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| **Tristia** **4.4b**  frigida me cohibent Euxini litora Ponti: 55      dictus ab antiquis Axenus ille fuit. nam neque iactantur moderatis aequora ventis,      nec placidos portus hospita navis adit. sunt circa gentes, quae praedam sanguine quaerunt;      nec minus infida terra timetur aqua.                     60 illi, quos audis hominum gaudere cruore,      paene sub eiusdem sideris axe iacent, nec procul a nobis locus est, ubi Taurica dira      caede pharetratae spargitur ara deae. haec prius, ut memorant, non invidiosa nefandis         65      nec cupienda bonis regna Thoantis erant. hic pro supposita virgo Pelopeïa cerva      sacra deae coluit qualiacumque suae. quo postquam, dubium pius an sceleratus, Orestes      exactus Furiis venerat ipse suis,                     70 et comes exemplum veri Phoceus amoris,      qui duo corporibus, mentibus unus erant, protinus evincti tristem ducuntur ad aram,      quae stabat geminas ante cruenta fores. nec tamen hunc sua mors, nec mors sua terruit illum;  75      alter ob alterius funera maestus erat. et iam constiterat stricto mucrone sacerdos,      cinxerat et Graias barbara vitta comas, cum vice sermonis fratrem cognovit, et illi      pro nece complexus Iphigenia dedit.                     80 laeta deae signum crudelia sacra perosae      transtulit ex illis in meliora locis. haec igitur regio, magni paene ultima mundi,      quam fugere homines dique, propinqua mihi est; aque mea terra prope sunt funebria sacra,                     85      si modo Nasoni barbara terra sua est. o utinam venti, quibus est ablatus Orestes,      placato referant et mea vela deo! | The cold shores of the Pontus Euxine [“Hospitable”] restrain me; that sea was named Axenus [“Inhospitable”] by men of old. For neither is the sea tossed by moderate winds, nor do foreign ships approach calm harbors. There are tribes around who seek booty and bloodshed; nor is the land to be feared less than the treacherous sea. Those whom you hear as rejoicing in the bloodshed of men dwell almost under the axis of the same constellation [as I do], nor is the location far from us where the Tauric altar of the quivered goddess is spattered with dreadful slaughter. People say previously this was Thoas’ kingdom, not envied by the wicked nor desired by the good.  Here the Pelopian maiden, for whom a doe was substituted, carried out the rites of her goddess, of whatever sort they were. After Orestes himself had come there, driven by his own Furies─it is unclear whether he was good or evil─accompanied by Pylades, a model of true devotion, who were two in body and one in mind, straightaway they were bound and led to the grim altar, which stood before the twin doors. Yet his own death frightened neither one; each was sad because of the impending death of the other. Already had the priestess taken her stand with sword drawn, and barbarian fillets bound her Greek tresses, when Iphigenia recognized her brother through an exchange of conversation, and instead of killing him, she gave him hugs. Happily, she conveyed the statue of the goddess, loathing cruel rites, from that place to a better one.  This region, therefore, almost the most remote of the vast world, which men and gods fled, is near me; the rites of death are near my land, if a barbarian land is Naso’s own. Would that the winds, by which Orestes was carried away, carry my sails homeward also as soon as the god is placated! |