

# THE ILIAD



HOMER

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***A. S. KLINE***

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## ABOUT THIS WORK



The Iliad, a major founding work of European literature, is usually dated to around the 8th century BC, and attributed to Homer. It is an epic poem, written in Ancient Greek but assumed to be derived from earlier oral sources, and tells much of the story of the legendary Trojan War between mainland Greece and the city of Troy in Asia Minor. The cultural background to the poem indicates a Bronze Age setting around 400 to 500 years before the Homeric literary period itself. The poem itself centres on the figure of Achilles the Greek warrior, his quarrel with King Agamemnon the Greek leader, the death of Achilles' friend Patroclus, and Achilles' ultimate defeat of the Trojan warrior Hector. In the course of relating this core story, the main events of the whole war are covered. The quality of the writing, the thoughtful treatment of warfare, and the thematic interest of the material have made the Iliad the most influential early work of Western literature, certainly from the time of the Renaissance onwards. Modern archaeological investigation has substantiated Homer's account of Troy's location and importance, and many of the details of the Bronze Age culture he describes, giving some historical credibility to the original legends he utilised.



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*Il Metal pour être*

## BK V:1-83 DIOMEDES LEADS THE ASSAULT



Now Pallas *Athene* [p. 559] gave *Diomedes* [p. 590], *Tydeus'* [p. 737] son, strength and courage to prove himself the finest of the Argives and win glory and renown. She made his helm and shield burn with unwavering flame, like that of Sirius the star of harvest, who when he has bathed in the Ocean depths rises to shine brightest of all. Such was the fire that streamed from his head and shoulders, as she thrust him into the heart of the fight where the enemy were strongest.

Now, there was a rich and peerless Trojan named *Dares* [p. 586], priest of *Hephaestus* [p. 623], who had two sons *Phegeus* [p. 694] and *Idaeus* [p. 635], trained in all manner of warfare. These two detached themselves from the ranks and advanced in their chariot to meet Diomedes, while he charged forward on foot. When they were within range, Phegeus first let fly his long-shadowed spear, whose point flew over *Tydeus'* shoulder without touching him. *Tydeus* replied, and the bronze-tipped shaft sped from his hand, striking his enemy in the chest, and knocking him from the chariot. *Idaeus* leapt backwards out from the rear, not daring to defend his brother's corpse. He indeed escaped black fate only because *Hephaestus* shielded him, spiriting him away cloaked in darkness, so his aged priestly father might not be destroyed by grief. But bold Diomedes freed the horses, and had his comrades drive them off to the hollow ships.

The hearts of the brave Trojans sank seeing one son of *Dares* dead and the other fleeing, while bright-eyed *Athene* grasped *Ares'* [p. 551] hand crying: 'Ares, bane of the living, blood-drenched sacker of cities, should we not let the Greeks and Trojans fight it out, so father Zeus can grant victory to whichever side he chooses? Let us two leave the field, not risk his wrath.'

So saying she drew him away from the battle, and sat him down on the sand beside *Scamander* [p. 715], while the Greeks pushed back the Trojan line. Each of their leaders killed his man. First *Agamemnon* [p. 528], king of men, toppled the great *Odius* [p. 671], leader of the *Halizones* [p. 616], from his chariot as he wheeled to flee, striking him with his spear between the shoulders, and out through the chest, so he fell with a thud and a crash of armour.

Then *Idomeneus* [p. 636] killed *Phaestus* [p. 693], the son of *Maeonian* [p. 651] *Borus* [p. 567], from fertile *Tarne* [p. 724]. The famous spearman transfixed his shoulder, as he mounted his chariot, with a thrust of the long spear, and hateful darkness took him. Idomeneus' men stripped him of his armour.

Then *Menelaus* [p. 655] with his sharp spear slew *Scamandrius* [p. 716], the skilful hunter, son of *Strophius* [p. 722]. He was a master of the chase, taught by *Artemis* [p. 555] herself to kill all the wild creatures of the mountain forest. Yet Artemis, Mistress of the Bow, was no help now, nor all his former skill in archery. For Menelaus, the great spearman, lanced him in the back as he fled, and drove the point between his shoulders, through the chest. Scamandrius fell face downwards with a crash.

Then *Meriones* [p. 658] killed *Phereclus* [p. 695], son of *Tecton* [p. 724], *Harmon's* [p. 616] son, who was skilled in fashioning every kind of clever work, loved greatly as he was by Pallas Athene. He built for *Paris* [p. 682] those fine ships that proved a source of evil, and a bane to all the Trojans and himself, being ignorant of the gods' intentions. Meriones chased him down, and when he caught him speared him through the right buttock, beneath the bone and into the bladder, so that he slumped to his knees with a groan, and death enveloped him.

Then *Meges* [p. 654] killed *Pedaeus* [p. 686], a bastard son of *Antenor's* [p. 543], whom Lady *Theano* [p. 727] had raised with care as if he were her own, to please her husband. Meges the mighty spearman, *Phyleus'* [p. 699] son, caught him and struck him in the neck-joint with his sharp spear, so the bronze blade severed his tongue at the root and exited between his teeth.

And *Eurypylos* [p. 608], *Euaemon's* [p. 606] son, killed noble *Hypsenor* [p. 632], the son of proud *Dolopion* [p. 593], priest of Scamander, whom the people

honoured like a god. Mighty Eurypylus chased him as he fled, and striking him on the shoulder with his sword, lopped off his mighty arm, which tumbled to the ground in a shower of blood. Implacable fate, dark death, enveloped his eyes.

