

# The Iliad

## Book Seven Hector and Ajax

*[Hector and Paris leave Troy, rejoin the fighting; Athena and Apollo plan to halt the battle; Helenus suggests Hector issue a challenge for single combat; Hector issues his challenge; no one responds; Nestor shames the Achaeans; Achaeans draw lots to see who will fight Hector; Ajax's lot falls out; Ajax's shield is described; Ajax and Hector fight; heralds intervene to stop them; Nestor suggests collecting the dead and building a defensive wall and ditch; in Troy Antenor suggests the return of Helen; Paris refuses but offers to return all the goods he took away; Idaios goes to the Argives to suggest a truce to bury the dead, repeats Paris' offer; the Achaeans refuse the offer; the armies collect and cremate the dead; the Achaeans build the wall; Poseidon objects to Zeus; both sides feast after the funeral rites]*

After glorious Hector had talked with Paris,  
he and his brother hurried through the gates,  
both of them with hearts on fire to fight in battle.  
Just as some god sends a breeze to sailors in distress,  
when they work themselves too hard rowing out at sea,  
bodies broken with fatigue at their polished oars—  
that's how these two looked to the long-suffering Trojans.

Paris then killed Menesthius, king Areithous' son.  
He lived in Arne, born from Areithous,  
[10] a mace fighter, and ox-eyed Phylomedusa.  
Hector hit Eioneus with his sharp spear  
in the neck, just under his bronze helmet rim.  
His legs collapsed. Glaucus, son of Hippolochus,  
leader of Lycians, amid the battle din,  
struck Iphinous, son of Dexius, in the shoulder,  
just as he was jumping in behind fast horses.  
He fell out of his chariot down on the ground.  
Then his limbs went limp and lifeless.

When goddess Athena with her glittering eyes  
[20] saw Argives being slaughtered in the battle frenzy,  
she rushed down from Olympus heights to sacred Ilion.  
Apollo, keeping watch from Pergamus,

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came to confront her.\* He wanted victory  
for Trojans. The two met one another by the oak tree.  
Lord Apollo, son of Zeus, addressed Athena first:

“Daughter of great-hearted Zeus, why has your spirit  
pushed you so eagerly down from Olympus?  
You want to change the tide of battle,  
giving victory to the Danaans.

[30] You don’t pity Trojans as they’re butchered.  
But it would be much better if you’d follow  
what I say—let’s put an end to battle  
and the killing, for today. They’ll fight again,  
later on, until they reach their goal in Troy,  
since the demolition of that city  
is what you goddesses desire in your hearts.”

Bright-eyed Athena then said to Apollo:

“God who works from far away, I agree—  
that’s what I myself intended, coming  
[40] from Olympus down to mingle here  
with Trojans and Achaeans. How will you get  
these troops to end this present battle?”

Lord Apollo, son of Zeus, answered Athena:

“Let’s rouse the powerful fighting spirit  
of horse-taming Hector, so he challenges  
one of the Danaans to fight him alone,  
in a grim single combat, one on one.  
Bronze-armed Achaeans, in admiration,  
may incite someone to fight lord Hector.”

[50] Apollo spoke, and bright-eyed Athena then agreed.  
Helenus, Priam’s much-loved son, in his heart  
well understood the scheme the gods had planned.  
So he went to Hector, stood by him, and said:

“Hector, son of Priam, wise as Zeus,  
why not be persuaded by what I suggest,  
since I’m your brother? Let other Trojans  
and Achaeans sit. You should challenge  
the best of the Achaeans to fight you,  
a personal single combat, a grim fight.  
[60] I’ve heard the voices of eternal gods—  
now is not your fated time to die.”

Helenus spoke. Hector was elated with the plan.  
He went into the middle of the Trojan ranks  
gripping the centre of his spear and pushed men back.  
The men sat down. Agamemnon, on his side,  
got well-armed Achaeans to stop fighting, too.  
Athena, with Apollo of the silver bow,  
perched in the lofty oak tree sacred to Zeus,  
who bears the aegis, looking like two vultures,  
[70] set to enjoy the unfolding human action.  
Ranks of men were closely packed, bristling with shields,  
with spears and helmets. As West Wind, when it starts to blow,  
ruffles the sea, and waters under it grow black—  
that’s what ranks of Trojans and Achaeans looked like  
out there on the plain. Hector then addressed both armies:

“Listen to me, you Trojans, you well-armed Achaeans,  
so I may speak what my heart prompts.  
High-ruling son of Cronos has quashed our pact,  
intending to bring both of us bad things,  
[80] until you capture well-built Troy or else  
are conquered beside your seaworthy ships.  
Achaean’s finest men are here among you.  
Let the one whose heart now drives him  
to fight with me step out as champion,  
your representative against lord Hector.  
That’s what I propose—let Zeus be my witness.  
If your man kills me with his sharpened bronze,

let him strip my armour, take it away,  
off to your hollow ships, but give my body  
[90] back to my house, so Trojans and their wives  
may give me ritual burning once I'm dead.  
If I kill your champion, if Apollo  
grants me that triumph, I'll strip his armour,  
take it to sacred Ilion and hang it  
in the temple of Apollo, the far shooter.  
I'll give up the body to be taken back  
to well-decked ships, so long-haired Achaeans  
can bury him and build his funeral mound  
on the banks of the broad Hellespont.  
[100] Then people born in years to come who sail  
their ships with many oars on the wine-dark sea  
will say,

‘This is the funeral mound of some man  
who died long ago, the best of warriors,  
killed by glorious Hector.’

That's what they'll say.  
And then my glory will never fade away.”

Hector finished. The Achaeans all grew silent,  
ashamed to duck the challenge, afraid to answer it.  
At last Menelaus, sick at heart, stood up to speak,  
reproaching them with bitter words of shame:

[110] “Alas, you boasters, you're Achaean women,  
not men. This shame will mean total disgrace,  
unless some Danaan now stands up to Hector.  
All of you sitting here, without heart,  
disgraced like this, may all of you dissolve,  
disintegrate to earth and water.  
I'll personally take up arms myself.  
I'll fight Hector. The rope that's tied  
to victory comes from heaven above,

from the hands of the immortal gods.”

[120] This said, Menelaus pulled his fine armour on.

And then, Menelaus, they would’ve seen you die  
at Hector’s hands—he was by far the stronger man—  
if wide-ruling Agamemnon, son of Atreus,  
king of the Achaeans, had not hurried up,  
grabbed you by your right hand, and said these words:

“Lord Menelaus, have you lost your mind?  
There’s no need for you to act so foolishly.  
Be patient, even though you’re disappointed.  
Don’t volunteer from mere love of battle

[130] to fight someone better than yourself,  
for Hector, son of Priam, is a man  
whom other men avoid. Even Achilles,  
a far better man than you, was hesitant  
to meet Hector in fights where men win fame.  
So go now, sit down with your companions.  
Achaeans will send out another man  
as champion against Hector. Though he’s fearless,  
with boundless appetite for battle,  
I think he’ll be content to take a rest,  
[140] if he survives this combat, this grim fight.”

Agamemnon’s prudent speech changed his brother’s mind.  
Menelaus was convinced, and his attendants  
gladly pulled the armour off his shoulders.  
Then Nestor, standing up before the Argives, said:

“Alas, what great sorrow for Achaea!  
Old horseman Peleus would cry with grief,  
noble counsellor of the Myrmidons.  
When I was in his house, he loved to talk with me,  
asking questions about men’s families,

[150] the ancestry of all Achaeans. If he knew  
these warriors were all afraid of Hector,

he'd keep lifting up his dear hands in prayer  
to the immortal gods that his spirit  
leave his body and go down to Hades' home.  
By father Zeus, Athena, and Apollo,  
would I were as young as when the Pylian  
and Arcadian spearmen gathered to fight  
by the walls of Pheia, beside the banks  
of the fast-flowing river Celadon.

[160] Ereuthalion then stepped forward  
as their champion, a godlike soldier,  
wearing on his shoulders the armour  
of king Areithous—that noble Areithous,  
whom men and well-dressed women gave  
the name of Mace-man, because he fought,  
not with long spear or bow, but with an iron mace.  
With that he smashed down ranks of warriors.  
Lycurgus killed him, not in a fair fight,  
but by a trick, in a narrow place,

[170] where the iron mace could not protect him  
from destruction. Lycurgus anticipated  
Areithous' blow and struck him first,  
a spear thrust in the belly. He fell down,  
dropping to the ground upon his back.  
Lycurgus then stripped off the armour  
which brazen Ares had given Areithous.  
Lycurgus himself wore it in later fights.  
And then, when he'd grown old in his own home,  
he gave the armour to Ereuthalion,

[180] his loyal attendant, who wore it as his own.  
That's the armour he had on at that time,  
when he challenged all our finest men.  
They held back, afraid, not daring to accept.  
But my spirit, full of fighting confidence,  
incited me to take him on in battle.  
By birth I was the youngest of them all.  
I fought him, and Athena gave me glory.  
I killed their biggest and most powerful man,

left his huge body sprawling on the ground.  
[190] Would I were that young now, my strength as firm.  
Hector of the shining helmet would soon have  
a man to fight. But now you warriors here,  
although the finest of Achaean men,  
aren't keen at all to face up to Hector."

