

from the **ILIAD**

from Book 1

Homer

translated by

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|| Notice how Homer characterizes Agamemnon and Achilles, the two central figures in Book 1. What do you think of these two men? How do you think Homer wants you to view them?

BOOK 1: The Quarrel

Anger be now your song, immortal one,
Achilles' anger, doomed and ruinous,
that caused the Achaeans^o loss on bitter loss
and crowded brave souls into the undergloom,
5 leaving so many dead men—carrion
for dogs and birds; and the will of Zeus was done.
Begin it when the two men first contending
broke with one another—

the Lord Marshal

Agamemnon, Atreus' son, and Prince Achilles.

10 Among the gods, who brought this quarrel on?
The son of Zeus by Leto.^o Agamemnon
angered him, so he made a burning wind
of plague rise in the army: rank and file
sickened and died for the ill their chief had done
15 in despising a man of prayer.
This priest, Chryses, had come down to the ships
with gifts, no end of ransom for his daughter;
on a golden staff he carried the god's white bands
and sued for grace from the men of all Achaea
20 the two Atridae^o most of all:

"O captains

Menelaus and Agamemnon, and you other
Achaeans under arms!
The gods who hold Olympus, may they grant you

3. **Achaeans** (ə-kē'ənz): one of the names used in the *Iliad* for the Greeks.

11. **The son . . . Leto** (lē'tō): Apollo.

20. **Atridae** (ə-trī'dē): Agamemnon and Menelaus are the sons of Atreus (ā'trē-as), the king of Mycenae. At the time of the Trojan War, and in Homer's own day, Greece was not a unified country but an amalgam of diverse kingdoms. The *Atridae* refers to one of many families of kings.

plunder of Priam's town and a fair wind home,
25 but let me have my daughter back for ransom
as you revere Apollo, son of Zeus!"

Then all the soldiers murmured their assent:
"Behave well to the priest. And take the ransom!"

But Agamemnon would not. It went against his desire,
30 and brutally he ordered the man away:

"Let me not find you here by the long ships
loitering this time or returning later,
old man; if I do,
the staff and ribbons of the god will fail you.
35 Give up the girl? I swear she will grow old
at home in Argos, far from her own country,
working my loom and visiting my bed.
Leave me in peace and go, while you can, in safety."

So harsh he was, the old man feared and obeyed him,
40 in silence trailing away
by the shore of the tumbling clamorous whispering sea,
and he prayed and prayed again, as he withdrew,
to the god whom silken-braided Leto bore:

"O hear me, master of the silver bow,
45 protector of Tenedos and the holy towns,
Apollo, Sminthian,⁴⁶ if to your liking
ever in any grove I roofed a shrine
or burnt thighbones in fat upon your altar—
bullock or goat flesh—let my wish come true:
50 your arrows on the Danaans⁵⁰ for my tears!"

Now when he heard this prayer, Phoebus Apollo
walked with storm in his heart from Olympus's crest,
quiver and bow at his back, and the bundled arrows
clanged on the sky behind as he rocked in his anger,
55 descending like night itself. Apart from the ships
he halted and let fly, and the bowstring slammed
as the silver bow sprang, rolling in thunder away.
Pack animals were his target first, and dogs,
but soldiers, too, soon felt transfixing pain
60 from his hard shots, and pyres burned night and day.
Nine days the arrows of the god came down
broadside upon the army. On the tenth,
Achilles called all ranks to assembly. Hera,

46. **Sminthian** (smin'thē-ən): epithet for Apollo, probably in reference to his role as destroyer of mice; the Greek for *mouse* is *sminthos*.

50. **Danaans** (dān'enz): one of the names for the Greeks.

whose arms are white as ivory, moved him to it,
65 as she took pity on Danaans dying.
All being mustered, all in place and quiet,
Achilles, fast in battle as a lion,
rose and said:

"Agamemnon, now, I take it,
the siege is broken, we are going to sail,
70 and even so may not leave death behind:
if war spares anyone, disease will take him
We might, though, ask some priest or some diviner,
even some fellow good at dreams—for dreams
come down from Zeus as well—



Fresco of the *Iliad*, showing the Greek gods, by Sabatelli. Many of the gods are painted here with clues to their identities. Zeus and Hera, for instance, are seated in their thrones at the top of the painting.
? Can you identify Ares, the god of war, or Aphrodite, the goddess of love?

75 why all this anger of the god Apollo?

Has he some quarrel with us for a failure
in vows or hecatombs?° Would mutton burned
or smoking goat flesh make him lift the plague?"

Putting the question, down he sat. And Calchas,
80 Calchas Thestorides, came forward, wisest
by far of all who scanned the flight of birds.
He knew what was, what had been, what would be,
Calchas, who brought Achaean's ships to Ilion°
by the diviner's gift Apollo gave him.
85 Now for their benefit he said:

"Achilles,

dear to Zeus, it is on me you call
to tell you why the Archer God° is angry.
Well, I can tell you. Are you listening? Swear
by heaven that you will back me and defend me,
90 because I fear my answer will enrage
a man with power in Argos, one whose word
Achaean troops obey.

A great man in his rage is formidable
for underlings: though he may keep it down,
he cherishes the burning in his belly
95 until a reckoning day. Think well
if you will save me."

Said Achilles:

"Courage.

Tell what you know, what you have light to know.
I swear by Apollo, the lord god to whom
100 you pray when you uncover truth,
never while I draw breath, while I have eyes to see,
shall any man upon this beachhead dare
lay hands on you—not one of all the army,
not Agamemnon, if it is he you mean,
105 though he is first in rank of all Achaeans."

The diviner then took heart and said:

"No failure

in hecatombs or vows is held against us.
It is the man of prayer whom Agamemnon
treated with contempt: he kept his daughter,
110 spurned his gifts: for that man's sake the Archer

77. **hecatombs** (hek'ə-tōmz'): sacrifices to the gods; originally a hecatomb consisted of a hundred oxen.

83. **Ilion** (il'ē-ən): another name for Troy; the founder of Troy was Ilus, who named the city for his father, Tros.

87. **the Archer God**: Apollo.



Greek vase.

visited grief upon us and will again.
Relieve the Danaans of this plague he will not
until the girl who turns the eyes of men^o
shall be restored to her own father—freely,

115 with no demand for ransom—and until
we offer up a hecatomb at Chryse.
Then only can we calm him and persuade him.”

He finished and sat down. The son of Atreus,
ruler of the great plain, Agamemnon,

120 rose, furious. Round his heart resentment
welled, and his eyes shone out like licking fire.
Then, with a long and boding look at Calchas,
he growled at him:

“You visionary of hell,

never have I had fair play in your forecasts.

125 Calamity is all you care about, or see,
no happy portents; and you bring to pass
nothing agreeable. Here you stand again
before the army, giving it out as oracle
the Archer made them suffer because of me,
130 because I would not take the gifts
and let the girl Chryseis go; I'd have her
mine, at home. Yes, if you like, I rate her
higher than Clytemnestra, my own wife!
She loses nothing by comparison
135 in beauty or womanhood, in mind or skill.

For all of that, I am willing now to yield her
if it is best; I want the army saved
and not destroyed. You must prepare, however,
a prize of honor for me, and at once,

140 that I may not be left without my portion—
I, of all Argives.^o It is not fitting so.
While every man of you looks on, my girl
goes elsewhere.”

Prince Achilles answered him:

145 “Lord Marshal, most insatiate of men,
how can the army make you a new gift?
Where is our store of booty? Can you see it?
Everything plundered from the towns has been
distributed; should troops turn all that in?
150 Just let the girl go, in the god's name, now;

113. **the girl . . . of men:** He is referring to Chryseis.

Photo Nimatallah/Art Resource, New York



Plate of Apollo crowned with myrtle. *Myrtle is a small, wild evergreen that the ancient Greeks considered sacred to the goddess Aphrodite.*

141. **Argives** (är'gīvz'): Greeks from Argos, in the northeastern part of the Peloponnesus.

we'll make it up to you, twice over, three times over, on that day Zeus gives us leave to plunder Troy behind her rings of stone."

Agamemnon answered:

"Not that way

- 155 will I be gulled, brave as you are, Achilles.
Take me in, would you? Try to get around me?
What do you really ask? That you may keep
your own winnings, I am to give up mine
and sit here wanting her? Oh, no:
160 the army will award a prize to me
and make sure that it measures up, or if
they do not, I will take a girl myself,
your own, or Ajax's, or Odysseus' prize!
Take her, yes, to keep. The man I visit
165 may choke with rage; well, let him.
But this, I say, we can decide on later.

Look to it now, we launch on the great sea
a well-found ship, and get her manned with oarsmen,
load her with sacrificial beasts and put aboard

- 170 Chryseis in her loveliness. My deputy,
Ajax, Idomeneus,^o or Prince Odysseus,
or you, Achilles, fearsome as you are,
will make the hecatomb and quiet the Archer."
Achilles frowned and looked at him, then said:

- 175 "You thick-skinned, shameless, greedy fool!
Can any Achaean care for you, or obey you,
after this on marches or in battle?
As for myself, when I came here to fight,
I had no quarrel with Troy or Trojan spearmen:
180 they never stole my cattle or my horses,
never in the black farmland of Phthia^o
ravaged my crops. How many miles there are
of shadowy hills between, and foaming seas!
No, no, we joined for you, you insolent boor,
185 to please you, fighting for your brother's sake
and yours, to get revenge upon the Trojans.
You overlook this, dogface, or don't care,
and now in the end you threaten to take my girl,
a prize I sweated for, and soldiers gave me!

- 190 Never have I had plunder like your own



Detail of a vase handle depicting Ajax.

171. **Idomeneus** (ī-dām'ī-nōōs', -nyōōs'): king of Crete and leader of the Cretan forces against Troy.

181. **Phthia** (thī'ə): Achilles' home in northern Greece.

from any Trojan stronghold battered down
by the Achaeans. I have seen more action
hand to hand in those assaults than you have,
but when the time for sharing comes, the greater
195 share is always yours. Worn out with battle
I carry off some trifle to my ships.
Well, this time I make sail for home.
Better to take now to my ships. Why linger,
cheated of winnings, to make wealth for you?"

200 To this the high commander made reply:
"Desert, if that's the way the wind blows. Will I
beg you to stay on my account? I will not.
Others will honor me, and Zeus who views
the wide world most of all.

