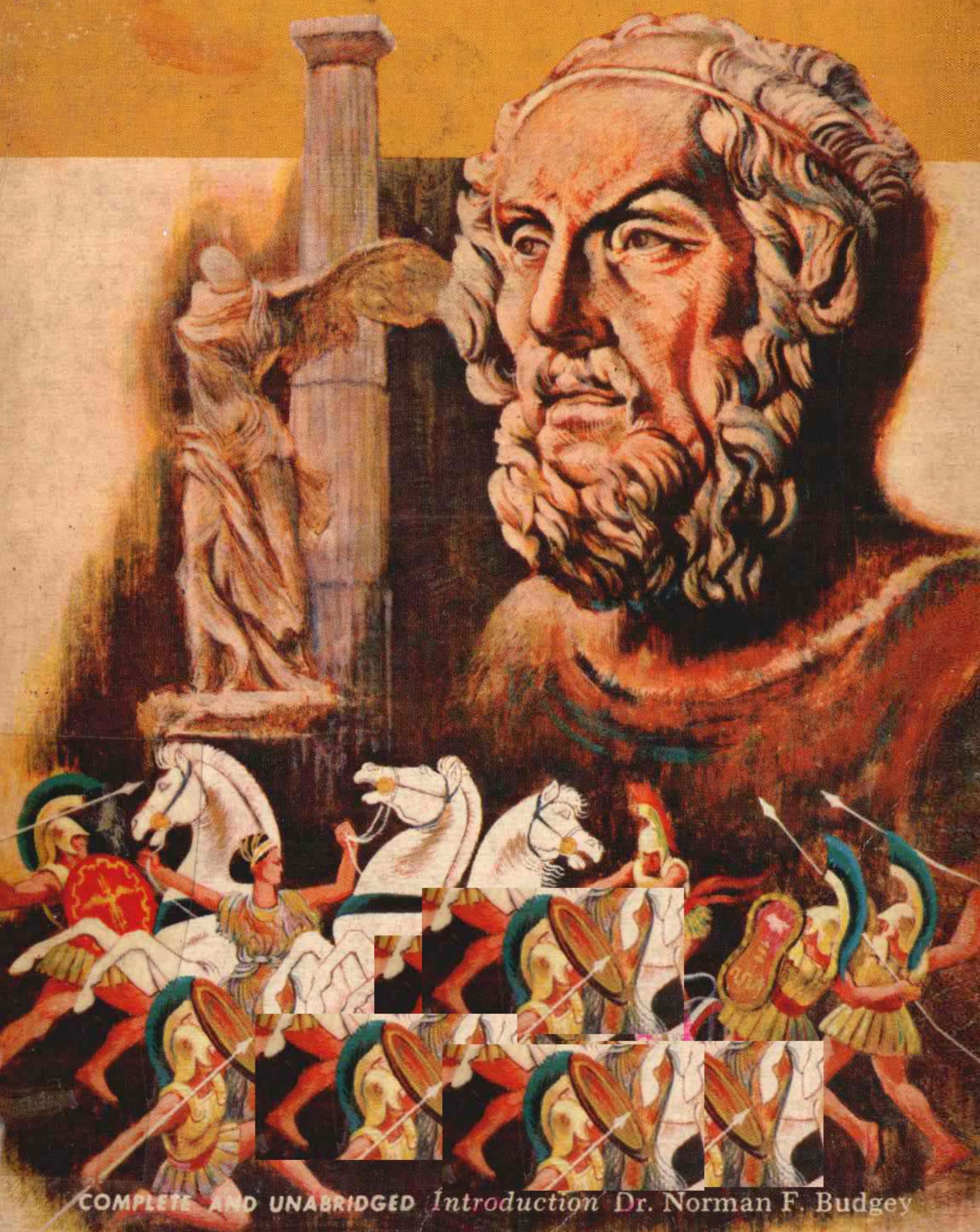




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# THE ILIAD of HOMER



COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED Introduction Dr. Norman F. Budgley



