

Aeneid 1.1-8

Arma virumque cano...

Wars and a man I sing—an exile driven on by Fate,
he was the first to flee the coast of Troy,
destined to reach Lavinian shores and Italian soil,
yet many blows he took on land and sea from the gods above—
thanks to cruel Juno's relentless rage—and many losses
he bore in battle too, before he could found a city,
bring his gods to Latium, source of the Latin race,
the Alban lords and the high walls of Rome. Tell me,
Muse, how it all began. Why was Juno outraged?

Iliad 1.1-10

Rage—Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles,
murderous, doomed, that cost the Achaeans countless losses,
hurling down to the House of Death so many sturdy souls,
great fighter's souls, but made their bodies carrion,
feasts for the dogs and birds,
and the will of Zeus was moving toward its end.
Begin, Muse, when the two first broke and clashed,
Agamemnon lord of men and brilliant Achilles.
What god drove them to fight with such a fury?
Apollo...

Odyssey 1.1-16, 19-23

Sing to me of the man, Muse, the man of twists and turns
driven time and again off course, once he had plundered
the hallowed heights of Troy.

Many cities of men he saw and learned their minds,
many pains he suffered, heartsick on the open sea,
fighting to save his life and bring his comrades home.
But he could not save them from disaster, hard as he strove—
the recklessness of their own ways destroyed them all,
the blind fools, they devoured the cattle of the Sun
and the Sungod wiped from sight the day of their return.

Launch out on his story, Muse, daughter of Zeus,
Start from where you will—sing for our time too. By now,
all the survivors, all who avoided headlong death
were safe at home, escaped the wars and waves.
but one man alone...

His heart set on his wife and his return [. . .]

But then, when the wheeling seasons brought the year around,
that year spun out by the gods when he should reach his home,
Ithaca—though not even there would he be free of trials,
even among his loved ones—then every god took pity,
all except Poseidon. He raged on, seething against
great Odysseus till he reached his native land.