205 is hateful to my sight as you are, none
given like you to faction, as to battle—
rugged you are, I grant, by some god's favor.
Sail, then, in your ships, and lord it over
your own battalion of Myrmidons.^o I do not
210 give a curse for you, or for your anger.
But here is warning for you:

being required of me by Phoebus Apollo,
she will be sent back in a ship of mine,
manned by my people. That done, I myself
215 will call for Briseis at your hut, and take her,
flower of young girls that she is, your prize,
to show you here and now who is the stronger
and make the next man sick at heart—if any
think of claiming equal place with me."

220 A pain like grief weighed on the son of Peleus,^o
and in his shaggy chest this way and that
the passion of his heart ran: should he draw
longsword from hip, stand off the rest, and kill
in single combat the great son of Atreus,
225 or hold his rage in check and give it time?
And as this tumult swayed him, as he slid
the big blade slowly from the sheath, Athena
came to him from the sky. The white-armed goddess,
Hera, sent her, being fond of both,



Lee Boltin Picture Library

Marble bust of Zeus, c. 131 B.C.

No officer

209. **Myrmidons** (mər'mə'dānz'): warriors from Thessaly, in northern Greece; followers of Achilles.

Chryseis

220. **son of Peleus**: Achilles.

230 concerned for both men. And Athena, stepping
up behind him, visible to no one
except Achilles, gripped his red-gold hair.

Startled, he made a half turn, and he knew her
upon the instant for Athena: terribly
235 her gray eyes blazed at him. And speaking softly
but rapidly aside to her he said:

"What now, O daughter of the god of heaven
who bears the stormcloud,^o why are you here? To see
the wolfishness of Agamemnon?"

240 Well, I give you my word: this time, and soon,
he pays for his behavior with his blood."

The gray-eyed goddess Athena said to him:

"It was to check this killing rage I came
from heaven, if you will listen. Hera sent me,
245 being fond of both of you, concerned for both.
Enough: break off this combat, stay your hand
upon the sword hilt. Let him have a lashing

237–238. god . . . who bears the
stormcloud: Zeus.



Ciraudon/Art Resource, New York

ATHENA RESTRAINING THE ANGER OF ACHILLES IN BATTLE WITH AGAMEMNON.
GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO (1696–1770).

? Why has Hera sent Athena? What is Athena's promise to Achilles?

with words, instead: tell him how things will be.
Here is my promise, and it will be kept:
250 winnings three times as rich, in due season,
you shall have in requital for his arrogance.
But hold your hand. Obey.”

The great runner,

Achilles, answered:

“Nothing for it, goddess,

but when you two immortals speak, a man
255 complies, though his heart burst. Just as well.
Honor the gods’ will, they may honor ours.”

On this he stayed his massive hand
upon the silver pommel,^o and the blade
of his great weapon slid back in the scabbard.

260 The man had done her bidding. Off to Olympus,
gaining the air, she went to join the rest,
the powers of heaven in the home of Zeus.

But now the son of Peleus turned on Agamemnon
and lashed out at him, letting his anger ride

265 in execration:

“Sack of wine,

you with your cur’s eyes and your antelope heart!
You’ve never had the kidney to buckle on
armor among the troops, or make a sortie
with picked men—oh, no; that way death might lie.

270 Safer, by god, in the middle of the army—
is it not?—to commandeer the prize
of any man who stands up to you! Leech!
Commander to trash! If not, I swear,
you never could abuse one soldier more!

275 But here is what I say: my oath upon it
by this great staff: look: leaf or shoot
it cannot sprout again, once lopped away
from the log it left behind in the timbered hills;
it cannot flower, peeled of bark and leaves;

280 instead, Achaean officers in council
take it in hand by turns, when they observe
by the will of Zeus due order in debate:
let this be what I swear by then: I swear
a day will come when every Achaean soldier
285 will groan to have Achilles back. That day
you shall no more prevail on me than this

258. **pommel**: the knob on the end of the hilt of a sword or dagger.

dry wood shall flourish—driven though you are,
and though a thousand men perish before
the killer, Hector. You will eat your heart out,
290 raging with remorse for this dishonor
done by you to the bravest of Achaeans.”

He hurled the staff, studded with golden nails,
before him on the ground. Then down he sat,
and fury filled Agamemnon, looking across at him.
295 But for the sake of both men Nestor arose,
the Pylians^o orator, eloquent and clear;
argument sweeter than honey rolled from his tongue.
By now he had outlived two generations
of mortal men, his own and the one after,
300 in Pylos land, and still ruled in the third.
In kind reproof he said:

296. **Pylians** (pīl'ē-ənz): people from Pylos (pī'los), a town in the Peloponnesus.

"A black day, this.

Bitter distress comes this way to Achaea.
How happy Priam and Priam's sons would be,
and all the Trojans—wild with joy—if they
305 got wind of all these fighting words between you,
foremost in council as you are, foremost
in battle. Give me your attention. Both
are younger men than I, and in my time
men who were even greater have I known
310 and none of them disdained me. Men like those
I have not seen again, nor shall: Peirithous,
the Lord Marshal Dryas, Caereus, Exadius,
Polyphemus, Theseus^o—Aegeus's son,
a man like the immortal gods. I speak
315 of champions among men of earth, who fought
with champions, with wild things of the mountains,
great centaurs^o whom they broke and overpowered.
Among these men I say I had my place
when I sailed out of Pylos, my far country,
320 because they called for me. I fought
for my own hand among them. Not one man
alive now upon earth could stand against them.
And I repeat: they listened to my reasoning,
took my advice. Well, then, you take it too.
325 It is far better so.

311–313. **Peirithous . . . Theseus:** heroes of Nestor's generation.

317. **centaurs:** legendary creatures, half-man and half-horse.

Lord Agamemnon,
do not deprive him of the girl, renounce her.



Mycenaean death mask, once thought to be the mask of Agamemnon.

❓ *What is Agamemnon's attitude toward Achilles?*

Scala/Art Resource, New York

The army had allotted her to him.
Achilles, for your part, do not defy
your King and Captain. No one vies in honor
330 with him who holds authority from Zeus.
You have more prowess, for a goddess bore you;
his power over men surpasses yours.

But, Agamemnon, let your anger cool.
I beg you to relent, knowing Achilles
335 a sea wall for Achaeans in the black waves of war."

Lord Agamemnon answered:

is fairly said, sir, but this man's ambition,
remember, is to lead, to lord it over
everyone, hold power over everyone,
340 give orders to the rest of us! Well, one
will never take his orders! If the gods
who live forever made a spearman of him,
have they put insults on his lips as well?"

"All you say

Achilles interrupted:

"What a poltroon,^o

344. **poltroon** (päl-trōōn'): coward.

- 345 how lily-livered I should be called, if I
knuckled under to all you do or say!
Give your commands to someone else, not me!
And one more thing I have to tell you: think it
over: this time, for the girl, I will not
350 wrangle in arms with you or anyone,
though I am robbed of what was given me;
but as for any other thing I have
alongside my black ship, you shall not take it
against my will. Try it. Hear this, everyone:
355 that instant your hot blood blackens my spear!"

They quarreled in this way, face to face, and then
broke off the assembly by the ships. Achilles
made his way to his squadron and his quarters,
Patroclus by his side, with his companions.

- 360 Agamemnon proceeded to launch a ship,
assigned her twenty oarsmen, loaded beasts
for sacrifice to the god, then set aboard
Chryseis in her loveliness. The versatile
Odysseus took the deck, and, all oars manned,
365 they pulled out on the drenching ways of sea.
The troops meanwhile were ordered to police camp
and did so, throwing refuse in the water;
then to Apollo by the barren surf
they carried out full-tally hecatombs,
370 and the savor curled in crooked smoke toward heaven.

That was the day's work in the army.

Agamemnon

had kept his threat in mind, and now he acted,
calling Eurybates and Talthybios,
his aides and criers:

"Go along," he said,

- 375 "both of you, to the quarters of Achilles
and take his charming Briseis by the hand
to bring to me. And if he balks at giving her
I shall be there myself with men-at-arms
in force to take her—all the more gall for him."
380 So, ominously, he sent them on their way,
and they who had no stomach for it went

Photo Nimatallah/Art Resource, New York



A scene of sacrifice.

along the waste sea shingle^o toward the ships
and shelters of the Myrmidons. Not far
from his black ship and hut they found the prince
385 in the open, seated. And seeing these two come
was cheerless to Achilles. Shamefast, pale
with fear of him, they stood without a word;
but he knew what they felt and called out:

"Peace to you,

criers and couriers of Zeus and men!
390 Come forward. Not one thing have I against you:
Agamemnon is the man who sent you
for Briseis. Here then, my lord Patroclus,
bring out the girl and give her to these men.
And let them both bear witness before the gods
395 who live in bliss, as before men who die,
including this harsh king, if ever hereafter
a need for me arises to keep the rest
from black defeat and ruin.

Lost in folly,

the man cannot think back or think ahead
400 how to come through a battle by the ships."
Patroclus did the bidding of his friend,
led from the hut Briseis in her beauty
and gave her to them. Back along the ships
they took their way, and the girl went, loath to go.
405 Leaving his friends in haste, Achilles wept,
and sat apart by the gray wave, scanning the endless sea.
Often he spread his hands in prayer to his mother:^o

"As my life came from you, though it is brief,
honor at least from Zeus who storms in heaven
410 I call my due. He gives me precious little.
See how the lord of the great plains, Agamemnon,
humiliated me! He has my prize,
by his own whim, for himself."

Eyes wet with tears,

he spoke, and her ladyship his mother heard him
415 in green deeps where she lolled near her old father.
Gliding she rose and broke like mist from the inshore
gray sea face, to sit down softly before him,
her son in tears; and fondling him she said:

382. **shingle**: beach covered with large, coarse gravel.

407. **mother**: the goddess Thetis (thē'tis), a daughter of Ne-reus, the old man of the sea.



SEE/Art Resource, New York

Fresco of Agamemnon carrying away Briseis, by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo.

? How is Briseis important to the plot of the Iliad?

"Child, why do you weep? What grief is this?
420 Out with it, tell me, both of us should know."
Achilles, fast in battle as a lion,
groaned and said:

"Why tell you what you know?

We sailed out raiding, and we took by storm
that ancient town of Eetion^o called Thebe,
425 plundered the place, brought slaves and spoils away.

At the division, later,
they chose a young girl, Chryseis, for the king.
Then Chryses, priest of the Archer God, Apollo,
came to the beachhead we Achaeans hold,
430 bringing no end of ransom for his daughter;

424. **Eetion** (ē-ē'tē-än): king of Thebe (thē'bē), a city near Troy.

he had the god's white bands on a golden staff
and sued for grace from the army of Achaea,
mostly the two Atridae, corps commanders.

