Starting from you, Phoibos, the deeds of those old-time mortals
I shall relate, who by way of the Black Sea’s mouth and through the
cobalt-dark rocks, at King Pelias’s commandment,
in search of the Golden Fleece drove tight-thwarted Argo.

For Pelias heard it voiced that in time thereafter
a grim fate would await him, death at the prompting
of the man he saw come, one-sandaled, from folk in the country:
and not much later—in accordance with your word—Jason,
fording on foot the Anauros’s wintry waters,
saved from the mud one sandal, but left the other
stuck fast in the flooded estuary, pressed straight on
to have his share in the sacred feast that Pelias
was preparing for Poseidon his father, and the rest of
the gods, though paying no heed to Pelasgian Hera.
The moment Pelias saw him, he knew, and devised him a trial
of most perilous seamanship, that in deep waters
or away among foreign folk he might lose his homecoming.

Now singers before my time have recounted how the vessel
was fashioned by Argos with the guidance of Athena.
What I plan to do now is tell the name and family
of each hero, describe their long voyage, all they accomplished
in their wanderings: may the Muses inspire my singing!

First in our record be Orpheus, whom famous Kalliope,
after bedding Thracian Oiágros, bore, they tell us,
hard by Pimpleia's high rocky lookout: Orpheus, who's said to have charmed unshiftable upland boulders and the flow of rivers with the sound of his music. Wild oaks still form a memorial to that singing: on the Thracian shore they flourish, marching in order, dense-packed, just as Orpheus long ago bewitched them with the sound of his lyre, brought them down from Pieria. Such was Orpheus, whom Aison's son Jason persuaded to join him, at Aison's advice, on his quest, and gave him warm welcome: Pieria's royal lord, the Bistonians' monarch.

Soon, too came Asterion, begotten of Komêtes by Apídanos' turbulent waters, who had his dwelling in Peiréssai of Thessalia, under a lofty mountain, where mighty Apídanos and divine Enípeus have their juncture, uniting in one from remote beginnings. After them, leaving Lárissa, there followed that Polyphémos, Eílatos's son, who once, among the sturdy Lapiths, when the Lapiths were arming themselves against the Centaurs, fought as a youth; though now his limbs were heavy with age, his spirit remained a warrior's as always.

Nor did Iphiklos tarry long in Phylaké, he being Jason's uncle, Aison having married Alkimédé of Phylaké: her kinship, that marriage bond, compelled him to enroll himself in the company. Nor did Admétos, king over sheep-rich Phérai, hang back there under the peaks of Thessalia's Chalkodónian mountains; nor did Hermes' two sons, Erytos and Echión, skillful tricksters both, rich in broad wheatfields, stay behind in Phthiótis, while Aithálides, their third brother, joined them on their departure. (Eupolemeia, fathered by Myrmidon in Phthia, had him by the Amphryssos; the other two Antianeira bore, Menétes' daughter.)

There came too, leaving wealthy Gyrton, Korónos, Kaineus's son, a brave man, yet not his father's equal: for Kaineus, as singers tell, was among the living still when destroyed by the Kentaurs: that day he drove them back, alone of the heroes; and when they rallied they could neither force him to yield, nor yet dispatch him, but unbowed, unbroken, he went into earth down under,
crushed by a shattering hail of heavy pine trunks.
Mopsos came too, the Thessalian, whom Apollo,
Leto's son, had made skilled in bird omens, above all mortals,
and Eurydamas, Kúmenos' son, who had his dwelling
in Dolopian Kúmené, by Lake Xynias. Actor
ordered forth his son Menoitios from Opous
to go with the flower of the heroes. There followed
Eurytion, and valiant Erybótes, the sons
one of Téleon, the other of Actor's scion, Iros—
it was far-famed Erybótes whom Téleon engendered,
Eurytion, Iros. With these as third went Oileus,
peerless in prowess, skilled at harrying foemen
from the rear, when he'd broken their ranks. Next, out of Euboia
Kanéthos set forth: him Kankthos son of Abas
sent, at his own eager wish, yet he was not ever
to come back home to Kerinthos, but fated to perish,
he, together with Mopsos, that prince among diviners,
in the course of their Libyan wanderings: so true it remains that
trouble lies never too distant for men to encounter,
since in Libya it was those two were given burial,
a place as far from Kolchis as is the distance
to be seen between the Sun's rising and its setting.
Next after him Klytios and Iphitos were mustered,
lords of Oichalia, sons to hard-bitten Eúrytos,
Eúrytos, offered a bow by far-shooting Apollo, yet getting
no joy of the gift, since he chose to compete with its giver.
Next came the sons of Aiakos, yet not together,
nor from one place, for they dwelt far apart and distant,
from Aígina, after slaying their brother Phókos
in a witless moment. Peleus set up his home in Phthia,
while Télamon moved to Salamis, Attika's island.
After them, from Kekropia, came the warrior Boútés,
son of brave Téleon, and Pháleros, stout spearman—
Alkon his father released him, though he had no other
sons to support his old age and livelihood,
and sent him forth, his best-beloved, his only
son, to earn fame among those feisty heroes.
But Theseus, who surpassed all the sons of Erechtheus,
an invisible bond held back, down under Tainaros, whither
he’d gone on his vain quest with Peirithoós: that couple would have made their task’s fulfillment far easier for them all. Tiphys too, Hagnias’s son, now left his Thespian canton of Siphai; skilled he was to predict a rising storm out on the broad sea, saw hurricanes coming, could steer a ship’s course by sun or stars! Tritonian Athena herself it was called him forth to the assembly of heroes, and glad they were to have him come among them; Athena, too, it was planned their swift ship, and with her Argos, Arestor’s son, laid it down to her instructions, which was how it came to be the finest of all vessels that ever under oar power made trial of the seaways. Phleias too came from his home in Araithyréa where he enjoyed great wealth by favor of his father Dionysos, holding land and hearth at the springs of Asópos. From Argos came Tálaos and Areíos, sons of Bias, and mighty Leódkos: these three the Neleid Pero bore, for whose sake the Aiolid Melámpous endured a heavy affliction in the stables of Iphiklos. No, nor do we hear that the power of stout-hearted Herakles made light of the strong appeal by Aison’s son Jason: at the time he got the news of the heroes’ mustering he’d passed Lyrkeian Argos on his way from Arkadia, bringing a wild boar, live, that had browsed in Lampeia’s thickets, beside the great marsh of Erymánthos, and at the very entrance to the Mykenaian assembly had dumped it, wrapped in chains, from off his great shoulders, and himself, as he willed, in defiance of Eurystheus, set forth, and with him Hylas, his fine squire, in the bloom of youth, to care for his bow, bear his arrows. Next came a descendant of godlike Danaos, Nauplios. He was the son of Naubolos’s son Klytonéos, and Naubolos’s father was Lernos, and Lernos, we know, the son of Proitos, whom Nauplios sired: before that, Poseidon had bedded the Danaïd maiden Amymoné, got her with Nauplios, who excelled all mortals in seamanship. Idmon the seer came last of all those dwelling in Argos: for he learnt his own fate from the bird signs, yet set forth, lest his good repute be impugned by the people.
He was no true son of Abas, but begotten rather, to add to the number of the famous Aiolids, by Leto's son, who himself taught him divination, how to read signs from birds and in burnt offerings. From Sparta Aitolian Leda sent strong Polydeukes, and Kastor, skilled in the breaking of swift-footed horses: in the house of Tyndareus she bore them, her twin darlings, at a single delivery, nor did she now deny their prayers: her choice for them now was worthy of Zeus's offspring. The sons of Aphareus, Lynkeus and arrogant Idas, came from Aréne, both overconfident in their mighty muscles: and Lynkeus besides excelled in sharpness of eyesight—if the report be true that this hero could easily discern even what lay underground. With them set forth Periklymenos, son of Neleus, eldest of all the children that were born in Pylos to godlike Neleus: Poseidon granted him boundless strength, and the gift to assume whatever form he prayed for when he was engaged in the shock and press of battle. Amphidamas and Képheus came from Arkadia, whose dwelling was Tegea, the estate of Apheidas, both Aleos's sons; and with them, a third companion, Ankaios went, dispatched by his father, Lykourgos, the elder brother to both, who himself, already aging, was left in the city to care for Aleos, sending his son to accompany his brothers. So there went Ankaios, dressed in a local bearskin, and swinging an enormous two-edged axe in one hand, since his arms had been hidden by Aleos, his grandfather, in the back of a granary, in a last attempt, even now, to stop him from going. There came too Augeias, whom rumor made the offspring of Helios. He was king over Elis and its warriors, proud in his wealth; he longed to see the land of Kolchis, and King Aiêtês himself, the Kolchians' leader. Astéris and Amphion, Hyperásios' sons, came from Achaian Pelléne, which Pellen their grandfather once founded upon the craggy brow of Aigialós. After these, quitting Tainaros, there came Euphémos, whom Európé, strong Tityos's daughter, bore to Poseidon.
to be a swifter runner than all other mortals: he’d speed along on the ocean’s gray and swelling surface, never dipping his nimble feet, but would follow his liquid trail, wetting nothing beyond the soles. Two other sons of Poseidon followed: the one, Erginos, had left far behind the citadel of lordly Miletos; the other, Ankaios, proud of bearing, the seat of Samian Hera; both vaunted their expertise in seamanship and war. After these there joined them, journeying from Kalydon, the son of Oineus, valiant Meleagros, and Laokoon with him, Laokoön, brother to Oineus, yet not by a single mother, for him a servant girl bore, and Oineus sent now, an old man, to serve as his son’s guardian, so that while still a boy, Meleagros entered the daring assembly of heroes: no better man, I think, ever would have joined them save Herakles himself, had he only waited among the Aitolians one year longer to grow up. With him on the same journey came his mother’s brother, Iphiklos son of Thestios, to be his companion, well skilled both as spearman and in close combat. With him too was Palaimónios from Olénos: son of Lernos by title, but by bloodline of Hephaistos, which was how he came to be lame of both feet. Yet no one dared to sneer at his person or courage: so he too was numbered in the roll of the heroes, to boost Jason’s reputation. From the Phokians came Iphitos, son to Naubolos, grandson of Ornytos: now Jason had once been this man’s guest-friend when he traveled to Delphic Pytho in quest of an oracle for his voyage: it was there that Iphitos entertained him. Zêtes and Kalain came, the sons of Boreas, whom once Oreithyia, Erechtheus’s daughter, bore to Boreas in remotest rough-wintered Thrace: it was this, that Boreas the Thracian snatched up and carried her off from Kekropia, while she circled in dance along the banks of Iïsson, took her far away, to the place men know as Sarpedon’s rock, hard by the waters of the river Erginos, and there he swathed her in dark clouds and possessed her.
Their sons now, soaring, beat dark wings, a wonder
to see, bright with gold scales, vibrating from their temples
and either foot; and about their shoulders, curling
down from crown and nape, blown hither and thither,
their blue-black locks streamed in the wind. Nor was Akástos,
stout Pelias's own son, of a mind to linger
in his father's house, or Argos, who worked at Athena's orders,
but both were soon to be numbered in the muster.

