ODYSSEY

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BY

HOMEROS

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BY SAMUEL BUTLER

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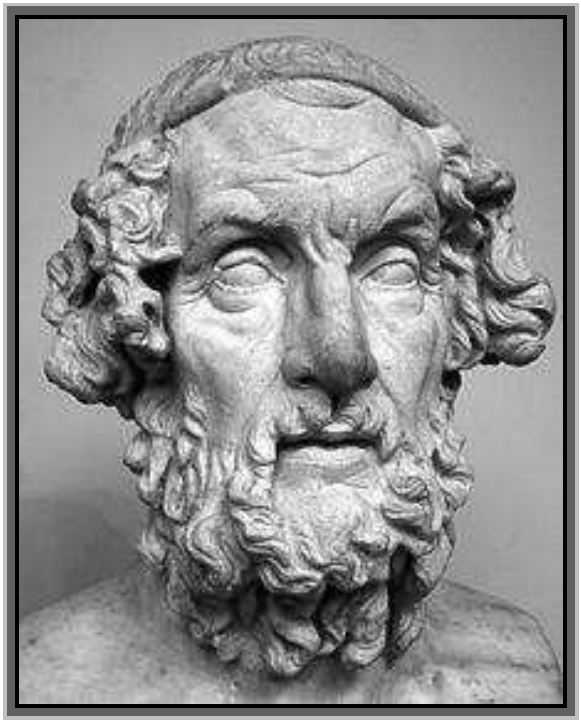
About Author



Homeros, In the Western classical tradition, **Homer** (Ancient Greek: Ὅμηρος [hómɛːros], *Hómēros*) is the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and is revered as the greatest of ancient Greek epic poets. These epics lie at the beginning of the Western canon of literature, and have had an enormous influence on the history of literature.

When he lived is unknown. Herodotus estimates that Homer lived 400 years before his own time, which would place him at around 850 BC, while other ancient sources claim that he lived much nearer to the supposed time of the Trojan War,

in the early 12th century BC. Most modern researchers place Homer in the 7th or 8th centuries BC.

The formative influence of the Homeric epics in shaping Greek culture was widely recognized, and Homer was described as the teacher of Greece. Homer's works, which are about fifty percent speeches, provided models in persuasive speaking and writing that were emulated throughout the ancient and medieval Greek worlds. Fragments of Homer account for nearly half of all identifiable Greek literary papyrus finds.

Period

For modern scholars "the date of Homer" refers not to an individual, but to the period when the epics were created. The consensus is that "the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* date from around the 8th century BC, the *Iliad* being composed before the *Odyssey*, perhaps by some decades," i.e. earlier than Hesiod, the *Iliad* being the oldest work of Western literature. Over the past few decades, some scholars have argued for a 7th-century BC date. Oliver Taplin believes that the conclusion of modern researchers is that Homer dates to between 750 to 650 BC. Some of those who argue that the Homeric poems developed gradually over a long period of time give an even later date for the composition of the poems; according to Gregory Nagy for example, they only became fixed texts in the 6th century BC. The question of the historicity of Homer the individual is known as the "Homeric question"; there is no reliable biographical information handed down from classical antiquity. The poems are generally seen as the culmination of many

generations of oral story-telling, in a tradition with a well-developed formulaic system of poetic composition. Some scholars, such as Martin West, claim that "Homer" is "not the name of a historical poet, but a fictitious or constructed name."

Life and legends

Homer and His Guide, by William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825–1905), portraying Homer on Mount Ida, beset by dogs and guided by the goatherder Glaucus (as told in Pseudo-Herodotus)

"Homer" is a Greek name, attested in Aeolic-speaking areas, and although nothing definite is known about him, traditions arose purporting to give details of his birthplace and background. The satirist Lucian, in his *True History*, describes him as a Babylonian called Tigranes, who assumed the name Homer when taken "hostage" (*homeros*) by the Greeks. When the Emperor Hadrian asked the Oracle at Delphi about Homer, the Pythia proclaimed that he was Ithacan, the son of Epikaste and Telemachus, from the *Odyssey*. These stories were incorporated into the various *Lives of Homer* compiled from the Alexandrian period onwards.

Homer is most frequently said to be born in the Ionian region of Asia Minor, at Smyrna, or on the island of Chios, dying on the Cycladic island of Ios. A connection with Smyrna seems to be alluded to in a legend that his original name was *Melesigenes* ("born of Meles", a river which flowed by that city), and his mother the nymph Kretheis. Internal evidence from the poems gives evidence of familiarity with the topography and

place-names of this area of Asia Minor; for example, Homer refers to meadow birds at the mouth of the Caystros, a storm in the Icarian sea, and mentions that women in Maeonia and Caria stain ivory with scarlet.

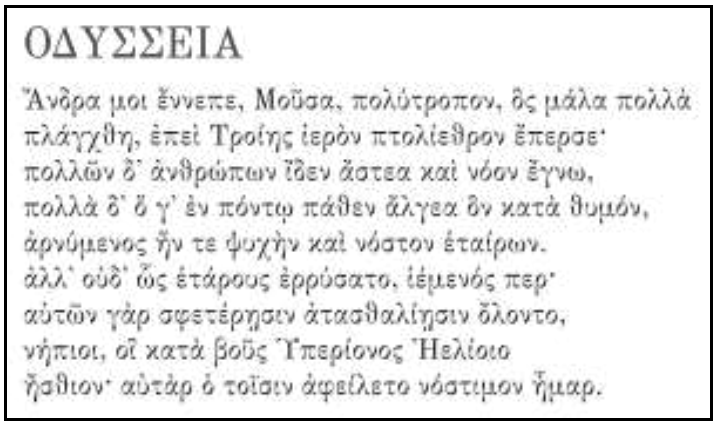
The association with Chios dates back to at least Semonides of Amorgos, who cited a famous line in the *Iliad* (6.146) as by "the man of Chios". An eponymous bardic guild, known as the Homeridae (sons of Homer), or *Homeristae* ('Homerizers') appears to have existed there, tracing descent from an ancestor of that name, or upholding their function as rhapsodes or "lay-stitchers" specialising in the recitation of Homeric poetry. Wilhelm Dörpfeld suggests that Homer had visited many of the places and regions which he describes in his epics, such as Mycenae, Troy, the palace of Odysseus at Ithaca and more. According to Diodorus Siculus, Homer had even visited Egypt.