**THE ILIAD**  
**of**  
**HOMER**





# ILIA of HOMER



*Translated into English Prose*

**ANDREW LANG, WALTER LEAF  
AND  
ERNEST MYERS**



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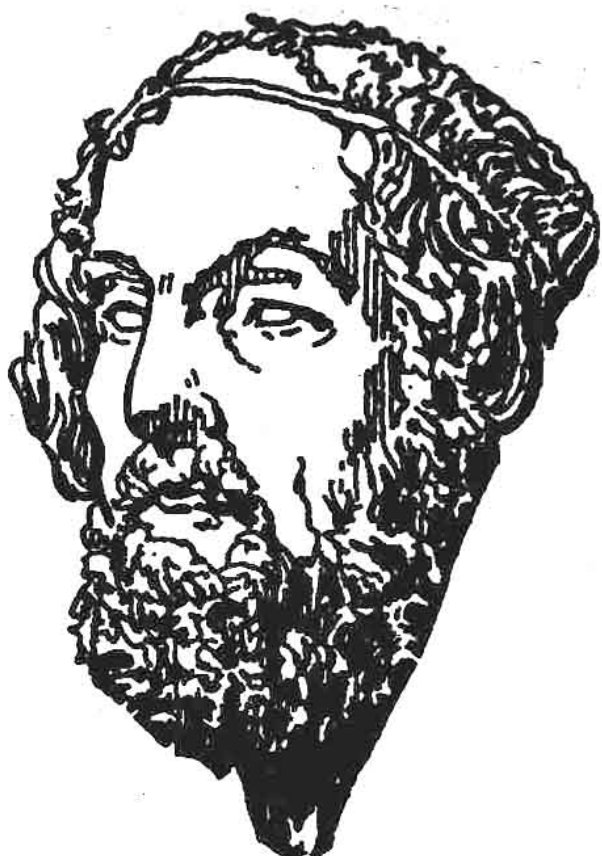
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# THE ILIAD

of  
HOMER

ANDREW LANG,  
WALTER LEAF,  
and  
ERNEST MYERS



## INTRODUCTION

**T**he various versions of the legend of the Trojan War and the wanderings of the heroes after the fall of the city constitute what is probably the largest single body of related material in the whole history of Western literature. Old Greek writers refer to an account of the Trojan War predating the account of Homer, and the beginning of the Christian era saw the appearance of several Latin works which purported to be translations from the older document. Prominent among these works were the chronicles of Dictys and Dares, and it was largely due to them that the Troy legend was diffused throughout Western Europe. It is interesting to note that many authorities of that period considered the two Latin works, shorn of most of the supernatural elements, to be far superior to the poems of Homer. The medieval *Roman de Troie* of Benoît de Sainte-More, based on information derived from Dictys and Dares, was to remain for centuries a source and inspiration to all interested in the subject. That the Troy legend should have exercised such widespread fascination is not hard to understand when we consider the enormous extent of the Western European myth of descent from the scattered heroes of Troy. The earliest British chroniclers name Brutus, a descendant of Æneas, as founder of Britain.

A return to the Homeric tradition came with the Renaissance, and between 1598 and 1611, George Chapman published his masterful translation of *The Iliad*. *The Iliad and Odyssey of Homer*, a translation by Hobbes followed in 1675, while Pope's translation of *Homer's Iliad* appeared between 1715 and 1720.

Two notable prose translations have been that of Andrew Lang with Leaf and Myers (1883)—the text of this edition—and Samuel Butler's version of 1898.

Of a historical personage by the name of Homer, we have absolutely no knowledge, for, although there have survived a number of traditional "lives," much of the material in them is so patently apocryphal that modern scholarship is almost unanimous in rejecting them. Even the date of writing of these accounts cannot be determined with any degree of certainty, but if we assume that the earliest would date from the period which first showed an interest in literary biography, the oldest of the "lives," the one falsely attributed to Herodotus, must have appeared shortly before the fourth century B.C. But it, like the later compositions, seems to be little more than a compilation of textual hints and even popular proverbs. Indeed, estimates of the date of birth of Homer range over a period of almost six centuries. Apparently, all these estimates are based on the date of the Trojan War and some rather vague conjecture about Homer's relationship to it. Eratosthenes, the keeper of the Alexandrian library in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes, dates the fall of Troy at 1194 B.C. and places Homer in the next century thereafter. Aristotle and Aristarchus both date Homer about a century and a half after the fall of the city, while Herodotus, in his history, puts him in the ninth century B.C., and the spurious Herodotean "life" sets the date at about 1100.