Such was the tally of all who gathered to Jason's aid.
Men dwelling round about knew these heroes, every one,
as Minyans, since most of them—and those the better
part—claimed to be in line from the daughters of Minyas:
and Jason himself, indeed, had Alkimédé
for mother, who was a child of the Minyan Klymené.

Now after their servants had stowed all the gear in readiness
that oared ships carry aboard, when men are driven
to make voyages over the salt deep, then they marched
through the city down to their vessel, by that headland
called Págasai of Magnesia. A crowd of onlookers
hurried along beside them, but they themselves shone out
like stars amid clouds. And thus would people comment,
watching the heroes flash past in their armor:
"God above, what's Pelias planning? Where can he mean to
send such a crowd of heroes from all Achaia? The very
day of their coming they could waste Aiêtés' palace
with deadly fire, should he not surrender the Fleece—"
"But they can't avoid the voyage—" "Much toil and trouble
for those who go—" So they talked, up and down the city.
But the women kept begging the gods, hands raised to heaven,
to grant them a homecoming such as they would hope for,
and thus would one, weeping, lament to her neighbor:
"Poor Alkimédé, sorrow, for you too, late yet certain,
has come, nor have you finished your life in happiness.
Aison too is greatly unfortunate: better, surely,
for him had he long since, wrapped in his funeral shroud,
lain underground, in ignorance of this wretched contest!
Better, too, for Phrixos, when virgin Hellé perished,
to have sunk in the black swell, ram too: but no, that frightful
monster framed human speech, to cause thereafter
troubles for Alkimédé, hard pains without number.”
Such was their talk as the heroes reached the harbor.
Already a crowd of servants and maidservants had gathered:
Jason’s mother’s arms were around him, and sharp distress
pierced every woman there; while his father, bedridden
by age the destroyer, wept with them, blanket-swaddled.
Jason was doing his best to allay their terrors
with words of encouragement: he bade slaves bring his war gear,
and they brought it, walking in silence, eyes downcast.
But his mother stayed as she’d been from the first, arms clasped
close about him, and wept still more sorely, like a girl who
is glad, when alone, to hug her gray-haired nanny
and cry, a girl with no other protectors living,
but leading a harsh life, ruled by a stepmother
who abuses the girl with countless harsh reproaches,
so that while she weeps, the heart within her is strangled
by grief, and she cannot discharge all her surging sobs:
just so, embracing her son, did Alkimédé
weep without stint, and spoke thus in her anguish:
“Would that upon the day when I heard, to my sorrow,
King Pelias utter his baneful proclamation
the breath had left me at once, I’d forgotten my troubles,
so that you with your own hands might have interred me,
my child: that alone was what I had left to hope for
from you; with all other returns for nurture I’m surfeited.
But now I, once revered among Achaian women,
shall be left like a slave in the empty palace, wasting
unhappily away with longing for you, in whom once
I took such delight and pride before, for whom alone
I undid my girdle the first and last time: the goddess
Eilethyia entirely begrudged me numerous progeny.
Alas for my fate: not even in my worst dreams
could I have guessed that the flight of Phrixos would destroy me.”
Thus she would wail and lament, and the serving women
stood sobbing all around her. But he, Jason,
addressed her with words of cajoling consolation:
“Do not inflict such grief and misery on me, mother:
it’s overdone, you can’t stop trouble coming
with tears, all you can do is add sorrow to sorrow. The woes gods hand out to mortals are unforeseeable, so accept the lot they give you, despite your heartfelt sorrow: bear it, be firm, have faith in Athena's covenants, in the god's oracles (since Apollo has spoken most favorably), in these heroes' aid. What you must do now, you and your serving women, is to sit quiet at home. Don't be a bird of ill omen for the ship. My servants and kinsmen will escort me thither."

With that he strode out of the house on his way: like Apollo issuing forth from his incense-fragrant temple on most holy Delos, or in Klaros or Pythian Delphoi, or in wide Lykia by the streams of Xanthos, thus did Jason move through the throng, the clamor of voices cheering him on. There met him aged Iphias, priestess of Artemis, the city's protector, and kissed his right hand; yet she could not have converse with him for all her desire—since the crowd now swept him onward—but was left there on one side, being an old woman, by the younger folk, while he was carried far away.

Now when he got beyond the city's well-built streets, and reached the headland of Págasai, where his companions were awaiting him, assembled beside Argo, their vessel, he stood at the harbor's edge, and they gathered before him. Then they glimpsed Akastos and Argos in the distance on their way down from the city, and all were astonished to see them coming, in defiance of Pelias. One, Argos, Arestor's son, had a bull's hide, black-ruffed, slung from shoulders to ankles, while the other wore a splendid double mantle, the gift of Pelopeia, his sister. Still, Jason held off from asking them detailed questions, and made the whole muster sit down together in assembly. So there, on the furled sails and on the unstepped mast, they took their places in order. Then the son of Aison addressed them with words kindly and prudent: "All the gear that's needed for fitting out a vessel is ranged here in good order, ready for departure; no need then, on that score, still to hold back from our voyage, so long as following winds blow for us.
Come, friends, since we'll have a joint return to Hellas and a joint outbound voyage to Aiētēs' kingdom—because of this, without prejudice, choose the best man among you as leader, to look after all details, to settle quarrels, make agreements when we're in foreign parts.”

