

Homeric Hymn to Pythian Apollo

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(ll. 179-181) O Lord, Lycia is yours and lovely Maeonia and Miletus, charming city by the sea, but over wave-girt Delos you greatly reign your own self.

(ll. 182-206) Leto's all-glorious son goes to rocky Pytho, playing upon his hollow lyre, clad in divine, perfumed garments; and at the touch of the golden key his lyre sings sweet. Thence, swift as thought, he speeds from earth to Olympus, to the house of Zeus, to join the gathering of the other gods: then straightway the undying gods think only of the lyre and song, and all the Muses together, voice sweetly answering voice, hymn the unending gifts the gods enjoy and the sufferings of men, all that they endure at the hands of the deathless gods, and how they live witless and helpless and cannot find healing for death or defence against old age. Meanwhile the rich-tressed Graces and cheerful Seasons dance with Harmonia and Hebe and Aphrodite, daughter of Zeus, holding each other by the wrist. And among them sings one, not mean nor puny, but tall to look upon and enviable in mien, Artemis who delights in arrows, sister of Apollo. Among them sport Ares and the keen-eyed Slayer of Argus, while Apollo plays his lyre stepping high and featly and a radiance shines around him, the gleaming of his feet and close-woven vest. And they, even gold-tressed Leto and wise Zeus, rejoice in their great hearts as they watch their dear son laying among the undying gods.

(ll. 207-228) How then shall I sing of you -- though in all ways you are a worthy theme for song? Shall I sing of you as wooer and in the fields of love, how you went wooing the daughter of Azan along with god-like Ischys the son of well-horsed Elatius, or with Phorbas sprung from Triops, or with Ereutheus, or with Leucippus and the wife of Leucippus....

((LACUNA))

....you on foot, he with his chariot, yet he fell not short of Triops. Or shall I sing how at the first you went about the earth seeking a place of oracle for men, O far-shooting Apollo? To Pieria first you went down from Olympus and passed by sandy Lectus and Enienae and through the land of the Perrhaebi.

Soon you came to Iolcus and set foot on Ceneae in Euboea, famed for ships: you stood in the Lelantine plain, but it pleased not your heart to make a temple there and wooded groves. From there you crossed the Euripus, far-shooting Apollo, and went up the green, holy hills, going on to Mycalessus and grassy-bedded Teumessus, and so came to the wood-clad abode of Thebe; for as yet no man lived in holy Thebe, nor were there tracks or ways about Thebe's wheat-bearing plain as yet.

(Il. 229-238) And further still you went, O far-shooting Apollo, and came to Onchestus, Poseidon's bright grove: there the new-broken cold distressed with drawing the trim chariot gets spirit again, and the skilled driver springs from his car and goes on his way. Then the horses for a while rattle the empty car, being rid of guidance; and if they break the chariot in the woody grove, men look after the horses, but tilt the chariot and leave it there; for this was the rite from the very first. And the drivers pray to the lord of the shrine; but the chariot falls to the lot of the god.

(Il. 239-243) Further yet you went, O far-shooting Apollo, and reached next Cephissus' sweet stream which pours forth its sweet-flowing water from Lilaia, and crossing over it, O worker from afar, you passed many-towered Ocalea and reached grassy Haliartus.

(Il. 244-253) Then you went towards Telphusa: and there the pleasant place seemed fit for making a temple and wooded grove. You came very near and spoke to her: 'Telphusa, here I am minded to make a glorious temple, an oracle for men, and hither they will always bring perfect hecatombs, both those who live in rich Peloponnesus and those of Europe and all the wave-washed isles, coming to seek oracles. And I will deliver to them all counsel that cannot fail, giving answer in my rich temple.'

(Il. 254-276) So said Phoebus Apollo, and laid out all the foundations throughout, wide and very long. But when Telphusa saw this, she was angry in heart and spoke, saying: 'Lord Phoebus, worker from afar, I will speak a word of counsel to your heart, since you are minded to make here a glorious temple to be an oracle for men who will always bring hither perfect

hecatombs for you; yet I will speak out, and do you lay up my words in your heart. The trampling of swift horses and the sound of mules watering at my sacred springs will always irk you, and men will like better to gaze at the well-made chariots and stamping, swift-footed horses than at your great temple and the many treasures that are within. But if you will be moved by me – for you, lord, are stronger and mightier than I, and your strength is very great – build at Crisa below the glades of Parnassus: there no bright chariot will clash, and there will be no noise of swift-footed horses near your well-built altar. But so the glorious tribes of men will bring gifts to you as Iepaeon ('Hail Healer'), and you will receive with delight rich sacrifices from the people dwelling round about.' So said Telphusa, that she alone, and not the Far-Shooter, should have renown there; and she persuaded the Far-Shooter.

(Il. 277-286) Further yet you went, far-shooting Apollo, until you came to the town of the presumptuous Phlegyae who dwell on this earth in a lovely glade near the Cephisian lake, caring not for Zeus. And thence you went speeding swiftly to the mountain ridge, and came to Crisa beneath snowy Parnassus, a foothill turned towards the west: a cliff hangs over it from above, and a hollow, rugged glade runs under. There the lord Phoebus Apollo resolved to make his lovely temple, and thus he said:

(Il. 287-293) 'In this place I am minded to build a glorious temple to be an oracle for men, and here they will always bring perfect hecatombs, both they who dwell in rich Peloponnesus and the men of Europe and from all the wave-washed isles, coming to question me. And I will deliver to them all counsel that cannot fail, answering them in my rich temple.'

(Il. 294-299) When he had said this, Phoebus Apollo laid out all the foundations throughout, wide and very long; and upon these the sons of Erginus, Trophonius and Agamedes, dear to the deathless gods, laid a footing of stone. And the countless tribes of men built the whole temple of wrought stones, to be sung of for ever.

