

# Classical Mythology

LLCU 316.010/080

## *HOMER'S ODYSSEY* CLASSIC MASTERPIECE.



# Class 24

The Age of Heroes:

*The Odyssey*

Readings for next Tuesday:

525-544 (*The Odyssey*)

# Reminder:

## Online Student Evaluations

The University (and I!) ask your assistance completing the evaluations for this course.

- I read them all (carefully) to evaluate course content, presentation, and assessments
- Student evaluations are important elements for professional evaluations and promotion



# Last Class: The Death of Hector





# Last Class: Priam's Ransom of Hector



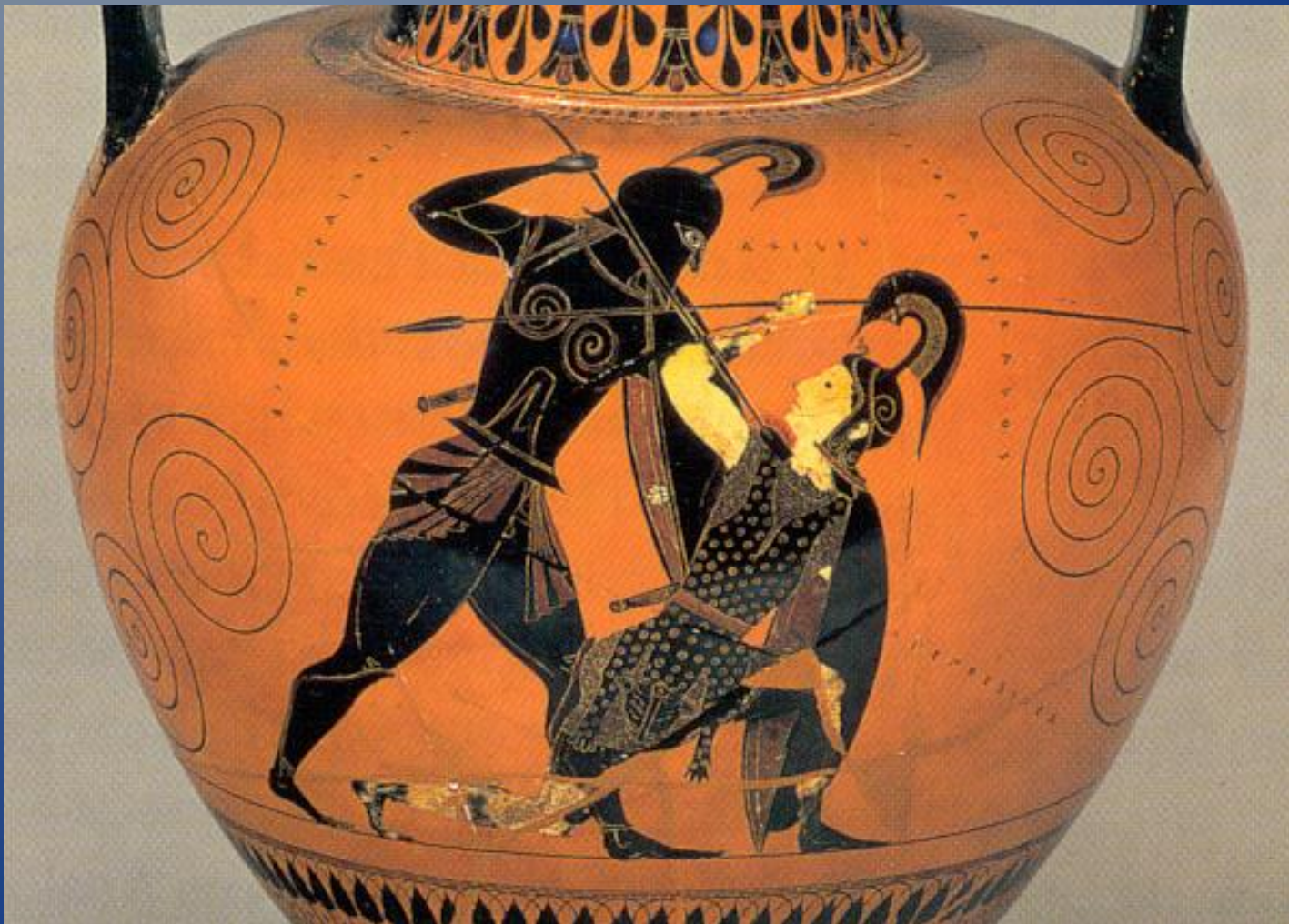
# The End of the War

- .Achilles back in the fight
- .Troy's main hero Hector is dead
- .Troy still cannot be taken