So he spoke. The young men's eyes turned to bold Herakles sitting there in their midst, and with one voice they all urged him to take command. But he, from where he sat, raised his right hand and said: “Let no man offer this honor to me: consent I will not, and, further, I shall stop any other man from rising. Let the person who mustered this host have its leadership as well.”

Such were his high words, and all expressed approval of Herakles' fiat. Then warlike Jason himself rose, joyful, and spoke thus to his eager listeners:

“If, then, you entrust me with the protection of your honor, nothing remains, as before, to hold us from our journey. So now let us first propitiate Phoibos Apollo with sacrifice, then at once prepare our meal. Meanwhile, until my servants arrive—my byre keepers, whose business is to search the herd for good oxen and drive them hither—we could drag our ship down to the sea, load all the tackle aboard her, cast lots to match up oars with benches. At the same time let us erect a seashore altar to Apollo of Embarkations, who through oracles promised to signal and show me the sea routes, should I preface with sacrifice in his honor my enterprise for the king.”

So he spoke, and was first to set hand to the work. Persuaded, up they all got, piled their garments together in heaps on a smooth flat reef, beyond reach of the sea's waves, though it bore the briny marks of storms in winter. Then the ship, in accordance with Argos's admonitions, they first whipped about with well-inwoven cable, pulling it taut at both ends, to keep her timbers tight-doweled, and proof against all salt-surge violence. Next they dug out a space the width of the vessel's beam, and lengthways from prow to sea's edge, the whole distance she was going to move, dragged onward by their hands; and as they advanced, they dug continually deeper.
below keel-level, and in this track laid polished rollers, tilting the hull to sit on the first of these and slide forward down the shipway. Along each side, port and starboard, they lashed the oars, reversed, to the benches, with a cubit of handle outjutting on either side, and themselves stood ranked in order, hands and chests pressing the handles together; and Tiphys meanwhile went aboard, to spur on their efforts at the proper moment. A great shout of command he gave, and on the instant, throwing their whole weight, with one thrust they maneuvered the ship from its resting place, then advanced, feet braced—forward, heave upon heave, till Pelian Argo responded with ease, and they ran beside her, cheering, and under the massive keel the rollers groaned with the friction, and all around dark smoke coiled up at the weight of her. As she entered the water, they hauled hard on hawsers to check her forward course, then fitted the oars for rowing, put aboard mast and well-made sails, rigging, and stores. When all this was accomplished, and every detail most skilfully taken care of, then they next cast lots to apportion the rowing benches, two men to each bench. But the central place, amidships, they selected for Herakles and, over the other heroes, Ankaios, who dwelt in Tegea’s citadel. To them alone they assigned that midmost seating at once, without casting lots, and with one accord to Tiphys they entrusted their well-keeled vessel’s helm. Next, close to the sea’s edge, they prised up pebbles and heaped them into an altar, on the shore, for Apollo Lord of Shores and of Embarkations; then they quickly overspread it with seasoned olive logs.

Meanwhile Jason’s cattlemen came back, driving before them two steers from the herd, and his youngest comrades dragged them up to the altar, while others readied the aspergent waters, the crushed barley for sprinkling beasts and altar, and Jason, invoking Apollo as ancestral god, now prayed: “Hear me, Lord, you who dwell in Pagasai and Aisónis, that has its name from my father; you who promised me, when
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I consulted your Pythian oracle, to show me this venture's end and accomplishment, having been yourself to blame for my whole ordeal—now in person bring ship and comrades safe to their goal, and back to Hellas. For you hereafter as many of us as get home will make splendid recompense, an ox for each man, on your altars, with countless offerings that I'll bring you, besides, to Delphi, and to Ortygia. But come, now, Far-Shooter, accept this our sacrifice, our very first gift, the voyage-price we offer for our vessel: may I, Lord, through thy counsel and wisdom, cast off for a sorrowless future, and may a favoring wind blow upon us, let us sail through calmest seas.”

As he prayed, he sprinkled the barley, while two heroes, proud Ankaios and Herakles, girded themselves to tackle the oxen. Herakles with his club smote one in mid-forehead. It sank earthward, a dead weight. Ankaios sliced through the massive neck of the second with his bronze axe, severed those powerful tendons, and it fell too, pitching forward on both horns. Then quickly other heroes cut throats and flayed off hides, butchered the beasts into joints, severed the sacrificial thighs, wrapped them all together in thick fat, burnt them over split kindling, while Jason poured libations of unmixed wine, and Idmon saw with pleasure the flames of sacrifice glowing on every side, the fateful thick smoke curling skyward in dark eddies. On the spot he bluntly declared the purpose of Apollo, Leto's son: “For you, the gods' fate and destiny is to return here bringing the Fleece, though ordeals beyond number await you before that, in your going and coming. But my destiny is to die through a god's hateful fiat, far away in some part of Asia's continent. This fate I already knew, through bad-luck bird signs, yet still I left my fatherland, to embark on this ship, and by so doing keep my good fame at home.”

So he spoke; and the young men, hearing his prophecies, felt sorrow for Idmon, but joy in their own return. At the hour when the sun is past his scorching zenith, and mountain shadows are moving across ploughland...
as the sun declines into evening dusk, now all
upon the sand spread foliage in deep layers
along the gray seashore, and laid themselves down upon it
ranged each in order; beside them were set endless
dishes and tasty wine that cupbearers poured out
from pitchers. And soon they began to tell one another
such fancy tales as young men often delight in
over food and wine, before ugly excess's onset.
But Jason sat at a loss there, endlessly brooding
on every last detail, with a downcast air;
and Idas, observing this, loudly rallied him:
“Son of Aison, what’s this great plan you’re turning over
in your mind? Speak your thoughts to us all. Or is it terror
that’s got to you and unstrung you, such as undoes cowardly men?
Be this furious spear my witness, with which I garner
more glory in battle than any—and not even
Zeus aids me as much as my spear—no deadly harm
will befall you, no task remain unfulfilled, with Idas
behind you, even supposing a god should block our path;
such a protector you’re bringing in me from Arêné!”
With that, he clutched his brimming cup in both hands,
and tossed down the sweet draught neat, wine slopping over
his lips and blue-black beard. A general hubbub
of protest arose, and Idmon now spoke out openly:
“Mad fool, have you long nursed such pernicious thoughts,
or is it the unmixed wine that swells that presumptuous
heart in your breast to undo you, makes you slight the gods?
There are other words of comfort with which a man might
put heart in his comrade: what you said was sheer arrogance.
Such stuff, we’re told, Aloeus’s giant sons sputtered
against the blessed gods—and you’re far from their equal
in courage—yet they both fell to the swift arrows
of Leto’s son Apollo, mighty though they were.”
So he spoke, but loud laughed Idas, Aphares’s son,
and squinnying at him, answered with taunting words:
“Come now, tell me this by your divinations,
if the gods are planning for me just such a doom
as your father handed out to the sons of Aloeus!
And figure how you’ll escape from my hands in safety
if you’re caught out uttering silly false predictions.”

So angrily he reproved him. Their quarrel would have worsened had their comrades, and Jason himself, not called on them to stop, and Orpheus, lyre raised in his left hand, not begun singing.

He sang how, in the beginning, earth, sky, and sea, confounded in a common mass together, were, as the result of deadly disruption, separated one from the other; how in the heavens forever fixed courses were assigned to the stars and the movements of sun and moon; how mountains rose up, how rivers loud-rushing over gravel, with their nymphs, came into being, and all creeping creatures.