(Il. 300-310) But near by was a sweet flowing spring, and there with his

strong bow the lord, the son of Zeus, killed the bloated, great she-dragon, a fierce monster wont to do great mischief to men upon earth, to men themselves and to their thin-shanked sheep; for she was a very bloody plague. She it was who once received from gold-throned Hera and brought up fell, cruel Typhaon to be a plague to men. Once on a time Hera bare him because she was angry with father Zeus, when the Son of Cronos bare all-glorious Athena in his head. Thereupon queenly Hera was angry and spoke thus among the assembled gods:

(Il. 311-330) `Hear from me, all gods and goddesses, how cloud-gathering Zeus begins to dishonour me wantonly, when he has made me his true-hearted wife. See now, apart from me he has given birth to bright-eyed Athena who is foremost among all the blessed gods. But my son Hephaestus whom I bare was weakly among all the blessed gods and shrivelled of foot, a shame and disgrace to me in heaven, whom I myself took in my hands and cast out so that he fell in the great sea. But silver-shod Thetis the daughter of Nereus took and cared for him with her sisters: would that she had done other service to the blessed gods! O wicked one and crafty! What else will you now devise? How dared you by yourself give birth to bright-eyed Athena? Would not I have borne you a child – I, who was at least called your wife among the undying gods who hold wide heaven. Beware now lest I devise some evil thing for you hereafter: yes, now I will contrive that a son be born me to be foremost among the undying gods – and that without casting shame on the holy bond of wedlock between you and me. And I will not come to your bed, but will consort with the blessed gods far off from you.'

(Il. 331-333) When she had so spoken, she went apart from the gods, being very angry. Then straightway large-eyed queenly Hera prayed, striking the ground flatwise with her hand, and speaking thus:

(Il. 334-362) `Hear now, I pray, Earth and wide Heaven above, and you Titan gods who dwell beneath the earth about great Tartarus, and from whom are sprung both gods and men! Harken you now to me, one and all, and grant that I may bear a child apart from Zeus, no wit lesser than him in strength – nay, let him be as much stronger than Zeus as all-seeing Zeus

than Cronos.' Thus she cried and lashed the earth with her strong hand. Then the life-giving earth was moved: and when Hera saw it she was glad in heart, for she thought her prayer would be fulfilled. And thereafter she never came to the bed of wise Zeus for a full year, not to sit in her carved chair as aforetime to plan wise counsel for him, but stayed in her temples where many pray, and delighted in her offerings, large-eyed queenly Hera. But when the months and days were fulfilled and the seasons duly came on as the earth moved round, she bare one neither like the gods nor mortal men, fell, cruel Typhaon, to be a plague to men. Straightway large-eyed queenly Hera took him and bringing one evil thing to another such, gave him to the dragoness; and she received him. And this Typhaon used to work great mischief among the famous tribes of men. Whosoever met the dragoness, the day of doom would sweep him away, until the lord Apollo, who deals death from afar, shot a strong arrow at her. Then she, rent with bitter pangs, lay drawing great gasps for breath and rolling about that place. An awful noise swelled up unspeakable as she writhed continually this way and that amid the wood: and so she left her life, breathing it forth in blood. Then Phoebus Apollo boasted over her:

(Il. 363-369) `Now rot here upon the soil that feeds man! You at least shall live no more to be a fell bane to men who eat the fruit of the all-nourishing earth, and who will bring hither perfect hecatombs. Against cruel death neither Typhoeus shall avail you nor ill-famed Chimera, but here shall the Earth and shining Hyperion make you rot.'

(Il. 370-374) Thus said Phoebus, exulting over her: and darkness covered her eyes. And the holy strength of Helios made her rot away there; therefore the place is now called Pytho, and men call the lord Apollo by another name, Pythian; because on that spot the power of piercing Helios made the monster rot away.

(Il. 375-378) Then Phoebus Apollo saw that the sweet-flowing spring had beguiled him, and he started out in anger against Telphusa; and soon coming to her, he stood close by and spoke to her:

(Il. 379-381) `Telphusa, you were not, after all, to keep to yourself this lovely place by deceiving my mind, and pour forth your clear flowing water: here my renown shall also be and not yours alone?'

(Il. 382-387) Thus spoke the lord, far-working Apollo, and pushed over upon her a crag with a shower of rocks, hiding her streams: and he made himself an altar in a wooded grove very near the clear-flowing stream. In that place all men pray to the great one by the name Telphusian, because he humbled the stream of holy Telphusa.

(Il. 388-439) Then Phoebus Apollo pondered in his heart what men he should bring in to be his ministers in sacrifice and to serve him in rocky Pytho. And while he considered this, he became aware of a swift ship upon the wine-like sea in which were many men and goodly, Cretans from Cnossos (10), the city of Minos, they who do sacrifice to the prince and announce his decrees, whatsoever Phoebus Apollo, bearer of the golden blade, speaks in answer from his laurel tree below the dells of Parnassus. These men were sailing in their black ship for traffic and for profit to sandy Pylos and to the men of Pylos. But Phoebus Apollo met them: in the open sea he sprang upon their swift ship, like a dolphin in shape, and lay there, a great and awesome monster, and none of them gave heed so as to understand (11); but they sought to cast the dolphin overboard. But he kept shaking the black ship every way and make the timbers quiver. So they sat silent in their craft for fear, and did not loose the sheets throughout the black, hollow ship, nor lowered the sail of their dark-prowed vessel, but as they had set it first of all with oxhide ropes, so they kept sailing on; for a rushing south wind hurried on the swift ship from behind. First they passed by Malea, and then along the Laconian coast they came to Taenarum, sea-garlanded town and country of Helios who gladdens men, where the thick-fleeced sheep of the lord Helios feed continually and occupy a glad-some country. There they wished to put their ship to shore, and land and comprehend the great marvel and see with their eyes whether the monster would remain upon the deck of the hollow ship, or spring back into the briny deep where fishes shoal. But the well-built ship would not obey the helm, but went on its way all along Peloponnesus: and the lord, far-working Apollo, guided it easily with the breath of the

