

The Iliad

Book Fourteen Zeus Deceived

[Nestor leaves his hut to look around, sees the Achaeans in retreat; Nestor meets the wounded kings inspecting the field; Agamemnon advises going home; Odysseus responds harshly to the suggestion; Diomedes advises them to visit the battle; Poseidon continues to encourage the Argives; Hera thinks of a plan to deceive Zeus; she prepares herself to look seductive; Hera gets a Aphrodite's love charms; Hera visits Sleep and gets his cooperation; Hera visits Zeus on Ida, has sex with him, and Zeus goes to sleep; Poseidon rallies the Argives and leads them into battle; Ajax wounds Hector badly with a rock; Hector withdraws; the killings continue on both sides, the Argives getting the better of the battle.]

As Nestor sat drinking wine, listening to the noise of war,
he said to Asclepius' son:

“Noble Machaon,
think about how this battle will end up—
the shouting from our young men by the ships
is getting louder. You should sit here for now.
Drink some sparkling wine, till Hecamede
with the lovely hair draws you a warm bath
and washes the dried blood off your body.
I'll go to a lookout, see what's going on.”

[10] Nestor took the well-made shield belonging to his son,
horse-taming Thrasymedes. It lay there in the hut,
gleaming bronze. The son was fighting with his father's shield.
Nestor took a strong spear with a sharp bronze point,
then stood outside the hut. At once he saw a shameful sight—
Achaeans in retreat, pushed back by their enemies,
high-hearted Trojans. The Achaean wall was breached.
Just as the great sea heaves with a sullen purple swell,
anticipating the swift passage of sharp winds—
but uncertainly—so its waves have no direction,
[20] until some steady storm blows down from Zeus—that's how
the old man was lost in thought, his heart divided
between two courses. Should he seek out the crowd

of swift-riding Danaans, or see if he could find
Agamemnon, son of Atreus, his people's shepherd?
As he thought it over, the best course seemed to be
to find the son of Atreus.

Meanwhile, the other men
kept up the fight, kept on butchering each other.
Around their bodies the unwearied bronze rang out,
as they thrust with swords and double-bladed spears.

[30] Then Nestor came across the kings the gods sustain—
they were walking round among the ships—all the ones
whom bronze had wounded—Diomedes and Odysseus,
along with Agamemnon, son of Atreus.

They'd drawn their ships on shore beside the blue-grey sea,
far from battle, dragging up their own ships first,
hauled them inland, then built the wall along the sterns.
The beach was wide, but not long enough for all the fleet.
The army didn't have much space to hold the boats.
So they'd set the ships in rows, and thus filled up

[40] the whole wide coastal bay between the headlands.
The kings had set out in one group together,
each one leaning on a spear, to see the fighting
and check the progress of the war. Deep in their chests
they were very troubled. When old Nestor met them,
the anxiety in their Achaean hearts
was even more acute. Mighty Agamemnon
spoke to him and said:

"Nestor, son of Neleus,
great glory of Achaeans, why are you here?
Why have you left the battle? I'm afraid

[50] that mighty Hector will make good those words
he used to threaten us, in that speech
he gave his Trojans, saying he'd not return
from our ships to Troy until he'd burned them
and slaughtered all the men. That's what he said.

And now it's happening. What chaos!
Other well-armed Achaeans in their hearts
must be angry with me, like Achilles,
unwilling to continue fighting by our ships."

Geranian horseman Nestor answered Agamemnon:

[60] "What's happened so far is over, done with—
not even high-thundering Zeus himself
could make that something else—our wall is down.
We put our faith in it as a firm defence
for ships and for ourselves. At this moment,
men are constantly in action by our ships,
with no relief. Whichever way you look,
even if you really try, you cannot tell
from what direction we are being attacked.
It's all confused. The killing is haphazard.

[70] The battle shouts fill heaven. As for us,
if thinking is a help, we should consider
how these events will end. I'm not saying
we should rejoin the fight—that's not expected
from those who have been wounded."