All of our soldiers murmured in assent:

- 435 'Behave well to the priest. And take the ransom!'
But Agamemnon would not. It went against his desire,
and brutally he ordered the man away.
So the old man withdrew in grief and anger.
Apollo cared for him: he heard his prayer
440 and let black bolts of plague fly on the Argives.

One by one our men came down with it
and died hard as the god's shots raked the army
broadside. But our priest divined the cause
and told us what the god meant by the plague.

- 445 I said, 'Appease the god!' but Agamemnon
could not contain his rage; he threatened me,
and what he threatened is now done—
one girl the Achaeans are embarking now
for Chryse beach with gifts for Lord Apollo;
450 the other, just now, from my hut—the criers
came and took her, Briseus' girl, my prize,
given by the army.

If you can, stand by me:

go to Olympus, pray to Zeus, if ever
by word or deed you served him—

- 455 and so you did, I often heard you tell it
in Father's house: that time when you alone
of all the gods shielded the son of Cronus^o
from peril and disgrace—when other gods,
Pallas Athena, Hera, and Poseidon,
460 wished him in irons, wished to keep him bound,
you had the will to free him of that bondage,
and called up to Olympus in all haste
Aegaeon, whom the gods call Briareus,^o
the giant with a hundred arms, more powerful
465 than the sea-god, his father. Down he sat
by the son of Cronus, glorying in that place.
For fear of him the blissful gods forbore
to manacle Zeus.

457. **son of Cronus:** Zeus; Cronus ruled over the Titans until his son, Zeus, dethroned him and became ruler over the Olympians.

463. **Briareus** (brī-ār'ē-əs): a giant who helped Zeus and the Olympians overcome the Titans.

Remind him of these things,
cling to his knees and tell him your good pleasure

470 if he will take the Trojan side
 and roll the Achaeans back to the water's edge,
 back on the ships with slaughter! All the troops
 may savor what their king has won for them,
 and he may know his madness, what he lost
 475 when he dishonored me, peerless among Achaeans."

Her eyes filled, and a tear fell as she answered:

"Alas, my child, why did I rear you, doomed
 the day I bore you? Ah, could you only be
 serene upon this beachhead through the siege,
 480 your life runs out so soon.

Oh early death! Oh broken heart! No destiny
 so cruel! And I bore you to this evil!

But what you wish I will propose
 To Zeus, lord of the lightning, going up
 485 myself into the snow-glare of Olympus
 with hope for his consent.

Be quiet now

beside the long ships, keep your anger bright
 against the army, quit the war.

Last night

490 Zeus made a journey to the shore of Ocean
 to feast among the Sunburned,^o and the gods
 accompanied him. In twelve days he will come
 back to Olympus. Then I shall be there
 to cross his bronze doorsill and take his knees.
 I trust I'll move him."

Thetis left her son

495 still burning for the softly belted girl
 whom they had wrested from him. . . .



Scala/Art Resource, New York

Vase depicting Thetis bringing armor to Achilles.

❓ What is the relation of Thetis to Achilles? Why would she bring him his armor?

490. the Sunburned: Ethiopians.



Fresco from the isle of Crete.

Photo Nimatallah/Art Resource, New York

First Thoughts

Which character do you think was more in the right, Agamemnon or Achilles? Explain.

Identifying Facts

1. What crisis in the Greek camp confronts the leaders at the opening of the epic? How does this crisis lead to a conflict between Achilles and Agamemnon?
2. What action does Agamemnon take to appease Apollo? What does he take from Achilles?
3. What oath does Achilles swear? Why does he withdraw from the battle?
4. What does Thetis promise to do for her son Achilles?

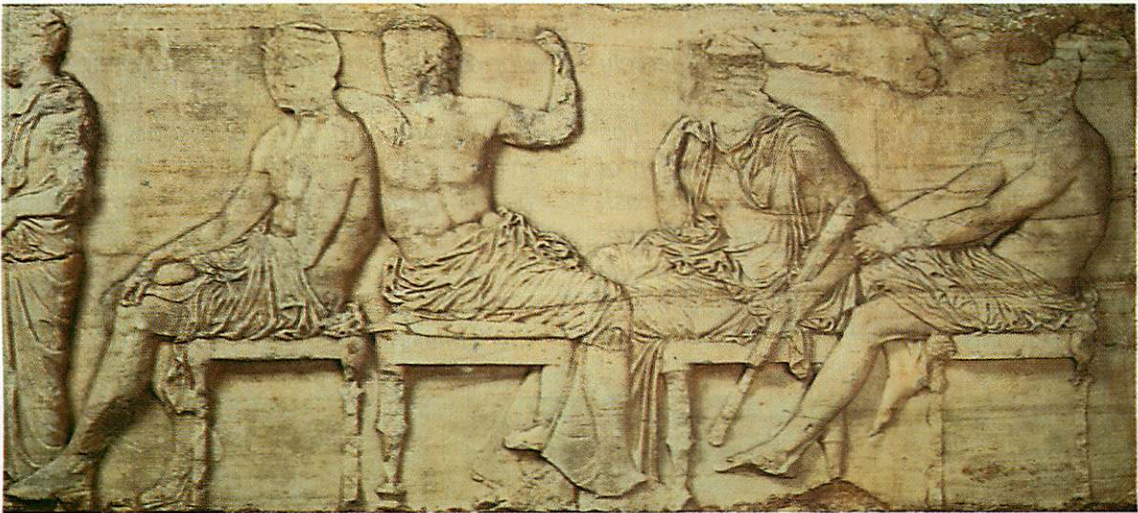
Interpreting Meanings

1. What impression do you form of Agamemnon's **character** from his own words and actions and the reactions of Calchas and Achilles?

2. What ominous, or threatening, images can you identify in the first fifteen lines of Book 1 of the *Iliad*? What future events do these images **foreshadow**?
3. In the scene between Achilles and his mother Thetis, there is a **flashback** to an earlier time when Thetis helped to defend Zeus. What purpose does this flashback serve?
4. What role do the gods and goddesses play in Book 1? Are they aloof observers, fair intermediaries, or meddling nuisances? Describe the roles played by Apollo, Athena, and Thetis in this book of the *Iliad*.

Applying Meanings

Do you think that Achilles is justified in his wrath against Agamemnon and his subsequent withdrawal from battle? Imagine that Achilles is a modern-day military officer. Would a modern general be justified in withdrawing from combat if his personal honor were at stake? If so, under what circumstances?



Parthenon frieze (477–432 B.C.). This frieze depicts Ares, the god of war, at right, and Dionysus, the god of agriculture and wine, facing Demeter, the goddess of fertility.

The Bridgeman Art Library/Art Resource, New York

from the **ILIAD**

from Books 22 and 24

Homer

translated by

ROBERT FITZGERALD

Based on what you have learned about Achilles in the epic thus far, how do you predict he will behave toward his enemy, the Trojan hero Hector, when the two men finally meet in battle?

Without Achilles' help, the Greeks are at a serious disadvantage against the Trojans, who are led by their great warrior Hector, the son of the Trojan king, Priam. In Book 6, we glimpse Hector's humanity as he shares a loving moment with his wife Andromache and his son Astyanax. Book 6 also reveals to us Hector's pride, for we learn that although he believes Troy is doomed, honor will not allow him to surrender.

Hector returns to battle, fighting fiercely for the Trojans. As fear grows in the Greek camp, Agamemnon admits that he has wronged Achilles. He sends a delegation of ambassadors to offer amends and to ask Achilles and his comrades to return to battle. Achilles' immense pride is revealed as he stubbornly refuses to accept Agamemnon's gifts. He tells the delegates that he has

decided to return to his kingdom and live out his life in comfort, forgoing the honor of dying a hero's death in battle.

When the Trojans break through the Greek defenses, Achilles' best friend Patroclus pleads with the hero to permit him to rejoin the fighting. Achilles reluctantly agrees (Books 11–15). As the battle rages, the god Apollo strikes Patroclus from his horse, giving Hector the opportunity to slay the warrior and strip the corpse of its armor.

On hearing of Patroclus's death, Achilles is overcome with grief and rage. Vowing to avenge his friend, he finally returns to the battle, mercilessly slaying the Trojan forces (Books 19–21). As Book 22 opens, the exhausted Trojans take refuge behind the high walls of the city. One Trojan remains outside the walls: Hector.



Fresco from the isle of Crete.

Photo Nimatallah/Art Resource, New York

BOOK 22: The Death of Hector

Once in the town, those who had fled like deer
wiped off their sweat and drank their thirst away,
leaning against the cool stone of the ramparts.^o
Meanwhile Achaeans with bright shields aslant

5 came up the plain and nearer. As for Hector,
fatal destiny pinned him where he stood
before the Scaean Gates, outside the city.

Now Achilles heard Apollo calling
back to him:

"Why run so hard, Achilles

10 mortal as you are, after a god?
Can you not comprehend it? I am immortal.
You are so hot to catch me, you no longer
think of finishing off the men you routed.
They are all in the town by now, packed in
15 while you were being diverted here. And yet
you cannot kill me; I am no man's quarry."

Achilles bit his lip and said:

"Archer of heaven, deadliest
of immortal gods, you put me off the track,
20 turning me from the wall this way. A hundred
might have sunk their teeth into the dust
before one man took cover in Ilion!
You saved my enemies with ease and stole
my glory, having no punishment to fear.
25 I'd take it out of you, if I had the power."

Then toward the town with might and main he ran,
magnificent, like a racing chariot horse
that holds its form at full stretch on the plain.
So light-footed Achilles held the pace.

30 And aging Priam was the first to see him
sparkling on the plain, bright as that star
in autumn rising, whose unclouded rays
shine out amid a throng of stars at dusk—
the one they call Orion's^o dog, most brilliant,
35 yes, but baleful as a sign: it brings
great fever to frail men. So pure and bright
the bronze gear blazed upon him as he ran.
The old man gave a cry. With both his hands

3. **ramparts:** defensive embankments surrounding a town.

Scala/Art Resource, New York



Statue of Apollo.

34. **Orion:** a constellation named after a hunter who was loved and accidentally killed by the goddess Artemis.

thrown up on high he struck his head, then shouted,
40 groaning, appealing to his dear son. Unmoved,
Lord Hector stood in the gateway, resolute
to fight Achilles.

Stretching out his hands,
old Priam said, imploring him:

"No, Hector!