breeze. So the ship ran on its course and came to Arena and lovely Argyphea and Thryon, the ford of Alpheus, and well-placed Aepy and sandy Pylos and the men of Pylos; past Cruni it went and Chalcis and past Dyme and fair Elis, where the Epei rule. And at the time when she was making for Pherae, exulting in the breeze from Zeus, there appeared to them below the clouds the steep mountain of Ithaca, and Dulichium and Same and wooded Zacynthus. But when they were passed by all the coast of Peloponnesus, then, towards Crisa, that vast gulf began to heave in sight which through all its length cuts off the rich isle of Pelops. There came on them a strong, clear west-wind by ordinance of Zeus and blew from heaven vehemently, that with all speed the ship might finish coursing over the briny water of the sea. So they began again to voyage back towards the dawn and the sun: and the lord Apollo, son of Zeus, led them on until they reached far-seen Crisa, land of vines, and into haven: there the sea-coursing ship grounded on the sands.

(Il. 440-451) Then, like a star at noonday, the lord, far-working Apollo, leaped from the ship: flashes of fire flew from him thick and their brightness reached to heaven. He entered into his shrine between priceless tripods, and there made a flame to flare up bright, showing forth the splendour of his shafts, so that their radiance filled all Crisa, and the wives and well-girded daughters of the Crisaeans raised a cry at that outburst of Phoebus; for he cast great fear upon them all. From his shrine he sprang forth again, swift as a thought, to speed again to the ship, bearing the form of a man, brisk and sturdy, in the prime of his youth, while his broad shoulders were covered with his hair: and he spoke to the Cretans, uttering winged words:

(Il. 452-461) `Strangers, who are you? Whence come you sailing along the paths of the sea? Are you for traffic, or do you wander at random over the sea as pirates do who put their own lives to hazard and bring mischief to men of foreign parts as they roam? Why rest you so and are afraid, and do not go ashore nor stow the gear of your black ship? For that is the custom of men who live by bread, whenever they come to land in their dark ships from the main, spent with toil; at once desire for sweet food catches them about the heart.'

(Il. 462-473) So speaking, he put courage in their hearts, and the master of the Cretans answered him and said: `Stranger – though you are nothing like mortal men in shape or stature, but are as the deathless gods – hail and all happiness to you, and may the gods give you good. Now tell me truly that I may surely know it: what country is this, and what land, and what men live herein? As for us, with thoughts set otherwards, we were sailing over the great sea to Pylos from Crete (for from there we declare that we are sprung), but now are come on shipboard to this place by no means willingly – another way and other paths – and gladly would we return. But one of the deathless gods brought us here against our will.'

(Il. 474-501) Then far-working Apollo answered then and said: `Strangers who once dwelt about wooded Cnossos but now shall return no more each to his loved city and fair house and dear wife; here shall you keep my rich temple that is honoured by many men. I am the son of Zeus; Apollo is my name: but you I brought here over the wide gulf of the sea, meaning you no hurt; nay, here you shall keep my rich temple that is greatly honoured among men, and you shall know the plans of the deathless gods, and by their will you shall be honoured continually for all time. And now come, make haste and do as I say. First loose the sheets and lower the sail, and then draw the swift ship up upon the land. Take out your goods and the gear of the straight ship, and make an altar upon the beach of the sea: light fire upon it and make an offering of white meal. Next, stand side by side around the altar and pray: and in as much as at the first on the hazy sea I sprang upon the swift ship in the form of a dolphin, pray to me as Apollo Delphinus; also the altar itself shall be called Delphinus and overlooking (12) for ever. Afterwards, sup beside your dark ship and pour an offering to the blessed gods who dwell on Olympus. But when you have put away craving for sweet food, come with me singing the hymn Ie Paeon (Hail, Healer!), until you come to the place where you shall keep my rich temple.'

(Il. 502-523) So said Apollo. And they readily harkened to him and obeyed him. First they unfastened the sheets and let down the sail and lowered the mast by the forestays upon the mast-rest. Then, landing upon the beach of the sea, they hauled up the ship from the water to dry land and fixed long

stays under it. Also they made an altar upon the beach of the sea, and when they had lit a fire, made an offering of white meal, and prayed standing around the altar as Apollo had bidden them. Then they took their meal by the swift, black ship, and poured an offering to the blessed gods who dwell on Olympus. And when they had put away craving for drink and food, they started out with the lord Apollo, the son of Zeus, to lead them, holding a lyre in his hands, and playing sweetly as he stepped high and featly. So the Cretans followed him to Pytho, marching in time as they chanted the Ie Paeon after the manner of the Cretan paeon-singers and of those in whose hearts the heavenly Muse has put sweet-voiced song. With tireless feet they approached the ridge and straightway came to Parnassus and the lovely place where they were to dwell honoured by many men. There Apollo brought them and showed them his most holy sanctuary and rich temple.

(Il. 524-525) But their spirit was stirred in their dear breasts, and the master of the Cretans asked him, saying:

(Il. 526-530) `Lord, since you have brought us here far from our dear ones and our fatherland, -- for so it seemed good to your heart, -- tell us now how we shall live. That we would know of you. This land is not to be desired either for vineyards or for pastures so that we can live well thereon and also minister to men.'