### BK V:84-165 PANDARUS WOUNDS DIOMEDES



Such was the furious combat. As for *Diomedes* [p. 590], none could have said which army Greek or Trojan he fought for, since he stormed over the plain like a raging winter torrent that sweeps away the dykes in its swift flood. Close-built embankments and the walls of fertile vineyards fail to hold its onset driven by Zeus' storm and before it the proud works of men all tumble to ruin: so the dense ranks of the Trojans were routed by Tydeus' son, giving way to him despite their numbers.

Yet when glorious *Pandarus* [p. 681], Lycaon's son, saw Diomedes rage across the plain, routing the army ahead, he swiftly bent his curved bow, and aimed at him, striking him firmly, as he ran, on the right shoulder-plate of his cuirass, so the sharp arrow pierced clean through, and the armour ran with blood. Pandarus cried aloud in triumph: 'On now, brave Trojans, you horse-prickers! The best of the Greeks is hurt, and that arrow means he's done for, if Lord *Apollo* [p. 547], born of Zeus, truly blessed my journey here from *Lycia* [p. 648].'

So he boasted, but the swift shaft failed to down Diomedes, who drew back to the shadow of his chariot, where he called to *Sthenelus* [p. 721], *Capaneus*' [p. 570] son: 'Quick, my lad, down here, and pull this bitter dart from my flesh.'

Leaping from the chariot, as he spoke, Sthenelus touched ground beside him and pulled the sharp arrow from his shoulder, so the blood soaked through the woven tunic. Then, Diomedes of the loud war-cry

prayed to *Athene* [p. 559]: ‘*Atrytone* [p. 562], hear me, aegis-bearing child of Zeus! If ever with kindly thought you stood by my father in the heat of battle, so now once more, Athene, show your love. Let me kill this man, bring him in range of my spear, who wounded me without warning, boasts of it, and shouts I am not long for the bright light of day.’

He prayed so that Pallas Athene heard, lightening his limbs, his feet and hands, and speaking her winged words in his ear: ‘Courage, Diomedes, I have filled your arteries with your father’s strength, that indomitable strength of *Tydeus* [p. 737], shield-wielding horseman. I have driven the mist that veiled them from your eyes what’s more, so you may know both men and gods. Now, if an immortal comes here to test you, among those deathless ones strike only at Aphrodite, Zeus’ daughter, if it be she who risks the battle: since her you may wound with a thrust of your keen blade.’

Bright-eyed Athene departed with those words, and Diomedes once more took his place at the front. Eager though he had been to fight before, his courage now was tripled, like a lion wounded but not killed, as it leaps the fence, by a shepherd as he guards his sheep. He angers it, but now cannot aid them, and has to hide behind walls, while the helpless flock is scattered, downed in heaps together, till the furious creature leaps from the fold. In such a fury great Diomedes attacked the Trojans.

*Astynous* [p. 558] and General *Hypeiron* [p. 631] he killed, striking one above the nipple with a throw of his bronze-tipped spear, the other with his long sword on the collarbone, shearing the shoulder from the neck and spine. Leaving them lying there, he chased down *Abas* [p. 515] and *Polyidus* [p. 703], sons of old *Eurydamas* [p. 608], interpreter of dreams. They came not back again, whom great Diomedes slew, for their father to tell their dreams. Then he pursued *Xanthus* [p. 738] and *Thoön* [p. 731], *Phaenops*’ [p. 693] dear sons: an old man too weighed down with age to get himself fresh heirs. Diomedes killed both, leaving their sorrowing father to weep when they failed to return, and his surviving kin to inherit.



‘The fight resumes’ – Workshop of Bernard Picart, 1710

Two sons of Dardanian *Priam* [p. 706], *Echemmon* [p. 595] and *Chromius* [p. 576] were next, as they rode the same chariot. As a lion launches itself on a herd grazing some wooded pasture, and breaks the neck of a heifer or two, so Diomedes dragged those men roughly from their chariot, stripping them of their armour, telling his comrades to drive their horses down to the ships.

## BK V:166-238 AENEAS JOINS PANDARUS IN ATTACKING DIOMEDES



Seeing *Diomedes* [p. 590] wreak carnage among the warriors, Prince *Aeneas* [p. 524] set out amid the conflict, through a hail of missiles, in search of noble *Pandarus* [p. 681]. He found that mighty peerless son of *Lycaon* [p. 648], and reaching him spoke in his ear: ‘Pandarus, where is your famous bow with its winged arrows? You are our finest archer, better than any in all *Lycia* [p. 648], come, raise your arms in prayer to Zeus, and aim at that hero, whoever he may be, who is wreaking havoc on us Trojans, loosing the limbs of many a warrior. Take care only lest it is some god, angered with our rites and resentful towards us: for a god’s wrath weighs heavy on us mortals.’

Lycaon’s glorious son replied: ‘Aeneas, wise counsellor to the bronze-clad Trojans: it is indeed the very likeness of brave Tydeus’s son. I’d know him by his shield and helmet-crest, and by his team of horses, yet still it may be a god. And even if it is mortal Diomedes, a god supports him in his rage: one of the immortals, wrapped in mist, stands by him, turning aside my arrows as they reach him. Even now I left fly a shaft that pierced his right shoulder, clean through the armour plate, enough I thought to send him down to *Hades* [p. 535], yet I failed. Surely some god is angry.

