify the forces at work, the principal textual questions and some of Homer's most concentrated inventions.

The translations by A. T. Murray retain the dignified, deliberately archaic character of the early twentieth-century Loeb editions. The Greek text that follows each epic, that of Monro and Allen, is supplied as a reference text rather than as a new critical edition.

HOMER: NAME, TRADITION, PERFORMANCE

“Homer” is the Greek collective name attached to the Iliad and the Odyssey. The ancient Lives offer competing birthplaces, blindness, travels and exemplary encounters. They reveal the need for a founding figure, not a biography. No secure biographical information survives.

The received forms of the poems belong to the archaic Greek world, probably to the late eighth or early seventh century BCE, although their formation and their differences remain matters of debate. Homeric Greek was no city’s everyday speech. It combines chiefly Ionic and Aeolic forms with archaisms and the requirements of dactylic hexameter. This artificial, traditional and highly specialised language made composition in rhythm possible. Groups such as a name and its epithet are metrical formulae, not merely repeated ornament. Repetition is at once a compositional resource, an act of memory and a source of meaning.

The work of Milman Parry and Albert Lord established that oral poetry depends on mastery of a language, themes and sequences through which a singer can compose in performance. It does not follow that every verse was improvised, or that the poems lack large-scale design. Oral resources and rigorous poetic organisation coexist in the received epics. The Homeric Question concerns the relations among tradition, composition, performance, diffusion and writing. Scholarly models allow these relations to have continued long after a first textualisation. The question helps to account for repetition, variation and tension, but it need not prevent close attention to scene, voice and expectation.

THE TWO EPICS: CHOOSING A MOMENT, OPENING A WORLD

The Iliad covers roughly fifty days in the final year of the war; its first word, “wrath”, governs its composition. When Agamemnon takes Briseis, Achilles’ anger divides the Achaean army. Patroclus then dies in Achilles’ armour, Achilles returns to battle and kills Hector, and finally gives Hector’s body back to Priam. A quarrel over honour becomes a collective catastrophe and a question about a life destined for early death.

The Odyssey concerns a homecoming of which almost everything remains to be done: a man must again become recognisable in his own house. Odysseus’ absence structures the poem. Telemachus seeks his father, Penelope administers an invaded household, the suitors consume its wealth, and Odysseus’ central narrative reconstructs his wanderings. His return entails disguise, testing and recognition, followed by violence that restores domestic order but leaves difficult questions behind.

The poems answer one another. The Iliad ends before Troy falls; the Odyssey begins after the war. One explores the mortal cost of martial glory; the other follows a survivor seeking home, a marriage bed and the continuity of a household. The contrast should not be made too neat. The Iliad contains care, women’s speech, meals, fathers and children; the Odyssey retains war memory, weapons and the threat of violence. Each poem clarifies the other by changing the scale of value.

THE HEROIC WORLD AND ITS TENSIONS

Homer's world is heroic, not modern-historical. Its heroes live in a grander past, use ancient objects, lead vast expeditions and converse with gods. At the same time, the imagined world draws upon the societies that transmitted the poems: assemblies and councils, gifts, domestic work, farming, seafaring, slavery and hospitality. It is not a photograph of Mycenae or of any single Greece, but a poetic memory joining different times.

Honour, timē, is visible social standing: a share of booty, a seat, a voice that is heard, a gift and the recognition of one's peers. Glory, kleos, is the endurance conferred by song beyond death. Achilles' quarrel is therefore not a simple property dispute. The loss of his prize calls his entire Achaean standing into question. Mortality sets a limit even to honour and glory. Gods are blessed because they do not die; mortals lose others and are themselves lost.

The gods are not simply cruel. Zeus weighs fates, Athena advises, Apollo strikes and Poseidon delays, while human beings deliberate, speak, err and bear consequences. There is no single Homeric doctrine of fate: necessity, choice and chance are interwoven from scene to scene. In the Odyssey, hospitality, xenia, requires that a stranger be welcomed and fed before questioning, and be given a gift and safe passage. It recognises shared vulnerability; Cyclopes, suitors and defective hosts are judged against it. The Iliad offers a related institution in supplication. Priam at Achilles' knees does not undo war or murder, but recalls Achilles to the thought of his own father.

Epic proceeds through scenes: assemblies, supplications, meals, aristeiai, recognitions, messenger narratives and ship departures. Such forms return with variation. A reception, an arming or a lament changes according to the actor, the speaker and the losses already suffered. Repetition gives events a memorial contour; it is not mere delay.

Direct speech stages argument, anger, prudence, calculation, cunning and fear. Extended similes bring shepherds, working women, storms, fires and animals into the field of war, exposing ordinary life to the violence measured there. The gods are dramatic persons rather than mechanical causes. Their councils, rivalries and interventions show the limits of human action, and may create comedy or irony without cancelling earthly horror. Homer moves abruptly from bloody combat to a smile, or from a joke to a supplication, without reducing either term.

TEXTS, SCHOLIA, EDITIONS

Printed Homer is the endpoint of a long history of performance, writing and varied ancient papyri. The Alexandrian scholars Zenodotus, Aristophanes of Byzantium and, above all, Aristarchus collated, commented upon and marked verses they considered doubtful. Their original work is lost, but part of its debates survives in the scholia. The tenth-century Venetus A manuscript of the Iliad is a major witness with extensive scholia, not a recovered original. Its importance lies in the conjunction of text and critical tradition.