(Il. 531-544) Then Apollo, the son of Zeus, smiled upon them and said: `Foolish mortals and poor drudges are you, that you seek cares and hard toils and straits! Easily will I tell you a word and set it in your hearts. Though each one of you with knife in hand should slaughter sheep continually, yet would you always have abundant store, even all that the glorious tribes of men bring here for me. But guard you my temple and receive the tribes of men that gather to this place, and especially show mortal men my will, and do you keep righteousness in your heart. But if any shall be disobedient and pay no heed to my warning, of if there shall be any idle word or deed and outrage as is common among mortal men, then other men shall be your masters and with a strong hand shall make you subject for ever. All has been told you: do you keep it in your heart.'

(Il. 545-546) And so, farewell, son of Zeus and Leto; but I will remember you and another hymn also.

IV. TO HERMES (582 lines)

(Il. 1-29) Muse, sing of Hermes, the son of Zeus and Maia, lord of Cyllene and Arcadia rich in flocks, the luck-bringing messenger of the immortals whom Maia bare, the rich-tressed nymph, when she was joined in love with Zeus, -- a shy goddess, for she avoided the company of the blessed gods, and lived within a deep, shady cave. There the son of Cronos used to lie with the rich-tressed nymph, unseen by deathless gods and mortal men, at dead of night while sweet sleep should hold white-armed Hera fast. And when the purpose of great Zeus was fixed in heaven, she was delivered and a notable thing was come to pass. For then she bare a son, of many shifts, blandly cunning, a robber, a cattle driver, a bringer of dreams, a watcher by night, a thief at the gates, one who was soon to show forth wonderful deeds among the deathless gods. Born with the dawning, at mid-day he played on the lyre, and in the evening he stole the cattle of far-shooting Apollo on the fourth day of the month; for on that day queenly Maia bare him. So soon as he had leaped from his mother's heavenly womb, he lay not long waiting in his holy cradle, but he sprang up and sought the oxen of Apollo. But as he stepped over the threshold of the high-roofed cave, he found a tortoise there and gained endless delight. For it was Hermes who first made the tortoise a singer. The creature fell in his way at the courtyard gate, where it was feeding on the rich grass before the dwelling, waddling along. When he saw it, the luck-bringing son of Zeus laughed and said:

(Il. 30-38) `An omen of great luck for me so soon! I do not slight it. Hail, comrade of the feast, lovely in shape, sounding at the dance! With joy I meet you! Where got you that rich gaud for covering, that spangled shell -- a tortoise living in the mountains? But I will take and carry you within: you shall help me and I will do you no disgrace, though first of all you must profit me. It is better to be at home: harm may come out of doors. Living,

you shall be a spell against mischievous witchcraft (13); but if you die, then you shall make sweetest song.

(Il. 39-61) Thus speaking, he took up the tortoise in both hands and went back into the house carrying his charming toy. Then he cut off its limbs and scooped out the marrow of the mountain-tortoise with a scoop of grey iron. As a swift thought darts through the heart of a man when thronging cares haunt him, or as bright glances flash from the eye, so glorious Hermes planned both thought and deed at once. He cut stalks of reed to measure and fixed them, fastening their ends across the back and through the shell of the tortoise, and then stretched ox hide all over it by his skill. Also he put in the horns and fitted a cross-piece upon the two of them, and stretched seven strings of sheep-gut. But when he had made it he proved each string in turn with the key, as he held the lovely thing. At the touch of his hand it sounded marvellously; and, as he tried it, the god sang sweet random snatches, even as youths bandy taunts at festivals. He sang of Zeus the son of Cronos and neat-shod Maia, the converse which they had before in the comradeship of love, telling all the glorious tale of his own begetting. He celebrated, too, the handmaids of the nymph, and her bright home, and the tripods all about the house, and the abundant cauldrons.

(Il. 62-67) But while he was singing of all these, his heart was bent on other matters. And he took the hollow lyre and laid it in his sacred cradle, and sprang from the sweet-smelling hall to a watch-place, pondering sheet trickery in his heart – deeds such as knavish folk pursue in the dark night-time; for he longed to taste flesh.

(Il. 68-86) The Sun was going down beneath the earth towards Ocean with his horses and chariot when Hermes came hurrying to the shadowy mountains of Pieria, where the divine cattle of the blessed gods had their steads and grazed the pleasant, unmown meadows. Of these the Son of Maia, the sharp-eyed slayer of Argus then cut off from the herd fifty loud-lowing kine, and drove them straggling-wise across a sandy place, turning their hoof-prints aside. Also, he bethought him of a crafty ruse and reversed the marks of their hoofs, making the front behind and the hind before, while he himself walked the other way (14). Then he wove sandals with wicker-

work by the sand of the sea, wonderful things, unthought of, unimagined; for he mixed together tamarisk and myrtle-twigs, fastening together an armful of their fresh, young wood, and tied them, leaves and all securely under his feet as light sandals. The brushwood the glorious Slayer of Argus plucked in Pieria as he was preparing for his journey, making shift (15) as one making haste for a long journey.

(Il. 87-89) But an old man tilling his flowering vineyard saw him as he was hurrying down the plain through grassy Onchestus. So the Son of Maia began and said to him:

(Il. 90-93) `Old man, digging about your vines with bowed shoulders, surely you shall have much wine when all these bear fruit, if you obey me and strictly remember not to have seen what you have seen, and not to have heard what you have heard, and to keep silent when nothing of your own is harmed.'

(Il. 94-114) When he had said this much, he hurried the strong cattle on together: through many shadowy mountains and echoing gorges and flowery plains glorious Hermes drove them. And now the divine night, his dark ally, was mostly passed, and dawn that sets folk to work was quickly coming on, while bright Selene, daughter of the lord Pallas, Megamedes' son, had just climbed her watch-post, when the strong Son of Zeus drove the wide-browed cattle of Phoebus Apollo to the river Alpheus. And they came unwearied to the high-roofed byres and the drinking-troughs that were before the noble meadow. Then, after he had well-fed the loud-bellowing cattle with fodder and driven them into the byre, close-packed and chewing lotus and began to seek the art of fire.