I am without chariot or horse to ride, yet in my father Lycaon’s halls, I know there stand eleven fine chariots, newly made and fitted out, cloths spread on them and by each a pair of horses feeding on white barley and on

rye. Indeed when I left, Lycaon, as a soldier, gave me strict instructions, advised me to lead my Trojans into the thick of combat with horse and chariot. But I, being I, paid scant attention, though it would have profited me to do so. I spared my glossy horses, thinking fodder would be scarce amongst such a multitude. So I left them there, and came on foot to Troy, trusting to my bow, though to no avail it seems. Twice I have aimed a shaft at their generals, at *Menelaus* [p. 655] and Diomedes, and hit them and drawn blood, yet it only spurred them on. It was an evil day when I took my curved bow from its stand, when I brought my Trojans to Ilium as a favour to noble *Hector* [p. 617]. If I have sight again of my native land and the roof of my great hall, and reach my home and wife once more, then may the next stranger take my head if I fail to shatter this bow with my own hands and feed it to the flames, given all the good it's done me.'

The Trojan general Aeneas replied: 'Say not so: the way to change this for the better is for us two to face him and test him with our weapons. Climb aboard my chariot, and see what the horses of *Tros* [p. 736] are made of, that cover the ground swiftly in pursuit or in flight. They will carry us back to the city in safety if Zeus gives Diomedes the edge once more. Take up the reins and whip, while I dismount to fight, or you stand your ground while I look to the horses.'

Noble Pandarus answered: 'Take the reins yourself Aeneas, handle your own horses. They'll work better for the master they know, if we're forced to run. For want of your voice to guide them they might startle, and jib at carrying us from the field, leaving fierce Diomedes to close in for the kill. He'd have them then, so drive the team and your own chariot now, while my sharp spear waits to receive him.'

## BK V:239-296 THE DEATH OF PANDARUS



At this, they mounted the ornate chariot and drove the swift team eagerly towards *Diomedes* [p. 590]. *Sthenelus* [p. 721] saw them approach, the son of noble Capaneus, and quickly warned Tydeus' son: 'Diomedes, dear friend, here come two warriors, strong beyond measure, to fight you. One is the archer, *Pandarus* [p. 681], who boasts he is son of Lycaon: the other, *Aeneas* [p. 524], claims *Anchises* [p. 542] for a father, *Aphrodite* [p. 546] as his mother. Wheel the chariot and give ground, I beg you, lest you lose your life in the fury of attack.'

Mighty Diomedes with an angry glance replied: 'Don't talk to me of flight, that won't deter me. It is not in my blood to cower away and shirk the fight: my strength's as great as ever. I'll not mount the chariot, but face them on foot, as I am. Pallas *Athene* [p. 559] allows no fear. As for those two the swiftest horses will not let them escape. Now, another thing, take careful note, if Athene in her wisdom grants me the power to kill both, leave our own fine horses here, tie the reins to the chariot rail, run to Aeneas' team and drive them from the Trojan lines to ours. They are of that breed, the best of all horses under the risen sun, from which Zeus chose a gift for *Tros* [p. 736], for taking *Ganymedes* [p. 610] his son. Lord Anchises later stole the breed, putting his mares to them, unknown to *Laomedon* [p. 643]. Six mares foaled in the stables, four he kept for himself rearing them in his stalls, giving the other two to Aeneas, for warhorses. If we could capture those, we would win great glory.'

While they spoke the two arrived at the gallop, and Pandarus called out: 'Diomedes, the brave and bloody, though my swift bitter shaft failed to fell you, let me try once more with the spear.' With that he took his stance and hurled the long-shadowed javelin, and the bronze tip struck Diomedes on the shield, piercing it through and reaching his corselet. Pandarus shouted in triumph: 'A hit, right in the belly. That should finish you, but add to my glory.'

Mighty Diomedes, without a tremor, replied: ‘You’ve failed, not succeeded, but before you two are done one of you must die, and sate with his blood Ares, god of the shield’s tough hide. With that, Diomedes hurled his spear whose bronze blade Athene guided to the face beside the eye, shattering Pandarus’ white teeth, shearing his tongue at the root, and exiting through the chin. He tumbled from the chariot with a clang of bright burnished armour, the swift horses swerved, and there his strength failed, his spirit was loosed.

### BK V:297-351 DIOMEDES WOUNDS APHRODITE



*Aeneas* [p. 524], grasping his shield and long spear, leapt down after him, fearful the Achaeans might rob him of the corpse. He bestrode it like a lion confident in his strength, covering himself with his round shield, ready to slay with his spear any man who would seize the corpse, raising his mighty war-cry. But *Diomedes* [p. 590] hefted a rock, heavier than any two men of our time might carry, lifting it easily on his own. With it he struck Aeneas on the hip where the thigh turns in the hip-joint, the cup-bone men call it. It crushed the bone, sheared the sinews, and jaggedly ripped the skin away. Aeneas fell to his knees, and pressed the ground with one great hand, while darkness shrouded his sight.

Now Aeneas would have died, had not *Aphrodite* [p. 546], Zeus’ daughter, been quick to notice, the mother who bore him to *Anchises* [p. 542] while he tended the herd. She flung her white arms about her beloved son, and spread a fold of her shining robe to shelter him from weapons, lest a bronze spear hurled from a swift Danaan chariot might pierce his breast and end his life.



‘The combat between Aeneas and Diomedes’

Crispijn van de Passe (I), 1613



‘Aeneas attempts to save the body of Pandarus’

Workshop of Bernard Picart, 1710

While she was bearing her son from the field, *Sthenelus* [p. 721] obeyed the command of Diomedes of the loud war-cry, and kept his team from the fight, tying their reins to the chariot rim, and running towards Aeneas' long-maned pair. He drove them out of the Trojan ranks towards the Greeks, and entrusted them to *Deipylus* [p. 588], his close comrade, whom he honoured most among all the friends of his youth, because they were kindred spirits. He told him to lead them down to the hollow ships. Then he mounted his chariot, seized the gleaming reins, and urged his powerful horses in ready pursuit of Diomedes.