# The End of the War: Trojans Call Reinforcements

.From the north, the **Amazons** (Penthesileia)





# The End of the War



# The End of the War: Trojans Call Reinforcements

.From the south, the Ethiopians



# The End of the War: Trojans Call Reinforcements

.From the south, the Ethiopians (**Memnon**)





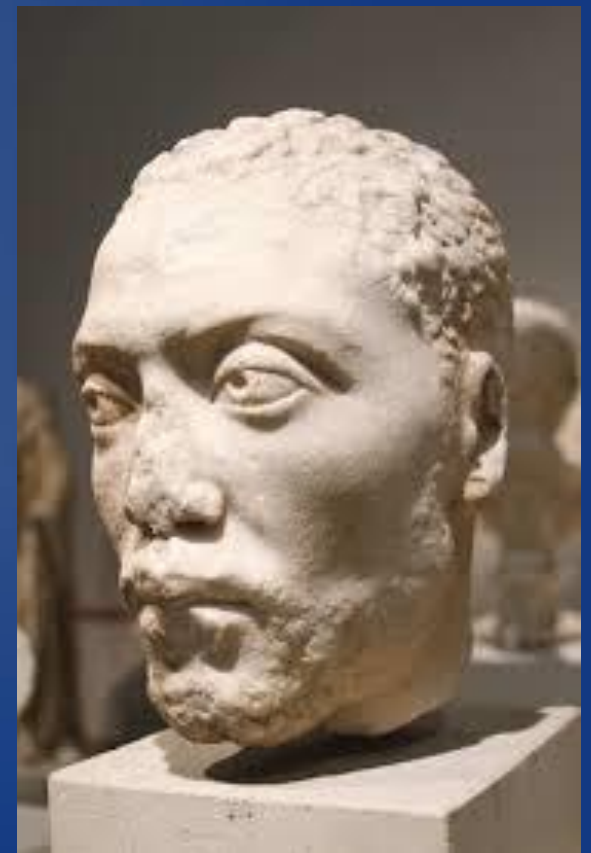
# The End of the War: Memnon

- Story told in the epic poem *Aethiopis* (now lost, except for a few lines)
- Son of Eos (Dawn)
- Identified with either the East (Persia) or South (Africa – more common)
- Said to be comparable to Achilles (even had armor made by Hephaestus, like Achilles)
- In the slight evidence we have, his story paralleled Hector (a worth competitor for Achilles, whose death is pitied: Memnon was made a god after his death, though)



# The End of the War: Trojans Call Reinforcements

.Memnon: Father of Thor?  
(13<sup>th</sup> century Icelandic *Prose Edda*)