He chose a stout laurel branch and trimmed it with the knife....

((LACUNA)) (16)

....held firmly in his hand: and the hot smoke rose up. For it was Hermes who first invented fire-sticks and fire. Next he took many dried sticks and piled them thick and plenty in a sunken trench: and flame began to glow, spreading afar the blast of fierce-burning fire.

(Il. 115-137) And while the strength of glorious Hephaestus was beginning to kindle the fire, he dragged out two lowing, horned cows close to the fire; for great strength was with him. He threw them both panting upon their backs on the ground, and rolled them on their sides, bending their necks over (17), and pierced their vital chord. Then he went on from task to task: first he cut up the rich, fatted meat, and pierced it with wooden spits, and roasted flesh and the honourable chine and the paunch full of dark blood all together. He laid them there upon the ground, and spread out the hides on a rugged rock: and so they are still there many ages afterwards, a long, long time after all this, and are continually (18). Next glad-hearted Hermes dragged the rich meats he had prepared and put them on a smooth, flat stone, and divided them into twelve portions distributed by lot, making each portion wholly honourable. Then glorious Hermes longed for the sacrificial meat, for the sweet savour wearied him, god though he was; nevertheless his proud heart was not prevailed upon to devour the flesh, although he greatly desired (19). But he put away the fat and all the flesh in the high-roofed byre, placing them high up to be a token of his youthful theft. And after that he gathered dry sticks and utterly destroyed with fire all the hoofs and all the heads.

(Il. 138-154) And when the god had duly finished all, he threw his sandals into deep-eddying Alpheus, and quenched the embers, covering the black ashes with sand, and so spent the night while Selene's soft light shone down. Then the god went straight back again at dawn to the bright crests of Cyllene, and no one met him on the long journey either of the blessed gods or mortal men, nor did any dog bark. And luck-bringing Hermes, the son of Zeus, passed edgeways through the key-hole of the hall like the autumn breeze, even as mist: straight through the cave he went and came to the rich inner chamber, walking softly, and making no noise as one might upon the floor. Then glorious Hermes went hurriedly to his cradle, wrapping his swaddling clothes about his shoulders as though he were a feeble babe, and lay playing with the covering about his knees; but at his left hand he kept close his sweet lyre.

(Il. 155-161) But the god did not pass unseen by the goddess his mother;

but she said to him: `How now, you rogue! Whence come you back so at night-time, you that wear shamelessness as a garment? And now I surely believe the son of Leto will soon have you forth out of doors with unbreakable cords about your ribs, or you will live a rogue's life in the glens robbing by whiles. Go to, then; your father got you to be a great worry to mortal men and deathless gods.'

(Il. 162-181) Then Hermes answered her with crafty words:

`Mother, why do you seek to frighten me like a feeble child whose heart knows few words of blame, a fearful babe that fears its mother's scolding? Nay, but I will try whatever plan is best, and so feed myself and you continually. We will not be content to remain here, as you bid, alone of all the gods unfee'd with offerings and prayers. Better to live in fellowship with the deathless gods continually, rich, wealthy, and enjoying stores of grain, than to sit always in a gloomy cave: and, as regards honour, I too will enter upon the rite that Apollo has. If my father will not give it to me, I will seek – and I am able – to be a prince of robbers. And if Leto's most glorious son shall seek me out, I think another and a greater loss will befall him. For I will go to Pytho to break into his great house, and will plunder therefrom splendid tripods, and cauldrons, and gold, and plenty of bright iron, and much apparel; and you shall see it if you will.'

(Il. 182-189) With such words they spoke together, the son of Zeus who holds the aegis, and the lady Maia. Now Eros the early born was rising from deep-flowing Ocean, bringing light to men, when Apollo, as he went, came to Onchestus, the lovely grove and sacred place of the loud-roaring Holder of the Earth. There he found an old man grazing his beast along the pathway from his court-yard fence, and the all-glorious Son of Leto began and said to him.

(Il. 190-200) `Old man, weeder (20) of grassy Onchestus, I am come here from Pieria seeking cattle, cows all of them, all with curving horns, from my herd. The black bull was grazing alone away from the rest, but fierce-eyed hounds followed the cows, four of them, all of one mind, like men. These were left behind, the dogs and the bull – which is great marvel; but the cows strayed out of the soft meadow, away from the pasture when the sun

was just going down. Now tell me this, old man born long ago: have you seen one passing along behind those cows?'

(Il. 201-211) Then the old man answered him and said: 'My son, it is hard to tell all that one's eyes see; for many wayfarers pass to and fro this way, some bent on much evil, and some on good: it is difficult to know each one. However, I was digging about my plot of vineyard all day long until the sun went down, and I thought, good sir, but I do not know for certain, that I marked a child, whoever the child was, that followed long-horned cattle – an infant who had a staff and kept walking from side to side: he was driving them backwards way, with their heads toward him.'

(Il. 212-218) So said the old man. And when Apollo heard this report, he went yet more quickly on his way, and presently, seeing a long-winged bird, he knew at once by that omen that thief was the child of Zeus the son of Cronos. So the lord Apollo, son of Zeus, hurried on to goodly Pylos seeking his shambling oxen, and he had his broad shoulders covered with a dark cloud. But when the Far-Shooter perceived the tracks, he cried:

(Il. 219-226) 'Oh, oh! Truly this is a great marvel that my eyes behold! These are indeed the tracks of straight-horned oxen, but they are turned backwards towards the flowery meadow. But these others are not the footprints of man or woman or grey wolves or bears or lions, nor do I think they are the tracks of a rough-maned Centaur – whoever it be that with swift feet makes such monstrous footprints; wonderful are the tracks on this side of the way, but yet more wonderfully are those on that.'