That son of Tydeus meanwhile, with pitiless spear, was chasing after Cyprian Aphrodite, knowing she was a gentle goddess, not one of those who control the flow of battle, no *Athene* [p. 559], or *Enyo* [p. 600], sacker of cities. So, when he reached her after his chase through the ranks, fierce Diomedes lunged at her with his sharp spear, piercing the divine robe the *Graces* [p. 613] had laboured to make for her, and wounding the flesh of her wrist near the palm. Out streamed the deathless goddess' blood, the ichor that flows in ambrosial veins, for the gods do not eat mortal bread or drink mortal wine, but lacking our blood are called immortals. With a piercing cry she let fall her son, whom Phoebus Apollo clasped in his arms, wrapped in a dark blue cloud, lest a bronze spear hurled from a swift Danaan chariot might pierce his breast and end his life.

Over her Diomedes of the loud war-cry raised a great shout of triumph: 'Daughter of Zeus, leave battle and strife to others. Isn't it enough that you snare feeble women? Rejoin the fight and you'll learn to shudder at the name of war!'

## BK V:352-430 APHRODITE RETURNS TO OLYMPUS



As he spoke, *Iris* [p. 640], swift-footed as the wind, led *Aphrodite* [p. 546] from the conflict, her lovely flesh stained with blood, and she distraught with pain, and suffering grievously. They found fierce *Ares* [p. 551], on the left flank, his two war-horses, with their golden harness, close by, his spear leaning on a cloud. Sinking to her knees, she begged the loan of her dear brother's steeds: 'Save me, brother dear, lend me your team, to reach *Olympus* [p. 675], my home among the immortals. I am sorely hurt by this wound, dealt by a mortal, son of Tydeus, who would challenge Father *Zeus* [p. 739] himself.'

At this, Ares lent her his horses with the golden harness, and sick at heart she mounted the chariot with *Iris* beside her, who took up the reins, and whipped up the team, which eagerly galloped away. Swiftly they reached the heights of Olympus, home of the gods, and there swift-footed *Iris* reined in the horses, unyoked them, and threw them ambrosial fodder, while lovely *Aphrodite* ran to kneel at her mother *Dione's* [p. 591] feet. Taking her daughter in her arms, *Dione* soothed her, saying: Which of the heavenly ones has hurt you so spitefully, dear child, as if you deserved punishment?

Laughter-loving *Aphrodite* said: 'Reckless *Diomedes* [p. 590], Tydeus' son, it was who wounded me, as I rescued my dear son Aeneas, dearest of all to me, from the field. This fierce feud's no longer one between Greeks and Trojans: now the Danaans are at war with the gods themselves.'

The lovely goddess, *Dione*, replied: 'Courage my child, and bear your pain well. Many of us who dwell on Olympus have suffered at the hands of men, attempting to injure one another. So Ares, when *Otus* [p. 679] and the mighty *Ephialtes* [p. 601], the sons of *Aloeus* [p. 537], bound him cruelly, trapped for thirteen months in a bronze jar. That would have been the end of Ares the warmonger, if *Eriboea* [p. 596] the sons' lovely stepmother had not told

*Hermes* [p. 626], who spirited away the suffering Ares, almost at the end of his tether. *Hera* [p. 624], too felt the agony, when the mighty *Heracles* [p. 625], son of *Amphitryon* [p. 540], pierced her right breast with his triple-barbed arrow. And even great Hades himself was stricken by a swift shaft, when that same hero, aegis-bearing Zeus' son, wounded him at the Gate of Hell, at *Pylos* [p. 710], among the dead, leaving him in agony. Hades fled to the house of Zeus, to high Olympus, shaken to the core and in great pain, for the arrow had pierced his mighty shoulder, and his heart was labouring. There *Paeon* [p. 680] the Healer spread soothing herbs on the wound, and cured Hades, one not made as mortals are. A harsh and violent man Heracles, and careless of doing evil: who even troubled the Olympians with his bow. And now a goddess, bright-eyed *Athene* [p. 559], sets this man Diomedes against you, a fool unconscious how brief life is for those who war with the gods. There'll be no homecoming for him, from the horrors of battle: no more will his children prattle at his knee. Let him take care, mighty horse-tamer that he is, lest he meets with a greater force than you and one day his noble wife *Aegialeia* [p. 523], wise daughter of *Adrastus* [p. 522], wakes her close servants from their sleep with her long lament, wailing for the best of the Achaeans.' So saying, with both hands she wiped the ichor from her daughter's arm. The wound was healed and the pain was eased.

Athene and Hera, who were watching, tried to provoke Zeus with mocking words. Bright-eyed Athene was the first to speak: 'Father Zeus, I hope you won't be angry at what I say. It seems your Cyprian daughter has been at work luring some Greek girl to chase after those Trojans she loves so deeply, and while fondling this girl and her golden brooch, scratched her own delicate hand.'

This only drew a smile from the Father of men and gods. Calling golden Aphrodite to his side, he said: 'War is not for you, my child, tend to the loving deeds of wedlock, and leave the fighting to Ares the swift and to Athene.'