No less vague are the suggestions about the poet's place of birth, and over a score of different cities have vied with one another in claiming the honor. Many of the claims can be refuted as obvious invention, but those of Smyrna and Chios seem to have been accorded the most credence.

Absent, too, is anything in the way of internal linguistic evidence which would enable a scholar to ascribe the work to a particular era or locality. There are no original texts of Homer's epics. *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* were recited at the Panathenaea every four years during the classical period prior to about 323 B.C., and thus the poems underwent a sort of leveling process in the "approved" synthetic literary idiom. Although much of the language suggests Ionic Greek, there is a tradition that the Panathenaic text had originally been written in Attic Greek, while some investigators have argued that a still older version was in the idiom of Æolis with a considerable admixture of pre-Greek and Arcadian terms. Clearly, no poet could have been born in twenty different cities in the course of six different centuries—but no such limitation applies to a literary work. Particularly in view



of the vast number of variations which are known to have existed at different periods, we are virtually forced to the conclusion that what we now call *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* are relatively late compilations—crystallizations of an extensive body of myths, legend, and folklore, all in existence long before a written version appeared in its modern form. There are, perhaps, fragments of historicity and the names of persons who actually lived but few of the incidents are unique and most can be found in one form or another in a variety of ancient legends. Modern scholarship has also suggested that some incidents, including even the crucial abduction of Helen, may have originated as religious symbols. Such conclusions would plainly obviate any possibility of the single authorship of *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*, although Samuel Butler's theory that the latter was the work of a female poet has been taken up in recent years and argued most ably by T. E. Lawrence and Robert Graves. At all events, little remains of the traditional picture of the old blind poet wandering from city to city. If we recollect, however, how little we know of the authorship of the other great European epics, the works called Homeric should be at no particular disadvantage on this score.

The historian Josephus, who lived in the first century A.D., avers that Homer left nothing in writing but that the works were collected later in many different localities. According to Cicero, it was Peisistratus who had assembled the various episodes and established the official Panathenaic text. There appears to have been an established Athenian text by the sixth century B.C., but the presently accepted "authoritative" version dates back with minor variations to the text established by Aristarchus, keeper of the Alexandrian library in about 150 B.C.

The *Iliad* begins with the quarrel of Agamemnon and Achilles in the tenth year of the Trojan War. The compiler plunges into the story—in *medias res*—and then, in the course of the narration, informs the reader what has happened prior to the commencement. In barest outline, the story is as follows:

When the chief augur is consulted about a plague which is sweeping through the Greek army he attributes it to the anger of Apollo, whose priest Chryses has been scornfully dismissed by Agamemnon. The old man had sought to ransom his daughter, captured by Achilles at the fall of Lyrnessus but later assigned to Agamemnon at the distribution of the spoils.

Agamemnon finally agrees to surrender the captive but insists that he shall receive some sort of indemnification. When none of the other commanders seems inclined to meet his demand for compensation, he seizes Briseis, a female captive of Achilles.



Achilles, in high dudgeon, withdraws his forces from the campaign and cannot be prevailed upon to revoke his decision until the Trojan Hector is on the point of setting fire to the Greek fleet. Even then he refrains from personal participation but permits his troops to go to the rescue under the leadership of Patroclus (Patroklos). Patroclus, who is wearing the armor of Achilles, is slain by Hector. Achilles, mad with grief and remorse, procures new armor and kills Hector, without whom the Trojan defense soon collapses and the city is taken.

The principal threat of the narration is liberally interspersed with secondary anecdotes, and since many of the heroes are the sons of gods or goddesses, the whole is at times rendered somewhat complicated and enigmatic by wholesale divine intervention on both sides.

*The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* occupy a position unique in the recorded literature of Western civilization. They are the starting point. They are monumental works from an age when the childhood of civilized man was not yet really remote but they were produced in a nation which had nevertheless attained a very high level of culture.