Agamemnon, king of men, replied:

"Nestor,
since the men now fight at our ships' sterns,
and since our strong wall and ditch are useless—
something crushing for Danaans, whose hearts
had trusted they'd provide a firm defence

[80] and keep our soldiers and our ships secure—
from this I gather that almighty Zeus
must enjoy it when Achaeans perish
without a name, right here, far from Argos.
I felt when Zeus was giving the Danaans
his full assistance, and I know it now,
when he gives the glory to the Trojans,

like blessed gods, while draining all our strength,
our fighting spirit. But come now, let's agree
to what I propose. Let's drag down those ships
[90] drawn up there in line closest to the surf
and pull them all into the sacred sea,
and moor them with stones in deeper water,
until the coming of immortal night—
which may prevent the Trojans' fighting.
Then we can shift the other ships. To flee
from ruin, even at night, brings no shame.
It's better to escape one's own destruction—
to run off—than let it overtake you."

In response to this, Odysseus scowled and said:

[100] "Son of Atreus, how can such words as these
come from your mouth? I'm finished with you.
I wish you ruled some other army,
some useless men, and were not our leader.
Zeus sees to it that from our youthful days
to our old age we must grind away
at wretched war, till, one by one, we die.
Are you really willing to leave Troy,
city of wide streets, for whose sake we've borne
so many evils? You'd better keep that quiet—
[110] another Achaean man may hear the news,
learn what you've proposed in words no man
should ever let pass through his mouth at all,
no man whose heart has any understanding
of what's appropriate to say, no one
who is a sceptred king whom men obey—
as many as those Argive troops you lead.
From what you've said, I think you've lost your mind.
In the middle of a fight, you tell us now
to drag our well-decked ships down to the sea,
[120] so that, though Trojans may be winning now,
they'd get what they most pray for realized—

the complete annihilation of us all.
For once we drag our ships into the sea,
Achaean then will never go on fighting—
the whole time they'll be looking over here
and pulling out from battle. Then your plan,
you leader of the army, will destroy it."

Agamemnon, king of men, replied:

"Odysseus,
that harsh rebuke of yours has stung my heart.
[130] But I'm not the man to tell Achaea's sons
to drag our well-decked ships into the sea
if they're not willing. So show me someone
with a better plan than mine—young or old—
I'll welcome it."

Then Diomedes,
skilled in battle shouts, spoke up:

"That man's close by.
We've no need to search too long, if you'll listen,
without any one of you resenting me
because I'm younger than the rest of you.
I claim worthy descent through Tydeus,
[140] who lies in Thebes hidden underground.
Portheus had three fine sons in Pleuron
and steep Calydon—Agrius, Melus,
and a third, Oeneus, my father's father.
He was the most courageous of them all.
He stayed there, but my father roamed around.
He came to Argos. That was what Zeus willed—
other gods, as well. He married a daughter
of Adrestus, lived in a prosperous home,
with many wheat-bearing fields and orchards
[150] planted all through his estate—and many sheep.
He was the best of all the Argive spearman.

You must have heard all this and know it's true.
So you would never label me by birth a coward,
a weakling, and thus demean what I advise,
if what I say is good. We must go back there,
to the battle, though we're wounded. Once there,
we'll stand back from combat, beyond the range
of flying weapons, in case someone is hit
and gets more wounds. But we'll urge on the others,
[160] even those who, wallowing in their feelings,
have stood aside, without fighting up to now."

They listened well to Diomedes and agreed.
So they set off, led by Agamemnon, king of men.

Famous Earthshaker Poseidon saw all this.
He walked among them in the shape of an old man.
Taking Atreus' son Agamemnon by his right hand,
Poseidon talked to him—his words had wings.