The poet's name is homophonous with ὅμηρος (*hómēros*), "hostage" (or "surety"), which is interpreted as meaning "he who accompanies; he who is forced to follow", or, in some dialects, "blind". This led to many tales that he was a hostage or a blind man. Traditions which assert that he was blind may have arisen from the meaning of the word in both Ionic, where the verbal form ὁμηρεύω (*homēreúō*) has the specialized meaning of "guide the blind", and the Aeolian dialect of Cyme, where ὅμηρος (*hómēros*) is synonymous with the standard Greek τυφλός (*tuphlós*), meaning 'blind'. The characterization of Homer as a blind bard goes back to some verses in the Delian *Hymn to Apollo,* the third of the *Homeric Hymns,* verses later cited to support this notion by Thucydides. The Cymean historian Ephorus held the same view, and the idea gained support in antiquity on the strength of a false etymology which derived his name from *ho mὲ horṓn* (ὁ μὴ ὁρῶν: "he who does not see"). Critics have long taken as self-referential a passage in the *Odyssey* describing a blind bard, Demodocus, in the court of the

Phaeacian king, who recounts stories of Troy to the shipwrecked Odysseus. Many scholars take the name of the poet to be indicative of a generic function. Gregory Nagy takes it to mean "he who fits (the Song) together". ὁμηρέω (homēréō), another related verb, besides signifying "meet", can mean "(sing) in accord/tune". Some argue that "Homer" may have meant "he who puts the voice in tune" with dancing. Marcello Durante links "Homeros" to an epithet of Zeus as "god of the assemblies" and argues that behind the name lies the echo of an archaic word for "reunion", similar to the later Panegyris, denoting a formal assembly of competing minstrels.

Some *Ancient Lives* depict Homer as a wandering minstrel, like Thamyris or Hesiod, who walked as far as Chalkis to sing at the funeral games of Amphidamas. We are given the image of a "blind, begging singer who hangs around with little people: shoemakers, fisherman, potters, sailors, elderly men in the gathering places of harbour towns". The poems, on the other hand, give us evidence of singers at the courts of the nobility. There is a strong aristocratic bias in the poems demonstrated by the lack of any major protagonists of non-aristocratic stock, and by episodes such as the beating down of the commoner Thersites by the king Odysseus for daring to criticize his superiors. That Odysseus is described as beating Thersites, not with any object of his own, but rather with Agamemnon's sceptre, could be seen as leaving the implications of the event open to the listener's imagination or point of view. In any event, scholars are divided as to which category, if any, the court singer or the wandering minstrel, the historic "Homer" belonged.

Preface (About the Book)


ΟΔΥΣΣΕΙΑ

Ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσε·
πολλῶν δ᾽ ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
πολλὰ δ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,
ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἑταίρων.
ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ὣς ἑτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἱέμενός περ·
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,
νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἠελίοιο
ἤσθιον· αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.

The ***Odyssey*** (Greek: Ὀδύσσεια, *Odýsseia*) is one of two major ancient Greek epic poems attributed to Homer. It is, in part, a sequel to the *Iliad*, the other work ascribed to Homer. The poem is fundamental to the modern Western canon, and is the second oldest extant work of Western literature, the *Iliad* being the oldest. It is believed to have been composed near the end of the 8th century BC, somewhere in Ionia, the Greek coastal region of Anatolia.

The poem mainly centers on the Greek hero Odysseus (known as Ulysses in Roman myths) and his journey home after the fall of Troy. It takes Odysseus ten years to reach Ithaca after the ten-year Trojan War. In his absence, it is assumed he has died, and his wife Penelope and son Telemachus must deal with a group of unruly suitors, the *Mnesteres* (Greek: Μνηστῆρες) or Proci, who compete for Penelope's hand in marriage.

It continues to be read in the Homeric Greek and translated into modern languages around the world. Many scholars believe that the original poem was composed in an oral tradition by an *aoidos* (epic poet/singer), perhaps a rhapsode (professional performer), and was more likely intended to be heard than read. The details of the ancient oral performance, and the story's conversion to a written work inspire continual debate among scholars. The *Odyssey* was written in a poetic dialect of Greek—a literary amalgam of Aeolic Greek, Ionic Greek, and other Ancient Greek dialects—and comprises 12,110 lines of dactylic hexameter. Among the most noteworthy elements of the text are its non-linear plot, and the influence on events of choices made by women and serfs, besides the actions of fighting men. In the English language as well as many others, the word *odyssey* has come to refer to an epic voyage.

The *Odyssey* has a lost sequel, the Telegony, which was not written by Homer. It was usually attributed in Antiquity to Cinaethon of Sparta, but in one source was said to have been stolen from Musaeus by Eugamon or Eugammon of Cyrene (see Cyclic poets).

Exposition

The *Odyssey* begins ten years after the end of the ten-year Trojan War (that is the subject of the *Iliad*), and Odysseus has still not returned home from the war. Odysseus' son Telemachus is about 20 years old and is sharing his absent father's house on the island of Ithaca with his mother Penelope and a crowd of 108 boisterous young men, "the Suitors", whose aim is to persuade Penelope to marry one of them, all the while

enjoying the hospitality of Odysseus' household and eating up his wealth.

Odysseus' protectress, the goddess Athena, discusses his fate with Zeus, king of the gods, at a moment when Odysseus' enemy, the god of the sea Poseidon, is absent from Mount Olympus. Then, disguised as a Taphian chieftain named Mentes, she visits Telemachus to urge him to search for news of his father. He offers her hospitality; they observe the Suitors dining rowdily while the bard Phemius performs a narrative poem for them. Penelope objects to Phemius' theme, the "Return from Troy", because it reminds her of her missing husband, but Telemachus rebuts her objections.

That night Athena, disguised as Telemachus, finds a ship and crew for the true Telemachus. The next morning, Telemachus calls an assembly of citizens of Ithaca to discuss what should be done with the suitors. Accompanied by Athena (now disguised as Mentor), he departs for the Greek mainland and the household of Nestor, most venerable of the Greek warriors at Troy, now at home in Pylos. From there, Telemachus rides overland, accompanied by Nestor's son, Peisistratus, to Sparta, where he finds Menelaus and Helen who are now reconciled. He is told that they returned to Sparta after a long voyage by way of Egypt. There, on the island of Pharos, Menelaus encountered the old sea-god Proteus, who told him that Odysseus was a captive of the nymph Calypso. Incidentally, Telemachus learns the fate of Menelaus' brother Agamemnon, king of Mycenae and leader of the Greeks at Troy: he was murdered on his return home by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus.

