

ARGONAUTICA

BOOK I

Phoebus, of ancient heroes' deeds I'll sing,
Starting with you: they, at the ordering
Of King Pelias, out through Pontus' gateway
And then across its rocks, sailed clean away
On well-benched *Argo* for the fleece of gold.
A dreadful fate stayed for him he'd been told
By an oracle – that he would slaughtered be
Through the prompting of a man whom he would see
One-sandalled, of the common folk. They say
That not long after, Jason made his way 10
By foot through chill Anaurus and, although
He saved one sandal from the mud, even so
He left the other mired in the sea.
He reached King Pelias immediately
To partake in a banquet he had planned
For Poseidon, the god who'd sired him, and
The other gods; no honour did he pay
To Grecian Hera. So, without delay,
Pelias eyed him and deliberated
And a laborious voyage formulated 20
That, being thrown amongst barbarian men
Or sailing on the sea, never again
Might he behold his native land. It's stated
By ancient bards that Argos fabricated
The ship with Athene's help. Now let me be
The bard who sings the heroes' ancestry,
Their names, the lengthy voyage, all that they
Achieved while on they wandered. To my lay
May the Muses lend their hand. Initially,
I'll sing of Orpheus whom Calliope, 30
They say, produced close to Pimpleis' height,
When she with Oiagrus had spent a night
Of love, the Cretan. With his songs' sweet sound
The harsh rocks of the mountains all around
He pacified, the rivers too, they say.
Wild oaks, still tokens of his songs today,
Growing on Thracian Zone's shore, close stand
In rows, which Orpheus from the Pierian land
Conducted thither with his soothing lute.
And Aeson's son received him at the suit 40
Of Chiron (he then held supremacy
Throughout Pieria) so he could be

A sharer in his toils. There went as well
 Asterion, who by the whirling swell
 Of Apidanus' streams first saw the light
 (His father Kometes within the sight
 Of Mt. Phyes then dwelt – Peiresiae
 Was his abode: bonding as one nearby
 In deluge teemed great Apidanus and
 Mighty Enipeus), then, to join their band 50
 Polyphemus came, the son of Eilatus,
 Who once had fought among the vigorous
 Lapiths against the Centaurs. Now, despite
 Stiff limbs, his spirit still retained its might.
 Nor was Iphiclus left in Phylace
 For long (Aeson had wed Alcimede,
 His sister, there – with this as stimulation,
 He entered into the association).
 Nor did the ruler of sheep-rich Pherae,
 Admetus, stay beneath the mountain high 60
 Above Chalkodon. Nor yet in Alope
 Did those two men well-versed in trickery,
 Hermes's sons, Erytus and Echion,
 Each corn-rich, stay behind, and boldly on,
 To keep them company, with them one more -
 Their kin, whom Phthian Eupolemeia bore
 To Aithalus, where Amphryssos sweeps on,
 Myrmidon's child; those two were each the son
 Of Antianeira, child of Menetes.
 And then came Coronus, as well as these, 70
 The son of Kaineus, leaving rich Gyrton,
 A stalwart man but in this not alone –
 His father equalled him in gallantry.
 Caineus, it is preserved in poetry,
 Was killed by the Centaurs, while he was aside
 From the other leaders, routing far and wide
 The foe. In flight they could not move nor slay
 The man – unbowed and underneath the clay,
 Engulfed in sturdy pines. Then Mopsus went,
 From Titarus, who was pre-eminent 80
 In augury, tutored by Leto's son.
 Eurymadas was yet another one,
 The child of Ctimenus: in Ctimene,
 In Dolope, in the vicinity
 Of Lake Xynias, he dwelt. To co-exist
 With leaders, Actor sent into the list
 Menoitius from their home in Opoeis.
 Teleus' son Eurytion took his place

As well, and stout Eurybates, the son
 Of Actor's son Iros. Another one 90
 Was Oileus, an expert in soldiery,
 Well-skilled in striking at the enemy,
 Breaking their ranks. Also Canethus sent
 Euboean Kanthos, keen and vehement
 (Abantias was his grandfather). To see
 Cerinthus once again grim Destiny
 Would not allow. For he would evermore,
 With prophet Mopsus, on the distant shore
 Of Libya lie slain. No agony's
 Too great for mortals since for even these 100
 Is Libya their grave – as far away
 From Colchis as the rising of the day
 Is from the setting sun. There Clytius
 And Iphitus, sons of rich Eurytus,
 Oechalia's lords, foregathered (his own bow
 Apollo gave to Eurytus, although
 He had no joy of it, for willingly
 He clashed with him who gave it). Subsequently
 Came the Ajaxes, not in unison
 Nor from the same place, for they both had gone 110
 To live far from Aegina, having slain
 Phocus, their brother, a deed quite insane.
 Peleus now lived in Phthia, Telamon
 Still on the isle. The child of Teleon,
 Bold Boutes from Cecropia, also went,
 And spearsman Phaleros, for Alcon sent
 Him there, his father. No more sons had he
 To care for him in his senility.
 Young and an only child, yet nonetheless
 He sent him that he might show worthiness 120
 Among bold heroes. Under Taenarus
 Theseus, who was the most illustrious
 Of the Erechtheids, had been restrained
 By dark chains, for the same path he'd maintained
 As Peirithus. Both, by their industry,
 Would have effected, for them all to see,
 A better outcome. Tiphys, Hagnias' child,
 Predictor of when surging seas grow wild,
 Of storms and when the time is right to sail,
 Left Thespian Siphiaes. Of avail 130
 In urging him to join the hero throng
 Was Athene, she herself going along,
 A welcome friend. She was the very one
 To build the swift ship, though Arestor's son,

Argos, was her assistant. The best ship
 It was of all that ever made a trip.
 From Aerithyrea to join them there
 Was Pthlias who, through Dionysus's care,
 His father, near the springs of Asopus
 Settled in riches. Then, too, Tanaus 140
 And Areius, Bias's sons, who went
 From Argos, also the magnificent
 Leodokos, the issue of Pero,
 Neleus's daughter; she caused grievous woe
 To Melampus of Aeolia when he
 Strove in Iphiklus' stables. Nor do we
 Believe stout-hearted Heracles had spurned
 Determined Jason's call. No, when he learned
 Of heroes gathering while on his way
 To Argos from Arcadia that day, 150
 A live boar in his arms, which until then
 Had grazed the pasture in Lampeia's glen,
 In the great Erymanthian morass,
 And reached Mycenae's agora, that mass
 Of trussed-up boar he dropped and with a will
 Took off (although Eurystheus took it ill).
 Young Hylas, too, went with him, a true friend,
 To bear his arrows and his bow to tend.
 Then Nauplius, who was from the holy race
 Of Danaus: his ancestry we trace 160
 Through Clytonaeos and through Naubolos,
 And Lernus and Proitos and Nauplius:
 Poseidon's wife, Danaan Amymone,
 Bore him, a man who gained supremacy
 In seamanship. Last of the Argive men,
 Idmon, had known through augury even then
 His fate, yet went so that the Argive race
 Might not begrudge that he would earn a place
 Among the heroes. Abas, though, was not
 His actual father – he had been begot 170
 By Leto's son, among the celebrated
 Aeolians revered and educated
 By Leto's son himself in prophecy,
 In avian auspices and augury
 Through fire. Then Aetolian Leda pressed
 To join the throng from Sparta in the west
 Castor and stout Pollux, masterly
 With winged steeds; extended pregnancy
 Produced them in the House of Tyndareus
 And in one birth; she managed to induce 180