(Il. 227-234) When he had so said, the lord Apollo, the Son of Zeus hastened on and came to the forest-clad mountain of Cyllene and the deep-shadowed cave in the rock where the divine nymph brought forth the child of Zeus who is the son of Cronos. A sweet odour spread over the lovely hill, and many thin-shanked sheep were grazing on the grass. Then far-shooting Apollo himself stepped down in haste over the stone threshold into the dusky cave.

(Il. 235-253) Now when the Son of Zeus and Maia saw Apollo in a rage about his cattle, he snuggled down in his fragrant swaddling-clothes; and as wood-ash covers over the deep embers of tree-stumps, so Hermes cuddled himself up when he saw the Far-Shooter. He squeezed head and hands and feet together in a small space, like a new born child seeking sweet sleep, though in truth he was wide awake, and he kept his lyre under his armpit. But the Son of Leto was aware and failed not to perceive the beautiful mountain-nymph and her dear son, albeit a little child and swathed so craftily. He peered in ever corner of the great dwelling and, taking a bright key, he opened three closets full of nectar and lovely ambrosia. And much gold and silver was stored in them, and many garments of the nymph, some purple and some silvery white, such as are kept in the sacred houses of the blessed gods. Then, after the Son of Leto had searched out the recesses of the great house, he spake to glorious Hermes:

(Il. 254-259) `Child, lying in the cradle, make haste and tell me of my cattle, or we two will soon fall out angrily. For I will take and cast you into dusty Tartarus and awful hopeless darkness, and neither your mother nor your father shall free you or bring you up again to the light, but you will wander under the earth and be the leader amongst little folk.' (21)

(Il. 260-277) Then Hermes answered him with crafty words: `Son of Leto, what harsh words are these you have spoken? And is it cattle of the field you are come here to seek? I have not seen them: I have not heard of them: no one has told me of them. I cannot give news of them, nor win the reward for news. Am I like a cattle-liter, a stalwart person? This is no task for me: rather I care for other things: I care for sleep, and milk of my mother's breast, and wrappings round my shoulders, and warm baths. Let no one hear the cause of this dispute; for this would be a great marvel indeed among the deathless gods, that a child newly born should pass in through the forepart of the house with cattle of the field: herein you speak extravagantly. I was born yesterday, and my feet are soft and the ground beneath is rough; nevertheless, if you will have it so, I will swear a great oath by my father's head and vow that neither am I guilty myself, neither

have I seen any other who stole your cows – whatever cows may be; for I know them only by hearsay.'

(Il. 278-280) So, then, said Hermes, shooting quick glances from his eyes: and he kept raising his brows and looking this way and that, whistling long and listening to Apollo's story as to an idle tale.

(Il. 281-292) But far-working Apollo laughed softly and said to him: `O rogue, deceiver, crafty in heart, you talk so innocently that I most surely believe that you have broken into many a well-built house and stripped more than one poor wretch bare this night (22), gathering his goods together all over the house without noise. You will plague many a lonely herdsman in mountain glades, when you come on herds and thick-fleeced sheep, and have a hankering after flesh. But come now, if you would not sleep your last and latest sleep, get out of your cradle, you comrade of dark night. Surely hereafter this shall be your title amongst the deathless gods, to be called the prince of robbers continually.'

(Il. 293-300) So said Phoebus Apollo, and took the child and began to carry him. But at that moment the strong Slayer of Argus had his plan, and, while Apollo held him in his hands, sent forth an omen, a hard-worked belly-serf, a rude messenger, and sneezed directly after. And when Apollo heard it, he dropped glorious Hermes out of his hands on the ground: then sitting down before him, though he was eager to go on his way, he spoke mockingly to Hermes:

(Il. 301-303) `Fear not, little swaddling baby, son of Zeus and Maia. I shall find the strong cattle presently by these omens, and you shall lead the way.'

(Il. 304-306) When Apollo had so said, Cyllenian Hermes sprang up quickly, starting in haste. With both hands he pushed up to his ears the covering that he had wrapped about his shoulders, and said:

(Il. 307-312) `Where are you carrying me, Far-Worker, hastiest of all the

gods? Is it because of your cattle that you are so angry and harass me? O dear, would that all the sort of oxen might perish; for it is not I who stole your cows, nor did I see another steal them -- whatever cows may be, and of that I have only heard report. Nay, give right and take it before Zeus, the Son of Cronos.'

(Il. 313-326) So Hermes the shepherd and Leto's glorious son kept stubbornly disputing each article of their quarrel: Apollo, speaking truly.... ((LACUNA))

....not fairly sought to seize glorious Hermes because of the cows; but he, the Cyllenian, tried to deceive the God of the Silver Bow with tricks and cunning words. But when, though he had many wiles, he found the other had as many shifts, he began to walk across the sand, himself in front, while the Son of Zeus and Leto came behind. Soon they came, these lovely children of Zeus, to the top of fragrant Olympus, to their father, the Son of Cronos; for there were the scales of judgement set for them both.

There was an assembly on snowy Olympus, and the immortals who perish not were gathering after the hour of gold-throned Dawn.

(Il. 327-329) Then Hermes and Apollo of the Silver Bow stood at the knees of Zeus: and Zeus who thunders on high spoke to his glorious son and asked him:

(Il. 330-332) `Phoebus, whence come you driving this great spoil, a child new born that has the look of a herald? This is a weighty matter that is come before the council of the gods.'

