

Book 20

So by the curved ships, and around you, Pēleus's son,
never glutted with fighting, the Achaians were arming themselves,
and across from them likewise the Trojans, on the rise of the plain.
Zeus meanwhile ordered Themis to call the gods to assembly
from high, many-clefted Olympos. She went around everywhere, 5
with the message that they should come in to Zeus's own abode.
Not a single river was absent, save only Ocean,
nor any of all the nymphs that frequent the lovely groves,
the sources of rivers, the grassy meadows. So when
they arrived at the abode of Zeus the cloud-gatherer, 10
they sat down in the polished stone porticos that Hēphaistos
with cunning expertise had built there for Zeus, the Father.

Thus they gathered in Zeus's house; nor did the Earth-Shaker
ignore the goddess's summons, but came from the sea
to join them, sat in their midst, asked Zeus what his purpose was: 15
“Why, lord of the bright bolt, have you once more summoned
the gods
to assembly? Are you concerned about the Trojans and Achaians,
since battle and warfare are close to flaring up between them?”

In answer to him then Zeus the cloud-gatherer said:
“You know, Earth-Shaker, what's on my mind, the reason 20
I summoned you all: they're dying—yes, I'm concerned for them!
Even so, I myself will stay here, in a glen of Olympos,
seated, enjoying the spectacle.¹ As for the rest of you,
take yourselves off now, among the Trojans or the Achaians,
give aid to either side, whichever one you prefer! 25
Should Achilles, even alone, now fight against the Trojans,
they won't for one moment stop Pēleus's swift-footed son—
why, even before, they shook just at the sight of him,

1. Edwards 2011 (289) well remarks here that Zeus “does not lack sympathy for the human warriors, and it is the gods from whom he (justifiably) expects to get a good deal of amusement . . . his very active sense of humour breaks through when he thinks about the antics some of his relatives will surely get up to now that he has turned them loose.”

and now, when his heart's so enraged by his comrade's death
I fear he may override fate, and storm their ramparts too." 30

So saying, the son of Kronos stirred up unending warfare.
Battlewards now went the gods, but with purposes divided:
Hērē to where the ships were beached, and with her Pallas
Athēnē, Poseidōn the Earth-Encircler, Hermēs
the Helper, who for smart thinking excels all others, 35
accompanied by Hēphaistos, exultant in his strength,
limping, but under him his stunted legs moved lightly.
To the Trojans went bright-helmeted Arēs, and with him
Phoibos, whose hair is unshorn, and Artemis the archer,
and Lētō and Xanthos² and smiling Aphrodītē. 40

For so long as the gods stayed apart from mortal men
the Achaians kept winning great glory, now that Achilles
had appeared, after lengthy absence from the grievous struggle,
while dread trembling came on the limbs of every Trojan
when, terrified, they caught sight of Pēleus's swift-footed son 45
agleam in his battle gear, a match for Arēs the killer.
But when the Olympians entered this throng of warriors,
and Strife sprang up, that strong rouser of nations, then Athēnē
cried out aloud: now standing by the ditch dug outside the wall,
and now on the thunderous shore, she gave her long battle cry. 50
Arēs bellowed as well, on the other side: black as a storm cloud,
now from the topmost ramparts he urged the Trojans on,
and now as he hastened by Simoeis toward Kallikolōnē.³

So both sides now did the blessed gods encourage
to clash head-on, and broke out oppressive strife between them. 55
Fearsomely thundered the Father of men and of gods
from on high, while down below Poseidōn caused the boundless
earth to quake, and the lofty mountain peaks:
all the foothills of spring-rich Ida were shaken, and all
her heights, and the Trojans' city, and the Achaians' ships. 60
In the underworld fear now gripped Hādēs, lord of the dead:

2. This Xanthos is not Achilles' recently mentioned immortal horse, but rather the local river god, known to the gods as Xanthos but to men as (the) Skamandros (73–74), against whom, or which, he is very soon to have a fearsome and protracted encounter (21.211–382).