Their going, for the thoughts that she possessed
 Fit well a bride of Zeus. To join the rest,
 From Arene Lynceus and proud Idas went,
 Apharitos's sons, both confident
 In their great might. If rumour tells no lies,
 Lynkeus had such perceptive eagle eyes
 That they could penetrate the earth below.
 Then Periclymenus was keen to go,
 The eldest august Neleus had begot
 In Argos: it had been his happy lot 190
 That Lord Poseidon gave him boundless might,
 Allowing him to take on in each fight
 What shape he chose. Amphidamas went, too,
 And Kepheus from Arcadia, both who
 Lived in Tegea, on Apheidas' land,
 Both sons of Aleus, and, close at hand,
 Ancaeos, who was sent by Lycourgos,
 Their elder brother, sire to Ancaeos,
 But he was left behind that he might tend
 The aged Aleos, though glad to send 200
 Ancaeus with his brothers. At their side
 He was wrapped in a Maenalian bear-hide,
 A massive, two-edged axe in his right hand,
 For, to prevent his entering that band,
 His grandfather had, deep within his den,
 Concealed his arms. Augeias followed then
 (Eëlius' son, they say) – he was the king
 Of Eleia, in riches glorying.
 He longed to see Colchis and Aeëtes,
 The ruler of that country. Next to these 210
 Asterios and Amphion appeared,
 The sons of Hyperasius, both reared
 In Achaean Pellene, founded by
 Their grandfather and perching way up high
 Upon Aegalius. Leaving the land
 Of Taenarus, Euphemos joined that band,
 Poseidon's son – Europe gave him birth,
 Stout Tityos's daughter – on this earth
 No-one was swifter: on the grey-green sea
 He sped and such was his rapidity 220
 Only his toes got wet. Another two
 Of Lord Poseidon's sons then joined the crew:
 From great Miletus' city, Erginus
 Arrived, as well as mighty Ankaeus,
 Who left behind Parthenia, the land
 Of Imbrian Hera, both with great command

Of seamanship and war. From Calydon
 Stout Meleager went, Laocoön
 As well, Oineus's sons: the latter, though,
 Was born of a mother whose status was low 230
 (She was a slave). Oineus had him conveyed,
 Now getting old, to be Meleager's aide.
 Still young himself, he joined the gallant team
 Of heroes. There'd be no-one, I esteem,
 Excepting Heracles, who could transcend
 That man, had he but seen one more year's end
 With the Aetolians. Now Iphiclus,
 His uncle and the son of Thestius,
 Accompanied him, skilled in both hand-to-hand
 And javelin. With him, to join the band, 240
 There also went one Pylaemonius,
 The son of Lernus from Olenios
 (Or so it has been said, but actually
 His father was Hephaestus). Therefore he
 Was crippled in one foot, though there was none
 Dared fault the great strength of Hephaestus' son:
 He too was added to that company
 Of leaders, boosting the celebrity
 Of Jason. From Phocia went Iphitus,
 Born of Naubolus, son of Omytus 250
 Who had been Jason's host some time before
 When he had gone to Pytho to explore
 A forecast for a future odyssey
 And offered him his hospitality.
 Then went Zetes and Calaïs, two more,
 Boreas's sons, whom Oreithyia bore,
 Erechtheus' child, far off in wintry Thrace
 (And from Cecropia in his firm embrace
 He snatched her when he saw her dance and sway
 Near Iphissos). He took her far away 260
 To where there stands the Rock of Sarpedon,
 Where Erigonus's streams meander on,
 And took her, hiding her beneath the screen
 Of dusky vapours. Now they could be seen,
 Their ankles shaking wings of ebony,
 With scales of gold, a wondrous thing to see.
 All down their backs, from head and neck, dark hair
 Hither and yon would flutter in the air.
 Stout Peleas' son Acastus would be gone,
 Not staying home, and he who waited on 270
 Athene, Argos. Therefore they both planned
 To be included in the hero-band.

All these were met, Jason's authorities.
 Those dwelling thereabouts called all of these
 Great leaders Minyans, because the most
 And best could from Minyas' daughters boast
 Their heritage. Thus Jason was the son
 Of Alcimede, who had been just one
 Of Minyas' daughters, Clymene. Each maid
 Had readied everything that should be laid 280
 Within the ships when men must sail the seas,
 Then through the city these celebrities
 Went to their ships where that part of the coast
 Is called Magnesian Pagasae; a host,
 A very host, went with them. Stars that glow
 Among the clouds they seemed. Seeing them go,
 All armed, each man said: "Zeus, what's Pelias
 Up to? Where is he sending this huge mass
 From all of Greece? They'd burn in just one day
 Aeëtes' halls with deadly fire if they 290
 Did not receive from his consenting hand
 The fleece. The ships, however, must be manned,
 The venture will be hard." From here and there
 The city heard these words. Into the air
 The women often raised their hands and prayed
 To the immortals that they lend their aid
 For a successful outcome. They all sighed,
 Lamenting to each other as they cried:
 "Sad Alcimede, pain is yours, though late.
 Unhappy old age has become your fate. 300
 Aeson as well, poor Aeson! It would be
 Far better that, not knowing misery,
 Before this day beneath the earth he lay,
 Wrapped in his shroud. Thus Phrixus, on that day
 Young Helle died, should, ram and all, have met
 A Stygian engulfing wave. And yet
 An evil, mortal-sounding augury
 For Alcimede forecast misery
 And countless woes thereafter." As the men
 Departed, thus the women spoke. By then 310
 A host of slaves had gathered. There, also,
 Came Jason's grieving mother. There was woe
 In every woman's heart. Bowed down with years,
 His father, closely wrapped in bed, shed tears
 With them. But Jason then soothed their heartache
 And cheered them, ordering the slaves to take
 The weapons up: this silently they did
 And sadly. First of all his mother slid

Her arms about her son, vociferously
 Weeping, just as a maiden tenderly 320
 Will fall upon her white-haired nurse, bereft,
 And grieve, when there's no other servant left
 To aid her, living now an onerous life
 Under her stepmother who turns the knife
 With many fresh abuses, while her core
 Is bound with woe while she bemoans once more
 Each slight, nor can she utter every groan
 That struggles in her throat. Thus did she moan
 And cradle Jason and, in yearning, say
 These words: 'My child, would that upon that day 330
 I heard King Pelias's vile decree
 I had expired, forgetting misery,
 That you your dear self might put me to rest –
 The only hope I've left: I have been blessed
 By all the other fruits. Once so respected
 Among Achaean women, now neglected,
 Left like a slave within this empty palace,
 Pining for you, the dupe of fate so callous:
 Through you I had renown and majesty,
 For you alone my prized virginity 340
 I lost: you were my one and only one:
 Eileithyia begrudged me any son
 Or daughter after you. Alas! I never,
 Not even in my dreams, imagined ever
 Phrixus's flight could bring me misery."
 She and her women-servants vehemently
 Thus mourned. But Jason tenderly addressed her:
 "Dear mother, don't let such resentment fester
 Within your heart; tears won't erase your sorrow,
 But rather you'll be dealt more pain tomorrow. 350
 The gods give unseen grief to men: forbear
 To weep, although your heart be filled with care.
 Bear up and trust Athene's guarantees
 As well as the celestial prophecies
 (For Phoebus augurs great prosperity)
 And then the chieftains' aid. Stay quietly
 At home, you and your maids; pray, do not show
 Yourself a fateful bird to the *Argo*.
 With me shall go my servants and my kin."
 He spoke these words and set out from within 360
 The house. As from a temple odorous
 With balm Apollo sets out for Delos,
 That holy isle, or Clarus, or Pytho,
 Or Lycia, that spacious land, where flow

The streams of Xanthos, thus he went among
 The crowd of people and, from out that throng
 There rose a mighty shout. Then the priestess
 Of Artemis, the town's benefactress,
 Old Iphias there met him: as that band
 Of people ran ahead, she kissed his hand. 370
 She could not speak, though eager to, but she
 Was pushed aside and, as the elderly
 Are treated by the young, was left forsaken.
 He was soon far away. When he had taken
 The path of well-built city streets to reach
 The place they called the Pagasaeon beach,
 His comrades welcomed him, all packed aboard
 The *Argo*; then he stood before this horde
 Right at the entrance, so they gathered there
 And stood before him. They were all aware 380
 Of Argos and Acastus making right
 For them straight from the city in despite
 Of Pelias. Argos wore a bull's hide,
 Arestor's son, floor-length, black on one side
 With hair. A lovely cloak he wore as well
 From his child Pelopeia. Jason would not tell
 Them anything they asked but made them go
 And sit, assembled. Each then, in his row,
 They sat upon the folded sail and mast.
 Then Jason kindly spoke: "All's firm and fast – 390
 Our naval needs are all in readiness.
 Let us make no delay – the breezes bless
 Our ship. So, friends – for all of us have planned
 To journey back as well as to the land
 Of Aeëtes – let's vote unstintingly,
 To be the leader of this odyssey,
 The bravest man to care for everything
 And take our covenants and quarrelling
 With enemies upon himself." At that,
 To the courageous Heracles, who sat 400
 Amongst them, all the young men turned their eyes
 And bade him with one shout up to the skies
 To lead them. He extended his right hand
 From where he sat and said: "Such a command
 Of high esteem let none put upon me.
 You'll not persuade me. I shall also see
 That none else will stand up. Let him who brought
 Us here command the host." A noble thought!
 As he had ordered them, they acquiesced.
 Bold Jason, glad at heart, rose and addressed 410