# The End of the War: *Xanthochroos* Achilles

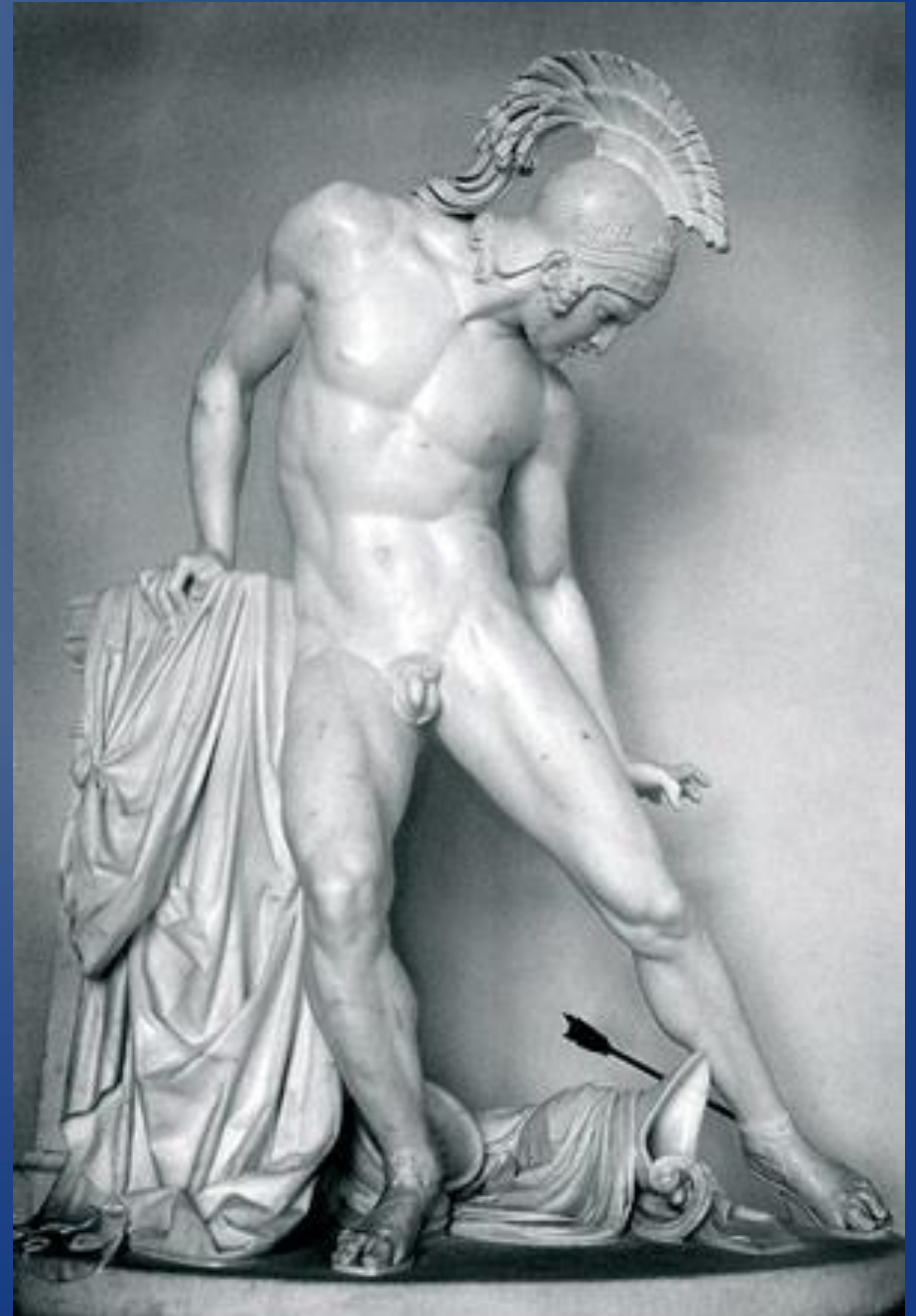
- The only evidence we have in the *Iliad* of Achilles' appearance describes him as *xantho*-haired (blonde, auburn, chestnut?)
- A later Greek poem describes him as *xanthochroos* (*xantho*-skinned); and curly haired (considered attractive)





# The End of the War

.Paris kills Achilles  
(with help from Apollo)



# The End of the War

- The Trojan Horse: the Greeks' last effort



# The End of the War

- The Trojan Horse: the Greeks' last effort
  - The Greeks let the Trojans believe that they've returned home to Greece
  - Leave a giant wooden horse on the beach (saying that it's for Athena, and adding that it will protect Troy if it's inside their walls – but too big to fit!)
  - The Trojans bring it in anyways, and the Greeks inside jump out at night and open the gates for their comrades





# The End of the War

The destruction of the Trojan house:

- Priam killed by Neoptolemus (Achilles' son)
- Hecuba (Priam's wife) and Andromache (Hector's wife) taken as prisoners
- Astyanax (Hector's son) killed
- Aeneas escapes with the help of Aphrodite

# Odysseus' *Nostos* (voyage home)





# Odysseus' *Nostos* (voyage home) A Reconstruction





# Odysseus' *Nostos* (voyage home)

Aristotle, *Poetics*

“The story of the *Odyssey* is not long; a man is away from home for many years; Poseidon constantly is on the watch to destroy him, and he is alone; at home his property is being wasted by suitors, and his son is the intended victim of a plot. He reaches home, tempest-tossed; he makes himself known, attacks his enemies and destroys them, and he is saved. This is the heart of the matter: the rest is episodes.”

# Odysseus' *Nostos* (voyage home)

The *Odyssey* is essentially the story of a man trying to make it home to his family, who are in danger (urgency).

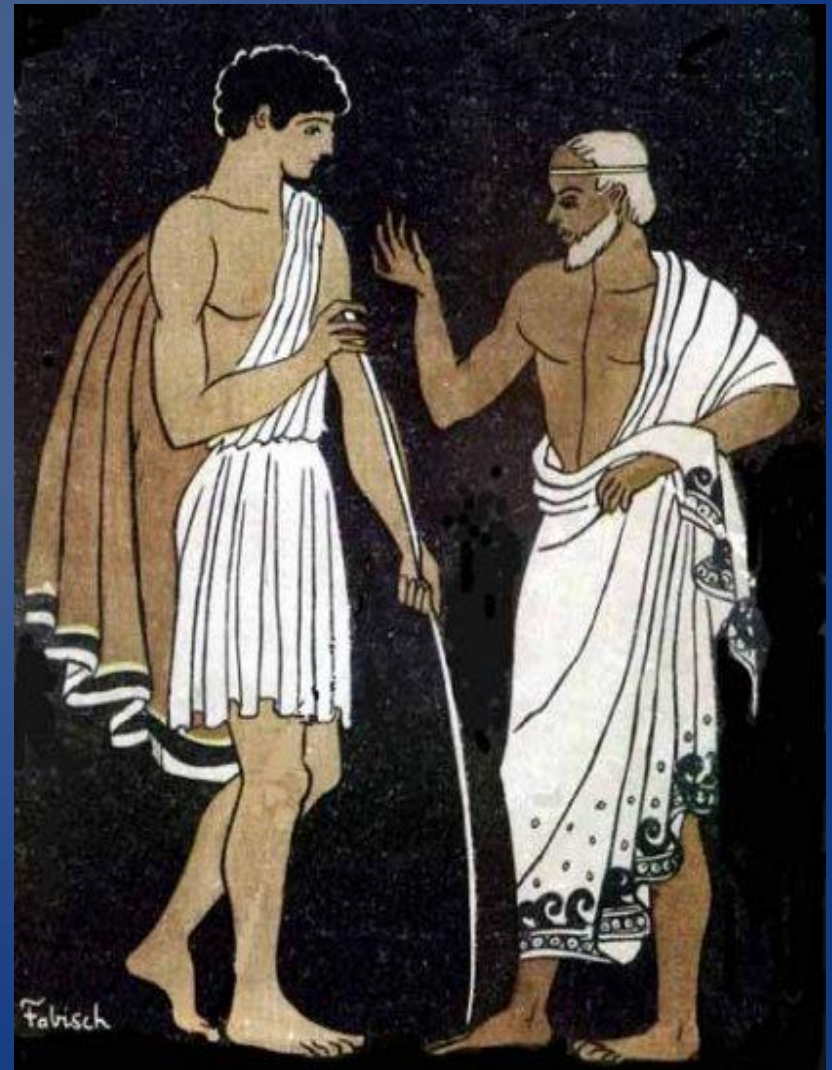
- Suitors trying to take Odysseus' place as king, and eating up his family's wealth while vying for Penelope's hand

Along the way, there are obstacles that he must face – both dangers and pleasures – to prove his resolve and loyalty.