3. Kallikolōnē (Καλλικολώνη, "Pleasant Hill"): exact position in relation to the Simoeis river uncertain, but traditionally believed to have been the site of the Judgment of Paris (HE 2: 430).

he leapt from his throne in panic and cried out, lest above him
the ground be split open by Poseidōn the Earth-Shaker,
and his own realm be laid bare to both gods and mortals—
dreadful and dank, abhorred even by the gods themselves. 65

Huge now was the crash when god faced god in strife,
for lined up against the lord Poseidōn there stood
Phoibos Apollo, winged arrows clutched in his hand,
and against Enyalios the grey-eyed goddess Athēnē,
while Hērē was faced by her of the loud chase, the golden arrows— 70
Artemis, archer herself, the deadly archer's sister.
Arrayed against Lētō was the mighty Helper Hermēs,
and against Hēphaistos the great deep-eddying river
known to the gods as Xanthos, but as Skamandros by mortals.

Thus gods went forth to stand against gods; but Achilles 75
was hungry to confront, above all, in the general mass,
Priam's son Hektōr: his heart was dead set on glutting
Arēs, that war god with oxhide shield, on Hektōr's blood.
However, it was Aineias whom Apollo, rouser of troops,
sent straight against Pēleus's son, and filled with mighty power. 80
Making his voice resemble that of Priam's son Lykaōn,
in his likeness Apollo, son of Zeus, now spoke to Aineias:
"Aineias, the Trojans' counsellor, where now are those threats
you once made to the Trojan lords while you were drinking,
that you'd fight, man to man, against Pēleus's son Achilles?" 85

Then Aineias in answer spoke to him in these words:
"Son of Priam, why urge me on, when I'm not so minded,
to match myself against Pēleus's all too arrogant son?
This would not be the first time I've faced swift-footed Achilles:
once before this he drove me headlong with his spear 90
from Ida, that time when he'd come out against our cattle,
and sacked both Lyrnessos and Pēdasos—but Zeus saved me,
stirred up my strength, put swiftness into my knees.
Else I'd have surely been slain at the hands of Achilles
and Athēnē, who went before him as his protector, urged him 95
to kill with his bronze spear both Lelegēs and Trojans.
Look, no mere man can meet Achilles in battle,
since there's always some god beside him, warding off trouble.
Besides this, his spear flies straight, and never rests
till it's gone through some human flesh. But supposing a god 100

were to stretch warfare's outcome evenly, then he'd not
beat me with ease, though he claimed to be made all of bronze."

To him then replied Zeus's son, the lord Apollo:
"Well, hero, you too can boast to the gods who are forever—
for they say that it was Zeus's daughter Aphrodītē 105
who bore you, while Achilles is the son of a lesser goddess,
your mother being Zeus's daughter, while his has as her father
the Old Man of the Sea. So, at him, with your unyielding bronze!
Don't let him scare you off with words of scorn or contempt!"

So saying he breathed great strength into the people's shepherd, 110
who now joined the foremost fighters, armored in gleaming bronze.
Nor did Anchīsēs's son go unnoticed by white-armed Hērē
as he went through the mass of troops to confront the son of Pēleus;
she called the gods together, and addressed them, saying:
"It's you two—Poseidōn, Athēnē—who now have need 115
to figure out in your minds how these matters are to be.
Aineias here has marched out, armored in gleaming bronze,
to confront Pēleus's son, spurred on by Phoibos Apollo!
So come, let's either turn him back here and now,
or else one of us should likewise stand by Achilles, 120
and endow him with mighty strength, let his heart lack nothing,
let him know that those who love him are the finest
of the immortals, while it's mere windbags who till now
have fended off warfare and fighting from the Trojans!
We've all come down from Olympos to play our part 125
in this battle, so that Achilles may suffer no hurt
from the Trojans today, though later he'll suffer whatever
Fate spun for him at his birth, when his mother bore him.
But if Achilles isn't told this, by some god in person,
he'll take fright later on, if a god comes up against him 130
in battle: gods are terrifying when visible as themselves."

Then Poseidōn the Earth-Shaker answered her, saying:
"Hērē, don't be enraged beyond reason: you've no need to.
Myself, I wouldn't choose to have the gods clash in strife
[us versus the rest, since we're by far the stronger];⁴ 135
so I think we should leave the beaten track for a spot

4. The sense is uncertain: the line may have been adapted from 8.211 at an early date.

to watch from, sit down there, let humans get on with the war.
 Yet if Arēs starts up a fight, or Phoibos Apollo,
 or they hold Achilles back, won't allow him to fight,
 then from us too they'll be hit by the burgeoning strife 140
 of battle: quite soon, I think, they'll pull out from the fighting
 and scuttle back to Olympos, to the other gods' gathering,
 overwhelmed by the irresistible force of our hands."

