may come to him, and he promises them splendid offerings,
so that you may set ablaze the funeral pyre, whereon lies
Patroklos, with all Achaians mourning about him."
She spoke so, and went away, and they with immortal
clamour rose up, and swept the clouds in confusion before them.
They came with a sudden blast upon the sea, and the waves rose
under the whistling wind. They came to the generous Troad
and hit the pyre, and a huge inhuman blaze rose, roaring.
Nightlong they piled the flames on the funeral pyre together
and blew with a screaming blast, and nightlong swift-footed Achilles
from a golden mixing-bowl, with a two-handled goblet in his hand,
drew the wine and poured it on the ground and drenched the ground
with it,
and called upon the soul of unhappy Patroklos. And as
a father mourns as he burns the bones of his son, who was married
only now, and died to grieve his unhappy parents,
so Achilles was mourning as he burned his companion’s
bones, and dragged himself by the fire in close lamentation.
At that time when the dawn star passes across earth, harbinger
of light, and after him dawn of the saffron mantle is scattered
across the sea, the fire died down and the flames were over.
The winds took their way back toward home again, crossing
the Thracian water, and it boiled with a moaning swell as they crossed it.
The son of Peleus turned aside and away from the burning
and lay down exhausted, and sweet sleep rose upon him. But now
they who were with the son of Atreus assembled together
and the sound and murmur of their oncoming wakened Achilles,
who straightened himself and sat upright and spoke a word to him:
‘Son of Atreus, and you other greatest of all the Achaians,
first put out with gleaming wine the pyre that is burning,
all that still has on it the fury of fire; and afterwards
we shall gather up the bones of Patroklos, the son of Menoitios,
which we shall easily tell apart, since they are conspicuous
where he lay in the middle of the pyre and the others far from him
at the edge burned, the men indiscriminately with the horses.
And let us lay his bones in a golden jar and a double
fold of fat, until I myself enfold him in Hades.

And I would have you build a grave mound which is not very great
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are swept along the ground as they stand with hearts full of sorrow.
But take, the rest of you, places in the field, whichever Achaian
has confidence in his horses and his compacted chariot.'

So spoke the son of Peleus, and the swift riders gathered.
Far the first to rise up was the lord of men Eumelos,
own son of Admetos, who surpassed in horsemanship. After
him rose up the son of Tydeus, strong Diomedes,
and led under the yoke the Trojan horses whom he had taken
by force from Aineias, but Aineias himself was saved by Apollo.
After him rose the son of Atreus, fair-haired Menelaos
the sky-descended, and led beneath the yoke the swift horses,
Aithe, Agamemnon's mare, and his own Podargos.
Echepolos, son of Anchises, gave her to Agamemnon
as a gift, so as not to have to go with him to windy Ilion
but stay where he was and enjoy himself, since Zeus had given him
great wealth, and he made his home in the wide spaces of Sikyon.

This mare, who was straining hard for the race, Menelaos harnessed.
Fourth to order his horses with flowing manes was Antilochos,
the glorious son of Nestor, Neleus' son, the high-hearted
lord, and fast-running horses out of the breed of Pylos
pulled his chariot, and his father standing close beside him
gave well-intentioned advice to his own good understanding:
'Antilochos, you are young indeed, but Zeus and Poseidon
have loved you and taught you horsemanship in all of its aspects.
Therefore there is no great need to instruct you; you yourself
know well how to double the turning-post. Yet in this race your horse
should run slowest. Therefore I think your work will be heavy.
The horses of these men are faster, but they themselves do not understand
any more than you of the science of racing.
Remember then, dear son, to have your mind full of every
resource of skill, so that the prizes may not elude you.

The woodcutter is far better for skill than he is for brute strength.
It is by skill that the sea captain holds his rapid ship
on its course, though torn by winds, over the wine-blue water.
By skill charioteer outpasses charioteer. He
who has put all his confidence in his horses and chariot
and recklessly makes a turn that is loose one way or another
finds his horses drifting out of the course and does not control them.