Old man Nestor shamed them. Nine men in all stood up.  
First to rise, well before the rest, was Agamemnon,  
king of men. Strong Diomedes, son of Tydeus,  
jumped up after him. Next came the two Ajaxes,  
men clothed in an impetuous ferocity.  
[200] Then Idomeneus, his comrade Meriones,  
and Eurypylus, Eumaeon's fine son, then Thoas,  
son of Andraemon, then lord Odysseus.  
They were all willing volunteers to fight with Hector.  
Geranian horseman Nestor spoke out once again:

"To choose, you must cast lots. Shake them well.  
The chosen man will greatly benefit  
well-armed Achaeans and his own heart, too—  
if he comes away from this grim fight,  
this dangerous combat."

Nestor spoke. The nine men  
[210] marked their lots and threw them in Agamemnon's helmet.  
Troops held up their hands, praying to the gods, saying,  
as they gazed up at wide heaven:

"Father Zeus,  
let the choice fall on Ajax, or Tydeus' son,  
or on Mycenae's king, rich in gold."

Geranian horseman Nestor shook the helmet.  
From it fell out the very lot men were hoping for,  
the one for Ajax. A herald carried round the lot,  
showing it to all the best Achaeans in the throng,

moving from left to right. But no one took it.  
[220] Each man declined. But when, in passing through the crowd,  
the herald came to the one who'd scratched his mark  
upon the lot and thrown it in the helmet,  
noble Ajax held out his hand. Approaching Ajax,  
the herald dropped the token in his palm.  
Ajax looked at the mark and saw that it was his.  
His heart was happy. Throwing the lot down on the ground  
beside his feet, he said:

“Friends, this marker here  
belongs to me. And I'm happy in my heart,  
for I think I'll overcome lord Hector.  
[230] But come, while I put on my battle armour,  
you should pray to lord Zeus, son of Cronos,  
but silently, so Trojans don't find out—  
or do it aloud, since we fear no one.  
No man is going to force me to move off  
through his power or will, if I don't consent,  
or through his fighting skill. For I was born  
and raised in Salamis, so I'm no novice.”

Ajax spoke. Men prayed to lord Zeus, son of Cronos.  
Gazing up to heaven, they uttered words like these:

[240] “Father Zeus, ruling from Mount Ida,  
most glorious one, most powerful—  
grant Ajax victory, the winner's triumph.  
But if you love Hector and look out for him,  
grant them both equal strength, equal glory.”

So men prayed. Ajax armed himself in glittering bronze.  
When all his armour was in place around his body,  
he moved forward, like some gigantic Ares  
when he sets off to battle among warriors  
whom Zeus, son of Cronos, has stirred up for war,  
[250] to fight with that war frenzy which consumes men's hearts.



That's how huge Ajax, bulwark of Achaeans,  
came up then, a grim smile on his face, moving his feet  
with giant strides. He clutched a long-shadowed spear.  
When Argives looked at him, they felt great joy,  
while the limbs of all the Trojans shook with fear.  
Even in Hector's chest the heart beat rapidly.  
But there was nothing he could do to pull back now,  
retreat into the ranks. For he had made the challenge,  
made it eagerly. Ajax approached bearing his shield.  
[260] It was like a tower made of bronze, with seven layers,  
each one of ox-hide, a weapon made by Tychius,  
the best of leather workers, who lived in Hyle.  
He'd made the glittering shield for Ajax from the hides  
of seven well-fed bulls. On top of these, he'd set  
an eighth layer made of bronze. Telamonian Ajax  
carried this shield in front of him. He came up,  
stood quite close to Hector, then spoke out grimly:

“Hector, now you'll come to recognize,  
one against one, just what the finest men  
[270] are like among Danaans, not counting  
Achilles, breaker of men, with his lion's heart.  
He now lies by his curved sea-worthy ships,  
angry at Agamemnon, his people's shepherd.  
But there are lots of us who'll stand against you.  
So come on then. Let's start this fight.”

