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*The Iliad* of Homer  
Book Four  
*The Dash and Commingle  
of Oath-Bars and Inspection  
of Agamemnon Adamant*

translated by J. M. Wilcox

Now the gods sitting by Indigo Zeus were assembled  
along the golden floor, and among them queenly Hebe, zing-shot cherry-  
cheeked,  
poured the punch-honey nectar, and with golden beakers the permanent  
people  
pledged each other, clinked bumpers, beholding the city of the Trojans.  
Subito son of Kronos, Tartaros-banished, tried to vex Sky Queen Here  
with jeering heart-hewing words, speaking deviously, obliquely, mouth-  
ing fireballs:  
‘Two goddesses are helpers to Menelaos People-Resister:  
Argive Here, arced in light, and Alalkomenean Athene, Battle-Fender.  
But indeed these two, sitting apart, delight  
in seeing a remarkable spectacle; and to Paris in turn, smile-loving  
Aphrodite  
comes beside him, ever there, and wards off the doom-goddess from  
him,  
and now she saved him, deeming doom yet bright-redeemed.  
But truly victory belongs to Menelaos People-Resister, war-precious.

Now let us consider and highlight what mode these actions will take, whether again we should stir up miasmatic sticky war and grim battle din,

or strike up a friendship between both parties.

And if this, in turn, somehow would be pleasing and sweet to all, indeed the city of King Priam might still remain inhabited, and Menelaos People-Resister would lead back Argive Helen, carved in light.'

Thus he spoke, and Athene Head-Born and Here Sky Queen murmured 'mumu',

who sat near and were cocooning wicked things for the Trojans.

Indeed Athene was silent and did not speak at all,

infuriated with father Zeus, and fierce and bitter anger seized her heart; but Here's breast could not contain her acid anger, steam-boiling, so she spoke directly to him:

'Most dreadful son of Kronos, what words you mouth!

How do you plan to make my hard labor fruitless and feckless, and the hot sweat which I sweated with toil, pore-oozed? My two horses, sky-car tuckered, are weary from riding hard while I gathered the host, a maneuver bad and boding for Priam and his children.

Do what you want, but the rest of us gods do *not* approve your move.'

And ramped in anger Stormhead Zeus, cloud-integrater, addressed her:

'Queeny, what is so bad that Priam and the sons of Priam do to you, that you burn and rage around-the-clock, impetuously, to utterly wipe out the well-built citadel of Ilios?

If you, to be sure, were to enter the double gates and tall walls  
and eat Priam raw and the sons of Priam  
and the other Trojans, then you might heal and stanch your bitter  
    anger.

Do what you want; may this trivial quarrel in the future not be  
to you and to me a source of serious strife between us, this man-sake  
    sky-wrangle.

And I have something else to say to you; and nail it to your heart.

Whenever I, too, ardent to utterly empty a city,  
wish to empty one where men are born who are dear to you,  
do not in any degree try to rub away or grind down my bitter anger, but  
    let me do it;

for I give in to you willingly for harmony's sake, with an unwilling  
    vaporous heart.

For under sun and metal dome of star-welded sky  
cities of earth-dwelling soil-rich men are inhabited,  
of which sacred Ilios has been honored perpetually with all my heart,  
    circumesteemed,

and Priam and the people of Priam of the strong slender snapback  
    ashen spear.

For never did my stepped altar lack the five essential food groups, a  
    well-balanced equally-divided banquet,

both a drink-offering, sparkle-arcs, and the steam and aroma of meat  
    encharred, fat-encased thigh-bones, for we obtained this sterling boon  
    by our own doing.'

Then ox-eyed queenly Here answered him, word-exchanging:

'Indeed there are three cities super-precious to me:

Argos, Glowtown, Sparte, Scattered-Dragon-Teeth, and wide-paved  
black-topped Mukene.

Knock these down, whenever they become hateful to your heart, spite-  
cradled;

wrack these up, for I shall not stand in the way or deem it a big deal.

For even if I resent it, refuse, and try not to let you wipe them out,

I shall not achieve anything by my resentment, for truly you are far  
stronger.

But my toil too must not be made fruitless and unfulfilled;

for I also am a god, and my stock and your stock come from the same  
place,

and crooked-scheming Kronos generated me, daughter esteemed  
supreme,

both in age and on account of being called your bedmate,

while you govern and rule over all the immortals.

But indeed let us yield up these things to each other,

I to you and you to me, and the other immortal gods will follow up.

But you quite quickly order Athene, the goddess of prowess,

to go into the shrill daze and bright roar, battle-jumble of Trojans and  
Akhaioi,

and, trouble-shooting, fix things so the Trojans will be the first to  
fashion teen,

trigger tumult, oath-counterering truce-violating, for the glory-teeming  
Akhaioi.'

Thus she spoke, and the father of men and gods did not fail to comply.

Subito he spoke winged words to Athene, the goddess of prowess:

'High-tail it to the army-camp of Trojans and Akhaioi,

and, trouble-shooting, fix things so the Trojans will be the first to  
fashion teen,  
trigger tumult, oath-counterering truce-violating, for the glory-teeming  
Akhaioi.'

So speaking, he stirred up Athene of the polka-dot cape, burning to go,  
and she stepped down, descending the combled peaks of Olumpos,  
bullet-like.

As the child of crooked-scheming Kronos fades-in space-hurls a star,  
a sign for sailors or wide-band campfired armies,  
a shiner shooting off many sparks, —core-popper flame-tail!—  
so like a star did Pallas Athene Spearpumper fade-in fast, earthdashing,  
and she landed troop-centered down-bounding, and amazement held the  
beholders,  
both mustang-taming Trojans and shin-guarded spear-deflecting  
Akhaioi.