Them in their eagerness: "If you commend
 Me for this honour, let there be an end
 To more delay. Let's show our piety
 To Phoebus with incense and instantly
 Prepare a meal. When those who oversee
 My quarters, whose responsibility
 Is to decide which oxen to convey
 Hither, my slaves, arrive, let's all away,
 Dragging our ship down to the sea, and tote
 All arms aboard and each one cast a vote
 For the benches and along the waterline
 To Phoebus Embrasius let's build a shrine –
 He promised by a prophecy the way
 Across the sea to show – that thus I may
 Begin my toil for Pelias the King
 With sacrifice. " Straight to his labouring
 He turned and they all rose obediently
 And piled their clothes on a smooth stone the sea
 Did not approach (but in the distant past
 The wintry waves had cleansed it). Hard and fast
 They bound the ship, at Argos's command,
 With twined rope, stretching it in a tight band
 On either side so that the planks may be
 Well-nailed and face the lashing of the sea.
 Straightway they dug a ship-wide waterway
 Which stretched her journey's length into the bay,
 Dragged by their hands. Ahead of her they made
 Deeper and deeper furrows while they laid
 Smooth rollers on them. On the first of these
 They dipped her so she should be borne with ease
 While gliding on. High up on either side
 They turned the oars and fitted them inside
 The oarlocks so they stretched one cubit's span,
 And then in rows they settled, every man,
 And pushed with chest and arms. Tiphys got on
 To urge the youths to row in unison.
 He shouted loudly, and immediately
 In one great thrust with all their energy
 They moved the *Argo*, giving her her head
 By straining with their feet, and on she sped.
 All yelled and ran on either side, elated.
 Beneath the sturdy keel the rollers, grated,
 Emitted groans. Due to the gravity,
 Dark smoke gushed forth, and down into the sea
 She slipped. They held her back as on she went.
 Oars fitted, they placed each accoutrement,

420

430

440

450

The mast, the well-made sails on board. But when
 All things were well attended to, why then
 The benches were by lots all allocated,
 Two men per bench, though one was designated – 460
 The very centre one – for Heracles
 And Ancaius, apart from all of these
 Others (the latter was a resident
 Of Tegea). An outright settlement –
 No lot – gave them alone the middle row;
 With one accord they voted to bestow
 On Tiphys the responsibility
 Of steering the well-keeled ship. Then, by the sea
 They piled up stones and built on the seaboard
 An altar to Apollo as the Lord 470
 Of Shores and Embarkation. Soon they spread
 Dried olive-logs on top. Two steers were led
 By Jason's herdsmen from the herd, and then
 These were dragged forward by the younger men
 Near to the altar. Barley was conveyed
 And holy water, too. Then Jason prayed
 To Apollo, his ancestral deity:
 "O lord, who dwell in Pagasae, hear me,
 O lord, who in Aesonis also dwell,
 Named for my father, you who vowed to tell 480
 How we should find and win our cherished aim
 When to your Pythian oracle I came –
 You were the cause of this our expedition –
 Keep us, as on we sail, in sound condition,
 Take us and bring us back. For each of us
 Returning, just so many glorious
 Bulls shall be sacrificed to you. As well,
 I'll carry countless gifts to where you dwell –
 Ortygia and Pytho. Phoebus, King,
 Far-Shooter, come, accept this offering, 490
 First given as our fare. Grant that I may
 Unloose the ropes and thus get underway
 Unscathed, and may there be a gentle breeze
 To help us make our way on quiet seas."
 He spoke and cast the barley with this prayer.
 And then those two great men made to prepare
 To kill the sacrifices, Heracles
 And proud Ancaius; and while one of these,
 The former, clubbed one smartly on the head
 So that at once it sank and lay there dead, 500
 The other's spacious neck was lacerated
 By Ancaius who quickly penetrated

With his bronze axe the tough, resilient
Sinews and, holding both its horns, he sent
It sprawling. Then their comrades swiftly ripped
Their throats apart and then their hides they stripped,
Sundered the joints, then carved the flesh, then tore
Apart the sacred thigh-bones; furthermore
They smothered all in fat and set it aflame
On cloven sticks of wood. Then Jason came 510

And poured unmixed libations; standing there,
Idmon rejoiced, beholding everywhere
The glowing sacrificial conflagration,
Auspicious smoke in purplish gyration
Arising. With blunt speed he spoke the bent
Of Leto's son: "It is the gods' intent
And destiny that you the fleece convey
Hither, though countless trials on your way
Will hound you. But there is a god's decree
That must one day prove terrible to me, 520

Condemning me to die far, far away
On mainland Asia. Thus before today
I learned from evil auguries my fate
Yet boarded ship that I might generate
Fame for my house." Hearing the prophecy,
The youths expressed their great felicity
At their return but grieved at Idmon's fate.
So when the sun had passed the midday's date
And boulders now were just about to shade
The fields in darkness and the sun to fade 530

Beneath the evening dusk, they thickly spread
A bower of leaves and lay down on that bed
In ranks just where the breakers reached the shore,
With food and honeyed wine, a spacious store,
The goblet-bearers having drawn the wine
Into their pitchers, then line after line,
They told such tales as youths often relate
When wine and viands pleasurably sate
And ravenous insolence is then elsewhere.
Then Jason, at a loss, weighed every care 540

Like someone troubled. Taking him to task
On seeing this, said Idas: "May I ask,
Son of Aeson, what scheme is in your head?
Tell all. Have you been overcome with dread,
Which cows all cowards? Witness, my staunch spear,
With which I win illustriousness clear
Beyond them all against my foes (not Zeus
Himself has ever been of greater use

Than has my spear), no pain proving to be
 A fatal one, each risk destined to see 550
 Fulfilment while Idas is close at hand.
 That's the ally you brought here from the land
 Of Arene." With these words a brimming cup
 He grasped with both his hands and swallowed up
 The unmixed wine, his lips and dark cheeks wet
 With purple residue. Each man then let
 A shout out, and Idmon spoke openly:
 "You fool, you plan before your destiny
 Your own destruction. Your stout heart's distended
 With unmixed wine: your life will soon be ended. 560
 Dare you insult the gods? Some words of ease
 May cheer a friend but haughty words are these,
 Such as the sons of Aloeus, they say,
 Once blurted out against the gods, and they
 Were mightier than you. They were snuffed out
 By Phoebus's swift arrow, strong and stout
 Though they had been." Then Idas lengthily
 Guffawed, then looked askance and stingingly
 Replied: "Come, tell me through your prophecy 570
 That by your father was granted those two
 And say how these two hands will suffer you
 Safely to dodge them both if you are seen
 To be a charlatan." Such was his spleen
 In his reproach. More railing they'd have heard
 Had not their comrades - Jason too - deterred
 With shouts their scrap. Orpheus began to sing,
 Holding his lyre, his theme the severing,
 After destructive strife, of earth and sea
 And sky, once fastened in one entity, 580
 And how the sun's paths, moon and stars up high
 Had each its permanent locus in the sky:
 The mountains rose, and every creeping thing
 And rivers, with their nymphs, all clamouring
 Then came alive. He sang how Ophion
 And Ocean's Eurynome first held the throne
 In cloudy Olympus; Cronus snatched the sway
 From one, and Rhea from the other; they
 (That is Ophion and Eurynome)
 Fell into Ocean. This authority 590
 Over the blessed Titans was maintained
 While Zeus was yet a child and entertained
 Nothing but childish notions and still dwelt
 In the Dictaeon cave nor had been dealt
 The bolt with thunder and lightning supplied

