

# **THE ODYSSEY**

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The Odyssey by Homer & J. W. Mackail

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**HOMER & J. W. MACKAIL**

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TRANSLATED BY  
J. W. MACKAIL

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## THE ODYSSEY

“ No more than this I deem may man desire.  
But now your heart has moved you to inquire  
Concerning all my woeful miseries,  
That my old sorrow may once more draw nigher.

“ Where shall I cease or whence begin to tell  
Of all my many sorrows that befell  
By disposition of the heavenly Gods ?  
First then my name, that you may know it well,

“ I will declare, that I hereafter may,  
Having escaped from out the evil day,  
A friend of yours be reckoned, though from yours  
The home wherein I dwell be far away.

“ Odysseus am I, of Laertes sprung,  
Whose wiles mid all men pass from tongue to tongue  
And my fame reaches heavenward ; and I dwell  
In far-seen Ithaca the waves among.

“ Therein is one fair mountain clad with trees,  
Neriton : and all around amid the seas  
Nigh one another many isles are set,  
Dulichium and Same, and by these

“ Wooded Zacynthus : but itself it lies  
A lowland, out beneath the dusking skies  
Far off to westward, but the rest apart,  
Facing the dawning and the sun's uprise.

## BOOK NINTH

“Rough is it, but the lads it rears are brave ;  
And for my part naught sweeter might I crave  
Than that same land of mine : but far from it  
Calypso kept me in her vaulted cave,

“The bright of Goddesses amid the sea,  
Desiring that her husband I should be :  
And likewise in her chambers perilous  
The witch Aeaean Circe prisoned me,

“Desiring me for husband : yet therein  
The heart within my breast they could not win :  
For sweeter than his parents and his home  
Is naught, to him who far from his own kin

“Must sojourn among folk of alien name,  
Though richly housed. Now I my tongue will frame  
To tell of the most woeful home-going  
That Zeus ordained me as from Troy I came.

“The wind that bore me from the Trojan strand  
Brought me ashore on the Ciconian land  
At Ismarus ; and there I sacked the town  
And slew them, and for plunder to our hand

“Their wives and cattle from the city we  
By shares among us parted equally.  
Then hot-foot flight I counselled ; but the rest  
In their great folly were not ruled by me.

## THE ODYSSEY

“ So there much wine was drunken by my crew  
And many sheep upon the shore they slew,  
And hooped and horned cattle. But the while  
To the Ciconians the Ciconians drew,

“ Who were their neighbours, mightier of their hand  
And more in number, in a trackless land  
Having their home, and skilled to fight with men  
From chariots, or at need afoot to stand.

“ Then came they on us in the mist of morn,  
As leaves and blossoms that in spring are born  
Innumerable: and an evil doom  
Zeus wrought to overcome our host forlorn;

“ Ordaining for our lot affliction sore:  
So joining battle the swift ships before  
They fought, and from men's hands the bronze-topped  
Hurtled on either side across the shore. [spears

“ Then for a while, as long as morn was grey,  
And through the increase of the sacred day,  
Against them, though they far outnumbered us,  
We held our ground and kept in our array.

“ But at the hour of the descending sun,  
When from the plough the oxen are undone,  
Back the Ciconians drove the Achaean host  
And broke them, that escape we hardly won