And thus someone turning an eye to his neighbor would say:  
'Indeed again there will be ugly war and gruesome battle-sounds,  
or Zeus of outer space has established friendship between both parties,  
who is fashioned and labeled and tagged by men as war-slicer, battle-  
hopper.'

Thus would one of the Akhaioi and Trojans speak.  
But Athene, the goddess of insight, slipped into the wound-up troop-  
pack, man-seeming,  
shape-shamming Laodokos People-Greeter, son of Antenor Man-Facer,  
mighty spearman,  
seeking out godlike Pandaros, hoping perhaps she might light upon him.

She found the son of Lukaon, Glowing Wolf Man, stainless and mighty,  
standing still, and flanking him the mighty ranks of shield-bearing  
troops, who followed him from the streams of Aisepos.

And standing tight she spoke winged words:

‘Won’t you listen to anything I say, son of Lukaon, Glimmer Man,  
knower of things?

Why don’t you dare to let go a quick stick at Menelaos People-Opposer,  
and gain glad grace and elevated glory among all Trojans,  
and, above all, Man-Repeller Alexandros the king.

Indeed by him you’d be first to be handed and walk off with radiant  
gifts,

if he should see Menelaos People-Opposer, warlike son of Atreus,  
subdued by his missile and mounted on a painful looming dolorous  
dooming fire-rickle.

Now get with it! Shoot your airborne arrow at glorious Menelaos  
People-Opposer,

and vow to Apollo Destroyer, wolf-born light-formed bow-famed,  
to perform a sacrifice of glorious fire-pools of protogonic first-born  
lambs

when he goes back home to the city of sacred Zeleia.’

Thus Athene, the goddess of insight, spoke, and induced the mind of the  
fool.

He quickly unhooded, detached, his well-filed bow of polished horn  
sawn off a bounding full-grown ibex,

which he himself on a hunt had hit below the breast,  
after stepping out from behind a rock while waiting to take her in  
ambush,

striking her heart; and she fell back on a rock—air-leap blow-shock!  
From her head horns blossomed sixteen palms, from pollex to pinkie,  
—span-spark!—

and these the hornscraper bowmaker worked down, fixed up, enlaced  
into a brilliant-bound ensemble, —twang-twink!—

and rubbed smooth the total surface, coruscating keratin, before he set  
the hooky golden loop-catcher bow-tip upon it.

He strained and strung and set the bow squarely down while bending it  
upon the ground into a maximal reflex,

and his brave and clanlike comrades held their tight-packed shields in  
front,

lest the warlike sons of the Akhaioi make the first move, dart-like,  
before Menelaos People-Opporter, warlike son of Atreus, was missile-  
hit.

Then he stripped off the lid of his quiver, back-borne, and took out an  
arrow,

never-shot, motley-feathered, source and base of dark and loaded pains,  
and he quickly fit the pointed pinewood airborne arrow to the bow-  
string in beautiful sequence, brilliant harmony,

and vowed to Apollo Destroyer, wolf-born light-formed bow-famed,  
to perform a sacrifice of glorious fire-pools of first-born lambs  
when he goes back home to the city of sacred Zeleia.

He drew the bow, jointly clutching the notch of the arrow-butt X-nock  
and ox-gut;

the bowstring he brought to his breast and to the horn bow the iron  
arrow-head.

Now in truth when he strained the great bow and made an O, circle-  
spun orbit-rubbed,



the bow twanged brightly and the string throbbbed keenly, and the  
oxubelic sharpshot airborne arrow  
leaped out, burning to fly through the tight-packed troops.

Menelaos People-Opposer, the blessed blissful deathless gods did not  
forget you, celestial notice unescaped,  
and foremost the daughter of Indigo Zeus, ageleie, plunder-taker,  
who, standing before you, warded off the fire-tipped cone-pine arcing  
missile.

She blocked it from the body surface, flicking it, though slightly  
grazing, as when a mother  
shoos away a fly, skin-biter, from her child when she lies in luscious  
sleep;

and she in turn steered it where the golden belt-snaps  
were cohered and the two-piece concave breastplate met enfolding it in  
double reinforcement.

And the pointed pinewood airborne arrow homed in arc-like on the snug  
fastened combat-belt.

Then through the blazing well-metalled color-beaded jewel-embellished  
combat-belt it was hard-driven,  
and through the well-hammered many-metalled breastplate it was  
pressed and planted,

and through the underbelt, which he wore as a bodyguard, dart-thwart,  
which protected him the most, but right through this it also went.

And so the airborne arrow scraped the outer surface of man-flesh,  
and subito kelainephic dark-clouded blood, plasma pools, wound-  
gushed.

As when a woman stains ivory purple-red,  
a Meionian or Kaeirian, to be a horse-bridle cheek-piece,  
and it lies idle in a secret room, and many car-fighters  
pray to possess it, but it lies actually otiose as a majestic object for a  
king,  
potentially both an ornament for his car's mares and a glorious object  
to a charioteer;  
so, Menelaos People-Opposer, were your fibrous thighs dyed with blood  
and your shins and your dashing ankles beneath.