Medieval manuscripts, papyri, quotations and ancient commentary require editors to choose among readings, mark uncertainty and distinguish successive textual traditions. The Monro–Allen text reproduced here is an older public-domain reference text and provides continuous Greek after the English translation. It does not replace recent critical editions or their apparatuses. For variants, suspected interpolations and scholia, readers may consult especially M. L. West and the Homer Multitext project.

NOTE ON THE ENGLISH TEXT

The reproduced translations are A. T. Murray's Iliad (1924) and Odyssey (1919), published in the Loeb Classical Library and now in the public domain. Their dignified early twentieth-century prose, including archaic forms such as thou and thee and their transliteration of names, belongs to the historical character of the translations. They are reproduced without modernisation, apart from the limited typographic adjustments required for this edition.

NOTE ON THE GREEK TEXT

The Greek following each epic is a documentary reference text without critical apparatus. It reproduces the public-domain Monro–Allen Homeri Opera through the Perseus TEI encoding, and follows that edition's numbering. Its proximity to the English translation neither claims that the English translation was made from this text nor implies agreement among modern editions.

EDITORIAL PRINCIPLES

Each epic is preceded by a developed notice on its narrative frame, composition, characters, themes and particular textual difficulties. Divisions by song are marked with subheadings; a work of this scale cannot receive line-by-line commentary here. The notices offer routes through the poems and points of orientation, not a substitute for a critical apparatus.

CHRONOLOGY AND LANDMARKS

The Bronze Age supplies the remote memory of Troy and the Mycenaean palaces, reworked by epic. In the eighth and seventh centuries BCE, the received forms of the Iliad and Odyssey were shaped in oral and written tradition. From the sixth to the second centuries BCE, the poems circulated across the Greek world, were performed by rhapsodes and received Alexandrian philological attention. The tenth century CE produced the Venetus A, a principal medieval witness to the Iliad and its scholia. The nineteenth through twenty-first centuries have brought critical editions, the study of orality and digital resources for manuscripts and papyri.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

For texts and transmission, see Monro and Allen, West's Ilias and Odyssea, Nagy's Homeric Questions, and the Homer Multitext. For orality and poetics, see Parry, Lord, Foley and de Jong.

For reading the poems, see Griffin, Richardson, Murnaghan and Vidal-Naquet.

THE ILIAD

Ἰλιάς

NOTICE

ILIAD

REFERENCE FACTS

Greek title: Ilias (Ιλιάς). The action covers several weeks in the tenth year of the siege of Troy. The text has a complex manuscript and papyrological tradition; the Greek printed after the poem is that of Monro and Allen. The English translation is A. T. Murray's public-domain Loeb Iliad of 1924.

A WAR SEIZED BY WRATH

The poem begins neither with the Achaean departure nor with Troy's fall. The war is already under way before the walls of Troy when Agamemnon takes Briseis, Achilles' honour-prize and visible proof of his worth. Achilles asks his mother Thetis to obtain Trojan success from Zeus, so that the Achaeans may learn the cost of humiliating him. The opening crisis is both private and political: possession of a captive concerns the order of allotment, the hierarchy of leaders and the possibility that the army can remain one body.

Thetis' prayer at the end of Book 1 governs the whole design. Achaean defeats expose Achilles' absence. Patroclus' intervention attempts to repair that absence, but his death changes the conflict

into mourning. Achilles' return exceeds his first purpose in its violence, until Priam compels the victor to confront a father's pain. Wrath reshapes every relation and moves the poem, step by step, towards its final act of supplication.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE BOOKS

The early books establish the crisis and Achilles' withdrawal. A divine assembly and Zeus' deceptive dream for Agamemnon lead to the Catalogue of Ships in Book 2. The catalogue gives the Greek army the depth of a whole world, and measures the danger caused by one man's wrath; it is not a clumsy pause. The duel of Menelaus and Paris, and the combat that follows, defeat hopes of an easy settlement.

Books 5–15 alternate aristeiai with human and divine deliberation. Diomedes, Hector, Ajax, Odysseus, the Trojan leaders and the gods speak in distinct voices and understand danger differently. In Book 9 Agamemnon sends Odysseus, Phoenix and Ajax to Achilles; each offers persuasion of a different kind. Achilles refuses not from whim, but because compensation does not answer the injury done to him.

Patroclus is the narrative pivot. In Book 16 he fights in Achilles' armour, drives back the Trojans and crosses the limit Achilles had set. Zeus, Apollo, Euphorbus and Hector together prepare and bring about his death. Achilles' honour can no longer be separated from the fate of others. Books 17–22 bring his return: new armour, a precarious reconciliation with Agamemnon, the slaughter by Scamander and the duel with Hector. Victory remains un-

resolved. Achilles abuses his enemy's body and remains captive to grief.

Book 24 provides the epic's true ending. Priam enters the Achaean camp at night, clasps Achilles' knees and invokes Peleus. The enemies weep together; Patroclus, Hector, Peleus and absent sons create a provisional community of mourning. The poem does not end the war. Against it, it sets the time required for burial and the mortality shared by both sides.

