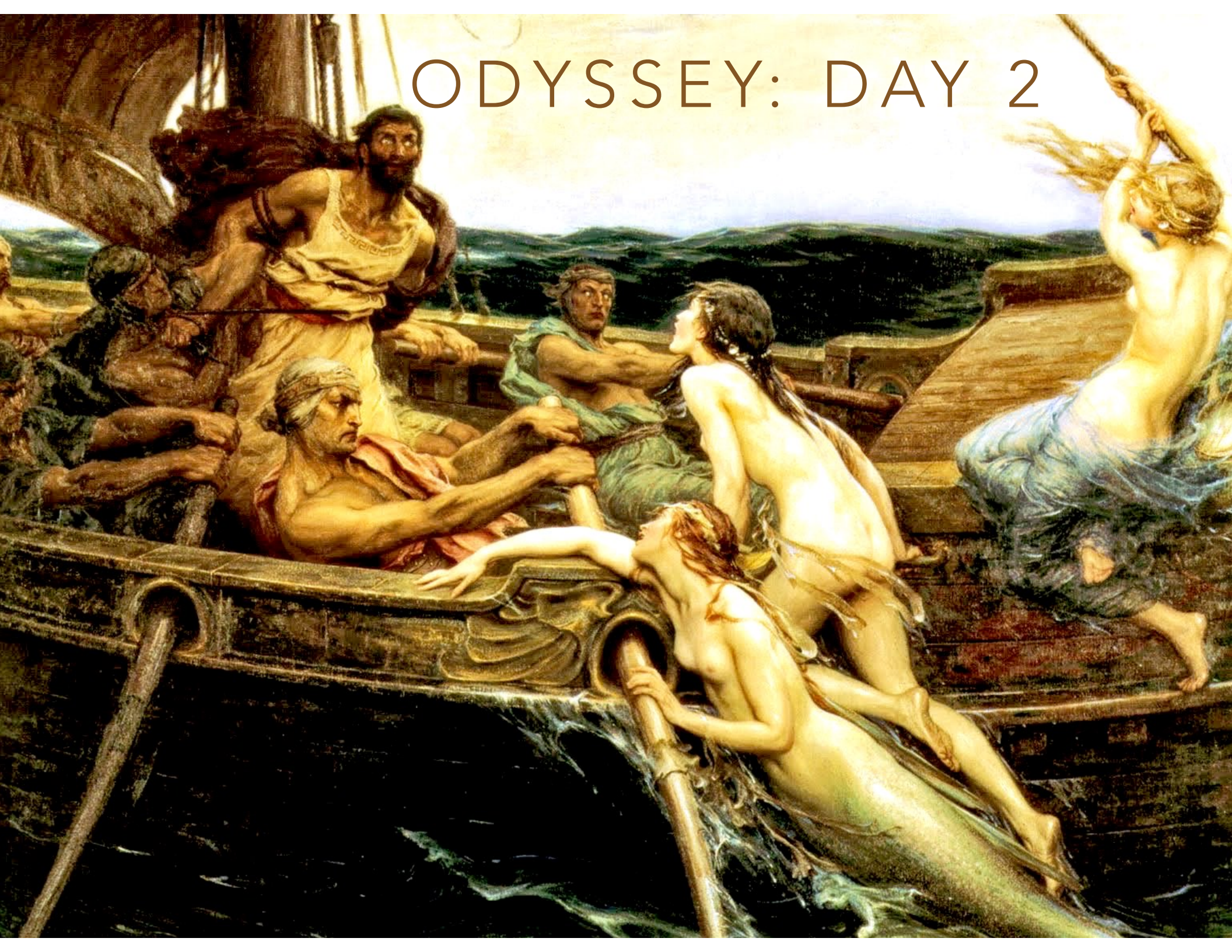


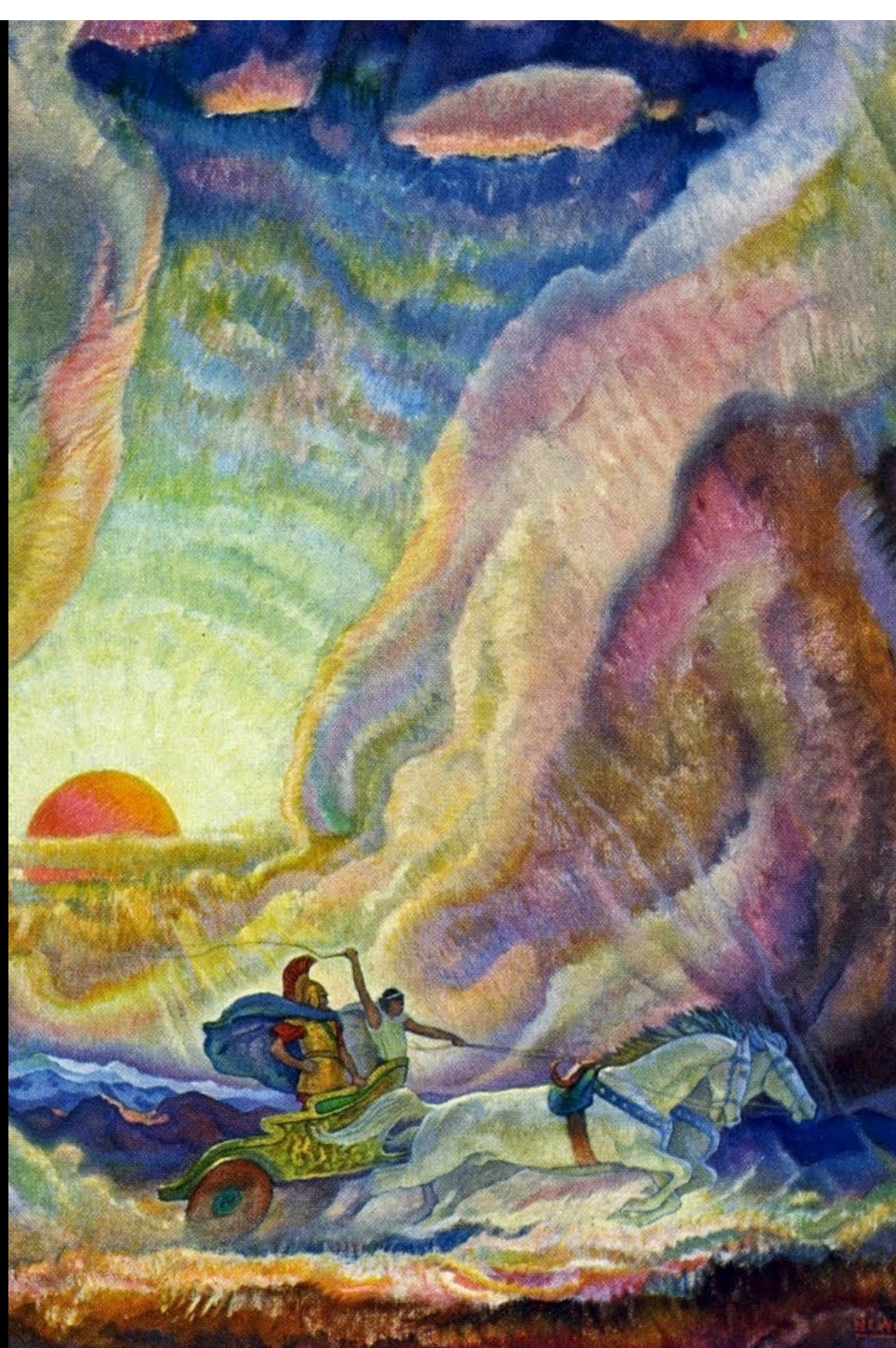
# ODYSSEY: DAY 2





## THOUGHTS FROM DAY 1

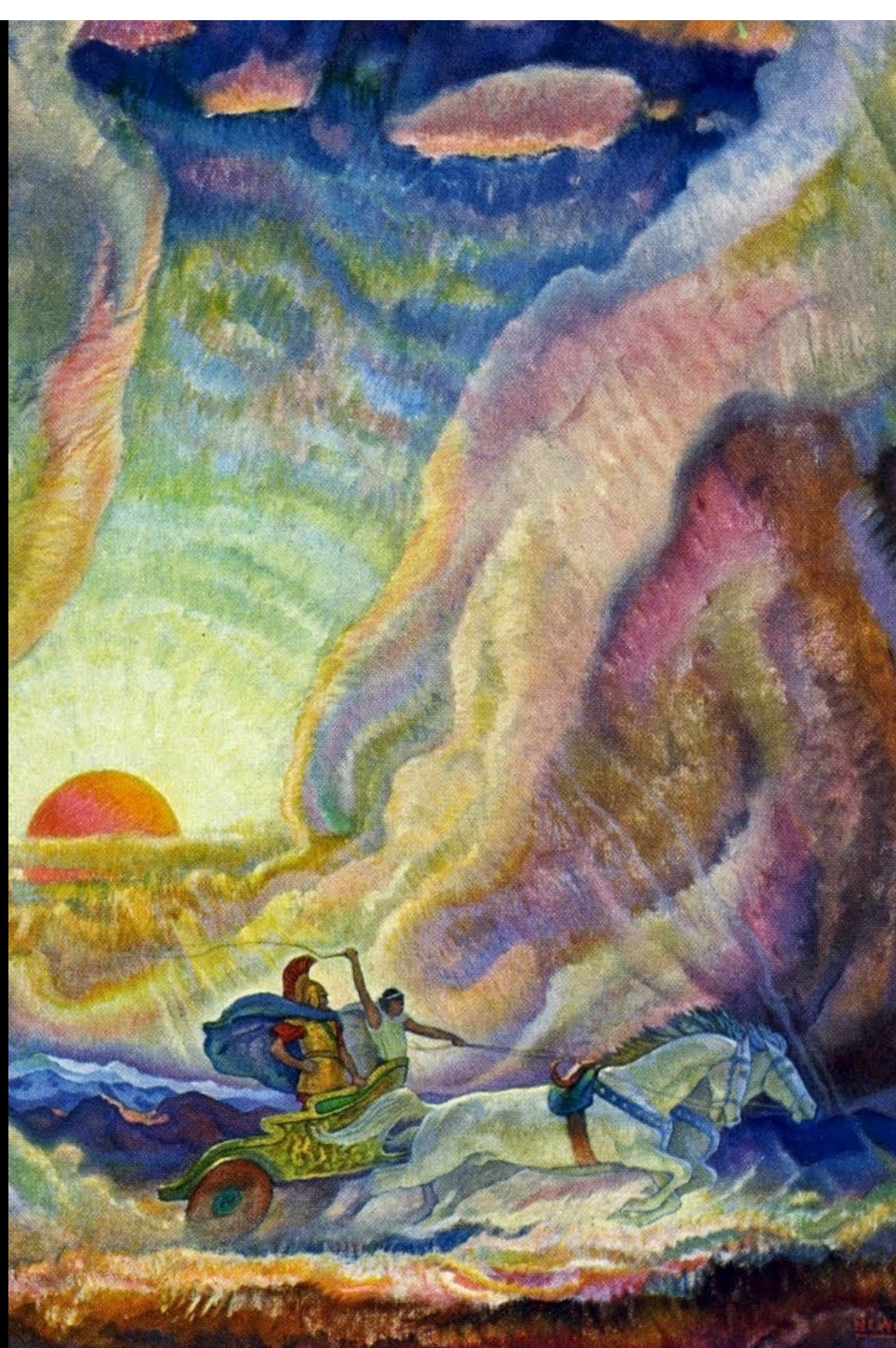
- careful thematic composition:  
Agamemnon raises questions of wife's fidelity, son's honor
- guests, hospitality, food and drink, property and propriety; Phaeacians are exemplary hosts, Polyphemus a terrible one; Odysseus is an exemplary guest, suitors are terrible ones