By the earthborn Cyclopes: these things provide
 Zeus with renown." At this he stayed his lyre
 And his sweet voice, though all were still afire
 To hear, bent forwards, pricking up each ear
 In fascination, so great was the cheer 600
 His singing left behind. Subsequently
 They mixed libations, as is customary,
 To Zeus; upon the flaming tongues it streamed.
 They settled down for sleep. Bright Dawn now gleamed
 On Pelion's steep rocks with eyes that flashed,
 And the calm headlands now were being splashed
 By the seas unsettled by the wind's attack.
 Tiphys awoke and bade the men go back
 On board and prime the oars. At Pagasae
 The port and *Argo* cried a dreadful cry, 610
 Urging departure. For a sacred spar
 Had been sunk in her, brought there from afar
 By Athena from a Dodonan oak which she
 Had planted in her stem. Then orderly,
 In single file, they then took up each row,
 All which had been assigned some time ago,
 And sat beside their arms, then came along
 Ancaeus and stout Heracles among
 That host; the latter placed beneath his heel
 His club, which quite submerged the *Argo*'s keel. 620
 The ropes were being slipped, while on the foam
 Wine-offerings were poured. But Jason's home
 And country he averted from his sight.
 Then they, just as a gang of young men might
 Arrange for Phoebus in Pytho a dance,
 Or in Ortygia, or yet, perchance,
 Beside Ismenus' stream, and to the sound
 Of lyres round the altar beat the ground
 Harmoniously with rapid feet, so they
 Beat the tempestuous waters of the bay 630
 To Orpheus' lyre with their oars, each blade
 Awash with surf, whose jet-black waters made
 A gushing roar, engendered by the might
 Of sturdy heroes. Armour shimmered bright
 Like flames as on she sped, and far behind
 Their wake gleamed white as you perhaps might find
 A pathway through a green plain. On that day
 All gods looked earthwards upon that display
 Of ship and mighty half-divinities,
 The bravest who then sailed upon the seas. 640
 The nymphs of Pelion looked on, surprised,

From their high peaks at what had been devised
 By Itonian Athena, as they plied
 The oars; Chiron came to the Oceanside.
 The son of Philyra, from his great height
 And where the breakers crashed upon the bight,
 He dipped his feet. Waving his heavy hand
 A score of times he shouted to the band
 And bade them safe return. His consort bore
 Achilles and held out the infant for 650
 Peleus, his sire, to see. So now when they
 Had left behind the harbour's curving bay,
 Through warlike Tiphys' plan, who skilfully
 Handled the polished helm that he might be
 A steadfast guide, they place the mighty mast
 Straight into the cross-beam and tied it fast
 On either side with mainstays, then let down
 The sail once they had raised it to the crown
 Of the masthead. Then there came a piping wind.
 Upon the deck they separately pinned 660
 The ropes with polished clasps, then peacefully
 Sped by the long Tisaeon promontory.
 And then Oiagrus' son took up his lyre
 And sang the daughter of a noble sire,
 The ship-protecting Artemis whose care
 Were those sea-peaks and Iolcus, and this air
 Was sweetly sung. The fish beneath the deep,
 Both large and small at once, would dart and leap
 Among those watery paths. So, just as when
 Large flocks will trail their shepherds to the pen, 670
 Sated with pasture, while he pipes a high
 Bucolic tune, those fishes followed nigh,
 While constant breezes bore her swiftly on.
 Suddenly the Pelasgian land was gone,
 Corn-rich and misty, out of sight, and they
 Now passed the Pelian crags while on their way
 They sped. The Sepian headland lost to view,
 Sciathus loomed ahead, Piresias too,
 And the serene Magnesian shore and where
 Dolops was buried. Then at eve the air 680
 Began to blow them backwards, so, that night,
 They roasted sheep in sacrificial rite
 To honour him nearby the swelling sea.
 There on the shoreline in tranquillity
 They sojourned for two days: the following day
 They hoisted their huge sail and sped away.
 Still do they call that beach-head Aphetæ

Of *Argo*. Thence they hastened, passing by
 Meliboea as its stormy shore they spied.
 Then they at dawn came to the seaside 690
 Port of Homole, and soon they would go by
 Amyros' streams, and then Eurymenae
 They'd see as well as the well-sluiced ravines
 Of Ossa and Olympus, hilly scenes
 In Pallene, the hillocks hovering
 Above Canastra: with the fluttering
 Of winds they sped beyond them in the night.
 Now Thracian Athos' peak at morning light
 Appeared: its top left Lemnos, obfuscated
 As far as Myrine, though separated 700
 From them as far as any merchantman,
 Well-trimmed, sails till midday – a goodly span.
 Then and into the night there came a blast
 That strongly blew, the sails upon the mast
 Ballooning. With the setting of the sun
 The breezes ceased and then they came upon
 The rocky isle of Sintians, Lemnos.
 The year gone by they'd suffered a huge loss –
 All of the men, due to the lechery
 Of women, were victims of butchery. 710
 Their lawful wives in hatred they'd repelled
 And for their captive women now they held
 An ardent passion, while upon their raids
 In Thrace they seized and brought across these maids.
 The dreadful wrath of Cypris they had earned
 Because for many years now they had spurned
 To render her her due. O ravenous
 And to your own misfortune envious,
 You wretched women! Not only each mate
 And captive-maid did they obliterate 720
 For their adultery but, so they may
 For their foul deeds no retribution pay,
 All males as well. One man received a pass –
 Hypsipyleia rescued old Thoas,
 Her father, king of that community:
 She found a chest and pushed it out to sea
 With him inside to save him from the slaughter.
 Oenoan fishers pulled him from the water
 (The isle was Sicinos, though, latterly,
 Because the water-nymph called Oenoe 730
 Bore him of Thoas). Now a cowherd's care,
 Donning bronze armour, using the ploughshare
 In cornfields for them all was easier

Than were Athena's works which earlier
 They had been busy with. But constantly
 They looked with pitiful dread upon the sea
 For fear of Thracians. So when they espied
 The *Argo* pulling close they rushed outside
 The gates, all armed, and dashed down to the strand
 Like raging Bacchants. Thracians in our land! 740
 They thought. With them Hypsipyleia wore
 Her father's arms as they began to pour
 Out, helpless, speechless, hemmed in by unease.
 The leaders then sent out Aethalides,
 Their speedy herald who was in command
 Of messages and carried in his hand
 His father Hermes' sceptre (for him he
 Had gained a comprehensive memory,
 An ageless gift). Although to Acheron 750
 And its repellent eddies he had gone,
 Forgetfulness had not planted its seed
 Yet in his soul, though it had been decreed
 That she is always moving here and there,
 Sometimes beneath the earth and sometimes where
 Men dwell under the sun. But why should I
 Tell lengthy tales of him? The day gone by
 And creeping into night, he coaxed her then
 To let ashore and entertain the men.
 Nor did they loose the ropes at break of day.
 The women of the island went away 760
 Up to the city where they settled down
 Within the meeting-place inside the town
 At her command. Then to the congregation
 At once she gave a spirited oration:
 "My friends, let us give gifts that will content
 These men, gifts fit for sailors, nourishment,
 Sweet wine, that they resolve to stay beyond
 Our towers nor create too great a bond,
 Out of necessity, with us and thus
 Provoke much talk. A dreadful deed by us 770
 Was done, which would not please them if they knew it.
 Such is our plan now: having listened to it,
 If you know of a better, rise, for that
 Is why I called you hither." Then she sat
 Back down upon her father's stone-built seat.
 But then her darling nurse got to her feet,
 Polyxo, whose old legs had grown so bent
 That she but limped as on her staff she leant,
 Eager to speak. There were sat near her there