But the man, though he drive the slower horses, who takes his advantage,
keeps his eye always on the post and turns tight, ever watchful,
pulled with the ox-hide reins on the course, as in the beginning,
and holds his horses steady in hand, and watches the leader.
I will give you a clear mark and you cannot fail to notice it.
There is a dry stump standing up from the ground about six feet,
oak, it may be, or pine, and not rooted away by rain-water,
and two white stones are leaned against it, one on either side,
at the joining place of the ways, and there is smooth driving around it.
Either it is the grave-mark of someone who died long ago,
or was set as a racing goal by men who lived before our time.
Now swift-footed brilliant Achilles has made it the turning-post.
You must drive your chariot and horses so as to hug this,
yourself, in the strong-fabricated chariot, lean over
a little to the left of the course, and as for your right horse, whip him
and urge him along, slackening your hands to give him his full rein,
but make your left-hand horse keep hard against the turning-post
so that the hub's edge of your fashioned wheel will seem to be
touching it, yet take care not really to brush against it,
for, if so, you might damage your horses and break your chariot,
and that will be a thing of joy for the others, and a failure
for you. So, dear son, drive thoughtfully and be watchful.
For if you follow the others but get first by the turning-post,
there is none who could sprint to make it up, nor close you, nor pass you,
not if the man behind you were driving the great Arion,
the swift horse of Adrestos, whose birth is from the immortals,
or Laomedon's horses, who were the pride of those raised in this country.'

So spoke Nestor the son of Neleus, and turned back to his place
and sat down, having talked to his son of each stage in the contest.

Fifth to order his horses with flowing manes was Meriones.
They climbed to the chariots and deposited the lots. Achilles
shook them, and the first to fall out was that of Antilochos,
Nestor's son, and strong Eumelos drew next after him,
and after him the son of Atreus, Menelaos the spear-famed.
Meriones drew the next lane to drive, and the last for the driving
of horses was drawn by far the best of them all, Diomedes.
They stood in line for the start, and Achilles showed them the turn-post
far away on the level plain, and beside it he stationed
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Then the son of Tydeus, turning his single-foot horses to pass him, went far out in front of the others, seeing that Athene had inspired strength in his horses and to himself gave the glory. After him came the son of Atreus, fair-haired Menelaos. But Antilochos cried out aloud to his father’s horses: ‘Come on, you two. Pull, as fast as you can! I am not trying to make you match your speed with the speed of those others, the horses of Tydeus’ valiant son, to whom now Athene has granted speed and to their rider has given the glory. But make your burst to catch the horses of the son of Atreus nor let them leave you behind, for fear Aithe who is female may shower you in mockery. Are you falling back, my brave horses? For I will tell you this, and it will be a thing accomplished. There will be no more care for you from the shepherd of the people, Nestor, but he will slaughter you out of hand with the edge of bronze, if we win the meaner prize because you are unwilling. Keep on close after him and make all the speed you are able. I myself shall know what to do and contrive it, so that we get by in the narrow place of the way. He will not escape me.’ So he spoke, and they hearing the angry voice of their master ran harder for a little while, and presently after this battle-stubborn Antilochos saw where the hollow way narrowed. There was a break in the ground where winter water had gathered and broken out of the road, and made a sunken place all about. Menelaos shrinking from a collision of chariots steered there, but Antilochos also turned out his single-foot horses from the road, and bore a little way aside, and went after him; and the son of Atreus was frightened and called out aloud to Antilochos: ‘Antilochos, this is reckless horsemanship. Hold in your horses. The way is narrow here, it will soon be wider for passing. Be careful not to crash your chariot and wreck both of us.’ So he spoke, but Antilochos drove on all the harder with a whiplash for greater speed, as if he had never heard him. As far as is the range of a discus swung from the shoulder and thrown by a stripling who tries out the strength of his young manhood, so far they ran even, but then the mares of Atreides gave way and fell back, for he of his own will slackened his driving
for fear that in the road the single-foot horses might crash
and overturn the strong-fabricated chariots, and the men
themselves go down in the dust through their hard striving for victory.
But Menelaos of the fair hair called to him in anger:
‘Antilochos, there is no other man more cursed than you are.
Damn you. We Achaians lied when we said you had good sense.
Even so, you will not get this prize without having to take oath.’
He spoke, and lifted his voice and called aloud to his horses:
‘Never hold back now, never stop, for all your hearts are
sorrowful. The feet of these and their knees will weary
before yours do, seeing that the youth is gone from those horses.’
So he spoke, and they fearing the angry voice of their master
ran the harder, and soon were close up behind the others.