With that

the dark-maned deity led the way to where there stood
 those heaped-up ramparts named for Hēraklēs the godlike, 145
 the high wall built for him by the Trojans and Pallas Athēnē,
 to provide him a refuge in his flight from the sea beast
 when it chased him from the seashore onto the plain.⁵

There the other gods and Poseidōn sat themselves down,
 wrapping their shoulders about with a dense unbroken cloud, 150
 while the opposing group settled on the brow of Kallikolōnē,
 round you, Phoibos the archer, and Arēs, sacker of cities.

So they sat there on opposite sides, still busily planning
 their strategies; yet to plunge into grievous warfare
 both sides were reluctant, though Zeus on high urged them on. 155

By now the whole plain was filled with the glinting bronze
 of men and horses: the earth resounded beneath their feet
 as both sides charged as one. The two best of all these fighters
 faced each other, eager to fight, out there in the middle—
 Aineias son of Anchīsēs and noble Achilles. 160

Aineias was first to emerge, with threatening mien,
 his weighty helmet's plumes nodding, his warlike shield
 held in front of his body: he was wielding a spear of bronze.
 Opposing him, Pēleus's son came at him like a lion,
 a ravening beast, that men are determined to kill—the whole 165
 neighborhood in a body. At first he goes on his way,

5. Bilked of his reward by Laomedōn for having built him Troy's walls, Poseidōn dispatched an amphibious sea beast to be a general menace in the region. An oracle told Laomedōn to put out his daughter as the monster's prey. He did this, having previously secured Hēraklēs' services to kill the creature by offering him some of his immortal horses. Aided by the defensive wall described here, Hēraklēs did the job, saving Laomedōn's daughter in the process; but Laomedōn, a chiseler to the core, rewarded him with mortal rather than immortal steeds; whereupon Hēraklēs returned with an expeditionary force and sacked Troy. See Gantz 400–401, 442–43.

uncaring; but when some youth, a brisk fighter, throws his spear
 and hits him, then he crouches, jaws open, foam gathering
 round his teeth: the mighty spirit groans within his heart,
 with his tail he lashes his ribs and flanks on either side, 170
 works himself up for the coming fight, and then,
 eyes glaring, charges straight ahead in his raging power,
 to kill some man, or himself to die among the foremost.
 Just so Achilles' own strength and proud heart impelled him
 to come out and confront great-hearted Aineias. When they 175
 were close, as the two of them moved one against the other,
 the first to speak was swift-footed Achilles: "Aineias,
 why have you come so far out, away from the main body,
 to make a stand here? Does your spirit urge you to fight me
 in the hope of becoming lord, among the Trojan horse breakers, 180
 of Priam's power? But supposing you were to kill me,
 not even for that would Priam place his realm in your hands!
 He has sons, he's of sound mind, he isn't crazy! Or have
 the Trojans marked you out an estate that outstrips all others,
 fine both for orchard and plowland, for you to possess 185
 if you slay me? That, I think, you'd find a tough task.
 Once in the past, I'd remind you, I put you to flight
 with my spear—don't you remember?—when you were alone
 and I sent you scampering headlong down Ida's slopes 190
 as you ran from me! Then you fled to Lyrnessos, but I,
 with Athēnē and Zeus the Father, assaulted and sacked it,
 led its women captive, took their day of freedom from them,
 while you were rescued by Zeus and the other gods.
 But now, I think, they won't rescue you, as in your heart 195
 you fondly imagine: so go off back, I urge you,
 into the common crowd—don't confront me here—before
 you suffer some hurt; what's done even fools can recognize."

Then Aineias in his turn now answered him, declaring:
 "Son of Pēleus, don't try to frighten me like a child 200
 with mere words, since I too know very well myself
 how to frame the language of taunts and unseemly abuse.
 We each know the other's lineage, we know his parents,
 through hearing the tale of old from mortal tellers—
 yet you've never set eyes on my parents, nor I on yours. 205
 They say that you're the offspring of peerless Pēleus,