Great Hector of the shining helmet then replied:

“Noble Ajax, son of Telamon,  
leader of your people. Don't play with me,  
as if I were a witless child or woman  
[280] who knows nothing of what war requires.  
For I understand well how to fight,  
how to kill men. I know how to shift  
my tanned leather shield to right or left,  
to me a crucial skill in fighting battles.

I know how to charge into the frenzy  
of fast chariots, and I know how to dance  
to Ares' tune in the grim killing zone.  
I don't want to hit you with a sneaky shot,  
not a man like you, but in open combat,  
if I can manage it."

- [290] Once Hector spoke,  
he balanced his long-shadowed spear and hurled it.  
He hit Ajax's fearful seven-layered shield  
on the outer covering of bronze, its eighth layer.  
The tireless spear tore its way through six layers.  
But it stopped at the seventh. Then noble Ajax,  
in his turn, threw his long-shadowed spear at Hector.  
His spear hit the even circle of Hector's shield,  
broke through the glittering shield, and forced its way  
through the breast plate and tunic covering his ribs.
- [300] Hector twisted to one side, evading a black fate.  
The two men then both pulled the long spears from their shields  
and charged each other, like flesh-eating lions  
or savage boars, whose strength is inexhaustible.  
With his spear Hector struck the centre of Ajax's shield,  
but the bronze did not break through—its point bent aside.  
Then Ajax charged ahead and speared Hector's shield,  
breaking clean through and striking Hector as he lunged.  
Its motion slashed at Hector's neck. Dark blood seeped out.  
But Hector of the shining helmet didn't stop the fight.
- [310] He stepped back, picked up in his powerful hand a rock  
lying there on the plain, a huge black jagged stone.  
With this he hit Ajax's seven-layered shield  
on its central boss, making the bronze ring out.  
Then Ajax, in his turn, seized a much bigger stone,  
swung it round and threw it with tremendous force.  
The rock, like a millstone, hit Hector's shield and smashed it.  
Strength drained from Hector's limbs. He was thrown on his back,  
with his shield pressing him on top, weighing him down.  
At once Apollo raised him up. Now they would've fought

[320] hand to hand with swords, if heralds, those messengers  
of gods and men, had not stepped in, one from Trojans,  
one from bronze-clad Achaeans—two trusted men,  
Talthybius and Idaios. They held out their staffs,  
symbols of their herald's office, between the two.  
Then herald Idaios, a wise prudent man, spoke out:

“You dear lads, fight no more. End this combat.  
Cloud-gatherer Zeus cares for you both.  
You're both fine fighters. We all know that.  
But night already is approaching.

[330] And it's good to be persuaded by the night.”

Telamonian Ajax then said in reply:

“Idaios, tell Hector here to give the word.  
For he was keen to challenge our best men.  
Let him speak first. I'll gladly follow what he says.”

Great Hector of the shining helmet answered Ajax:

“Ajax, god has given you size, power,  
judgment, and you're the strongest with the spear,  
among Achaeans. For today let's end  
our battle combat. We'll fight once again,  
[340] later on, until god decides between us,  
awarding one of us the victory.  
For night already is approaching,  
and it's good to be persuaded by the night.  
So you can bring joy to all Achaeans  
by their ships, especially your clansmen,  
your companions. And I can bring joy  
to the mighty city of king Priam,  
to Trojans and women in their trailing gowns.  
They'll gather in holy processions now,  
[350] giving thanks on my behalf in prayer.  
But come, let's exchange noteworthy presents

with each other, so Trojans and Achaeans  
may say, ‘These men fought in murderous war  
but were reconciled and parted friends.’”

This said, Hector gave Ajax a silver-studded sword,  
along with a scabbard and a well-cut sword belt.  
Ajax gave Hector a shining purple belt.  
Then they parted, Ajax going to Achaean troops,  
Hector rejoining Trojans, who were overjoyed  
[360] to see him return alive, safe and sound,  
surviving Ajax’s fury, his unconquerable hands.  
They’d given up all hope for Hector’s safety.  
Now they took him back with them into the city.