## BK V:431-518 APOLLO INTERVENES ON THE BATTLEFIELD



As they spoke, *Diomedes* [p. 590] of the loud war-cry flung himself at *Aeneas* [p. 524] once more, whom he well knew Apollo protected, caring nothing for that great god, and eager to kill Aeneas and strip him of his shining armour. Three times he leapt at him threateningly three times *Apollo* [p. 547] beat away his gleaming shield. But when like a demon he rushed at him a fourth time, far-striking Apollo gave a terrible cry: ‘Take thought, son of Tydeus, and give way! Don’t think yourself equal to the gods: the immortals are of a different race than those who walk the earth.’

Diomedes, at this, gave ground a little, before far-striking Apollo’s anger, while the god bore Aeneas far from the field to his temple on sacred *Pergamus* [p. 690]. There in the great sanctuary *Leto* [p. 646], and *Artemis* [p. 555] the Huntress, healed him and made him more glorious still, while Apollo, Lord of the Silver Bow, formed a phantom in Aeneas’ likeness, armed like him, round which the Trojans and noble Greeks hacked at the bull’s hide shields protecting each other’s breasts, the great round shields and lighter bucklers. Then Phoebus Apollo called to *Ares* [p. 551]: ‘You, destroyer of men and bloody sacker of cities, Ares, enter the fray and drive this son of Tydeus off, who would fight Father Zeus himself. He wounded Aphrodite’s wrist, then lunged at me like a demon!’

While Apollo took to the heights of Pergamus, lethal Ares joined the Trojan ranks, masked as *Acamas* [p. 516] the dashing Thracian leader. He called to the Zeus-blessed sons of Priam: ‘How long will you watch our men fall to the Greeks? Are they free to storm our very gates? Aeneas has fallen, Anchises’ son, whom we honour as much as *Hector* [p. 617]. Come, save our brave comrade from the din of battle.’

So saying, he roused their fighting spirit, while *Sarpedon* [p. 714] dealt noble Hector a stern rebuke: ‘Where is the courage you used to show, Hector? Did you think to hold the city without allied troops, relying only on your brothers and brothers-in-law? And where are they? I see nary a one. They cower like dogs before a lion, while we who are simply allies do the fighting. And a long journey it was here. In far off *Lycia* [p. 648], by eddying *Xanthus* [p. 738], I left my darling wife and infant son, and great possessions too that any man would envy. Yet I urge on my Lycians, ready to fight myself, though there is nothing here of mine for the Greeks to carry off or drive away; while you stand there, not even bidding your men hold and defend their women. Beware lest you and they are snared in the net and fall an easy prey to your foes. They will soon lay waste to your proud city. This should be your care, day and night: and you should beg the leaders of your noble allies to be firm and resolute, if you wish to avoid blame.’

Hector was deeply stung by his words. At once, he leapt fully-armed from his chariot, and brandishing two sharp spears, went through the ranks urging them to fight, rousing their martial spirit. They turned about then to face the Greeks, who closed ranks awaiting them, refusing to retreat. As the breeze blows chaff across the sacred threshing-floor, when golden-haired *Demeter* [p. 588] sends drafts of air to winnow the grain, whitening the chaff-heaps, so now the Greeks were whitened by the dust that settled on head and shoulders as the fight was joined and the chariots wheeled round, dust thrown to a copper-coloured sky by the horses’ hooves. They met the shock, while fierce Ares, ranging everywhere, threw a dark veil round the fight, to aid the Trojans, fulfilling Apollo of the Golden Sword’s command. Phoebus had asked him to rouse the Trojans’ spirits, when he saw Pallas *Athene* [p. 559] withdraw from aiding the Greeks. And Apollo sent Aeneas forth from the great sanctuary, and filled the general with courage. He took his place in the ranks, and his friends rejoiced to see him alive and whole, and brimming with valour. Not that they had time to question him, since Apollo of the Silver Bow, Ares destroyer of men, and *Strife* [p. 604] in her ceaseless rage, drove them on to battle.

**BK V:519-589 THE GREEKS PREVAIL**



On their side *Odysseus* [p. 671], *Diomedes* [p. 590] and the two *Aiantes* [p. 532], urged on the Greeks who, fearless of the violent Trojan onslaught, stood their ground, unmoving as the mist with which Zeus caps the mountain tops in calm weather, when angry Boreas and the other winds are sleeping, with all their fierce gusts that send the dark clouds fleeing. So did the Greeks stand firm against the Trojans and held their place. *Agamemnon's* [p. 528] commanding voice echoed through the ranks: 'Be men, my friends, take heart, fear nothing but dishonour in other's eyes. When men shun shame, more survive than not, in flight there is no glory, no salvation.'

So saying, he swiftly hurled his spear striking a comrade of brave *Aeneas* [p. 524], *Deicoön* [p. 587] son of *Pegasus* [p. 691], whom the Trojans honoured like a son of Priam, for his readiness to fight in the vanguard. The spear struck his shield, and meeting little resistance passed straight through, past his belt and into the lower belly. He fell with a thud, and a crash of armour.

Aeneas in reply killed two Danaan champions, *Crethon* [p. 582] and *Orsilochus* [p. 678] sons of *Diocles* [p. 589], whose father lived in noble *Pherae* [p. 694]. A man of substance, his line began with the river-god *Alpheus* [p. 538], whose broad stream flows through *Pylian* [p. 710] lands, and whose son was the great King *Orsilochus* [p. 678]. He begat Diocles in turn, whose sons these were, skilled in warfare. Reaching manhood, they followed the Argives to horse-breeding Troy in the black ships, to win compensation for the Atreidae. Now their voyage ended there in death. Like a pair of lions reared in a mountain-thicket that prey on the farmers' fine sheep and cattle till they themselves fall to the bronze blade, so these two at the hands of Aeneas were toppled like tall firs.