and your mother is fair-tressed Thetis, the sea goddess;
 while I claim I am the son of the great-hearted
 Anchīsēs, and that my mother is Aphrodītē.
 Of these one pair will be weeping for a beloved son 210
 this very day: for it won't be with mere childish insults
 that we two settle our business and return from battle.
 Still, if you insist, hear this too, and gain full knowledge
 of our ancestry—something many men know already.
 Dardanos first was begotten by Zeus the cloud-gatherer, 215
 and founded Dardania, since not yet was sacred Ilion
 built in the plain, a city of mortal humankind,
 but people then still dwelt on the slopes of spring-rich Ida.
 Dardanos sired a son, Erichthonios the king,
 who lived to become the richest of mortal men: 220
 three thousand mares he had grazing in the water meadows,
 breeders, rejoicing in their newborn foals. Of these
 mares out at pasture the north wind became enamored,
 and taking the shape of a black-maned stallion, covered them:
 twelve foals were conceived and born of this coupling, 225
 and these, when bounding over the grain-rich plowland
 skimmed the topmost ears of ripe corn, never crushed them,
 and when bounding across the broad back of the sea
 skimmed the crests of the grey brine's breakers. Then came Trōs,
 whom Erichthonios sired to be king among the Trojans, 230
 and Trōs in his turn fathered three peerless sons—
 Ilos, Assarakos, and godlike Ganymēdēs
 who was born the best-looking mortal man of them all,
 and because of his beauty the gods wafted him aloft
 to be Zeus's cup-bearer and dwell among the immortals. 235
 Ilos too sired a son, the peerless Laomedōn,
 and Laomedōn in turn sired Tithōnos and Priam,
 Lampos and Klytios, and Hiketaōn, scion of Arēs,
 while Assarakos begot Kapys, and Kapys Anchīsēs,
 and Anchīsēs begot me, and Priam noble Hektōr: 240
 from this blood and lineage, then, I claim descent.
 But valor is something that Zeus increases or lessens
 in mortals as he is minded, being the mightiest of all.
 So come on then, let's stop arguing like children,
 standing here in the midst of the grind of battle. Insults 245
 are to hand for us both to cast, the one at the other—

so many, not even a hundred-benched ship could hold them!
 The human tongue's voluble, the words on it are many
 and of every sort, the range of man's speech is broad
 on all sides: any word you speak, you can also hear. 250
 But what need for us to exchange abuse and accusations,
 yelling one at the other like a pair of housewives
 who work themselves up over some gut-wrenching quarrel
 and end in a lengthy slanging match on the public highway
 with some true charges, some false—rage makes for lies! 255
 It's not with words that you'll kill my urge to valor,
 not until we've fought face to face with the bronze—so come,
 let's make trial of each other, now, with our bronze-tipped spears.”

With that he cast his great spear at Achilles' fearsomely daunting 260
 shield, and loudly the shield clanged round the spear point.
 With one strong hand Pēleus's son was holding the shield
 out from him: alarmed, since he thought the far-shadowing spear
 of great-hearted Aineias would easily pierce through it—
 fool that he was, not knowing, by reason and by instinct,
 that it's far from easy for the splendid gifts of the gods 265
 to be vanquished, or made to yield, by mortal warriors!
 So now the massive spear of warlike Aineias failed
 to break through the shield: the gold, the god's gift, stopped it.
 [Through two layers only he forced it; there still were three,
 since five in all the lame cripple had welded together, 270
 two of bronze, two inner layers of tin,
 and one of gold, where the spear of ash was halted.]⁶

Then Achilles in turn let fly his far-shadowing spear,
 and hit the nicely balanced shield of Aineias, below
 its outermost rim, where the bronze ran at its thinnest, 275
 and thinnest, too, was the oxhide: clean through now passed
 the Pēlian spear, and the struck shield rang with the blow.
 Aineias, crouching down, held his shield out away from him
 in terror: the flung spear passed over his shoulder, stuck

6. These lines have been argued over, bracketed as dubious, or rejected as spurious from antiquity on. The layers as described make “no practical sense either for the purpose or the appearance of the shield” (Edwards 2011, 323): the gold is invisible and being a soft metal would be worse than useless for stopping a spear. Hēphaistos's selection of material [18.474–75] seems to have been borrowed, and the order of metals maintained, to produce “this improbable and impractical artifact.”