In its original language, *The Iliad* was a work of sublime artistry composed in a vehicle which represented the ideal marriage of language and metre. The hexameter was later taken over by Latin poets and the writers of various other European tongues but was never able to approach the original Greek use of the metre. There is, however, so much more to *The Iliad* than language and form that a reissue of it, even in prose translation, is still a valuable contribution to our understanding of our great heritage.

“. . . what principally strikes us,” said Alexander Pope of the author of *The Iliad*, “is his invention. It is that which forms the character of each part of his work; and accordingly we find it to have made his fable more extensive and copious than any other; his manners more lively and strongly marked, his speeches more affecting and transported, his sentiments more warm and sublime, his images and descriptions more full and animated, his expression more raised and daring, and his numbers more rapid and various.”

—NORMAN F. BUDGEY

## PREFATORY NOTE

The execution of this version of the *Iliad* has been entrusted to the three Translators in the following three parts:—

Books	I—IX	. . . . .	W. LEAF.
"	X—XVI	. . . . .	A. LANG.
"	XVII—XXIV	. . . . .	E. MYERS.

Each Translator is therefore responsible for his own portion; but the whole has been revised by all three Translators, and the rendering of passages or phrases recurring in more than one portion has been determined after deliberation in common. Even in these, however, a certain elasticity has been deemed desirable.

On a few doubtful points, though very rarely, the opinion of two of the Translators has had to be adopted to the suppression of that held by the third. Thus, for instance, the Translator of Books X—XVI would have preferred "c" and "us" to "k" and "os" in the spelling of all proper names.

The text followed has been that of La Roche (Leipzig, 1873). Where the balance of evidence, external and internal, has seemed to the Translator to be against the genuineness of any passage, such passage has been enclosed in parentheses.

The Translator of Books X—XVI has to thank MR. R. W. RAPER, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, for his valuable aid in revising the proof-sheets of these Books.

The sacred soil of Ilios is rent

With shaft and pit; foiled waters wander slow  
Through plains where Simois and Scamander went  
To war with gods and heroes long ago.

Not yet to dark Cassandra lying low

In rich Mycenae do the Fates relent;

The bones of Agamemnon are a show,

And ruined is his royal monument.

The dust and awful treasures of the dead

Hath Learning scattered wide; but vainly thee,

Homer, she meteth with her Lesbian lead,  
And strives to rend thy songs, too blind is she  
To know the crown on thine immortal head  
Of indivisible supremacy. A. L.

Athwart the sunrise of our western day  
The form of great Achilles, high and clear,  
Stands forth in arms, wielding the Pelian spear.  
The sanguine tides of that immortal fray,  
Swept on by gods, around him surge and sway,  
Wherethrough the helms of many a warrior peer,  
Strong men and swift, their tossing plumes uprear.  
But stronger, swifter, goodlier he than they,  
More awful, more divine. Yet mark anigh;  
Some fiery pang hath rent his soul within,  
Some hovering shade his brows encompasseth.  
What gifts hath Fate for all his chivalry?  
Even such as hearts heroic oftenest win;  
Honour, a friend, anguish, untimely death. E. M.

Above the din of slayers and of slain  
And diapason of the war-god's cry;  
Behind the dazzle and stress of chivalry  
And glow meridian of the Ilian plain,  
The finer ear discerned a secret strain,  
A vision pierced to the diviner eye;  
The far-off echo of a woman's sigh,  
Weakness made perfect unto strength in pain.  
Before the throne of great Achilles see  
The broken king kissing the deadly hands  
Whereby his house is left him desolate;  
And in the shadow of the Skaian gate,  
Her babe foredoomed upon her bosom, stands  
Smiling amid her tears, Andromache. W. L.



*How Agamemnon and Achilles fell out at the siege of Troy; and Achilles withdrew himself from battle, and won from Zeus a pledge that his wrong should be avenged on Agamemnon and the Achaïans.*

Sing, goddess, the wrath of Achilles Peleus' son, the ruinous wrath that brought on the Achaïans woes innumerable, and hurled down into Hades many strong souls of heroes, and gave their bodies to be a prey to dogs and all winged fowls; and so the counsel of Zeus wrought out its accomplishment from the day when first strife parted Atreides king of men and noble Achilles.