*Menelaus* [p. 655], dear to Ares, pitied their fate, and strode through the foremost ranks, in red-bronze armour, shaking his spear; yet Ares breathed power into him, seeking his death also at the hands of Aeneas. But *Antilochus* [p. 544], brave *Nestor's* [p. 667] son, fearing for Menelaus, and the frustration of all their efforts, followed him through the ranks. He found Aeneas and Menelaus threatening each other with spears, ready to fight, and Aeneas, seeing them joined against him, retreated while they, dragging their dead towards the Greek line, relinquished the sad corpses to their comrades and turned again to fight in the vanguard.

Then the pair killed warlike *Pylaemenes* [p. 710], leader of the brave *Paphlagonian* [p. 682] fighters. The great spearman Menelaus struck him with a spear where he stood shattering the collarbone, while Antilochus dealt with his squire the charioteer *Mydon* [p. 663], noble son of *Atymnius* [p. 562], who was wheeling the horses round, and struck him with a stone on the elbow. The reins, with their ivory trappings, fell from his hand to the ground. Antilochus ran in and sank his sword in his temple, so he fell sprawling with a gasp and buried his head and shoulders in the dust. It was deep sand where he fell and he hung there for a moment, till his flailing horses knocked him prone. Then Antilochus touched his whip to them, and drove them off into the Greek lines.

## BK V:590-702 THE WOUNDING OF SARPEDON

ut *Hector* [p. 617] had spied them through the ranks, and rushed towards them with a cry, the serried ranks of the Trojans behind him. *Ares* [p. 551] led them on with the goddess *Enyo* [p. 600], war's merciless clamour in her train, Ares brandishing a huge spear, ranged now in front of Hector now behind him.

*Diomedes* [p. 590] of the loud war-cry, dismayed at the sight of Ares, turned round, like a traveller crossing a wide plain who halts thwarted by a

swift sea-bound river seething with foam, and called to his men: ‘My friends, no wonder noble Hector, the spearman and daring warrior, fills us with wonder, for a god is always by his side to save him from ruin. Ares is there, now, masked as a mortal. Retreat but keep your faces to the enemy, and show no eagerness to fight the gods.’

As he spoke, the Trojans were upon them, and Hector killed two veteran warriors riding the one chariot, *Menesthes* [p. 657] and *Anchialus* [p. 542]. Telemonian *Ajax* [p. 532] felt pity at their fall and, taking his stand nearby, with a cast of his glittering javelin struck *Amphius* [p. 541], son of *Selagus* [p. 717], a rich farmer of *Paesus* [p. 680], owner of many fields, whom fate had led to serve as an ally to Priam and his sons. Telamonian Ajax struck Amphius on the belt, such that the long spear pierced the lower belly, and he toppled with a thud. But when the mighty Ajax ran in to strip him of his armour, the Trojans unleashed a volley of glittering javelins, a host of which he caught on his shield. Yet he planted his foot on the corpse, and dragged the bronze spear from the wound, failing only to strip it of its fine armour, due to a shower of missiles. Moreover he feared the brave Trojans stout defence, who faced him in ample numbers, spear in hand. Tall, powerful, and dauntless though he was they forced him back till he staggered and gave ground.

So they struggled in mighty combat. Meanwhile *Tlepolemus* [p. 735], the tall strong son of *Heracles* [p. 625], was roused by overriding fate to fight godlike *Sarpedon* [p. 714]. When these two, a son and a grandson of Zeus the Cloud-maker, were within range Tlepolemus cried: ‘Sarpedon, Counsellor of the *Lycians* [p. 648], and a man ignorant of war, why are you skulking here? It can’t be true you’re a son of aegis-bearing Zeus, inferior as you are to the warriors he engendered in ancient times. Men say great Heracles, my father, was of another make, staunch in the fight, and with a lion’s heart. He came here for *Laomedon*’s [p. 643] mares, bringing a smaller army and only six ships, yet he sacked Ilium and razed its streets. Yours though is a coward’s heart, and your numbers are waning. Strong though you think you are, your journey from Lycia to bolster Troy is doomed, since you will fall to my hand and pass through *Hades*’ [p. 614] gate.’

Sarpedon of the Lycians replied: 'It's true, Tlepolemus, that Heracles your father razed holy Ilium, because of proud Laomedon's foolishness, who repaid his efforts with insults, and denied him the mares he had journeyed far to win. But here only death and dark fate await you, at my hands. Downed by my spear you will yield me the glory, and Hades the Horse Lord your spirit.'

As Sarpedon finished, Tlepolemus raised his ash spear high, and the long shafts leapt from both men's hands in an instant. Sarpedon's struck square on the neck, and the deadly point sliced clean through, so the darkness of night shrouded Tlepolemus' sight. His own spear, striking Sarpedon on the left thigh, had passed on furiously, grazing the bone, though the Father saved the son from death.

His loyal followers bore godlike Sarpedon from the field, while, in their haste and the effort it cost them, not one of them had time to pull the ashen spear from his wound so he might stand, and the javelin dragged on his flesh as it trailed along.