And he sang how at first Ophion and Ocean’s daughter Eurynomé were masters over snowy Olympos, and how he yielded up his honor to strong-armed Kronos, she to Rhea, and both sank under Ocean’s waves; for a while they lorded it over the Titans, blessed gods, while Zeus was still youthful, still childish in understanding, hidden deep in the cave of Dikte; nor had those earthborn Kyklópés yet shored up his power with the fulminous bolt, with thunder and lightning, tools of Zeus’s glory.

So he sang, then stopped his lyre and his immortal voice; but when he’d ceased, all heads still eagerly craned forward, ears straining, held still and spellbound; such enchantment did he shed on them with his singing; and not long thereafter they mixed libations for Zeus, as ritual prescribed, and standing there poured them over the blazing tongues, then settled to that night’s sleep.

But when radiant dawn looked out with eyes of brightness on the high peaks of Pelion, and the morning breeze stirred the sea, left the headlands calm and clear, then Tiphys arose, and roused up his companions to board the ship, and set their oars for rowing.

Then a terrible cry rang out from the harbour of Págasai and from Pelian Argo herself, in her passion for departure, since one divine beam was run through her, of Dodóna oak, that Athena had carpentered into the heart of the forekeel. Then they took their seats on the benches, one after the other, each in the place where the lot had set him to row, and settled down orderly, with their arms beside them.
On the midmost thwart, Ankaios and Herakles' great might sat; nearby he dumped his great club, and beneath his feet the ship's keel plunged deep. Now the hawser were being hauled in, wine poured on the sea; but Jason wept as he turned his eyes away from his native land. Just as youths who dance for Apollo, either in Delphoi or else in Ortygia, or by Ismenos's waters, stand round the altar and, keeping time together to the thrum of the lyre, stamp swift feet on the ground, so these to Orpheus's lyre struck with their oar blades the deep sea's chopwater, sent whitecaps surging back. On this side and that the dark brine bubbled with foam, boiled terribly under the thrust of these mighty heroes. As the ship moved, their arms gleamed flamelike in the sunlight, and the long wake shone ever white behind them, like some track seen dwindling away across the green savannah. On that day all the gods in heaven were spectators of the ship and this race of demigods, valiantly steering over the deep. On the topmost peaks of Pelion, the nymphs gazed in amazement as they witnessed Athena of Iton's handiwork, and the heroes themselves, fists gripping and plying the oars. From his mountain summit Cheiron, Philyra's son, came down to the seashore, and where the waves break brine-gray, in the shallows splashed fetlock-deep, great forehoof waving them on their way, wishing them safe return from their journeying; and beside him his wife bore Achilles, Peleus's son, firm-craddled in the crook of her arm, held him up to his dear father. Now when they had passed beyond the harbor's protective headland—helmed by the cunning skills of Hagnias's prudent son Tiphys, whose hands directed the polished steering oars with mastery, keeping the vessel steady on her course—then they stepped the great mast in its midships box, secured it with stays both fore and aft, drawn taut on either side, and bent the sail on, hauled it high up to the masthead; and a keen wind filled it, and they clewed the sheets to polished cleats set at intervals along the bulwarks, and ran on, quiet and steady, under the long headland of Tisai, while Orpheus played and sang a pleasing
lay to them of Artemis, great father's daughter,
savior of ships, who had under her protection
those sea-heights and the land of Iolkos; and the fishes
followed them, great mixed with small, leaping up out of the briny
depths, to skitter along the liquid sea-ways. Just as
in the tracks of a rustic herdsman sheep by the thousand
hurry back to their steading, glutted with good grass,
and he goes ahead of them, skilfully playing a country
air on his shrill pipe, so the fishes followed,
and an ever-freshening breeze blew the vessel onward,
till Skiathos showed in mid-sea, and further distant,
bright through clear air, the whole Magnesian coastline,
with its towns, and the tomb of Dolops. There, towards evening,
they were driven by contrary winds to beach their vessel,
and at dusk, as a swell got up, in Dolops's honor
they burnt joints of sheep for the dead. Two days they lingered
idle upon the shore there, but on the third refloated
their vessel, hauling aloft its ample canvas: men still
refer to that beach as Aphktai, the "departure point" of Argo.
Soon the rich Pelasgian wheatfields sank in the misty
distance. Still pressing on, they sailed past the cliffs of
Pelion, left Cape Sepias below the horizon.
From there they continued their voyage, passing Meliboia,
seeing its craggy heights, its gale-swept shoreline.
As dawn came up, they sighted Homōlé, lying
flush with the sea, and sailed past it: not long after
they skirted the outflow of the Amyros estuary.
From there they glimpsed Eurymenai, and the sea-swept
ravines of Olympos and Ossa; on they voyaged,
running before the wind, reaching by nightfall
the hills of Palléné, beyond Kanastron's headland.
Next day early, as they were sailing, the mass of Thrakian
Athos rose up before them. Though its distance from Lemnos
is as much as a well-found merchantman sails in a morning,
yet its highest peak casts a shadow as far as Myrina.
All that day until dusk the breeze blew strong and steady,
and the ship's sail bellied out; but with the last fading
rays of the sun, the wind dropped, and it was under oars
that they came to Sintian Lemnos's rocky shoreline.
There, in the previous year, the whole city had been undone pitilessly, at one stroke, through transgression by its women: for the men had grown disgusted with the wives they'd married and put them away, conceiving instead a savage passion for the girl captives they rounded up while raiding the Thracian mainland opposite, since Aphrodite's terrible anger pursued the wives for too long neglecting her worship. Ah, wretched women, jealous past satiation, to their mischance! Not content with the slaughter of husbands and captives for bedding together, they slew every male, to escape retribution in after time for this terrible mass murder. Alone of them all, Hysípylê, daughter of Thóas the ruler over this people, spared her aged father, and set him afloat on the sea, in a hollow chest, to give him a chance of survival; and fishermen brought him to the island once called Oinoie, but Sikinos thereafter, from that Sikinos whom the Naiad Oinoie bore after bedding with Thóas. But now these women of Lemnos found it easier to herd cattle, put on bronze armor, plough the fields for wheat, than to devote themselves to Athena's domestic labors as in the past. Yet, notwithstanding, time and again, they would turn their gaze across the broad sea in fearful dread; were the Thrakians coming? So when they saw Argo, quite close, being rowed to their island, at once they donned war gear, passed out of Myrina's gates in a crowd together, hurried down to the seashore like raw-flesh-eating Mainads, saying it was the Thrakians who had to be coming. With them went Thóas's daughter Hysípylê, wearing her father's arms. Sheer lack of plans struck them dumb, such terror loomed above them all. But meanwhile from their ship the heroes sent forward Aithállides, swift herald, to whom they entrusted their embassies, and the staff of Hermes, his father, who'd given him an indelible memory for all matters: not even now he's crossed the unspeakable whirlpools of Acheron has forgetfulness overrun his spirit, doomed by fate to immutable alternations, numbered
now among underworld dwellers, and now with living men in the sunlight. But what need is there for me to rehearse at length Aithálides' whole story? He it was now who sweet-talked Hypsipylé into receiving these travelers, day being far gone, for the hours of darkness; nor at dawn, with a norther blowing, did they loose their hawsers.

Now the women of Lemnos came into town and seated themselves in the place of assembly as Hypsipylé had ordered. Then, when at last the whole crowd was gathered together, she made this speech among them, with intent to persuade: "Come, my friends, let us offer agreeable presents to these men, things that men should have to carry on a ship, food and sweet wine, to keep them outside our towers for good and all, lest pursuing their needs among us, they find out the truth, and spread unpleasant reports, far and wide, of the great deed we did, since even such strangers will not find it at all to their liking, should they learn it. This, then, is the plan we've thought of; but if any one else among you can offer a better, let her stand up now: that's the reason I called this meeting."