Cut off as you are, alone, dear son,
45 don't try to hold your ground against this man,
or soon you'll meet the shock of doom, borne down
by the son of Peleus. He is more powerful
by far than you, and pitiless. Ah, were he
but dear to the gods as he is dear to me!
50 Wild dogs and kites would eat him where he lay
within the hour, and ease me of my torment.
Many tall sons he killed, bereaving me,
or sold them to far islands. Even now
I cannot see two sons of mine, Lycaon°
55 and Polydorus,° among the Trojans massed
inside the town. A queen, Laothoe,
conceived and bore them. If they are alive
amid the Achaean host, I'll ransom them
with bronze and gold: both I have, piled at home,
60 rich treasures that old Altes, the renowned,
gave for his daughter's dowry. If they died,
if they went under to the homes of Death,
sorrow has come to me and to their mother.
But to our townsmen all this pain is brief,
65 unless you too go down before Achilles.
Come inside the wall, child; here you may
fight on to save our Trojan men and women.
Do not resign the glory to Achilles,
losing your own dear life! Take pity, too,
70 on me and my hard fate, while I live still.
Upon the threshold of my age, in misery,
the son of Cronus° will destroy my life
after the evil days I shall have seen—
my sons brought down, my daughters dragged away,
75 bedchambers ravaged, and small children hurled
to earth in the atrocity of war,
as my sons' wives are taken by Achaeans'
ruinous hands. And at the end, I too—
when someone with a sword-cut or a spear

54. Lycaon (lī-kā'ān)

55. Polydorus (pōl-i-dō'rēs)

72. son of Cronus: Zeus.

80 has had my life—I shall be torn apart
on my own doorstep by the hounds
I trained as watchdogs, fed from my own table.
These will lap my blood with ravenous hearts
and lie in the entranceway.

Everything done

85 to a young man killed in war becomes his glory,
once he is riven^o by the whetted bronze:
dead though he be, it is all fair, whatever
happens then. But when an old man falls,
and dogs disfigure his gray head and cheek
90 and genitals, that is most harrowing
of all that men in their hard lives endure.”

86. *riven*: split or torn apart.

The old man wrenched at his gray hair and pulled out
hanks of it in both hands, but moved
Lord Hector not at all. The young man's mother
95 wailed from the tower across, above the portal,
streaming tears, and loosening her robe
with one hand, held her breast out in the other,
saying:

“Hector, my child, be moved by this,
and pity me, if ever I unbound

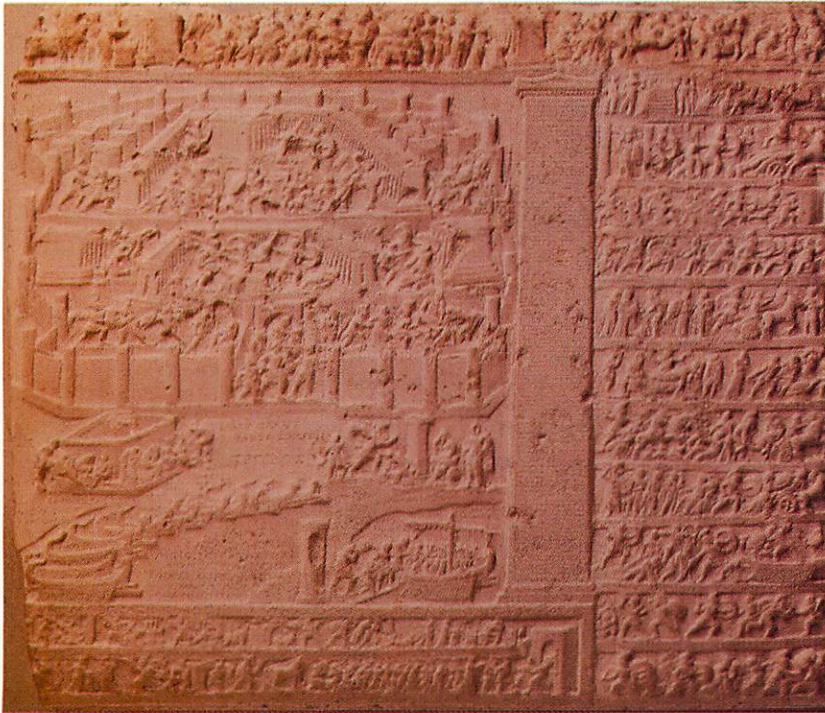
100 a quieting breast for you. Think of these things,
dear child; defend yourself against the killer
this side of the wall, not hand to hand.
He has no pity. If he brings you down,
I shall no longer be allowed to mourn you
105 laid out on your bed, dear branch in flower,
born of me! And neither will your lady,
so endowed with gifts. Far from us both,
dogs will devour you by the Argive ships.”

With tears and cries the two implored their son,
110 and made their prayers again, but could not shake him.
Hector stood firm, as huge Achilles neared.
The way a serpent, fed on poisonous herbs,
coiled at his lair upon a mountainside,
with all his length of hate awaits a man
115 and eyes him evilly: so Hector, grim
and narrow-eyed, refused to yield. He leaned
his brilliant shield against a spur of wall
and in his brave heart bitterly reflected:
“Here I am badly caught. If I take cover,



*HECTOR TAKING LEAVE FROM
ANDROMACHE, ANGELICA KAUFFMANN
(1741–1807).*

Tate Gallery, London/Art Resource, New York



Stone etching of a battle of the Trojan War.

? Why does Hector refuse to back down? How does he talk himself into facing Achilles?

120 slipping inside the gate and wall, the first
to accuse me for it will be Polydamas,^o
he who told me I should lead the Trojans
back to the city on that cursed night
Achilles joined the battle. No, I would not,
125 would not, wiser though it would have been.
Now troops have perished for my foolish pride,
I am ashamed to face townsmen and women.
Someone inferior to me may say:
'He kept his pride and lost his men, this Hector!'
130 So it will go. Better, when that time comes,
that I appear as he who killed Achilles
man to man, or else that I went down
fighting him to the end before the city.
Suppose, though, that I lay my shield and helm
135 aside, and prop my spear against the wall,
and go to meet the noble Prince Achilles,
promising Helen, promising with her
all treasures that Alexandros^o brought home
by ship to Troy—the first cause of our quarrel—

121. **Polydamas** (pō-lid'ē-mēs): a Trojan leader.

138. **Alexandros**: another name for Paris. *Alexandros* means "champion."

140 that he may give these things to the Atridae?
Then I might add, apart from these, a portion
of all the secret wealth the city owns.
Yes, later I might take our counselors' oath
to hide no stores, but share and share alike
145 to halve all wealth our lovely city holds,
all that is here within the walls. Ah, no,
why even put the question to myself?
I must not go before him and receive
no quarter, no respect! Aye, then and there
150 he'll kill me, unprotected as I am,
my gear laid by, defenseless as a woman.
No chance, now, for charms from oak or stone
in parley with him—charms a girl and boy
might use when they enchant each other talking!
155 Better we duel, now at once, and see
to whom the Olympian awards the glory."

These were his shifts of mood. Now close at hand
Achilles like the implacable god of war
came on with blowing crest, hefting the dreaded
160 beam of Pelian ash^o on his right shoulder.
Bronze light played around him, like the glare
of a great fire or the great sun rising,
and Hector, as he watched, began to tremble.
Then he could hold his ground no more. He ran,
165 leaving the gate behind him, with Achilles
hard on his heels, sure of his own speed.
When that most lightning-like of birds, a hawk
bred on a mountain, swoops upon a dove,
the quarry dips in terror, but the hunter,
170 screaming, dips behind and gains upon it,
passionate for prey. Just so, Achilles
murderously cleft the air, as Hector
ran with flashing knees along the wall.
They passed the lookout point, the wild fig tree
175 with wind in all its leaves, then veered away
along the curving wagon road, and came
to where the double fountains well, the source
of eddying Scamander.^o One hot spring
flows out, and from the water fumes arise
180 as though from fire burning; but the other
even in summer gushes chill as hail

160. **Pelian** (pēl'ē-ən) ash: wood cut from trees on Mount Pelion, one of the highest mountains in Greece.

178. **Scamander** (skə-man'dər): river of Troy.

or snow or crystal ice frozen on water.
 Near these fountains are wide washing pools
 of smooth-laid stone, where Trojan wives and daughters
 185 laundered their smooth linen in the days
 of peace before the Achaeans came. Past these
 the two men ran, pursuer and pursued,
 and he who fled was noble, he behind
 a greater man by far. They ran full speed,
 190 and not for bull's hide or a ritual beast
 or any prize that men compete for: no,
 but for the life of Hector, tamer of horses.
 Just as when chariot-teams around a course
 go wheeling swiftly, for the prize is great,
 195 a tripod^o or a woman, in the games
 held for a dead man, so three times these two
 at full speed made their course round Priam's town,
 as all the gods looked on. And now the father
 of gods and men^o turned to the rest and said:
 200 "How sad that this beloved man is hunted
 around the wall before my eyes! My heart
 is touched for Hector; he has burned thigh flesh
 of oxen for me often, high on Ida,^o
 at other times on the high point of Troy.
 205 Now Prince Achilles with devouring stride
 is pressing him around the town of Priam.
 Come, gods, put your minds on it, consider
 whether we may deliver him from death
 or see him, noble as he is, brought down
 210 by Peleus' son, Achilles."

195. **tripod**: a bronze altar used in sacrifices.

198–199. **father of gods and men**: Zeus.

203. **Ida**: Mount Ida, in Phrygia, the source of many rivers, including the Scamander.

Gray-eyed Athena

said to him:

"Father of the blinding bolt,
 the dark stormcloud, what words are these? The man
 is mortal, and his doom fixed, long ago.
 Would you release him from his painful death?
 215 Then do so, but not all of us will praise you."

Zeus who gathers cloud replied:

"Take heart,

my dear and honored child. I am not bent
 on my suggestion, and I would indulge you.
 Act as your thought inclines, refrain no longer."

220 So he encouraged her in her desire,
and down she swept from ridges of Olympus.
Great Achilles, hard on Hector's heels,
kept after him, the way a hound will harry
a deer's fawn he has startled from its bed
225 to chase through gorge and open glade, and when
the quarry goes to earth under a bush
he holds the scent and quarters till he finds it;
so with Hector: he could not shake off
the great runner, Achilles. Every time
230 he tried to spring hard for the Dardan gates^o
under the towers, hoping men could help him,
sending missiles down, Achilles loomed
to cut him off and turn him toward the plain,
as he himself ran always near the city.
235 As in a dream a man chasing another
cannot catch him, nor can he in flight
escape from his pursuer, so Achilles
could not by his swiftness overtake him,
nor could Hector pull away. How could he
240 run so long from death, had not Apollo
for the last time, the very last, come near
to give him stamina and speed?