"Son of Atreus, in Achilles' chest
his destructive heart is really happy now,
[170] to see Achaeans slaughtered and in flight.
He's not in his right mind, not in the least.
Well, he may be killed anyway—some god
may strike him. As for you, the blessed gods
aren't angry with you over anything,
so Troy's kings and leaders may yet make dust
while scurrying over this wide plain,
while you watch them running to their city,
back from these huts."

Poseidon said these words,
then, as he raced off to the plain, let out a mighty roar—
[180] as loud as the din from nine or ten thousand men
when on a battleground they first clash with Ares.
That's how loud the sound was which came out then
from powerful Earthshaker's chest, infusing

great strength in each man's heart to keep on going,
to fight on there and not to pause for rest.

As this was happening, on a peak of Mount Olympus
Hera of the golden throne was standing watching.
She recognized her brother-in-law at once,
as he kept busy in the war where men win glory,
[190] for he was her brother and her husband's, too.
Hera's heart was pleased. She looked across at Zeus,
sitting on the highest peak on top of Ida,
with its many fountains. Hatred filled her heart.
So ox-eyed queen Hera then began considering
how she might deceive the mind of aegis-bearing Zeus.
In her heart the best course of action seemed to be
to make herself look most attractive, go to Ida,
then see if Zeus would want to lie down with her,
embrace her, and make love. Then she could pour out
[200] on his eyelids and his crafty mind a deep warm sleep.
She went off to her bedroom, which Hephaestus,
her dear son, had made for her, with close-fitting doors
set against their posts, secured with a secret lock,
which no other god could open. She went in there,
then closed the shining doors. First, with ambrosia
she washed from her lovely body all the stains,
then rubbed her skin with fragrant oil, divinely sweet,
made specially for her. If this perfume were merely stirred
inside Zeus' bronze-floored house, its scent would then diffuse
[210] throughout heaven and earth. She used this perfume
all over her fair body, then arranged her hair.
With her own hands she combed her shining locks in braids,
a stunning style for an immortal goddess.
Then she wrapped around herself a heavenly robe,
which Athena made for her from silky fabric,
adorning it with gorgeous embroidery.
She pinned the robe around her breast with golden brooches.
On her waist she put a belt with a hundred tassels.
Hera then fixed earrings in her pierced ear lobes,

[220] each with three gemstones, an enchanting glitter.
Next the queen of goddesses placed on her head
a fine new dazzling shawl, white as the sun.
She then slipped lovely sandals over her sleek feet.

Once Hera had dressed her body in this finery,
she left the room and summoned Aphrodite.
Some distance from the other gods, she said to her:

“My dear child, will you agree to do
what I ask of you, or will you refuse,
because you’re angry with me in your heart,
[230] since I help Danaans and you aid the Trojans?”

Zeus’ daughter Aphrodite answered her:

“Hera,
honoured goddess, daughter of great Cronos,
say what’s on your mind. My heart tells me
I should do what you ask, if I can,
if it’s something that can be carried out.”

Then queen Hera, with her devious mind, replied:

“Then give me Love and Sexual Desire,
which you use to master all immortals,
and mortal men as well. I’m going to visit
[240] the limits of this all-nourishing earth,
to see Oceanus, from whom the gods arose,
and mother Tethys, the two who reared me,
taking good care of me inside their home,
once they got me from Rhea, that time Zeus,
who sees far and wide, forced Cronos
underground, under the restless seas.
I’m going to visit them. And I’ll resolve
their endless quarrel. For a long time now,
they’ve stayed apart from one another,

[250] not sharing love there in the marriage bed,
since anger fills their hearts. If my words
could reconcile the hearts in these two gods,
bring them to bed again, once more in love,
they'd think of me with loving reverence."

Laughter-loving Aphrodite answered Hera:

"It wouldn't be appropriate for me
to say no to your demand, since you sleep
in the arms of Zeus, the greatest of the gods."