Four unwed maids with blond and downy hair. 780
 She stood among them, slowly raised her head
 Above her crooked back and thus she said:
 “Let us send presents to these foreign men,
 As Madam wishes – it were better then.
 What’s your survival plan if we’re brought low
 By Thracian soldiers or some other foe,
 As often happens? Unexpectedly
 Did they arrive. If some divinity
 Relieves us now, much woe is still ahead,
 Worse than mere battles, when old ones are dead 790
 And you young maids, still childless, then arrive
 At hateful old age? How will you survive
 In wretchedness? Will oxen, yoked by you
 To the deep plough, of their accord cut through
 The fallow? At the ending of the year
 Will they, with no ado, harvest each ear
 Of corn? Till now the Fates have bypassed me
 In horror, yet next year I well may be
 Clothed in earth’s garments, with my share of rites,
 As it should be, before the blackest nights 800
 Appear. You younger ones, I beg, take heed
 Of what I say. A chance of being freed
 Lies at your feet: turn over to the crew
 The care of home, stock, glorious city, too.”
 The place was filled with shouts: they liked this speech.
 Hypsipyle leapt fast into the breach
 And said: “If all of you approve this plea,
 I’ll send an envoy to the company.”
 At that, she said to one who sat nearby,
 Iphinoë: “Iphinoë, go hie 810
 You to that man (their leader, I surmise);
 Tell him to come here that I may apprise
 Him of some news that our community
 Will love, and bid them enter fearlessly
 Our land and town, if that’s their inclination.”
 With these words she dismissed the convocation
 And set off home, and to the Minyae
 Went Iphinoë. They inquired why
 She came. Quickly she said: “Hypsipyle,
 Thoas’s child, said our community 820
 Will love the news the leader of your band
 Shall hear from me – you may enter our land,
 Our town, if that you wish, and feel no fear.”
 Her happy words filled all of them with cheer.
 Since Thoas was deceased, Hypsipyle

They deemed was now their queen, thus speedily
 They sent their chief and started to prepare
 To go themselves. He buckled, then and there,
 A two-fold purple cloak, Athena-wrought,
 Upon his shoulders, which she once had brought 830
 To give to Jason when she first had laid
 The keel-props of the *Argo* and had made
 Him master of the art of measuring
 The timbers with a rule. An easier thing
 It were to watch the sun's ascendancy
 Than look upon that blazing majesty.
 For in the centre it was flaming red
 Yet purple at its foot and at its head,
 While at each edge were fashioned skilfully
 A segregated multiplicity 840
 Of artworks. One beheld the Cyclopes
 Applying their deathless abilities,
 Fashioning a thunderbolt for Father Zeus,
 Now almost finished, almost set for use:
 A shaft of light was all it was without,
 And this one thing was being hammered out
 With iron mallets as it shot a flare
 Of raging flame. Antiope's sons were there,
 Zethus and Amphion, Asopus' brace
 Of grandsons. Thebe, too, took up a space 850
 Nearby, yet unprotected, whose foundation
 They were just then, in keen anticipation,
 Laying. Zethos was heaving shoulder-high
 The peak of a steep mountain while, nearby,
 With golden lyre and a loud, clear song,
 Amphion led a rock that rolled along
 Behind him, twice its size. Then following
 Was long-tressed Cythereia, handling
 Ares' swift shield: her tunic was untied
 From her left shoulder and all down that side 860
 Beneath her breast. Reflected in that shield
 Of bronze she stood out clear. There was a field
 Of oxen, where there was a skirmishing
 In place between Alectryon's offspring
 And the Teleboae, who were on a foray,
 Taphian brigands, being kept at bay
 By the former. With their blood the dewy lea
 Was drizzling, while the majority
 Conquered the fewer herdsmen. Then a race
 Between two chariots upon its face 870
 Was worked, Pelops, shaking the reins, before,

Hippodameia, and then one more,
 Myrtilus, drove *his* horses, and, his spear
 Grasped, couched, in hand, Oenomaus stood near,
 Yet falling when an axle turned and split,
 Though eager to stab Pelops' back. Near it
 Was wrought Apollo, yet a youth, although
 A strapping lad, who's shooting from his bow
 Great Tityus who dragged audaciously
 His mother by the veil, Tityus, he 880
 To whom the glorious Elare gave birth
 (Though nursed and given life again by Earth),
 Then Minyan Phrixus, listening, seemingly,
 To a ram that seemed to talk. Were you to see
 These things you'd be struck speechless and mislead
 Your soul in hope that you might have indeed
 Heard actual words of wisdom as you viewed
 Them long and with that hopeful attitude.
 These were Athena's gifts. In his right hand
 He held a lengthy spear which, in the land 890
 Of Maenalus, Atalanta had bestowed,
 As guest-gift, with warm greetings, for that road
 Of exploration she desired to take;
 Yet he prevented her, fearing she'd make
 Resentful rivals in carnality.
 He entered the city, glowing dazzlingly,
 As though he were a star which maidens eye,
 While pent in splendid huts, ascending high
 Above their homes, gleaming both red and fair,
 Charming their eyes as through the dark-blue air 900
 It goes; each maid delights while pining for
 Her youth who sojourns on a foreign shore,
 For whom her parents keep him for his bride.
 Thus he approached the city. In a tide
 Its women surged behind him, revelling
 In him. He went straight on, though, focussing
 His eyes upon the ground, until he came
 To Hypsipyle's mansion of glorious fame.
 When he appeared her servants opened wide
 The double doors which had been beautified 910
 With well-wrought panels, and then, straightaway
 Leading him through a handsome passageway,
 Iphinoë placed him on a gleaming seat
 Facing her mistress, who down at her feet
 Now cast her eyes while blushing prettily;
 And yet she spoke, for all her modesty,
 With crafty words: "Why stay so long out there,

Stranger, beyond our walls? Not anywhere
 Will you see men residing in this place:
 They plough their wheat-filled furrows out in Thrace 920
 As immigrants. I'll tell you of our hell
 That you might know it all and know it well.
 Thoas, my father, once was ruler here:
 Back then our men would sometimes disappear
 And plunder from their ships the habitations
 In Thrace (there's little space between our nations)
 And brought back loot aplenty, maids as well;
 Deadly Cypris was planning to propel
 Her scheme which brought lethal infatuation
 To them. There now evolved a detestation 930
 Of their true wives: to madness giving way,
 They threw them out and took their spear-won prey
 Into their beds, the rogues. We stuck it out
 For some time, hoping that they'd start to doubt
 Their choice. This bitter plight, however, grew
 And doubled. In the halls their children, too,
 Were treated badly, and a bastard race
 Sprang up, and thus there roamed throughout this place
 Each widowed mother and unmarried maid.
 No heed, however fleetingly, was paid 940
 By fathers to their daughters, in despite
 Of evil stepmothers, before their sight,
 Murdering them; and, not as formerly,
 Mothers against such foul indignity
 Received no help from sons; there was no care
 Of brother for sister: and everywhere,
 At home or in the dance, a convocation
 Or at a feast, their one consideration
 Would be their concubines. Eventually
 Some god gave them a desperate bravery 950
 No longer to allow them back when they
 Returned from Thrace, that they might choose the way
 Of right or, with their captive-maids, take sail
 And leave. They begged of us each infant male
 Left in the city, then took off. So now
 They still reside in Thrace and ply the plough
 On snowy fields. Stay here, and, should you yearn
 To do so and it pleases you, you'll earn
 My father Thoas' privilege. You'll not,
 I think, despise our land, for it has got 960
 A deeper soil in the Aegean Sea
 Than any other isle. Listen to me,
 Go to your ship, relate all that I say

To your companions; do not stay away
 Beyond our walls." These were her words, but she
 Did not disclose to him the butchery
 Of all their men. He answered: "Very dear
 Is the support you offer to us here,
 For we're in need of you, Hypsipyle.
 I shall return when I accordingly 970
 Have told them all. Continue to possess
 The island's sovereignty: no scornfulness
 Provokes my yielding it, but I'm impelled
 To grievous woes." He spoke and briefly held
 Her right hand, then set off back; all around
 There whirled about him with a joyful sound
 The countless maidens until he had cleared
 The gates. Then later on they all appeared
 On smoothly-running wagons on the beach
 With many gifts (by now he'd told them each 980
 And every thing she'd said). Then readily
 They took them to their homes for company.
 For Cypris gave to them a sweet allure,
 For the sake of wise Hephaestus, to ensure
 That Lemnos, uneradicated, be
 Inhabited by men eternally.
 Then Jason for the regal residence
 Of Hypsipyle set out. As providence
 Dictated, all the others went their way,
 Except for Heracles, who chose to stay 990
 With just a few picked friends. Immediately
 The whole town danced and feasted joyously,
 And all around them sacrificial savour
 Was wafted here and there. They showed their favour
 Above all of the other deities
 To noted Ares and Cypris, for these
 With sacrifice and song they adulated.
 Day followed day while they procrastinated
 Their setting sail. A long time they'd have dallied
 In idleness had Heracles not harried 1000
 Them all, far from the womenfolk, and thus
 Rebuked them: "Wretches, is *this* keeping us
 From home, this kindred-butchery? Have we
 Come here to wed and make a mockery
 Of our own women? Do you think it grand
 To dwell here, ploughing Lemnos' fertile land?
 We'll win no fame kept back day after day
 By foreign women. After such delay
 No god will grant our prayers and thus bestow

