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# *ODYSSEY* AND *ARGONAUTICA*

One of the most certain results of Homeric scholarship, in many scholars' view, is that some of Odysseus' adventures owe something to a pre-existing narrative about Jason and the Argonauts.[1] Opinions differ as to the extent and nature of the debt, and the matter merits a new discussion. We shall find that it opens up exhilarating views of several topics: the development of Greek geographical knowledge, the early form of the *Argo* legend, the stages by which the *Odyssey* evolved, and the eclectic borrowing by different poets of motifs from the *Epic of Gilgamesh.*

The Odyssean adventures that come into question are contained in the sequence that extends from the Laestrygonians (10.77–132) to Thrinacia (12.260–419). I shall not discuss them in the order in which they appear in the narrative, but begin where the presence of Argonautic motifs is clearest.

## THE CLASHING ROCKS

The starting-point must be the Clashing Rocks, those twin skyscraper cliffs that slam together to crush anything that tries to pass between them. This is not something that Odysseus attempts to do. Circe has told him that he has a choice of routes: either between these rocks, which the gods call the Planctae,[2] or between Scylla and Charybdis. The second alternative is evidently the better bet, as not even the doves that supply Zeus with ambrosia can get through the Planctae without one of them being caught, and the only ship that ever got through was the Argo (12.69–72):

> οἵη δὴ κείνηι γε παρέπλω ποντοπόρος νηῦς
> Ἀργὼ πᾶσι μέλουσα, παρ' Αἰήταο πλέουσα·
> καί νύ κε τὴν ἔνθ' ὧκα βάλεν μεγάλας ποτὶ πέτρας,
> ἀλλ' Ἥρη παρέπεμψεν, ἐπεὶ φίλος ἦεν Ἰήσων.

The only seagoing ship that has sailed past by that route is the *Argo* that stirs everyone's interest, as she sailed from Aeëtes: even her it would have straightway hurled there against the great rocks, but Hera guided her past, since Jason was dear.

The two alternative ways, then, are the *Argo*'s way and Odysseus' way; he is not to replicate Jason's adventure. But the verses prove that the *Odyssey* poet knew the

[1] The thesis was first argued by A. Kirchhoff, *Die Composition der Odyssee* (Berlin, 1869), 84–6; id. (1879), 287–9. Of subsequent literature the following items may be especially noted: C. Heimreich, *Die Telemachie und der jüngere Nostos* (Flensburg, 1871), 17–20; Wilamowitz (1884), 165–8; Friedländer (1914); Kranz (1915); Maass (1915); Meuli (1921); Finsler (1924), 1.26, 2.326–7; Schwartz (1924), 52–3, 262–71; Wilamowitz (1924), 2.236–48; Von der Mühll (1940), 721–31; Lesky (1948); Hölscher (1988); Heubeck (1989), 121; Kullmann (1992); Danek (1998), 197–201, 213, 252–3, 262.

[2] *Od.* 12.61. If no mortals' name is given, it is because mortals are not familiar with the place; cf. 10.305–6, μῶλυ δέ μιν καλέουσι θεοί, χαλεπὸν δέ τ' ὀρύσσειν | ἀνδράσι γε θνητοῖσι. Later poets speak of the *Κυάνεαι πέτραι*, *Συμπληγάδες*, *Συνδρομάδες*, or *Συνορμάδες*. Some thought that the Wandering Rocks were different from the Clashing Rocks. Cf. Jessen (1902–9), 2544–7; Robert (1920–3), 825–7; Von der Mühll (1940), 728–9; Hölscher (1988), 177–8; G. Crane, *Calypso: Backgrounds and Conventions of the Odyssey* (Frankfurt, 1988), 153–4.

story of the Argonauts' voyage and had it in mind as some sort of analogue or foil for Odysseus' peregrinations. The reference to Hera's assistance implies a narrative with divine machinery, from which scholars have rightly inferred an epic format.

Other allusions in archaic poetry confirm the currency of the myth by (at latest) the early seventh century. Hesiod in his catalogue of the world's major rivers (*Th.* 338–45) includes the Phasis, which owed its fame entirely to the *Argo* story.[3] The *Iliad* (7.467–9, cf. 20.40–1, 23.746–7) knows of Jason's union with Hypsipyle on Lemnos, which was always treated as an episode of the Argonautic expedition. Mimnermus (frs. 11–11a W., quoted below) devotes several lines to Jason's successful recovery of the Fleece from the ends of the earth. Clearly it was celebrated in epic poetry.