Aphrodite spoke, then loosened from her breasts
[260] the finely decorated, embroidered garment
in which all her magic charms were fixed—for love,
erotic lust, flirtation, and seduction,
which steals the wits even of clear-thinking men.
Aphrodite put this in Hera's hands, then said:

"Take this garment. Tie it round your breasts.
Everything is interwoven in the cloth.
I don't think you'll come back unsuccessful
in getting what it is your heart desires."

Aphrodite finished. Ox-eyed queen Hera smiled,
[270] and, as she did so, put the garment round her breasts.
Then Aphrodite, Zeus' daughter, went back home.

Hera sped off, leaving the crest of Mount Olympus.
She touched down on Pieria, lovely Emathia,
rushed by the highest mountains of Thracian horsemen—
her feet did not touch ground on those snow-covered peaks.
From Athos she went across the heaving sea,
coming to Lemnos, city of godlike Thoas.
There she met Sleep, Death's brother. Claspings his hand,
she spoke to him:

“Sleep, king of all men and gods,
[280] if you’ve ever listened to what I say,
obey me now. I’ll be grateful always.
Lull Zeus’ radiant eyes to sleep for me,
when I’m stretched out for sex beside him.
I’ll give you as a gift a lovely throne,
indestructible gold which my own son
Hephaestus with his ambidextrous skills
will make for you. Under it he’ll set a stool,
so you can rest your feet when drinking wine.”

Sweet Sleep then said in reply:

“Honoured goddess Hera,
[290] daughter of mighty Cronos, I could with ease
bring some other immortal one to sleep,
even the streams of river Ocean,
the source of all of them. But I won’t come
near Zeus, lull him to sleep, unless he bids me,
asks in person. Your request some time ago
taught me my lesson, on that very day
when Hercules, son of almighty Zeus,
set sail from Ilion, after he’d sacked
the Trojans’ city. That’s when I seduced
[300] the mind of aegis-bearing Zeus, pouring
my sweetness over him. You then carried
evil in your heart for Hercules, driving
blasts of hostile winds across the sea,
taking him at last to well-settled Cos,
far from all his friends. When Zeus woke up,
he was incensed, throwing gods around his house,
looking, above all, for me. He’d have tossed me
from heaven into the sea, if Night,
who subdues gods and men, had not saved me.
[310] I ran away to her, and Zeus held back,
though still enraged, not wishing to offend
swift Night. Now here you are again, asking me

to do something I simply must not do.”

Ox-eyed queen Hera then answered him:

“Sleep,
why concern your heart about these matters?
Do you think all-seeing Zeus feels for Trojans
the same rage he felt then for Hercules,
his own son? But come, I’ll give you as your wife
one of the younger Graces. You can marry
[320] Pasithea, whom you long for every day.”

Hera finished. Sleep was overjoyed and said:

“All right, then. Swear to me by waters
of the inviolable river Styx, setting
one hand on the all-nourishing earth,
the other on the shimmering sea,
so all may witness our agreement,
even those gods underground with Cronos,
that you will give me one of the Graces,
Pasithea, whom I long for every day.”

[330] White-armed goddess Hera agreed to Sleep’s request.

She made the oath, as he had asked, invoking
all the gods under Tartarus, those called the Titans.*
Once she’d finished saying the oath, they both set off,
wrapping themselves in mist. They left behind them
the cities of Lemnos and Imbros, moving quickly,
then came to Mount Ida with its many springs,
mother of wild creatures, and arrived at Lectum,
where for the first time they left the sea. They walked
on dry land, shaking treetops underneath their feet.

[340] Sleep then stopped, before Zeus’ eyes could see him,
climbed a high pine tree, at that time the tallest one
growing on Ida. It stretched up through the lower air
right into the sky. Concealed in that tree’s branches,

Sleep perched there, shaped like the clear-voiced mountain bird
which gods call Chalcis, but people name Cymindis.