Charles Gleyre, *Odysseus and Nausicaä*

Escape to the Phaeacians

Then the story of Odysseus is told. He has spent seven years in captivity on Calypso's island, Ogygia. Calypso falls deeply in love with him but he has consistently spurned her advances. She is persuaded to release him by Odysseus' great-grandfather, the messenger god Hermes, who has been sent by Zeus in response to Athena's plea. Odysseus builds a raft and is given clothing, food and drink by Calypso. When Poseidon finds out that Odysseus has escaped, he wrecks the raft but, helped by a veil given by the sea nymph Ino, Odysseus swims ashore on Scherie, the island of the Phaeacians. Naked and exhausted, he hides in a pile of leaves and falls asleep. The next morning, awakened by the laughter of girls, he sees the young Nausicaa, who has gone to the seashore with her maids to wash clothes

after Athena told her in a dream to do so. He appeals to her for help. She encourages him to seek the hospitality of her parents, Arete and Alcinous, or Alkinous. Odysseus is welcomed and is not at first asked for his name. He remains for several days, takes part in a pentathlon, and hears the blind singer Demodocus perform two narrative poems. The first is an otherwise obscure incident of the Trojan War, the "Quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles"; the second is the amusing tale of a love affair between two Olympian gods, Ares and Aphrodite. Finally, Odysseus asks Demodocus to return to the Trojan War theme and tell of the Trojan Horse, a stratagem in which Odysseus had played a leading role. Unable to hide his emotion as he relives this episode, Odysseus at last reveals his identity. He then begins to tell the story of his return from Troy.

Odysseus Overcome by Demodocus' Song, Francesco Hayez, 1813-15

Odysseus' account of his adventures

After a piratical raid on Ismaros in the land of the Cicones, he and his twelve ships were driven off course by storms. They visited the lethargic Lotus-Eaters who gave two of his men their fruit which caused them to forget their homecoming, and then were captured by the Cyclops Polyphemus, escaping by blinding him with a wooden stake. While they were escaping, however, Odysseus foolishly told Polyphemus his identity, and Polyphemus told his father, Poseidon, that Odysseus had blinded him. Poseidon then curses Odysseus to wander the sea for ten years, during which he would lose all his crew and return home through the aid of others. After their escape, they stayed with Aeolus, the master of the winds and he gave Odysseus a leather bag containing all the winds, except the west wind, a gift that should have ensured a safe return home. However, the greedy sailors foolishly opened the bag while Odysseus slept, thinking it contained gold. All of the winds flew out and the resulting storm drove the ships back the way they had come, just as Ithaca came into sight.

After unsuccessfully pleading with Aeolus to help them again, they re-embarked and encountered the cannibalistic Laestrygonians. All of Odysseus's ships except his own entered the harbor of the Laestrygonians' Island and were immediately destroyed. He sailed on and visited the witch-goddess Circe. She turned half of his men into swine after feeding them cheese and wine. Hermes warned Odysseus about Circe and gave Odysseus a drug called *moly* which gave him resistance to Circe's magic. Circe, surprised by Odysseus' resistance, agreed to change his men back to their human form in exchange for

Odysseus' love. They remained with her on the island for one year, while they feasted and drank. Finally, guided by Circe's instructions, Odysseus and his crew crossed the ocean and reached a harbor at the western edge of the world, where Odysseus sacrificed to the dead. He first encountered the spirit of crewmember Elpenor, who had gotten drunk and fallen from a roof to his death, which had gone unnoticed by others, before Odysseus and the rest of his crew had left Circe. Elpenor's ghost told Odysseus to bury his body, which Odysseus promised to do. Odysseus then summoned the spirit of the old prophet Tiresias for advice on how to appease the gods upon his return home. Next Odysseus met the spirit of his own mother, who had died of grief during his long absence. From her, he got his first news of his own household, threatened by the greed of the Suitors. Finally, he met the spirits of famous men and women. Notably he encountered the spirit of Agamemnon, of whose murder he now learned, and Achilles, who told him about the woes of the land of the dead (for Odysseus' encounter with the dead, see also *Nekuia*).

Returning to Circe's island, they were advised by her on the remaining stages of the journey. They skirted the land of the Sirens, who sang an enchanting song that normally caused passing sailors to steer toward the rocks, only to hit them and sink. All of the sailors except for Odysseus, who was tied to the mast as he wanted to hear the song, had their ears plugged up with beeswax. They then passed between the six-headed monster Scylla and the whirlpool Charybdis, Odysseus losing six men to Scylla, and landed on the island of Thrinacia.

Odysseus and the Sirens, eponymous vase of the Siren Painter, ca. 480-470 BC, (British Museum)

Zeus caused a storm which prevented them leaving. While Odysseus was away praying, his men ignored the warnings of Tiresias and Circe and hunted down the sacred cattle of the sun god Helios as their food had run short. The Sun God insisted that Zeus punish the men for this sacrilege. They suffered a shipwreck as they were driven towards Charybdis. All but Odysseus were drowned; he clung to a fig tree above Charybdis. Washed ashore on the island of Calypso, he was compelled to remain there as her lover until she was ordered by Zeus via Hermes to release Odysseus.

Return to Ithaca

Having listened with rapt attention to his story, the Phaeacians, who are skilled mariners, agree to help Odysseus get home. They deliver him at night, while he is fast asleep, to a

hidden harbour on Ithaca. He finds his way to the hut of one of his own slaves, the swineherd Eumaeus. Athena disguises Odysseus as a wandering beggar so he can see how things stand in his household. After dinner, he tells the farm laborers a fictitious tale of himself: He was born in Crete, had led a party of Cretans to fight alongside other Greeks in the Trojan War, and had then spent seven years at the court of the king of Egypt; finally he had been shipwrecked in Thesprotia and crossed from there to Ithaca.

Meanwhile, Telemachus sails home from Sparta, evading an ambush set by the Suitors. He disembarks on the coast of Ithaca and makes for Eumaeus's hut. Father and son meet; Odysseus identifies himself to Telemachus (but still not to Eumaeus), and they decide that the Suitors must be killed. Telemachus goes home first. Accompanied by Eumaeus, Odysseus returns to his own house, still pretending to be a beggar. He is ridiculed by the Suitors in his own home, especially by one extremely impertinent man named Antinous. Odysseus meets Penelope and tests her intentions by saying he once met Odysseus in Crete. Closely questioned, he adds that he had recently been in Thesprotia and had learned something there of Odysseus's recent wanderings.

Odysseus's identity is discovered by the housekeeper, Eurycleia, when she recognizes an old scar as she is washing his feet. Eurycleia tries to tell Penelope about the beggar's true identity, but Athena makes sure that Penelope cannot hear her. Odysseus then swears Eurycleia to secrecy.

Slaying of the Suitors

The next day, at Athena's prompting, Penelope maneuvers the Suitors into competing for her hand with an archery competition using Odysseus' bow. The man who can string the bow and shoot it through a dozen axe heads would win. Odysseus takes part in the competition himself: he alone is strong enough to string the bow and shoot it through the dozen axe heads, making him the winner. He then turns his arrows on the Suitors and with the help of Athena, Telemachus, Eumaeus and Philoteus the cowherd, he kills all the Suitors. Odysseus and Telemachus hang twelve of their household maids, who had betrayed Penelope or had sex with the Suitors, or both; they mutilate and kill the goatherd Melanthius, who had mocked and abused Odysseus. Now at last, Odysseus identifies himself to Penelope. She is hesitant, but accepts him when he mentions that their bed was made from an olive tree still rooted to the ground. Many modern and ancient scholars take this to be the original ending of the *Odyssey*, and the rest to be an interpolation.