Meanwhile the bronze-greaved Achaeans carried Tlepolemus out of battle, watched by the great *Odysseus* [p. 671], steadfast of heart, whose spirit raged within him. He debated in his mind whether to pursue Sarpedon, Zeus the Thunderer's son, or wreak more havoc among the Lycians. Yet Fate did not wish that mighty son of Zeus to die by Odysseus' sword, and so on the Lycian host *Athene* [p. 559] turned his fury. He killed *Coeranus* [p. 580], *Chromius* [p. 576], *Alastor* [p. 535] and *Halius* [p. 615], *Alcandrus* [p. 535], *Noemon* [p. 669] and *Prytanis* [p. 709]. More of the Lycians would have died at noble Odysseus' hands, but for Hector's quick eye, he of the glittering helm, who strode to the front in his red-bronze armour, filling the Greeks with terror. Sarpedon, Zeus' son, joyed at his coming, and called to him in distress: 'Son of Priam, save me: don't leave me a prey to the Danaans, and if I must die, and never see my own home again, nor in returning bring joy to my wife and child, let me at least die in your city.'

Hector of the glittering helm gave no answer to his words, but sped by swiftly, eager to stall the Greeks and kill them en masse. But godlike Sarpedon was seated by loyal friends under a fine oak-tree sacred to aegis-

bearing Zeus, and *Pelagon* [p. 687] his close comrade drew the ash spear from his thigh. His breath failed, and mist shrouded his eyes, but he breathed again as the North Wind blew across him, bringing him new life when he had fairly loosed his spirit.

Meanwhile the Greeks, seeing Ares at war for the Trojans, threatened by him and bronze-clad Hector, unable to stand the onslaught, but refusing to flee for the black ships, fell back steadily.

### BK V:703-766 HERA AND ATHENE JOIN THE BATTLE



Who were the first and last to be slain by *Hector* [p. 617], Priam's son, and bronze-clad *Ares* [p. 551]? Godlike *Teuthras* [p. 726], next horse-tamer *Orestes* [p. 677], then *Trechus* [p. 735] Aetolian spearman, *Oenemaus* [p. 673], and *Helenus* [p. 621], son of *Oenops* [p. 674], last *Oresbius* [p. 677] of the glittering belt, from *Hyle* [p. 630] on the shores of Lake Cephisis where he garnered riches among the *Boeotians* [p. 566] in that fertile land.

And when the goddess, white-armed *Hera* [p. 624] saw the slaughter of Argives in mortal combat, she swiftly spoke winged words to *Athene* [p. 559]: 'Oh, child of aegis-bearing Zeus, *Atrytone* [p. 562], if we let savage Ares rage like this, what use our pledge to Menelaus that he'd raze the high walls of Troy before returning home? Come let us too think of wild bravery.'

Bright-eyed Athene hastened to obey her words. Hera, the great goddess, daughter of *Cronos* [p. 582], ran to harness her steeds with gold, while *Hebe* [p. 616] swiftly fitted the eight-spoked wheels of bronze on the chariot's iron axle. The felloes of these are imperishable gold: the tires are bronze, a wonder to see; while the whirling hubs are silver. The platform is woven with straps of silver and gold, with a double rail, and a long silver pole to which she fastened the golden yoke and breast-straps. Then Hera, eager for war's alarms, led her swift horses under the yoke.

Meanwhile Athene, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, shed her soft richly embroidered robe the work of her own two hands, at her Father's threshold, dressed herself in the tunic of Zeus the Cloud-Driver, and donned her armour ready for sad war. She threw the dreadful tasselled aegis about her shoulders, crowned at every point with terror, violence and strife within, adorned with the monstrous image of the Gorgon's head, grim and awful emblem of aegis-bearing Zeus. She set on her head the golden helmet with its four cones and double-crest, adorned with warriors of a hundred cities. Then she set foot on the fiery chariot, grasped her huge, strong, weighty spear, with which this daughter of a mighty Father shatters the ranks in anger.

At once, Hera whipped up the horses, and Heaven's Gates of themselves groaned open on their hinges, gates that the Hours guard, the wardens of wide heaven and Olympus, to veil or reveal as they see fit. Through the gates they drove their steady horses, and found the Son of Cronos sitting alone on the topmost peak of many-ridged Olympus. There white-armed Hera reined in the horses, and questioned lofty *Zeus* [p. 739]: 'Father are you not seething with indignation at Ares for this violence that has laid a vast army of noble Achaeans low, with reckless abandon, to my great sorrow? Cyprian *Aphrodite* [p. 546], and *Apollo* [p. 547], Lord of the Silver Bow, are delighted at loosing this lawless savage. Will you be angry, Father Zeus, if I smite Ares hard and drive him from the field?'

'Then rouse Athene, ever first to chase the spoils, and let her face him,' Zeus the Cloud-Gatherer replied. 'She, above all, is wont to cause him pain.'

## BK V:767-845 ATHENE FIGHTS ALONGSIDE DIOMEDES



he goddess, white-armed *Hera* [p. 624], sped to obey his order, flicking the horses with her whip, and the willing pair set a course between earth and the starry heavens. Those thundering horses of the gods cover the distance at one bound that a man can see through the distant haze, gazing from a watchtower over the wine-dark deep. They soon reached Troy, land of the two rivers, and there at the meeting of *Simois* [p. 719] and *Scamander* [p. 715], the white-armed goddess Hera reined in her horses, and loosed them from the yoke. With a deep mist she veiled them, while *Simois* made ambrosia spring up for them to graze. Then the two goddesses strutted forward, like bold pigeons, in their eagerness to aid the Argive army.

When they had reached the place where a picked force of Achaeans, ranged like ravenous lions or formidable wild boars, had gathered round mighty *Diomedes* [p. 590], tamer of horses, the goddess, white-armed Hera halted and called aloud, imitating bronze-voiced *Stentor's* [p. 721] great shout louder than fifty men: ‘Shame on you, Greeks, fine to view, but contemptible within! When noble Achilles led the fight no Trojan dared to leave the Dardanian Gates, they feared his great spear so much, but now far from their city they fight by your hollow ships.’