So she spoke, and sat down again, on her father's stone seat of office. Then there rose Polyxo, her own nurse, halting on feet all shriveled with age, and propping herself with a stick, yet urgent to speak before the assembly; and by her sat four virgins, all unmarried despite the white manes of hair that covered them. She stood in the midst of the assembly, barely raising her neck, with an effort, between stooped shoulders, and spoke as follows: "Gifts indeed, as our Queen Hypsipylé is minded, let us send to these strangers, since to give is better. But you—what plan do you have to preserve your lives if there fall upon you an army of Thrakians, or some other ill-wishers? Such troubles are common among mankind, as witness this crowd that's arrived so unexpectedly. And even if some god deflects your present danger, countless other woes remain, much worse than warfare. When the women now ancient have perished, and you, the younger, arrive at hateful old age without any children,
how then will you live, poor creatures? Will the oxen yoke themselves of their own accord for you, through the deep ploughland drag on the ploughshare, cleave the furrows, and, prompt at the year’s turning, bring in the harvest? For myself, though the Fates have shrunk from me so far in repulsion, I predict that sooner than this next year’s out the earth will have covered me, that I’ll have had my proper funeral honors before calamity strikes home. But you younger ones must, I tell you, pay close attention to this problem—for now a way of escape lies open before your feet: entrust your houses, all property, our fine city’s government, here and now, to these strangers.” So she spoke, and cheers filled the assembly, for her counsel pleased them. At once after her Hypsípylē rose once more and spoke in answer as follows: “If this proposal is pleasing to every one of you, I shall send, here and now, a messenger down to the vessel.” With that she addressed Iphínoē, standing beside her; “Off with you, Iphínoē, to the man who’s the commander of this expedition, tell him to come among us and hear, from me, a decision of my people that’ll be to his liking: bid the rest, too, freely enter our land and city in friendship, if they so wish it.” With that she dismissed the assembly, then started homeward, while Iphínoē went to the Minyans, who asked her with what purpose she’d come among them. Straight away, in response to all their questions, she spoke as follows: “Hypsípylē, daughter of Thóas, has sent me to you, with an invitation for whoever may be in command here to hear from her a decision taken by her people that’ll be to his liking; and she bids you others freely, if you like, to enter our land and city in friendship.” So she spoke, and all were pleased by her fateful message, believing that Thóas was dead, and his well-loved daughter Hypsípylē now ruled. So quickly they sent Jason on his way, and all made ready to come themselves. He pinned about his shoulders a double purple mantle, Pallas Athena’s handiwork, that the goddess gave him herself, when she first set up the timber cradle
for *Argo* and taught them to measure the cross-thwarts with the rule. You could more easily turn your eyes on the rising sun than look straight at that mantle in its fiery redness; for its middle part was flame-red, but all its borders deep purple, while top and bottom were embroidered with many a cunning image, skillfully wrought.

There, first, were the Kyklópés, crouched at their endless task, sweating out for Lord Zeus a bright thunderbolt: already it was near to complete, still lacking but a single radiant shaft, which they with their iron hammers were beating out, a hot blast of raging fire.

There, next, were Amphion and Zéthos, the two sons of Asópos's daughter Antiope. Nearby lay Thebes, towerless still. In eager haste they'd just laid the foundations. Now Zéthos, seemingly with effort, was hefting on one shoulder a lofty mountain peak, while Amphion came behind him, playing his golden lyre, and a rock twice as large followed after in his footsteps.

Next there was worked the deep-tressed Kytheraian goddess, clutching Ares' swift shield, while from her shoulder the tunic, fastened there, hung loose to the forearm, falling below the breast; and there, in the polished brazen shield, facing her, could be seen her exact reflection.

Next on it there came a rough cattle pasture: rustlers were fighting over the cattle with the sons of Éliktryon—the latter in their defense, the former, Taphian pirates, attempting to lift them: the dew-wet field was sodden with their blood; the few herdsmen were overwhelmed by numbers.

And on it was worked a race between two chariots: the one ahead was driven by Pelops, shaking the reins, while the passenger at his side was Hippodameía; in pursuit of them came Myrtilos, whipping his horses onward, while Oinomáos, clutching a poised spear beside him, as the wheel's axle snapped in the nave, lurched sideways and fell, still eager to send his spear through Pelops's back.

And on it Apollo was figured, Phoibos, as a boy not yet fully grown, but shooting—because of that shameless attempt to strip the veil from his mother—huge Tityos, child of divine Elára, nursling reborn from Earth;
And on it was Phrixos the Minyan, seemingly attentive
to what the ram said, and the ram shown as though speaking;
seeing them you’d keep silent, embrace the deception,
in the hope of hearing from them some word of wisdom—
and long indeed might you gaze with this hope in mind.
Such was the gift of the goddess, Itonian Athena.

In his right hand Jason took one spear, a fine long flyer,
that Atalanta once gave him as a guest-gift on Mainalos,
eagerly coming to meet him, for great was her desire
to follow that quest. But by free choice he refused her,
fearing the harsh rivalries engendered by passion.

So Jason strode on to the city, like the bright star
that brides-to-be, sequestered behind new curtains,
watch rising above their houses, eyes adazzle
at its fine red glow as it shines on them through the blue-black
night air, and the maiden is gladdened in her yearning
for the young buck now far distant among foreign
fighters, to whom her parents are holding her betrothed.
Like that star, in the messenger’s tracks now strode the hero,
and when they passed the gates and entered the city,
the commoner women thronged after them in their delight
with this stranger; but he kept straight forward on his way,
eyes fixed on the ground, till he reached the splendid abode
of Hypsipyle. At his appearance the maids threw open
the double doors, with their snugly fitted leaves;
and then Iphinoe hurriedly led him across
a fine entrance hall, and seated him on a burnished
chair in front of her mistress, who, with sidelong glances
and virginal blushing cheeks, for all her modesty
still contrived to make him a wily, coaxing speech:
“Stranger, why have you all sat waiting so long like this
outside our towers? There are no men now dwelling
in this city, they’ve migrated to the Thracian mainland
and are ploughing the wheatfields there. Let me tell you truly
the whole sum of our woes, make you familiar with them.
When Theas, my father, was king over this city,
then raiders from here would sail over, attack the Thracians
living across there, sack the steadings from their ships,
and bring back loot in abundance, along with captive women. Thus was accomplished the wrath of a dread goddess, Kypris, who struck these men with a lethal madness: for they came to abhor their wives, and in the grip of this folly drove them off, out of house and home, sleeping instead with their spear-won captive women, the wretches! Long we bore it, hoping they yet might return, in the end, to their senses: but no, things just got worse, our troubles doubled, for they dishonored their home-bred legitimate offspring, instead raised a crop of bastards. So unmarried girls and with them their widowed mothers would wander neglected up and down the city, and no father paid the least heed to his daughter, even if with his own eyes he saw her maltreated by some arrogant stepmother; nor were mothers kept safe, as before, by their sons from insult and dishonor, nor did brothers feel responsible for a sister. It was only the captive women who claimed attention, at home, when dancing, in the market, at festivals, until some god gave us the self-respect and courage no longer to let them enter our halls upon returning from the Thrakians, so that either they’d revert to decent ways, or take themselves off somewhere else, captive women and all. Then they, reclaiming every male child that was left here in the city, went straight back to the snowbound ploughlands of Thrakia, and there they are living still. So do you abide among us! If it be your pleasure to choose to settle here, then the perquisites and honors of my father, Thóas, would all be yours; and I cannot think you’d find fault with our terrain, since of all Aigaian islands this is the richest, the most fruitful. So come now, away to your ship, and tell your comrades what I have said; don’t hang back outside the city!” Thus she spoke, glossing over the fact, the act of murder done on their menfolk. He answered her as follows: “Hypsipyle, most gladly would we accept your welcome offer, which matches so well with our own desires. Let me, then, return to the city, after I’ve related each detail in order. But the monarchy and the island—
these must be your own care. My refusal's not made lightly or scornfully: there are harsh trials I must face.”

With that he clasped her right hand and at once departed the way he had come; and a swarm of young girls, rejoicing, skittered round him on all sides till he was out of the city gates. Then later—when Jason had recounted Hypsipylé’s whole message on summoning him—they came down to the shore at a smart trot in their wagons, bringing all sorts of presents. They found it easy enough to fetch all the heroes away as guests into their houses, since—out of regard for Hephaistos, the jack-of-all-trades, that Lemnos might thereafter be restored, repopulated with males—Aphrodite had stirred each man to sweet desire. So Jason set out on his way to Hypsipylé’s palace, and the rest to where chance might take them, all except Herakles: he volunteered to stay aboard the vessel, with a few chosen companions. Soon the city was a scene of merriment, full of dancing, feasting, the smoke from roasting meat; above all other immortals it was Hera’s famed son and Aphrodite herself that with sacrifice and chant they propitiated.

