

Book 1

Wrath, goddess, sing of Achilles Pēleus's son's
calamitous wrath, which hit the Achaïans with countless ills—
many the valiant souls it saw off down to Hādēs,
souls of heroes, their selves¹ left as carrion for dogs
and all birds of prey, and the plan of Zeus was fulfilled²— 5
from the first moment those two men parted in fury,
Atreus's son, king of men, and the godlike Achilles.

Which of the gods was it brought them into contention?
Lētō's and Zeus's son:³ for he, enraged by the king,
spread a foul plague through the army, and men were dying, 10
all because Chrysēs his priest had been dishonored
by Atreus's son. Chrysēs came to the Achaïans' swift ships
to win his daughter's release, bringing ransom past counting,
in his hands the laurel wreaths of the deadly archer Apollo
on a golden staff, and made his plea to all the Achaïans, 15
but first to the two sons of Atreus, the host's field marshals:

"Atreus's sons, and you other well-greaved Achaeans,
may the gods who have their homes on Olympos grant you
to sack Priam's city, and win a safe homecoming!
But release my dear daughter, accept the ransom I offer, 20
show respect for Zeus's son, Apollo, the deadly archer."

Then all the other Achaïans spoke up in agreement—
to respect the priest, to accept his splendid ransom.
Yet Atreus's son Agamemnōn's angry heart remained untouched.

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1. The word "selves" (Greek *αὐτοῦς*, *autous*) strikingly emphasizes the epic's intense preference for this mortal physical existence over any vague insubstantial afterlife. The physical body is the real them. This is what Achilles has in mind when he famously says in Hādēs (*Od.* 11.88–91) that he'd rather be a hireling and alive than king of the dead.
 2. Here, probably, Zeus's agreement to the prayer of Thetis (see 1.503–30) to recompense her son Achilles for Agamemnōn's insulting treatment of him (the main subject of book 1) by giving the advantage in the war to the Trojans until such time as the Achaïans should make him adequate amends.
 3. Lētō's and Zeus's son: Apollo.

Brusquely he turned him away with words of harsh dismissal: 25
 “Don’t let me find you still here, old man, by the hollow ships,
 either loitering now or making your way back later,
 lest your staff and the god’s wreath afford you no protection!
 Her I shall not release—no, sooner will old age reach her
 in our house, in Argos, far away from her native country, 30
 working to and fro at the loom and sharing my bed. Now go—
 and do not provoke me, if you want to depart in safety.”

So he spoke: the old man was scared and obeyed his words.
 Silent along the shore of the thunderous sea he went;
 but once well away, long and deeply the old man prayed 35
 to Apollo his lord, the child of fair-haired Lētō:
 “Hear me, you of the silver bow, protector of Chrysē
 and holy Killa, who rule with might over Tenedos—
 Smintheus,⁴ if ever for you I roofed a pleasing precinct,
 if ever I burned for you the fat-rich thighbones 40
 of bulls or goats, now grant me this my desire:
 use your arrows to make the Danaäns pay for my tears.”

Thus he spoke in prayer, and Phoibos Apollo heard him.
 Down from the peaks of Olympos he hastened, enraged at heart,
 carrying on his shoulders his bow and lidded quiver, 45
 arrows rattling loud on his shoulders as in his rage
 he strode on his way: he came as nightfall comes.
 Away from the ships he sat, and let fly an arrow:
 fearful the twang of his silver bow. To begin with
 it was the mules he aimed at, and the swift dogs; but later 50
 he made the troops the targets of his sharp shafts
 and struck: day in, day out the clustering corpse fires flared.

Nine days throughout the army the god’s shafts sped: on the tenth
 Achilles summoned the troops to the place of assembly,
 for white-armed Hērē, the goddess, had put this in his mind 55
 since she pitied the Danaäns as she saw them dying.
 So when they had gathered and were all assembled together,
 swift-footed Achilles stood up and spoke among them:
 “Son of Atreus, I think we shall now be driven into retreat

4. Smintheus: an uncertain epithet, but most probably “mouse-god”, as protector against rodents (for which there is evidence): the uncertainty is largely due to Hellenistic scholars who thought this something “inappropriate” to the dignity of epic poetry.

and forced back home, even should we escape with our lives, 60
 if indeed war and plague together are to crush the Achaians!
 Come, then, let us find and question some priest or diviner,
 or even a reader of dreams, since a dream too is from Zeus,
 who might explain to us Phoibos Apollo's deep anger—
 Is it a missed vow that riles him? Were some oxen not sacrificed?— 65
 Maybe, catching the savor of lambs and unblemished goats,
 he'll be willing to give us relief, call off this onslaught."

This said, he sat down, and there next stood up among them
 Kalchas, Thestōr's son, of the seers by far the finest:
 he knew events present and future as well as from the past, 70
 and had brought the Achaians' fleet safe to landfall by Ilion
 through the diviner's art he had from Phoibos Apollo.
 He, with friendly intent, now spoke before the assembly:
 "Ah, Achilles, dear to Zeus, you bid me explain the reason
 for the wrath of my lord Apollo, the deadly archer. 75
 Then tell you I shall. But you must agree, and swear,
 to be my willing protector with word and with hand,
 since I think I shall anger a man who holds powerful rule
 over the Argives, to whom the Achaians owe allegiance.
 For a king has the upper hand when enraged by a commoner, 80
 since though he may swallow his wrath that day, yet he still
 nurses resentment thereafter, in his heart of hearts,
 until he fulfils it. Tell me then: will you protect me?"
 Then swift-footed Achilles spoke to him thus in answer:
 "Have no fear, reveal any oracle that you know of, 85
 for—by Apollo dear to Zeus, to whom you, Kalchas,
 pray when you make plain his oracles to the Danaäns—
 no man, while I still live and have sight upon this earth,
 shall lay heavy hands on you beside the hollow ships,
 of all the Danaäns, not even if it's Agamemnōn you mean, 90
 who claims to be far the noblest of all the Achaians."

At this the blameless diviner was emboldened, and spoke out:
 "It's for no missed vow or rich sacrifice that he faults us,
 but because of the priest whom Agamemnōn dishonored,
 refusing to free his daughter, to accept ransom for her: hence 95
 those griefs that the deadly archer's inflicted, and will inflict:
 No way will he free the Danaäns from this loathsome havoc
 until we give back to her father the quick-eyed girl, unbought,

unransomed, and take to Chrysē a rich holy sacrifice:
this is the only way we might appease and persuade him.” 100

This said, he sat down again, and there stood up among them
Atreus’s heroic son, wide-ruling Agamemnōn,
bitterly troubled, his black heart brimming over
with rage, while his eyes had the semblance of blazing fire.
Kalchas he first addressed, with a look of hatred: 105
“Prophet of doom, not once have you told me anything pleasing—
what’s always dear to your heart is to prophesy disaster:
nothing good have you ever foretold or brought to pass!⁵
Now here you come peddling your claims to the Danaān assembly,
alleging the deadly archer has laid these griefs upon them 110
because I was unwilling to accept a bounteous ransom
for this girl, Chrysēs’ daughter, since I’d rather keep her
with me at home. Indeed, I prefer her to Klytaimnēstra,
my wedded wife, whose equal she is in all ways,
being as good-looking, as tall, as clever, as accomplished. 115
Yet even so I’ll return her, if that should be best:
I want to have my troops safe, not facing destruction!
But you must find me a prize, at once, so I’m not
the only Argive left prizeless. That would not be seemly—
for you see this, all of you, that my prize is going elsewhere.” 120

Then to him replied swift-footed godlike Achilles:
“Most glorious son of Atreus, of all men the most covetous,
how can the great-hearted Achaians produce you a prize?
We know of no common stock of goods in store—
what we took when we sacked the cities has been shared out, 125
and to recall it now from the men would be most improper.
You must give up this girl to the god, and we, the Achaians,
will repay you threefold and fourfold, if Zeus ever grants
that we storm and sack the strong-walled citadel of Troy.”

5. Some have seen here a veiled reference to Kalchas’s announcement at Aulis that in order to procure a favorable sailing wind to Troy, the wrath of Artemis at Agamemnōn for some slight against her could only be purged by the human sacrifice of Agamemnōn’s daughter Iphigeneia—which was duly carried out. The wind then changed, and the fleet sailed. Homer makes no direct mention of the incident, and it was argued in antiquity, improbably, that he did not know the tradition. See also n. 4 to 9.287.

Answering him then lord Agamemnōn declared: 130
 “Fine warrior you may be, godlike Achilles, but don’t
 play tricks on me: you’ll not outwit or persuade me.
 Do you plan to keep your own prize, but leave me sitting here
 without one, since you tell me to give the girl back again?
 Either I get a new prize from the great-hearted Achaians— 135
 chosen to satisfy me, something of equal value—
 or, if they give me nothing, I shall come in person and take
 your prize, or Aias’s, or carry off that of Odysseus,
 and he’ll have cause for resentment, the man I come to!
 These matters, though, we can deal with at a later time. 140
 For now, let us haul down a black ship to the bright sea,
 and assemble a crew of oarsmen, place oxen on board
 for sacrifice, together with Chrysēs’ fair-cheeked daughter
 herself; and let one man, a counsellor, go as captain—
 Aias, or Idomeneus, or noble Odysseus, 145
 Or you, son of Pēleus, of all men the most fearsome,
 to make sacrifice for the appeasement of the deadly archer.”

Eyeing him angrily, swift-footed Achilles declared:
 “You clotheshorse for shamelessness, mind obsessed with profit,
 how could any Achaian be prompt to obey your orders 150
 to march to war or with might face men in battle?
 I did not come here on account of Troy’s spearmen: why
 should I fight them? In no way have they ever wronged me.
 Never have they driven off my cattle or my horses;
 Never in rich-soiled Phthië, the nurse of heroes, did they 155
 lay waste the harvest, since great distance lies between us—
 shadowy mountains and echoing sea. But you,
 you shameless hulk, we accompanied here for your pleasure,
 to win honor for Menelaös and for you, you dog-face,
 from the Trojans. But none of these things you heed or
 care for— 160
 and now you even threaten to rob me of the prize
 to get which I suffered much, and the Achaians’ sons gave it me.
 Never do I rate a prize to match yours when the Achaians
 lay waste some populous citadel of the Trojans, though mine
 are the hands that bear the brunt of furious battle; 165
 and when the time comes for sharing, then your prize
 is by far the greater, while I, with some smaller thing

for my share, trudge back to the ships, still combat-weary.
 But now I'm returning to Phthië: that's better by far,
 going home with my curved vessels. I'm not minded 170
 to stay here without honor, amassing you wealth and plenty."

Then the lord of men, Agamemnōn, made answer to him:
 "Run away, if your heart so bids you. Far be it from me
 to beg you to stay here for my sake. With me are many others
 who will treat me with honor—Zeus the Counsellor above all. 175
 Most hateful you are to me of Zeus's royal nurslings:
 quarrels are what you love most, and wars and battles.
 That great strength of yours, I'd guess, was some god's gift.
 Take off homeward now with your ships and your comrades,
 lord it over the Myrmidons—for you I care nothing, 180
 I take no heed of your anger. And this is my threat to you:
 Since Chryseïs is taken from me by Phoibos Apollo,
 her, with a ship of my own and my own companions,
 I shall send back—but the fair-cheeked Briseïs, your prize,
 I'll come to your hut myself, and take, that you may know well 185
 how much stronger I am than you—and that others may fear
 to address me as an equal, to confront me face to face."

So he spoke, and pain seized Pēleus's son, the heart
 in his shaggy breast was divided, torn this way and that:
 should he draw the sharp sword from beside his thigh, 190
 break up the crowd, and kill the son of Atreus,
 or swallow his bitter gall, restrain his passion?
 While he still was debating this in mind and spirit,
 his great sword half-drawn from its scabbard, Athēnē came
 down

from the heavens, dispatched by the white-armed goddess Hērē, 195
 who loved and cared for them both alike in her heart.
 Standing behind him, she grasped Pēleus's son's fair hair—
 appearing to him alone: of the others no one saw her—
 and Achilles turned round in amazement, instantly recognized
 Pallas Athēnē, the terrible radiance of her eyes, 200
 and uttering winged words, he thus addressed her:
 "Why have you come this time, child of Zeus the aegis-bearer?
 To witness the arrogant gall of Atreus's son Agamemnōn?
 For this I will tell you, and I think it will come about:
 Through his insolent conduct he may well soon lose his life." 205

To him then spoke in answer the goddess, grey-eyed Athēnē:
 “I have come here to check your rage—if you’ll listen to me—
 down from high heaven, sent by the goddess, white-armed Hērē,
 who loves and cares for you both alike in her heart.
 Come now, leave off your strife, take your hand from your sword: 210
 abuse him with words alone regarding what will happen,
 for thus I declare, and it will certainly come about:
 one day three times as many fine gifts will be offered you
 on account of this insult. So restrain yourself, and obey us.”

Then in answer to her swift-footed Achilles declared: 215
 “Needs must, goddess, respect the words of you both,
 however angry at heart one may be. It is better so—
 and those who comply with the gods are listened to in return.”
 With that, on the silver hilt he set his heavy hand,
 thrust the great sword back in its scabbard, nor disregarded 220
 Athēnē’s words; but she had already left for Olympus,
 home of Zeus of the aegis, to rejoin the other gods.

So Pēleus’s son once again with words of strong contempt
 addressed the son of Atreus, his anger not yet ended:
 “You wine-sodden wretch, dog-faced, deer-hearted, not once 225
 have you dared to arm yourself for battle with your troops,
 or joined in an ambush with the Achaian chieftains!
 Oh no, such things spell death to you. Better by far
 to range here through the broad camp of the Achaians
 and take back the gifts of whoever speaks out against you! 230
 A king that feeds off his commons, who rules mere nonentities!
 Otherwise, son of Atreus, this new outrage would be your last.
 This, though, I will tell you, and swear a great oath besides:
 By this staff—which never again will put out leaves or shoots
 since the day it first left its tree stump in the mountains, 235
 nor will it flourish afresh, since the bronze has stripped it
 of leaves and bark, and now those sons of the Achaians
 who render judgments, who safeguard the ordinances of Zeus,
 carry it in their hands—this will be my great oath for you:
 One day the need for Achilles will hit the Achaians’ sons, 240
 every man jack of them—then, for all your grief, you’ll not
 be able to help them, when many at the hands of Hector,
 killer of men, fall dying; you’ll eat out the heart within you,
 incensed that you failed to honor the best of the Achaians.”

So spoke the son of Pēleus, then dashed to the ground the staff 245
 studded with golden nails, and himself sat down.
 Across from him Atreus's son still raged. Then Nestōr,
 smooth phrasemaker, arose, the Pylians' lucid spokesman,
 a man from whose tongue the speech flowed sweeter than honey.
 In his lifetime already two generations of mortals 250
 had passed away—those raised with him—and their offspring,
 in sacred Pylos, and now he was king over the third.
 He, with friendly intent, now spoke before the assembly:
 "Ah me, great grief indeed now besets the land of Achaia!
 Priam would surely rejoice, and the sons of Priam, 255
 and all the rest of the Trojans would be happy at heart
 if they learned about this quarrel between the pair of you,
 who in counsel surpass all the Danaāns, and in fighting.
 Now listen to me. You both are younger than I am,
 there was a time when I consorted with far better men 260
 than you—and they never wrote me off as a lightweight!
 Such men have I not seen since, nor shall see again
 as Peirithoös, or Dryas, the shepherd of his people,
 or Kaineus or Exadios, or godlike Polyphēmos,
 or Thēseus, Aigeus's son, an equal of the immortals. 265
 Strongest were these of all men nurtured by earth;
 strongest themselves, and fought against the strongest,
 the mountain-laired beast-men,⁶ and fearsomely they destroyed them.
 I joined these men's company when I'd come from Pylos,
 a long trek from a distant land; it was they who invited me. 270
 Single-handed I fought, but against such men as these
 no mortal of those on earth today could do battle.
 They listened to my advice, were persuaded by my words.
 So do you both be persuaded: persuasion is better.
You, great man though you are, do not take away his girl, 275
 but let her be, as the prize the Achaians' sons first gave him.
 And *you*, son of Pēleus, do not seek to challenge a king
 by main force, since it is no ordinary honor
 that's the lot of a sceptered king, to whom Zeus gives the glory.

6. The mountain-laired beast-men: the Centaurs, traditionally located on the wooded slopes of Mt. Pēlion: they were most famously in conflict with the Lapiths of Thessaly (Nestōr's father Nēleus was Thessalian by origin), who drove them out, after killing many, when they got drunk at the wedding of King Peirithoös and tried to rape his bride, Hippodameia.

Strong though you are, with a goddess for your mother, 280
 yet this man is the greater, since he rules more subjects.
 Son of Atreus, control your rage. I do beseech you,
 check your anger against Achilles, who is a great
 bulwark for all the Achaians against war's disasters."

Then in answer to him spoke the lord Agamemnōn: 285
 "Yes, all that you say, old sir, is right and proper.
 But this man has it in mind to be above all others,
 He wants to dominate all, be lord over all, give orders
 to all—yet there's one man, I think, will not obey him.
 If the gods who live forever have made him a spearman, 290
 is that now an excuse for his insults to run wild—?"

Cutting in on his words then, noble Achilles responded:
 "I'd surely be called a coward and a worthless fellow
 if over every matter I yield to you, do as you say!
 Tell others to act thus, but don't give me such orders, 295
 for I think I'm no longer minded to obey you.
 One other thing I will tell you, and do you lay it to heart:
 I shan't fight with my hands for the girl, no, neither
 against you nor anyone else: you gave her, you'll take her.
 But of everything else that is mine by my swift black ship 300
 not one piece shall you carry off against my pleasure!
 Go on, then, try it, so that these men here too may learn
 how quickly your black blood will gush out round my spear point."

So the two, after exchanging their fighting words, arose
 and broke up the assembly by the ships of the Achaians. 305
 Pēleus's son made his way to the huts and his well-trimmed vessels
 with Patroklos, son of Menoitios, and his other companions;
 but Atreus's son now had a swift ship hauled down to the sea,
 chose a score of men to row it, loaded oxen for the god,
 brought out the fair-cheeked Chryseïs and put her aboard, 310
 and as captain there went with them resourceful Odysseus.

So these embarked and sailed out over the seaways.
 But Atreus's son ordered his people to purify themselves,
 and they did so, cast into the sea the filth of their defilement,
 then offered up to Apollo their perfect sacrifices 315
 of bulls and goats by the shore of the unharvested sea,
 and the savor went up to heaven, circling around the smoke.

Thus throughout the camp they were busy; yet Agamemnōn
did not give up the strife with which he first threatened Achilles,
but gave orders to Talthybios and Eurybatēs, 320
the two who were his heralds and busy henchmen:

“Both of you go to the hut of Pēleus’s son Achilles,
take by the hand the fair-cheeked Briseïs, bring her back here.
If he won’t give her up, I shall come in person to get her,
with a large force: and that will be the worse for him.” 325

So saying, he sent them off, with these harsh orders: the two
reluctantly went by the shore of the unharvested sea,
and came to the Myrmidons’ ships and huts. They found
Achilles sitting beside his hut and his black ship,
and at the sight of those two he was not best pleased. 330
They, quaking with terror and in awe of the king,
stood there, not questioning him, not saying a word,
but he understood in his heart, and thus addressed them:

“Greetings, you heralds, messengers of Zeus and of mankind!
Come closer: for me it’s not you who are guilty, but Agamemnōn, 335
who’s sent you both here on account of the girl Briseïs.
Very well, then. Patroklos, go fetch the girl out, hand her over
to these two to take away. And let them be witnesses
before the blessed gods and before all mortal men—
yes, and before that ruthless king—if ever hereafter 340
there shall be need of me, to ward off shameful havoc
from the host at large! How he seethes in his destructive mind,
with no idea how to look at once both before and after,
to ensure that the Achaians might fight safely beside their ships.”

So he spoke, and Patroklos obeyed his dear companion. 345
From their hut he brought the fair-cheeked Briseïs, gave her
to them to take. The two went back to the Achaians’
ships, and the woman went with them, unwillingly. But Achilles,
weeping, moved off apart from his comrades, sat down
on the shore of the grey salt sea, eyes fixed on the boundless deep, 350
and appealed to his dear mother, arms outstretched:

“Mother, since you bore me, though for a short life only,
some honor, for sure, the Olympian should have guaranteed me—
Zeus, who thunders on high; but now not the slightest regard
has he shown me—and Atreus’s son, wide-ruling Agamemnōn, 355
has done me dishonor, himself took my prize, and keeps it.”

So he spoke, shedding tears, and the lady his mother heard him
as she sat in the depths of the sea beside the Old Man, her father.
Swiftly she rose up, like a mist, through the grey sea-brine,
came and sat down in front of him as he wept, 360
and stroking him with her hand, addressed him by name, and said:
“Child, why are you crying? What grief has possessed your heart?
Speak out, let us both know, don’t hide it away in your mind.”

Then, with a heavy sigh, swift-footed Achilles answered:
“You know. Why must I tell you this, when you’re all-knowing? 365
We marched out to Thēbē, Eētiōn’s sacred city,
sacked it, brought everything back here. The sons of the Achaians
divided the spoils quite fairly among themselves,
to the son of Atreus allotting Chrysēs’ fair-cheeked daughter.
But Chrysēs himself, the priest of Apollo, deadly archer, 370
came to the swift ships of the bronze-corseleted Achaians,
to win his daughter’s release, bearing ransom past counting,
a golden staff in his hands, wreathed with the deadly archer
Apollo’s laurels, made his plea to all the Achaians,
but first to the two sons of Atreus, the host’s field marshals. 375
Then all the other Achaians spoke up in agreement:
they should respect the priest, and accept the splendid ransom.
Yet Atreus’s son Agamemnōn’s angry heart remained untouched.
Brusquely he turned him away, with words of harsh dismissal.
Angered, the old man went back, but Apollo had listened 380
to the prayer he made, for his priest was most dear to him;
so he let fly against the Argives his deadly shafts. Their men
were now dying one after the other, as the god’s arrows ranged
throughout the Achaians’ wide camp. But to us the seer,
well aware of the truth, made clear the deadly archer’s message. 385
I was the first, at once, to urge the god’s appeasement,
but then bitter anger flared in Atreus’s son: he stood up
and quickly uttered a threat, which is now accomplished:
for the sharp-eyed Achaians are sending this girl aboard
a swift ship to Chrysē, along with gifts for the lord Apollo, 390
while heralds have led away the other girl from my hut,
Briseus’s daughter, my present from the Achaians’ sons.
But you, if you can, now come to the aid of your son,
go on up to Olympos, petition Zeus, if ever
you’ve gratified his heart by either word or deed! 395

For surely I've often heard you in the halls of my father,
boasting—that Kronos's son, lord of black thunderclouds,
was saved from shameful ruin, you said, by you alone
among the immortals, when those other Olympians wanted
to put him in fetters—Hērē, Poseidōn, and Pallas Athēnē. 400
But you came, goddess, and rescued him from his bonds,
quickly calling to high Olympos the hundred-handed one,
whom the gods name Briareus—but mortals of every sort
Aigaiōn—for he in strength is mightier than his father.⁷
By the son of Kronos he sat down, exulting in his glory, 405
and the blessed gods, terrified, laid aside their fetters.
Remind him now of these matters, sit by him, clasp his knees,
in case he may be minded to assist the Trojans, drive back
the Achaians past the ships' sterns and along the seashore,
with slaughter, that they may all get joy of the king they have, 410
and Atreus's son, wide-ruling Agamemnōn, may know
his delusion in failing to honor the best of the Achaians."

Then Thetis answered him, shedding tears: "Ah, my child,
Why, after so ill-starred a birth, did I ever rear you?
I wish it had been your lot to sit by your ships, ungrieving, 415
tearless, since your life will be brief, of no real length;
but now you are both short-lived and the wretchedest mortal
of all—to a cruel fate I bore you in our halls!
Still to bring this complaint of yours before Zeus, happy thunderer,
I'll go myself to snowbound Olympos. He might just listen. 420
You, though, sit tight by your swift-sailing ships, rage on
against the Achaians—but yourself abstain from battle.
Zeus yesterday went to Ocean, to visit the blameless⁸
Aithiōpians, for a feast: all the other gods left with him.
In twelve days he'll come back to Olympos, and then 425
I shall go to the house of Zeus, with its brazen floor,
and clasp his knees; and I think I shall persuade him."

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7. Briareus was the son of Ouranos (Heaven) and Gaia (Earth): Hes. *Theog.* 147–49: the *bri-* phoneme linguistically suggests "strength". Kirk 1: 94 reminds us that Briareus "existed before men were created, and his name was therefore assigned by primeval gods." The parenthetic punctuation is that of West. Hērē, Poseidōn, and Athēnē are the three main pro-Achaian deities in the *Iliad*, but this act of rebellion is otherwise unknown.
8. The Aithiōpians were thought of as a mysterious race at the known world's periphery (Homer's world was a flat disc, with Ocean its great circumambient river). As Pulleyn says, "The gods like to visit far-away places as a diversion" (228).

This said, she took herself off, and left him there,
 enraged at heart on account of the fine-clad woman
 they'd taken from him by force, against his will. Meanwhile 430
 Odysseus made landfall at Chrysē, conveying the oxen
 for a holy sacrifice. When they entered the deep harbor
 they furled the sail and stowed it away in the black ship.
 The mast they let down by the forestays, lowered it into the crutch
 smartly, then plied their oars to the roadstead anchorage, 435
 cast out the anchor stones, hitched up the stern cables,
 and themselves stepped out onto the seashore, disembarked
 the sacrificial oxen for Apollo, the deadly archer;
 and from the seagoing ship Chryseïs too stepped forth.
 Then resourceful Odysseus escorted her to the altar, put her 440
 in the arms of her dear father, and thus addressed him:
 "Chrysēs, I am sent here by the lord of men, Agamemnōn,
 to bring you your daughter, and offer to Phoibos a holy
 sacrifice for the Danaäns, to placate the Lord
 who has lately laid on the Argives much grief and lamentation." 445

So saying, he delivered her into his arms, and Chrysēs
 gladly received his dear child. Now quickly and in good order
 they set up the god's holy sacrifice around his well-built altar,
 washed their hands, took up the barley groats, and before them
 Chrysēs now prayed aloud, with arms uplifted: 450
 "Hear me, you of the silver bow, protector of Chrysē
 and sacred Killa, who rule in might over Tenedos!
 There was a time when I prayed, and you duly listened,
 honored my prayer, and wrought havoc on the troops of the Achaians,
 so fulfil for me also one new wish, here and now: 455
 take off, without delay, this vile plague from the Danaäns."

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoibos Apollo heard him.

When they had prayed, and scattered the barley groats, first
 pulling back the victims' heads, they slaughtered and flayed them,
 cut out the thighs, wrapped them up in a double layer 460
 of fat, and placed above them cuts of raw meat. The old man
 burned these over split billets, with fire-bright wine
 drizzled them, while beside him young men held five-pronged forks.
 When the thighs were well broiled and they'd tasted the innards, next
 they chopped up the rest, threaded the bits on skewers, 465

grilled them with care, then drew them all off. But when
 they were through with their work, and the meal had been got ready,
 they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share in the feasting.
 But when they had satisfied their desire for food and drink,
 the young men topped up the mixing bowls with liquor 470
 and served it to all, the first drops in their cups for a libation.
 The whole day through with song these young Achaians sought
 to appease the god, chanting their lovely paean,
 that hymned the deadly archer, whose heart rejoiced as he listened.

But when the sun went down and darkness came on, 475
 they settled themselves and slept by the ships' stern cables;
 and when early Dawn appeared, the rosy-fingered,
 they put out to sea toward the wide camp of the Achaians,
 and Apollo the deadly archer sent them a following wind,
 and they raised the mast and spread wide the white sail. 480

The sail bellied out in the wind, and a surging bow wave
 sang loud round the vessel's cutwater as she ran.
 On she sped, slicing herself a sea-lane through the billows;
 but when they arrived at the wide camp of the Achaians,
 the black ship they hauled far up the beach, set her high 485
 on the sands, planted the long props against her hull,⁹
 and themselves dispersed to their various huts and vessels.

So he sat on, still raging, beside his swift-moving ships,
 Pēleus's heaven-sprung son, swift-footed Achilles. Never
 did he show up now in assembly, where men attain renown, 490
 never went to the fighting, but let his dear heart waste away,
 withdrawn there, though he longed for the war cry and for combat.

But when the twelfth dawn from that day broke, then back
 to Olympus the gods who are forever returned,
 all together, with Zeus at their head; and Thetis did not 495
 forget her son's entreaties, but rose from the sea's waves
 in the early morning, went up through the vast sky to Olympus.
 Kronos's loud-thundering son she found apart from the rest,
 perched on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus.
 She sat down before him, with her left hand embraced his knees, 500
 while with her right she touched him beneath the chin,

9. These props were posts or stakes driven into the sand and resting against the sides of the hull to hold the vessel upright.

and in supplication addressed him as Lord Zeus, Kronos's son:
 "Zeus, Father, if ever before among the immortals I helped you
 by word or deed, then grant me now this wish!
 Honor my son, who beyond all other men is fated 505
 to a brief life; for now that lord of men, Agamemnōn,
 has done him dishonor, himself took his prize, and keeps it.
 Zeus,—Olympian, counselor!—you must show him honor:
 give the edge to the Trojans, at least until the Achaians
 acknowledge my son's rights, make him honorable amends." 510

So she spoke; but no word came from Zeus the cloud-gatherer.
 Long in silence he sat. Yet Thetis, just as she'd embraced
 his knees, now clung to him, asked him a second time:
 "Promise me this without fail, and nod in confirmation,
 or else say no—you've nothing to fear!—and show me 515
 how far I'm the one least honored among all the gods."

Then, deeply troubled, cloud-gatherer Zeus addressed her:
 "This is a nasty business—you'll bring me into conflict
 with Hērē, make her provoke me with reproachful words.
 As it is, she constantly nags me before the immortal gods, 520
 says that I give my support to the Trojans in the fighting.
 You go back home now, lest Hērē notice you; I
 shall figure a way to get this matter accomplished.
 See now, I'll nod my head to make you believe me,
 since among the immortals this from me is the strongest 525
 pledge: no promise of mine can be revoked, mislead,
 or remain unfulfilled, once I nod in assent to it."

With that the son of Kronos nodded his dark brows,
 and the locks of ambrosial hair swung rippling from the Lord's
 immortal head: he made great Olympos tremble. 530

These two, planning done, now parted: she leapt down
 into the salty deep from gleaming Olympos, while Zeus
 went to his dwelling. All the gods rose together
 from their chairs in respect for the Father, not one of them dared
 to stay seated on his arrival: all stood up to greet him. 535
 So he sat down there on his throne. But Hērē was well aware,
 when she saw him, that Thetis, the silver-footed, the Old
 Man of the Sea's daughter, had been with him, plotting mischief.
 At once with mocking words she addressed Zeus, son of Kronos:

“Which of the gods, you trickster, has been with you, plotting mischief? 540

Always it’s your pleasure to leave me out of things,
make decisions you’ve worked on in secret. You’ve never really
wanted to let me share what’s going on in your mind.”

Then to her the father of gods and men replied:

“Hērē, do not expect to get to know all my thoughts— 545
they’d be difficult for you, even though you are my wife.

What is fitting for you to hear there is no one, either
of gods or mortals, who will learn it before you. But
such plans as I aim to devise without the other gods’ knowledge
are matters you never must ask me about, or query.” 550

Then to him the ox-eyed lady Hērē responded:

“Most dread son of Kronos, what’s this that you’re telling me?
In the past, to a fault, I’ve not questioned or pestered you—
you work out at your ease anything that you’ve a mind to.
But now I very much fear you’ve been won over by Thetis, 555
the silver-footed, the daughter of the Old Man of the Sea,
for at first light she sat down before you, and clasped your knees,
and I think you nodded to her as true token that you’d honor
Achilles, and kill many men by the ships of the Achaians.”

Then in answer to her Zeus the cloud-gatherer said: 560

“Madam, you’re full of fancies: I can keep nothing from you.
Yet you won’t achieve anything this way, save to find yourself
further still from my heart—which will be the worse for you.
If this business is thus, then it must be to my liking.
So sit down, keep quiet, and be obedient to my orders, 565
for all the gods on Olympos will avail you nothing
when I come close and lay invincible hands upon you.”

So he spoke, and fear seized the ox-eyed lady Hērē:

she sat in silence, wrestling her inner heart to submission,
and throughout Zeus’s house the gods of heaven were troubled. 570

Among them Hēphaistos, famed craftsman, was first to speak,
hoping to calm his dear mother, white-armed Hērē:

“A nasty business we’ll have here, something not to be borne
if you two are to quarrel like this for the sake of mortals,
and bring brawling among the gods—there’ll be no pleasure 575
in the splendid feast, since bad feeling’s uppermost.

And I would advise my mother (though she knows this herself)
 to make up to our dear father Zeus, so that our father may not
 fall out with her again, and thus upset our feasting.
 Suppose the Olympian, lord of the lightning, were minded 580
 to toss us out of our seats? He's by far the strongest.
 So, engage him with soft, fair words; then straight away
 the Olympian's sure to show himself gracious to us."

So saying he sprang up, and put a two-handled goblet
 in his dear mother's hand, and thus addressed her: 585
 "Be patient, my mother, endure, despite your sorrow,
 lest, dear as you are to me, I get to see you beaten
 before my eyes, and then I'll be unable to help you
 for all my grief: the Olympian's a difficult opponent.
 Once before, that other time when I was minded to aid you, 590
 he hurled me, seized by the foot, down from the gods' threshold.
 All day long I plummeted, till as the sun was setting
 I fell upon Lēmnos, and little the life left in me,
 but the Sintian folk cared for me directly after my fall."

So he spoke, and the goddess, white-armed Hērē, smiled, 595
 and smiling received the cup in one hand from her son.
 Then, going from left to right, for all the other gods
 he poured out sweet nectar, drawn from the mixing bowl,
 and unquenchable laughter arose among the blessed gods
 as they watched Hēphaistos hobbling around the palace. 600

Then the whole day long until the sun went down
 they feasted, and no one's heart lacked a fair share of the feasting,
 nor of the exquisite lyre that Apollo handled, nor of
 the Muses who sang, sweet-voiced, responding one to another.

But when the bright light of the sun sank, then they all went 605
 to lie down and sleep, every one in his own dwelling,
 where for each of them a house had been built, with cunning skill,
 by far-famed Hēphaistos, lame of both legs; and Zeus
 the Olympian, lord of lightning, went to his own bed,
 where he always had found repose when sweet sleep overtook him. 610
 There he went up and slept, with gold-throned Hērē beside him.