

Room 2:

1. Homer *Iliad* 8.362-369 Athena is speaking.

He [Zeus] is hard, and forever wicked; he crosses my high hopes, nor remembers at all those many times I rescued his own son, Herakles, when the tasks of Eurystheus were too much for his strength. And time and again he would cry out aloud to the heavens, and Zeus would send me down in speed from the sky to help him. If in the wiliness of my heart I had had thoughts like his, when Herakles was sent down to Hades of the Gates, to hale back from the Kingdom of the Dark the hound of the grisly death god, never would he have got clear of the steep-dripping Stygian water.

2. Homer *Odyssey* 11.601-628 This passage is from Odysseus' visit to Hades.

And after him I [Odysseus] caught sight of the mighty Herakles – the phantom of him: he himself is with the immortal gods in the enjoyment of their feasting, with lovely-ankled Hebe as his wife, the daughter of great Zeus and Hera of the golden sandals. Around him the dead kept up a clamour like frightened birds, and fled away from him wherever they could: and he walked like a black night, holding his bow at the ready and an arrow on the string, staring fearfully round him, as if always on the point of shooting. And there was a grim baldric round his chest, a golden belt with amazing scenes worked on it, bears and wild boars and staring lions, and fights and battles, slaughters and the killing of men. Whoever it was who encompassed that belt in his craft should never have made it, and may he never make another like it.

Herakles recognised me at once, as soon as he saw me, and in sorrow spoke winged words to me: "Royal son of Laertes, resourceful Odysseus, you poor man, have you too then had to carry some wretched fate with you, like that which burdened me under the light of the sun. I was a child of Zeus, son of Kronos, and yet I had misery without limit. I was bound in servitude to a man much my inferior, who set hard labour on me. And once he even sent me here to bring back the dog of Hades, thinking that no further labour would be harder for me than this. But I took the dog and brought him up out of Hades, with Hermes and bright-eyed Athene helping me on my way."