ACHILLES, HECTOR, PRIAM

Achilles is a hero of alternatives, not simply of superior strength. Thetis tells him that he may choose a long life without glory or an early death with imperishable glory. He is neither a model nor a simple fault: his demand for dignity becomes a murderous refusal, while his love for Patroclus brings the would-be retiree back to battle. His greatness is inseparable from excess.

Hector is the indispensable counterpoint. He fights for a city, a family and a future under threat. His scene with Andromache and Astyanax in Book 6 presents him as husband, father and Troy's defender. Yet he is not merely a victim. He makes errors, chooses, hopes too much and draws others into the consequences of his decisions. Priam steps outside the rivalry of warriors. By retrieving his son's body through an almost unthinkable act, he gives Achilles a brief release from the logic of revenge.

HOW TO READ THE ILIAD

The Iliad does not seek ceaseless acceleration. Its apparent slowness creates tension. Lists of fighters, genealogies, embedded tales, meals and councils make the extent of war weigh upon each individual fight. The similes deserve equal attention: lions, felled trees and wool-working women alter the scale of reality, and measure violence by what it destroys beyond the battlefield.

Useful thresholds include the failed embassy of Book 9, Patroclus' death in Book 16, Achilles' recognition of his new arms in Book 19, the duel with Hector in Book 22, and the meeting of Priam and Achilles in Book 24. These do not form a simple psychological itinerary. They turn the desire for glory into loss, then restore speech and funeral rite against a war that nearly abolishes both.

BOOK I

The wrath sing, goddess, of Peleus' son, Achilles, that destructive wrath which brought countless woes upon the Achaeans, and sent forth to Hades many valiant souls of heroes, and made them themselves spoil for dogs and every bird; thus the plan of Zeus came to fulfillment, from the time when first they parted in strife Atreus' son, king of men, and brilliant Achilles. Who then of the gods was it that brought these two together to contend? The son of Leto and Zeus; for he in anger against the king roused throughout the host an evil pestilence, and the people began to perish, because upon the priest Chryses the son of Atreus had wrought dishonour. For he had come to the swift ships of the Achaeans to free his daughter, bearing ransom past counting; and in his hands he held the wreaths of Apollo who strikes from afar, on a staff of gold; and he implored all the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus, the marshallers of the people:

CHRYSES - Sons of Atreus, and other well-greaved Achaeans, to you may the gods who have homes upon Olympus grant that you sack the city of Priam, and return safe to your homes; but my dear child release to me, and accept the ransom out of reverence for the son of Zeus, Apollo who strikes from afar.

Then all the rest of the Achaeans shouted assent, to reverence the priest and accept the glorious ransom, yet the thing did not please the heart of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, but he sent him away harshly, and laid upon him a stern command:

AGAMEMNON - Let me not find you, old man, by the hollow ships, either tarrying now or coming back later, lest your staff

and the wreath of the god not protect you. Her I will not set free. Sooner shall old age come upon her in our house, in Argos, far from her native land, as she walks to and fro before the loom and serves my bed. But go, do not anger me, that you may return the safer.

So he spoke, and the old man was seized with fear and obeyed his word. He went forth in silence along the shore of the loud-resounding sea, and earnestly then, when he had gone apart, the old man prayed to the lord Apollo, whom fair-haired Leto bore:

CHRYSES - Hear me, god of the silver bow, who stand over Chryse and holy Cilla, and rule mightily over Tenedos, Sminthian god, if ever I roofed over a temple to your pleasing, or if ever I burned to you fat thigh-pieces of bulls and goats, fulfill this prayer for me: let the Danaans pay for my tears by your arrows

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him. Down from the peaks of Olympus he strode, angered at heart, bearing on his shoulders his bow and covered quiver. The arrows rattled on the shoulders of the angry god as he moved, and his coming was like the night. Then he sat down apart from the ships and let fly an arrow: terrible was the twang of the silver bow. The mules he assailed first and the swift dogs, but then on the men themselves he let fly his stinging shafts, and struck; and constantly the pyres of the dead burned thick. For nine days the missiles of the god ranged among the host, but on the tenth Achilles called the people to assembly, for the goddess, white-armed Hera, had put it in his heart, since she pitied the Danaans, when she saw them

dying. When they were assembled and gathered together, among them arose and spoke swift-footed Achilles:

ACHILLES - Son of Atreus, now I think we shall return home, beaten back again, should we even escape death, if war and pestilence alike are to ravage the Achaeans. But come, let us ask some seer or priest, or some reader of dreams—for a dream too is from Zeus—who might say why Phoebus Apollo is so angry, whether he finds fault with a vow or a hecatomb; in hope that he may accept the savour of lambs and unblemished goats, and be willing to ward off the pestilence from us.