The moving fleece. Let every man, then, go 1010
 Back to his own: all day let Jason lie
 In bed with *her* until he can supply
 Lemnos with men and thus achieve great fame.”
 Thus he rebuked them all. A sense of shame
 Caused them to drop their eyes nor would they talk.
 Then from the meeting they prepared to walk.
 Learning their plan, the women speedily
 Came running to them. Just as, droningly,
 Bees haunt the splendid lilies when they shoot
 From their rock-hive and gather the sweet fruit 1020
 While dewy meadows smile, thus, sorrowing,
 They streamed and thronged the heroes, welcoming
 Each one with hands and voice while they implored
 The gods a safe homecoming to afford.
 Hypsipyle prayed too and wept to lose
 Her lover: “Go, and may the gods all choose
 To grant that you may in all safety bring
 The golden fleece and give it to the king,
 As is your wish. This island and the sway
 Of my father shall be here should you, one day, 1030
 Returning, come to Lemnos. Easily
 Could you amass a goodly company
 From other lands. You will not wish it, though;
 I prophesy that it will not be so.
 Remember me both when you’re far away
 And on your homeward journey. May you say
 Your wish and I will grant it readily
 Should heaven grant to me maternity.”
 Then Jason answered her in admiration:
 “May heaven allow all this its consummation. 1040
 Both think more nobly of me – by the grace
 Of Pelias, to dwell in my birthplace
 Is quite enough. May the gods just set me free
 Of all my labours. If my destiny
 Is not to see Greece more once, under sail,
 I’ve travelled far, and, if you bear a male,
 Send him when grown to Iolcus as relief
 To my father and my mother from their grief
 (If they still live) that, distanced far away
 From the king, they may be cared for while they stay 1050
 Within their home. “ He was the first to board,
 The other chiefs behind. Each then was oared
 In rows. The ship unloosed the ropes from round
 The sea-girt rock. They made the sea resound
 With their long oars. At Orpheus’ decree,

That evening to Electra's island (she
 Who was Atlanta's child) they came, that they
 May learn the rites, that one may never say,
 In gentleness, then cross the icy sea
 In safety. You will hear no more from me 1060
 Of this; however, let us say farewell
 To the island and the gods that in her dwell,
 The keepers of those rites, of which to sing
 Is not allowed. With eager labouring
 Upon the oars they crossed the deep black sea
 (The land of Thrace at one extremity
 And Imbrus on the other); day was through
 When they reached Chersonese; upon them blew
 A mild south wind, and, raising to the breeze
 Their sails, they rowed to the profundities 1070
 Of Athamas's virgin child, Helle;
 At dawn they left behind the northern sea,
 Sailing by night past the Rhoetaean strand
 With Ida on their right, their left the land
 Of Dardanus and for Abydos set
 Their course, then, sailing further still, they met
 Percote and the sandy waterside
 Of Pityeia; by night they applied
 Both sail and oar and passed the dark blue sea
 Of eddying Hellespont. There happens to be 1080
 A steep isle in Propontis, looming near
 The corn-rich Phrygia, plunging so sheer
 Her isthmus is immersed. Two shores are there,
 The Aesepus below them; it's called Bear
 Mountain by those who dwell around the isle;
 Its own inhabitants are fierce and vile,
 Earthborn, who are, to dwellers thereabouts,
 A wonder to behold. Each of them sprouts
 Six heavy hands – each sturdy shoulderblade
 Has two, while on their dread sides are arrayed 1090
 Four more. The isthmus and the plain contained
 The Doliones, over whom there reigned
 The son of Aeneeus and of Ainete,
 Commendable Eusorus' progeny.
 Though dread, the Earthborn caused no aggravation
 To them thanks to Poseidon's preservation
 From whom these people had originated.
 And then, by Thracian winds accelerated,
 The *Argo* sailed into the anchorage
 Of Kalos as upon their pilgrimage 1100
 They sped, and it was there that they set free

Their little anchor-stone at the decree
 Of Tiphys, leaving it beneath the spring
 Of Artacia; a fitter one (a thing
 Much heavier) they took. Subsequently,
 According to Apollo's prophecy,
 The Ionians, sons of Neleus, built of it
 A temple, as is proper, right and fit,
 In Jason's Athens. Cyzicus, along
 With the Doliones, in a friendly throng, 1110
 Met them and when they learned of their crusade
 And lineage, a cordial welcome made
 And urged them to row closer and to tie
 Their hawsers in their harbour, then nearby
 They built an altar right upon the strand
 To Phoebus, god of disembarking, and
 Gave sacrifices. Of his own largess
 The king supplied them in their neediness
 With sheep and sweet wine (he'd heard people say
 That, if a godlike army came their way, 1120
 He should receive them kindly and not seek
 To fight them). As with Jason, on his cheek
 There grew soft down, nor yet had he the pleasure
 Of fatherhood, and in domestic leisure
 His wife lived free of childbirth's misery,
 Percopian Merops's progeny,
 Fair-haired Cleite, whom from the opposite land,
 With countless gifts, winning the lady's hand,
 He'd just from her father brought. He left her bed
 And chamber, then he organized a spread 1130
 For them and cast all terror from his heart.
 They asked each other questions. For his part,
 He learned their quest and Pelias' decree,
 While they each bay of the Propontic Sea,
 So broad, and neighbour cities learned, although
 He could not tell them more, howevers
 They longed to hear. The dawn saw them ascend
 Great Dindymum so they some time might spend
 In scanning for themselves each passageway
 Upon that sea, and then they made their way 1140
 To Chytus Port from where they first had bound
 Their hawsers, and the passage that they found
 Was called Jasonian Way. But then there ran
 From the far side of the isle each Earthborn man
 Down from the mountain and with rocks below
 Blocked up the mouth of vast Chytus, as though
 They lay in wait for beasts inside their den.

But Heracles, left with the younger men,
 Drew back his arching bow immediately,
 Plunging them earthwards individually. 1150
 They, in their turn, raised jagged rocks and threw
 Them. Zeus's wife, dread Hera, I construe,
 Had nurtured them to be a cause of woe
 To Heracles. Back then, to meet the foe,
 Came all the rest before they'd reached the height
 Of outlook, mighty heroes all, to fight
 And slay the Earthborn, spears, and darts as well,
 Impaling them till each and every knell
 Was knolled among them. As woodcutters throw
 Tall, newly-cut tress row on mounting row 1160
 Upon the beach that they, once drenched in brine,
 May be fast-bolted, so, line after line,
 At the foam-skirted harbour-mouth they lay,
 Some with both head and breast bent to the spray
 In heaps, their limbs spread out upon the strand,
 Some with their heads resting upon the sand,
 Feet in the deep, to birds and fish left there
 As prey. The heroes, once the armed affair
 Was over, loosed their hawsers to the breeze
 And sailed on through the swelling of the seas. 1170
 All day they sped by sail; at the advent
 Of night the breezes failed and back they went,
 Impelled by adverse winds, and they once more
 Arrived at the kindly Doliones' shore.
 That night they disembarked: The Sacred Rock
 Is still its name. Then quickly to the dock
 They lashed their hawsers. No-one was aware
 It was the same isle, and that they were there
 The Doliones in the dark of night
 Had no clear knowledge, thinking that they might 1180
 Be the warlike Macrians. They armed and raced
 At them; with shields and spears each faction faced
 The other like a fervid fire's rush
 That plunges down upon some barren brush.
 A fierce and violent disquieting
 Fell on the Doliones. Their own king
 Would not escape his fate and go home free
 From harm to his dear wife: immediately
 The son of Aeson, as he wheeled around,
 Impaled the king's chest with a single bound; 1190
 Around the spear the bone was shattered and,
 His fate fulfilled, he rolled across the sand –
 No man avoids his lot: an ample net