The next day he and Telemachus visit the country farm of his old father Laertes, who likewise accepts his identity only when Odysseus correctly describes the orchard that Laertes had previously given him.

The citizens of Ithaca have followed Odysseus on the road, planning to avenge the killing of the Suitors, their sons. Their leader points out that Odysseus has now caused the deaths of two generations of the men of Ithaca: his sailors, not one of whom survived; and the Suitors, whom he has now executed. The goddess Athena intervenes and persuades both sides to

give up the vendetta, a *deus ex machina*. After this, Ithaca is at peace once more, concluding the *Odyssey*.

Character of Odysseus

Odysseus' name means "trouble" in Greek, referring to both the giving and receiving of trouble—as is often the case in his wanderings. An early example of this is the boar hunt that gave Odysseus the scar by which Eurycleia recognizes him; Odysseus is injured by the boar and responds by killing it. Odysseus' heroic trait is his *mētis*, or "cunning intelligence": he is often described as the "Peer of Zeus in Counsel." This intelligence is most often manifested by his use of disguise and deceptive speech. His disguises take forms both physical (altering his appearance) and verbal, such as telling the Cyclops Polyphemus that his name is Οὖτις, "Nobody", then escaping after blinding Polyphemus. When asked by other Cyclopes why he is screaming, Polyphemus replies that "Nobody" is hurting him, so the others assume that, "If alone as you are [Polyphemus] none uses violence on you, why, there is no avoiding the sickness sent by great Zeus; so you had better pray to your father, the lord Poseidon". The most evident flaw that Odysseus sports is that of his arrogance and his pride, or *hubris*. As he sails away from the island of the Cyclopes, he shouts his name and boasts that nobody can defeat the "Great Odysseus". The Cyclops then throws the top half of a mountain at him and prays to his father, Poseidon, saying that Odysseus has blinded him. This enrages Poseidon, causing the god to thwart Odysseus' homecoming for a very long time.

Structure

The Odyssey was written in dactylic hexameter. The *Odyssey* opens *in medias res*, in the middle of the overall story, with prior events described through flashbacks or storytelling. This device is also used by later authors of literary epics, such as Virgil in the *Aeneid*, Luís de Camões in *Os Lusíadas* and Alexander Pope in *The Rape of the Lock*.

In the first episodes, we trace Telemachus' efforts to assert control of the household, and then, at Athena's advice, to search for news of his long-lost father. Then the scene shifts: Odysseus has been a captive of the beautiful nymph Calypso, with whom he has spent seven of his ten lost years. Released by the intercession of his patroness Athena, through the aid of Hermes, he departs, but his raft is destroyed by his divine enemy Poseidon, who is angry because Odysseus blinded his son, Polyphemus. When Odysseus washes up on Scherie, home to the Phaeacians, he is assisted by the young Nausicaa and is treated hospitably. In return, he satisfies the Phaeacians' curiosity, telling them, and the reader, of all his adventures since departing from Troy. The shipbuilding Phaeacians then loan him a ship to return to Ithaca, where he is aided by the swineherd Eumaeus, meets Telemachus, regains his household, kills the Suitors, and is reunited with his faithful wife, Penelope.

All ancient and nearly all modern editions and translations of the *Odyssey* are divided into 24 books. This division is convenient but it may not be original. Many scholars believe it was developed by Alexandrian editors of the 3rd century BC. In the Classical period, moreover, several of the books (individually and in groups) were given their own titles: the first

four books, focusing on Telemachus, are commonly known as the *Telemachy*. Odysseus' narrative, Book 9, featuring his encounter with the cyclops Polyphemus, is traditionally called the *Cyclopeia*. Book 11, the section describing his meeting with the spirits of the dead is known as the *Nekuia*. Books 9 through 12, wherein Odysseus recalls his adventures for his Phaeacian hosts, are collectively referred to as the *Apologoi*: Odysseus' "stories". Book 22, wherein Odysseus kills all the Suitors, has been given the title *Mnesterophonia*: "slaughter of the Suitors". This concludes the Greek Epic Cycle, though fragments remain of the "alternative ending" of sorts known as the *Telegony*.

This *Telegony* aside, the last 548 lines of the *Odyssey*, corresponding to Book 24, are believed by many scholars to have been added by a slightly later poet. Several passages in earlier books seem to be setting up the events of Book 24, so if it were indeed a later addition, the offending editor would seem to have changed earlier text as well. For more about varying views on the origin, authorship and unity of the poem see Homeric scholarship.

Geography of the *Odyssey*

Events in the main sequence of the *Odyssey* (excluding Odysseus' embedded narrative of his wanderings) take place in the Peloponnese and in what are now called the Ionian Islands. There are difficulties in the apparently simple identification of Ithaca, the homeland of Odysseus, which may or may not be the same island that is now called Ithake. The wanderings of Odysseus as told to the Phaeacians, and the location of the

Phaeacians' own island of Scheria, pose more fundamental problems, if geography is to be applied: scholars, both ancient and modern, are divided as to whether or not any of the places visited by Odysseus (after Ismaros and before his return to Ithaca) are real.

Dating the *Odyssey*

In 2008, scientists Marcelo O. Magnasco and Constantino Baikouzis at Rockefeller University used clues in the text and astronomical data to attempt to pinpoint the time of Odysseus's return from his journey after the Trojan War.

The first clue is Odysseus' sighting of Venus just before dawn as he arrives on Ithaca. The second is a new moon on the night before the massacre of the Suitors. The final clue is a total eclipse, falling over Ithaca around noon, when Penelope's

Suitors sit down for their noon meal. The seer Theoclymenus approaches the Suitors and foretells their death, saying, "The Sun has been obliterated from the sky, and an unlucky darkness invades the world." The problem with this is that the 'eclipse' is only seen by Theoclymenus, and the Suitors toss him out, calling him mad. No one else sees the sky darken, and it is therefore not actually described as an eclipse within the story, merely a vision by Theoclymenus.

Doctors Baikouzis and Magnasco state that "[t]he odds that purely fictional references to these phenomena (so hard to satisfy simultaneously) would coincide by accident with the only eclipse of the century are minute." They conclude that these three astronomical references "'cohere', in the sense that the astronomical phenomena pinpoint the date of 16 April 1178 BCE" as the most likely date of Odysseus' return.

This dating places the destruction of Troy, ten years before, to 1188 BC, which is close to the archaeologically dated destruction of Troy VIIa circa 1190 BC.

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Preface to First Edition

This translation is intended to supplement a work entitled "The Authoress of the Odyssey", which I published in 1897. I could not give the whole "Odyssey" in that book without making it unwieldy, I therefore epitomised my translation, which was already completed and which I now publish in full.