## Books 1-4

# Telemachus and Mentor (Athena in disguise) (A mini-*nostos*: son searching for father)

- Telemachus (Odysseus' son) goes to mainland Greece to ask about his father
- Accompanied by Mentor (Athena in disguise)
- A short “coming of age” segment to the story – Telemachus is going on a youth-sized adventure



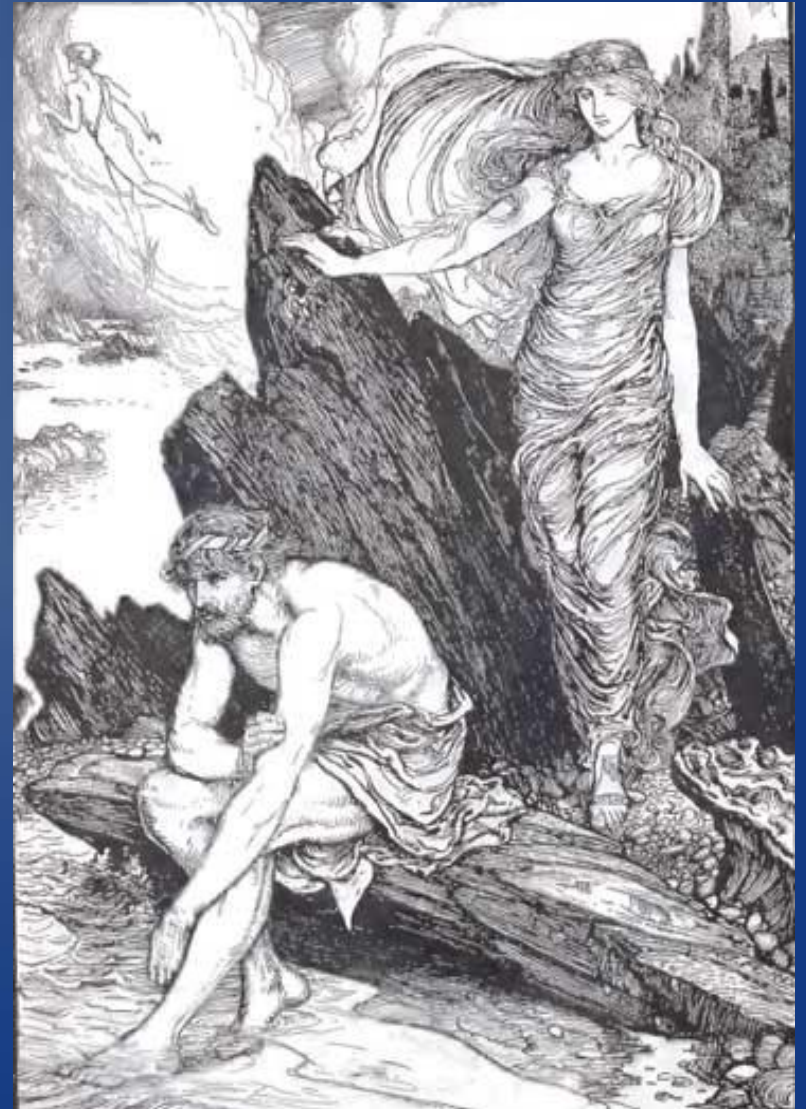


## Books 5

### Odysseus and Calypso

(After a delay in returning for seven years!)

- Odysseus appears near the end of his journey home
- He has been living with the nymph Calypso on her island for 7 years
- Needs to return home
- Hermes is sent by Zeus to order Calypso to “release him”
  - She does



# Books 6-8

## Odysseus among the Phaeaceans

### Nausicaa and Alcinous

Ship destroyed returning home

Washes up on Phaeacean shores

Greeted first by the princess  
Nausicaa

These people (not Greek) receive  
him well and he tells them of his journeys (much of the poem  
is a flashback)

They eventually provide him with a ship to return home



# Books 9

## The Cicones and the Lotus Eaters

Cicones: a group of giants that attack Odysseus and his men

Lotus Eaters: seduce Odysseus' men with the "Lotus" plant which makes them forget about their journey