Now the Argives who sat in their assembly were watching
the horses, and the horses flew through the dust of the flat land.
Idomeneus, lord of the Kretans, was first to make out the horses,
for he sat apart from the others assembled, and higher up, where
he could see all ways, and from far off he heard Diomedes
calling, and knew him, and made out one horse ahead of the others
who was conspicuous, all red, except on his forehead
there was a white mark, round, like the full moon. Idomeneus
rose to his feet upright and spoke his word out to the Argives:
‘Friends, who are leaders of the Argives and keep their counsel:
am I the only one who can see the horses, or can you
also? It seems to me there are other horses leading
and I make out another charioteer. The mares of Eumelos
must have come to grief somewhere in the plain, who led on the way out,
for those I saw running out in front as they made the turn-post
I can see no longer anywhere, though I watch and though my eyes
look everywhere about the plain of Troy. But it must be
that the reins got away from the charioteer, or he could not hold them
well in hand at the goal and failed to double the turn-post.
There I think he must have been thrown out and his chariot broken,
and the mares bolted away with the wildness upon their spirit.
But you also stand up and look for yourselves; I cannot
well make out, but it seems to me the man who is leading
is an Aitolian by birth, but lord of the Argives,
the son of Tydeus, breaker of horses, strong Diomedes.’

Swift Aias, son of Oileus, spoke shamefully to him in anger:
‘Idomeneus, what was all this windy talk? The light-footed
horses are still far where they sweep over the great plain.
You are not by so much the youngest among the Argives,
nor do the eyes in your head see so much sharper than others.
But forever you are windy with your words, and you should not
be a windy speaker. There are others here better than you are.
The horses who are in front are the same as before, and they are
those of Eumelos, and he stands holding the reins behind them.’
The lord of the Kretans answered him to his face in anger:
‘Aias, surpassing in abuse, yet stupid, in all else
you are worst of the Argives with that stubborn mind of yours. Come
then,
let us put up a wager of a tripod or cauldron
and make Agamemnon, son of Atreus, witness between us
as to which horses lead. And when you pay, you will find out.’
So he spoke, and swift Aias, son of Oileus, was rising
up, angry in turn, to trade hard words with him. And now
the quarrel between the two of them would have gone still further,
had not Achilles himself risen up and spoken between them:
‘No longer now, Aias and Idomeneus, continue
to exchange this bitter and evil talk. It is not becoming.
If another acted so, you yourselves would be angry.
Rather sit down again among those assembled and watch for
the horses, and they in their strain for victory will before long
be here. Then you each can see for himself, and learn which
of the Argives horses have run first and which have run second.’

He spoke, and now Tydeus’ son in his rapid course was close on them
and he lashed them always with the whipstroke from the shoulder. His
horses
still lifted their feet light and high as they made their swift passage.
Dust flying splashed always the charioteer, and the chariot
that was overlaid with gold and tin still rolled hard after
the flying feet of the horses, and in their wake there was not much
trace from the running rims of the wheels left in the thin dust.
The horses came in running hard. Diomedes stopped them
in the middle of where the men were assembled, with the dense sweat
starting
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and dripping to the ground from neck and chest of his horses.
He himself vaulted down to the ground from his shining chariot
and leaned his whip against the yoke. Nor did strong Sthenelos
delay, but made haste to take up the prizes, and gave the woman
to his high-hearted companions to lead away and the tripod
with ears to carry, while Diomedes set free the horses.