I shall not here argue the two main points dealt with in the work just mentioned; I have nothing either to add to, or to withdraw from, what I have there written. The points in question are:

(1) that the "Odyssey" was written entirely at, and drawn entirely from, the place now called Trapani on the West Coast of Sicily, alike as regards the Phaeacian and the Ithaca scenes; while the voyages of Ulysses, when once he is within easy reach of Sicily, solve themselves into a periplus of the island, practically from Trapani back to Trapani, via the Lipari islands, the Straits of Messina, and the island of Pantellaria.

(2) That the poem was entirely written by a very young woman, who lived at the place now called Trapani, and introduced herself into her work under the name of Nausicaa.

The main arguments on which I base the first of these somewhat startling contentions, have been prominently and repeatedly before the English and Italian public ever since they appeared (without rejoinder) in the "Athenaeum" for January 30 and February 20, 1892. Both contentions were urged (also without rejoinder) in the Johnian "Eagle" for the Lent and

October terms of the same year. Nothing to which I should reply has reached me from any quarter, and knowing how anxiously I have endeavoured to learn the existence of any flaws in my argument, I begin to feel some confidence that, did such flaws exist, I should have heard, at any rate about some of them, before now. Without, therefore, for a moment pretending to think that scholars generally acquiesce in my conclusions, I shall act as thinking them little likely so to gainsay me as that it will be incumbent upon me to reply, and shall confine myself to translating the "Odyssey" for English readers, with such notes as I think will be found useful. Among these I would especially call attention to one on xxii. 465-473 which Lord Grimthorpe has kindly allowed me to make public.

I have repeated several of the illustrations used in "The Authoress of the Odyssey", and have added two which I hope may bring the outer court of Ulysses' house more vividly before the reader. I should like to explain that the presence of a man and a dog in one illustration is accidental, and was not observed by me till I developed the negative. In an appendix I have also reprinted the paragraphs explanatory of the plan of Ulysses' house, together with the plan itself. The reader is recommended to study this plan with some attention.

In the preface to my translation of the "Iliad" I have given my views as to the main principles by which a translator should be guided, and need not repeat them here, beyond pointing out that the initial liberty of translating poetry into prose involves the continual taking of more or less liberty throughout the translation; for much that is right in poetry is wrong in prose, and the exigencies of readable prose are the first things to be

considered in a prose translation. That the reader, however, may see how far I have departed from strict construe, I will print here Messrs. Butcher and Lang's translation of the sixty lines or so of the "Odyssey." Their translation runs:

> Tell me, Muse, of that man, so ready at need, who wandered far and wide, after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy, and many were the men whose towns he saw and whose mind he learnt, yea, and many the woes he suffered in his heart on the deep, striving to win his own life and the return of his company. Nay, but even so he saved not his company, though he desired it sore. For through the blindness of their own hearts they perished, fools, who devoured the oxen of Helios Hyperion: but the god took from them their day of returning. Of these things, goddess, daughter of Zeus, whencesoever thou hast heard thereof, declare thou even unto us.
>
> Now all the rest, as many as fled from sheer destruction, were at home, and had escaped both war and sea, but Odysseus only, craving for his wife and for his homeward path, the lady nymph Calypso held, that fair goddess, in her hollow caves, longing to have him for her lord. But when now the year had come in the courses of the seasons, wherein the gods had ordained that he should return home to Ithaca, not even there was he quit of labours, not even among his own; but all the gods had pity on him save
>
> Poseidon, who raged continually against godlike Odysseus, till he came to his own country. Howbeit

Poseidon had now departed for the distant Ethiopians, the Ethiopians that are sundered in twain, the uttermost of men, abiding some where Hyperion sinks and some where he rises. There he looked to receive his hecatomb of bulls and rams, there he made merry sitting at the feast, but the other gods were gathered in the halls of Olympian Zeus. Then among them the father of men and gods began to speak, for he bethought him in his heart of noble Aegisthus, whom the son of Agamemnon, far-famed Orestes, slew. Thinking upon him he spake out among the Immortals:

'Lo you now, how vainly mortal men do blame the gods! For of us they say comes evil, whereas they even of themselves, through the blindness of their own hearts, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained. Even as of late Aegisthus, beyond that which was ordained, took to him the wedded wife of the son of Atreus, and killed her lord on his return, and that with sheer doom before his eyes, since we had warned him by the embassy of Hermes the keen-sighted, the slayer of Argos, that he should neither kill the man, nor woo his wife. For the son of Atreus shall be avenged at the hand of Orestes, so soon as he shall come to man's estate and long for his own country. So spake Hermes, yet he prevailed not on the heart of Aegisthus, for all his good will; but now hath he paid one price for all.'

And the goddess, grey-eyed Athene, answered him, saying: 'O father, our father Cronides, throned in the

highest; that man assuredly lies in a death that is his due; so perish likewise all who work such deeds! But my heart is rent for wise Odysseus, the hapless one, who far from his friends this long while suffereth affliction in a sea-girt isle, where is the navel of the sea, a woodland isle, and therein a goddess hath her habitation, the daughter of the wizard Atlas, who knows the depths of every sea, and himself upholds the tall pillars which keep earth and sky asunder. His daughter it is that holds the hapless man in sorrow: and ever with soft and guileful tales she is wooing him to forgetfulness of Ithaca. But Odysseus yearning to see if it were but the smoke leap upwards from his own land, hath a desire to die. As for thee, thine heart regardeth it not at all, Olympian! What! Did not Odysseus by the ships of the Argives make thee freeoffering of sacrifice in the wide Trojan land? Wherefore wast thou then so wroth with him, O Zeus?'

The "Odyssey" (as every one knows) abounds in passages borrowed from the "Iliad"; I had wished to print these in a slightly different type, with marginal references to the "Iliad," and had marked them to this end in my MS. I found, however, that the translation would be thus hopelessly scholasticised, and abandoned my intention. I would nevertheless urge on those who have the management of our University presses, that they would render a great service to students if they would publish a Greek text of the "Odyssey" with the Iliadic passages printed in a different type, and with marginal references. I have given the British Museum a copy of the "Odyssey" with the Iliadic passages underlined and referred to in MS.; I have also given an

"Iliad" marked with all the Odyssean passages, and their references; but copies of both the "Iliad" and "Odyssey" so marked ought to be within easy reach of all students.

Any one who at the present day discusses the questions that have arisen round the "Iliad" since Wolf's time, without keeping it well before his reader's mind that the "Odyssey" was demonstrably written from one single neighbourhood, and hence (even though nothing else pointed to this conclusion) presumably by one person only—that it was written certainly before 750, and in all probability before 1000 B.C.—that the writer of this very early poem was demonstrably familiar with the "Iliad" as we now have it, borrowing as freely from those books whose genuineness has been most impugned, as from those which are admitted to be by Homer—any one who fails to keep these points before his readers, is hardly dealing equitably by them. Any one on the other hand, who will mark his "Iliad" and his "Odyssey" from the copies in the British Museum above referred to, and who will draw the only inference that common sense can draw from the presence of so many identical passages in both poems, will, I believe, find no difficulty in assigning their proper value to a large number of books here and on the Continent that at present enjoy considerable reputations. Furthermore, and this perhaps is an advantage better worth securing, he will find that many puzzles of the "Odyssey" cease to puzzle him on the discovery that they arise from over-saturation with the "Iliad."