# Books 9

## The Cyclopes and The Barbaric World



## Books 9

# The Cyclopes and The Barbaric World

- Odysseus' visit to the island of the Cyclopes shows how far away he's wandered
- Inhabitants don't understand *xenia*
- The Cyclops  
Polyphemus locks  
Odysseus and his men  
in the cave, and begins  
to eat them



# Books 9 The Cyclopes

Odysseus and his men escape





# Books 9 The Cyclopes

## Odysseus' Escape Under Ram



# Books 9

## The Cyclopes

Odysseus and his men make their way to the ship

Odysseus wants the Cyclops to know who blinded him:  
“I am Odysseus, son of Laertius”



Odysseus' *ate*: because he knew Odysseus' name, the Cyclops could then call upon a curse upon his head (Poseidon answers)

# Circe

A sorceress (aunt of Medea)

Turns Odysseus' men into pigs



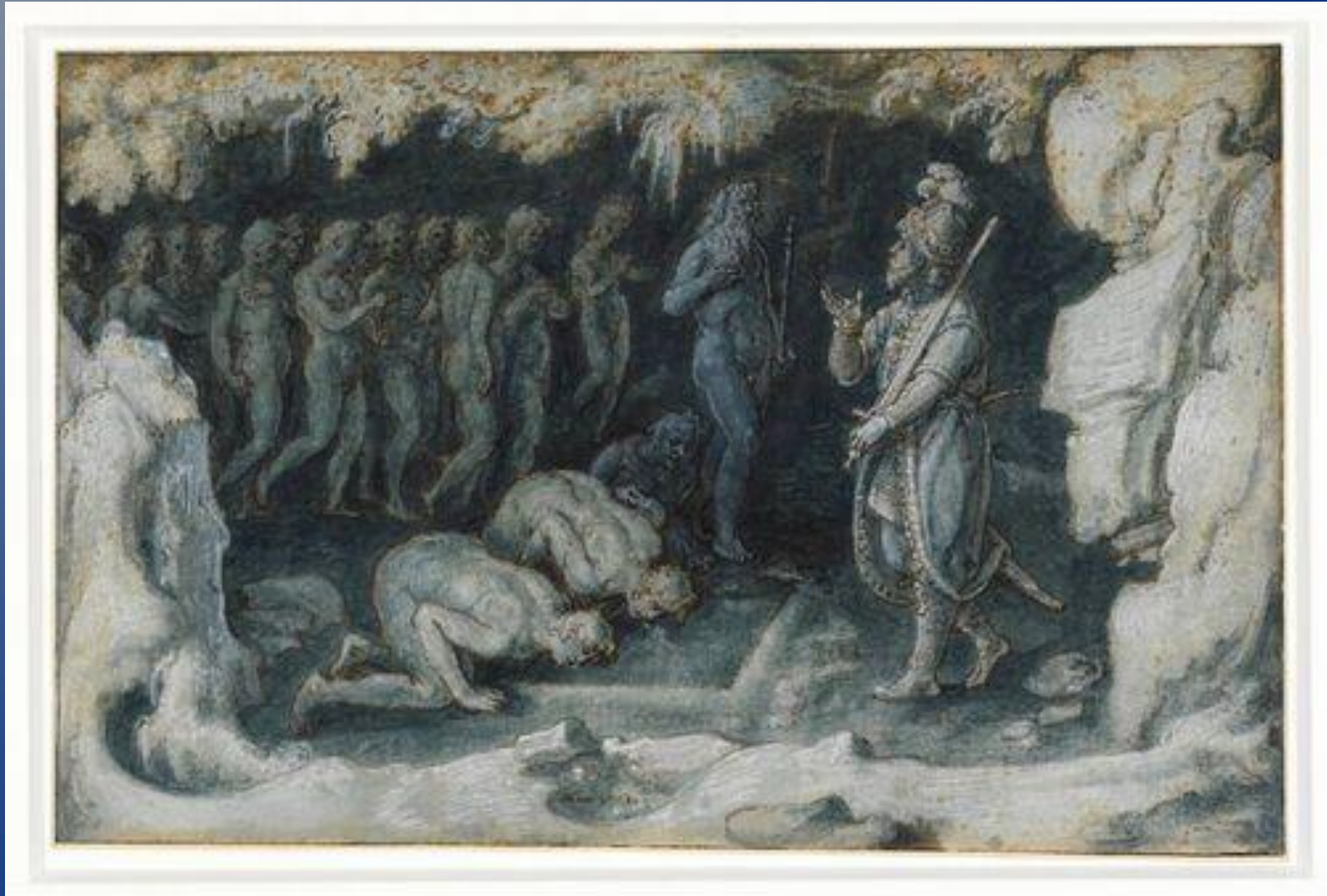
Odysseus given an herb (*moly*) which makes him immune