After him Neleian Antilochos drove in his horses,

having passed Menelaos, not by speed but by taking advantage.
But even so Menelaos held his fast horses close on him.
As far as from the wheel stands the horse who is straining
to pull his master with the chariot over the flat land;
the extreme hairs in the tail of the horse brush against the running
rim of the wheel, and he courses very close, there is not much
space between as he runs a great way over the flat land;
by so much Menelaos was left behind by Antilochos
the blameless. At first he was left behind the length of a discus
thrown, but was overhauling him fast, with Aithe

of the fair mane, Agamemnon’s mare, putting on a strong burst.
If both of them had had to run the course any further,
Menelaos would have passed him, and there could have been no argument.
But Meriones, strong henchman of Idomeneus, was left
a spearcast’s length behind by glorious Menelaos.

For his horses with splendid manes were slowest of all, and likewise
he himself was of least account for the racing of chariots.
Last and behind them all came in the son of Admetos
dragging his fine chariot and driving his horses before him,
and seeing this, brilliant swift-footed Achilles took pity upon him
and stood forth among the Argives and spoke to them all in winged
words:

‘The best man is driving his single-foot horses in last.
Come then, we must give some kind of prize, and well he deserves it;
second prize; let first place go to the son of Tydeus.’

So he spoke, and all gave approval to what he was urging,
and he would have given him the horse, since all the Achaions
approved, had not Antilochos, son of great-hearted Nestor,
stood up to answer Peleid Achilleus, and argue:
‘Achilleus, I shall be very angry with you if you accomplish
what you have said. You mean to take my prize away from me,

with the thought in mind that his chariot fouled and his running horses
but he himself is great. He should have prayed to the immortal
gods. That is why he came in last of all in the running.
But if you are sorry for him and he is dear to your liking,
there is abundant gold in your shelter, and there is bronze there
and animals, and there are handmaidens and single-foot horses.
You can take from these, and give him afterwards a prize still greater
than mine, or now at once, and have the Achaions applaud you.
But the mare I will not give up, and the man who wants her
must fight me for her with his hands before he can take her.’

So he spoke, but brilliant swift-footed Achilleus, favouring
Antilochos, smiled, since he was his beloved companion,
and answered him and addressed him in winged words: ‘Antilochos,
if you would have me bring some other thing out of my dwelling
as special gift for Eumelos, then for your sake I will do it.
I will give him that corslet I stripped from Asteropaios;
it is bronze, but there is an overlay circled about it
in shining tin. It will be a gift that will mean much to him.’

He spoke, and told Automedon, his beloved companion,
to bring it out of the shelter, and he went away, and brought it back,
and put it in Eumelos’ hands. And he accepted it joyfully.

But now Menelaos, heart full of bitterness, stood up among them
in relentless anger against Antilochos, and the herald
put the staff into his hand and gave the call for the Argives
to be silent. And he stood forth, a man like a god, and spoke to them:
‘Antilochos, you had good sense once. See what you have done.
You have defiled my horsemanship, you have fouled my horses
by throwing your horses in their way, though yours were far slower.
Come then, o leaders of the Argives and their men of counsel: judge
between the two of us now; and without favour;
so that no man of the bronze-armoured Achaions shall say of us:

“Menelaos using lies and force against Antilochos
went off with the mare he won, for his horses were far slower
but he himself was greater in power and degree.” Or rather
come, I myself will give the judgment, and I think no other
man of the Danaans can call it in question, for it will be right.
Antilochos, beloved of Zeus, come here. This is justice.
Stand in front of your horses and chariot, and in your hand take
up the narrow whip with which you drove them before, then
lay your hand on the horses and swear by him who encircles
the earth and shakes it you used no guile to baffle my chariot.’
Then in turn Antilochos of the good counsel answered him:
‘Enough now. For I, my lord Menelaos, am younger
by far than you, and you are the greater and go before me.
You know how greedy transgressions flower in a young man, seeing
that his mind is the more active but his judgment is lightweight. Therefore
I would have your heart be patient with me. I myself will give you
the mare I won, and if there were something still greater you asked for
out of my house, I should still be willing at once to give it
to you, beloved of Zeus, rather than all my days
fall from your favour and be in the wrong before the divinities.’
He spoke, the son of Nestor the great-hearted, and leading
the mare up gave her to Menelaos’ hands. But his anger
was softened, as with dew the ears of corn are softened
in the standing corn growth of a shuddering field. For you also
the heart, o Menelaos, was thus softened within you.
He spoke to him aloud and addressed him in winged words: ‘Antilochos,
I myself, who was angry, now will give way before you,
since you were not formerly loose-minded or vain. It is only
that this time your youth got the better of your intelligence.
Beware another time of playing tricks on your betters.
Any other man of the Achaeans might not have appeased me.
But you have suffered much for me, and done much hard work,
and your noble father, too, and your brother for my sake. Therefore
I will be ruled by your supplication. I will even give you
the mare, though she is mine, so that these men too may be witnesses
that the heart is never arrogant nor stubborn within me.’
He spoke, and gave Antilochos’ companion, Noëmon,
the mare to lead away, and himself took the glittering cauldron.
Fourth, in the order he had driven, Meriones took up
the two talents’ weight of gold. But the fifth prize, the two-handled
jar, was left. Achilles carried it through the assembly
of the Argives, and gave it to Nestor, and stood by and spoke to him:
‘This, aged sir, is yours to lay away as a treasure
in memory of the burial of Patroklos; since never
again will you see him among the Argives. I give you this prize

for the giving; since never again will you fight with your fists nor wrestle,
nor enter again the field for the spear-throwing, nor race
on your feet; since now the hardship of old age is upon you.’
He spoke, and put it in the hands of Nestor, who took it
joyfully and spoke in answer and addressed him in winged words:
‘Yes, child: all this you said to me was true as you said it.
My limbs are no longer steady, dear friend; not my feet, neither
do my arms, as once they did, swing light from my shoulders.
I wish I were young again and the strength still unshaken within me
as once, when great Amaryngkeus was buried by the Epeians
at Boutrapion, and his sons gave games for a king’s funeral.
There was no man like me, not among the Epeians
nor yet of the Pylians themselves or great-hearted Aitolians.
At boxing I won against Klytomedes, the son of Enots,
at wrestling against Angkaioi of Pleuron, who stood up against me.
In the foot-race, for all his speed, I outran Iphiklos,
and with the spear I out-threw Polydoros and Phyleus.
It was only in the chariot-race that the sons of Aktor
defeated me, crossing me in the crowd, so intent on winning
were they, for the biggest prizes had been left for the horse-race.
Now these sons of Aktor were twins; one held the reins at his leisure,
held the reins at his leisure while the other lashed on the horses.
This was I, once. Now it is for the young men to encounter
in such actions, and for me to give way to the persuasion
of gloomy old age. But once I shone among the young heroes.
Go now, and honour the death of your companion with contests.
I accept this from you gratefully, and my heart is happy
that you have remembered me and my kindness, that I am not forgotten
for the honour that should be my honour among the Achaeans.
May the gods, for what you have done for me, give you great happiness.’
He spoke, and Peleides went back among the great numbers
of Achaeans assembled, when he had listened to all the praise spoken
by Neleus’ son, and set forth the prizes for the painful boxing.
He led out into the field and tethered there a hard-working
six-year-old unbroken jenny, the kind that is hardest
to break; and for the loser set out a two-handled goblet.
He stood upright and spoke his word out among the Argives:
‘Son of Atreus, and all you other strong-greaved-Achaeans,
as he spat up the thick blood and rolled his head over on one side. He was dizzy when they brought him back and set him among them. But they themselves went and carried off the two-handed goblet.

