

you, an only and loved son? Illustrious Odysseus

has perished far from his country in some outlandish region.

And these men will devise evils against you, on your returning, so you shall die by guile, and they divide all that is yours.

No, but stay here and guard your possessions. It is not right for you to wander and suffer hardships on the barren wide sea."

Then the thoughtful Telemachos said to her in answer:

"Do not fear, nurse. This plan was not made without a god's will.

But swear to tell my beloved mother nothing about this until the eleventh day has come or the twelfth hereafter,

or until she misses me herself or hears I am absent, so that she may not ruin her lovely skin with weeping."

So he spoke, and the old woman swore to the gods a great oath, and after she had sworn to it and completed the oath taking,

she drew the wine in the handled jars at once thereafter and poured his barley into bags stitched strongly of leather,

but Telemachos went back into the house and joined the suitors.

Now the gray-eyed goddess Athene thought what to do next.

In the likeness of Telemachos she went all through the city

and, standing beside each man as she came to him, told them all to assemble beside the fast ship in the evening.

Then she asked Noëmon, the glorious son of Phronios, for a fast ship. And he with good will promised it to her.

And the sun set, and all the journeying ways were darkened. Now she drew the fast ship down to the sea, and in her

stowed all the running gear that strong-benched vessels carry. She set it at the edge of the harbor, and around her the good companions

thronged and were assembled and the goddess urged on each man. Now the gray-eyed goddess Athene thought what to do next.

She went on her way, into the house of godlike Odysseus, and there she drifted a sweet slumber over the suitors,

and struck them as they drank, and knocked the goblets out of their hands, and they went to sleep in the city, nor did any one

sit long, after sleep was fallen upon his eyelids. Afterward gray-eyed Athene spoke to Telemachos

when she had called him out from the well-established palace, likening herself to Mentor in voice and appearance:

"Telemachos, already now your strong-greaved companions are sitting at the oars, and waiting for you to set forth.

So let us go, and not delay our voyaging longer."

So spoke Pallas Athene, and she led the way swiftly, and the man followed behind her walking in the god's footsteps.

But when they had come down to the sea, and where the ship was, they found the flowing-haired companions there by the seashore.

Now the hallowed prince, Telemachos, spoke his word to them:

"Here, friends, let us carry the provisions. They are all ready and stacked in the hall. But my mother has been told nothing of this, nor the rest of the serving women. Only one knows the story."

So he spoke and led the way, and the rest went with him.

They all carried the provisions down, and stowed them in the strong-benched

vessel, in the way the dear son of Odysseus directed them.

Telemachos went aboard the ship, but Athene went first

and took her place in the stern of the ship, and close beside her

Telemachos took his place. The men cast off the stern cables and themselves also went aboard and sat to the oarlocks.

The goddess gray-eyed Athene sent them a favoring stern wind, strong Zephyros, who murmured over the wine-blue water.

Telemachos then gave the sign and urged his companions to lay hold of the tackle, and they listened to his urging

and, raising the mast pole made of fir, they set it upright in the hollow hole in the box, and made it fast with forestays,

and with hal yards strongly twisted of leather pulled up the white sails. The wind blew into the middle of the sail, and at the curwater.

a blue wave rose and sang strongly as the ship went onward.

She ran swiftly, cutting across the swell her pathway.

When they had made fast the running gear all along the black ship, then they set up mixing bowls, filling them brimful

with wine, and poured to the gods immortal and everlasting beyond all other gods they poured to Zeus' grey-eyed daughter.

All night long and into the dawn she ran on her journey.

## 2. Homer, *Iliad* 18.474—617: The Shield of Achilles

He cast on the fire bronze which is weariless, and tin with it and valuable gold, and silver, and thereafter set forth

upon its standard the great anvil, and gripped in one hand the ponderous hammer, while in the other he grasped the pincers.

First of all he forged a shield that was huge and heavy, elaborating it about, and threw around it a shining

triple rim that glittered, and the shield strap was cast of silver.

There were five folds composing the shield itself, and upon it he elaborated many things in his skill and craftsmanship.

He made the earth upon it, and the sky, and the sea's water, and the tireless sun, and the moon waxing into her fullness, and on it all the constellations that festoon the heavens, the Pleiades and the Hyades and the strength of Orion and the Bear, whom men give also the name of the Wagon, who turns about in a fixed place and looks at Orion and she alone is never plunged in the wash of the Ocean.

On it he wrought in all their beauty two cities of mortal men. And there were marriages in one, and festivals.

They were leading the brides along the city from their maiden chambers under the flaring of torches, and the loud bride song was arising.

The young men followed the circles of the dance, and among them the flutes and lyres kept up their clamour as in the meantime the women standing each at the door of her court admired them.

The people were assembled in the market place, where a quarrel had arisen, and two men were disputing over the blood price for a man who had been killed. One man promised full restitution in a public statement, but the other refused and would accept nothing.

Both then made for an arbitrator, to have a decision; and people were speaking up on either side, to help both men.

But the heralds kept the people in hand, as meanwhile the elders were in session on benches of polished stone in the sacred circle and held in their hands the staves of the heralds who lift their voices.

The two men rushed before these, and look turns speaking their cases, and between them lay on the ground two talents of gold, to be given to that judge who in this case spoke the straightest opinion.

But around the other city were lying two forces of armed men shining in their war gear. For one side counsel was divided whether to storm and sack, or share between both sides the property and all the possessions the lovely citadel held hard within it.