Other difficulties will also disappear as soon as the development of the poem in the writer's mind is understood. I have dealt with this at some length in pp. 251-261 of "The

Authoress of the Odyssey". Briefly, the "Odyssey" consists of two distinct poems: (1) The Return of Ulysses, which alone the Muse is asked to sing in the opening lines of the poem. This poem includes the Phaeacian episode, and the account of Ulysses' adventures as told by himself in Books ix.-xii. It consists of lines 1-79 (roughly) of Book i., of line 28 of Book v., and thence without intermission to the middle of line 187 of Book xiii., at which point the original scheme was abandoned.

(2) The story of Penelope and the suitors, with the episode of Telemachus' voyage to Pylos. This poem begins with line 80 (roughly) of Book i., is continued to the end of Book iv., and not resumed till Ulysses wakes in the middle of line 187, Book xiii., from whence it continues to the end of Book xxiv.

In "The Authoress of the Odyssey", I wrote:

the introduction of lines xi., 115-137 and of line ix., 535, with the writing a new council of the gods at the beginning of Book v., to take the place of the one that was removed to Book i., 1-79, were the only things that were done to give even a semblance of unity to the old scheme and the new, and to conceal the fact that the Muse, after being asked to sing of one subject, spend two-thirds of her time in singing a very different one, with a climax for which no-one has asked her. For roughly the Return occupies eight Books, and Penelope and the Suitors sixteen.

I believe this to be substantially correct.

Lastly, to deal with a very unimportant point, I observe that the Leipsic Teubner edition of 894 makes Books ii. and iii. end

with a comma. Stops are things of such far more recent date than the "Odyssey," that there does not seem much use in adhering to the text in so small a matter; still, from a spirit of mere conservatism, I have preferred to do so. Why [Greek] at the beginnings of Books ii. and viii., and [Greek], at the beginning of Book vii. should have initial capitals in an edition far too careful to admit a supposition of inadvertence, when [Greek] at the beginning of Books vi. and xiii., and [Greek] at the beginning of Book xvii. have no initial capitals, I cannot determine. No other Books of the "Odyssey" have initial capitals except the three mentioned unless the first word of the Book is a proper name.

S. BUTLER.

July 25, 1900.

Preface to Second Edition

Butler's Translation of the "Odyssey" appeared originally in 1900, and The Authoress of the Odyssey in 1897. In the preface to the new edition of "The Authoress", which is published simultaneously with this new edition of the Translation, I have given some account of the genesis of the two books.

The size of the original page has been reduced so as to make both books uniform with Butler's other works; and, fortunately, it has been possible, by using a smaller type, to get the same number of words into each page, so that the references remain good, and, with the exception of a few minor alterations and rearrangements now to be enumerated so far as they affect the Translation, the new editions are faithful reprints of the original editions, with misprints and obvious errors corrected—no attempt having been made to edit them or to bring them up to date.

(a) The Index has been revised.

(b) Owing to the reduction in the size of the page it has been necessary to shorten some of the headlines, and here advantage has been taken of various corrections of and additions to the headlines and shoulder-notes made by Butler in his own copies of the two books.

(c) For the most part each of the illustrations now occupies a page, whereas in the original editions they generally appeared

two on the page. It has been necessary to reduce the plan of the House of Ulysses.

On page 153 of "The Authoress" Butler says: "No great poet would compare his hero to a paunch full of blood and fat, cooking before the fire (xx, 24-28)." This passage is not given in the abridged Story of the "Odyssey" at the beginning of the book, but in the Translation it occurs in these words:

"Thus he chided with his heart, and checked it into endurance, but he tossed about as one who turns a paunch full of blood and fat in front of a hot fire, doing it first on one side then on the other, that he may get it cooked as soon as possible; even so did he turn himself about from side to side, thinking all the time how, single-handed as he was, he should contrive to kill so large a body of men as the wicked suitors."

It looks as though in the interval between the publication of "The Authoress" (1897) and of the Translation (1900) Butler had changed his mind; for in the first case the comparison is between Ulysses and a paunch full, etc., and in the second it is between Ulysses and a man who turns a paunch full, etc. The second comparison is perhaps one which a great poet might make.

In seeing the works through the press I have had the invaluable assistance of Mr. A. T. Bartholomew of the University Library, Cambridge, and of Mr. Donald S. Robertson, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. To both these friends I give my most cordial thanks for the care and skill exercised by them. Mr. Robertson has found time for the labour of checking and correcting all the quotations from and

references to the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," and I believe that it could not have been better performed. It was, I know, a pleasure for him; and it would have been a pleasure also for Butler if he could have known that his work was being shepherded by the son of his old friend, Mr. H. R. Robertson, who more than half a century ago was a fellow-student with him at Cary's School of Art in Streatham Street, Bloomsbury.

HENRY FESTING JONES.

120 MAIDA VALE, W.9.

4th December, 1921.

The Odyssey

Book I

THE GODS IN COUNCIL—MINERVA'S VISIT TO ITHACA—THE CHALLENGE FROM TELEMACHUS TO THE SUITORS.

Tell me, O Muse, of that ingenious hero who travelled far and wide after he had sacked the famous town of Troy. Many cities did he visit, and many were the nations with whose manners and customs he was acquainted; moreover he suffered much by sea while trying to save his own life and bring his men safely home; but do what he might he could not save his men, for they perished through their own sheer folly in eating the cattle of the Sun-god Hyperion; so the god prevented them

from ever reaching home. Tell me, too, about all these things, oh daughter of Jove, from whatsoever source you may know them.

So now all who escaped death in battle or by shipwreck had got safely home except Ulysses, and he, though he was longing to return to his wife and country, was detained by the goddess Calypso, who had got him into a large cave and wanted to marry him. But as years went by, there came a time when the gods settled that he should go back to Ithaca; even then, however, when he was among his own people, his troubles were not yet over; nevertheless all the gods had now begun to pity him except Neptune, who still persecuted him without ceasing and would not let him get home.