in the ground, after breaking through both layers 280
 of the sheltering shield.⁷ Then he, having dodged the long spear,
 stood up, his eyes now showing measureless alarm,
 scared on account of the spear's near miss. But Achilles
 drew his sharp sword and sprang upon him in fury,
 with a terrible shout. Now Aineias hefted a rock in his hands— 285
 a mighty feat, that would take two men and more
 such as men are today; but, alone, he easily wielded it,
 and would have thrown it to meet Achilles' onslaught, aiming
 at his helmet, or else at the shield that kept him from grim death,
 and Pēleus's son with his sword, closing in, would have slain
 Aineias, 290
 had not Poseidōn the Earth-Shaker quickly taken notice,
 and straightway spoken up among the immortal gods:⁸
 "Alas, I feel grief for Aineias, the great-hearted, who too soon
 vanquished by Pēleus's son will go down to the realm of Hādēs
 after believing the tales of Apollo, the deadly archer— 295
 the fool! And Apollo won't even save him from wretched death!
 Why should this guiltless man now suffer calamity
 in vain, because of the troubles of others, he who always
 gives welcome gifts to the gods who hold the broad heavens?
 Come then, let's snatch him away from death ourselves, 300
 for the son of Kronos may well be wrathful, should Achilles
 slaughter Aineias here, who's destined to survive
 that his race may not perish unseen for lack of seed, the line
 of Dardanos, whom Kronos's son loved above all children
 who have ever been born to him of mortal women. So now 305
 he's come to look with hatred upon Priam's line: now surely
 mighty Aineias will reign as king among the Trojans,
 he and his sons, and his sons' sons born in time to come."
 To him the ox-eyed lady Hērē replied: "Earth-Shaker,
 you must decide yourself concerning Aineias— 310

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7. Another physical improbability that suggests that this passage may be the work of an interpolator. How likely is a spear, even when flung by Achilles, not only to have its entire length pierce right through two layers of a shield but, despite the arresting shock, to then *continue its flight*?
 8. Still more physical improbability: we are required to think of the two combatants suddenly freeze-framed, as it were, in the middle of their incipient duel, and waiting thus while the gods discuss their case, until Poseidōn comes and magically removes Aineias from the scene.

whether to rescue him, or let him be vanquished,
brave though he is, by Achilles, Pēleus's son.

The two of us have sworn a number of oaths in the presence
of all the immortals, Pallas Athēnē and I,
that we'll never ward off from the Trojans their day of evil— 315
not even when all Troy is ablaze with devouring fire,
and the Achaians' warlike sons are those who lit the flames.”

On hearing her words, Poseidōn the Earth-Shaker
set off through the fighting and the tumult of spears,
and came to where Aineias and far-famed Achilles were. 320
Swiftly he shed a mist over the eyes of Achilles,
Pēleus's son, then pulled his well-bronzed ash-wood spear
out from the shield of great-hearted Aineias, and set it
at the feet of Achilles; but Aineias himself he picked up,
lifted high off the ground, and flung him: over many ranks 325
of fighters Aineias soared, and many of horses, thrown
in a great arc by the god's hand, till he landed
at the outermost edge of the violent conflict, where
the Kaukōnians were armed and ready for battle. Then
Poseidōn the Earth-Shaker came up close beside him, 330
and addressed him with winged words, saying:

“Aineias,
what god is it who's been urging you, in your rash folly,
to measure yourself, face to face, in battle against the arrogant
son of Pēleus, who's stronger than you, and better loved
by the immortals? Withdraw, any time you encounter him, 335
lest you enter the realm of Hādēs before your fated time!
But after Achilles meets his death and destined end
then take heart and fight among the foremost: no other
warrior of the Achaians will be able to take your life.”

So saying, he left him there, when he'd revealed all this, 340
and at once from Achilles' eyes the marvelous mist
dispersed; and then he at once, staring hard at what he saw,
in amazement addressed his own proud spirit: “See now,
what's this strange thing I behold with my own eyes?
My spear lies here on the ground, yet he at whom I threw it, 345
determined to kill him, is nowhere to be seen!
Aineias, too, must be dear to the immortal gods, although

I assumed that his boasting was the merest idle bombast.
 Ah, let him go: he'll not have the courage to confront me
 ever again: he's too happy to have dodged death now! 350
 So, after passing the word to the war-loving Danaäns,
 I'll go face the rest of the Trojans, and make trial of them."

With that
 he raced down the ranks, exhorting each warrior as he went:
 "No longer now hang back from the Trojans, noble Achaïans,
 rather let man go face man, be raging for the battle! 355
 It's hard for me, strong though I am, to battle against
 such a mass of men, to fight them all single-handed:
 not even Arēs, immortal god, nor Athēnē, could toil
 and engage with the jaws of such a huge grinding conflict!
 Nevertheless, as far as I'm able, with hands and feet 360
 and human strength, I promise you, in no way
 will I yield the slightest, but press right through their ranks,
 and no Trojan, I think, who comes near my spear will be happy."