Now Peleides set forth the prizes for the third contest, for the painful wrestling, at once, and displayed them before the Danaans. There was a great tripod, to set over fire, for the winner. The Achaians among themselves valued it at the worth of twelve oxen. But for the beaten man he set in their midst a woman skilled in much work of her hands, and they rated her at four oxen. He stood upright and spoke his word out among the Argives: ‘Rise up, two who would endeavour this prize.' So he spoke and presently there rose up huge Telamonian Aias, and resourceful Odysseus rose, who was versed in every advantage. The two men, girt up, strode out into the midst of the circle, and grappled each other in the hook of their heavy arms, as when rafters lock, when a renowned architect has fitted them in the roof of a high house to keep out the force of the winds’ spite. Their backs creaked under stress of violent hands that tugged them stubbornly, and the running sweat broke out, and raw places frequent all along their ribs and their shoulders broke out bright red with blood, as both of them kept up their hard efforts for success and the prize of the wrought tripod. Neither Odysseus was able to bring Aias down or throw him to the ground, nor could Aias, but the great strength of Odysseus held out against him. But now as they made the strong-greaved Achaian begin to be restless, at last great Telamonian Aias said to the other: ‘Son of Laertes and seed of Zeus, resourceful Odysseus: lift me, or I will lift you. All success shall be as Zeus gives it.’ He spoke, and heaved; but not forgetting his craft Odysseus caught him with a stroke behind the hollow of the knee, and unnerved the tendons, and threw him over backward, so that Odysseus fell on his chest as the people gazed upon them and wondered. Next, brilliant much-enduring Odysseus endeavoured to lift him and budge him a little from the ground, but still could not raise him clear, then hooked a knee behind, so that both of them went down together to the ground, and lay close, and were soiled in the dust. Then they would have sprung to their feet once more and wrestled a third fall, had not Achilleus himself stood up and spoken to stop them:

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735 ‘Wrestle no more now; do not wear yourselves out and get hurt. You have both won. Therefore take the prizes in equal division and retire, so the rest of the Achaeans can have their contests.’

So he spoke, and they listened close to him and obeyed him and wiped the dust away from their bodies, and put on their tunics.

740 At once the son of Peleus set out prizes for the foot-race: a mixing-bowl of silver, a work of art, which held only six measures, but for its loveliness it surpassed all others on earth by far, since skilled Sidonian craftsmen had wrought it well, and Phoenicians carried it over the misty face of the water and set it in the harbour, and gave it for a present to Thos. Euneos, son of Jason, gave it to the hero Patroklos to buy Lykaon, Priam’s son, out of slavery, and now Achilles made it a prize in memory of his companion, for that man who should prove in the speed of his feet to run lightest.

750 For second place he set out a great ox with fat deep upon him, and for the last runner half a talent’s weight of gold. He stood upright then and spoke his word out among the Argives: ‘Rise up, you who would endeavour this prize.’ So he spoke and presently there rose up swift Aias, the son of Oileus, and Odysseus the resourceful rose up, and after him Nestor’s son, Antilochos, the best runner among all the young men. They stood in line for the start, and Achilles showed them the turn-post. The field was strung out from the scratch, and not long afterwards Oileus’ son was out in front, but brilliant Odysseus overhauled him close, as near as to the breast of a woman fair-girdled is the rod she pulls in her hands carefully as she draws the spool out and along the warp, and holds it close to her chest. So Odysseus ran close up, but behind him, and his feet were hitting the other’s tracks before the dust settled.

760 Great Odysseus was breathing on the back of the head of Aias as he ran and held his speed, and all the Achaeans were shouting for his effort to win, and hallowed him hard along in his running. But as they were running the last part of the race, then Odysseus said a prayer inside his own mind to grey-eyed Athene:

770 ‘Hear me, goddess; be kind; and come with strength for my footsteps.’

So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athene heard him. She made his limbs light, both his feet and the hands above them.