With these words she roused the courage and daring in every man. Meanwhile bright-eyed *Athene* [p. 559] seeing ‘Tydeus’ son, beside his horses and chariot, airing the arrow-wound *Pandarus* [p. 681] dealt, ran swiftly to his side. Beneath the broad shoulder-strap of his round shield the sweat was irking him, and he lifted the strap to wipe away the dark blood beneath his weakened arm. The goddess laid her hand on the chariot yoke saying: ‘Tydeus’ son is hardly like his father. Small though he was he was a fighter. Even when I wanted him not to fight or make a row, when he strode alone into the crowd of *Cadmeians* [p. 569] at *Thebes* [p. 728], bearing them a message,

even when I'd told him to sit and banquet quietly in their hall, he with his great heart had to challenge the Cadmeian youth, and beat them easily, as ever, though with my help. But you, I stand by your side, I shield you from harm, ready to urge you on against the Trojans, yet you seem too weary to attack again, or are robbed of your strength by fear. If that is so, then you are no child of *Tydeus* [p. 737], *Oeneus*' [p. 673] warlike son!

'I know you, daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus,' answered mighty Diomedes, 'so I will speak freely hiding nothing. Neither blind fear nor weariness possess me, I am merely obeying your command not to fight with the gods face to face, unless *Aphrodite* [p. 546] daughter of Zeus enters the fray, when I might wound her with my keen blade. It is *Ares* [p. 551] I see controlling the field of war, so I have retreated and told the rest of the Argives to gather here round me.'

'Dearest Diomedes, true son of Tydeus,' bright-eyed Athene replied, 'have no fear of Ares now or any of the immortals, and I will be here beside you to defend you. Drive your swift steeds towards him, and strike him at close range. Be not in awe of Ares raging in his fury, treacherous plague that he is, who promised Hera and I just now he would aid the Greeks against the Trojans, but now forgets what he swore and fights for Troy.'

She reached out, as she spoke, and grasping *Sthenelus* [p. 721] hustled him from the chariot, he being quick to go, she mounting beside Diomedes, eager herself for battle. The beech-wood axle groaned beneath its burden, weighed down by the mighty warrior and the fearsome goddess. Pallas Athene grasped the reins, and whipped the swift horses towards Ares, as he stripped the armour from vast *Periphas* [p. 691], noble son of *Ochesius* [p. 671], and pride of the *Aetolians* [p. 527]. Spattered with blood he despoiled the corpse, while Athene donned *Hades*' [p. 614] helmet of invisibility, to hide her identity from the mighty god.

## BK V:846-909 DIOMEDES WOUNDS ARES



ut the moment *Ares* [p. 551], bane of the living, glimpsed *Diomedes* [p. 590], he left vast *Periphas* [p. 691] where he had killed him, and headed straight for the horse-tamer. When they were at close quarters, Ares thrust with his bronze spear over the reins and yoke, at Diomedes, eager to strike him dead: but bright-eyed *Athene* [p. 559] caught the spear in her hand, and drove it above the chariot to spend its force in the air. Now, Diomedes, of the loud war-cry, drove his bronze-spear at Ares, and Pallas Athene drove it home into the lower belly, where he wore a defensive apron. There the thrust landed, tearing the flesh, and Diomedes wrenched it free again. Then brazen Ares bellowed as loud as ten thousand warriors shout in battle, when they meet in the war-god's shadow. The Greeks and Trojans trembled with fear at insatiable Ares' cry.

Like the dark column that whirls from the cloud when a tornado forms in heated air, so brazen Ares seemed to Diomedes, as he sped through the sky to high heaven. Swiftly he reached the gods' home on steep Olympus, and sat down at *Zeus'* [p. 739] side, in anguish. Ares showed Zeus the divine ichor flowing from the wound, and spoke in a plaintive voice: 'Father Zeus, does it not stir your indignation to see all this violence? We gods always suffer cruelly at each other's hands when we show mortals favour. We are all at odds with you because you cursed the world with that mad daughter of yours who is ever bent on lawlessness. The rest of us Olympians obey you and bow to you, but you say and do nothing to stop her antics, you condone them rather, simply because this girl who wreaks havoc is yours. Now she spurs on foolhardy Diomedes to vent his anger on us immortals. First in a close encounter he wounded *Aphrodite* [p. 546] on the wrist then he ran at me like a very demon. Quick on my feet, I sprang away, or I would have suffered there for ages among the grisly dead, or been crippled by his spear-blows.

Zeus, the Cloud-gatherer, turned on him angrily: ‘Don’t come here to whine, you backslider. Strife, conflict, and war are all you care for, so much so that I loathe you more than all the other Olympians. You share your mother *Hera’s* [p. 624] intolerable, headstrong spirit; she too will scarcely obey my word. I suspect she prompted this and caused your wound. Yet as my offspring I’ll not let you suffer, since it was to me she bore you, though if any other god had fathered so violent a son, you’d have been ranked below the sons of Uranus, long ago.’

So saying, he ordered *Paeon* [p. 680] to heal him, by spreading soothing ointment on the wound, for Ares was no mortal. He healed the fierce god as swiftly as fig-juice thickens milk that curdles when stirred. Then *Hebe* [p. 616] bathed him, and dressed him in fine clothes, and he sat down again by Zeus’ side, in all his former glory.

Meanwhile Hera of Argos and *Alalcomenean* [p. 535] Athene returned to great Zeus’ palace, having forced Ares, bane of the living, to end his murderous progress.