When he had thus spoken he sat down, and among them arose Calchas son of Thestor, far the best of bird-diviners, who knew the things that were, and that were to be, and that had been before, and who had guided the ships of the Achaeans to Ilios by his own prophetic powers which Phoebus Apollo had bestowed upon him. He with good intent addressed the gathering, and spoke among them:

CALCHAS - Achilles, dear to Zeus, you bid me declare the wrath of Apollo, the lord who strikes from afar. Therefore I will speak; but take thought and swear that you will readily defend me with word and with might of hand; for I think I shall anger a man who rules mightily over all the Argives, and whom the Achaeans obey. For mightier is a king, when he is angry at a lesser man. Even if he swallows down his wrath for that day, yet afterwards he cherishes resentment in his heart till he brings it to fulfillment. Say then, if you will keep me safe.

In answer to him spoke swift-footed Achilles:

ACHILLES - Take heart, and speak out whatever oracle you know; for by Apollo, dear to Zeus, to whom you, Calchas, pray when you reveal oracles to the Danaans, no one, while I live and have sight on the earth, shall lay heavy hands on you beside the hollow ships, no one of the whole host of the Danaans, not even if you name Agamemnon, who now claims to be far the best of the Achaeans.

Then the blameless seer took heart, and spoke:

CALCHAS - It is not then because of a vow that he finds fault, nor because of a hecatomb, but because of the priest whom Agamemnon dishonoured, and did not release his daughter nor accept the ransom. For this cause the god who strikes from afar has given woes and will still give them. He will not drive off from the Danaans the loathsome pestilence, until we give back to her dear father the bright-eyed maiden, unbought, unransomed, and lead a sacred hecatomb to Chryse. Then we might appease and persuade him.

When he had thus spoken he sat down, and among them arose the warrior, son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon, deeply troubled. With rage his black heart was wholly filled, and his eyes were like blazing fire. To Calchas first of all he spoke, and his look threatened evil:

AGAMEMNON - Prophet of evil, never yet have you spoken to me a pleasant thing; ever is evil dear to your heart to prophesy, but a word of good you have never yet spoken, nor brought to pass. And now among the Danaans you claim in prophecy that for this reason the god who strikes from afar brings woes upon them, that I would not accept the glorious ransom for the girl, the daughter of Chryses, since I much

prefer to keep her in my home. For certainly I prefer her to Clytemnestra, my wedded wife, since she is not inferior to her, either in form or in stature, or in mind, or in any handiwork. Yet even so will I give her back, if that is better; I would rather the people be safe than perish. But provide me with a prize of honour forthwith, lest I alone of the Argives be without one, since that would not be proper. For you all see this, that my prize goes elsewhere.

In answer to him spoke swift-footed brilliant Achilles:

ACHILLES - Most glorious son of Atreus, most covetous of all, how shall the great-hearted Achaeans give you a prize? We know nothing of a hoard of wealth in common store, but whatever we took by pillage from the cities has been apportioned, and it is not seemly to gather these things back from the army. But give back the girl to the god, and we Achaeans will recompense you three and fourfold, if ever Zeus grants us to sack the well-walled city of Troy.

In answer to him spoke lord Agamemnon:

AGAMEMNON - Do not thus, mighty though you are, god-like Achilles, seek to deceive me with your wit; for you will not get by me nor persuade me. Are you willing, so that your yourself may keep your prize, for me to sit here idly in want, while you order me to give her back? No, if the great-hearted Achaeans give me a prize, suiting it to my mind, so that it will be worth just as much—but if they do not, I myself will come and take your prize, or that of Aias, or that of Odysseus I will seize and bear away. Angry will he be, to whomever I come. But these things we will consider hereafter. Let us now drag a black ship to the shining sea, and quickly gather suitable

rowers into it, and place on board a hecatomb, and embark on it the fair-cheeked daughter of Chryses herself. Let one prudent man be its commander, either Aias, or Idomeneus, or brilliant Odysseus, or you, son of Peleus, of all men most extreme, so that on our behalf you may propitiate the god who strikes from afar by offering sacrifice.

Glaring from beneath his brows spoke to him swift-footed Achilles:

ACHILLES - Ah me, clothed in shamelessness, thinking of profit, how shall any man of the Achaeans obey your words with a ready heart either to go on a journey or to fight against men with force? It was not on account of the Trojan spearmen that I came here to fight, since they have done no wrong to me. Never have they driven off my cattle or my horses, nor ever in deep-soiled Phthia, nurse of men, did they lay waste the harvest, for many things lie between us—shadowy mountains and sounding sea. But you, shameless one, we followed, so that you might rejoice, seeking to win recompense for Menelaus and for yourself, dog-face, from the Trojans. This you disregard, and take no heed of. And now you threaten that you will yourself take my prize away from me, for which I toiled so much, which the sons of the Achaeans gave to me. Never have I prize like yours, whenever the Achaeans sack a well-inhabited citadel of the Trojans. The brunt of furious battle do my hands undertake, but if ever an apportionment comes, your prize is far greater, while small but dear is the reward I take to my ships, when I have worn myself out in the fighting. Now I will go back to Phthia, since it is far better to

return home with my beaked ships, nor do I intend while I am here dishonoured to pile up riches and wealth for you.