775 Now as they were for making their final sprint for the trophy, there Aias slipped in his running, for Athene unbalanced him, where dung was scattered on the ground from the bellowing oxen slaughtered by swift-footed Achilles, those he slew to honour Patroklos; and his mouth and nose were filled with the cow dung, so that Odysseus the great and much enduring took off the mixing-bowl, seeing he had passed him and come in first, and the ox went to glorious Aias. He stood there holding in his hands the horn of the field-ox, spitting the dung from his mouth, and spoke his word to the Argives: ‘Ah, now! That goddess made me slip on my feet, who has always stood over Odysseus like a mother, and taken good care of him.’

He spoke, and all the rest of them laughed happily at him. In turn Antilochos took up prize for last place, and carried it off, and grinning spoke his word out among the Argives: ‘Friends, you all know well what I tell you, that still the immortals continue to favour the elder men. For see now, Aias is elder than I, if only by a little, but this man is out of another age than ours and one of the ancients. But his, they say, is a green old age. It would be a hard thing for any Achaian to match his speed. Except for Achilles.’

So he spoke, and glorified the swift-footed Peleion. And Achilles gave him an answer for what he said, and spoke to him: ‘Antilochos, your good word for me shall not have been spoken in vain. I shall give you another half-talent of gold in addition.’

He spoke, and put it in Antilochos’ hands, who received it joyfully. Then the son of Peleus carried into the circle and set down a far-shadowing spear, and set down beside it a shield and a helmet: the armour of Sarpedon, that Patroklos stripped from his body. He stood upright and spoke his word out among the Argives: ‘We invite two men, the best among you, to contend for these prizes. Let them draw their armour upon them and take up the rending bronze spears and stand up to each other in the trial of close combat. The fighter who is first of the two to get in a stroke at the other’s fair body, to get through armour and dark blood and reach to the vitals, to that man I will give this magnificent silver-nailed sword of Thrace I stripped from the body of Asteropaios.

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But let both men carry off this armour and have it in common;
and we shall set out a brave dinner before them both in our shelters.'
So he spoke, and there rose up huge Telamonic Aias,
and next the son of Tydeus rose up, strong Diomedes.
When these were in their armour on either side of the assembly,
they came together in the middle space, furious for the combat,
with dangerous looks, and wonder settled on all the Achaians.
Then as, moving forward, the two were closing in on each other,
there were three charges, three times they swept in close. Then Aias
stabbed at Diomedes' shield on its perfect circle
but did not get through to the skin, for the corselet inside it guarded him.
The son of Tydeus, over the top of the huge shield, was always
menacing the neck of Aias with the point of the shining
spear, but when the Achaians saw it in fear for Aias
they called for them to stop and divide the prizes evenly.
But the hero Achilles carried the great sword, with its scabbard
and carefully cut sword belt, and gave it to Diomedes.

Now the son of Peleus set in place a lump of pig-iron,
which had once been the throwing-weight of Eetion in his great strength;
but now swift-footed brilliant Achilles had slain him and taken
the weight away in the ships along with the other possessions.
He stood upright and spoke his word out among the Argives:
'Rise up, you who would endeavour to win this prize also.
For although the rich demesnes of him who wins it lie far off
indeed, yet for the succession of five years he will have it
to use; for his shepherd for want of iron will not have to go in
to the city for it, nor his ploughman either. This will supply them.'
So he spoke, and up stood Polypoites the stubborn in battle,
and Leonteus in his great strength, a godlike man, and there rose up
Aias, the son of Telamon, and brilliant Epeios.
They stood in order to throw, and great Epeios took up the weight
and whirled and threw it, and all the Achaians laughed when they saw
him.
Second to throw in turn was Leonteus, scion of Ares,
and third in turn huge Telamonic Aias threw it
from his ponderous hand, and overpassed the marks of all others.
But when Polypoites stubborn in battle caught up the iron,
he overthrew the entire field by as far as an ox-herd

can cast with his throwing stick which spins through the air and comes
down
where the cattle graze in their herds, and all the Achaians applauded,
and the companions of powerful Polypoites uprisings