## THOUGHTS FROM DAY 1

- virile epic action set against lethargy, despair (*akedia*); creates a dynamic contrast between the Odysseus of past (active) and present (passive, weepy); Telemachus: passive present and past; both have an active future





# BOOK 10

- Aeolia, the Laestrygonians, Aea (Ἠεῖα) and Circe
- books 9-12 form the core of the fantastic in *The Odyssey*; frankly, they are “tall tales”
- Odysseus is not a liar — he’s a good guest; Phaeacians really superb hosts; reciprocity
- hospitality again the core concern: Aeolus hosts for a whole month, gives sacks of gold, a magic gift; Circe follows the forms of hospitality, but adulterates and alters them





*hospitality*, from Latin *hospes* (host)  
hence *hospital*, *hospitality*, *hospitable*

but *hospes* also means *guest*, *stranger*, and gave us  
the word *hostis* "host": *hostility*, *hostile*, *hostel*, *hotel*

the word "guest" comes from exactly the same root,  
one that appears to be related to "ghost" (*Gast*), a  
very significant (uninvited?) guest in your home

guests and hosts and ghosts are the same, a mix of  
uncanny, hostile hospitality ("host" also meant "army"  
in older English (e.g., "the heavenly host"))



“L'ospite è come il pesce: dopo tre giorni, puzza.”

-ITALIAN PROVERB



"Guests are like fish. After three days, they stink."

-ITALIAN PROVERB



# BOOK 10

- hospitality gone wrong; food and drink are adulterated with *pharmaka*, drugs
- the remedy for drugs? drugs: *pharmakon* from gods
- a play between literal and metaphorical: men are pigs, "let me feast my eyes," his men are like "cows come home" (foreshadowing!)
- Aeolus and Circe are opposites: one starts with hospitality, but then withholds it; the other, the reverse



So he urged and the men called out and hailed her.  
She opened her gleaming doors at once and stepped forth,  
inviting them all in, and in they went, all innocence.  
Only Eurylochus stayed behind—he sensed a trap...  
She ushered them in to sit on high-backed chairs,  
then she mixed them a potion—cheese, barley  
and pale honey mulled in Pramnian wine—  
but into the brew she stirred her wicked drugs  
to wipe from their memories any thought of home.