Circe falls in love (Odysseus stays for a year with her)



Odysseus' *Nekuia* (descent to underworld)

Seeks Tiresius for information about journey home



# Scylla and Charybdis

Told by Circe about the dangers ahead:

Scylla: a beast that snatches ships

Charybdis: a whirlpool

Odysseus chooses to go closer to Scylla (loses a few men instead of his whole ship)



# Cattle of Helios

Told by Circe about the dangers ahead:

The cattle of Helios are sacred and should not be eaten

Odysseus' men disobey orders, and eat one anyways

For the crime, the ship is destroyed and Odysseus' men are lost





# Calypso (Right before his return)

- Gives him a ship and sends him on his way
- Assisted by Athena in his arrival to Ithaca
- Disguised as an “old beggar” so he can investigate what awaits him (cf. Agamemnon)



# Odysseus Back Home at Ithaca

## Odysseus and Eumaeus





# The Suitors

**Penelope** delays the proposals by claiming to decide when she finishes weaving Laertes' (Odysseus' fathers') funeral shroud

Undoes her weaving every night

a “schemer” like Odysseus



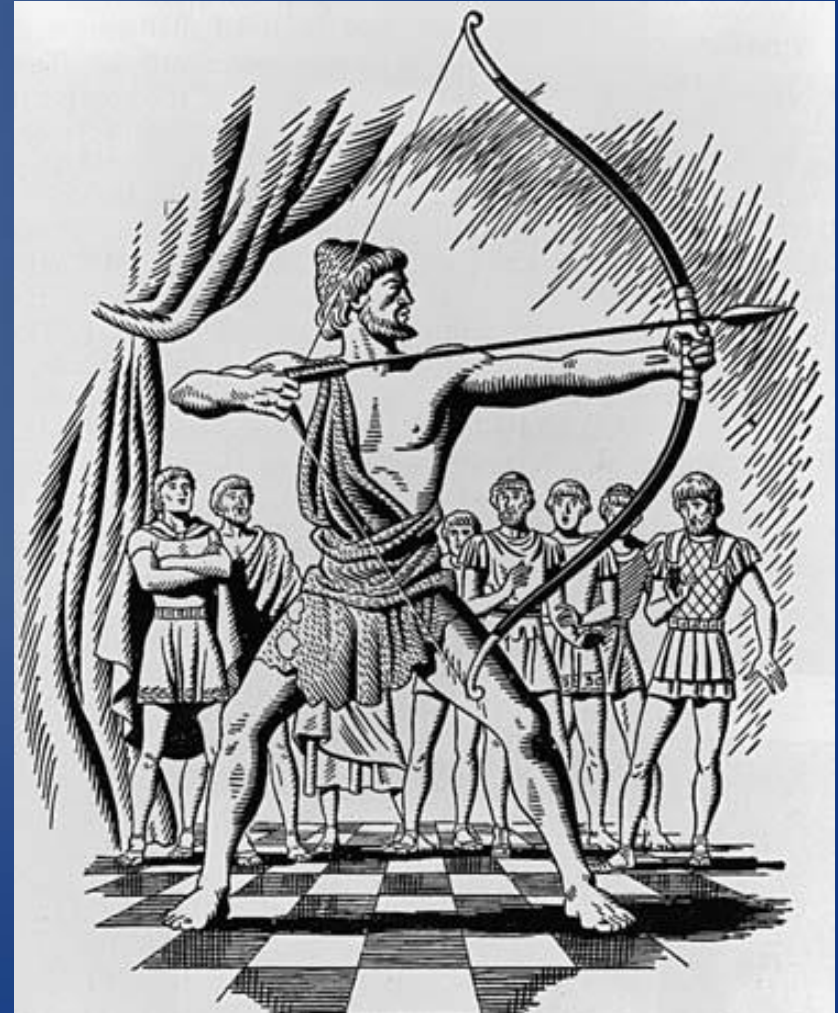


# The Contest

Odysseus enters palace in disguise as a pauper (to see what treachery awaits him – cf. Agamemnon and Clytemnestra)