Is spread around us. While he hoped even yet
 To dodge his bitter death, that very night
 Fate tangled with him as he faced the might
 Of Jason's chiefs. More seeming enemies
 Were slain: Heracles dispatched Megabrontes
 As well as Telecles; Akastos slew
 Sphodris, Peleus Zelys and that man who 1120
 Was swift in war, Gephyros. The king, however,
 Telamon slew, that man proficient ever
 With the ash-spear. Promeus and Hyacinthos
 Were slaughtered by Idas and Klytius,
 Phlogios by the two Tyndaridae,
 And Megalossaces, two others by
 The son of Oeneus, brave Itymoneus
 And one of their commanders, Artaceus.
 Heroic praise is given them today
 By the locals. All the others ran away 1130
 In fear, as doves in swarms timidly flee
 The rapid hawks. They scampered noisily
 Into the gates in throngs: then mournful weeping
 Because of this reverse was swiftly sweeping
 Throughout the city. Both sides at daybreak
 Took in the fatal fault, which to unmake
 Were hopeless. The heroic company
 Of Minyans was gripped by misery
 In seeing dead amid the dust and gore
 Cyzicus, son of Aineus. Both sides tore 1140
 Their hair in mourning for three days, but then
 Three times in their bronze armour all the men
 Paced round the tomb, performed rites for the slain
 And rightly held games on the meadowy plain
 Where even now this tomb can be descried
 By later folk. Cleite did not abide
 Long past her husband's death, for now she found
 An even greater wretchedness – she bound
 A rope around her neck. Her sad demise
 Even the grove-maids wept at. From their eyes 1150
 What tears they shed the goddesses created
 A spring they called Cleite, after the fated
 Lady herself; a day of misery
 It was for men and women equally
 Among the Doliones: none would take
 One bite of food nor, for their sorrow's sake,
 Would undertake to labour at the mill
 To grind the corn, but, so that they might still
 Live on, they ate raw meat. Even today,

When the Ionian Cyzicans must pay 1160
 Their annual libations for the dead,
 The sacrificial cakes that must be fed
 To them are made of corn that has been ground
 At the common mill. Fierce storms began to pound
 And lasted twelve whole days and nights, impeding
 Departure. As the next night was receding,
 The chieftains were asleep and as they slept
 In deep repose a careful watch was kept
 By Mopsus and Acastus, the issue
 Of Ampycos. A kingfisher then flew 1170
 Round Jason's golden head: its piercing mew
 Now prophesied good weather. Mopsus knew
 The shore-bird's omen. Some god made it turn
 And, flying high, alight upon the stern.
 As Jason, sleeping on soft fleeces, lay
 The seer nudged him awake with no delay
 And said: "O Jason, now you must repair
 To stark Dindymus' temple and, once there,
 The godhead's fair-throned queen propitiate.
 The dreadful storms will cease: I heard of late 1180
 The sea-bird's cry – it told me everything
 While round your sleeping self a-fluttering.
 Upon the winds, upon the earth, the sea,
 Snowy Olympus she has mastery.
 Even the son of Cronus, Zeus, concedes
 To her when from the mountains she proceeds
 To mighty heaven. To this dread goddess
 The other gods bestow a copiousness
 Of reverence." These words he joyed to hear.
 He hurried from his bed, filled full of cheer. 1190
 He roused all of his men immediately
 As he sped on and told the prophecy
 Of Mopsus, son of Ampycus, and then
 Quickly the oxen by the younger men
 Were driven from their stalls up to the tip
 Of the sheer mountain; then upon the ship
 They loosed the hawsers from the Holy Rock
 And plied their oars to reach the Thracian dock.
 They climbed the mountain, leaving but a few
 Aboard. The Mithrian heights were close in view 1200
 And Thrace. The misty Bosporus they spied
 And Mysian heights, and on the other side
 The Aesepus, the city and the plain
 Of Nepeian Adrasteia. A stout skein
 Of vine there was, and very old, which they

Chopped down in order that they might display
 This idol for the peak's divinity,
 Which Argos chiselled very skilfully.
 They placed it on the rugged hill below
 Tall oaks than which no other species go 1210
 So deep beneath the earth. Then alongside
 They built a gravel altar, then they tied
 Oak leaves around their heads and took great care
 With sacrifice, intoning to the air
 To call upon the Mother, nonpareil
 Of Dindymum, who holds all Phrygian sway,
 And Titias and Cyllenus, the possessors
 Of the right to dispense doom and be assessors
 Of the Idaean Mother (only they can be,
 Of many, owners of this liberty), 1220
 Idaean Dactyls of the Cretan land
 Whom, grasping Oiaxian soil with either hand,
 Anchiale bore in the Dictaean cave.
 The son of Aeson prayed that she might save
 Them from the storms with frequent supplications
 As he poured out the glittering libations.
 The young men, then, at Orpheus's decree,
 Began in armoured choreography
 To move as on their shields their swords they struck
 To dissipate the outcry of ill luck 1230
 With which the people mourned their king. That scene
 Has prompted kettledrum and tambourine
 To be applied in their propitiation
 Of Rhea by the Phrygian population
 Even today. The goddess, I dare state,
 Began to soften at those consummate
 Procedures, for auspicious auguries
 Appeared: abundant fruit grew on the trees,
 While flowers sprang up automatically
 Straight through the tender grass, while fawningly 1240
 Wild beasts, their dens and thickets left behind,
 Would wag their tails at men. Another find
 Was marvellous to behold: for formerly
 No water flowed in the vicinity
 Of Dindymum, but now there gushed nonstop
 Fresh water from the thirsty mountaintop.
 And now its name the locals had devised
 Is Jason's Spring. So then they organized
 For Rhea, queen of queens, a solemn feast
 Upon the Mount of Bears. The winds had ceased 1250
 By early light and so they rowed away.

A spirit of contention rose that day
 With each chief as to who would be the last
 To leave his oar. A calming zephyr passed
 Across the eddies, quieting the sea.
 So, trusting in this new tranquillity,
 They pressed the *Argo*: so fast did she race
 That Lord Poseidon's horses have kept pace,
 Storm-footed though they were. Nevertheless
 Fierce blasts that evening caused a restlessness 1260
 Brought for the rivers, harrying the seas.
 The chieftains, spent, retired. But Heracles
 With mighty arms pulled on the weary crew:
 The ship's strong timbers shook. Now eager to
 Reach Mysia, they passed Rhyndei's bay
 And Aegaeon's great cairn, a little way
 From Phrygia. But, ploughing through the swell,
 Heracles then broke his oar and sideways fell,
 One piece still in his hand, the other gone,
 Swept backwards by the sea-surge. He sat on 1270
 In silence, glaring: inactivity
 Was not his wont. That time when from the lea
 The delver or the ploughman in delight
 Goes to his hut, desirous of a bite
 To eat, and each one bends his weary knees
 Upon the threshold, caked with dust, then sees
 His toil-worn hands and curses to the sky
 His belly - that was when they glided by
 Cician homes around Cius' gateway
 And Mount Arganthon. Amicably they 1280
 Were welcomed by those living thereabout,
 The Mysians, who to them handed out
 Comestibles and wine in plenteousness
 As well as sheep for they in their distress
 Lacked these. Some brought dry wood, some leaves to spread
 Aplenty to provide for each a bed.
 Some rubbed together firesticks to afford
 A flame, some mixed wine, others spread the board,
 Once they had to Apollo at nightfall
 Made sacrifice (for he was god of all 1290
 Who sailed to sea). The son of Zeus then bade
 Them to prepare the feast but then he made
 His way into a wood that he might mould
 An oar to fit his hand: lo and behold,
 Roaming, he found a pine with branches few
 And not too leafy, likening it to
 The shaft of a tall poplar, for so high