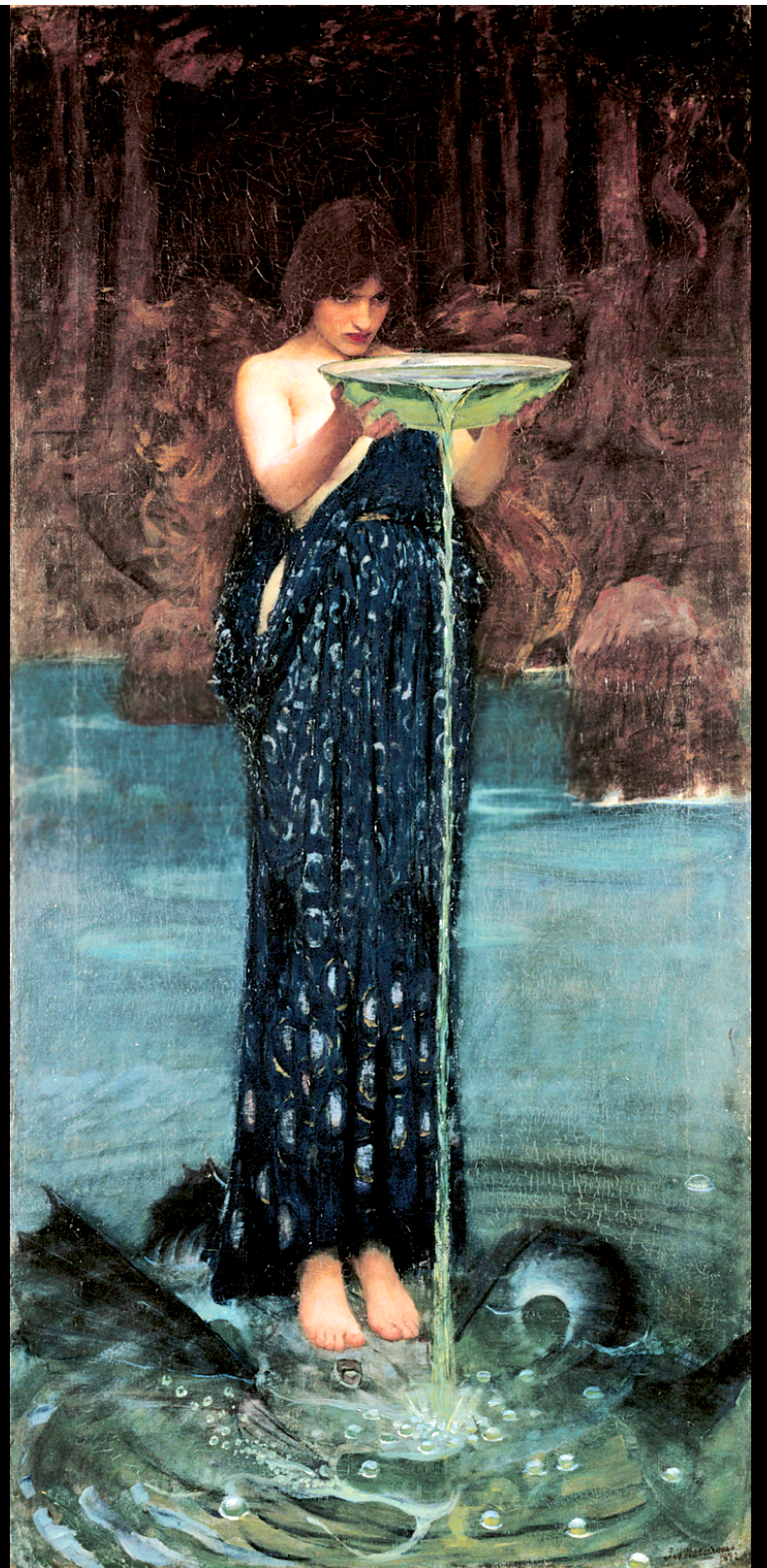


Once they'd drained the bowls she filled, suddenly she struck with her wand, drove them into her pigsties, all of them bristling into swine—with grunts, snouts—even their bodies, yes, and only the men's minds stayed steadfast as before. So off they went to their pens, sobbing, squealing as Circe flung them acorns, cornel nuts and mast, common fodder for hogs that root and roll in mud.































# BOOK 10

- more themes:
  - In the fantastic, who has agency? women, monsters
  - *akedia* (ἀκηδία): torpor, listlessness, laziness, depression, lack of direction (55-57, 520-24, 623-5); the dead are listless, w/o purpose
- more figure and fulfillment: Circe's explanation of how to enter the land of the dead
- figure and fulfillment are ideal for the oral tradition



And I woke up with a start, my spirit churning—  
should I leap over the side and drown at once  
or grin and bear it, stay among the living?  
I bore it all, held firm.

“Captain, this is madness!  
High time you thought of your own home at last, if it really is  
your fate to make it back alive  
and reach your well-built house and native land.”  
Their urging brought my stubborn spirit round.

So I said, and it broke my shipmates' hearts.  
They sank down on the ground, moaning, tore their hair. But it  
gained us nothing—what good can come of grief?



# BOOK 11

- figure and fulfillment:  
elaborate sacrifice, uncanny  
dead eager for the living; the  
dead and *akedia*
- blood + speech = truth
- the tragedy of the loss of  
physical contact; we *feel* the  
pain of not being able to  
touch
- list of famous women (famous  
for their husbands and sons)
- great men: Achilles and...
- Agamemnon and Orestes!
- invective against women





“So,  
there’s nothing more deadly, bestial than a woman  
set on works like these—what a monstrous thing  
she plotted, slaughtered her own lawful husband!  
Why, I expected, at least, some welcome home  
from all my children, all my household slaves  
when I came sailing back again ... But she—  
the queen, hell-bent on outrage—bathes in shame  
not only herself but the whole breed of womankind,  
even the honest ones to come, forever down the years!”