Achilles

shook his head at the rest of the Achaeans,
allowing none to shoot or cast at Hector—
245 none to forestall him, and to win the honor.
But when, for the fourth time, they reached the springs,
the Father poised his golden scales.

He placed

two shapes of death, death prone and cold, upon them,
one of Achilles, one of the horseman, Hector,
250 and held the midpoint, pulling upward. Down
sank Hector's fatal day, the pan went down
toward undergloom, and Phoebus Apollo left him.
Then came Athena, gray-eyed, to the son
of Peleus, falling in with him, and near him,
255 saying swiftly:

"Now at last I think

the two of us, Achilles loved by Zeus,
shall bring Achaeans triumph at the ships
by killing Hector—unappeased
though he was ever in his thirst for war.

230. **Dardan gates:** gates of Troy; Dardania, a city built near the foot of Mount Ida, became part of Troy.



Bust of Athena.

Lee Boltin Picture Library

260 There is no way he may escape us now,
not though Apollo, lord of distances,
should suffer all indignity for him
before his father Zeus who bears the stormcloud,
rolling back and forth and begging for him.
265 Now you can halt and take your breath, while I
persuade him into combat face to face."

These were Athena's orders. He complied,
relieved, and leaning hard upon the spearshaft
armed with its head of bronze. She left him there
270 and overtook Lord Hector—but she seemed
Deiphobus^o in form and resonant voice,
appearing at his shoulder, saying swiftly:
"Ai! Dear brother, how he runs, Achilles,
harrying you around the town of Priam!
275 Come, we'll stand and take him on."

271. **Deiphobus** (de-if'ō-bēs): one of Hector's brothers.

To this,

great Hector in his shimmering helm replied:

"Deiphobus, you were the closest to me
in the old days, of all my brothers, sons
of Hecuba and Priam. Now I can say
280 I honor you still more
because you dared this foray for my sake,
seeing me run. The rest stay under cover."

Again the gray-eyed goddess spoke:

"Dear brother, how your father and gentle mother
285 begged and begged me to remain! So did
the soldiers round me, all undone by fear.
But in my heart I ached for you.
Now let us fight him, and fight hard.
No holding back. We'll see if this Achilles
290 conquers both, to take our armor seaward,
or if he can be brought down by your spear."

This way, by guile, Athena led him on.
And when at last the two men faced each other,
Hector was the first to speak. He said:

295 "I will no longer fear you as before,
son of Peleus, though I ran from you
round Priam's town three times and could not face you.
Now my soul would have me stand and fight,



Vase depicting Achilles.

whether I kill you or am killed. So come,
300 we'll summon gods here as our witnesses,
none higher, arbiters^o of a pact: I swear
that, terrible as you are,
I'll not insult your corpse should Zeus allow me
victory in the end, your life as prize.
305 Once I have your gear, I'll give your body
back to Achaeans. Grant me, too, this grace."

301. arbiters: judges.

But swift Achilles frowned at him and said:

"Hector, I'll have no talk of pacts with you,
forever unforgiven as you are.

310 As between men and lions there are none,
no concord between wolves and sheep, but all
hold one another hateful through and through,
so there can be no courtesy between us,
no sworn truce, till one of us is down
315 and glutting with his blood the wargod Ares.
Summon up what skills you have. By god,
you'd better be a spearman and a fighter!
Now there is no way out. Pallas Athena
will have the upper hand of you. The weapon
320 belongs to me. You'll pay the reckoning
in full for all the pain my men have borne,
who met death by your spear."

He twirled and cast

his shaft with its long shadow. Splendid Hector,
keeping his eye upon the point, eluded it
325 by ducking at the instant of the cast,
so shaft and bronze shank passed him overhead
and punched into the earth. But unperceived
by Hector, Pallas Athena plucked it out
and gave it back to Achilles. Hector said:

330 "A clean miss. Godlike as you are,
you have not yet known doom for me from Zeus.
You thought you had, by heaven. Then you turned
into a word-thrower, hoping to make me lose
my fighting heart and head in fear of you.
335 You cannot plant your spear between my shoulders
while I am running. If you have the gift,
just put it through my chest as I come forward.
Now it's for you to dodge my own. Would god
you'd give the whole shaft lodging in your body!



HECTOR KILLED BY ACHILLES, PETER PAUL RUBENS (1577–1640).

② **How do Hector and Achilles differ as heroes? With which hero do you most identify? Why?**

340 War for the Trojans would be eased
if you were blotted out, bane^o that you are."

With this he twirled his long spearshaft and cast it,
hitting his enemy mid-shield, but off
and away the spear rebounded. Furious

345 that he had lost it, made his throw for nothing,
Hector stood bemused. He had no other.

Then he gave a great shout to Deiphobus
to ask for a long spear. But there was no one
near him, not a soul. Now in his heart

350 the Trojan realized the truth and said:

"This is the end. The gods are calling deathward.
I had thought

a good soldier, Deiphobus, was with me.
He is inside the walls. Athena tricked me.

355 Death is near, and black, not at a distance,
not to be evaded. Long ago

this hour must have been to Zeus's liking
and to the liking of his archer son.^o

They have been well disposed before, but now

341. **bane:** the cause of distress, death, or ruin.

358. **archer son:** Apollo.

360 the appointed time's upon me. Still, I would not
die without delivering a stroke,
or die ingloriously, but in some action
memorable to men in days to come."

With this he drew the whetted blade that hung
365 upon his left flank, ponderous and long,
collecting all his might the way an eagle
narrows himself to dive through shady cloud
and strike a lamb or cowering hare: so Hector
lanced ahead and swung his whetted blade.

370 Achilles with wild fury in his heart
pulled in upon his chest his beautiful shield—
his helmet with four burnished metal ridges
nodding above it, and the golden crest
Hephaestus^o locked there tossing in the wind,

375 Conspicuous as the evening star that comes,
amid the first in heaven, at fall of night,
and stands most lovely in the west, so shone
in sunlight the fine-pointed spear

Achilles poised in his right hand, with deadly
380 aim at Hector, at the skin where most
it lay exposed. But nearly all was covered
by the bronze gear he took from slain Patroclus,
showing only, where his collarbones
divided neck and shoulders, the bare throat

385 where the destruction of a life is quickest.
Here, then, as the Trojan charged, Achilles
drove his point straight through the tender neck,
but did not cut the windpipe, leaving Hector
able to speak and to respond. He fell

390 aside into the dust. And Prince Achilles
now exulted:

"Hector, had you thought
that you could kill Patroclus and be safe?
Nothing to dread from me; I was not there.
All childishness. Though distant then, Patroclus's
395 comrade in arms was greater far than he—
and it is I who had been left behind
that day beside the deep-sea ships who now
have made your knees give way. The dogs and kites
will rip your body. His will lie in honor
400 when the Achaeans give him funeral."

374. **Hephaestus** (hē-fes'təs): the blacksmith of the gods, who forged new arms for Achilles after Patroclus, wearing Achilles' armor, was slain by Hector.

Hector, barely whispering, replied:

"I beg you by your soul and by your parents,
do not let the dogs feed on me
in your encampment by the ships. Accept
405 the bronze and gold my father will provide
as gifts, my father and her ladyship
my mother. Let them have my body back,
so that our men and women may accord me
decency of fire when I am dead."

410 Achilles the great runner scowled and said:

"Beg me no beggary by soul or parents,
whining dog! Would god my passion drove me
to slaughter you and eat you raw, you've caused
such agony to me! No man exists
415 who could defend you from the carrion pack—
not if they spread for me ten times your ransom,
twenty times, and promise more as well;
aye, not if Priam, son of Dardanus,
tells them to buy you for your weight in gold!
420 You'll have no bed of death, nor will you be
laid out and mourned by her who gave you birth.
Dogs and birds will have you, every scrap."

Then at the point of death Lord Hector said:

"I see you now for what you are. No chance
425 to win you over. Iron in your breast
your heart is. Think a bit, though: this may be
a thing the gods in anger hold against you
on that day when Paris and Apollo
destroy you at the Gates,^o great as you are."

430 Even as he spoke, the end came, and death hid him;
spirit from body fluttered to undergloom,
bewailing fate that made him leave his youth
and manhood in the world. And as he died
Achilles spoke again. He said:

435 "Die, make an end. I shall accept my own
whenever Zeus and the other gods desire."
At this he pulled his spearhead from the body,
laying it aside, and stripped
the bloodstained shield and cuirass^o from his shoulders.
440 Other Achaeans hastened round to see

428–429. **Paris . . . Gates:**
Achilles is later slain by Paris,
who shoots an arrow into
Achilles' heel, the only part
of his body that is vulnerable.

439. **cuirass (kwi-ras')**: armor pro-
tecting the breast and back.

Hector's fine body and his comely face,
and no one came who did not stab the body.
Glancing at one another they would say:

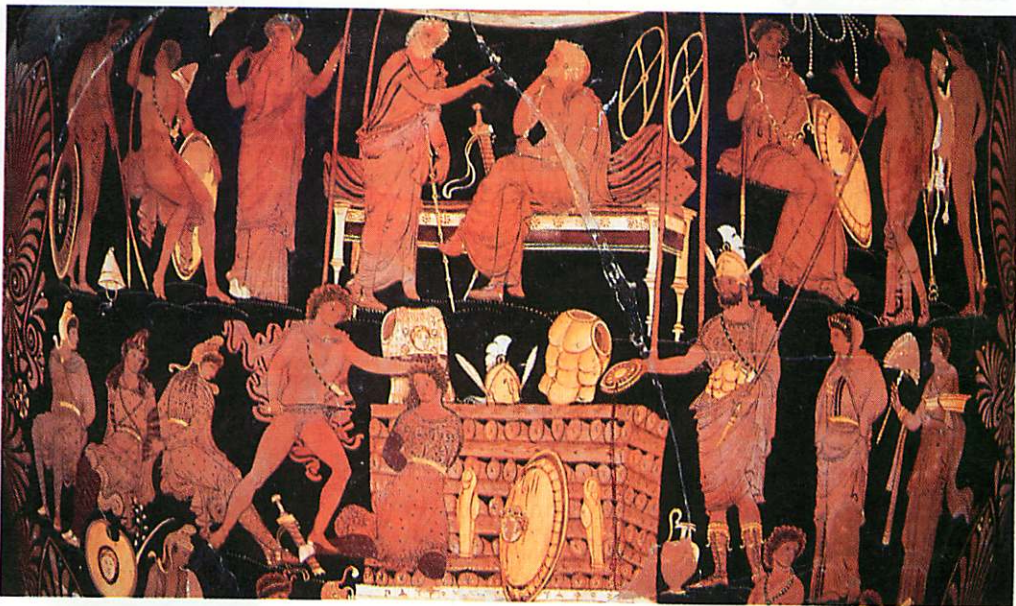
445 "Now Hector has turned vulnerable, softer
than when he put the torches to the ships!"