But Achilles set gloomy iron forth once more, for the archers.
He set ten double-bladed axes forth, ten with single
blades, and planted far away on the sands the mast pole
of a dark-proved ship, and tethered a tremulous wild pigeon to it
by a thin string attached to her foot, then challenged the archers
to shoot at her: 'Now let the man who hits the wild pigeon
take up and carry away home with him all the full axes.
But if one should miss the bird and still hit the string, that man,
seeing that he is the loser, still shall have the half-axes.'
So he spoke, and there rose up in his strength the lord Teukros,
and Meriones rose up, Idomeneus' powerful henchman.
They chose their lots, and shook them up in a brazen helmet,
and Teukros was allotted first place to shoot. He let fly
a strong-shot arrow, but did not promise the lord of archery
that he would accomplish for him a grand sacrifice of lambs first born.
He missed the bird, for Apollo begrudged him that, but he did hit
the string beside the foot where the bird was tied, and the tearing
arrow went straight through and cut the string, and the pigeon
soared swift up toward the sky, while the string dropped and dangled
toward the ground. But still the Achaians thundered approval.
Meriones in a fury of haste caught the bow from his hand,
but had not an arrow before, while Teukros was aiming,
and forthwith promised to the one who strikes from afar, Apollo,
that he would accomplish for him a grand sacrifice of lambs first born.
Way up under the clouds he saw the tremulous wild dove
and as she circled struck her under the wing in the body
and the shaft passed clean through and out of her, so that it dropped
back
and stuck in the ground beside the foot of Meriones, but the bird
dropped and fell on top of the mast of the dark-proved vessel
and drooped her neck and the beating wings went slack, and the spirit
of life fled swift away from her limbs. Far down from the mast peak
she dropped to earth. And the people gazed upon it and wondered.
BOOK TWENTY-THREE

Then Meriones gathered up all ten double axes,
but Teukros carried the half-axes back to the hollow ships.
Then the son of Peleus carried into the circle and set down
885 a far-shadowing spear and an unfired cauldron with patterns
of flowers on it, the worth of an ox. And the spear-throwers rose up.
The son of Atreus rose, wide-powerful Agamemnon,
and Meriones rose up, Idomeneus’ powerful henchman.
But now among them spoke swift-footed brilliant Achilles:
890 ‘Son of Atreus, for we know how much you surpass all others,
by how much you are greatest for strength among the spear-throwers,
therefore take this prize and keep it and go back to your hollow
ships; but let us give the spear to the hero Meriones;
if your own heart would have it this way, for so I invite you.’
895 He spoke, nor did Agamemnon lord of men disobey him.
The hero gave the bronze spear to Meriones, and thereafter
handed his prize, surpassingly lovely, to the herald Talthybios.

BOOK TWENTY-FOUR

And the games broke up, and the people scattered to go away,
each man
to his fast-running ship, and the rest of them took thought of their dinner
and of sweet sleep and its enjoyment; only Achilles
wept still as he remembered his beloved companion, nor did sleep
who subdues all come over him, but he tossed from one side to the other
in longing for Patroklos, for his manhood and his great strength
and all the actions he had seen to the end with him, and the hardships
he had suffered; the wars of men; hard crossing of the big waters.
Remembering all these things he let fall the swelling tears, lying
sometimes along his side, sometimes on his back, and now again
prone on his face; then he would stand upright, and pace turning
in distraction along the beach of the sea, nor did dawn rising
escape him as she brightened across the sea and the beaches.
Then, when he had yoked running horses under the chariot
he would fasten Hektor behind the chariot, so as to drag him,
and draw him three times around the tomb of Menoitios’ fallen
son, then rest again in his shelter, and throw down the dead man
and leave him to lie sprawled on his face in the dust. But Apollo
had pity on him, though he was only a dead man, and guarded
the body from all ugliness, and hid all of it under the golden
aegis, so that it might not be torn when Achilles dragged it.
So Achilles in his standing fury outraged great Hektor.
The blessed gods as they looked upon him were filled with compassion
and kept urging clear-sighted Argeiphones to steal the body.
There this was pleasing to all the others, but never to Hera