Now Neptune had gone off to the Ethiopians, who are at the world's end, and lie in two halves, the one looking West and the other East. 1 He had gone there to accept a hecatomb of sheep and oxen, and was enjoying himself at his festival; but the other gods met in the house of Olympian Jove, and the sire of gods and men spoke first. At that moment he was thinking of Aegisthus, who had been killed by Agamemnon's son Orestes; so he said to the other gods:

"See now, how men lay blame upon us gods for what is after all nothing but their own folly. Look at Aegisthus; he must needs make love to Agamemnon's wife unrighteously and then kill Agamemnon, though he knew it would be the death of him; for I sent Mercury to warn him not to do either of these things, inasmuch as Orestes would be sure to take his revenge when he grew up and wanted to return home. Mercury told him this in

all good will but he would not listen, and now he has paid for everything in full."

Then Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, it served Aegisthus right, and so it would any one else who does as he did; but Aegisthus is neither here nor there; it is for Ulysses that my heart bleeds, when I think of his sufferings in that lonely sea-girt island, far away, poor man, from all his friends. It is an island covered with forest, in the very middle of the sea, and a goddess lives there, daughter of the magician Atlas, who looks after the bottom of the ocean, and carries the great columns that keep heaven and earth asunder. This daughter of Atlas has got hold of poor unhappy Ulysses, and keeps trying by every kind of blandishment to make him forget his home, so that he is tired of life, and thinks of nothing but how he may once more see the smoke of his own chimneys. You, sir, take no heed of this, and yet when Ulysses was before Troy did he not propitiate you with many a burnt sacrifice? Why then should you keep on being so angry with him?"

And Jove said, "My child, what are you talking about? How can I forget Ulysses than whom there is no more capable man on earth, nor more liberal in his offerings to the immortal gods that live in heaven? Bear in mind, however, that Neptune is still furious with Ulysses for having blinded an eye of Polyphemus king of the Cyclopes. Polyphemus is son to Neptune by the nymph Thoosa, daughter to the sea-king Phorcys; therefore though he will not kill Ulysses outright, he torments him by preventing him from getting home. Still, let us lay our heads together and see how we can help him to return; Neptune will

then be pacified, for if we are all of a mind he can hardly stand out against us."

And Minerva said, "Father, son of Saturn, King of kings, if, then, the gods now mean that Ulysses should get home, we should first send Mercury to the Ogygian island to tell Calypso that we have made up our minds and that he is to return. In the meantime I will go to Ithaca, to put heart into Ulysses' son Telemachus; I will embolden him to call the Achaeans in assembly, and speak out to the suitors of his mother Penelope, who persist in eating up any number of his sheep and oxen; I will also conduct him to Sparta and to Pylos, to see if he can hear anything about the return of his dear father—for this will make people speak well of him."

So saying she bound on her glittering golden sandals, imperishable, with which she can fly like the wind over land or sea; she grasped the redoubtable bronze-shod spear, so stout and sturdy and strong, wherewith she quells the ranks of heroes who have displeased her, and down she darted from the topmost summits of Olympus, whereon forthwith she was in Ithaca, at the gateway of Ulysses' house, disguised as a visitor, Mentes, chief of the Taphians, and she held a bronze spear in her hand. There she found the lordly suitors seated on hides of the oxen which they had killed and eaten, and playing draughts in front of the house. Men-servants and pages were bustling about to wait upon them, some mixing wine with water in the mixing-bowls, some cleaning down the tables with wet sponges and laying them out again, and some cutting up great quantities of meat.

Telemachus saw her long before any one else did. He was sitting moodily among the suitors thinking about his brave father, and how he would send them flying out of the house, if he were to come to his own again and be honoured as in days gone by. Thus brooding as he sat among them, he caught sight of Minerva and went straight to the gate, for he was vexed that a stranger should be kept waiting for admittance. He took her right hand in his own, and bade her give him her spear. "Welcome," said he, "to our house, and when you have partaken of food you shall tell us what you have come for."

He led the way as he spoke, and Minerva followed him. When they were within he took her spear and set it in the spear-stand against a strong bearing-post along with the many other spears of his unhappy father, and he conducted her to a richly decorated seat under which he threw a cloth of damask. There was a footstool also for her feet,2 and he set another seat near her for himself, away from the suitors, that she might not be annoyed while eating by their noise and insolence, and that he might ask her more freely about his father.

A maid servant then brought them water in a beautiful golden ewer and poured it into a silver basin for them to wash their hands, and she drew a clean table beside them. An upper servant brought them bread, and offered them many good things of what there was in the house, the carver fetched them plates of all manner of meats and set cups of gold by their side, and a manservant brought them wine and poured it out for them.

Then the suitors came in and took their places on the benches and seats. 3 Forthwith men servants poured water over

their hands, maids went round with the bread-baskets, pages filled the mixing-bowls with wine and water, and they laid their hands upon the good things that were before them. As soon as they had had enough to eat and drink they wanted music and dancing, which are the crowning embellishments of a banquet, so a servant brought a lyre to Phemius, whom they compelled perforce to sing to them. As soon as he touched his lyre and began to sing Telemachus spoke low to Minerva, with his head close to hers that no man might hear.

"I hope, sir," said he, "that you will not be offended with what I am going to say. Singing comes cheap to those who do not pay for it, and all this is done at the cost of one whose bones lie rotting in some wilderness or grinding to powder in the surf. If these men were to see my father come back to Ithaca they would pray for longer legs rather than a longer purse, for money would not serve them; but he, alas, has fallen on an ill fate, and even when people do sometimes say that he is coming, we no longer heed them; we shall never see him again. And now, sir, tell me and tell me true, who you are and where you come from. Tell me of your town and parents, what manner of ship you came in, how your crew brought you to Ithaca, and of what nation they declared themselves to be—for you cannot have come by land. Tell me also truly, for I want to know, are you a stranger to this house, or have you been here in my father's time? In the old days we had many visitors for my father went about much himself."

And Minerva answered, "I will tell you truly and particularly all about it. I am Mentes, son of Anchialus, and I am King of the Taphians. I have come here with my ship and crew, on a

voyage to men of a foreign tongue being bound for Temesa 4 with a cargo of iron, and I shall bring back copper. As for my ship, it lies over yonder off the open country away from the town, in the harbour Rheithron 5 under the wooded mountain Neritum. 6 Our fathers were friends before us, as old Laertes will tell you, if you will go and ask him. They say, however, that he never comes to town now, and lives by himself in the country, faring hardly, with an old woman to look after him and get his dinner for him, when he comes in tired from pottering about his vineyard. They told me your father was at home again, and that was why I came, but it seems the gods are still keeping him back, for he is not dead yet not on the mainland. It is more likely he is on some sea-girt island in mid ocean, or a prisoner among savages who are detaining him against his will. I am no prophet, and know very little about omens, but I speak as it is borne in upon me from heaven, and assure you that he will not be away much longer; for he is a man of such resource that even though he were in chains of iron he would find some means of getting home again. But tell me, and tell me true, can Ulysses really have such a fine looking fellow for a son? You are indeed wonderfully like him about the head and eyes, for we were close friends before he set sail for Troy where the flower of all the Argives went also. Since that time we have never either of us seen the other."