So from day to day they made repeated postponement of their sailing; and long indeed would they have stayed there had Herakles not assembled his companions, apart from the women, and addressed them reproachfully in these words: “You wretched creatures, is it murder of kin that keeps us far from our country? Was it for lack of weddings that we came thence hither, scorning our native ladies? Is it our pleasure to dwell here, sharing out rich Lemnian lots? We’ll not win renown cooped up for all this time with a passel of foreign women, nor will some deity grab the Fleece if we beg him to, make us a present of it. Let us go back each to his own, and leave this fellow in Hypsipylé’s bed all day, till he’s remanned Lemnos with his sons, and got himself greatly talked about.”

So he chided the company, and no one dared to look him straight in the face, or give him an answer, but without more ado, fast breaking up their assembly, they made ready to leave; and the women, when they learnt it,
hurried to them. Just as bees buzz around fine lilies, swarm out from their rocky hive amid a smiling
dew-wet meadow, and flying from bloom to bloom
suck their sweet harvest; so now with loving greed
the women in tears flung their arms around their menfolk,
with hands and words bidding each one farewell,
and praying to the blessed gods to grant them safe homecoming.
So too did Hypsipyle pray, Jason’s hands in hers,
while her tears streamed down for the sharp loss of his leaving:
“Go, and may the gods bring you back with all your comrades unharmed, and bearing the Golden Fleece to the king, as is your dearest wish! But this island and my father’s scepter will still be yours, if even once you’ve returned you should ever choose to come back here later: you could easily gather a vast following for yourself from other cities. Yet you will never nurse such a plan, and my mind sees that things will not happen in this manner. At least when you’re far away, and after your homing, remember Hypsipyle!—and leave me your instructions, which I’ll gladly carry out, should the gods grant me a child.” Admiring and disconcerted, Jason answered her:
“Hypsipyle, may all this turn out as you want it by the will of the blessed gods! But curb your more hopeful desires where I’m concerned: enough for me, should Pelias grant it, to dwell in my homeland—only may heaven bring me through my ordeal! But should I not be fated after long voyaging to return to Hellas, and you should bear a son, then send him when grown to Pelasgian Iolkos, to heal the grief of my parents—if he find them alive still—and so that they may, though the king be absent, stay settled in their own home and be cared for.” Thus he spoke, and was first man aboard the ship: then the other heroes followed, and sitting in order grasped the oars with strong fists, and Argos freed off the stern cables from under their sea-washed rock. Then they all forcefully struck the sea’s surface with their long sweeps of pine. Towards evening, at Orpheus’s behest, they beached their vessel on the island of Atlas’s daughter Elektra, that by learning those secret rites, with their benign initiations,
they might steer in greater safety across the chilling deep. Of such rites I say no more, but bid farewell to the island itself and its indwelling deities, whose are the mystery cults, which here we may not mention. Thence, moving briskly, they crossed the depths of the Black Gulf with the Thrakian coast to port, and away to seaward the island of Imbros. Just as the Sun was setting they rounded the Chersonésos's jutting promontory. Here they caught a stiff southerly wind and to the following breeze bent their sail, thrust into the racing channel of Athamas's daughter. They left the open sea behind them at dawn and by nightfall were steering under the lee of Rhoiteion's headland, with Ida firm on their starboard bow. Leaving Dardania, they set course for Abydos, passing Perkótë next, and Abámis's sandy strand, and sacred Pityeia. Indeed, in one single night, their ship zigzagging upstream, they now traversed the whole of the darkly turbulent Hellespont.

Within the Propontis there stands a beetling island, just offshore from the fertile Phrygian domain, sloping down to the sea, with sea-washed isthmus, and sheer on the landward side. Its shores possess double promontories. It lies north of the Aisepos River, and dwellers round about call it Bear Mountain. Once it was inhabited by savage and violent aboriginals, an astonishing spectacle for their neighbors, since each had six great powerful arms to brandish, two springing from his stout shoulders, while the four below were fitted to his monstrous rib cage. But the isthmus and plain were peopled by Doliónes, fine men, over whom there ruled a hero, Aineios's son, Kyzikós, whom the daughter of divine Eusóros, Ainétë, bore. Yet never, fearful monsters though they were, did the aboriginals harry them, through Poseidon's succor, since the Doliónes could claim him as their first ancestor. Hither Argo sailed onward, sped by Thracian winds, and the Fair Haven welcomed her as she ran before them. It was here, too, in accordance with Tiphys's counsels,
that they dumped their small anchor stone, left it below a spring, the spring of Artákia, chose another that suited them, a massive one; but the first, by Apollo's oracles, the Ionian Neleids afterwards consecrated, very properly, in the shrine of Jasonian Athena.

All together, the Doliónes, and Kyzikós in person, came out to meet them in friendship, after they'd ascertained what their race was, and why this voyage; hailed them hospitably, issued an invitation to row on further, cast their mooring hawsers ashore inside the city harbor.

There they set up an altar to Apollo of Landings, building it by the shore, and made sacrifice on it. The King himself gave them the sweet wine that they lacked, and sheep besides; for he'd learnt from an oracle that when a band of god-born heroes arrived, he must straightway welcome them in friendship and take no thought for war. On his cheeks, as on Jason's, the first fine stubble sprouted; nor as yet had he gotten children to be his pride, for the wife in his household still remained innocent of childbirth—Perkosian Merops's daughter, rich-tressed Kleité, whom he'd lately won with rich gifts, and brought across from her father's home on the mainland opposite. Yet, notwithstanding, he left his bride's bed and bower to share their feast, casting all fear from his heart.

They questioned each other in turn: from them he discovered the goal of their voyage and Pelias's behests; they learnt from him about all the surrounding cities, the whole gulf of Propontis; but there was nothing he could tell them of what lay beyond, though they longed to know.

So at dawn some went up high Dindymon, to view for themselves the lie of that sea, while at the same time others moved the ship from its previous moorings to Bar Harbor, and the route they took is still called Jason's Way.