So he spoke, urging them on, while illustrious Hektōr
 cried out to the Trojans, swore he'd go and confront Achilles: 365
 "You great-hearted Trojans, don't be scared of Pēleus's son!
 I too with words would battle even the immortals,
 though not with the spear, since they're mightier by far.
 Nor will Achilles accomplish everything he's promised:
 a part he'll fulfill, but a part he'll leave half-finished. 370
 Yet I shall go forth against him, though his hands be like fire—
 though his hands be like fire, and his passion like red-hot iron."

So he spoke, urging them on, and the Trojans faced the foe,
 spears raised: the two sides' rage mingled, the war cry went up.
 Then to Hektōr came Phoibos Apollo, and spoke to him, saying: 375
 "Hektōr, no longer challenge Achilles out front: instead
 wait for him with the main body, in the tumult of battle,
 lest he spear you, or wound you at close quarters with his sword."

So he spoke, and Hektōr went back into the throng of troops
 alarmed, after hearing the speaking voice of the god. 380

But Achilles went for the Trojans, heart clad in prowess,
 yelling his terrible war cry. Iphitiōn first he killed,
 Otrynteus's fine son, a commander of many men,

born of a nymph, a Naiad, to Otrynteus, sacker of cities,
under snowcapped Tmōlos, in Hydē's rich countryside. 385
As he charged, noble Achilles took him out with a spear cast
square in the face: his head was split in two, he fell
with a thud, and over him noble Achilles exulted:
"Lie there, son of Otrynteus, most fearsome of warriors!
Here you met your death, though it was by the Gygaian 390
lake you were born, on your ancestral estate, beside
fish-rich Hyllos and eddying Hermos."

So he spoke,

vauntingly, but darkness now covered his victim's eyes,
and the wheels of Achaian chariots tore him asunder
in the first grinding onset: over him Dēmoleōn— 395
a fine battler, the son of Antēnōr—Achilles now speared
in the temple, through the bronze cheek-piece of his helmet:
the bronze helmet was no protection, the flighted spear point
tore into it, split the bone open, and all his brains
were mashed up inside: he died while still attacking. 400
Hippodamas next, who'd just jumped down from his chariot
and was trying to escape him, Achilles speared in the back.
As he breathed his last he bellowed, the way that a bull
will bellow when it's dragged out by young men at the lord
of Helikē's shrine⁹: the Earth-Shaker loves such things. 405
So did Hippodamas bellow as the proud spirit fled his bones.
Achilles now with his spear made for godlike Polydōros,
a son of Priam. His father refused to allow him to fight,
since among his children he was the latest-born,
and his favorite as well, and beat everyone at running: 410
but then, in his childishness, to show how fast he could sprint,
he went tearing down the front line, and lost his life there,
speared square in the back by swift-footed noble Achilles
as he dashed by, where the baldric's golden clasps
were fastened, and the two ends of the corselet overlapped. 415
Clean through beside the navel went the spear point, and he
sank on his knees with a groan: a dark cloud enshrouded him,
and, collapsing, he grasped his innards in his hands.

9. The "lord of Helikē" was Poseidōn, who had a famous shrine at Helikē on the coast of Achaia.

But when Hektōr perceived his brother Polydōros,
 with his innards clutched in his hands, collapsing on the ground, 420
 a mist was shed over his eyes, no longer could he bear
 to range over the battlefield, but made straight for Achilles,
 like a flame, brandishing his keen-edged spear. When Achilles
 saw him, up he sprang, and vauntingly declared:
 “Here comes the man who has most deeply vexed my spirit, 425
 since he slew my much-beloved comrade: not for much longer
 shall we two avoid each other along the battle lines.”

That said, with an angry glance he called to noble Hektōr:
 “Come close, that you may the sooner enter destruction’s
 bounds.”

To this, untouched by fear, bright-helmeted Hektōr replied: 430
 “Son of Pēleus, don’t try to frighten me like a child
 with mere words, since I know perfectly well myself
 how to frame the language of taunts and rancorous abuse.
 I know, too, you’re a great fighter, and that I rank well
 below you.

Yet it’s true that such matters rest on the knees of the gods— 435
 whether I, though the lesser man, may still rob you of life
 when I cast my spear: it’s been sharp enough in the past.”