And thereupon Agamemnon king of men shuddered  
when he saw black blood, plasma pools, red jets, flowing from the  
wound,  
and war-precious Menelaos shuddered on the spot to boot.  
But when he saw both tight-wound arrow-head sinew and missile-barbs  
embedded outside flesh,  
his rushing breath gathered in a backflow to his breast—shock-attack!  
And King Agamemnon Stabilizer spoke among them moaning deeply,  
holding the hand of Menelaos People-Opposer, and his comrades also  
emanated moans:  
'Precious brother, now it seems I cut oath-bars for your death,  
setting you up alone before the Akhaioi to fight it out with Trojans,  
since Trojans struck you, hit by sky-projectile, and stomped and tram-  
pled trusty oath-bonds.  
But in no way is an oath-bond bootless, weight-unbearing, and blood of  
lambs  
and unblended splash-bright god-pop and hand-pledges in which we  
trusted.

For even if the Olympian does not fulfill promises subito,  
 he will fulfill them later, and payback claims a copious price,  
 demanding the heads of men and their wives and children.  
 For I know this well in my heart and soul:  
 there *will* be a day when sacred Ilios *will* be decimated,  
 and Priam and the people of Priam of the splendid slender snapback  
 ashen spear;  
 and Zeus son of Kronos, high-bleached, dweller of the upper brilliant  
 air,  
 he himself will shake and pump his dark-echoing dragon-flaming  
 snakehead-goatshield over all the people,  
 rancorous over this deception. And these things will not be unfulfilled,  
 but terrible agony for you will be mine, Menelaos,  
 if you should die and fill up your doom-crashing high-pressured life.  
 And most rebukable, a target for blame, I would go to unirrigated  
 poludipsious too-too thirsty Argos, Land of Light,  
 for immediately the Akhaioi will turn their minds to their birthland,  
 and we would relinquish to Priam and Trojans their boast and plume,  
 the busy bloom  
 of Argive Helen, Light-Carved, and the ploughed earth will rot and  
 break down your bones, ho-hum inhumed,  
 with you lying cold in Troy with mission unaccomplished.  
 And so some super-seeming overweening Trojan, jumping up and down  
 on the sepulchered mound of glorious Menelaos People-Resister, will  
 say:  
 'Too bad Agamemnon Stabilizer does not top off his bile-lather thus in  
 all his actions,  
 even as now he led here on a fruitless journey divisions of Akhaioi,

and indeed embarked and went back home to his precious birthland  
with vacant ships, empty cargo, forsaking majestic Menelaos People-  
Resister.'

Thus afterward will someone say. Then on that day may the wide earth  
yawn and suck me down—gape-drop!'

But yellow-haired Menelaos People-Resister, encheering, emboldened  
and spoke to him:

'Cheer up, and don't frighten or scare in any way the troops of the  
Akhaioi.

The sharp shaft is not stuck in a vital spot, for first in front  
my light-weight multi-colored panaiolic beam-bouncing combat-belt  
blocked it, —missile-drag—and beneath  
my girded lower breastplate-pad, and underbelt which coppersmiths  
sweat-shaped, —pound-and-blow clang-and-glow!—stopped it.'

And responding King Agamemnon Adamant spoke to him:

'I hope indeed this is the case, my dear Menelaos;  
and if so, the healing doctor will endeavor to examine and probe the  
rip-red wound and apply  
the outer ointments, which should stop the dark pain, the black ache.'

He spoke too to Talthubios, the sacred herald:

'Talthubios, as quick as you can call Makhaon, Scalpel Man, to come,  
son of Asklepios, surgeon superb,  
to take a look at warlike Menelaos, son of Atreus,  
whom some Trojan or wolf-glowing Lykian, well-skilled at bow-aiming,  
hit with airborne arrow—to him a mark of glory, to us a cause for

worry, a sorrow-trigger.’

Thus he spoke, and the sacred herald, hearing, did not disobey him,  
and he started to go down through the khalkokhitonic bronze-clad  
Akhaioi,

looking around and searching for the warrior Makhaon, Scalpel Man,  
and he marked him

standing by, and flanking him the mighty ranks of shield-bearing  
troops, who followed him from hippobotic steed-feeding Trikke.

And standing tight, strangle-close, he spoke winged words:

‘Snap to and step on it, son of Asklepios; King Agamemnon is calling  
for you to take a look at warlike Menelaos, captain of the Akhaioi,  
whom some Trojan or wolf-glowing Lykian, well-skilled at bow-aiming,  
hit with airborne arrow—to him a mark of glory, to us a cause for  
worry, a sorrow-trigger.’

Thus he spoke, and subito stirred the blood-rushing plasma-pumping  
heart in his chest.

And they started to go down through the tight-packed throng and up  
through the wide-band army camp of Akhaioi.

But when indeed they came where yellow-haired Menelaos People-  
Resister

was hit by the arrow, stick-struck, and round him were gathered the  
quantum of the cream

in a ring, the god-equal man came and stood in the middle by him,

and subito drew the quivered arrow from the snug fastened combat-  
belt,

and as it was yanked out sharp barbs bent back, broke off, crooked-

metal-caught.

And he unbound his light-weight multi-colored beam-bouncing combat-belt, and beneath his girded lower breastplate-pad, and underbelt which coppersmiths sweat-shaped—pound-and-blow clang-and-glow! But when he saw the rip-red wound, where the keen pine shot shaft down-arc'd, shut-lipped he sucked out blood and sprinkled and applied efficiently soothing balming surface ointments, which on a previous occasion the kind Kentaur, Kheiron, Five Fingers, furnished to his well-favored father.

While they were engaging encompassed Menelaos of the supreme war-scream, the ranks of the shield-bearing Trojans on-the-go came in a storm and attacked; and in turn the Akhaioi slipped on their well-wrought bright-built battle-gear, and turned their minds to battle-bliss.

