

Catullus 64 Translation

Cat. 64.19-21 (Peleus sees sea-nymph Thetis during Argonaut expedition):

“Then is Peleus said to have caught fire with love of Thetis, then did Thetis not disdain mortal espousals, then did the Father [Jupiter] himself know in his heart that Peleus must be joined to Thetis”

Cat. 64.205-7 (guest at wedding of Peleus and Thetis) “Him follows Prometheus wise of heart, bearing the faded scars of the ancient penalty which whilom, his limbs found fast to the rock with chains, he paid, hanging from the craggy summits.”

Cat. 64.323-81 (wedding song of the Fates)

“O thou who crownest high renown with great deeds of virtue, bulwark of Emathia, to the son of Ops most dear, receive the truthful oracle which on this happy day the Sisters reveal to thee; but run ye on, drawing the woof-threads which the fates follow, ye spindles, run.

Soon will Hesperus come to thee, Hesperus, who brings longed-for gifts to the wedded, soon will come thy wife with happy star, to shed over thy spirit soul-quelling love, and join with thee languorous slumbers, laying her smooth arms under thy strong neck. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

“No house ever harboured such loves as these; no love ever joined lovers in such a bond as links Thetis with Peleus, Peleus with Thetis. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

“There shall be born to you a son that knows not fear, Achilles, known to his enemies not by his back but by his stout breast; who right often winner in the contest of the wide-ranging race shall outstrip the flame-feet footsteps of the flying hind. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

“Against him not a hero shall match himself in war, when the Phrygian streams shall flow with Teucrian blood, and the third heir of Pelops shall lay waste the Trojan walls, with tedious war beleaguering. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

“The hero’s surpassing achievements and renowned deeds often shall mothers own at the burial of their sons, loosing dishevelled hair from hoary head, and marring their withered breasts with weak hands. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

“For as the husbandman cropping the thick ears of corn under the burning sun mows down the yellow fields, so shall he lay low with foeman’s steel the bodies of the sons of Troy. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

“Witness of his great deeds of valour shall be the wave of Scamander which pours itself forth abroad in the current of Hellespont, whose channel he shall choke with heaps of slain corpses, and make the deep streams warm with mingled blood. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

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“Lastly, witness too shall be the prize assigned to him in death, when the rounded barrow heaped up with lofty mound shall receive the snowy limbs of the slaughtered maiden. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

“For so soon as Fortune shall give to the weary Achaens power to loose the Neptune-forged circlet of the Dardanian town, the high tomb shall be wetted with Polyxena’s blood, who like a victim falling under the two-edged steel, shall bend her knee and bow her headless trunk. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

“Come then, unite the loves which your souls desire: let the husband receive in happy bonds the goddess, let the bride be given up—nay now!—to her eager spouse. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.

“When her nurse visits her again with the morning light, she will not be able to circle her neck with yesterday’s riband; nor shall her anxious mother, saddened by lone-lying of an unkindly bride, give up the hope of dear descendants. Run, drawing the woof-threads, ye spindles, run.”