(Il. 333-364) Then the lord, far-working Apollo, answered him: `O my father, you shall soon hear no trifling tale though you reproach me that I alone am fond of spoil. Here is a child, a burgling robber, whom I found after a long journey in the hills of Cyllene: for my part I have never seen one so pert either among the gods or all men that catch folk unawares throughout the world. He stole away my cows from their meadow and drove them

off in the evening along the shore of the loud-roaring sea, making straight for Pylos. There were double tracks, and wonderful they were, such as one might marvel at, the doing of a clever sprite; for as for the cows, the dark dust kept and showed their footprints leading towards the flowery meadow; but he himself – bewildering creature – crossed the sandy ground outside the path, not on his feet nor yet on his hands; but, furnished with some other means he trudged his way – wonder of wonders! – as though one walked on slender oak-trees. Now while he followed the cattle across sandy ground, all the tracks showed quite clearly in the dust; but when he had finished the long way across the sand, presently the cows' track and his own could not be traced over the hard ground. But a mortal man noticed him as he drove the wide-browed kine straight towards Pylos. And as soon as he had shut them up quietly, and had gone home by crafty turns and twists, he lay down in his cradle in the gloom of a dim cave, as still as dark night, so that not even an eagle keenly gazing would have spied him. Much he rubbed his eyes with his hands as he prepared falsehood, and himself straightway said roundly: "I have not seen them: I have not heard of them: no man has told me of them. I could not tell you of them, nor win the reward of telling."

(Il. 365-367) When he had so spoken, Phoebus Apollo sat down. But Hermes on his part answered and said, pointing at the Son of Cronos, the lord of all the gods:

(Il. 368-386) ` Zeus, my father, indeed I will speak truth to you; for I am truthful and I cannot tell a lie. He came to our house to-day looking for his shambling cows, as the sun was newly rising. He brought no witnesses with him nor any of the blessed gods who had seen the theft, but with great violence ordered me to confess, threatening much to throw me into wide Tartarus. For he has the rich bloom of glorious youth, while I was born but yesterday – as he too knows – nor am I like a cattle-lifter, a sturdy fellow. Believe my tale (for you claim to be my own father), that I did not drive his cows to my house – so may I prosper – nor crossed the threshold: this I say truly. I reverence Helios greatly and the other gods, and you I love and him I dread. You yourself know that I am not guilty: and I will swear a great oath upon it: – No! by these rich-decked porticoes of the gods. And some

day I will punish him, strong as he is, for this pitiless inquisition; but now do you help the younger.'

(Il. 387-396) So spake the Cyllenian, the Slayer of Argus, while he kept shooting sidelong glances and kept his swaddling-clothes upon his arm, and did not cast them away. But Zeus laughed out loud to see his evil-plotting child well and cunningly denying guilt about the cattle. And he bade them both to be of one mind and search for the cattle, and guiding Hermes to lead the way and, without mischievousness of heart, to show the place where now he had hidden the strong cattle. Then the Son of Cronos bowed his head: and goodly Hermes obeyed him; for the will of Zeus who holds the aegis easily prevailed with him.

(Il. 397-404) Then the two all-glorious children of Zeus hastened both to sandy Pylos, and reached the ford of Alpheus, and came to the fields and the high-roofed byre where the beasts were cherished at night-time. Now while Hermes went to the cave in the rock and began to drive out the strong cattle, the son of Leto, looking aside, saw the cowhides on the sheer rock. And he asked glorious Hermes at once:

(Il. 405-408) 'How were you able, you crafty rogue, to flay two cows, newborn and babyish as you are? For my part, I dread the strength that will be yours: there is no need you should keep growing long, Cyllenian, son of Maia!'

(Il. 409-414) So saying, Apollo twisted strong withes with his hands meaning to bind Hermes with firm bands; but the bands would not hold him, and the withes of osier fell far from him and began to grow at once from the ground beneath their feet in that very place. And intertwining with one another, they quickly grew and covered all the wild-roving cattle by the will of thievish Hermes, so that Apollo was astonished as he gazed.

(Il. 414-435) Then the strong slayer of Argus looked furtively upon the ground with eyes flashing fire.... desiring to hide....

((LACUNA))

....Very easily he softened the son of all-glorious Leto as he would, stern though the Far-shooter was. He took the lyre upon his left arm and tried each string in turn with the key, so that it sounded awesomely at his touch. And Phoebus Apollo laughed for joy; for the sweet throb of the marvellous music went to his heart, and a soft longing took hold on his soul as he listened. Then the son of Maia, harping sweetly upon his lyre, took courage and stood at the left hand of Phoebus Apollo; and soon, while he played shrilly on his lyre, he lifted up his voice and sang, and lovely was the sound of his voice that followed. He sang the story of the deathless gods and of the dark earth, how at the first they came to be, and how each one received his portion. First among the gods he honoured Mnemosyne, mother of the Muses, in his song; for the son of Maia was of her following. And next the goodly son of Zeus hymned the rest of the immortals according to their order in age, and told how each was born, mentioning all in order as he struck the lyre upon his arm. But Apollo was seized with a longing not to be allayed, and he opened his mouth and spoke winged words to Hermes:

(Il. 436-462) `Slayer of oxen, trickster, busy one, comrade of the feast, this song of yours is worth fifty cows, and I believe that presently we shall settle our quarrel peacefully. But come now, tell me this, resourceful son of Maia: has this marvelous thing been with you from your birth, or did some god or mortal man give it you – a noble gift – and teach you heavenly song? For wonderful is this new-uttered sound I hear, the like of which I vow that no man nor god dwelling on Olympus ever yet has known but you, O thievish son of Maia. What skill is this? What song for desperate cares? What way of song? For verily here are three things to hand all at once from which to choose, – mirth, and love, and sweet sleep. And though I am a follower of the Olympian Muses who love dances and the bright path of song – the full-toned chant and ravishing thrill of flutes – yet I never cared for any of those feats of skill at young men's revels, as I do now for this: I am filled with wonder, O son of Zeus, at your sweet playing. But now, since you, though little, have such glorious skill, sit down, dear boy, and respect the words of your elders. For now you shall have renown among the deathless gods, you and your mother also. This I will declare to you exactly: by this shaft of cornel wood I will surely make you a leader renowned among the

deathless gods, and fortunate, and will give you glorious gifts and will not deceive you from first to last.'