Enters competition for Penelope's hand in marriage

Must string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow through 12 axes



# The Contest

## Odysseus and Telemachus kill Suitors



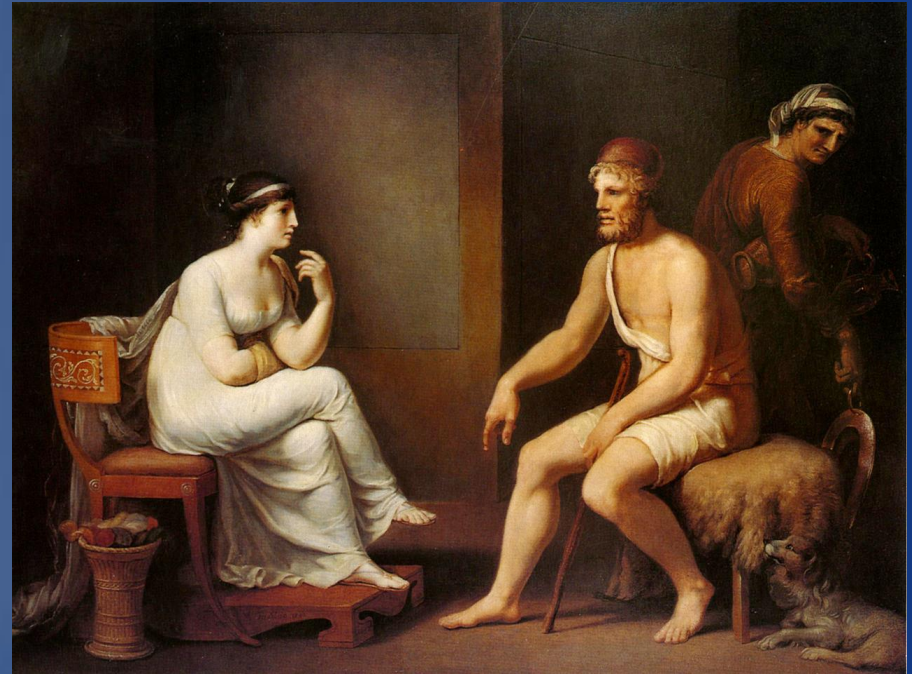
# Penelope and Odysseus Reunite





# Penelope and Odysseus Reunite

- Odysseus has proven his identity to Penelope
- Penelope has proven her loyalty to her husband
- they retire to their bedroom, where he recounts his tales to Penelope into the wee hours of the night



## Book 24: The Suitors' Families

- A pretty awful book: bizarre imagery and poorly composed – bats in the Underworld?
- Odysseus pursued by the suitors' families
- Athena comes down, and basically says “Don’t worry, guys. Everything is fine here.”

Telegonos and Odysseus' Death

*Odysseus Acanthoplex* (Sophocles)





# Telegonos and Odysseus' Death

## *Odysseus Acanthoplex* (Sophocles)

- A fragmentary play
- Odysseus is killed by his son Telegones (with Circe)
- Is stabbed with a spear made from a stingray spine
- Poseidon (connection to the sea) finally gets his final Revenge (curse of Polyphemus, the cyclops)

