

Sing, O goddess, the destructive wrath of Achilles, son of Peleus, which brought countless woes upon the Greeks, and hurled many valiant souls of heroes down to Hades, and made themselves a prey to dogs and to all birds [but the will of Jove was being accomplished], from the time when Atreides, king of men, and noble Achilles, first contending, were disunited.

Which, then, of the gods, engaged these two in strife, so that they should fight? The son of Leto and Zeus; for he, enraged with the king, stirred up an evil pestilence through the army [and the people kept perishing]; because the son of Atreus had dishonoured the priest Chryses: for he came to the swift ships of the Greeks to ransom his daughter, and bringing invaluable ransoms, having in his hands the fillets of far-darting Apollo on his golden sceptre. And he supplicated all the Greeks, but chiefly the two sons of Atreus, the leaders of the people: