Books that Changed Humanity: Friday 11 November 2016

Homer’s Iliad

It has taken me some time to select the passages that I recommend that you read before we meet on 11 November. Of course, it would be great if you could read it all; and perhaps some of you have done so, even more than once.

I have aimed to keep the reading to approximately 30 pages. So, after much debate, I have selected the following:

1. Iliad Book 1 (the whole book). Here we are witnesses to the great quarrel that sets the Iliad-story in motion; we meet Achilles and some other players, all from the Greek (Achaean) army; and we get a glimpse of the Olympian gods at home. These gods, especially Zeus, will play important roles in the action.

2. Iliad Book 6, line 369 to the end of Book 6. Now we meet the Trojans: Hector, the leader of the Trojan forces, and his wife Andromache. The poet shows us something of the terror of war for a besieged city.

3. Iliad Book 24, line 432 to the end of Book 24. We have reached the end of the epic. The Trojan prince Hector has been killed by Achilles in single combat as an act of revenge (we will talk about this at the meeting); Achilles has refused to give up the body, but he has now been instructed to do so by Zeus. Priam (Hector’s father) also receives a message from the gods. He is to go into the Achaean camp and beg Achilles, face to face, for the release of his son’s body, so that he may return to Troy to bury it: this is one of the great moments in Western literature.

The translations are all from Richmond Lattimore, The Iliad of Homer, Chicago, 1951.

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Sing, goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilles
and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the
Achaeans,
hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls
of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate feasting
doors, of all birds, and the will of Zeus was accomplished
since that time when first there stood in division of conflict
Atreus' son the lord of men and brilliant Achilles.

What god was it then set them together in bitter collision?
Zeus' son and Leto's, Apollo, who in anger at the king drove
the foul pestilence along the host, and the people perished,
since Atreus' son had dishonoured Chryses, priest of Apollo,
when he came beside the fast ships of the Achaeans to ransom
back his daughter, carrying gifts beyond count and holding
in his hands wound on a staff of gold the ribbons of Apollo
who strikes from afar, and supplicated all the Achaeans,
but above all Atreus' two sons, the marshals of the people:
'Sons of Atreus and you other strong-greaved Achaeans,
to you may the gods grant who have their homes on Olympos
Priam's city to be plundered and a fair homecoming thereafter,
but may you give me back my own daughter and take the ransom,
giving honour to Zeus' son who strikes from afar, Apollo.'

Then all the rest of the Achaeans cried out in favour
that the priest be respected and the shining ransom be taken;
yet this pleased not the heart of Atreus' son Agamemnon,
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but harshly he drove him away with a strong order upon him:

'Never let me find you again, old sir, near our hollow
ships, neither lingering now nor coming again hereafter,
for fear your staff and the god's ribbons help you no longer.
The girl I will not give back; sooner will old age come upon her
in my own house, in Argos, far from her own land, going
up and down by the loom and being in my bed as my companion.
So go now, do not make me angry; you will be safer.'

So he spoke, and the old man in terror obeyed him
and went silently away beside the murmuring sea beach.

Over and over the old man prayed as he walked in solitude
to King Apollo, whom Leto of the lovely hair bore: 'Hear me,
Lord of the silver bow who set your power about Chryse
and Killa the sacrosanct, who are lord in strength over Tenedos,
Smintheus, if ever it pleased your heart that I built your temple,
if ever it pleased you that I burned all the rich thigh pieces
of bulls, of goats, then bring to pass this wish I pray for;
let your arrows make the Danaans pay for my tears shed.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him,
and strode down along the pinnacles of Olympos, angered
in his heart, carrying across his shoulders the bow and the hooded
quiver; and the shafts clashed on the shoulders of the god walking
angrily. He came as night comes down and knelt then
apart and opposite the ships and let go an arrow.
Terrible was the clash that rose from the bow of silver.

First he went after the mules and the circling hounds, then let go
a tearing arrow against the men themselves and struck them.
The corpse fires burned everywhere and did not stop burning.

Nine days up and down the host ranged the god's arrows,
but on the tenth Achilles called the people to assembly;
a thing put into his mind by the goddess of the white arms, Hera,
who had pity upon the Danaans when she saw them dying.
Now when they were all assembled in one place together,
Achilles of the swift feet stood up among them and spoke forth:
'Son of Atreus, I believe now that struggling backwards
we must make our way home if we can even escape death,
if fighting now must crush the Achaeans and the plague likewise.
No, come, let us ask some holy man, some prophet,
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He spoke thus and sat down again, and among them stood up Atreus' son the hero wide-ruling Agamemnon raging, the heart within filled black to the brim with anger from beneath, but his two eyes showed like fire in their blazing.

First of all he eyed Kalchas bitterly and spoke to him:

'See of evil: never yet have you told me a good thing. Always the evil things are dear to your heart is prophesy, but nothing excellent have you said nor ever accomplished. Now once more you make divination to the Danaans, argue forth your reason why he who strikes from afar afflicts them, but the boat, the girl Chryseis would not take the shining ransom; and indeed I wish greatly to have her in my own house; since I like her better than Klytaimestra my own wife, for in truth she is no way inferior, neither in build nor stature nor wit, nor in accomplishment. Still I am willing to give her back, if such is the best way. I myself desire that my people be safe, not perish. Find me then some prize that shall be my own, lest I only among the Argives go without, since that were unfitting; you are all witnesses to this thing, that my prize goes elsewhere.'

Then in answer again spoke brilliant swift-footed Achilles:

'Son of Atreus, most lordly, greediest for gain of all men, how shall the great-hearted Achaeans give you a prize now? There is no great store of things lying about I know of.

But what we took from the cities by storm has been distributed; it is unbecoming for the people to call back things once given. No, for the present give the girl back to the god; we Achaeans thrice and four times over will repay you, if ever Zeus gives into our hands the strong-walled citadel of Troy to be plundered.'

Then in answer again spoke powerful Agamemnon:

'Not that way, good fighter though you be, godlike Achilles, strive to cheat, for you will not deceive, you will not persuade me. What do you want? To keep your own prize and have me sit here lacking one? Are you ordering me to give this girl back?

Either the great-hearted Achaeans shall give me a new prize chosen according to my desire to atone for the girl lost, or else if they will not give me one I myself shall take her, your own prize, or that of Ajax, or that of Odysseus, going myself in person; and he whom I visit will be bitter. Still, these are things we shall deliberate again hereafter. Come, now, we must haul a black ship down to the bright sea, and assemble rowers enough for it, and put on board it the hecatomb, and the girl herself, Chryseis of the fair cheeks, and let there be one responsible man in charge of her, either Ajax or Idomeneus or brilliant Odysseus, or you yourself, son of Pelcus, most terrifying of all men, to reconcile by accomplishing sacrifice the archer.'

Then looking darkly at him Achilles of the swift feet spoke:

'O wrapped in shamelessness, with your mind forever on profit, how shall any one of the Achaeans readily obey you either to go on a journey or to fight men strongly in battle? I for my part did not come here for the sake of the Trojan spearman to fight against them, since to me they have done nothing. Never yet have they driven away my cattle or my horses, never in Phthia where the soil is rich and men grow great did they spoil my harvest, since indeed there is much that lies between us, the shadowy mountains and the echoing sea; but for your sake, o great shamelessness, we followed, to do you favour, you with the dog's eyes, to win your honour and Menelaus' from the Trojans. You forget all this or else you care nothing. And now my prize you threaten in person to strip from me, for whom I laboured much, the gift of the sons of the Achaeans. Never, when the Achaeans sack some well-founded citadel of the Trojans, do I have a prize that is equal to your prize. Always the greater part of the painful fighting is the work of my hands; but when the time comes to distribute the booty yours is far the greater reward, and I with some small thing yet dear to me go back to my ships when I am weary with fighting. Now I am returning to Phthia, since it is much better to go home again with my curved ships, and I am minded no longer to stay here dishonoured and pile up your wealth and your luxury.'

Then answered him in turn the lord of men Agamemnon:

'Run away by all means if your heart drives you. I will not entreat you to stay here for my sake. There are others with me who will do me honour, and above all Zeus of the counsels. To me you are the most hateful of all the kings whom the gods love.
Then in answer again spoke Achilles of the swift feet:
‘Goddess, it is necessary that I obey the word of you two,
angry though I am in my heart. So it will be better.
If any man obeys the gods, they listen to him also.’

He spoke, and laid his heavy hand on the silver sword hilt
and thrust the great blade back into the scabbard nor disobeyed
the word of Athene. And she went back again to Olympos
to the house of Zeus of the aegis with the other divinities.

But Peleus’ son once again in words of derision
spoke to Atreides, and did not yet let go of his anger:
‘You wine sack, with a dog’s eyes, with a deer’s heart. Never
once have you taken courage in your heart to arm with your people
for battle, or go into ambush with the best of the Achaitans.
No, for in such things you see death. Far better to your mind
is it, all along the widespread host of the Achaitans
to take away the gifts of any man who speaks up against you.
King who feed on your people, since you rule nonentities;
otherwise, son of Atreus, this were your last outrage.

But I will tell you this and swear a great oath upon it:
in the name of this sceptre, which never again will bear leaf nor
branch, now that it has left behind the cut stump in the mountains,
nor shall it ever blossom again, since the bronze blade stripped
bark and leafage, and now at last the sons of the Achaitans
carry it in their hands in state when they administer
the justice of Zeus. And this shall be a great oath before you:
some day longing for Achilles will come to the sons of the Achaitans,
all of them. Then stricken at heart though you be, you will be able
do to nothing, when in their numbers before man-slaughtering Hektor
they drop and die. And then you will eat out the heart within you
in sorrow, that you did no honour to the best of the Achaitans.’

Thus spoke Peleus’ son and dashed to the ground the sceptre
studded with golden nails, and sat down again. But Atreides
raged still on the other side, and between them Nestor
the fair-spoken rose up, the lucid speaker of Pylos,
from whose lips the streams of words ran sweeter than honey.
In his time two generations of mortal men had perished,
those who had grown up with him and they who had been born to
these in sacred Pylos, and he was king in the third age.
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He in kind intention toward both stood forth and addressed them:
‘Oh, for shame. Great sorrow comes on the land of Achaia.

Now might Priam and the sons of Priam in truth be happy,
and all the rest of the Trojans be visited in their hearts with gladness,
were they to hear all this wherein you two are quarrelling.
you, who surpass all Danaans in council, in fighting.
Yet be persuaded. Both of you are younger than I am.

Yes, and in my time I have dealt with better men than
you are, and never once did they disregard me. Never
yet have I seen nor shall see again such men as these were,
men like Peirithoös and Dryas, shepherd of the people,
Kaineus and Exadios, godlike Polyphemos,
or Theseus, Aigeus’ son, in the likeness of the immortals.
These were the strongest generation of earth-born mortals,
the strongest, and they fought against the strongest, the best men
living within the mountains, and terribly they destroyed them.
I was of the company of these men, coming from Pylos,
a long way from a distant land, since they had summoned me.

And I fought single-handed, yet against such men no one
of the mortals now alive upon earth could do battle. And also
these listened to the counsels I gave and heeded my bidding.
Do you also obey, since to be persuaded is better.

You, great man that you are, yet do not take the girl away
but let her be, a prize as the sons of the Achaians gave her
first. Nor, son of Peleus, think to match your strength with
the king, since never equal with the rest is the portion of honour
of the spoilt king to whom Zeus gives magnificence. Even
though you are the stronger man, and the mother who bore you was
immortal,
yet is this man greater who is lord over more than you rule.
Son of Atreus, give up your anger; even I entreat you
to give over your bitterness against Achilles, he who
stands as a great bulwark of battle over all the Achaians.’

Then in answer again spoke powerful Agamemnon:
‘Yes, old sir, all this you have said is fair and orderly.
Yet here is a man who wishes to be above all others,
who wishes to hold power over all, and to be lord of
all, and give them their orders, yet I think one will not obey him.

And if the everlasting gods have made him a spearman,
yet they have not given him the right to speak abusively.’

Then looking at him darkly brilliant Achilles answered him:
‘So must I be called of no account and a coward
if I must carry out every order you may happen to give me.
Tell other men to do these things, but give me no more
commands, since I for my part have no intention to obey you.
And put away in your thoughts this other thing I tell you.
With my hands I will not fight for the girl’s sake, neither
with you nor any other man, since you take her away who gave her.
But of all the other things that are mine beside my fast black
ship, you shall take nothing away against my pleasure.
Come, then, only try it, that these others may see also;
instantly your own black blood will stain my spearpoint.’

So these two after battling in words of contention
stood up, and broke the assembly beside the ships of the Achaians.
Peleus’ son went back to his balanced ships and his shelter
with Patroklos, Menoitios’ son, and his own companions.
But the son of Atreus drew a fast ship down to the water
and allotted into it twenty rowers and put on board it
the hecatomb for the god and Chryseis of the fair cheeks
leading her by the hand. And in charge went crafty Odysseus.
These then putting out went over the ways of the water
while Atreus’ son told his people to wash off their defilement.
And they washed it away and threw the washings into the salt sea.
Then they accomplished perfect hecatombs to Apollo,
of bulls and goats along the beach of the barren salt sea.
The savour of the burning swept in circles up to the bright sky.
Thus these were busy about the army. But Agamemnon
did not give up his anger and the first threat he made to Achilles,
but to Talthybios he gave his orders and Eurybates
who were heralds and hard-working henchmen to him: ‘Go now
to the shelter of Peleus’ son Achilles, to bring back
Briseis of the fair cheeks leading her by the hand. And if he
will not give her, I must come in person to take her
with many men behind me, and it will be the worse for him.’
He spoke and sent them forth with this strong order upon them.
They went against their will beside the beach of the barren

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salt sea, and came to the shelters and the ships of the Myrmidons.
The man himself they found beside his shelter and his black ship
sitting. And Achilles took no joy at all when he saw them.

330 These two terrified and in awe of the king stood waiting
quietly, and did not speak a word at all nor question him.
But he knew the whole matter in his own heart, and spoke first:
"Welcome, heralds, messengers of Zeus and of mortals.

335 Draw near. You are not to blame in my sight, but Agamemnon
who sent the two of you here for the sake of the girl Briseis.
Go then, illustrious Patroklos, and bring the girl forth
and give her to these to be taken away. Yet let them be witnesses
in the sight of the blessed gods, in the sight of mortal
men, and of this cruel king, if ever hereafter
there shall be need of me to beat back the shameful destruction
from the rest. For surely in ruined heart he makes sacrifice
and has not wit enough to look behind and before him
that the Achaeans fighting beside their ships shall not perish."

340 So he spoke, and Patroklos obeyed his beloved companion.
He led forth from the hut Briseis of the fair cheeks and gave her
to be taken away; and they walked back beside the ships of the Achaeans,
and the woman all unwilling went with them still. But Achilles
weeping went and sat in sorrow apart from his companions
beside the beach of the grey sea looking out on the infinite water.

Many times stretching forth his hands he called on his mother:
"Since, my mother, you bore me to be a man with a short life,
therefore Zeus of the loud thunder on Olympos should grant me
honour at least. But now he has given me not even a little.

355 Now the son of Atreus, powerful Agamemnon,
has dishonoured me, since he has taken away my prize and keeps it."

So he spoke in tears and the lady his mother heard him
as she sat in the depths of the sea at the side of her aged father,
and lightly she emerged like a mist from the grey water.

360 She came and sat beside him as he wept, and stroked him
with her hand and called him by name and spoke to him: 'Why then,
child, do you lament? What sorrow has come to your heart now?
Tell me, do not hide it in your mind, and thus we shall both know.'

Sighing heavily Achilles of the swift feet answered her:

365 'You know; since you know why must I tell you all this?'
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Aigaioi’s son, but he is far greater in strength than his father.

405 He rejoicing in the glory of it sat down by Kronion, and the rest of the blessed gods were frightened and gave up binding him. Sit beside him and take his knees and remind him of these things now, if perhaps he might be willing to help the Trojans, and pin the Achaioi back against the ships and the water, dying, so that they may all have profit of their own king, that Atreus’ son wide-ruling Agamemnon may recognize his madness, that he did no honour to the best of the Achaioi.’

Thetis answered him then letting the tears fall: ‘Ah me, my child. Your birth was bitterness. Why did I raise you?

415 If only you could sit by your ships untroubled, not weeping, since indeed your lifetime is to be short, of no length. Now it has befallen that your life must be brief and bitter beyond all men’s. To a bad destiny I bore you in my chambers. But I will go to cloud-dark Olympos and ask this thing of Zeus who delights in the thunder. Perhaps he will do it. Do you therefore continuing to sit by your swift ships be angry at the Achaioi and stay away from all fighting. For Zeus went to the blameless Athioioi at the Ocean yesterday to feast, and the rest of the gods went with him.

420 On the twelfth day he will be coming back to Olympos, and then I will go for your sake to the house of Zeus, bronze-founded, and take him by the knees and I think I can persuade him.’ So speaking she went away from that place and left him sorrowing in his heart for the sake of the fair-girdled woman whom they were taking by force against his will. But Odysseus meanwhile drew near to Chryse conveying the sacred hecatomb. These when they were inside the many-hollowed harbour took down and gathered together the sails and stowed them in the black ship, let down mast by the forestays, and settled it into the mast crutch easily, and rowed her in with oars to the mooring. They threw over the anchor stones and made fast the stern cables and themselves stepped out on to the break of the sea beach, and led forth the hecatomb to the archer Apollo, and Chryseis herself stepped forth from the sea-going vessel.

430 Odysseus of the many designs guided her to the altar and left her in her father’s arms and spoke a word to him: ‘Chryses, I was sent here by the lord of men Agamemnon to lead back your daughter and accomplish a sacred hecatomb to Apollo on behalf of the Danaoi, that we may propitiate the lord who has heaped unhappiness and tears on the Argives.’

435 He spoke, and left her in his arms. And he received gladly his beloved child. And the men arranged the sacred hecatomb for the god in orderly fashion around the strong-founded altar. Next they washed their hands and took up the scattering barley. Standing among them with lifted arms Chryses prayed in a great voice: ‘Hear me, lord of the silver bow, who set your power about Chryse and Killa the sacred sanct, who are lord in strength over Tenedos; if once before you listened to my prayers and did me honour and smote strongly the host of the Achaioi, so one more time bring to pass the wish that I pray for. Beat aside at last the shameful plague from the Danaoi.’

440 So he spoke in prayer, and Phoebos Apollo heard him. And when all had made prayer and flung down the scattering barley first they drew back the victims’ heads and slaughtered them and skinned them, and cut away the meat from the thighs and wrapped them in fat, making a double fold, and laid shreds of flesh upon them. The old man burned these on a cleft stick and poured the gleaming wine over, while the young men with forks in their hands stood about him.

445 But when they had burned the thigh pieces and tasted the vitals, they cut all the remainder into pieces and spit them and roasted all carefully and took off the pieces. Then after they had finished the work and got the feast ready they feasted, nor was any man’s hunger denied a fair portion. But when they had put away their desire for eating and drinking, the young men filled the mixing bowls with pure wine, passing a portion to all, when they had offered drink in the goblets. All day long they propitiated the god with singing, chanting a splendid hymn to Apollo, these young Achaioi, singing to the one who works from afar, who listened in gladness.

450 Afterwards when the sun went down and darkness came onward they lay down and slept beside the ship’s stern cables.
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But when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers,
young Dawn showed again, with her rosy fingers, they put forth to sea toward the wide camp of the Achaian.

And Apollo, who from afar sent them a favouring stern wind.

They set up the mast again and spread on it the white sails,
and the wind blew into the middle of the sail, and at the cutwater
a blue wave rose and sang strongly as the ship went forward.
She ran swiftly cutting across the swell her pathway.

But when they had come back to the wide camp of the Achaian
they hauled the black ship up on the mainland, high up
on the sand, and underneath her they fixed the long props.
Afterwards they scattered to their own ships and their shelters.

But that other still sat in anger beside his swift ships,
Peleus' son divinely born, Achilles of the swift feet.

Never now would he go to assemblies where men win glory,
never more into battle, but continued to waste his heart out
sitting there, though he longed always for the clamour and fighting.

But when the twelfth dawn after this day appeared, the gods who
live forever came back to Olympos all in a body

Zeus led them; nor did Thetis forget the entreaties
of her son, but she emerged from the sea's waves early
in the morning and went up to the tall sky and Olympos.
She found Kronos' broad-browed son apart from the others
sitting upon the highest peak of rugged Olympos,

She came and sat beside him with her left hand embracing
his knees, but took him underneath the chin with her right hand
and spoke in supplication to lord Zeus son of Kronos:
'Father Zeus, if ever before in word or action
I did you favour among the immortals, now grant what I ask for.

Now give honour to my son short-lived beyond all other
mortal. Since even now the lord of men Agamemnon
dishonours him, who has taken away his prize and keeps it.
Zeus of the counsels, lord of Olympos, now do him honour.
So long put strength into the Trojans, until the Achaian
give my son his rights, and his honour is increased among them.'

She spoke thus. But Zeus who gathers the clouds made no answer
but sat in silence a long time. And Thetis, as she had taken
his knees, clung fast to them and urged once more her question:
'Bend your head and promise me to accomplish this thing,
or else refuse it, you have nothing to fear, that I may know
by how much I am the most dishonoured of all gods.'

Deeply disturbed Zeus who gathers the clouds answered her:
'This is a disastrous matter when you set me in conflict
with Hera, and she troubles me with recriminations.
Since even as things are, forever among the immortals
she is at me and speaks of how I help the Trojans in battle.

Even so, go back again now, go away, for fear she
see us. I will look to these things that they be accomplished.
See then, I will bend my head that you may believe me.

For this among the immortal gods is the mightiest witness
I can give, and nothing I do shall be vain or revocable
nor a thing unfulfilled when I bend my head in assent to it.'

He spoke, the son of Kronos, and nodded his head with the dark brows,
and the immortally anointed hair of the great god
swpt from his divine head, and all Olympos was shaken.

So these two who had made their plans separated, and Thetis
leapt down again from shining Olympos into the sea's depth,
but Zeus went back to his own house, and all the gods rose up
from their chairs to greet the coming of their father, not one had courage
to keep his place as the father advanced, but stood up to greet him.

Thus he took his place on the throne; yet Hera was not
ignorant, having seen how he had been plotting counsels
with Thetis the silver-footed, the daughter of the sea's ancient,
and at once she spoke revilingly to Zeus son of Kronos:
'Treachery one, what god has been plotting counsels with you?
Always it is dear to your heart in my absence to think of
secret things and decide upon them. Never have you patience
frankly to speak forth to me the thing that you purpose.'

Then to her the father of gods and men made answer:
'Hera, do not go on hoping that you will hear all my
thoughts, since these will be too hard for you, though you are my wife.

Any thought that is right for you to listen to, no one
neither man nor any immortal shall hear it before you.
But anything that apart from the rest of the gods I wish to
plan, do not always question each detail nor probe me.'

Then the goddess the ox-eyed lady Hera answered:
'Majesty, son of Kronos, what sort of thing have you spoken?
Truly too much in time past I have not questioned nor probed you, but you are entirely free to think out whatever pleases you.

Now, though, I am terribly afraid you were won over by Thetis the silver-footed, the daughter of the sea's ancient. For early in the morning she sat beside you and took your knees, and I think you bowed your head in assent to do honour to Achilles, and to destroy many beside the ships of the Achaeans.'

Then in return Zeus who gathers the clouds made answer: 'Dear lady, I never escape you, you are always full of suspicion. Yet thus you can accomplish nothing surely, but be more distant from my heart than ever, and it will be the worse for you. If what you say is true, then that is the way I wish it.'

But go then, sit down in silence, and do as I tell you, for fear all the gods, as many as are on Olympus, can do nothing if I come close and lay my unconquerable hands upon you.' He spoke, and the goddess the ox-eyed lady Hera was frightened and went and sat down in silence wrenching her heart to obedience, and all the Uranian gods in the house of Zeus were troubled. Hephæstos the renowned smith rose up to speak among them, to bring comfort to his beloved mother, Hera of the white arms: 'This will be a disastrous matter and not endurable if you two are to quarrel thus for the sake of mortals and bring brawling among the gods. There will be no pleasure in the stately feast at all, since vile things will be uppermost. And I entreat my mother, though she herself understands it, to be ingratiating toward our father Zeus, that no longer our father may scold her and break up the quiet of our feasting.

For if the Olympian who handles the lightning should be minded to hurl us out of our places, he is far too strong for any. Do you therefore approach him again with words made gentle, and at once the Olympian will be gracious again to us.'

He spoke, and sprouting to his feet put a two-handled goblet into his mother's hands and spoke again to her once more: 'Have patience, my mother, and endure it, though you be saddened, for fear that, dear as you are, I see you before my own eyes struck down, and then sorry though I be I shall not be able to do anything. It is too hard to fight against the Olympian.

There was a time once before now I was minded to help you, and he caught me by the foot and threw me from the magic threshold, and all day long I dropped helpless, and about sunset I landed in Lemnos, and there was not much life left in me. After that fell it was the Sintian men who took care of me."

He spoke, and the goddess of the white arms Hera smiled at him, and smiling she accepted the goblet out of her son's hand. Thereafter beginning from the left he poured drinks for the other gods, dipping up from the mixing bowl the sweet nectar. But among the blessed immortals uncontrollable laughter went up as they saw Hephæstos bustling about the palace.

Thus thereafter the whole day long until the sun went under they feasted, nor was anyone's hunger denied a fair portion, nor denied the beautifully wrought lyre in the hands of Apollo nor the antiphonal sweet sound of the Muses singing.

Afterwards when the light of the flaming sun went under they went away each one to sleep in his home where for each one the far-renowned strong-handed Hephæstos had built a house by means of his craftsmanship and cunning. Zeus the Olympian and lord of the lightning went to his own bed, where always he lay when sweet sleep came on him. Going up to the bed he slept and Hera of the gold throne beside him.
so he may overtake me while I am still in the city.

For I am going first to my own house, so I can visit
my own people, my beloved wife and my son, who is little,
since I do not know if ever again I shall come back this way,
or whether the gods will strike me down at the hands of the Achaians.'

So speaking Hektor of the shining helm departed
and in speed made his way to his own well-established dwelling,
but failed to find in the house Andromache of the white arms;
for she, with the child, and followed by one fair-robed attendant,
had taken her place on the tower in lamentation, and tearful.
When he saw no sign of his perfect wife within the house, Hektor
stopped in his way on the threshold and spoke among the handmaids:
'Come then, tell me truthfully as you may, handmaids:
where has Andromache of the white arms gone? Is she
with any of the sisters of her lord or the wives of his brothers?
Or has she gone to the house of Athene, where all the other
lovely-haired women of Troy propitiate the grim goddess?

Then in turn the hard-working housekeeper gave him an answer:
'Hektor, since you have urged me to tell you the truth, she is not
with any of the sisters of her lord or the wives of his brothers,
nor has she gone to the house of Athene, where all the other
lovely-haired women of Troy propitiate the grim goddess,
but she has gone to the great bastion of Ilion, because she heard that
the Trojans were losing, and great grew the strength of the Achaians.
Therefore she has gone in speed to the wall, like a woman
gone mad, and a nurse attending her carries the baby.'

So the housekeeper spoke, and Hektor hastened from his home
backward by the way he had come through the well-laid streets. So
as he had come to the gates on his way through the great city,
the Skanian gates, whereby he would issue into the plain, there
at last his own generous wife came running to meet him,
Andromache, the daughter of high-hearted Eteocles;
Athena, who had dwelt underneath wooded Plakos,
Thbe below Plakos, lord over the Kilikian people.

It was his daughter who was given to Hektor of the bronze helm.
She came to him there, and beside her went an attendant carrying
the boy in the fold of her bosom, a little child, only a baby,
Hektor's son, the admired, beautiful as a star shining,
BOOK SIX

whom Hektor called Skamandrios, but all of the others
Astyanax—lord of the city; since Hektor alone saved Iliion.
Hektor smiled in silence as he looked on his son, but she,
Andromache, stood close beside him, letting her tears fall,
and clung to his hand and called him by name and spoke to him: 'Dearest,
your own great strength will be your death, and you have no pity
on your little son, nor on me, ill-starred, who soon must be your widow;
for presently the Achaeans, gathering together,
will set upon you and kill you; and for me it would be far better
to sink into the earth when I have lost you, for there is no other
consolation for me after you have gone to your destiny—
only grief; since I have no father, no honoured mother.
It was brilliant Achilles who slew my father, Eëtion,
when he stormed the strong-founded citadel of the Kilikians,
Thebe of the towering gates. He killed Eëtion
but did not strip his armour, for his heart respected the dead man,
but burned the body in all its elaborate war-gear
and piled a grave mound over it, and the nymphs of the mountains,
daughters of Zeus of the aegis, planted elm trees about it.
And they who were my seven brothers in the great house all went
upon a single day down into the house of the death god,
for swift-footed brilliant Achilles slaughtered all of them
as they were tending their white sheep and their lumbering oxen;
and when he had led my mother, who was queen under wooded Plakes,
here, along with all his other possessions, Achilles
released her again, accepting ransom beyond count, but Artemis
of the showering arrows struck her down in the halls of her father.
Hektor, thus you are father to me, and my honoured mother,
you are my brother, and you it is who are my young husband.
Please take pity upon me then, stay here on the rampart,
that you may not leave your child an orphan, your wife a widow,
but draw your people up by the fig tree, there where the city
is openest to attack, and where the wall may be mounted.
Three times their bravest came that way, and fought there to storm it
about the two Aiantes and renowned Idomeneus,
about the two Atreidai and the fighting son of Tydeus.
Either some man well skilled in prophetic arts had spoken,
or the very spirit within themselves had stirred them to the onslaught.'
may be as I am, pre-eminent among the Trojans,
great in strength, as am I, and rule strongly over Ilion;
and some day let them say of him: "He is better by far than his father",
as he comes in from the fighting; and let him kill his enemy
and bring home the blooded spoils, and delight the heart of his mother.'
So speaking he set his child again in the arms of his beloved
wife, who took him back again to her fragrant bosom
smiling in her tears; and her husband saw, and took pity upon her,
and stroked her with his hand, and called her by name and spoke to her:
'Poor Andromache! Why does your heart sorrow so much for me?
No man is going to hurl me to Hades, unless it is fated,
but as for fate, I think that no man yet has escaped it
once it has taken its first form, neither brave man nor coward.

Go therefore back to our house, and take up your own work,
the loom and the distaff, and see to it that your handmaids
ply their work also; but the men must see to the fighting,
all men who are the people of Ilion, but I beyond others.'

So glorious Hektor spoke and again took up the helmet
with its crest of horse-hair, while his beloved wife went homeward,
turning to look back on the way, letting the live tears fall.
And as she came in speed into the well-settled household
of Hektor the slayer of men, she found numbers of handmaidens
within, and her coming stirred all of them into lamentation.

So they mourned in his house over Hektor while he was living
still, for they thought he would never again come back from the fighting
alive, escaping the Achaian hands and their violence.

But Paris in turn did not linger long in his high house,
but when he had put on his glorious armour with bronze elaborate
he ran in the confidence of his quick feet through the city.

As when some stalled horse who has been corn-fed at the manger
breaking free of his rope gaolps over the plain in thunder
to his accustomed bathing place in a sweet-running river
and in the pride of his strength holds high his head, and the mane floats
over his shoulders; sure of his glorious strength, the quick knees
carry him to the loved places and the pasture of horses;
so from utmost Pergamos came Paris, the son of
Priam, shining in all his armour of war as the sun shines,
laughing aloud, and his quick feet carried him; suddenly thereafter

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BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

They chafe from sitting here too long, nor have the Achaeans' kings the strength to hold them back as they break for the fighting.

In answer to him again spoke aged Priam the godlike:

'If then you are henchman to Peleid Achilleus, come, tell me the entire truth, and whether my son lies still beside the ships, or whether by now he has been hewn limb from limb and thrown before the dogs by Achilleus.'

Then in turn answered him the courier Argeiphontes:

'Aged sir, neither have any dogs eaten him, nor have the birds, but he lies yet beside the ship of Achilleus at the shelters, and as he was; now here is the twelfth dawn he has lain there, nor does his flesh decay, nor do worms feed on him, they who devour men who have fallen in battle. It is true, Achilleus drags him at random around his beloved companion's tomb, as dawn on dawn appears, yet he cannot mutilate him; you yourself can see when you go there how fresh with dew he lies, and the blood is all washed from him, nor is there any corruption, and all the wounds have been closed up where he was struck, since many drove the bronze in his body. So it is that the blessed immortals care for your son, though he is nothing but a dead man; because in their hearts they loved him.'

He spoke, and the old man was made joyful and answered him, saying:

'My child, surely it is good to give the immortals their due gifts; because my own son, if ever I had one, never forgot in his halls the gods who live on Olympos. Therefore they remembered him even in death's stage. Come, then, accept at my hands this beautiful drinking-cup, and give me protection for my body, and with the gods' grace be my escort until I make my way to the shelter of the son of Peleus.'

In turn answered him the courier Argeiphontes:

'You try me out, aged sir, for I am young, but you will not persuade me, telling me to accept your gifts when Achilleus does not know. I fear him at heart and have too much reverence to rob him. Such a thing might be to my sorrow hereafter. But I would be your escort and take good care of you, even till I came to glorious Argos in a fast ship or following on foot, and none would fight you because he despised your escort.'

The kind god spoke, and sprang up behind the horses and into

BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

the chariot, and rapidly caught in his hands the lash and the guide reins, and breathed great strength into the mules and horses. Now after they had got to the fortifications about the ships, and the ditch, there were sentries, who had just begun to make ready their dinner, but about these the courier Argeiphontes drifted sleep, on all, and quickly opened the gate, and shoved back the door-bars, and brought in Priam and the glorious gifts on the wagon. But when they had got to the shelter of Peleus' son: a towering shelter the Myrmidons had built for their king, hewing the timbers of pine, and they made a roof of thatch above it shaggy with grass that they had gathered out of the meadows; and around it made a great courtyard for their king, with hedgepoles set close together; the gate was secured by a single door-piece of pine, and three Achaeans could ram it home in its socket and three could pull back and open the huge door-bar; three other Achaeans, that is, but Achilleus all by himself could close it.

At this time Hermes, the kind god, opened the gate for the old man and brought in the glorious gifts for Peleus' son, the swift-footed, and dismounted to the ground from behind the horses, and spoke forth:

'Aged sir, I who came to you am a god immortal, Hermes. My father sent me down to guide and go with you. But now I am going back again, and I will not go in before the eyes of Achilleus, for it would make others angry for an immortal god so to face mortal men with favour. But go you in yourself and clasp the knees of Peleion and entreat him in the name of his father, the name of his mother of the lovely hair, and his child, and so move the spirit within him.'

So Hermes spoke, and went away to the height of Olympos, but Priam vaulted down to the ground from behind the horses and left Idaios where he was, for he stayed behind, holding in hand the horses and mules. The old man made straight for the dwelling where Achilleus the beloved of Zeus was sitting. He found him inside, and his companions were sitting apart, as two only, Automedon the hero and Alkinos, scion of Ares, were busy beside him. He had just now got through with his dinner, with eating and drinking, and the table still stood by. Tall Priam came in unseen by the other men and stood close beside him and caught the knees of Achilleus in his arms, and kissed the hands
BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

that were dangerous and manslaughtering and had killed so many
of his sons. As when dense disaster closes on one who has murdered
a man in his own land, and he comes to the country of others,
to a man of substance, and wonder seizes on those who behold him,
so Achilles wondered as he looked on Priam, a godlike
man, and the rest of them wondered also, and looked at each other.

But now Priam spoke to him in the words of a suppliant:
'Achilles like the gods, remember your father, one who
is of years like mine, and on the door-sill of sorrowful old age.
And they who dwell nearby encompass him and afflict him,
nor is there any to defend him against the wrath, the destruction.
Yet surely he, when he hears of you and that you are still living,
is gladened within his heart and all his days he is hopeful
that he will see his beloved son come home from the Troad.
But for me, my destiny was evil. I have had the noblest
of sons in Troy, but I say not one of them is left to me.

Fifty were my sons, when the sons of the Achaians came here.
Nineteen were born to me from the womb of a single mother,
and other women bore the rest in my palace; and of these
violent Ares broke the strength in the knees of most of them,
but one was left me who guarded my city and people, that one
you killed a few days since as he fought in defence of his country,
Hektor, for whose sake I come now to the ships of the Achaians
to win him back from you, and I bring you gifts beyond number.
Honour then the gods, Achilles, and take pity upon me
remembering your father, yet I am still more pitiful;

I have gone through what no other mortal on earth has gone through;
I put my lips to the hands of the man who has killed my children.'

So he spoke, and stirred in the other a passion of grieving
for his own father. He took the old man’s hand and pushed him
gently away, and the two remembered, as Priam sat huddled
at the feet of Achilles and wept close for manslaughtering Hektor
and Achilles wept now for his own father, now again
for Patroklos. The sound of their mourning moved in the house. Then
when great Achilles had taken full satisfaction in sorrow
and the passion for it had gone from his mind and body, thereafter
he rose from his chair, and took the old man by the hand, and set him
on his feet again, in pity for the grey head and the grey beard,
give him back, so my eyes may behold him, and accept the ransom we bring you, which is great. You may have joy of it, and go back to the land of your own fathers, since once you have permitted me to go on living myself and continue to look on the sunlight.'

Then looking darkly at him spoke swift-footed Achilles:

'No longer stir me up, old sir, I myself am minded
to give Hektor back to you. A messenger came to me from Zeus,
my mother, who bore me, the daughter of the sea’s ancient.
I know you, Priam, in my heart, and it does not escape me
that some god led you to the running ships of the Achaeans.

For no mortal would dare come to our encampment, not even
one strong in youth. He could not get by the pickets, he could not
lightly unbar the bolt that secures our gateway. Therefore
you must not further make my spirit move in my sorrows,
for fear, old sir, I might not let you alone in my shelter,
suppliant as you are; and be guilty before the god’s orders.

He spoke, and the old man was frightened and did as he told him.
The son of Peleus bounded to the door of the house like a lion,
not went alone, but the two henchmen followed attending,
the hero Automedon and Alkimus, those whom Achilles
honoured beyond all companions after Patroklos dead. These two
now set free from under the yoke the mules and the horses,
and led inside the herald, the old king’s crier, and gave him
a chair to sit in, then from the smooth-polished mule wagon
lifted out the innumerable spoils for the head of Hektor,
but left inside it two great cloaks and a finespun tunic
to shroud the corpse in when they carried him home. Then Achilles
called out to his serving-maids to wash the body and anoint it
all over; but take it first aside, since otherwise Priam
might see his son and in the heart’s sorrow not hold in his anger
at the sight, and the deep heart in Achilles be shaken to anger;
that he might not kill Priam and be guilty before the god’s orders.
Then when the serving-maids had washed the corpse and anointed it
with olive oil, they threw a fair great cloak and a tunic
about him, and Achilles himself lifted him and laid him
on a litter, and his friends helped him lift it to the smooth-polished
mule wagon. He groaned then, and called by name on his beloved companion:

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at his size and beauty, for he seemed like an outright vision of gods. Achilleus in turn gazed on Dardanian Priam and wondered, as he saw his brave looks and listened to him talking. But when they had taken their fill of gazing one on the other, first of the two to speak was the aged man, Priam the godlike:

'Give me, beloved of Zeus, a place to sleep presently, so that we may even go to bed and take the pleasure of sweet sleep. For my eyes have not closed underneath my lids since that time when my son lost his life beneath your hands, but always I have been grieving and brooding over my numberless sorrows and wallowed in the muck about my courtyard’s enclosure. Now I have tasted food again and have let the gleaming wine go down my throat. Before, I had tasted nothing.'

He spoke, and Achilleus ordered his serving-maids and companions to make a bed in the porch’s shelter and to lay upon it fine underbedding of purple, and spread blankets above it and fleecy robes to be an over-all covering. The maid-servants went forth from the main house, and in their hands held torches, and set to work, and presently had two beds made. Achilleus of the swift feet now looked at Priam and said, sarcastic:

'Sleep outside, aged sir and good friend, for fear some Achaian might come in here on a matter of counsel, since they keep coming and sitting by me and making plans; as they are supposed to. But if one of these come through the fleeting night should notice you, he would go straight and tell Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, and there would be delay in the ransoming of the body. But come, tell me this and count off for me exactly how many days you intend for the burial of great Hektor. Tell me, so I myself shall stay still and hold back the people.'

In answer to him again spoke aged Priam the godlike:

'If you are willing that we accomplish a complete funeral for great Hektor, this, Achilleus, is what you could do and give me pleasure. For you know surely how we are penned in our city, and wood is far to bring in from the hills, and the Trojans are frightened badly. Nine days we would keep him in our palace and mourn him, and bury him on the tenth day, and the people feast by him, and on the eleventh day we would make the grave-barrow for him, and on the twelfth day fight again; if so we must do.'
BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

'Come, men of Troy and Trojan women; look upon Hektor
if ever before you were joyful when you saw him come back living
from battle; for he was a great joy to his city, and all his people.'
She spoke, and there was no man left there in all the city
nor woman, but all were held in sorrow passing endurance.
They met Priam beside the gates as he brought the dead in.
First among them were Hektor's wife and his honoured mother
who tore their hair, and ran up beside the smooth-rolling wagon,
and touched his head. And the multitude, wailing, stood there about them.
And now and there in front of the gates they would have lamented
all day till the sun went down and let fall their tears for Hektor,
except that the old man spoke from the chariot to his people:
'Give me way to get through with my mules; then afterwards
you may sate yourselves with mourning, when I have him inside the
palace.'
So he spoke, and they stood apart and made way for the wagon.
And when they had brought him inside the renowned house, they laid
him
then on a carved bed, and seated beside him the singers
who were to lead the melody in the dirge, and the singers
chanted the song of sorrow, and the women were mourning beside them.
Andromache of the white arms led the lamentation
of the women, and held in her arms the head of manslaughtering Hektor:
'My husband, you were lost young from life, and have left me
a widow in your house, and the boy is only a baby
who was born to you and me, the unhappy. I think he will never
come of age, for before then head to heel this city
will be sacked, for you, its defender, are gone, you who guarded
the city, and the grave wives, and the innocent children,
wives who before long must go away in the hollow ships,
and among them I shall also go, and you, my child, follow
where I go, and there do much hard work that is unworthy
of you, drudgery for a hard master; or else some Achaian
will take you by hand and hurl you from the tower into horrible
death, in anger because Hektor once killed his brother,
or his father, or his son; there were so many Achaian
whose teeth bit the vast earth, beaten down by the hands of Hektor.
Your father was no merciful man in the horror of battle.

Therefore your people are grieving for you all through their city,
Hektor, and you left for your parents mourning and sorrow
beyond words, but for me passing all others is left the bitterness
and the pain, for you did not die in bed, and stretch your arms to me,
nor tell me some last intimate word that I could remember
always, all the nights and days of my weeping for you.'
So she spoke in tears, and the women were mourning about her.
Now Hekabe led out the thronging chant of their sorrow:
'Hektor, of all my sons the dearest by far to my spirit;
while you still lived for me you were dear to the gods, and even
in the stage of death they cared about you still. There were others
of my sons whom at times swift-footed Achilles captured,
and he would send them as slaves far across the unresting salt water
into Samos, and Limnos, and Lemnos in the gloom of the mists. You,
when he had taken your life with the thin edge of the bronze sword,
he dragged again and again around his beloved companion's
tomb, Patroklos, whom you killed, but even so did not
bring him back to life. Now you lie in the palace, handsome
and fresh with dew, in the likeness of one whom he of the silver
bow, Apollo, has attacked and killed with his gentle arrows.'
So she spoke, in tears, and awakened the endless mourning.
Third and last Helen led the song of sorrow among them:
'Hektor, of all my lord's brothers dearest by far to my spirit:
my husband is Alexandros, like an immortal, who brought me
here to Troy; and I should have died before I came with him;
and here now is the twentieth year upon me since I came
from the place where I was, forsaking the land of my fathers. In this time
I have never heard a harsh saying from you, nor an insult.
No, but when another, one of my lord's brothers or sisters, a fair-robed
wife of some brother, would say a harsh word to me in the palace,
or my lord's mother—but his father was gentle always, a father
indeed—then you would speak and put them off and restrain them
by your own gentleness of heart and your gentle words. Therefore
I mourn for you in sorrow of heart and mourn myself also
and my ill luck. There was no other in all the wide Troad
who was kind to me, and my friend; all others shrank when they saw me.'
So she spoke in tears, and the vast populace grieved with her.
Now Priam the aged king spoke forth his word to his people:
BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

'Now, men of Troy, bring timber into the city, and let not your hearts fear a close ambush of the Argives. Achilles promised me, as he sent me on my way from the black ships, that none should do us injury until the twelfth dawn comes.'

He spoke, and they harnessed to the wagons their mules and their oxen and presently were gathered in front of the city. Nine days they spent bringing in an endless supply of timber. But when the tenth dawn had shone forth with her light upon mortals, they carried out bold Hektor, weeping, and set the body aloft a towering pyre for burning. And set fire to it.

But when the young dawn showed again with her rosy fingers, the people gathered around the pyre of illustrious Hektor.

But when all were gathered to one place and assembled together, first with gleaming wine they put out the pyre that was burning, all where the fury of the fire still was in force, and thereafter the brothers and companions of Hektor gathered the white bones up, mourning, as the tears swelled and ran down their cheeks. Then they laid what they had gathered up in a golden casket and wrapped this about with soft robes of purple, and presently put it away in the hollow of the grave, and over it piled huge stones laid close together. Lightly and quickly they piled up the grave-barrow, and on all sides were set watchmen for fear the strong-greaved Achaians might too soon set upon them.

They piled up the grave-barrow and went away, and thereafter assembled in a fair gathering and held a glorious feast within the house of Priam, king under God's hand.

Such was their burial of Hektor, breaker of horses.

NOTE. It is a frequent, though not universal, practice to latinize Greek names, then anglicize the Latin forms, at least in pronunciation. I have generally avoided this practice, but have followed it on some occasions. Names ending in *ee* have been made to end in *ee*; some names end (falsely) in *en, as Danaan, Boiotian. Some endings in *e* have been changed to *a, as Ida (not I'de), Hera (not Here). Other Anglo-Latin forms are: Apollo, Argives, Athens, Centaurs, Egypt, Hades, Helen, Hermes, Jason, Myrmidons, Priam, Rhodes, Thrace and Thracian, Titans, Trojans, Troy.

This glossary is not meant to be a complete index, but gives at least one reference for each name in question (frequently there is only one) except in the case of major characters, for whom only a complete index would be useful. References are to book and line.

Aban'nes: The people of Euboea, 2. 336.
Abar'bare: A nymph, 6. 22.
A'bas: Trojan killed by Diomedes, 5. 148.
A'bioi: Barbarians of the north, 13. 6.
Able'ros: Trojan killed by Antilochos, 6. 33.
Aby'dor: A city on the Hellespont, 2. 836.
Ach'la'si: Greece.
Ach'la'nes: Greeks.
Achill'eus: Son of Peleus and Thetis, (Pele'i'on, Pele'ides) leader of the Myrmidons, 1. 7, etc.
A'damns: Trojan killed by Mermiones, 13. 360 sqq.
Ad'mes'tos: King in Thessaly, husband of Alkestis, father of Eumelos, 2. 713.
Adren'ei'si: City near Troy, 2. 828.
Adres'tos: (1) King of Sikyon, 2. 572. (2) Warrior from Adresteia, 2. 830; killed