And thick it was. He laid his quiver by
 Posthaste, his bow as well. His lion's hide
 He doffed, and then his bronzed club he applied 1300
 To it and, putting both his hands around
 The trunk, he loosed the whole thing from the ground,
 Relying on his strength, then, legs astride
 For purchase, he upheld it on one side
 Of his broad neck and ripped it totally
 Skyward, though it had stood deep-rootedly
 Within the earth. Just as in wintry days
 Calamitous Orion starts his phase
 Of setting and a sudden current shocks,
 Falls on the ship's mast and removes the blocks 1310
 And stays, it was the same with Heracles.
 Taking bow, darts, hide, club, with all of these
 He started back. Hylas began to turn
 From the heroic crew, with a bronze urn,
 And sought the holy spring that he might take
 Some water for the evening meal and make
 All else shipshape for Heracles when he
 Returned, for Heracles had similarly
 Brought up the boy from early infancy
 Without his father, Theiodamas the Good 1320
 Whom he over an ox slew cruelly
 Among the Dryopians after he,
 While ploughing fallow land, met with distress
 When Heracles had, for its usefulness
 For ploughing, compelled him, against his will,
 To render up the ox: he yearned for ill
 To the Dryopians while seeking a device
 To wage a war against them for their vice.
 This would, however, lead me far astray
 From what I sing about. But, as I say, 1330
 Hylas came to the fountain, called Pegae
 By the inhabitants who lived nearby.
 The dances of the nymphs were being held
 Just at this time, for all three nymphs who dwelled
 Upon that lovely headland took great care
 Always to honour with a nightly air
 Queen Artemis. Those nymphs who singled out
 The peaks and dells were ranging far about
 To guard the woods. A water-nymph, outside
 The lovely, flowing spring, however, spied 1340
 Close by, as she appeared, the ruddy lad
 In comeliness and sweet enchantment clad
 (For the full moon was beaming high above,

Displaying him). Cypris so filled with love
 Her trembling heart that she could scarcely draw
 Her breath in her confusion. When she saw
 Him dip the urn into the stream as he
 Leaned over and the water brimmingly
 Roared as it poured around the vessel there,
 She laid her left arm on his neck four-square,
 Agog to kiss his tender mouth: her right
 She laid upon his elbow and the sprite
 Pulled him into the stream. One man alone,
 Eilatus' son, Polyphemus, heard the groan
 While on the path, for he was looking out
 For Heracles' return. He dashed without
 Delay to Pegae like a beast that's caught
 The sound of far-off bleating, being fraught
 With blazing hunger, so it turns around
 But not a flock of sheep can there be found,
 The shepherds having driven them within,
 And so he roars in an incessant din
 Until he's weary: groaning loudly thus
 Did Polyphemus, son of Eilatus,
 Wander about in the vicinity
 And shouted while his voice rang piteously.
 He drew his great sword and was on his way
 For fear that Hylas be to beasts a prey
 Or men might ambush him and easily
 Drag him away. Then on the pathway he
 Met Heracles himself while brandishing
 His naked sword, for in the deepening
 Of night he knew him well as on he went
 To the ship. He told him of the dread event
 At once, his breathing laboured: "I shall be
 The first to tell of dire calamity,
 My poor friend; Hylas set off for the well
 But has not safe returned. What man can tell
 If thieves attacked and now are dragging him
 Away or beasts are tearing limb from limb
 His corpse? I heard him cry." That's what he said.
 When Heracles heard this, down his forehead
 Ran streams of sweat, black blood was bubbling
 Within his gut and anger made him fling
 The pine-tree to the ground, then off he went
 Upon the path, his spirit vehement.
 Just as a bull stung by a gadfly flees,
 Abandoning the marshlands and the leas:
 No thoughts of herd, no thoughts of shepherd fill

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His head; he goes, now dashing, now stockstill, 1390
 He bellows loudly, broad neck rising high,
 Assaulted by the maddening gadfly –
 It was in this way frenzied Heracles
 Now restlessly applied his speedy knees
 To running fast, and then, putting aside
 His toil, he shouted loudly far and wide.
 Immediately the morning star shone through
 The mountain-tops while down the breezes blew.
 Speedily Tiphys urged them all to board
 The ship and, what the breezes could afford, 1400
 Make use of, and they did this eagerly,
 Hauling the ropes, and thrust off from the quay.
 The sails were bellied by the wind, the strand
 Left far behind and gladly the headland
 Of Poseidon now they passed. Now dawn, bright-eyed,
 Arisen from the east, they all espied
 Beaming from heaven, and the ways showed, too,
 So clearly, while the meadows, thick with dew,
 Shone brightly: then it was they comprehended
 That they had left behind, though unintended, 1410
 Some men, and so a mighty quarrel fell
 Among them, and incessant brawl as well
 That they had left the bravest of their crew.
 Bewildered, Jason knew not what to do
 And sat in silence, eating out his heart
 In grievous sorrow. With an angry start
 Did Telamon speak out: “Oh sit there, please!
 It’s fitting to abandon Heracles!
 For his repute, it was your strategy,
 Should not eclipse your own in Greece, should we 1420
 Be blessed to come safe home. What joy is there
 In words, though? I will take myself elsewhere,
 Far from your friends who showed complicity
 In your deceit. Those were his words. Then he
 At Tiphys, son of Hagnas, swiftly came,
 His eyes like curling licks of ravening flame.
 They should have quickly come to Mysian turf
 While battling through the endless winds and surf
 But that the sons of Boreas the Thracian
 Restrained the man with words of indignation: 1430
 Alas, the dire revenge of Heracles
 For staying of a search awaited these
 Two men: in sea-girt Tenos they were slain
 By him as they were coming back again
 From the games for Pelias’ death; the earth he piled

Around them, then two monuments he styled
 Above them, one, a wondrous sight to see,
 Which moves when the North Wind blows stormily
 Upon it. These events in future time
 Would be fulfilled. Out of the deep sea's rime 1440
 Glaucus appeared, divine Nereus's wise
 Interpreter. They all observed him rise,
 His shaggy head and chest imposingly
 Drawn up above his flanks, then sturdily
 He seized the keel and to the eager crew
 Cried: "Why do you pay no attention to
 Great Zeus's counsel, proposing to bring
 Bold Heracles to the city of the king
 Aeëtes? He for the contemptuous
 Eurystheus must complete twelve strenuous 1450
 Labours and dwell in immortality,
 Should he fulfil a few more; let there be
 No grief for him. It's the gods' will, likewise,
 That Polyphemos is to organize
 A glorious city at the entranceway
 Of Kios with the Mysians and stay
 Thenceforward in the Chalybes' great land.
 The holy nymph has taken Hylas' hand
 In loving wedlock, for whose sake those two
 Wandered around, now left behind by you." 1460
 He spoke and with a plunge the restless swell
 He swathed about himself; round him, pell-mell,
 The dark waves foamed in eddies and assailed
 The hollow ship as through the sea she sailed.
 The heroes were excited. Eagerly
 To Jason Telamon, the progeny
 Of Aeacus, went up and grasped his hand
 Within his own, embraced him warmly and
 Said: "Jason, cease your anger, please, I pray:
 I erred in folly – sorrow made me say 1470
 Things arrogant and dreadful. Let me throw
 My error to the winds that we may show
 Our friendship as before:" Then prudently
 The son of Aeson said: "You slandered me,
 Good friend, with vicious words, to all men here
 Saying I wronged a kind friend. Never fear,
 However, for my anger I'll not keep,
 Though pained beforehand. It was not for sheep
 Or property that you felt indignation
 But for a friend. I hold the expectation 1480
 That you would fight another man for me

In such a case.” And then, as formerly,
They sat united. It was Zeus’s will
That of those two, Polyphemus would fulfil
A city’s founding in the Mysian land,
Named for the river flowing by it, and
The other, Heracles, would go and toil
For Eurystheus. He threatened to despoil
The Mysian territory instantly
Should they not bring to light the destiny 1490
Of Hylas, quick or dead. Then they all chose
The worthiest male progeny of those
Who lived there and then pledged a guarantee
Not to forsake their search. Accordingly
The people of Kios even today
Seek Hylas, Theiodamas’s son, while they
Watch over well-built Trachis – Heracles
Had settled in that place their guarantees,
Those noble sons. The ship, all day and night,
Was carried by strong winds but at first light 1500
No breeze was felt at all. A promontory
They then detected, very broad to see,
Rising above the bay, so on they rowed
And came to landfall as the rooster crowed.