

As for Melanthios, they took him through the hall into the inner court. There they cut off his nose and his ears; [475] they drew out his vitals and gave them to the dogs raw, and then in their fury they cut off his hands and his feet.

*Odyssey* 22.473–477 Sourcebook

The rest now took their seats and kept to their own several places, but Thersites still went on wagging his unbridled tongue—a man of many words, and those unseemly [= without *kosmos*]; a monger of sedition, a railer against all who were in authority, rashly but not according to order [*kosmos*], [215] so that he might set the Achaeans in a laugh. He was the ugliest man of all those that came to Troy—bandy-legged, lame of one foot, with his two shoulders rounded and hunched over his chest. His head ran up to a point, but there was little hair on the top of it. [220] He was hateful to Achilles and Odysseus most of all, <sup>221</sup> because he made a quarrel [*neikos*] against these two; now, however, with a shrill squeaky voice he began heaping his abuse on radiant Agamemnon. The Achaeans were angry and disgusted, but nevertheless he kept on brawling and bawling at the son of Atreus.

*Iliad* 2.211–224 Sourcebook

[165] “For shame, sir,” answered resourceful Odysseus, fiercely, “you are an insolent man—so true is it that the gods do not grace all men alike in speech, person, and

understanding. One man may be of weak presence, [170] but the gods have adorned

him with such a good conversation that he charms every one who sees him; his honeyed moderation [*aidōs*] carries his hearers with him so that he is leader in all assemblies of his fellows, and wherever he goes he is looked up to. Another may be as handsome as a god, [175] but his good looks are not crowned with verbal grace [*kharis*]. This is your case. No god could make a finer looking man than you are, but you are empty with respect to *noos*. Your ill-judged [= without *kosmos*] remarks have made me exceedingly angry, for I excel [180] in a great many athletic exercises [*āthlos*]; indeed, so long as I had youth and strength, I was among the first athletes of the age. Now, however, I am worn out by labor and sorrow, for I have gone through much both on the field of battle and by the waves of the weary sea; still, in spite of all this I will engage in the competition [*āthlos*], [185] for your taunts have stung me to the quick."

*Odyssey* 8.165–185 Sourcebook

I will begin by disguising you so that no human being shall know you; I will cover your body with wrinkles; you shall lose all your yellow hair; I will clothe you [400] in a garment that shall fill all who see it with loathing; I will blear your fine eyes for you, and make you an unseemly object in the sight of the suitors, of your wife, and of the son whom you left behind you.

*Odyssey* 13.397–403 Sourcebook

<sup>66</sup>And he [= Demodokos], playing on the phorminx [*phormizein*], started [*anaballesthai*] singing beautifully <sup>267</sup>about [*amphi*] the bonding [*philotēs*] of Arēs and of Aphrodite, the one with the beautiful garlands [*stephanoi*], <sup>268</sup>about how they, at the very beginning, mated with each other in the palace of Hephaistos, <sup>269</sup>in secret Arēs made Aphrodite many presents, and defiled [270] lord Hephaistos' marriage bed, so the sun, who saw what they were about, told Hephaistos. Hephaistos was very angry when he heard such dreadful news, so he went to his smithy brooding mischief, got his great anvil into its place, and began to forge some chains [275] which none could either unloose or break, so that they might stay there in that place. When he had finished his snare he went into his bedroom and festooned the bed-posts all over [280] with chains like cobwebs; he also let many hang down from the great beam of the ceiling. Not even a god could see them, so fine and subtle were they. As soon as he had spread the chains all over the bed, he made as though he were setting out for the fair state of strong-founded Lemnos, which of all places in the world was the one he was most fond of. [285] But Arēs kept no blind look out, and as soon as he saw him start, hurried off to his house, burning with love for sweet-garlanded Aphrodite.

Now Aphrodite was just come in from a visit [290] to her father Zeus, the powerful son of Kronos, and was about sitting down when Arēs came inside the house, and said as he took her hand in his own, "Let us go to the couch of Hephaistos: he is not at

home, but is gone off to Lemnos among the Sintians, whose speech is barbarous.”

[295] She was not unwilling, so they went to the couch to take their rest, whereon they were caught in the toils which cunning Hephaistos had spread for them, and could neither get up nor stir hand or foot, but found too late that they were in a trap. [300] Then glorious Hephaistos of the strong arms came up to them, for he had turned back before reaching Lemnos, when his scout the sun told him what was going on. He was in a furious passion, [305] and stood in the vestibule making a dreadful noise as he shouted to all the gods.

“Father Zeus,” he cried, “and all you other blessed gods who live for ever, come here and see the ridiculous and disgraceful sight that I will show you. Zeus’ daughter Aphrodite is always dishonoring me because I am lame. She is in love with ruinous Arēs, [310] who is handsome and clean built, whereas I am a cripple—but my parents are responsible [*aitioi*] for that, not I; they ought never to have begotten me. Come and see the pair together asleep on my bed. It makes me furious to look at them. [315] They are very fond of one another, but I do not think they will lie there longer than they can help, nor do I think that they will sleep much; there, however, they shall stay till her father has repaid me the sum I gave him for his bitch-eyed daughter, [320] who is fair but not honest.”

Then the gods gathered to the house of Hephaistos. Earth-encircling Poseidon came, and kindly Hermes, the bringer of luck, and lord Apollo, but the goddesses stayed

at home all of them for shame. [325] Then the givers of all good things stood in the doorway, and the blessed gods roared with inextinguishable laughter, as they saw how cunning Hephaistos had been, whereon one would turn towards his neighbor saying:

“Ill deeds do not bring excellence [*aretē*], and the weak [330] confound the strong. See how limping Hephaistos, lame as he is, has caught Arēs who is the fleetest god in the sky; and now Arēs will be cast in heavy damages.”

Thus did they converse, but lord Apollo said to Hermes, [335] “Messenger Hermes, giver of good things, you would not care how strong the chains were, would you, if you could sleep with Aphrodite the golden?”

“King Apollo,” answered Hermes, “I only wish [340] I might get the chance, though there were three times as many chains—and you might look on, all of you, gods and goddesses, but I would sleep with her if I could.”

The immortal gods burst out laughing as they heard him, but Poseidon took it all seriously, and kept on imploring [345] Hephaistos to set Arēs free again. “Let him go,” he cried, “and I will undertake, as you require, that he shall pay you all the damages that are held reasonable among the immortal gods.”

“Do not,” replied renowned Hephaistos of the strong arms, [350] “ask me to do this; a bad man’s bond is bad security; what remedy could I enforce against you if Arēs should go away and leave his debts behind him along with his chains?”

“Hephaistos,” said Poseidon, shaker of the Earth, [355] “if Arēs goes away without paying his damages, I will pay you myself.” So mighty Hephaistos answered, “In this case I cannot and must not refuse you.”

Then he loosed the bonds that bound them, [360] and as soon as they were free they scampered off, Arēs to Thrace and laughter-loving Aphrodite to Cyprus and to Paphos, where is her grove and her altar fragrant with burnt offerings. Here the Graces bathed her, and anointed her with oil of ambrosia [365] such as the immortal gods make use of, and they clothed her in raiment of the most enchanting beauty.

*Odyssey* 8.266–366 Sourcebook