However, we cannot identify any *Argonautica* of this period that was available to later readers. The myth was at least touched on (and developed) in the *Corinthiaca* attributed to Eumelus, but this poem cannot be dated earlier than the mid sixth century.[4] There was an ample account in the *Carmen Naupactium* (frs. 3–9 Davies, Bernabé, West), but this too reflected a Corinthian or Corinthian-colonial elaboration of the legend, with Jason moving to Corcyra after the death of Pelias. Nobody supposes this to be pre-Odyssean. Finally, a poem in 6,500 lines on 'the building of the Argo and Jason's voyage to Colchis' was ascribed to Epimenides, and it is cited a couple of times by the scholiast to Apollonius Rhodius.[5] The author of this pseudonymous poem agreed with 'Eumelus' in making Helios' son Aeëtes a native of Corinth (though he named the mother as Ephyra instead of Antiope). So here again we are not looking at a primary source.[6]

It seems, then, that the *Argonautica* known to the poet of the *Odyssey* was current only in oral form, or, if it was ever fixed in writing, it disappeared before the Hellenistic age. We can nevertheless make some useful deductions about it.

It made the *Argo* pass through the Clashing Rocks as it was *sailing from Aeëtes*, in other words on its return journey. As in most later versions, then, the Argonauts returned to Iolcus by a different route from the one they had followed on the outward voyage. We can deduce further that the Clashing Rocks were not yet identified with the mouth of the Bosporus at the entrance to the Black Sea, for the *Argo* must have passed the Bosporus on its outward journey. Jason's expedition was always conceived as going in that direction, into the Pontus.[7]

Here it is important to be clear that 'into the Pontus' does not mean 'into a sea known to be enclosed', and it does not mean 'along the Anatolian coasts to Colchis'. The myth was formed at a time when the Euxine was still largely unexplored. Here was a vast sea stretching away to the north and east, to unknown

[3] The more explicit references towards the end of the *Theogony* (956–62, 992–1002) come in sections of the poem added at a later period. Allusions to the subject matter in Hesiodic fragments (*Catalogue of Women*, frs. 38, 40, 63, 241; *Megalai Ehoiai*, frs. 253–5; *Keykos gamos*, fr. 263; *Aigimios*, fr. 299) date likewise from the sixth century rather than the seventh.

[4] West (2002), 130–1. This answers Von der Mühll's question (1940: 721), 'konnte diese [argonautische] Vorlage nicht schon das Epos des Eumelos von Korinth sein?'

[5] Diog. Laert. 1.111, *Ἀργοῦς ναυπηγίαν τε καὶ Ἰάσονος εἰς Κόλχους ἀπόπλουν*; *Vorsokr.* 3 B 12–13 Diels–Kranz = *FGrH* 457 F 11–12 = frs. 14–15 Fowler.

[6] In general the ascription of poetry to the semi-legendary seer Epimenides seems to have begun in the fifth century: M. L. West, *The Orphic Poems* (Oxford, 1983), 45–53.

[7] Cf. Meuli (1921), 86 = (1975), 652; Kullmann (1992), 127, 'denn in welcher Richtung sollte man Aia sonst suchen, wenn von dem Ausgangspunkt Iolkos her Lemnos auf dem Weg liegt?'

regions. It seemed reasonable to suppose that, like the western sea, it connected with Oceanus.[8] So it did in the Argonautic epic known to Mimnermus:

οὐδέ κοτ' ἂν μέγα κῶας ἀνήγαγεν αὐτὸς Ἰήσων
ἐξ Αἴης τελέσας ἀλγινόεσσαν ὁδόν,
ὑβριστῆι Πελίηι τελέων χαλεπῆρες ἄεθλον,
οὐδ' ἂν ἐπ' Ὠκεανοῦ καλὸν ἵκοντο ῥόον. (11)

Nor ever would Jason himself have brought back the great fleece from Aea, completing that arduous journey as he performed the difficult trial for arrogant Pelias, nor would they have reached Oceanus' fair stream.