But the aborigines, charging around the mountain, with showers of rocks to the bottom began to dam Bar Harbor mouth, as though trapping a sea beast inside. Now the younger men had been left behind there, and with them Herakles, who at once strung his back-bent bow
and shot them down one by one, while they in turn
heaved up and hurled huge, jagged rocks. And doubtless
these grim freaks too were bred up by the goddess Hera,
Zeus's bedmate, to be a new labor for Herakles.
Soon the rest joined him, hurrying back before they'd
scaled the lookout peak, true warrior heroes,
and slaughtered the aborigines, repelling
their charges with arrows and spear thrusts, till they’d brought down
every last one of these stubborn, frenzied attackers.
As when long timbers, lately felled with the axe,
are laid out in rows by the woodmen at the surf line
to soak, and thus support the solid dowels; so these
were stretched out, side by side, at the narrow entrance
of the brine-gray harbor, some grouped with heads and breasts
awash in the surf, their nether limbs spreadeagled
over the shore, while others by contrast had heads
cushioned on sand and feet thrust into the sea:
but both lots were food for fish and for scavenging vultures.
So the heroes, having purged the terror from this ordeal,
now slipped the ship's moorings as the wind got up
and over the swell of the sea pursued their voyage.
The ship ran all day under canvas; but at nightfall
the steady breeze dropped, and a contrary hurricane
whirled them about and drove them right back once more
to their kind hosts the Doliōnes. They disembarked
in the dead of night. That stone is still called sacred
round which in their haste they looped their mooring hawser.
Nor was there one among them who saw that they'd returned
to the same island, while darkness prevented the Doliōnes
from knowing it was the heroes come back again—they may well have
thought that Pelasgian raiders, fierce Makrians, had landed,
so put on their armour and sallied forth to combat.
Ash spears and shields clashed one against the other,
like a swift blast of flame that falls upon dry bushes
and crests there. The noisy pandemonium of battle
fell now, fearful, raging, upon the Dolionian people:
nor was their king, overriding his fate, to return
home to his bridal bed and marriage chamber,
but as he turned to face Jason, Jason sprang
and ran him straight through the breast, and the bone shattered under the spearpoint, and he on the sand, in spasms, accomplished his destiny. That destiny no mortal is allowed to escape; a great barrier fences him all around. So his fate caught him that night, though he thought himself beyond any bitter blow from the heroes, and shackled him fast as he fought them. Many others were slain in his defense: Herakles dispatched Telekles and Megabrontes, Akastos brought down Sphódris, and Peleus overpowered Zelys and Géphyros, so swift in the press of battle, while Télamon, that fine spearman, killed Básileus, and Idas struck down Prómeus, and Klytios Hyakinthos, and the two sons of Tyndáreus Megálossákes and Phlégios, and beside them Oineus's son saw off Artákes, that front-rank fighter, and dashing Itymoneus—all of them honored today by the natives with hero cults. But the rest turned tail and ran, like a cloud of frightened pigeons taking flight before swift-winging falcons, and through the gates they all tumbled, a noisy mob, and at once the city was filled with groans and lamentation as the battle backed up. But at dawn both sides acknowledged their deadly, incurable error: harsh grief swept over the Minyan heroes as they saw Aineios's son, Kyzikós, lying before them, roiled in dust and blood. For three whole days they tore their hair and lamented, they and the Doliónes together. But then after they'd circled his corpse three times in their brazen armor they entombed him with honor and contested in funeral games, as ritual demands, on the plain called the Meadow, where still to this day his tumulus stands for posterity to witness. No, nor did his wife Kleité live on, survive her husband's decease, but compounded bad with worse by knotting a noose around her neck. Her death the very nymphs of the woods and groves lamented; all the tears that from their eyes dropped earthbound on her account were gathered by the goddesses into a spring, which men still call Kleité, illustrious name of that unhappy bride. This, then, was the grimmest day that upon the women and men of the Doliónes Zeus ever sent; there was not
one of them had the heart for food, and long thereafter
their grief left them indifferent to the work of grinding,
so that they kept alive by eating food just as it was,
uncooked; and so even now, when the Ionians dwelling
in Kyzikos make their annual libations, to this day they
grind the grain for the offering cakes at the public mill.

From this point there arose fierce storms that lasted
twelve days and nights together, holding the heroes
back from their voyage. But on the following night,
when all the rest were sleeping, during the last watch,
overcome by exhaustion, with Akastos and Mopsos,
Amykos’s son, to watch over their heavy slumbers,
then over the golden head of Jason, Aison’s son,
a halcyon circled, with its shrill cry predicting
an end to the driving gales; and Mopsos understood,
hearing it, the good omen of this shore-loving bird; and then
the goddess changed its course once more, so that, down-swooping,
it perched there aloft on the figurehead of their vessel;
and Mopsos shook Jason awake at once, as he lay there
bedded down on soft sheepskins, and spoke to him as follows:
"Son of Aison, needs must that you climb up to rugged Dindymon’s
shrine, and propitiate the Mother of all the blessed
gods where she sits enthroned; and then the raging
storms will die out: such the word I lately got
from the sea-halcyon as it circled above your sleeping
body, and told me the truth as to every detail.
For on her the winds and sea and earth’s foundations
all depend, and the snowy bastion of Olympos;
and to her, when she climbs great heaven from her mountains,
Zeus himself, son of Kronos, gives place, and all the other
blessed immortals honor that terrible goddess."
So he spoke, and welcome were his words to Jason,
who rose from his couch rejoicing, and hastened to rouse
all his companions, and when they were up, informed them
of what Mopsos son of Amykos had predicted. Straight away
some of the younger men drove oxen from the byres
and led them up to the sheer peak of the mountain,
while others, slipping their hawsers from the Sacred Rock,
rowed on to the Thrakian Harbor, and then, leaving a few comrades aboard, themselves made the ascent. Before their eyes there appeared, as though close enough to touch, the Makrian heights and the whole coast opposite Thraké, while far in the haze they could see the Bosphoros gap and the ridges of Mysia; on the other side, the Aísepos River, the Nepeían plain, the city of Adrasteía. There they found a massive vine stump, reared in the forest, dead and dried out: this they cut away, to fashion a sacred image of the mountain goddess, and Argos carved it with elegance, and they set it up on that rugged summit, under the shade of the topmost oaks that had taken root there, far above all the others. Then they heaped up a gravel altar, hung it with garlands of oak leaves, and offered up sacrifice, invoking Dindyménē the mother, Lady of many names, dweller in Phrygia, and Tītias and Kyllénos—who alone are called fate-dispensers, and coadjutors of the Idaian mother, out of that whole crowd of Daktyls on Kretan Ida, long ago brought to birth in Díktē's cave by the nymph Anchiálē, clutching fistfuls of earth from Oiaxos in either hand. With many prayers Jason besought the goddess to avert this hurricane, poured libations on the blazing victims; at Orpheus's command, the young men all together, with measured leap, danced the war dance in full armor, beating their swords on their shields, that that ill-omened cry might be scattered and lost in air, of the people keening still for their king. From that day Phrygians have propitiated Rhea with bull-roarer and kettledrum. Such undefiled offerings surely won the goddess's prayable ear: appropriate signs appeared now—trees dropped fruit in abundance, around their feet Earth of herself brought tender herbage to blossom, and wild beasts, leaving their lairs and woodland thickets, came forward wagging their tails. Yet another marvel the goddess produced: though before no water had flowed on Dindymon, now for them, on the spot, a constant spring burst from the parched rock, and local people
have called it, ever since then, the Spring of Jason.
And then, on Bear Mountain, they made a feast to honor
the goddess, hymning Rhea, mistress of many names;
and at dawn the winds dropped, and they rowed on from the island.
Then rivalry stirred up each one of the heroes
to be the last to quit rowing; for all around them
the still air had smoothed the eddies, lulled the sea to sleep.
Reliant on this calm, they drove the vessel forward
by their own might: as it sped through the deep, not even
Poseidon's own storm-swift horses could have caught it.
Then, when whitecaps were whipped up by the furious winds
that begin to blow off the rivers before nightfall,
exhausted, they eased their efforts. But Herakles drew them
on by the force of his hands, all laboring together,
and made the vessel's strong-built timbers tremble.
However, when in their haste to make the Mysian coast, they
had sighted and were passing the Rhynndakos estuary
and Aigaion's great barrow, then, just beyond Phrygia,
while heaving and furrowing back the sea swell's tumult,
Herakles broke his oar, fell sideways with one splintered
half still clutched in both hands, while the sea's backwash
swept the other fragment away. He sat up, speechless,
glaring around: his hands were not used to being idle.
At the hour when a ploughman or gardener, much relieved,
gets home to his cottage, ravenous for supper,
and on the threshold, knees buckling with exhaustion,
sunburnt, dust-caked, contemplates his toil-worn
hands, and calls down many curses on his belly:
then was the time they reached the habitations of Kios
by Mount Arganthónios and the Kios River's outfall.
They came as friends, so the Mysians who occupied that region
gave them warm welcome, furnished them with provisions
to meet their needs: sheep, and wine in abundance.
Then some brought in dry firewood, others balefuls
of leaves and scythed grass from the meadows to spread as couches,
while others again spun firesticks, or mixed wine
in the great bowls, or worked to prepare dinner,
after sacrificing at dusk to Apollo as Lord of
Embarkations. But Herakles, wishing his comrades pleasure
of their feast, went off to the woodland with the purpose of getting himself an oar well suited to his grip. So, casting about, he found a fir, not burdened with too many branches or excess of foliage, but more resembling a poplar, with its tapered trunk, both in length and in thickness. Quickly he laid aside his bow and quiver of arrows on the ground, and stripped off his lion skin. With his brassbound club he gave the fir tree a blow that shook it to its roots; then with both hands, confident in his muscle, gripped it around the bole, legs spread, thrust with one mighty shoulder, leaned in, and, rooted deep though it was, tore it free of the ground, along with the earth masses that had held it fast. As when a tearing wind squall, at the winter setting especially of deadly Orion, can swoop, out of the blue, down on a ship’s mast and tear it loose from its forestays, quoins and all, so he lifted that tree. Then, picking up bow and arrows and club, he put on his lion skin and set out back.