Hera moved quickly on to Ida's peak, high Gargarus.
Cloud-gatherer Zeus caught sight of her. As he looked,
his wise heart became suffused with sexual desire,
as strong as when they'd first made love together,
[350] lying on a couch without their parents' knowledge.
Zeus stood up in front of her, called her, and said:

"Hera, what are you looking for, coming
down here from Olympus? Your chariot,
your horses are not here. You should use them."

Queen Hera with her crafty mind then answered Zeus:

"I'm going to visit the outer limits
of this all-nourishing earth, to Oceanus,
from whom gods came, and mother Tethys,
who looked after me in their own home.
[360] They raised me well. I'll try to mediate
their endless quarrel. For a long time now,
they've stayed apart from one another,
not sharing love there in the marriage bed,
since anger fills their hearts. As for my horses,
they're standing at the foot of Ida,
with its many springs, to carry me
across dry land and sea. I've come here now,
down from Mount Olympus, to stop you
from being angry with me afterwards,
[370] if I say nothing about going to visit
deep-flowing Oceanus in his home."

Cloud-gatherer Zeus then answered:

"Hera,
you can go there later. But why don't we

lie down and make joyful love together?
I've never felt such sexual desire before
for any goddess, for any mortal woman.
It's flooding through me, overpowering the heart
here in my chest—not even when I lusted for
Ixion's wife, who bore me Peirithous,
[380] a man as wise as gods, or Danaë,
with her enchanting ankles, daughter
of Acrisius, who gave birth to Perseus,
most illustrious of men, nor the daughter
of famous Phoenix, who bore me Minos
and godlike Rhadamanthus, nor Alcmene,
who gave birth to Hercules in Thebes,
a mighty hearted son, nor Semele,
who bore that joy to mortals Dionysus,
nor fair-haired lady Demeter, nor Leto,
[390] that glorious girl, not even for yourself—
I felt for none of these the love I feel
for you right now—such sweet desire grips me.”

Queen Hera with her cunning mind then said in reply:

“Most fearsome son of Cronos, what are you saying?
If you now want us to make love lying here,
on Ida's peaks, where anyone can see,
what if one of the immortal gods observes us,
as we sleep, then goes and tells the other gods?
I could not get up from this bed and go
[400] into your home. That would be scandalous.
But if that's your wish, if your heart's set on it,
you have that bedroom your own son Hephaestus
had built for you. It has close-fitting doors
fixed into posts. Let's go and lie down there,
since you're so keen for us to go to bed.”

Cloud-gatherer Zeus then answered her:

“Hera,
don’t be afraid that any god or man
will glimpse a thing. I’ll cover you up
in a golden cloud. Even sun god Helios
[410] will not see the two of us, and his rays
are the most perceptive spies of all.”

Zeus finished. Then Cronos’ son took his wife in his arms.
Underneath them divine Earth made fresh flowers grow—
dew-covered clover, crocuses, and hyacinths,
lush and soft, to hold the lovers off the ground.
They lay together there covered with a cloud,
a lovely golden mist, from which fell glistening dew.
Then Zeus slumbered peacefully on Mount Gargarus,
overcome with love and sleep, his wife in his embrace.

[420] Sweet Sleep rushed to the Achaean ships, to inform
Poseidon, the Encircler and Shaker of the Earth.
Coming up to him, Sleep spoke—his words had wings:

“Poseidon, you could now help the Argives
quite readily and give them glory,
if only for a while—Zeus is fast asleep.
I’ve covered him with a delicious sleep.
Hera has seduced him on a bed of love.”

Saying this, Sleep left there for some well-known tribes of men.
But he made Poseidon want to help Danaans,
[430] even more so than before. He ran to those in front,
calling in a loud voice:

“You Argives,
are we really going to give the victory
to Hector, son of Priam—allow him
to take our ships and get the glory?
That’s what he says. He even boasts about it—
since Achilles stays beside his hollow ships,

anger in his heart. But we won't miss him much
if the rest of us get fighting strength
and help each other. So come, let's all follow
[440] what I suggest. Let's arm ourselves with shields,
the best and biggest in our whole army,
cover our heads with gleaming helmets,
take in our hands the longest spears, and go.
I'll lead us. I don't think Hector, Priam's son,
will hold, no matter how much he wants to fight."