With that he swung and let fly his spear, but Athēnē
 blew it back, well away from glorious Achilles,
 with a light breath only: it returned to noble Hektōr, 440
 fell right at his feet. Then Achilles sprang upon him,
 hot for action, determined to cut him down,
 with a terrifying shout. But Apollo snatched Hektōr away—
 very easily, as a god can, and hid him in dense mist.
 Three times did swift-footed noble Achilles rush him 445
 with his bronze spear; three times he only struck thick mist.
 But when for the fourth time he charged at him like a god,
 after his fearsome war cry he spoke winged words to him:
 “Now once more, dog, you’ve dodged death, though close indeed
 that bad thing came to you! But once more Phoibos Apollo 450
 saved you, to whom it must be that you pray before entering
 the clash of spears—and for sure, when I meet you later,
 if there’s any god who’s *my* helper, I’ll finish you off!
 But for now I’ll go after the others, see whom I can catch.”

So saying, he struck Dryōps full in the neck with his spear, 455
 and Dryōps slumped at his feet. He left him there,
 and Philētōr's son Dēmouchos, a big strong fellow,
 he hit with his spear on one knee, cut short his advance,
 then savaged with his great sword, deprived him of life.
 Next Dardanos and Laogonos, two sons of Bias, 460
 he attacked, forcing both from their chariot to the ground,
 one speared, the other cut down by his sword, hand to hand.
 Then Alastōr's son Trōs—who'd come up to clasp his knees
 in the hope that he'd take him prisoner, let him live,
 out of pity for one of his age group, rather than kill him:
 the fool, 465
 unaware that there wasn't a chance of ever persuading him,
 since this was a man without kindness of mind or heart,
 but raging to kill—flung his arms now around Achilles' knees,
 tried to beseech him. A sword-stroke found his liver,
 the liver protruded, and black blood poured down from it, 470
 filling his tunic's fold. Darkness shrouded his eyes
 as he lost hold of life. Achilles then closed in on Moulaios,
 hit one ear with his spear, and the bronze point drove
 clean through to the other ear. Agēnōr's son Eheklos
 he slashed square on the head with his hilted sword: 475
 its whole blade was warmed with his blood, and both his eyes
 were invaded by scarlet death and all-mastering fate.
 Deukaliōn next, at the point where the elbow's tendons
 are joined, Achilles pierced through one arm with his bronze
 spear point: Deukaliōn faced him, arm weighed down, 480
 seeing his death before him. Achilles' sword severed his neck,
 sent both head and helmet flying, while marrow spurted out
 from his spine, and the trunk lay spread-eagled on the ground.
 Then Achilles went in pursuit of Peirēs' blameless son,
 Rhigmos, who'd come from rich-soiled Thrace. Him now 485
 Achilles speared in mid-torso: the bronze stuck in his belly,
 and he fell from his chariot. While his driver Areithoös
 was wheeling his horses around, he too was hit, in the back,
 by Achilles' sharp spear, and thrown out: the horses panicked.
 As devouring fire rages onward through the deep glens 490
 of a dried-out mountainside, and the thick maquis flares up,
 and on all sides the blaze is fanned by a roiling wind,

so Achilles, like some demon,¹⁰ raged everywhere with his spear,
 hard on the heels of his victims: the earth ran black with blood.
 As a man yokes broad-browed bulls for the treading out 495
 of white barley strewn on a strong-based threshing-floor,
 and quickly the grain's unhusked by the feet of the bellowing bulls,
 so, urged by great-hearted Achilles, his whole-hoofed horses
 galloped over the dead and their shields; with blood all the axle
 below was splashed, and the rails round his chariot, 500
 with the drops flung up by the wheels and the horses' hooves
 as Pēleus's son charged on, his invincible hands
 bespattered with flying gore, in his pursuit of glory.

10. The Greek word δαίμων (*daimōn*) is nuanced in a bewildering variety of ways. In essence it means a divine or superhuman power, a spirit: sometimes neutral, sometimes aggressive, occasionally kindly; sometimes personal, sometimes vaguely abstract; at times fate, or divinity, or heaven, or a god, or the gods collectively. For some reason the one thing the scholarly tradition shies away from ever translating it as is "demon," the modern version of the word itself, perhaps feeling that this is too tarred with the post-Christian tradition. But a malevolent spirit is clearly at work at 9.600 and 15.468, and Achilles does indeed attack like a demon, in the extended English sense as well, both here and at 21.93, 227; in these cases I have translated accordingly.