–AGAMEMNON







“Please, tell me about my wife, her turn of mind,  
her thoughts . . . still standing fast beside our son.”

–ODYSSEUS



“And I saw Tantalus too, bearing endless torture.

He stood erect in a pool as the water lapped his chin —  
parched, he tried to drink, but he could not reach the surface,  
no, time and again the old man stooped, craving a sip,  
time and again the water vanished, swallowed down,  
laying bare the caked black earth at his feet —  
some spirit drank it dry. And over his head  
leafy trees dangled their fruit from high aloft,  
pomegranates and pears, and apples glowing red,  
succulent figs and olives swelling sleek and dark,  
but as soon as the old man would strain to clutch them fast  
a gust would toss them up to the lowering black clouds.”

—BOOK XI, 669-680



# BOOK 12

- figure, fulfillment: Circe describes what will happen; it then happens; sense of fate
- siren song: most famous episode? why? only 20 lines!
- the herds of Helios: the one rule that mustn't be broken... is always broken. Ironic?
- sirens are radically ambivalent:
  - "siren song"—alluring but fatal attraction
  - siren: a warning that keeps you away from danger





# BOOK 12

- the female voice as fatal danger, but also as a needed warning (Clytemnestra, Cassandra, Athena, Circe, etc.)
- Odysseus recounts a fantasy: the control of the seductive female voice (and sexuality in general) via technology (Greek *techne*, technique)
- But the idea comes from Circe
- Odysseus gets what? The sirens offer wisdom ("we know it all"), but does he learn from them?





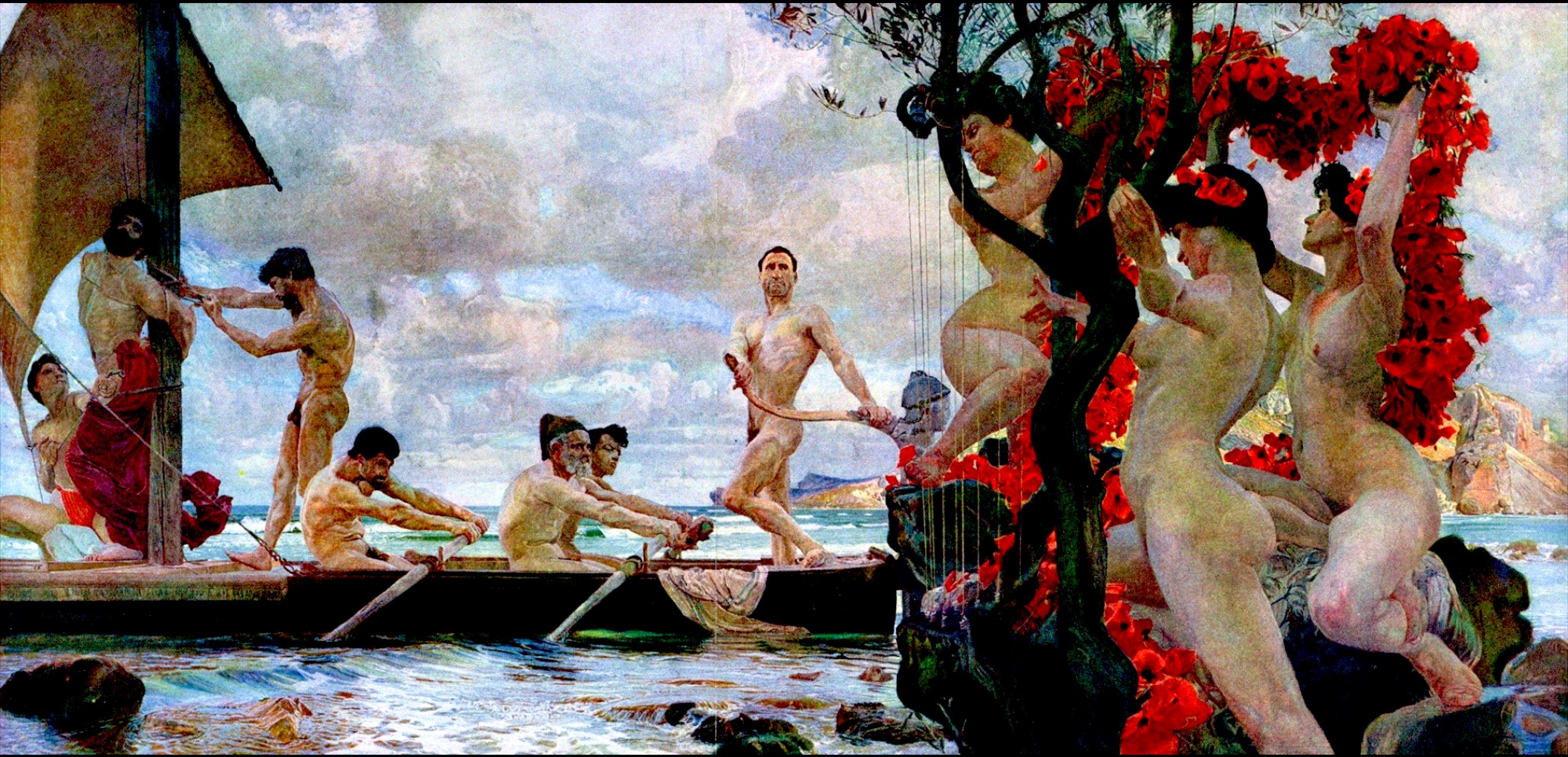
“Come closer, famous Odysseus—Achaea’s pride and glory—  
moor your ship on our coast so you can hear our song!  
Never has any sailor passed our shores in his black craft  
until he has heard the honeyed voices pouring from our lips,  
and once he hears to his heart’s content sails on, a wiser man.  
We know all the pains that Achaeans and Trojans once endured  
on the spreading plain of Troy when the gods willed it so—  
all that comes to pass on the fertile earth, we know it all!”