Αἰήταο πόλιν, τόθι τ' ὠκέος Ἠελίοιο
ἀκτῖνες χρυσέωι κείαται ἐν θαλάμωι
Ὠκεανοῦ παρὰ χεῖλος, ἵν' ἴκετο θεῖος Ἰήσων. (11a)

Aeëtes' city, where swift Helios' rays are stored in a golden chamber by the edge of Oceanus, where godlike Jason went.

The Fleece had to be got from a fabulous kingdom called Aea, on the edge of Oceanus, near the sunrise; its ruler Aeëtes, 'the man of Aea', was a son of Helios himself. Aea was not yet identified with the real land of Colchis in Georgia, and the river Phasis that featured in the myth was not yet identified with the Colchian river Rion.[9] The identification with Colchis first appears in 'Eumelus', and there is no reason to suppose that it preceded Greek settlement in Colchis. This appears to date only from the middle of the sixth century, though the region was no doubt visited sporadically before that.[10] Previously the Phasis appears to have been identified with the Tanais, implying a north rather than a south Pontic setting for the *Argo*'s voyage.[11]

We have seen that in the pre-Odyssean *Argonautica* Jason encountered the Clashing Rocks only on his way home from Aea. In later versions he did so on the way there. Once the limits of the Black Sea had become known and Aea set at Colchis, the Clashing Rocks more or less had to be put at the Bosporus and passed through on the outward voyage. The myth was modified by saying that after the

[8] Cf. Strab. 1.2.10, ἁπλῶς δ' οἱ τότε τὸ πέλαγος τὸ Ποντικὸν ὥσπερ ἄλλόν τινα Ὠκεανὸν ὑπεῦ λάμβανον, καὶ τοὺς πλέοντας ἐκεῖσε ὁμοίως ἐκτοπίζειν ἐδόκουν ὥσπερ τοὺς ἔξω Στηλῶν ἐπὶ πολὺ προϊόντας. Gladstone (1858), 280–6, 295–8, argued that the eastern and western seas were imagined to join up north of Thrace and Italy (Phoenician mariners having brought back rumours of the North Sea). Cf. Wilamowitz (1884), 166; A. Lesky, *Homeros* (Stuttgart, 1967, from *RE* Suppl. XI), 112–13, 'im Weltbild unserer Od. gibt es keinen Pontos und schon gar nicht einen im Norden durch Land begrenzten. Auf dieser Erdscheibe ist es möglich, im Norden der Landmasse zu Schiff von Westen nach Osten und umgekehrt zu gelangen.'

[9] The Colchians were a historical people, Urartian *Qulḫā*: I. M. Diakonoff and S. M. Kashkai, *Répertoire géographique des textes cunéiformes*, 9: *Geographical Names According to Urartian Texts* (Wiesbaden, 1981), 68–9.

[10] Braund (1994), 89–118; G. R. Tsetskhladze, *Die Griechen in der Kolchis* (Amsterdam, 1998). Cf. Wilamowitz, *Griechische Tragödien* 3 (Berlin, 1910[3]), 169–70; Friedländer (1914), 300; Wilamowitz (1924), 2.237; West (2002), 130.

[11] Wilamowitz, *Aischylos. Interpretationen* (Berlin, 1914), 152–3; J. D. P. Bolton, *Aristeas of Proconnesus* (Oxford, 1962), 55–9. No weight should be put on the fact that the romancer Dionysius Scytobrachion made the Argonauts go by way of the Tauric Chersonese (*FGrH* 32 F 14, Diod. 4.44.7, 46.3), or on other late data such as that Panticapaeum was said to have been founded by a son of Aeëtes (St. Byz. s.v.; Eust. in Dion. Per. 311), or that Κριοῦ μέτωπον, the southern tip of the Crimea, was named after Phrixus' ram (ps.-Plut. *Fluv.* 14. 4). It may be more significant that Phineus is sometimes associated with Salmydessus (Robert [1920–3], 817). See also Braund (1994), 33–4.

*Argo* had successfully passed them, they became fixed and stopped colliding.[12] So even in those versions where the Argonauts did not return from Aea by an alternative route, they did not have to face the danger a second time.