And he who said this would inflict a wound.
When the great master of pursuit, Achilles,
had the body stripped, he stood among them,
saying swiftly:

450 "Friends, my lords and captains
of Argives, now that the gods at last have let me
bring to earth this man who wrought
havoc among us—more than all the rest—
come, we'll offer battle around the city,
to learn the intentions of the Trojans now.
455 Will they give up their strongpoint^o at this loss?
Can they fight on, though Hector's dead?

455. **strongpoint:** Troy.

But wait:
why do I ponder, why take up these questions?
Down by the ships Patroclus's body lies
unwept, unburied. I shall not forget him



Alinari/Art Resource, New York

The funeral of Patroclus.

? What effect does Patroclus's death have on the events of the Trojan War?

while I can keep my feet among the living.
If in the dead world they forget the dead,
I say there, too, I shall remember him,
my friend. Men of Achaea, lift a song!
Down to the ships we go, and take this body,
465 our glory. We have beaten Hector down,
to whom as to a god the Trojans prayed.”

Indeed, he had in mind for Hector's body
outrage and shame. Behind both feet he pierced
the tendons, heel to ankle. Rawhide cords
470 he drew through both and lashed them to his chariot,
letting the man's head trail. Stepping aboard,
bearing the great trophy of the arms,^o
he shook the reins, and whipped the team ahead
into a willing run. A dustcloud rose
475 above the furrowing body; the dark tresses
flowed behind, and the head so princely once
lay back in dust. Zeus gave him to his enemies
to be defiled in his own fatherland.

So his whole head was blackened. Looking down,
480 his mother tore her braids, threw off her veil,
and wailed, heartbroken to behold her son.
Piteously his father groaned, and round him
lamentation spread throughout the town,
most like the clamor to be heard if Ilion's
485 towers, top to bottom, seethed in flames.
They barely stayed the old man, mad with grief,
from passing through the gates. Then in the mire
he rolled, and begged them all, each man by name:
"Relent, friends. It is hard; but let me go
490 out of the city to the Achaean ships.
I'll make my plea to that demonic heart.
He may feel shame before his peers, or pity
my old age. His father, too, is old.
Peleus, who brought him up to be a scourge
495 to Trojans, cruel to all, but most to me,
so many of my sons in flower of youth
he cut away. And, though I grieve, I cannot
mourn them all as much as I do one,
for whom my grief will take me to the grave—
500 and that is Hector. Why could he not have died
where I might hold him? In our weeping, then,
his mother, now so destitute, and I

472. **great trophy of the arms:**
Hector's armor.



Black-figured panel amphora
depicting dueling figures.

might have had surfeit^o and relief of tears."

503. **surfeit**: an excess of.

505 These were the words of Priam as he wept,
and all his people groaned. Then in her turn
Hecuba led the women in lamentation:

"Child, I am lost now. Can I bear my life
after the death of suffering your death?
You were my pride in all my nights and days,
510 pride of the city, pillar to the Trojans
and Trojan women. Everyone looked to you
as though you were a god, and rightly so.
You were their greatest glory while you lived.
Now your doom and death have come upon you."

515 These were her mournful words. But Hector's lady
still knew nothing; no one came to tell her
of Hector's stand outside the gates. She wove
upon her loom, deep in the lofty house,
a double purple web with rose design.

520 Calling her maids in waiting,
she ordered a big caldron on a tripod
set on the hearthfire, to provide a bath
for Hector when he came home from the fight.
Poor wife, how far removed from baths he was
525 she could not know, as at Achilles' hands
Athena brought him down.

Then from the tower
she heard a wailing and a distant moan.
Her knees shook, and she let her shuttle^o fall,
and called out to her maids again:

528. **shuttle**: as used here, an instrument that carries thread back and forth; used in the craft of weaving.

"Come here.

530 Two must follow me, to see this action.
I heard my husband's queenly mother cry.
I feel my heart rise, throbbing in my throat.
My knees are like stone under me. Some blow
is coming home to Priam's sons and daughters.
535 Ah, could it never reach my ears! I die
of dread that Achilles may have cut off Hector,
blocked my bold husband from the city wall,
to drive him down the plain alone! By now
he may have ended Hector's deathly pride.
540 He never kept his place amid the chariots
but drove ahead. He would not be outdone
by anyone in courage."

Saying this, she ran

like a madwoman through the megaron,^o
her heart convulsed. Her maids kept at her side.

545 On reaching the great tower and the soldiers,
Andromache stood gazing from the wall
and saw him being dragged before the city.
Chariot horses at a brutal gallop
pulled the torn body toward the decked ships.

550 Blackness of night covered her eyes; she fell
backward swooning, sighing out her life,
and let her shining headdress fall, her hood
and diadem,^o her plaited band and veil
that Aphrodite once had given her,

555 on that day when, from Eetion's house,
for a thousand bridal gifts, Lord Hector led her.
Now, at her side, kinswomen of her lord
supported her among them, dazed and faint
to the point of death. But when she breathed again
560 and her stunned heart recovered, in a burst
of sobbing she called out among the women:

"Hector! Here is my desolation. Both
had this in store from birth—from yours in Troy
in Priam's palace, mine by wooded Placus

565 at Thebe in the home of Eetion,
my father, who took care of me in childhood,
a man cursed by fate, a fated daughter.
How I could wish I never had been born!
Now under earth's roof to the house of Death

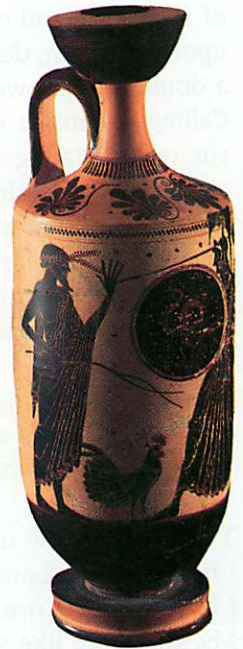
570 you go your way and leave me here, bereft,
lonely, in anguish without end. The child
we wretches had is still in infancy;
you cannot be a pillar to him, Hector,
now you are dead, nor he to you. And should

575 this boy escape the misery of the war,
there will be toil and sorrow for him later,
as when strangers move his boundary stones.
The day that orphans him will leave him lonely,
downcast in everything, cheeks wet with tears,

580 in hunger going to his father's friends
to tug at one man's cloak, another's chiton.^o
Some will be kindly: one may lift a cup
to wet his lips at least, though not his throat;
but from the board some child with living parents

543. **megaron** (meg'ə-rän): the central hall of the house.

553. **diadem**: ornamental head-band.



Vase showing a black-figured Lekythos, c. 500-485 B.C. This vase is attributed to the "Athena Master," an unknown Greek sculptor thought to be responsible for many surviving renderings of Athena.

581. **chiton** (kī'tən): a tunic.



Greek coins, or drachmas (dräk' mas), depicting Aphrodite, c. 4th century B.C.

Lee Boltin Picture Library

585 gives him a push, a slap, with biting words:
 'Outside, you there! Your father is not with us
 here at our feast!' And the boy Astyanax
 will run to his forlorn mother. Once he fed
 on marrow only and the fat of lamb,
 590 high on his father's knees. And when sleep came
 to end his play, he slept in a nurse's arms,
 brimful of happiness, in a soft bed.
 But now he'll know sad days and many of them,
 missing his father. 'Lord of the lower town'
 595 the Trojans call him. They know, you alone,
 Lord Hector, kept their gates and their long walls.
 Beside the beaked ships now, far from your kin,
 the blowflies' maggots in a swarm will eat you
 naked, after the dogs have had their fill.
 600 Ah, there are folded garments in your chambers,
 delicate and fine, of women's weaving.
 These, by heaven, I'll burn to the last thread
 in blazing fire! They are no good to you,
 they cannot cover you in death. So let them
 605 go, let them be burnt as an offering
 from Trojans and their women in your honor."
 Thus she mourned, and the women wailed in answer.



BOOK 24: Priam and Achilles

After he slays Hector in Book 22, Achilles prepares for Patroclus's ceremonial funeral. When the Greeks burn Patroclus's body, they also hold elaborate athletic contests, a custom in funeral services for distinguished men (Book 23).

As Book 24 opens, Achilles is still so enraged at Hector's killing of Patroclus that he refuses to give up Hector's body for burial. This is a particularly offensive form of revenge, for both the Greeks and Trojans

believed that certain funeral rites were necessary before the soul of a dead person could find rest. Achilles' shameful treatment of Hector's body offends Zeus, and he finally orders Achilles to give up the body to Priam. The aged king, bowed with grief and bearing a rich ransom to exchange for his son's corpse, is escorted to the Greek camp by the god Hermes, who is disguised as a young man.

- Now night had fallen,
- bringing the sentries to their supper fire,
but the glimmering god Hermes, the Wayfinder,
showered a mist of slumber on them all.
- 5 As quick as thought, he had the gates unbarred
and open to let the wagon enter, bearing
the old king and the ransom.

- Going seaward
- they came to the lofty quarters of Achilles,
a lodge the Myrmidons built for their lord
- 10 of pine trees cut and trimmed, and shaggy thatch
from mowings in deep meadows. Posts were driven
round the wide courtyard in a palisade,
whose gate one crossbar held, one beam of pine.
It took three men to slam this home, and three
- 15 to draw the bolt again—but great Achilles
worked his entryway alone with ease.
And now Hermes, who lights the way for mortals,
opened for Priam, took him safely in
with all his rich gifts for the son of Peleus.
- 20 Then the god dropped the reins, and stepping down
he said:

"I am no mortal wagoner,
but Hermes, sir. My father^o sent me here
to be your guide amid the Achaean men.



Greek vase depicting Achilles and Ajax playing dice.

22. father: Zeus.

Now that is done, I'm off to heaven again
25 and will not visit Achilles. That would be
to compromise an immortal's dignity—
to be received with guests of mortal station.
Go take his knees, and make your supplication:
invoke his father, his mother, and his child;
30 pray that his heart be touched, that he be reconciled."