At that point you would not see lambent Agamemnon slumbering, eyelid-ponderous, nor crouching down nor cringing back, nor unwilling to fight, but above all burning for man-boosting battle. For he, dismounting, left his equine team and two-wheeled well-drilled bronze-beaten war-car undeemed, and his batman-charioteer kept the snorting horses far away, Eurumedon, Wide-Patroller, son of Peiraieus' son Ptolemaios, Slugger. Agamemnon Adamant commanded him keenly to hold the stallions on

standby, for when  
 fatigue should take, usurp his limbs, while wielding power moving  
 through the many men,  
 but he on foot interlooped the ranks of men as battle-ranger, troop-  
 inspector.  
 And any of the takhupolic quick-colted Danaoi whom he would see  
 bracing for battle,  
 drawing near and standing by them he would cheer and bold them up  
 with words exquisitely:  
 ‘Argeioi, Men of Light, don’t let go of your coiled tension, your propul-  
 sive energy;  
 for father Zeus of the asteroid belt will not be a helper to liars;  
 but *who* were first to do damage counter to oath-bars,  
 body-scraping vultures will eat and pick for sure their furbished flesh,  
 their tender body surface,  
 and we in turn their precious wives and word-lacking children  
 shall lead and bring away in ships, after we latch and take the city.’

Whomever in turn he would see slacking, leaking energy, dropping back  
 from abominable combat,  
 those above all he would camp and grill with bilious words: —syllable-  
 blast!—

‘Argeioi, Men of Light, arrow-wacky, dull of voice, ignominious, *right*  
*now* have you no shame?

Why in the world do you stand thus, frozen and fazed like fawns,  
 which, when pooped from scampering over a spacy plain,  
 stop and stand still, for there is no active strength, no fending element  
 turning over in their hearts?

Thus you stand stunned, immobile and dazed, and do not fight.  
Is it that you're waiting for the Trojans to come close where your  
well-swabbed  
bright-pooped ships are drawn up on the stacked beach of the gray sea,  
so you can know if son of Kronos Circle-Maker will hold his hand in  
manual protection over you?'

Thus he ranged through the ranks of men, wielding command,  
and he came to the Kretans, going through the bunged-up throng of  
men.

Now they were gearing up for combat, flanking Idomeneus Timber-  
Tough, battle blazing through his head.

As Idomeneus Timber-Tough loomed among the front-fighters, the  
champions, like a wild boar in boldness, raw-powered,  
so Meriones was working up the rear guard.

At sight of them Agamemnon king of men exulted, smile-slashed,  
and subito he spoke with soothing words to Idomeneus Timber-Tough:  
'Idomeneus, I prize you above and beyond all Danaoi, lords of the quick  
colts,

both in combat and in other assorted assignments,  
and at covered-dish affairs, when the best of the Argeioi  
mingle in a mixing-bowl fire-eyed warlord tony party wine.

For even if the other hair-streaming Akhaioi at any rate  
drink their quantum, your cylinder stands ever full,  
just like mine, to drink and drain to your surging heart's desire.

But now, pump it up for battle like you pumped it up on past occasions  
—walk the talk, baby.'



And to him in turn Idomeneus Timber-Tough, Kretan leader, shot right back:

‘Son of Atreus, I shall be a trusty companion to you above all, a strong link,  
just as at first I promised and head down nodded, and I stand on my word.

Now go and hot-wire other hair-streaming Akhaioi  
so we can battle subito, since the Trojans interfused and jumbled oath-bars,  
while death in turn and woes and throes will rack and cark their future,  
since they were the first to break the truce, to counter and violate oath-bars.’

Thus he spoke, and son of Atreus passed on by, heart-delighted,  
and he came to the Aiantians, winding through the cluster of men,  
and the two were donning their war-gear, helmet-tuning, and a cloud of  
foot-fighters were simultaneously checking their weapons.  
Just as when from a lookout a goat-ranger sees a cloud  
coming over the open sea propelled by the galing howling rumble-snap  
of Gloom-Insuming Zephuros, West Wind,  
and to him far away it appears quite black, like thick pitch  
going over the open sea, and it brings many a harrowing hurricane,  
circumsuming storm,  
and as he spots it, quakes, and drives his goats, hypoactive, into a cave;  
suchly simultaneously along with the Aiantians did close-packed fist-  
clenched lines of platoons  
of vigorous diotrephic sky-curdled cadets move and dash  
into fire lanes of orange battle, cobalt lines of cadets, bristling and

asperous, a jagged silhouette, with tight-packed shields and hush-headed spears.

And seeing these Commander Agamemnon exulted, smile-slashed, and addressing them spoke winged words, syllable-bubbles:

‘Aiantians, leaders of the bronze-clad Argeioi,

it’s crude and loony and unbeseeing to stir you up, both of you. I don’t need to spur you on at all,

for you yourselves, utterly, command your men to fight full-force.

I wish, father Zeus and Athene and Killer Apollo,

such a storming spirit were generated in all breasts;

thus would the city of Priam the king quickly bow and teeter conquered and cracked, seized and sacked by our hands.’

Speaking thus he left them there and went to the others.

Then he found Nestor, clear-toned talker, musical mouthpiece of the

Pulioi, the Gate People,

preparing, equipping his comrades and lighting the fuse of their will to fight,

flanking mighty Pelagon, Sea Man, and Alastor, Inescapable, and

Khromios, Crash,

and Commander Haimon, Disco, and Bias, Power Man, shepherd of the people.