–THE SIRENS

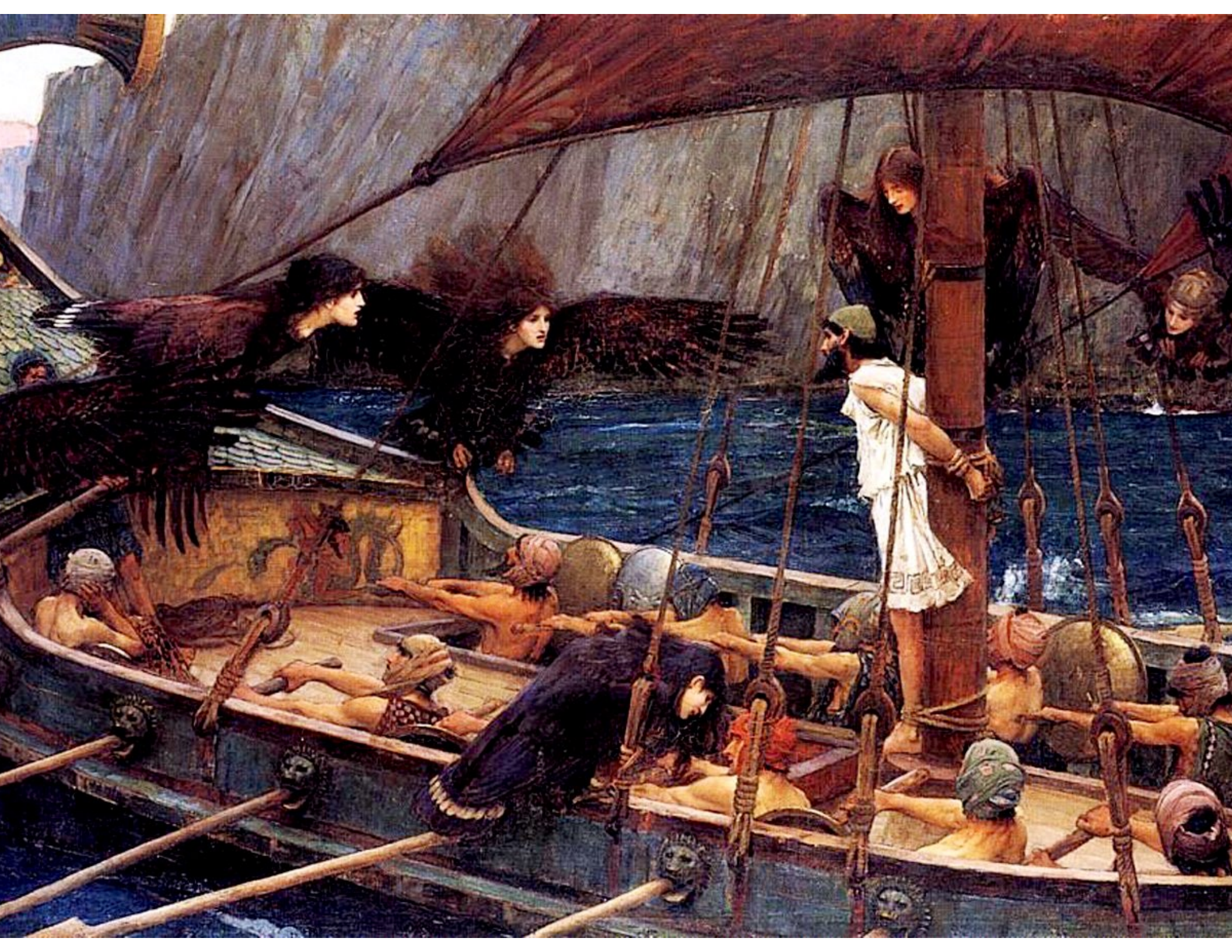


















CAPTAIN! WE'RE ABOUT TO PASS THE ISLAND OF THE SIRENS!

I ORDER YOU TO TIE ME TO THE MAST!