Now Hermes turned, departing for Olympus,
and Priam vaulted down. He left Idaeus^o
to hold the teams in check, while he went forward
into the lodge. He found Achilles, dear
35 to Zeus, there in his chair, with officers
at ease across the room. Only Automedon^o
and Alcimus^o were busy near Achilles,
for he had just now made an end of dinner,
eating and drinking, and the laden boards
40 lay near him still upon the trestles.

32. **Idaeus** (ī'dē'əs): the herald of the Trojans.

36. **Automedon** (ō-tām'ə-dän): Achilles' charioteer.

37. **Alcimus** (al-sī'məs): son of Ares, the god of war.

Priam,

the great king of Troy, passed by the others,
knelt down, took in his arms Achilles' knees,
and kissed the hands of wrath that killed his sons.

When, taken with mad Folly in his own land,
45 a man does murder and in exile finds
refuge in some rich house, then all who see him
stand in awe.
So these men stood.

Achilles

gazed in wonder at the splendid king,
50 and his companions marveled too, all silent,
with glances to and fro. Now Priam prayed
to the man before him:

"Remember your own father,

Achilles, in your godlike youth: his years
like mine are many, and he stands upon
the fearful doorstep of old age. He, too,
55 is hard pressed, it may be, by those around him,
there being no one able to defend him
from bane of war and ruin. Ah, but he
may nonetheless hear news of you alive,
60 and so with glad heart hope through all his days
for sight of his dear son, come back from Troy,
while I have deathly fortune.

Alinari/Art Resource, New York



Vase with detail of Hermes.
Hermes—the messenger god as well as the god of travelers—is identified by the staff he carries and the wings on his feet.

Noble sons

I fathered here, but scarce one man is left me.
Fifty I had when the Achaeans came,
65 nineteen out of a single belly, others
born of attendant women. Most are gone.
Raging Ares cut their knees from under them.
And he who stood alone among them all,
their champion, and Troy's, ten days ago
70 you killed him, fighting for his land, my prince,
Hector.

It is for him that I have come
among these ships, to beg him back from you,
and I bring ransom without stint.^o

73. **without stint:** unlimited, unrestricted.

Achilles,

be reverent toward the great gods! And take
75 pity on me, remember your own father.
Think me more pitiful by far, since I
have brought myself to do what no man else
has done before—to lift to my lips the hand
of one who killed my son.”

Now in Achilles

80 the evocation of his father stirred
new longing, and an ache of grief. He lifted
the old man's hand and gently put him by.
Then both were overborne as they remembered:
the old king huddled at Achilles' feet
85 wept, and wept for Hector, killer of men,
while great Achilles wept for his own father
as for Patroclus once again; and sobbing
filled the room.

But when Achilles' heart
had known the luxury of tears, and pain
90 within his breast and bones had passed away,
he stood then, raised the old king up, in pity
for his gray head and graybeard cheek, and spoke
in a warm rush of words:

—“Ah, sad and old!

Trouble and pain you've borne, and bear, aplenty.
95 Only a great will could have brought you here
among the Achaean ships, and here alone
before the eyes of one who stripped your sons,



Detail of vase depicting Priam.

your many sons, in battle. Iron must be
the heart within you. Come, then, and sit down.
100 We'll probe our wounds no more but let them rest,
though grief lies heavy on us. Tears heal nothing,
drying so stiff and cold. This is the way
the gods ordained the destiny of men,
to bear such burdens in our lives, while they
105 feel no affliction. At the door of Zeus
are those two urns^o of good and evil gifts
that he may choose for us; and one for whom
the lightning's joyous king dips in both urns
will have by turns bad luck and good. But one
110 to whom he sends all evil—that man goes
contemptible by the will of Zeus; ravenous
hunger drives him over the wondrous earth,
unresting, without honor from gods or men.
Mixed fortune came to Peleus. Shining gifts
115 at the gods' hands he had from birth: felicity,
wealth overflowing, rule of the Myrmidons,
a bride immortal at his mortal side.
But then Zeus gave afflictions too—no family
of powerful sons grew up for him at home,
120 but one child, of all seasons and of none.
Can I stand by him in his age? Far from my country
I sit at Troy to grieve you and your children.
You, too, sir, in time past were fortunate,
we hear men say. From Macar's isle of Lesbos
125 northward, and south of Phrygia and the Straits,^o
no one had wealth like yours, or sons like yours.
Then gods out of the sky sent you this bitterness:
the years of siege, the battles and the losses.
Endure it, then. And do not mourn forever
130 for your dead son. There is no remedy.
You will not make him stand again. Rather
await some new misfortune to be suffered."

The old king in his majesty replied:

"Never give me a chair, my lord, while Hector
135 lies in your camp uncared for. Yield him to me
now. Allow me sight of him. Accept
the many gifts I bring. May they reward you,
and may you see your home again.
You spared my life at once and let me live."

106. urns: vases with feet or pedestals.

125. the Straits: the Dardanelles, narrow waterway between the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara.



Menelaus and the dead Patroclus.
 ? Based on events in the Iliad, what can you infer about the Greek warrior code? What values were Greek warriors willing to die for? What actions did they consider dishonorable?

140 Achilles, the great runner, frowned and eyed him under his brows:

"Do not vex me, sir," he said.

"I have intended, in my own good time, to yield up Hector to you. She who bore me,^o the daughter of the Ancient of the sea,

143. She who bore me: Thetis.

145 has come with word to me from Zeus. I know in your case, too—though you say nothing, Priam—that some god guided you to the shipways here. No strong man in his best days could make entry into this camp. How could he pass the guard,

150 or force our gateway?

Therefore, let me be.

Sting my sore heart again, and even here, under my own roof, suppliant though you are, I may not spare you, sir, but trample on the express command of Zeus!"

When he heard this,

155 the old man feared him and obeyed with silence.

Now like a lion at one bound Achilles
left the room. Close at his back the officers
Automedon and Alcimus went out—

160 comrades in arms whom he esteemed the most
after the dead Patroclus. They unharnessed
mules and horses, led the old king's crier
to a low bench and sat him down.

Then from the polished wagon
they took the piled-up price of Hector's body.

165 One chiton and two capes they left aside
as dress and shrouding for the homeward journey.

Then, calling to the women slaves, Achilles
ordered the body bathed and rubbed with oil—
but lifted, too, and placed apart, where Priam

170 could not see his son—for seeing Hector
he might in his great pain give way to rage,
and fury then might rise up in Achilles
to slay the old king, flouting Zeus's word.

So after bathing and anointing Hector

175 they drew the shirt and beautiful shrouding over him.

Then with his own hands lifting him, Achilles
laid him upon a couch, and with his two
companions aiding, placed him in the wagon.

Now a bitter groan burst from Achilles,

180 who stood and prayed to his own dead friend:

"Patroclus,

do not be angry with me, if somehow
even in the world of Death you learn of this—
that I released Prince Hector to his father.

The gifts he gave were not unworthy. Aye,

185 and you shall have your share, this time as well."

The Prince Achilles turned back to his quarters.

He took again the splendid chair that stood
against the farther wall, then looked at Priam
and made his declaration:

"As you wished, sir,

190 the body of your son is now set free.

He lies in state. At the first sight of Dawn
you shall take charge of him yourself and see him.

Now let us think of supper. We are told

that even Niobe in her extremity
 195 took thought for bread—though all her brood had perished,
 her six young girls and six tall sons. Apollo,
 making his silver longbow whip and sing,
 shot the lads down, and Artemis with raining
 arrows killed the daughters—all this after
 200 Niobe had compared herself with Leto,
 the smooth-cheeked goddess.

She has borne two children,
 Niobe said, How many have I borne!
 But soon those two destroyed the twelve.

Besides,
 nine days the dead lay stark, no one could bury them,
 205 for Zeus had turned all folk of theirs to stone.
 The gods made graves for them on the tenth day,
 and then at last, being weak and spent with weeping,
 Niobe thought of food. Among the rocks
 of Sipylus' lonely mountainside, where nymphs
 210 who race Achelous's° river go to rest,
 she, too, long turned to stone, somewhere broods on
 the gall immortal gods gave her to drink.°

210. **Achelous** (ə-kel'ō-əs): a river god

194–212. **Niobe** (nī'ō-bə') . . .
drink: a woman whose children were killed by the goddess Artemis and the god Apollo because she boasted of her superiority to their mother, Leto; Niobe was then turned into a pillar of stone, from which her tears are still said to flow. This pillar of stone is on a mountain called Sipylus (si'pil-əs) in Asia Minor.

Like her we'll think of supper, noble sir.
 Weep for your son again when you have borne him
 215 back to Troy; there he'll be mourned indeed."
 In one swift movement now Achilles caught
 and slaughtered a white lamb. His officers
 flayed it, skillful in their butchering
 to dress the flesh; they cut bits for the skewers,
 220 roasted, and drew them off, done to a turn.
 Automedon dealt loaves into the baskets
 on the great board; Achilles served the meat.
 Then all their hands went out upon the supper.
 When thirst and appetite were turned away,
 225 Priam, the heir of Dardanos, gazed long
 in wonder at Achilles' form and scale—
 so like the gods in aspect. And Achilles
 in his turn gazed in wonder upon Priam,
 royal in visage° as in speech. Both men
 230 in contemplation found rest for their eyes,
 till the old hero, Priam, broke the silence:

229. **visage:** face, expression.

"Make a bed ready for me, son of Thetis,
 and let us know the luxury of sleep.

From that hour when my son died at your hands
235 till now, my eyelids have not closed in slumber
over my eyes, but groaning where I sat
I tasted pain and grief a thousandfold,
or lay down rolling in my courtyard mire.
Here for the first time I have swallowed bread
240 and made myself drink wine.

Before, I could not."