"My mother," answered Telemachus, "tells me I am son to Ulysses, but it is a wise child that knows his own father. Would that I were son to one who had grown old upon his own estates, for, since you ask me, there is no more ill-starred man under heaven than he who they tell me is my father."

And Minerva said, "There is no fear of your race dying out yet, while Penelope has such a fine son as you are. But tell me, and tell me true, what is the meaning of all this feasting, and who are these people? What is it all about? Have you some banquet, or is there a wedding in the family—for no one seems to be bringing any provisions of his own? And the guests—how atrociously they are behaving; what riot they make over the whole house; it is enough to disgust any respectable person who comes near them."

"Sir," said Telemachus, "as regards your question, so long as my father was here it was well with us and with the house, but the gods in their displeasure have willed it otherwise, and have hidden him away more closely than mortal man was ever yet hidden. I could have borne it better even though he were dead, if he had fallen with his men before Troy, or had died with friends around him when the days of his fighting were done; for then the Achaeans would have built a mound over his ashes, and I should myself have been heir to his renown; but now the storm-winds have spirited him away we know not whither; he is gone without leaving so much as a trace behind him, and I inherit nothing but dismay. Nor does the matter end simply with grief for the loss of my father; heaven has laid sorrows upon me of yet another kind; for the chiefs from all our islands, Dulichium, Same, and the woodland island of Zacynthus, as also all the principal men of Ithaca itself, are eating up my house under the pretext of paying their court to my mother, who will neither point blank say that she will not marry, 7 nor yet bring matters to an end; so they are making

havoc of my estate, and before long will do so also with myself."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Minerva, "then you do indeed want Ulysses home again. Give him his helmet, shield, and a couple of lances, and if he is the man he was when I first knew him in our house, drinking and making merry, he would soon lay his hands about these rascally suitors, were he to stand once more upon his own threshold. He was then coming from Ephyra, where he had been to beg poison for his arrows from Ilus, son of Mermerus. Ilus feared the ever-living gods and would not give him any, but my father let him have some, for he was very fond of him. If Ulysses is the man he then was these suitors will have a short shrift and a sorry wedding.

"But there! It rests with heaven to determine whether he is to return, and take his revenge in his own house or no; I would, however, urge you to set about trying to get rid of these suitors at once. Take my advice, call the Achaean heroes in assembly to-morrow morning—lay your case before them, and call heaven to bear you witness. Bid the suitors take themselves off, each to his own place, and if your mother's mind is set on marrying again, let her go back to her father, who will find her a husband and provide her with all the marriage gifts that so dear a daughter may expect. As for yourself, let me prevail upon you to take the best ship you can get, with a crew of twenty men, and go in quest of your father who has so long been missing. Some one may tell you something, or (and people often hear things in this way) some heaven-sent message may direct you. First go to Pylos and ask Nestor; thence go on to Sparta and visit Menelaus, for he got home last of all the Achaeans; if you

hear that your father is alive and on his way home, you can put up with the waste these suitors will make for yet another twelve months. If on the other hand you hear of his death, come home at once, celebrate his funeral rites with all due pomp, build a barrow to his memory, and make your mother marry again. Then, having done all this, think it well over in your mind how, by fair means or foul, you may kill these suitors in your own house. You are too old to plead infancy any longer; have you not heard how people are singing Orestes' praises for having killed his father's murderer Aegisthus? You are a fine, smart looking fellow; show your mettle, then, and make yourself a name in story. Now, however, I must go back to my ship and to my crew, who will be impatient if I keep them waiting longer; think the matter over for yourself, and remember what I have said to you."

"Sir," answered Telemachus, "it has been very kind of you to talk to me in this way, as though I were your own son, and I will do all you tell me; I know you want to be getting on with your voyage, but stay a little longer till you have taken a bath and refreshed yourself. I will then give you a present, and you shall go on your way rejoicing; I will give you one of great beauty and value—a keepsake such as only dear friends give to one another."

Minerva answered, "Do not try to keep me, for I would be on my way at once. As for any present you may be disposed to make me, keep it till I come again, and I will take it home with me. You shall give me a very good one, and I will give you one of no less value in return."

With these words she flew away like a bird into the air, but she had given Telemachus courage, and had made him think more than ever about his father. He felt the change, wondered at it, and knew that the stranger had been a god, so he went straight to where the suitors were sitting.

Phemius was still singing, and his hearers sat rapt in silence as he told the sad tale of the return from Troy, and the ills Minerva had laid upon the Achaeans. Penelope, daughter of Icarius, heard his song from her room upstairs, and came down by the great staircase, not alone, but attended by two of her handmaids. When she reached the suitors she stood by one of the bearing posts that supported the roof of the cloisters 8 with a staid maiden on either side of her. She held a veil, moreover, before her face, and was weeping bitterly.

"Phemius," she cried, "you know many another feat of gods and heroes, such as poets love to celebrate. Sing the suitors some one of these, and let them drink their wine in silence, but cease this sad tale, for it breaks my sorrowful heart, and reminds me of my lost husband whom I mourn ever without ceasing, and whose name was great over all Hellas and middle Argos." 9

"Mother," answered Telemachus, "let the bard sing what he has a mind to; bards do not make the ills they sing of; it is Jove, not they, who makes them, and who sends weal or woe upon mankind according to his own good pleasure. This fellow means no harm by singing the ill-fated return of the Danaans, for people always applaud the latest songs most warmly. Make up your mind to it and bear it; Ulysses is not the only man who never came back from Troy, but many another went down as

well as he. Go, then, within the house and busy yourself with your daily duties, your loom, your distaff, and the ordering of your servants; for speech is man's matter, and mine above all others 10—for it is I who am master here."

She went wondering back into the house, and laid her son's saying in her heart. Then, going upstairs with her handmaids into her room, she mourned her dear husband till Minerva shed sweet sleep over her eyes. But the suitors were clamorous throughout the covered cloisters 11, and prayed each one that he might be her bed fellow.

Then Telemachus spoke, "Shameless," he cried, "and insolent suitors, let us feast at our pleasure now, and let there be no brawling, for it is a rare thing to hear a man with such a divine voice as Phemius has; but in the morning meet me in full assembly that I may give you formal notice to depart, and feast at one another's houses, turn and turn about, at your own cost. If on the other hand you choose to persist in spunging upon one man, heaven help me, but Jove shall reckon with you in full, and when you fall in my father's house there shall be no man to avenge you."

The suitors bit their lips as they heard him, and marvelled at the boldness of his speech. Then, Antinous, son of Eupeithes, said, "The gods seem to have given you lessons in bluster and tall talking; may Jove never grant you to be chief in Ithaca as your father was before you."

Telemachus answered, "Antinous, do not chide with me, but, god willing, I will be chief too if I can. Is this the worst fate you can think of for me? It is no bad thing to be a chief, for it