(Il. 463-495) Then Hermes answered him with artful words: `You question me carefully, O Far-worker; yet I am not jealous that you should enter upon my art: this day you shall know it. For I seek to be friendly with you both in thought and word. Now you well know all things in your heart, since you sit foremost among the deathless gods, O son of Zeus, and are goodly and strong. And wise Zeus loves you as all right is, and has given you splendid gifts. And they say that from the utterance of Zeus you have learned both the honours due to the gods, O Far-worker, and oracles from Zeus, even all his ordinances. Of all these I myself have already learned that you have great wealth. Now, you are free to learn whatever you please; but since, as it seems, your heart is so strongly set on playing the lyre, chant, and play upon it, and give yourself to merriment, taking this as a gift from me, and do you, my friend, bestow glory on me. Sing well with this clear-voiced companion in your hands; for you are skilled in good, well-ordered utterance. From now on bring it confidently to the rich feast and lovely dance and glorious revel, a joy by night and by day. Whoso with wit and wisdom enquires of it cunningly, him it teaches through its sound all manner of things that delight the mind, being easily played with gentle familiarities, for it abhors toilsome drudgery; but whoso in ignorance enquires of it violently, to him it chatters mere vanity and foolishness. But you are able to learn whatever you please. So then, I will give you this lyre, glorious son of Zeus, while I for my part will graze down with wild-roving cattle the pastures on hill and horse-feeding plain: so shall the cows covered by the bulls calve abundantly both males and females. And now there is no need for you, bargainer though you are, to be furiously angry.'

(Il. 496-502) When Hermes had said this, he held out the lyre: and Phoebus Apollo took it, and readily put his shining whip in Hermes' hand, and ordained him keeper of herds. The son of Maia received it joyfully, while the glorious son of Leto, the lord far-working Apollo, took the lyre upon his left arm and tried each string with the key. Awesomely it sounded at the touch of the god, while he sang sweetly to its note.

(Il. 503-512) Afterwards they two, the all-glorious sons of Zeus turned the cows back towards the sacred meadow, but themselves hastened back to snowy Olympus, delighting in the lyre. Then wise Zeus was glad and made them both friends. And Hermes loved the son of Leto continually, even as he does now, when he had given the lyre as token to the Far-shooter, who played it skilfully, holding it upon his arm. But for himself Hermes found out another cunning art and made himself the pipes whose sound is heard afar.

(Il. 513-520) Then the son of Leto said to Hermes: `Son of Maia, guide and cunning one, I fear you may steal from me the lyre and my curved bow together; for you have an office from Zeus, to establish deeds of barter amongst men throughout the fruitful earth. Now if you would only swear me the great oath of the gods, either by nodding your head, or by the potent water of Styx, you would do all that can please and ease my heart.'

(Il. 521-549) Then Maia's son nodded his head and promised that he would never steal anything of all the Far-shooter possessed, and would never go near his strong house; but Apollo, son of Leto, swore to be fellow and friend to Hermes, vowing that he would love no other among the immortals, neither god nor man sprung from Zeus, better than Hermes: and the Father sent forth an eagle in confirmation. And Apollo sware also: `Verily I will make you only to be an omen for the immortals and all alike, trusted and honoured by my heart. Moreover, I will give you a splendid staff of riches and wealth: it is of gold, with three branches, and will keep you scatheless, accomplishing every task, whether of words or deeds that are good, which I claim to know through the utterance of Zeus. But as for sooth-saying, noble, heaven-born child, of which you ask, it is not lawful for you to learn it, nor for any other of the deathless gods: only the mind of Zeus knows that. I am pledged and have vowed and sworn a strong oath that no other of the eternal gods save I should know the wise-hearted counsel of Zeus. And do not you, my brother, bearer of the golden wand, bid me tell those decrees which all-seeing Zeus intends. As for men, I will harm one and profit another, sorely perplexing the tribes of unenviable men. Whosoever shall come guided by the call and flight of birds of sure omen, that man shall have

advantage through my voice, and I will not deceive him. But whoso shall trust to idly-chattering birds and shall seek to invoke my prophetic art contrary to my will, and to understand more than the eternal gods, I declare that he shall come on an idle journey; yet his gifts I wouldtake.

(Il. 550-568) `But I will tell you another thing, Son of all-glorious Maia and Zeus who holds the aegis, luck-bringing genius of the gods. There are certain holy ones, sisters born – three virgins (23) gifted with wings: their heads are besprinkled with white meal, and they dwell under a ridge of Parnassus. These are teachers of divination apart from me, the art which I practiced while yet a boy following herds, though my father paid no heed to it. From their home they fly now here, now there, feeding on honey-comb and bringing all things to pass. And when they are inspired through eating yellow honey, they are willing to speak truth; but if they be deprived of the gods' sweet food, then they speak falsely, as they swarm in and out together. These, then, I give you; enquire of them strictly and delight your heart: and if you should teach any mortal so to do, often will he hear your response – if he have good fortune. Take these, Son of Maia, and tend the wild roving, horned oxen and horses and patient mules.'

(Il. 568a-573) So he spake. And from heaven father Zeus himself gave confirmation to his words, and commanded that glorious Hermes should be lord over all birds of omen and grim-eyed lions, and boars with gleaming tusks, and over dogs and all flocks that the wide earth nourishes, and over all sheep; also that he only should be the appointed messenger to Hades, who, though he takes no gift, shall give him no mean prize.

(Il. 574-578) Thus the lord Apollo showed his kindness for the Son of Maia by all manner of friendship: and the Son of Cronos gave him grace besides. He consorts with all mortals and immortals: a little he profits, but continually throughout the dark night he cozens the tribes of mortal men.

(Il. 579-580) And so, farewell, Son of Zeus and Maia; but I will remember you and another song also.