First he organized charioteers and lined them up with horses and cars and rear guard foot-fighters, many and proficient,

to be battle’s iron bar, combat’s bulldozer blade; and he drove poltroons between,

so even unwilling every man would fight full-throttle, at maximum pressure.

He issued orders first to the charioteers; now he monished them  
to hold their horses back, and not to drive out of control through the  
banged-up throng and many sounds of troop turbulence:

‘Let no man, trusting his car-driving skills and machismo,  
yearn to fight with the Trojans alone in front of the rest of the men,  
nor let him draw back, give ground, for you will be power-drained,  
enemy-licked.

But whatever man from his own souped-up car should come to a  
well-built stripped-down enemy war-car,  
let him lunge with his two-part lance, since certainly this would be  
better thus by far.

So also did the men before now besiege and destroy cities and walls,  
possess in their breasts this cast of purpose and hot spirit.’

Thus was the old man stirring them up, well-acquainted with long-ago  
wars.

And seeing him King Agamemnon exulted, smile-slashed,  
and addressing him he spoke winged words, syllable-bubbles:

‘Chief, just as your spirit inflames your breast, I wish  
truly your knees would follow in step and keep up, your body-strength  
be well-grounded.

But old age, the common denominator, the equalizer, rubs you hard.

How I wish  
some other man could assume your senectitude, and you turn time back,  
be a teen, meta-mingle!—retrotropic enzyme-tingle!’

And then to him the Gerenian horseman Nestor responded:

‘Son of Atreus, I myself truly above all, might wish too

that I were still the man who killed Ereuthalion, Red Sea, skybright, cut  
him down.

But no way do gods give all things to men at the same time;  
though then I was a youth, now in turn old age prods me, drags me by  
a chain.

But even so I shall interblend with charioteers and exhort them  
with words and resolutions, for this is the apanage of chiefs.  
And younger men will launch hush-headed lances, who, vim-waxed,  
weapon-bearing, are younger than I and trust their body-power.'

Thus he spoke, and son of Atreus passed on by, heart-delighted.  
He found son of Peteos, Winger, horse-striker Menestheus, Abider,  
standing by, and flanking him the Athenaioi, lords of the battle-scream.  
And scheme-teeming Odusseus Hated Man stood near.  
And flanking him ranks of Kephallenians, not power-drained or enemy-  
licked,  
stood by, for their host did not yet hear the battle-scream;  
but battle-lines of bronco-busting Trojans and Akhaioi  
had just begun to rev it up and move out, all cylinders firing. And they  
stood waiting  
for another tower of Akhaioi topping out to come upon the Trojans  
and push them back in retroaction and be the first to tackle battle, kick  
off combat.

And seeing them Agamemnon king of men chewed them out,  
and addressing them spoke winged words, syllable-bubbles:  
'O son of Peteos, Winger, Zeus-cherished king,  
and you who excels in diabolic stratagems, malicious tricks, crafty-  
minded gain-brain,

why in the world are you standing apart crouching down, fear-hunched  
and waiting for others?

It is more suitable for you both, as chiefs, to stand among the foremost  
and to hit the hell and burn of battle head-on, to auto-hurl into war's  
glare and fire,

for you are first to hear about any feast I throw too,  
whenever we Akhaioi whip up and tool out a many-dish meal for the  
chiefs.

Then it is good to eat roasted flesh and beakers  
drink of honey-sweet wine as long as you wish.

But now you would gladly observe even if ten towers of Akhaioi  
topping out  
should fight out front while you hang back and make quick work with  
ruthless bronze.'

And then to him with a crooked sneer and umbrous glare spoke scheme-  
teeming Odusseus:

'Son of Atreus, what shocking words have fled from the braces and ring  
of your teeth!

How can you say—how dare you say!—that from war we drop back, go  
slack, for we Akhaioi  
are waking up vein-slashing Ares, stirring up dark-bladed battle against  
the horse-taming Trojans.

You will see, if you wish, and if these things are objects of care to you,  
the fond father of Telemakhos Far-Fighter mixing with the front-  
fighters, champions  
of horse-taming Trojans. And you say these things are windy, airblown,  
lightweight.'

Then Commander Agamemnon smiled at him and spoke,  
as he knew he was worked up, and took back his words:  
Zeus-produced son of Laertes, Ant Man, trick-teeming Odusseus, man  
of many modes,  
I am not lambasting you in an extreme untempered tone or prodding  
you,  
for I know the smoking heart in your breast  
knows good counsel, for you ponder the same things that I do.  
Go to it, and we shall get together and make up over this in the eyeless  
future, if anything bad  
has been spoken now, and may the gods make all things metamonious,  
wind-borne.'

Speaking thus he left them there and went to the others.  
And he found the son of Tudeus of Kaludon, super-souled Diomedes  
Sky-Guarded,  
standing by his horses in his arc-welded bright-riveted war-car,  
and beside him stood Sthenelos, Mighty, Kapaneus' son.  
And when he saw him Commander Agamemnon let him have it,  
and addressing him spoke syllable-bubbles, words winged:  
'O my stars! Son of battle-minded horse-taming firehead Tudeus,  
why are you crouching, and why are you gazing at spear space?  
Tudeus certainly did not like to skulk like this,  
but preferred to fight way in front of his precious comates with the  
flame-blasting enemy,  
as they say who saw him incoiled in battle's body-slogging toils, for I to  
be sure  
never met him or saw him, but they say he ran circles around all

combateers.

Now indeed he came into the land of Mukenai without battle-aim,  
as a guest together with godlike Poluneikes, Wrangle-Monger, to  
gather a host.