Hylas meanwhile, with bronze pitcher, had left his comrades in search of some spring’s hallowed flow, to draw water enough for supper, make all else ready, briskly and in good order, against Herakles’ coming; for Herakles himself had inbued him with such habits, after taking him as a child from the house of his father, godlike Theiodamas, whom he pitilessly slaughtered among the Dryopians in a quarrel over a plough-ox. Theiodamas was ploughing the length of a fallow field, heavy-burdened with troubles; but unwilling though he was, Herakles made him hand over one of his oxen, for he wanted some lame excuse to war on the Dryopians since they lived without the slightest regard for justice—but this tale could lead me too far astray from my theme.

Hylas, then, came to a spring that was known as The Fountains by local inhabitants. Just now, as it chanced, the dances of the nymphs were being held there; for it was their custom, that of all nymphs who dwelt around that lovely mountain, ever to honor Artemis with nocturnal song.
Now all whose haunts were hilltops or mountain torrents, the guardian wood nymphs, these were ranged apart; but one water nymph had just swum up to the surface of the sweet-flowing spring. Before her she saw young Hylas in a blushing glow of sweet gracefulness and beauty: for on him the full moon, shining clear from heaven, now cast its light. Aphrodite fluttered her senses, leaving her stunned, scarce able to gather her wits. But the moment he dipped his pitcher in the current, crouching over sideways, and the brimful stream rang loud, as it hit the echoing bronze, then she at once slipped her left arm round his neck from above, in urgent longing to kiss his tender young mouth, and with her right hand drew down his elbow, plunged him into mid-eddy. Of all the band of heroes, one only heard his cry: Polyphémos, Eilatos's son, as he advanced down the same path, awaiting mighty Herakles' return; and he took off and went near The Fountains, like some savage beast whose ears have caught the distant bleating of sheep, and on fire with hunger, he follows, yet does not meet with any flocks, for the shepherds have already penned them safe in the fold, and he howls on in his frustration till he tires: so now Polyphémos shouted despairingly all round the spot, till he lost his voice; then, drawing his great sword with dispatch, started out in pursuit, afraid Hylas was caught by wild beasts, or that men had trapped him alone, and were dragging him off, an easy prey. There on the trail, still brandishing naked sword in fist, he ran into Herakles himself, now hurrying shipward through the darkness, easily knew him, told him at once, out of breath, heart pounding, the whole sad calamity: "My friend, I shall be the first to bring you bitter tidings: Hylas went to the spring, but has not come back in safety—either brigands have seized him, are dragging him away, or wild beasts are savaging him: I heard his cries." So he spoke; and at the words sweat rained down Herakles' temples, and under his gut the black blood boiled. In fury he threw down his fir trunk, and went sprinting along the path, wherever his feet might take him in his haste.
As when a bull, stung up by the gadfly, cringes,
leaving meadows and marshland, caring nothing
for herdsmen or herd, but presses on, now without stopping,
now standing still, lifting his massive neck
and bellowing, goaded by that damnable sting; so he
in his urgency would now keep his lithe knees ceaselessly
moving, and now would give over from his efforts
to shout, till the echoes rang, in that huge voice of his.

As soon as the morning star rose clear above the topmost
peaks, the wind gusted down, and Tiphys quickly
urged them aboard, to make good use of the land breeze;
then straight away they embarked with a will, and raised the
ship’s anchor stones, and hauled hard on the sheet-lines.
The sail bellied out in the wind, and they, rejoicing,
were borne away from shore, past Poseidon’s headland.
At the hour when dawn’s gray half-light first shines in the heavens,
rising from the horizon, and paths become visible,
and dew-pointed meadows glitter brightly, then they
perceived that, all unknowing, they’d left those two ashore.
Then a fierce quarrel broke out among them, with noisy shouting,
because they had sailed away, leaving there behind them
the best of their comrades. But Jason, amazed and at a loss,
said never a word, one way or the other, but sat there
bowed under his heavy load of ruin, in silence,
consuming his spirit. Then Télamon, furious, shouted:
“Yes, sit there easy, small wonder, it suited you nicely
to leave Herakles behind! This scheme was all your doing,
to stop his fame throughout Greece from eclipsing yours,
if it be that the gods grant us a safe homecoming!
But what’s the point of talk? I’m going back, despite those
comrades of yours who planned this treachery with you.”
So saying he sprang at Tiphys, Hagnias’s son, his
eyes aglint with fury like bright twists of raging fire;
and indeed they would have turned back to Mysian territory,
thrusting across the gulf against the relentless
roar of the gale, had not the two sons of Thrakian
Boreas stopped Télamon short with a harsh reproof—
headstrong fools! who suffered a grim requital thereafter
at Herakles' hands, since they'd held back the search for him.  
For on their way home from Pelias's funeral games  
he killed them in sea-girt Tenos and piled up earthen  
barrows above them, each surmounted by a column  
and one of these—a great marvel for men to behold—  
sways under the breath of blustering Boreas.  
*These things came to pass thus in time thereafter.*  
But out of the briny depths there now appeared to them  
Glaukos, the sage interpreter of divine Nereus,  
and heaving up high his shaggy head and shoulders  
clear to the waist below, he grasped the ship's sternpost  
with powerful hand, and cried to his eager audience:  
"Why so determined, against great Zeus's counsels,  
to bring bold Herakles to Aietês' citadel?  
In Argos his fate is to toil hard, for presumptuous  
Eurystheus, fulfilling a total of twelve labors,  
then to share hearth and home with the gods—if he accomplish  
a few more still: so let him occasion no regrets.  
Likewise with Polyphimos, who, the destined founder  
of a famous Mysian township on the Kios estuary,  
will meet his measure of doom in the Chalybes' vast land.  
But a goddess, a nymph, through love for Hylas, has made him  
his husband: it was for *his* sake those two went off, were left."

With that he dived down, wrapped himself in the restless  
wave, and around him dark water boiled in seething eddies,  
washing the hollow ship onward through the salty depths.  
And the heroes rejoiced, and Télamon, Aiakos' son,  
was at Jason's side in an instant, impulsively clasped his hand  
in his own, embraced him, exclaiming, "Son of Aison,  
do not be angry with me if through my thoughtlessness  
I acted a little foolishly: it was grief that drove me to utter  
words arrogant and intolerable. Come, let us offer  
my error to the winds, be good friends as before."

Then Aison's son made him this careful answer:  
"Friend, indeed you did abuse me with ill words,  
making a claim in public that I'd acted unscrupulously  
against a kindly man. Yet I shall not long nurse bitter  
resentment, hurt though I was, since not over flocks of  
sheep or other possessions were you goaded to fury
but for a man, your comrade. And I hope that if ever
the need arose you’d defend me against some attacker.”
So he spoke, and they sat down, united as before.

But of those two, by Zeus’s counsel, one, Polyphémos,
Eilatos’s son, was fated to found and build among
the Mysians a city with the river’s name, while the other,
Herakles, toiled at Eurystheus’s labors. He threatened
to ravage the Mysians’ land on the spot, if they failed
to discover the fate of Hylas, be he dead or living.
They chose, and gave him as pledges, the people’s noblest
sons, and swore an oath that they would never
cease from their toilsome search: which is the reason
why to this day the people of Kios ask after
Hylas, Theiódamas’s son, and maintain an interest
in well-built Trachis: for there was where Herakles settled
the boys they sent him from Kios to be taken as hostages.

All day and throughout the night a strong wind drove their
ship on her way; but as the dawn was breaking
a dead calm fell. Then, noting where a foreland
stood out from a curve in the coast, very widespread to the eye,
they bent to their oars, and landed there by sunrise.