Well-armed Achaeans, for their part, led Ajax,  
elated by his victory, to lord Agamemnon.  
When they all came inside the son of Atreus’ hut,  
Agamemnon, king of men, sacrificed an ox,  
a male five years old, to the exalted son of Cronos.  
They flayed the beast, prepared and carved it up,  
[370] chopping it skilfully into tiny pieces.  
They skewered these on spits, cooked them carefully,  
and drew them off. This done, they prepared a meal and ate.  
No one went unsatisfied. All feasted equally.  
Wide-ruling Agamemnon, heroic son of Atreus,  
acknowledged Ajax with the whole back cut of meat.  
When everyone had had his fill of food and drink,  
old Nestor spoke up first, outlining for them  
a plan he had. Earlier his advice had seemed the best.  
Keeping in mind their common good, he said:

[380] “Son of Atreus, you other Argive leaders,  
many long-haired Achaeans have been killed.  
Fierce Ares has scattered their dark blood  
beside the fair-flowing Scamander river.  
Their souls have departed down to Hades.  
So tomorrow you should call a halt.

Stop Achaeans fighting. We should all assemble,  
then carry off the bodies of the dead  
with mules and oxen. Then we'll burn them  
a short distance from our ships, so each of us,  
[390] when we return, may carry back the bones.  
Let's set up one single common funeral mound  
close by the fire and angled on the plain.  
Then with all speed from that mound we'll build  
some high walls with turrets, to guard us and our ships.  
In those walls we'll construct tight-fitting gates,  
so there's a path to drive our chariots through.  
Outside we'll dig a deep trench close beside it,  
to enclose the walls and hold out chariots—  
soldiers, too, if those impetuous Trojans  
[400] should ever drive us back in battle.”

So Nestor spoke. All the kings approved his plan.

Meanwhile the Trojans were meeting on the city heights,  
by Priam's palace doors—they were confused and fearful.  
Antenor, a wise counselor, was the first to speak:

“Listen to me, you Trojans, Dardan allies,  
so I may say what the heart in my chest prompts.  
Come now, let's give back Argive Helen  
and her possessions to the sons of Atreus  
for them to keep. We've broken the truce  
[410] and are fighting once again, so I don't see  
how things will work out very well for us,  
unless we carry out what I propose.”

Antenor spoke, then sat down. Before them all,  
lord Alexander, husband of fair-haired Helen,  
stood up to reply. His words had wings:

“Antenor,  
I'm not pleased with what you've said.

You know very well how to think up  
some alternative, some better plan.  
But if you truly mean what you've just said,  
[420] the gods themselves have muddled up your wits.  
Now I'll speak to horse-taming Trojans.  
I flatly refuse. I won't give up my wife.  
But I will surrender all the goods  
I carried back from Argos to our home.  
I'm willing to give up all of it,  
even to add to it things of my own."

Paris spoke, then sat back down. Priam stood up,  
descendant of Dardanus, wise as the gods.  
Thinking of their common cause, he spoke out:

[430] "Listen to me, Trojans, Dardan allies,  
so I may state what the heart in my chest prompts.  
You should prepare your dinner and then eat,  
here in the city, as before. But remember—  
keep sentries posted. Each man should stay awake.  
Tomorrow morning Idaios should go  
to the hollow ships, to tell the sons of Atreus,  
both Agamemnon and Menelaus,  
what Alexander has just now proposed,  
the very man whose cause launched this dispute.  
[440] Idaios should propose this wise suggestion—  
if they'll consent to postpone grim warfare,  
so we can burn our dead, we'll fight later,  
until god adjudicates between us  
and awards one side the victory."

They heard what Priam said and readily agreed.  
Throughout the army, in the ranks, they ate their dinner.

At dawn Idaios went out to the hollow ships.  
There he found Danaans, companions of Ares,  
assembled by the stern of Agamemnon's ship.

[450] The loud-voiced herald, standing in their midst, spoke out:

“Son of Atreus, other Achaean leaders,  
Priam and other noble Trojans asked me  
to tell you what Alexander has proposed,  
if that meets with your approval, an offer  
you will want to hear. That man began our strife.  
All the property which Paris brought here  
in his hollow ships to Troy—how I wish  
he’d died before that day!—he’ll hand over  
and add more goods from his own home.

[460] But he says he’ll not return that noble lady,  
wife of Menelaus, though the Trojans wish  
he’d do that. There’s more. My orders tell me  
to speak to you to see if you are willing  
to put a stop to the harsh clash of war,  
until such time as we have burned our dead.  
We will fight later, until god chooses  
between us, makes one of us the victors.”