They at that time were going to try to puncture and scale the holy  
mighty walls of Thebe, air-traced rhythm-built,  
and they begged in profusion the Mukenaioi to render notable allies.  
The Mukenaioi, render-willing, move commended, men commanded;  
but Zeus of the blue-flaming skies changed their minds, aims shunted  
and sheered, by exhibiting goddess-spun out-meted unturnable doom-  
imminent signs.

So when they had gone and were on their way  
and came to Asopos, deep-reeded rush-lush grass-sleepy couch-cushy,  
there in turn the Akhaioi sent Tudeus on a prearranged message-  
bearing mission.

And he left on foot, and found many Kadmeioi, Dragon-Teeth-  
Germinated,

chowing down, feasting in the well-built house of mighty Eteokles.

Then, though a stranger, an outer-man, Tudeus the charioteer  
was not alarmed, the lone stranger among many Kadmeioi, Dragon-  
Teeth-Germinated,

and he challenged them to mixed competitions, and vanquished all  
comers

easily; such a helper was Athene to him, a goddess to the rescue  
—chiming windrush, booming airblow!

But the Kadmeioi, Dragon-Teeth-Germinated, steed-tappers, alien-  
heated,

as he went back, suddenly, lying low, led and set up a tight-tied fist-

clenching ambush,  
fifty young fighters; and two were leaders,  
Maion, Seeker, son of Haimon, Disco, resembling the imperials,  
and son of Autophonos, Kin-Killer, battle-abider Poluphontes,  
Quantum-Killer.

But Tudeus unleashed upon these too a dreadful untamed nosediving  
destiny;

he killed them all but one, the only one whom he let go, who subsequent-  
ly hastened homeward.

Maion, Seeker, he dispelled, complying with the symbols of the gods.  
Such was Aitolian Tudeus, but a son  
he produced inferior to himself in war, though superior at the place of  
assembly.'

Thus he spoke, and mighty Diomedes Sky-Guarded did not respond to  
him at all,

abashed at the tongue-lash and monishing of the venerated awe-  
beaming king.

But the son of glorious Kapaneus traded words with him:

'Son of Atreus, don't tell lies, stand by what you know, the crystal-clear  
truth.

We assert to be better by far than our fathers.

*We* took and wrenched and crumbled the throne of Thebe of the seven  
gates,

the two of us leading a smaller army, sans reinforcements, up to and  
under a well-braced better-built wall,

trusting the wonders of the gods and the aid of Sky-Warden Zeus;  
but *they* perished by their own brash and pluming presuming.



So don't ever place our fathers in esteem on the same plane as us.'

And then to him with a crooked sneer and umbrous glare spoke mighty

Diomedes Sky-Guarded:

'My dear friend, calm down, clam up and heed my word,

for I don't resent Agamemnon, shepherd of hosts,

spurring the shin-guarded face-shielded Akhaioi to fight;

for glory will trail him in tandem, should the Akhaioi

slash and burn the Trojans and take and torch sacred mighty Ilios.

And tremendous sorrow will subsume him in turn if the Akhaioi are

sliced and toasted.

So let's go and both of us focus on prowess, bounding kinetic energy,

mobile repelling power.'

He spoke and leaped geared-up from his gassed-up car to the ground,

and the bronze banged with a terrible clash on the breast of the fired-up

warlord

as he moved. Terror and horror would have seized from below even a

hard-shelled man.

As when on a poluekhous many-toned drum-and-cymballing beach

—wave-flex surf-sizzle!—the birthing swell of the sea

moves, shaking shingle, procession compelling, Gloom-Shot Zephuros,

West Wind, driven,

and on the open sea it first tops out helmet-like, and then—

mist-burst!—broken and shattered on dry land it roars and booms,

—rumble-spray!—and around the capes

propelling and arcing it tops out cresting, and spits water, spouts froth,

spumes foam, sea-detached brine-break-away;  
likewise then battle-lines of Danaoi moved in nonstop pressing patterns,  
pulled out warward ranked and rippled in a bright continuum, and each  
of the leaders exhorted his own men,  
and the others marched in pointed silence. You would not guess  
that so vast a host which followed, possessed in their breasts human  
voices,  
so cowed in quiet they were, fearing their signal commanders. Left and  
right, front and back, about all men  
beamed many-metalled complex well-built battle-armor which they  
wore as they marched in brilliant order.  
But the Trojans, like countless ewes which stand in the open-air  
court-yard  
of a polupamonus man, getter of many things, udders squeezed, white  
milk squirting,  
bleating nonstop while hearing the voices of their lambs,  
thus had arisen the loud battle-cries of the Trojans throughout wide-  
deployed brigades,  
for the sound of all voices was not the same or single in speech,  
but shrieking tongues were intermingled, stark in timbre, as men were  
called from many lands.  
Red-Mouth Ares stirred *these* up, but Athene of the stargolden-seasilver  
eyes  
and Battle's shadows, Deimos, Fear, and Phobos, Fright, and Eris,  
Strife, burning in a savage rage, a wildfire out of control,  
sister and companion of androphonic man-killing Ares, god of war,  
stirred *those* up, the Danaoi.  
She slightly rears her painted helmet at first, and then

she sticks her head in the sky and treads upon the earth.  
 At that time too she tossed and tumbled equal-shared fracas-fever into  
 their midst  
 while tooling through the bunged-up throng, increasing sighs and boost-  
 ing moans of men.