Then the king of men, Agamemnon, answered him:

AGAMEMNON - Flee then, if your heart urges you; I do not beg you to remain for my sake. With me are others who will honour me, and above all Zeus, the lord of counsel. Most hateful to me are you of all the kings that Zeus nurtures, for always strife is dear to you, and wars and battles. If you are very strong, it was a god, I think, who gave you this gift. Go home with your ships and your companions and lord it over the Myrmidons; for you I care not, nor take heed of your wrath. But I will threaten you thus: as Phoebus Apollo takes from me the daughter of Chryses, her with my ship and my companions I will send back, but I will myself come to your tent and take the fair-cheeked Briseis, your prize, so that you will understand how much mightier I am than you, and another may shrink from declaring himself my equal and likening himself to me to my face.

So he spoke. Grief came upon the son of Peleus, and within his shaggy breast his heart was divided, whether he should draw his sharp sword from beside his thigh, and break up the assembly, and slay the son of Atreus, or stay his anger and curb his spirit. While he pondered this in mind and heart, and was drawing from its sheath his great sword, Athene came from heaven. The white-armed goddess Hera had sent her forth, for in her heart she loved and cared for both men alike. She stood behind him, and seized the son of Peleus by his fair hair, appearing to him alone. No one of the others saw her. Achilles was seized with wonder, and turned around,

and immediately recognized Pallas Athene. Terribly her eyes shone. Then he addressed her with winged words, and said:

ACHILLES - Why now, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, have you come? Is it so that you might see the arrogance of Agamemnon, son of Atreus? One thing I will tell you, and I think this will be brought to pass: through his own excessive pride shall he presently lose his life.

Him then the goddess, bright-eyed Athene, answered:

ATHENA - I have come from heaven to stay your anger, if you will obey, The goddess white-armed Hera sent me forth, for in her heart she loves and cares for both of you. But come, cease from strife, and do not grasp the sword with your hand. With words indeed taunt him, telling him how it shall be. For thus will I speak, and this thing shall truly be brought to pass. Hereafter three times as many glorious gifts shall be yours on account of this arrogance. But refrain, and obey us.

In answer to her spoke swift-footed Achilles:

ACHILLES - It is necessary, goddess, to observe the words of you two, however angered a man be in his heart, for is it better so. Whoever obeys the gods, to him do they gladly give ear.

He spoke, and stayed his heavy hand on the silver hilt, and back into its sheath thrust the great sword, and did not disobey the word of Athene. She returned to Olympus to the palace of aegis-bearing Zeus, to join the company of the other gods. But the son of Peleus again addressed with violent words the son of Atreus, and in no way ceased from his wrath:

ACHILLES - Heavy with wine, with the face of a dog but the heart of a deer, never have you had courage to arm for

battle along with your people, or go forth to an ambush with the chiefs of the Achaeans. That seems to you even as death. Indeed it is far better throughout the wide camp of the Achaeans to deprive of his prize whoever speaks contrary to you. People-devouring king, since you rule over nobodies; else, son of Atreus, this would be your last piece of insolence. But I will speak out to you, and will swear thereto a mighty oath: by this staff, that shall never more put forth leaves or shoots since first it left its stump among the mountains, nor shall it again grow green, for the bronze has stripped it on all sides of leaves and bark, and now the sons of the Achaeans carry it in their hands when they act as judges, those who guard the ordinances that come from Zeus; and this shall be for you a mighty oath. Surely some day a longing for Achilles will come upon the sons of the Achaeans one and all, and on that day you will not be able to help them at all, for all your grief, when many shall fall dying before man-slaying Hector. But you will gnaw the heart within you, in anger that you did no honour to the best of the Achaeans.

So spoke the son of Peleus, and down to the earth he dashed the staff studded with golden nails, and himself sat down, while over against him the son of Atreus continued to vent his wrath. Then among them arose Nestor, sweet of speech, the clear-voiced orator of the Pylians, from whose tongue flowed speech sweeter than honey. Two generations of mortal men had passed away in his lifetime, who had been born and reared with him before in sacred Pylos, and he was king among the third. He with good intent addressed the gathering and spoke among them:

NESTOR - Comrades, great grief has come upon the land of Achaea. Truly would Priam and the sons of Priam rejoice, and the rest of the Trojans would be most glad at heart, were they to hear all this of you two quarrelling, you who are chief among the Danaans in counsel and chief in war. Listen to me, for you are both younger than I. In earlier times I moved among men more warlike than you, and never did they despise me. Such warriors have I never since seen, nor shall I see, as Peirithous was and Dryas, shepherd of the people, and Caeneus and Exadius and godlike Polyphemus, and Theseus, son of Aegeus, a man like the immortals. Mightiest were these of men reared upon the earth; mightiest were they, and with the mightiest they fought, the mountain-dwelling centaurs, and they destroyed them terribly. With these men I had fellowship, when I came from Pylos, from a distant land far away; for they themselves called me. And I fought on my own; with those men could no one fight of the mortals now upon the earth. Yes, and they listened to my counsel, and obeyed my words. So also should you obey, since to obey is better. Neither do you, mighty though you are, take away the girl, but let her be, as the sons of the Achaeans first gave her to him as a prize; nor do you, son of Peleus, be minded to strive with a king, might against might, for it is no common honour that is the portion of a sceptre-holding king, to whom Zeus gives glory. If you are a stronger fighter, and a goddess mother bore you, yet he is the mightier, since he is king over more. Son of Atreus, check your rage. Indeed, I beg you to let go your anger against Achilles, who is for all the Achaeans a mighty bulwark in evil war.

