

## Gods and territories

Now the gods were sitting with Jove in council upon the golden floor while Hebe went round pouring out nectar for them to drink, and as they pledged one another in their cups of gold they looked down upon the town of Troy. The son of Saturn then began to tease Juno, talking at her so as to provoke her. "Menelaus," said he, "has two good friends among the goddesses, Juno of Argos, and Minerva of Alalcomene, but they only sit still and look on, while Venus keeps ever by Alexandrus' side to defend him in any danger; indeed she has just rescued him when he made sure that it was all over with him- for the victory really did lie with Menelaus. We must consider what we shall do about all this; shall we set them fighting anew or make peace between them? If you will agree to this last Menelaus can take back Helen and the city of Priam may remain still inhabited."

Minerva and Juno muttered their discontent as they sat side by side hatching mischief for the Trojans. Minerva scowled at her father, for she was in a furious passion with him, and said nothing, but Juno could not contain herself. "Dread son of Saturn," said she, "what, pray, is the meaning of all this? Is my trouble, then, to go for nothing, and the sweat that I have sweated, to say nothing of my horses, while getting the people together against Priam and his children? Do as you will, but we other gods shall not all of us approve your counsel."

The *Iliad* from book 4, Translated by Samuel Butler

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