And when indeed assembling they came to a singled-out ground space,  
 ox-hide shields they dashed together and spearheads nick-knocked,  
 spears shafts shift-shot, and the flaming might  
 of copper-plated chest-protected men met. Knobbed round bull-hide  
 dark-dented tassel-tossing shields  
 were making contact, and much noise arose—rattle-silver gold-clatter!  
 And then emerged simultaneously screams of pain and wails and vows  
 and swashing  
 of man-destroyers and men destroyed, and the earth began to flow with  
 blood.

And just as snow-flowing ice-sliding drinking rivers gushing down  
 mountains in bright cascades  
 into a bending dell or dingle, collide and dash together their weighted  
 mighty waters  
 from stupendous springs within a crizzled hollow cut-out honed arroyo,  
 —torrent-tearing plangent-scarring bright cojection!—  
 and far away a sharp-eared shepherd hears the crystal-crash and  
 bubble-boom of head-butting brutal waters charging, —gorge-glitter  
 basin-gurgle!—  
 thus, man-mixing frenzied shrieks and battle-toil burgeoned.

Antilokhos, Bushwhacker, was first to take a visored fighter of the

Trojans,  
efficient in the vanguard, Ekhepolos, Colt-Keeper, son of Thalusios,  
Bloomer.  
He was first to strike him on the horse-hair-bushy air-whipped plumed  
metal ridge of his helmet,  
and he stuck the spear in the space between his eyes, and subito the  
hushed bronze flashing spear-point  
drove through into the bone; and darkness veiled his two eyes,  
and he tumble-crashed like a tower, in the powerful fight.  
As he fell Commander Elephenor grabbed him by the feet,  
son of Khalkodon, leader of the spirit-storming soul-supreme  
Abantians,  
and he tried to drag him out from under the missiles, striving to seize  
and strip off the bright-hammered armor as quickly as possible. His  
push puffed out, then started to shrink;  
for soul-supreme Agenor, Macho Man, seeing him ground-dragging the  
dead body,  
struck his rib cage, as he stooped, sticking out from his circular shield.  
He thrust with a planed and polished copper-tipped spear-shaft, and  
loosened his limbs.  
Thus, his storming soul abandoned him, and over him painful heavy  
trouble-packed battle-work  
of Trojans and Akhaioi was wrought. Even as wolves  
assault each other, stirred up to a fierce frenzy, man shook man to  
darkness—gloom-propelling twilight-swinging.

Then Telamonian Aias, Everlast, missile-hit bloom-luminous  
Anthemion's son,

the mateless bloom-beaming youth Simoeisios, whom on a previous  
 occasion his mother  
 bore beside high-standing banks of Simoeis, after coming down from  
 Ide, descending Timber Mountain,  
 when she accompanied her parents to keep an eye on their sheep and  
 goats;  
 on account of this they called him Simoeisios, but he did not, cat's  
 cradle-like, give back  
 to his doted parents the nourishing love which they gave him, for his  
 life-span, time-space,  
 was docked and dwined, River Boy now tamed and whelmed by the  
 pike-pole of soul-supreme spirit-storming Aias, Everlast.  
 For he shot-hit him hieing to the frontline in the chest beside the right  
 breast,  
 and right through his shoulder went the copper two-part pike.  
 He fell down on the ground in kicked-up dust-clouds like a scale-petaled  
 poplar  
 which had shot up, lushed out, in a big low-ground riverside marsh-  
 meadow,  
 a smooth-bark swamp-tree, but from the calm tiptop branches broke  
 out, —bloom pop!—  
 and a weld-blasting pound-sparking chassis-shaping chariot-maker cut  
 it down with glowing iron, —ax-thonk leave-shush—  
 so that he could bend it like a narrow-leaved willow into a felloe, outer  
 wheel-rim, spoke-proponed salix-circle for a perikallous beauty-  
 orbited two-man war-car;  
 and there it lies to dry, sun-sucked air-seasoned, by the elevated banks  
 of a drinking river.

Subito such-like Zeus-produced Aias stripped spoils from bloom-luminous Anthemion's son

Simoeisios; and aiolothorexic Antiphos of the hue-changing ray-pinging breastplate,

Priam's son, hurled his hush-headed sharp wooden javelin angling down through the throng.

He missed his mark, but Leukos, Bright Man, Odusseus' brave companion,

he hit with success in the groin, while ground-dragging the dead body to the other side;

and he tumbled and collapsed upon it, X-shaped ensemble, and the corpse dropped from his hand.

But Odusseus Abominated was vervely vexed in his hectic heart by his killing,

and he stepped through the frontline, helmed and harnessed in eye-burning bronze,

and going quite near he stood tight and hurled his hush-headed shiny wooden javelin,

looking around him, flank-scoping target-seeking enemy-scaring; and the Trojans receded by degrees

as the commando cast—shrinkback! And he did not launch his airborne missile in vain,

but hit the illegitimate son of Priam, Demokoon,

who came for his sake from Abudos, from his stable of high-speed horses, racing-mares.

Subito Odusseus Hated Man, furious for his companion, with his wooden javelin

struck his temple, and the racing copper spear-point drove through

the other side of his forehead, striking wall-bone; —skull-rattle!— and  
 darkness veiled his two eyes,  
 and he fell with a thud, drop-clunk, and hammered armor clacked like  
 clicking teeth upon him.