In answer to him spoke lord Agamemnon:

AGAMEMNON - All these things, old man, to be sure, you have spoken as is right. But this man wishes to be above all others; over all he wishes to rule and over all to be king, and to all to give orders; in this, I think, there is someone who will not obey. If the gods who exist for ever made him a spearman, do they therefore license him to keep uttering insults?

Brilliant Achilles broke in upon him and replied:

ACHILLES - Surely I would be called cowardly and of no account, if I am to yield to you in every matter that you say. On others lay these commands, but do not give orders to me, for I do not think I shall obey you any longer. And another thing I will tell you, and take it to heart: with my hands I will not fight for the girl's sake either with you nor with any other, since you are taking away what you have given. But of all else that is mine by my swift black ship, nothing will you take or carry away against my will. Come, just try, so that these too may know: forthwith will your dark blood flow forth about my spear.

So when the two had made an end of contending with violent words, they rose, and broke up the gathering beside the ships of the Achaeans. The son of Peleus went his way to his huts and his balanced ships together with the son of Menoetius, and with his men; but the son of Atreus launched a swift ship on the sea, and chose for it twenty rowers, and drove on board a hecatomb for the god, and brought the fair-cheeked daughter of Chryses and set her in the ship; and Odysseus of many wiles went on board to take command.

So these embarked and sailed over the watery ways; but the son of Atreus bade the people purify themselves. And they

purified themselves, and cast the defilement into the sea, and offered to Apollo perfect hecatombs of bulls and goats by the shore of the barren sea; and the savour thereof went up to heaven, eddying amid the smoke. Thus were they busied throughout the camp; but Agamemnon did not cease from the strife with which he had first threatened Achilles, but called to Talthibius and Eurybates, who were his heralds and ready squires:

AGAMEMNON - Go to the hut of Achilles, Peleus' son, and take by the hand the fair-cheeked Briseis, and lead her hither; and if he give her not, I will myself go with a larger company and take her; that will be even the worse for him.

So saying he sent them forth, and laid upon them a stern command. Unwilling went the two along the shore of the barren sea, and came to the tents and the ships of the Myrmidons. Him they found sitting beside his tent and his black ship; and Achilles was not glad at sight of them. The two, seized with dread and in awe of the king, stood, and spoke no word to him, nor made question; but he knew in his heart, and spoke:

ACHILLES - Hail, heralds, messengers of Zeus and men, draw near. It is not you who are guilty in my sight, but Agamemnon, who sent you forth for the sake of the girl, Briseis. But come, Patroclus, sprung from Zeus, bring forth the girl, and give her to them to lead away. However, let these two themselves be witnesses before the blessed gods and mortal men, and before him, that ruthless king, if hereafter there shall be need of me to ward off shameful ruin from the host. Truly he rages with baneful mind, and knows not at all to

look both before and after, that his Achaeans might wage war in safety beside their ships.

So he spoke, and Patroclus obeyed his dear comrade, and led forth from the hut the fair-cheeked Briseis, and gave her to them to lead away. So the two went back beside the ships of the Achaeans, and with them, all unwilling, went the woman. But Achilles burst into tears, and withdrew apart from his comrades, and sat down on the shore of the grey sea, looking forth over the wine-dark deep. Earnestly he prayed to his dear mother with hands outstretched:

ACHILLES - Mother, since you bore me, though to so brief a span of life, honour surely ought the Olympian to have given into my hands, Zeus who thunders on high; but now he has honoured me not a bit. Truly the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon has dishonoured me: for he has taken and keeps my prize through his own arrogant act.

So he spoke, weeping, and his lady mother heard him, as she sat in the depths of the sea beside the old man, her father. And speedily she came forth from the grey sea like a mist, and sat down before him, as he wept, and she stroked him with her hand, and spoke to him, and called him by name:

THETIS - My child, why do you weep? What sorrow has come upon your heart? Speak out; hide it not in your mind, that we both may know.

Then with heavy moaning spoke swift-footed Achilles to her:

ACHILLES - You know. Why then should I tell the tale to you who knows all? We went forth to Thebe, the sacred city of Eetion, and laid it waste, and brought here all the spoil. This the sons of the Achaeans divided properly among themselves,

but for the son of Atreus they chose out the fair-cheeked daughter of Chryses. However, Chryses, priest of Apollo, who strikes from afar, came to the swift ships of the bronze-clad Achaeans, to free his daughter, bearing ransom past counting, and in his hands he held the wreaths of Apollo who strikes from afar, on a staff of gold, and he implored all the Achaeans, but most of all the two sons of Atreus, marshallers of the people. Then all the rest of the Achaeans shouted assent, to reverence the priest and accept the glorious ransom; yet the thing did not please the heart of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, but he sent him away harshly, and laid upon him a stern command. So the old man went back again in anger; and Apollo heard his prayer, for he was very dear to him, and sent against the Argives an evil shaft. Then the people began to die thick and fast, and the shafts of the god ranged everywhere throughout the wide camp of the Achaeans. But to us the prophet with sure knowledge declared the oracles of the god who strikes from afar.