THERE. THOUGH, HONESTLY I DON'T SEE WHY YOU CAN'T JUST USE YOUR WILL TO RESIST THE SIRENS.



SIRENS? WHAT SIRENS?



UH...

I ORDER YOU TO SPANK ME!





We reached the Aeaean island next, the home of Circe  
the nymph with lovely braids, an awesome power too  
who can speak with human voice...

But still they paused at her doors, the nymph with lovely braids,  
Circe—and deep inside they heard her singing, lifting  
her spellbinding voice as she glided back and forth  
at her great immortal loom, her enchanting web  
a shimmering glory only goddesses can weave.

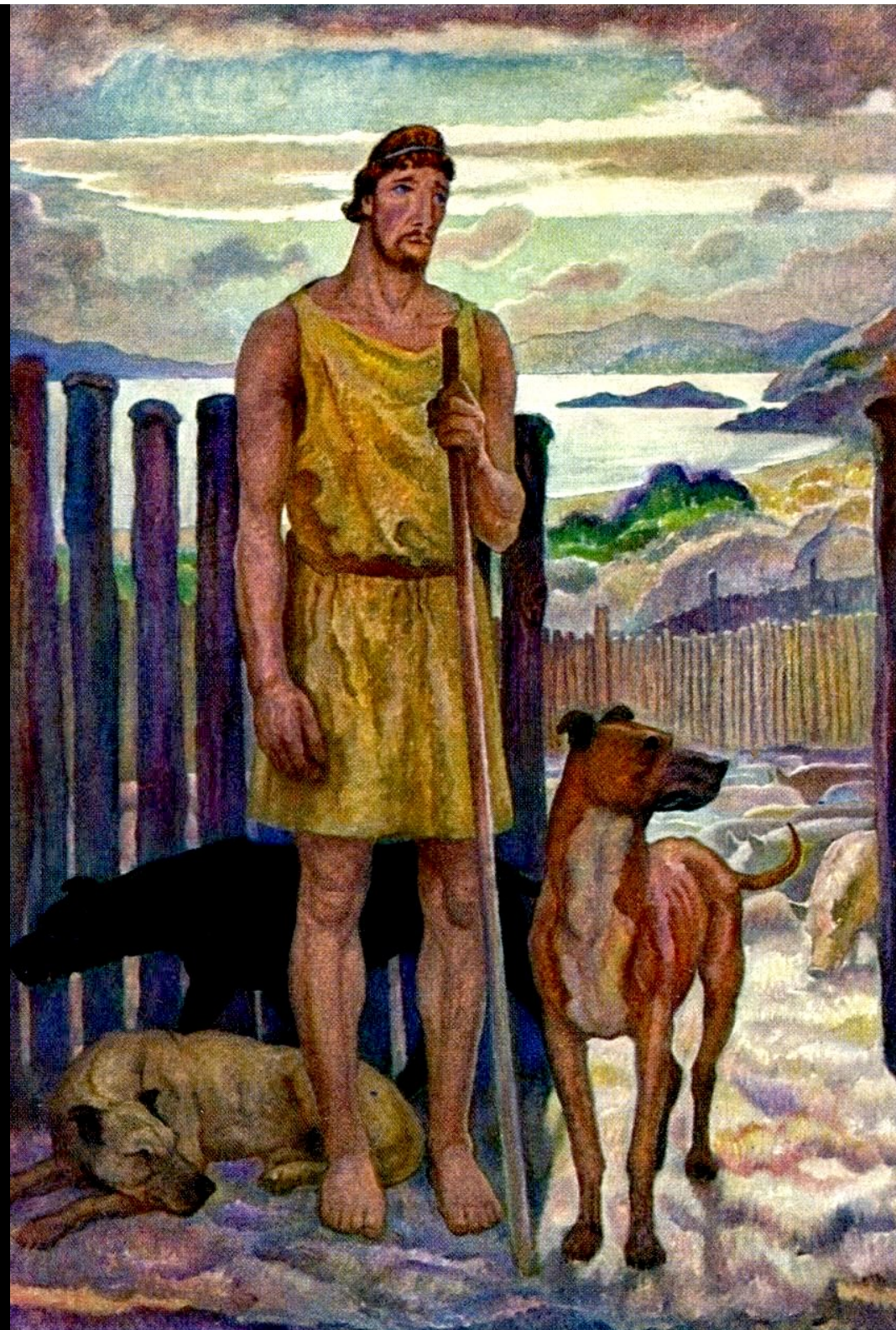






# BOOKS 13–15

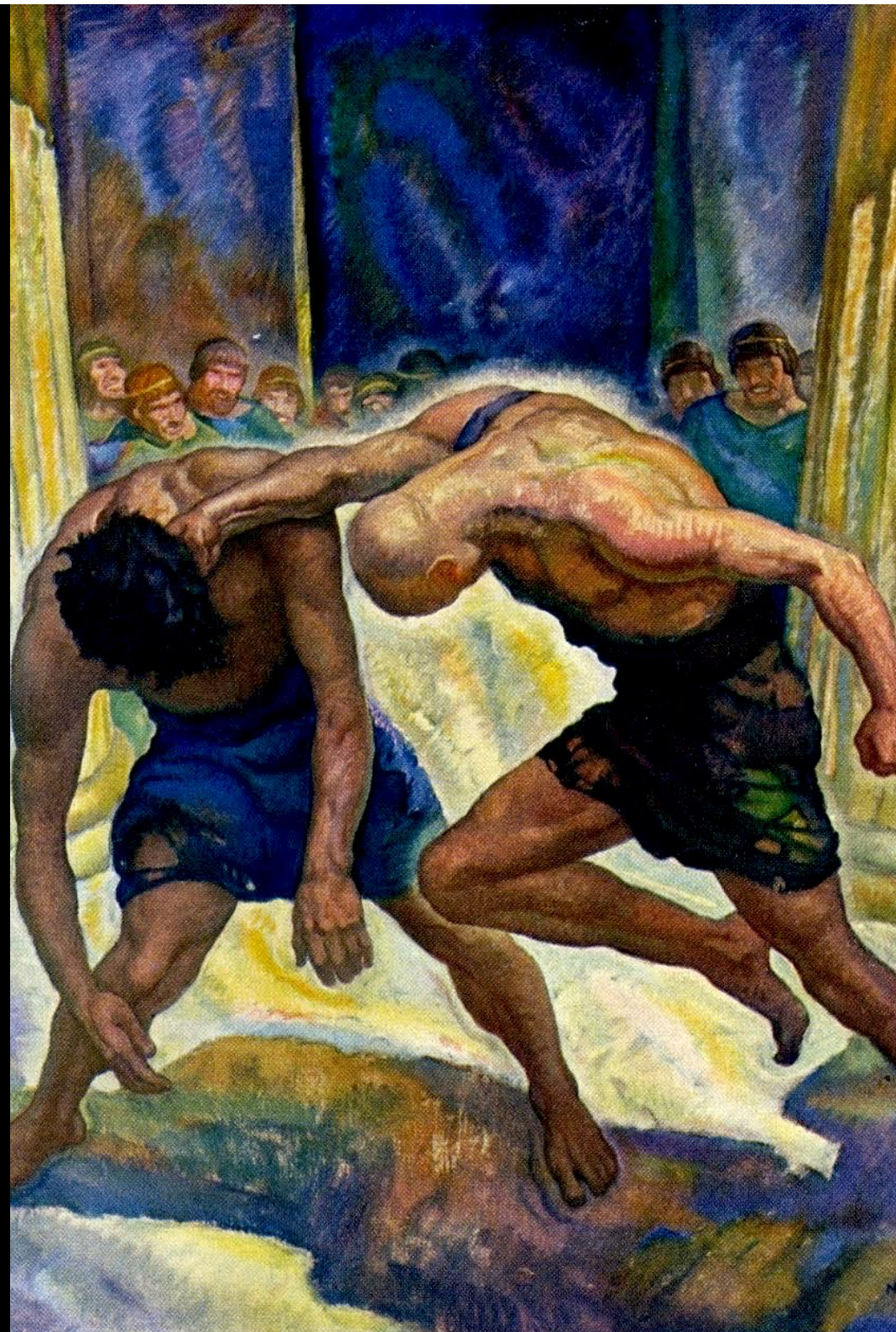
- Book 13: The Phaeacians take Odysseus to Ithaca, asleep; are turned to stone by Poseidon, vow to never help strangers
- Book 14: Odysseus in disguise, meets old servant Eumaeus, who offers him hospitality without recognizing him
- Book 15: Athena goes to Sparta, warns Telemachus to go home; Eumaeus insists Odysseus stay, warns him away from suitors. Telemachus offers protection to Theoclymenus.





# BOOKS 16–18

- Book 16: Telemachus joins Odysseus at Eumaeus' hut; Eumaeus leaves, Odysseus reveals his true self; they plan
- Book 17: Odysseus heads to palace disguised as beggar, insulted and beaten by suitors
- Book 15: The suitors pit Odysseus against another beggar in a fight; Penelope appears and suitors offer her gifts; tensions grow, and Telemachus defuses a direct confrontation





# BOOKS 19,20

- Book 19: Odysseus and Telemachus plan how to kill the suitors and hide weapons. Penelope comes to the beggar, asks him to tell her of Odysseus, and he does; when the old maid washes the beggar's feet, she recognizes a scar from when Odysseus went boar hunting as a young man
- Book 20: Penelope and Odysseus sleep badly, fearing what the next day will bring; more tension, insults





- hospitality as radically ambiguous: a moment of danger (who am I letting into my home?), but also of social and moral necessity: *hospes* = host, guest (hospitality, hostility)
- the danger of male *akedia*—a loss of motivation, direction, energy to be replaced with epic energy
- the ambivalent nature of female power, voice
- do women have a voice in Homer?
- ambivalence: drug, song, guest, woman





NEXT UP:  
HOMER'S *THE ODYSSEY*  
BOOKS 21, 22, 23