Poseidon spoke. The soldiers heard him and obeyed.
The kings themselves, though wounded, organized the men—
Agamemnon, Diomedes, and Odysseus.
Moving among the warriors, they supervised
[450] the exchange of weapons. The best men put on
the best equipment, the worst men got the worst.
Once their bodies were encased in gleaming bronze,
they marched out. Earthshaker Poseidon led them,
gripping in his powerful fist a fearful sword,
with a long edge, like a lightning bolt, which no man
in grim battle could withstand—his fear would hold him back.
On the other side, glorious Hector organized his men.
Then he and dark-haired Poseidon launched the fight,
the most destructive moments of that battle,
[460] one commanding Trojans, the other leading Argives.
The sea surged up to the Achaean huts and ships,
as the two sides met with a tremendous noise,
louder than ocean surf booming on shore, driven there
from the depths by the harsh North Wind, louder, too,
than roaring fire as it jumps to burn the trees
in some mountain clearing, louder than the wind
which howls through the highest branches of some oak tree,
a wind which at its worst makes the most piercing noise—
that's how loud the shouting came from Trojans and Achaeans,
[470] terrifying screams, as they went at each other.

Glorious Hector first threw his spear at Ajax,

as he'd just turned to face him. The spear hit Ajax,
right where two straps intersected on his chest,
one for his shield, one for his silver-studded sword.
These saved his tender flesh. Hector was annoyed—
his weapon had flown from his hand and missed its mark.
He drew back into the group of his companions,
evading death. But great Telamonian Ajax
hit Hector with a rock as he was moving back—
[480] there were many of them there rolling underfoot,
right where they fought, rock wedges used to prop the ships.
Ajax picked up one of these and struck Hector's chest,
just above the shield rim, close to Hector's neck.
The impact spun Hector like a top, reeling
round and round. Just like those times Father Zeus
uproots some oak tree with a lightning bolt—it falls,
with an awful smell of sulphur spreading from it,
which no one close by can look at without fear,
for Zeus' lighting bolts fill men with terror—
[490] that's how mighty Hector fell down in the dust.
His spear dropped from his hand. His shield fell on him,
his helmet, too. The finely worked bronze armour
round his body rattled. Raising a loud shout,
Achaeans ran up, hoping to drag Hector back.
Their spears flew thick and fast, but no one could wound him,
that shepherd of his people, with sword or spear.
Before that happened, the best men rallied by him,
Polydamas, Aeneas, lord Agenor,
Lycian leader Sarpedon, and noble Glaucus.
[500] None of the others ignored Hector. In front of him,
they held round shields. His companions picked him up
and took him in their arms out of the fighting,
until they came to his swift horses waiting for him
with their charioteer and richly ornate chariot
behind the battle lines. With chariot and horses
they took Hector, groaning badly, towards the city.
But when they reached the ford on that lovely river,
the swirling Xanthus, whose father is immortal Zeus,

they lifted him out and set him on the ground.
[510] They poured on water to revive him. His eyes opened.
He rose to his knees, but then vomited dark blood
and fell down on his back again, lying on the ground.
Black night was covering up his eyes, for his spirit
was still overpowered by that blow from Ajax.

When Argives saw Hector carried back, they charged in,
going at Trojans even more, their battle fury roused.
Far ahead of all the rest came Oïlean Ajax.
Jumping out with his sharp spear, he struck Satnius,
son of Enops, who'd conceived him with a Naiad nymph,
[520] while he was tending cattle by the river banks
at the Satnioeis. Ajax, son of Oïleus,
famous spearman, came up and struck him in the side.
Satnius fell backwards. Trojans and Danaans
then fought on around him. Spearman Polydamas,
son of Panthous, came up to help. He threw and hit
Prothoënor, son of Areilycus, in his right shoulder.
The heavy spear tore through the shoulder. He fell down—
lying in the dust and clawing dirt. Polydamas,
with a great shout, exulted in his triumph:

[530] "I don't think that spear flew in vain
from the strong hand of Panthous' valiant son.
Some Argive has got it in his flesh.
I think as he goes down to Hades' house,
he'll use it as a walking staff."