Forthwith, then, I first bade propitiate the god, but thereafter anger seized the son of Atreus, and straightway he arose and spoke a threatening word, which now has come to pass. For the quick-glancing Achaeans are taking the maiden in a swift ship to Chryse, and are bearing gifts to the god; while the other woman the heralds have just now taken from my tent and led away, the daughter of Briseus, whom the sons of the Achaeans gave me. But, you, if you are able, guard your own son; go to Olympus and make prayer to Zeus, if ever you have gladdened his heart by word or deed. For often I have heard you glorying in the halls of my father, and declaring that you alone among the immortals warded off shameful ruin from

the son of Cronos, lord of the dark clouds, on the day when the other Olympians wished to put him in bonds, even Hera and Poseidon and Pallas Athene. But you came, goddess, and freed him from his bonds, when you had quickly called to high Olympus him of the hundred hands, whom the gods call Briareus, but all men Aegaeon; for he is mightier than his father. He sat down by the side of the son of Cronos, exulting in his glory, and the blessed gods were seized with fear of him, and did not bind Zeus. Bring this now to his remembrance, and sit by his side, and clasp his knees, in hope that he might perhaps wish to succour the Trojans, and for those others, the Achaeans, to pen them in among the sterns of their ships and around the sea as they are slain, so that they may all have profit of their king, and that the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon may know his blindness in that he did no honour to the best of the Achaeans.

Then Thetis answered him as she wept:

THETIS - Ah me, my child, why did I rear you, cursed in my child-bearing? Would that it had been your lot to remain by your ships without tears and without grief, since your span of life is brief and endures no long time; but now you are doomed to a speedy death and are laden with sorrow above all men; therefore to an evil fate I bore you in our halls. Yet in order to tell this your word to Zeus who delights in the thunderbolt I will myself go to snowy Olympus, in hope that he may be persuaded. But remain by your swift, sea-faring ships, and continue your wrath against the Achaeans, and refrain utterly from battle; for Zeus went yesterday to Oceanus, to the blameless Ethiopians for a feast, and all the gods followed

with him; but on the twelfth day he will come back again to Olympus, and then will I go to the house of Zeus with threshold of bronze, and will clasp his knees in prayer, and I think I shall win him.

So saying, she went her way and left him where he was, angry at heart for the fair-girdled woman's sake, whom they had taken from him by force though he was unwilling; and meanwhile Odysseus came to Chryse bringing the holy hecatomb. When they had arrived within the deep harbour, they furled the sail, and stowed it in the black ship, and the mast they lowered by the forestays and brought it to the crutch with speed, and rowed her with oars to the place of anchorage. Then they cast out the mooring-stones and made fast the stern cables, and themselves went forth upon the shore of the sea. They brought forth the hecatomb for Apollo, who strikes from afar, and forth stepped also the daughter of Chryses from the sea-faring ship. Her then did Odysseus of many wiles lead to the altar, and place in the arms of her dear father, saying to him:

ODYSSEUS - Chryses, Agamemnon, king of men, sent me forth to bring to you your daughter, and to offer to Phoebus a holy hecatomb on the Danaans' behalf, that therewith we may propitiate the lord, who has now brought upon the Argives woeful lamentation.

So saying he placed her in his arms, and he joyfully took his dear child; but they made haste to set in array for the god the holy hecatomb around the well-built altar, and then they washed their hands and took up the barley grains. Then Chryses lifted up his hands, and prayed aloud for them:

CHRYSES - Hear me, god of the silver bow, who stands over Chryse and holy Cilla, and rules mightily over Tenedos. As before you heard me when I prayed—to me you did honour, and mightily smote the host of the Achaeans—even so now fulfill me this my desire: ward off now from the Danaans the loathly pestilence.

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him. Then, when they had prayed, and had sprinkled the barley grains, they first drew back the victims' heads, and cut their throats, and flayed them, and cut out the thighs and covered them with a double layer of fat, and laid raw flesh thereon. And the old man burned them on stakes of wood, and made libation over them of gleaming wine; and beside him the young men held in their hands the five-pronged forks. But when the thigh-pieces were wholly burned, and they had tasted the entrails, they cut up the rest and spitted it, and roasted it carefully, and drew all off the spits. Then, when they had ceased from their labour and had made ready the meal, they feasted, nor did their hearts lack anything of the equal feast. But when they had put from them the desire for food and drink, the youths filled the bowls brim full of drink and served out to all, first pouring drops for libation into the cups. So the whole day long they sought to appease the god with song, singing the beautiful paean, the sons of the Achaeans, hymning the god who works from afar; and his heart was glad, as he heard. But when the sun set and darkness came on, they lay down to rest by the stern cables of the ship, and as soon as early rosy-fingered Dawn appeared, then they set sail for the wide camp of the Achaeans. And Apollo, who works from afar, sent them a favouring wind, and they

set up the mast and spread the white sail. So the wind filled the belly of the sail, and the dark wave sang loudly about the stem of the ship, as she went, and she sped over the wave, accomplishing her way. But when they came to the wide camp of the Achaeans, they drew the black ship up on the shore, high upon the sands, and set in line the long props beneath, and themselves scattered among the tents and ships. But he in his wrath sat beside his swift-faring ships, the Zeus-sprung son of Peleus, swift-footed Achilles. Never did he go forth to the place of gathering, where men win glory, nor ever to war, but wasted away his own heart, as he tarried where he was; and he longed for the war-cry and the battle.