Who then among the gods set the twain at strife and variance? Even the son of Leto and of Zeus; for he in anger at the king sent a sore plague upon the host, that the folk began to perish, because Atreides had done dishonour to Chryses the priest. For he had come to the Achaïans' fleet ships to win his daughter's freedom, and brought a ransom beyond telling; and bare in his hands the fillet of Apollo the Far-darter upon a golden staff; and made his prayer unto all the Achaïans, and most of all to the two sons of Atreus, orderers of the host: "Ye sons of Atreus and all ye well-greaved Achaïans, now may the gods that dwell in the mansions of Olympus grant you to lay waste the city of Priam, and to fare happily homeward; only set ye my dear child free, and accept the ransom in reverence to the son of Zeus, far-darting Apollo."

Then all the other Achaïans cried assent, to reverence the priest and accept his goodly ransom; yet the thing pleased not the heart of Agamemnon son of Atreus, but he roughly sent him away, and laid stern charge upon him, saying: "Let me not find thee, old man, amid the hollow ships, whether tarrying now or returning again hereafter, lest the staff and fillet of the god avail thee naught. And her will I not set free; nay, ere that shall old age come on her in our house, in Argos, far from her native land, where she shall ply the loom and serve my couch. But depart, provoke me not, that thou mayest the rather go in peace."

So said he, and the old man was afraid and obeyed his word, and fared silently along the shore of the loud-sounding sea. Then went that aged man apart and prayed aloud to king Apollo, whom Leto of the fair locks bare: "Hear me, god of the silver bow, that standest over Chryse and holy Killa, and rulest Tenedos with might, O Smintheus! If ever I built a temple gracious in thine eyes, or if ever I burnt to thee fat flesh of thighs of bulls or goats, fulfil thou this my desire; let the Danaans pay by thine arrows for my tears."



So spake he in prayer, and Phoebus Apollo heard him, and came down from the peaks of Olympus wroth at heart, bearing on his shoulders his bow and covered quiver. And the arrows clanged upon his shoulders in his wrath, as the god moved; and he descended like to night. Then he sate him aloof from the ships, and let an arrow fly; and there was heard a dread clanging of the silver bow. First did he assail the mules and fleet dogs, but afterward, aiming at the men his piercing dart, he smote; and the pyres of the dead burnt continually in multitude.

Now for nine days ranged the god's shafts through the host; but on the tenth Achilles summoned the folk to assembly, for in his mind did goddess Hera of the white arms put the thought because she had pity on the Danaans when she beheld them perishing. Now when they had gathered and were met in assembly, then Achilles fleet of foot stood up and spake among them: "Son of Atreus, now deem I that we shall return wandering home again—if verily we might escape death—if war at once and pestilence must indeed ravage the Achaians. But come, let us now inquire of some soothsayer or priest, yea, or an interpreter of dreams—seeing that a dream too is of Zeus—who shall say wherefore Phoebus Apollo is so wroth, whether he blame us by reason of vow or hecatomb; if perchance he would accept the savour of lambs or unblemished goats, and so would take away the pestilence from us."

So spake he and sate him down; and there stood up before them Kalchas son of Thestor, most excellent far of augurs, who knew both things that were and that should be and that had been before, and guided the ships of the Achaians to Ilios by his soothsaying that Phoebus Apollo bestowed on him. He of good intent made harangue and spake amid them: "Achilles, dear to Zeus, thou biddest me tell the wrath of Apollo, the king that smiteth afar. Therefore will I speak; but do thou make covenant with me, and swear that verily with all thy heart thou wilt aid me both by word and deed. For of a truth I deem that I shall provoke one that ruleth all the Argives with might, and whom the Achaians obey. For a king is more of might when he is wroth with a meaner man; even though for the one day he swallow his anger, yet doth he still keep his displeasure thereafter in his breast till he accomplish it. Consider thou, then, if thou wilt hold me safe."

And Achilles fleet of foot made answer and spake to him: "Yea, be of good courage, speak whatever soothsaying thou knowest; for by Apollo dear to Zeus, him by whose worship thou, O Kalchas, declarest thy soothsaying to the Danaans, no man while I live and behold light on earth shall lay violent