Polydamas' loud boasting pained the Argives.
He especially roused the spirit in fierce Ajax,
son of Telamon. For Prothoënor fell
right next to him. So Ajax quickly moved ahead
and hurled his shining spear. But jumping to one side,
[540] Polydamas nimbly avoided his dark fate.
The spear hit Archelochus, Antenor's son—
the gods had planned his death. It struck his spine up high,

where the head attaches to the neck—slicing through,
it cut both sinews. As he fell, his head, mouth, and nose
hit the earth well before his knees, and Ajax cried
to brave Polydamas:

“Consider this, Polydamas,
and tell me the truth—is not this man here
worth killing to avenge Prothoënor?
He doesn’t seem to be unworthy,
[550] or from inferior parents. He looks like
a brother of horse-taming Antenor,
perhaps his son—he looks a lot like him.”

Ajax shouted this, knowing very well the man he’d killed.
Trojans hearts were seized with grief. Then Acamas,
standing above his brother’s body, with his spear
struck Promachus, a Boeotian, as he was trying
to drag Archelochus by his feet. Over the body
Acamas shouted then in triumph:

“You Argive boasters,
how you love to threaten! Misery like this,
[560] all this suffering, is not for us alone.
You too some day will be killed like this.
See how your Promachus now sleeps in death,
thanks to my spear. Whatever’s owed to me
for my brother has not been unpaid long.
That’s why in time of war a soldier prays
he leaves at home a brother to avenge him.”

Acamas shouted this, bringing grief to Argives.
He really stirred the heart of warlike Peneleus.
He charged at Acamas, who did not stay there
[570] to confront the charge of noble Peneleus,
so he then struck Ilioneus, son of Phorbas,
who owned many flocks, a man whom Hermes loved
above all Trojans, and he’d made him wealthy.

Ilioneus was the only child his mother bore
to Phorbas. But then he was hit by Peneleus,
below his eyebrows, just underneath his eye.
The spear knocked out the eyeball, went in his eye,
drove through his neck, and sliced the tendons at the nape.
Ilioneus collapsed, stretching out his arms.

[580] Peneleus drew his sharp sword and struck his neck,
chopping head and helmet, so they hit the ground,
the spear still sticking from the socket of his eye.
Holding it up high, like a flowering poppy,
Peneleus shouted a loud boast at the Trojans:

“Trojans, you can now tell the dear father
and mother of fine Ilioneus to lament
all through their house. When we Achaean lads
sail in our ships from Troy, then the wife
of this Promachus, son of Alegenor,
[590] will not be celebrating the return
of her beloved husband.”

Peneleos finished.

The Trojans were shaken, limbs trembling. Every man
looked around to see how he could evade grim death.

Tell me now, you Muses living on Olympus,
which of the Achaeans was first to carry off
bloody trophies from the men who'd just been slaughtered,
when famous Earthshaker turned the tides of war.
The first for that was Ajax, son of Telamon.
He hit Hyrtius, the son of Gyrtius,
[600] who led the courageous Mysians. Then Antilochus
stripped spoils from Mermerus and Phalces.
Meriones killed Morus and Hippotion,
while Teucer slaughtered Prothoön and Periphetes.
and Menelaus hit Hyperenor in the side,
a shepherd to his people. As it went through him,
the spear forced out his guts. His life-spirit left him

through the wound, and darkness veiled his eyes.
But Ajax, swift son of Oileus, killed the most.
For none could match his speed on foot, as he ran,
[610] chasing men in flight when Zeus forced them to flee.