But the city's people were not giving way, and armed for an ambush. Their beloved wives and their little children stood on the rampart to hold it, and with them the men with age upon them, but meanwhile the others went out. And Ares led them, and Pallas Athene.

These were gold, both, and golden raiment upon them, and they were beautiful and huge in their armour, being divinities, and conspicuous from afar, but the people around them were smaller.

These, when they were come to the place that was set for their ambush, in a river, where there was a watering place for all animals, there they sat down in place shrouding themselves in the bright bronze.

But apart from these were sitting two men to watch for the rest of them and waiting until they could see the sheep and the shambling cattle, who appeared presently, and two herdsmen went along with them playing happily on pipes, and look no thought of the treachery.

Those others saw them, and made a rush, and quickly thereafter cut off on both sides the herds of cattle and the beautiful flocks of shining sheep, and killed the shepherds upon them.

But the other army, as soon as they heard the uproar arising from the cattle, as they sat in their councils, suddenly mounted behind their light-foot horses, and went after, and soon overtook them.

These stood their ground and fought a battle by the banks of the river, and they were making casts at each other with their spears bronze-headed; and Hate was there with Confusion among them, and Death the destructive;

she was holding a live man with a new wound, and another one unhurt, and dragged a dead man by the feet through the carnage.

The clothing upon her shoulders showed strong red with the man's blood. All closed together like living men and fought with each other and dragged away from each other the corpses of those who had fallen.

He made upon it a soft field, the pride of the tilled land, wide and triple-ploughed, with many ploughmen upon it who wheeled their teams at the turn and drove them in either direction.

And as these making their turn would reach the end-strip of the field, a man would come up to them at this point and hand them a flagon of honey-sweet wine, and they would turn again to the furrows in their haste to come again to the end-strip of the deep field.

The earth darkened behind them and looked like earth that has been ploughed

though it was gold. Such was the wonder of the shield's forging.

He made on it the precinct of a king, where the labourers were reaping, with the sharp reaping hooks in their hands. Of the cut swathes

some fell along the lines of reaping, one after another, while the sheaf-binders caught up others and tied them with bind-ropes. There were three sheaf-binders who stood by, and behind them were children picking up the cut swathes, and filled their arms with them

and carried and gave them always; and by them the king in silence and holding his staff stood near the line of the reapers, happily. And apart and under a tree the heralds made a feast ready

and trimmed a great ox they had slaughtered. Meanwhile the women scattered, for the workmen to eat, abundant white barley.

He made on it a great vineyard heavy with clusters,

lovely and in gold, but the grapes upon it were darkened  
and the vines themselves stood out through poles of silver. About them  
he made a field-ditch of dark metal, and drove all around this  
a fence of tin; and there was only one path to the vineyard,  
and along it ran the grape-bearers for the vineyard's stripping.  
Young girls and young men, in all their light-hearted innocence,  
carried the kind, sweet fruit away in their woven baskets,  
and in their midst a youth with a singing lyre played charmingly  
upon it for them, and sang the beautiful song for Linos  
in a light voice, and they followed him, and with singing and whistling  
and light dance-steps of their feet kept time to the music.

He made upon it a herd of horn-straight oxen. The cattle  
were wrought of gold and of tin, and thronged in speed and with lowing  
out of the dung of the farmyard to a pasturing place by a sounding  
river, and beside the moving field of a reed bed.  
The herdsmen were of gold who went along with the cattle,  
four of them, and nine dogs shifting their feet followed them.  
But among the foremost of the cattle two formidable lions  
had caught hold of a bellowing bull, and he with loud lowings  
was dragged away, as the dogs and the young men went in pursuit of him.  
But the two lions, breaking open the hide of the great ox,  
gulped the black blood and the inward guts, as meanwhile the herdsmen  
were in the act of setting and urging the quick dogs on them.  
But they, before they could get their teeth in, turned back from the lions,  
but would come and take their stand very close, and bayed, and kept  
clear.

And the renowned smith of the strong arms made on it a meadow  
large and in a lovely valley for the glimmering sheepflocks,  
with dwelling places upon it, and covered shelters, and sheepfolds.

And the renowned smith of the strong arms made elaborate on it  
a dancing floor, like that which once in the wide spaces of Knosos  
Daidalos built for Ariadne of the lovely tresses.

And there were young men on it and young girls, sought for their beauty  
with gifts of oxen, dancing, and holding hands at the wrist. These  
wore, the maidens long light robes, but the men wore tunics  
of finespun work and shining softly, touched with olive oil.

And the girls wore fair garlands on their heads, while the young men  
carried golden knives that hung from sword-belts of silver.  
At whiles on their understanding feet they would run very lightly,  
as when a potter crouching makes trial of his wheel, holding  
it close in his hands, to see if it will run smooth. At another  
time they would form rows, and run, rows crossing each other.

And around the lovely chorus of dancers stood a great multitude  
happily watching, while among the dancers two acrobats  
led the measures of song and dance revolving among them.

He made on it the great strength of the Ocean River  
which ran around the uttermost rim of the shield's strong structure.

Then after he had wrought this shield, which was huge and heavy,  
he wrought for him a caseler brighter than fire in its shining,  
and wrought him a helmet, massive and fitting close to his temples,  
lovely and intricate work, and laid a gold top-ridge along it,  
and out of pliable tin wrought him leg-armor. Thereafter  
when the renowned smith of the strong arms had finished the armor  
he lifted it and laid it before the mother of Achilles.

And she like a hawk came sweeping down from the snows of Olympus  
and carried with her the shining armor, the gift of Hephaistos.