Idaios spoke. They all remained silent, speechless.  
At last Diomedes, skilled at war shouts, cried out:

[470] “Let no man now accept Alexander’s stuff,  
nor Helen. For it’s quite clear, even to a fool,  
the Trojans are tied down to lethal fate.”

Diomedes spoke. All Achaea’s sons roared out,  
approving what horse-taming Diomedes said.  
Mighty Agamemnon then addressed Idaios:

“Idaios, you yourself have heard our answer,  
what Achaeans think of what you offer.  
And I agree with them. But I don’t object  
to burning corpses, for when men die,  
[480] one should not deny the bodies of the dead  
a swift propitiation in the flames.

So let Zeus, Hera's loud-thundering husband,  
stand as witness here to our pledged word."

Saying this, Agamemnon held up his sceptre,  
invoking all the gods. Idaios then returned,  
going back to sacred Ilion. There the Trojans  
and Dardanians were seated in a meeting,  
a general assembly, awaiting his return.  
He came, stood in their midst, and delivered his report.

[490] Then they quickly organized two working parties—  
some to gather bodies, others to get firewood.

Argives also moved swiftly from their well-decked ships.  
Some hurried to bring in the dead, others to find wood.  
Just as the sun began to shine down on the fields,  
rising from the gently flowing Ocean depths,  
climbing in the sky, the two groups met each other.  
At that point it was hard to recognize each dead man.  
They washed blood off with water and piled them onto carts,  
shedding hot tears. Great Priam did not permit

[500] his Trojans to lament. So they heaped the corpses  
on the pyre in silence, hearts full of anguish.  
Once they'd burned the bodies, they went back to sacred Troy.  
Opposite them, in the same way, well-armed Achaeans  
heaped their dead up on a pyre, sick at heart, burned them,  
and then returned back to their hollow ships.

Next day, just before dawn, still at night, in half light,  
a chosen group of Achaeans was awake around the pyre.  
Beside it, on an angle, they made a common grave,  
back from the plain. From that mound they built a wall,  
[510] with high towers, to defend them and their ships.  
Inside the rampart they set close-fitting gates,  
to make a passage so chariots could pass through.  
Outside the wall they dug a big ditch, wide and deep,  
close to the rampart, setting stakes down in the trench.



As long-haired Achaeans worked, gods sitting beside Zeus,  
lord of lightning, gazed down on the huge construction,  
the project undertaken by bronze-armed Achaeans.  
Earthshaker Poseidon was the first to speak:

“Father Zeus, will any mortal man  
[520] on boundless earth, after this event,  
inform gods of his plans, of his intentions?  
Don’t you see that long-haired Achaeans  
have built a new wall to protect their ships,  
dug a ditch around it, and yet have made  
no splendid sacrifice to us, the gods?  
The fame of this wall will reach everywhere,  
as far as light of dawn. People will forget  
that wall which Phoebus Apollo and myself  
worked hard to build for heroic Laomedon.”\*

[530] Cloud-gatherer Zeus, quite irked, answered Poseidon:

“Such talk from you, mighty Earthshaker, is silly.  
Another god might well fear this design,  
some god with a far less powerful hand,  
a weaker spirit than your own. Your fame  
will reach as far as the shining light of dawn.  
Come now, when the long-haired Achaeans leave,  
sailing their ships to their dear native land,  
you can smash their wall, take it out to sea,  
bury the great shore under sand, and so erase  
[540] that great Achaean wall completely.”

As the gods discussed these things amongst themselves,  
the sun went down and Achaeans finished working.  
They slaughtered oxen by their huts and ate their dinner.  
Many ships had come, bringing wine from Lemnos,  
sent by Jason’s son Euneus—born to Jason,  
his people’s shepherd, from Hypsipyle.  
Euneus had donated wine, a thousand measures,

to go to Agamemnon and Menelaus.  
From these ships long-haired Achaeans bought their wine.  
[550] Some bartered with bronze, some with shiny iron,  
others with hides, live oxen, or with slaves.  
And then the men prepared a sumptuous banquet.  
Long-haired Achaeans feasted all night long,  
as did Trojans and their allies in the city,  
while throughout the night, Counsellor Zeus,  
thundering ominously, plotted bad things for them.  
Pale fear gripped men. They kept pouring wine from goblets  
onto the ground. No one dared to drink before he made  
an offering to Zeus, almighty son of Cronos.  
Then they went to bed, to receive the gift of sleep.