Achilles ordered men and serving women
to make a bed outside, in the covered forecourt,
with purple rugs piled up and sheets outspread
and coverings of fleeces laid on top.
245 The girls went out with torches in their hands
and soon deftly made up a double bed.
Then Achilles, defiant of Agamemnon,
told his guest:

"Dear venerable sir,

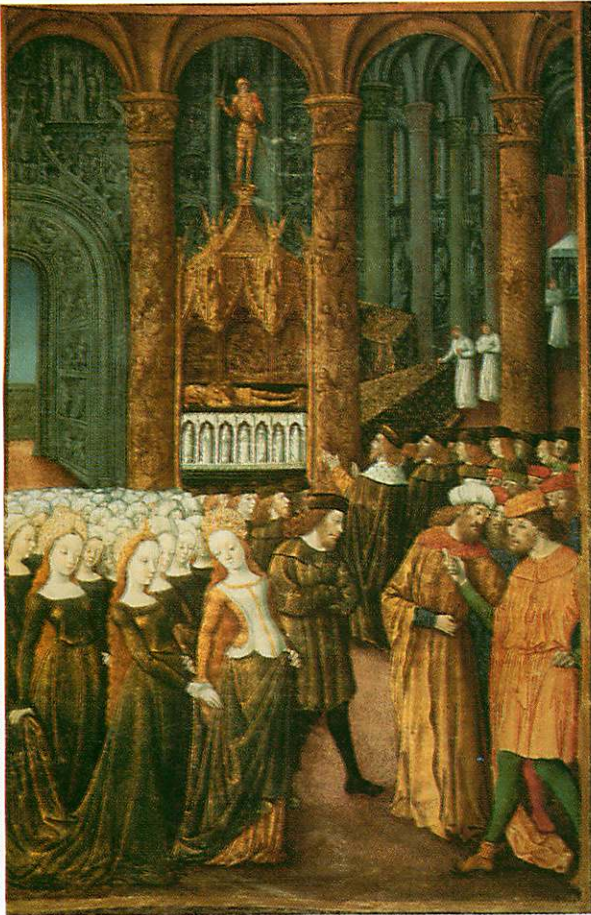
you'll sleep outside tonight, in case an Achaean
250 officer turns up, one of those men
who are forever taking counsel with me—
as well they may. If one should see you here
as the dark night runs on, he would report it
to the Lord Marshal Agamemnon. Then
255 return of the body would only be delayed.
Now tell me this, and give me a straight answer:
How many days do you require
for the funeral of Prince Hector?—I should know
how long to wait, and hold the Achaean army."

260 Old Priam in his majesty replied:

"If you would have me carry out the burial,
Achilles, here is the way to do me grace.
As we are penned in the town, but must bring wood
from the distant hills, the Trojans are afraid.
265 We should have mourning for nine days in hall,
then on the tenth conduct his funeral
and feast the troops and commons;
on the eleventh we should make his tomb,
and on the twelfth give battle, if we must."

270 Achilles said:

"As you command, old Priam,



PRIAM BEFORE HECTOR'S TOMB IN THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO, from the studio of Colombe, c. 1500. This scene is a medieval rendering of the story of Troy.

the thing is done. I shall suspend the war
for those eleven days that you require."
He took the old man's right hand by the wrist
and held it, to allay his fear.

Now crier

- 275 and king with hearts brimful retired to rest
in the sheltered forecourt, while Achilles slept
deep in his palisaded lodge. Beside him,
lovely in her youth, Briseis^o lay.
And other gods and soldiers all night long,
280 by slumber quieted, slept on. But slumber
would not come to Hermes the Good Companion,
as he considered how to ease the way
for Priam from the camp, to send him through
unseen by the formidable gatekeepers.
285 Then Hermes came to Priam's pillow, saying:

278. **Briseis:** In order to appease Achilles, Agamemnon had had Briseis returned to him.

"Sir, no thought of danger shakes your rest,
as you sleep on, being great Achilles' guest,
amid men fierce as hunters in a ring.
You triumphed in a costly ransoming,
290 but three times costlier your own would be
to your surviving sons—a monarch's fee—
if this should come to Agamemnon's ear
and all the Achaean host should learn that you are here."

The old king started up in fright, and woke
295 his herald. Hermes yoked the mules and horses,
took the reins, then inland like the wind
he drove through all the encampment, seen by no one.
When they reached Xanthus,^o eddying and running
god-begotten river, at the ford,
300 Hermes departed for Olympus. Dawn
spread out her yellow robe on all the earth,
as they drove on toward Troy, with groans and sighs,
and the mule-team pulled the wagon and the body.
And no one saw them, not a man or woman,
305 before Cassandra.^o Tall as the pale-gold
goddess Aphrodite, she had climbed
the citadel of Pergamus^o at dawn.
Now looking down she saw her father come
in his war-car, and saw the crier there,
310 and saw Lord Hector on his bed of death
upon the mulecart. The girl wailed and cried
to all the city:

"Oh, look down, look down,
go to your windows, men of Troy, and women,
see Lord Hector now! Remember joy
315 at seeing him return alive from battle,
exalting all our city and our land!"

Now, at the sight of Hector, all gave way
to loss and longing, and all crowded down
to meet the escort and body near the gates,
320 till no one in the town was left at home.
There Hector's lady and his gentle mother
tore their hair for him, flinging themselves
upon the wagon to embrace his person
while the crowd groaned. All that long day
325 until the sun went down they might have mourned
in tears before the gateway. But old Priam

298. **Xanthus** (zan'thēs): also called *Scamander*.

305. **Cassandra** (kə-san'drə): a daughter of Priam and Hecuba; in Greek mythology, Apollo gives her the gift of prophecy, but when she rejects his advances, he decrees that no one will believe her predictions. She figures more prominently in other versions of the Trojan War legend, such as in Euripides' drama *The Trojan Women*.
307. **Pergamus** (pur'gə-mēs): the citadel, or fortress, of Troy.

spoke to them from his chariot:

"Make way,

let the mules pass. You'll have your fill of weeping
later, when I've brought the body home."

330 They parted then, and made way for the wagon,
allowing Priam to reach the famous hall.
They laid the body of Hector in his bed,
and brought in minstrels, men to lead the dirge.^o
While these wailed out, the women answered, moaning.

333. **dirge:** funeral hymn.

335 Andromache of the ivory-white arms
held in her lap between her hands
the head of Hector who had killed so many.
Now she lamented:

"You've been torn from life,

my husband, in young manhood, and you leave me
340 empty in our hall. The boy's a child
whom you and I, poor souls, conceived; I doubt
he'll come to manhood. Long before, great Troy
will go down plundered, citadel and all,
now that you are lost, who guarded it
345 and kept it, and preserved its wives and children.
They will be shipped off in the murmuring hulls
one day, and I along with all the rest.

You, my little one, either you come with me
to do some grinding labor, some base toil
350 for a harsh master, or an Achaean soldier
will grip you by the arm and hurl you down
from a tower^o here to a miserable death—
out of his anger for a brother, a father,
or even a son that Hector killed. Achaeans
355 in hundreds mouthed black dust under his blows.
He was no moderate man in war, your father,
and that is why they mourn him through the city.
Hector, you gave your parents grief and pain
but left me loneliest, and heartbroken.

351–352. **hurl you down from a tower:** Indeed, after the fall of Troy, Astyanax was thrown by the Greek conquerors from the walls of the city.

360 You could not open your strong arms to me
from your deathbed, or say a thoughtful word,
for me to cherish all my life long
as I weep for you night and day."

Her voice broke,

and a wail came from the women. Hecuba
365 lifted her lamenting voice among them:

"Hector, dearest of sons to me, in life
you had the favor of the immortal gods,
and they have cared for you in death as well.
Achilles captured other sons of mine
370 in other years, and sold them overseas
to Samos, Imbros, and the smoky island,
Lemnos.^o That was not his way with you.
After he took your life, cutting you down
with his sharp-bladed spear, he trussed and dragged you
375 many times round the barrow^o of his friend,
Patroclus, whom you killed—though not by this
could that friend live again. But now I find you
fresh as pale dew, seeming newly dead,
like one to whom Apollo of the silver bow
380 had given easy death with his mild arrows."

Hecuba sobbed again, and the wails redoubled.
Then it was Helen's turn to make lament:

"Dear Hector, dearest brother to me by far!
My husband is Alexandros,
385 who brought me here to Troy—God, that I might
have died sooner! This is the twentieth year
since I left home, and left my fatherland.
But never did I have an evil word
or gesture from you. No—and when some other
390 brother-in-law or sister would revile me,
or if my mother-in-law spoke to me bitterly—
but Priam never did, being as mild
as my own father—you would bring her round
with your kind heart and gentle speech. Therefore
395 I weep for you and for myself as well,
given this fate, this grief. In all wide Troy
no one is left who will befriend me, none;
they all shudder at me."

Helen wept,

and a moan came from the people, hearing her.
400 Then Priam, the old king, commanded them:
"Trojans, bring firewood to the edge of town.
No need to fear an ambush of the Argives.
When he dismissed me from the camp, Achilles
told me clearly they will not harass us,
405 not until dawn comes for the twelfth day."

371–372. **Samos** (sā'mäs), **Imbros** (im'bräs) . . . **Lemnos** (lem'näs): islands in the Aegean Sea.

375. **barrow**: a mound of earth and stones built over a grave.

Then yoking mules and oxen to their wagons
the people thronged before the city gates.
Nine days they labored, bringing countless loads
of firewood to the town. When Dawn that lights
410 the world of mortals came for the tenth day,
they carried greathearted Hector out at last,
and all in tears placed his dead body high
upon its pyre, then cast a torch below.
When the young Dawn with finger tips of rose
415 made heaven bright, the Trojan people massed
about Prince Hector's ritual fire.
All being gathered and assembled, first
they quenched the smoking pyre with tawny wine
wherever flames had licked their way, then friends
420 and brothers picked his white bones from the char
in sorrow, while the tears rolled down their cheeks.
In a golden urn they put the bones,
shrouding the urn with veiling of soft purple.
Then in a grave dug deep they placed it
425 and heaped it with great stones. The men were quick
to raise the death-mound, while in every quarter
lookouts were posted to ensure against
an Achaean surprise attack. When they had finished
raising the barrow, they returned to Ilion,
430 where all sat down to banquet in his honor
in the hall of Priam king. So they performed
the funeral rites of Hector, tamer of horses.



Helen and Priam. *The abduction of the Greek Helen by the Trojan Paris eventually led to the deaths of his brother Hector and his father Priam by the vengeful Greek forces.*

First Thoughts

How did you feel about Achilles' behavior toward Hector and Priam in these two books?

Identifying Facts

1. What advice do Priam and Hecuba give to Hector as he stands outside the walls of the city?
2. In lines 119–156 of Book 22, what courses of action does Hector consider and reject before fighting Achilles?
3. How does Athena deceive Hector? Why is Zeus unable to save Hector?

4. What is Hector's dying request, and how does Achilles respond to it?

5. What does Achilles agree to do to allow Hector a proper burial?

Interpreting Meanings

1. The meeting of Hector and Achilles in Book 22 is the dramatic **climax** of the *Iliad*. At this climactic confrontation, Hector trembles and then runs away. How does Homer prepare you for Hector's flight by his revelation of the Trojan's thoughts and by his description of Achilles' advance? Does Hector's action