Now when the twelfth morning thereafter had come, then into Olympus came the gods who are for ever, all in one company, and Zeus led the way. And Thetis did not forget the behest of her son, but rose up from the wave of the sea, and at early morning went up to great heaven and Olympus. There she found the far-seeing son of Cronos sitting apart from the rest upon the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus. So she sat down before him, and clasped his knees with her left hand, while with her right she touched him beneath the chin, and she spoke in prayer to king Zeus, son of Cronos:

THETIS - Father Zeus, if ever amid the immortals I gave you aid by word or deed, grant me this prayer: do honour to my son, who is doomed to a speedy death beyond all other men; yet now Agamemnon, king of men, has dishonoured him, for he has taken and keeps his prize by his own arrogant act. But honour him, Olympian Zeus, lord of counsel; and

give might to the Trojans, until the Achaeans do honour to my son, and magnify him with recompense.

So she spoke; but Zeus, the cloud-gatherer, spoke no word to her, but sat a long time in silence. Yet Thetis, even as she had clasped his knees, so held to him, clinging close, and questioned him again a second time:

THETIS - Give me your infallible promise, and bow your head to it, or else deny me, for there is nothing to make you afraid; so that I may know well how far I among all the gods am honoured the least.

Then, greatly troubled, Zeus, the cloud-gatherer spoke to her:

ZEUS - Surely this will be sorry work, since you will set me on to engage in strife with Hera, when she shall anger me with taunting words. Even now she always upbraids me among the immortal gods, and declares that I give aid to the Trojans in battle. But for the present, depart again, lest Hera note something; and I will take thought for these things to bring all to pass. Come, I will bow my head to you, that thou may be certain, for this from me is the surest token among the immortals; no word of mine may be recalled, nor is false, nor unfulfilled, to which I bow my head.

The son of Cronos spoke, and bowed his dark brow in assent, and the ambrosial locks waved from the king's immortal head; and he made great Olympus quake.

When the two had taken counsel together in this way, they parted; she leapt straightway into the deep sea from gleaming Olympus, and Zeus went to his own palace. All the gods together rose from their seats before the face of their father;

no one dared to await his coming, but they all rose up before him. So he sat down there upon his throne; but Hera saw, and failed not to note how silver-footed Thetis, daughter of the old man of the sea, had taken counsel with him. Forthwith then she spoke to Zeus, son of Cronos, with mocking words:

HERA - Who of the gods, crafty one, has now again taken counsel with you? Always is it your pleasure to hold aloof from me, and to give judgments which you have pondered in secret, nor have you ever brought yourself with a ready heart to declare to me the matter which you devise.

In answer to her spoke the father of men and gods:

ZEUS - Hera, do not hope to know all my words: hard will they prove for you, though you are my wife. Whatever it is fitting for you to hear, this none other shall know before you, whether of gods or men; but what I wish to devise apart from the gods, of all this do not in any way inquire nor ask.

In answer to him spoke the ox-eyed lady Hera:

HERA - Most dread son of Cronos, what a word you have said! Truly, in the past I have not been accustomed to inquire nor ask you, but at your ease you devise all things whatever you wish. But now I have wondrous dread at heart, lest silver-footed Thetis, daughter of the old man of the sea, have beguiled you; for at early dawn she sat by you and clasped your knees. To her, I think, you bowed your head in sure token that you will honour Achilles, and bring many to death beside the ships of the Achaeans.

Then in answer to her spoke Zeus, the cloud-gatherer:

ZEUS - Strange one, you are always suspecting, and I do not escape you; yet you shall be able to accomplish nothing, but

shall be even further from my heart; and that shall be the worse for you. If this thing is as you say, then it must be pleasing to me. Sit down in silence, and obey my word, lest all the gods that are in Olympus avail you not against my drawing near, when I put forth upon you my irresistible hands.

He spoke, and ox-eyed lady Hera was seized with fear, and sat down in silence, curbing her heart. Then troubled were the gods of heaven throughout the palace of Zeus, and among them Hephaestus, the famed craftsman, was first to speak, doing pleasure to his dear mother, white-armed Hera:

HEPHAESTUS - Surely this will be sorry work, that is no longer bearable, if you two are to wrangle thus for mortals' sakes, and set the gods in tumult; neither will there be any joy in the excellent feast, since worse things prevail. And I give counsel to my mother, wise though she be herself, to do pleasure to our dear father Zeus, that the father upbraid her not again, and bring confusion upon our feast. What if the Olympian, the lord of the lightning, were minded to dash us from our seats! for he is mightiest far. But address him with gentle words; so shall the Olympian forthwith be gracious to us.

So saying, he sprang up and placed in his dear mother's hand the double cup, and spoke to her:

HEPHAESTUS - Be patient, my mother, and endure for all your grief, lest, dear as you are to me, my eyes see you stricken, and then I shall in no way be able to succour you for all my sorrow; for a hard foe is the Olympian to meet in strife. On a time before this, when I was striving to save you, he caught me by the foot and hurled me from the heavenly threshold; the