Then the front-fighters and luminous Hektor made room, gave ground,  
 retrograded, backspaced;

and the Argeioi, the Gleamers, shrieked with a shock, and dragged off  
 numb bodies,

and pressed on straight ahead much further. And Killer Apollo became  
 indignant

gazing down from Pergamos, the tower-teeming citadel, and called to  
 the Trojans, battle-shouting, blowing injunctions:

‘Arise! Rev it up, horse-busting Trojans, and don’t unfizz your battle-  
 lust, don’t shrink back from the kick of combat

against the Argeioi, the Gleamers, since their skin, not made of iron or  
 stone,

cannot hold up to flesh-cutting bronze, body surface scraping, if missile-  
 hit;

nor indeed does Akhilleus Man of Pain, child of Thetis of the beautiful  
 hair,

fight, but at his ships cherishes heart-hurt hot-charged boiling bile  
 —fire-absorber heat-changer!—smoke-ache soul-simmer!’

Thus did the scary mighty god speak from the city. But the Akhaioi,  
 the true daughter of blue-embosomed Zeus, most glorious Tritogeneia,

Libya-Lake-Born, stirred up,

tooling through the throng, where she might spot, identify, the ones  
 losing nerve, lacking drive, dropping back—the slackers.

Then sparkling Amarugkeus' son Diores, Zeus-Suitable, destiny  
detained, entangled, sky-bound shadow-shackled;  
for with a jagged five-finger many-pointed mini-boulder he was missile-  
hit on the right shinbone  
beside the anklebone, and the leader of the Threikians threw it,  
Peiros son of Imbrasos, who had come from Ainos, Bleaktown.  
The bones and both tight-stretched tissue-connected tendons a shame-  
less stone  
utterly crushed, totally threshed, marrow-tunnels ground and pounded;  
—pulp-smash shank-shatter!— and backward under clouds of dust  
he fell down face-up, and spread both arms and stretched his hands to  
his dear companions,  
gasping out his coursing life. Then he ran up who shot and hit him,  
Peiros, and dealing out a coup de grâce, struck him with his wooden  
spear beside the navel; and consequently  
all his bowels, both intestines large and small, spilled out on the ground,  
—technicolored organ-gush— and darkness veiled his two eyes.

But Aitolian Thoas, Runner, missile-hit him driven and dashing away,  
struck him with a cast of his wooden spear  
in his chest in the major pectoral muscle, oxygen-absorber penetrated,  
and the copper head stuck hard in his air-sucking lung;  
and Thoas, Runner, went up to him, strangle-close, and wrenched the  
heavy mighty compound spear  
from his chest, and drew his silver-keen sword —swish-dazzle!—  
and he struck him in the middle of the abdomen, and took out his  
coursing life.

But he did not strip off his hammered armor, for his companions circled



up,  
 the akrokomic top-knotted high-and-loose dragon-haired Threikians,  
 clenching long compound spears in their hands.  
 And though Thoas was quite big and muscle-necked and glorious  
 they shoved him back from them, and back he shrunk, retropelled, kept  
 at bay, swayed and shaken.  
 So, both in the dust lay stretched out beside each other,  
 chiefs indeed, the one of the Threikians, the other of the bronze-clad  
 Epeioi,  
 and many others all around were killed too.

Then moving through the troops, no longer would a man criticize or  
 bad-mouth the battle business, war's works,  
 whoever, still not shot by dart or struck by sharp copper,  
 might whirl through the middle of the drumfire; and Pallas Athene  
 Missile Maiden would lead him,  
 taking his hand, and keep back the force and rush of missiles.  
 For many Trojans and Akhaioi on that day,  
 face-down in clouds of dust, lay stretched out beside each other.

#### **NOTE**

In Book I of Plato's *Republic*, Sokrates, at one point in the course of his discussion of 'dikaiosúnē' (justice), convinces Polemarkhos that harming horses or dogs for whatever reason is counter-productive because they become worse in regard to their equine or canine nature or excellence, and immediately poses the following momentum-built question: 'But is not justice or righteousness human excellence?' After Polemarkhos admits that it is, Sokrates concludes that humans who are harmed become more unjust

or unrighteous. I take this to mean that willful human injury makes the most beautiful human quality (i.e., justice or virtue) less beautiful. Although this consideration would seem to be particularly germane to the current state of affairs in the modern world, its simple logic lies somewhere outside the *Iliad's* sphere of passion.

Where a single combat episode draws 'Book III' to a close (see my translation, *The Iliad* of Homer, Book Three: *Oath-Bars, Wall-Watching, and the Isolated Single Combat of Alexandros Man-Repeller and Menelaos People-Resister*'. The Hiyoshi Review of English Studies. Keio University, No. 39, Sept., 2001, 163-188), the end of 'Book IV' contains the first true battle of the *Iliad*, and the perfunctory process of war begins to operate, and inevitably, humans are harmed. The immediate cause of the first encounter can be traced to the breaking of an oath in the beginning of this book, a compact which was formulated in the previous book.

Even before the fight begins, the liquid velocity of the Iliadic rhythm pulls the reader into its hard and exquisite molecular beauty, and when the two sides meet for the first time, Homer compares the clash and clang of shields and spears to the splash and boom of water and rocks: a battlefall? A similar type of beauty might be seen in 'Oji Fudo-no taki', an ukiyo-e woodblock print by Ando Hiroshige, from the series, *Meisho Edo Hyakkei*. In that picture, one is awed by the centrally-saturated blue and misting-out-into-white of the tubelike waterfall, and the seemingly hearable ion-emanating boom-crash and pool-burgeoning bubbles below, enhanced by the diminishing rocks with their interlocking fingerlike lines and the enchanting and diminutive kimono-clad creatures, umbrella-equipped, in a seeming state of permanent amazement.