There is a good reason why in the early version the Clashing Rocks were encountered on the way back and not on the way out. It is a widespread folktale motif that to reach the other world, or to obtain the elixir of life from the ends of the earth, it is necessary to pass through a narrow portal that closes behind one to prevent return. One can get to the elixir, but not bring it back to the world of men.[13] The Clashing Rocks are a version of this portal. So it is appropriate that they do not appear as an obstacle when the hero is on his way to the distant treasure, but only when he seeks to return with it.[14] But for Hera's intervention they would have caught him.

That the Clashing Rocks had such associations independently of the *Argo* myth is confirmed by the reference to the doves that bring ambrosia to Zeus. This commodity, the essence of immortality, does not grow on Olympus but somewhere beyond Oceanus.[15] Even the gods have trouble obtaining it: the dove convoy gets through, but not without loss. There seems to be here the remnant of an Indo-European myth. In the *Rigveda* there are numerous allusions to the story that the divine Soma was brought to Indra from the furthest heaven by an eagle or falcon. According to the most explicit account, Soma's guardian Kṛśānu shot an arrow at the bird and sheared off one of its tail feathers.[16] (This recalls how in Apollonius the Argonauts release a dove to test the state of the Clashing Rocks, and it has its tail feathers cut off as it passes through; the ship itself loses the ἄκρα κόρυμβα of its stern.[17]) According to the Avesta (*Yasna* 10.10–12), the Haoma, which corresponds to the Indian Soma, was first planted on the cosmic mountain Haraitī and then carried by birds to other more accessible mountains. Ossetic legend tells of a tree on which golden life-giving apples grew. They were regularly stolen by a trio of doves that carried them overseas. The tree's guardian shot an arrow at them, and

[12] Pind. *Pyth.* 4.210–11; Ap. Rhod. 2.604–6. Finsler (1924), 1.25, noted that the stabilization of the rocks showed them to be conceived as being in a definite terrestrial location; cf. Meuli (1921), 89, 104 = (1975), 655, 666, n. 2. But Finsler and others have wrongly taken the stabilization to be presupposed in the *Odyssey* narrative. The present tenses in the lines about the doves (12.62–5) show that the rocks still crash together after the passage of the Argo.

[13] E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (1873$^2$), 1.347–50; Friedländer (1914), 302, n. 2; A. B. Cook, *Zeus* (Cambridge, 1914–40), iii(2).976–9; Stith Thompson, *Motif-index of Folk-literature*, F 91.1, 152.2, 156.4.

[14] Jessen (1902–9), 2540, 'Daß die Gefahr gerade dem Heimkehrenden droht, ist charakteristisch. Die Felsen trennen ursprünglich das bekannte Diesseits von dem unbekannten Jenseits am Okeanos, zu dem der Mensch zwar leicht hinüber kommt, woher aber nur wenigen Helden der Vorzeit, und auch diesen nur unter den höchsten Gefahren, die Rückkehr vergönnt war'; Meuli (1921), 88 = (1975), 653–4; Finsler (1924), 1.24; Schwartz (1924), 52, 265, 267.

[15] Euripides, *Hipp.* 748, imagines κρῆναι ἀμβρόσιαι in the far west, by Atlas and the Hesperides; *pace* Barrett, he surely means something more than divine water-springs. Moiro, fr. 1.3–6 Powell, describes the infant Zeus being nourished in the Cretan cave on ambrosia that doves brought to him from Oceanus and on nectar that an eagle brought him from a rocky source. Pherecydes of Syros placed the source of the gods' ambrosia on the moon: Plut. *De fac.* 938b; M. L. West, *Early Greek Philosophy and the Orient* (Oxford, 1971), 24, 62–3.

[16] *Rigveda* 4.27.3–4, cf. 9.77.2; A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie* 1 (Breslau, 1927$^2$), 289–93. Other Vedic passages: *Rigveda* 1.80.2, 93.6; 3.43.7; 4.18.13, 26.4–7; 5.45.9; 6.20.6; 8.82.9, 100.8; 9.68.6, 86.24; 10.11.4, 144.4. According to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (3.6.2.9), the Soma 'was enclosed between two golden bowls(?). At every twinkling of the eye they closed shut with sharp edges.' In a similar account at *Mahābhārata* 1.29.2 the Soma is protected by a revolving bladed wheel.

[17] Ap. Rhod. 2.571–3, 601; cf. Asclepiades of Tragilos, *FGrH* 12 F 2, 31.

succeeded in wounding one of them, but it escaped all the same.[18] In Nordic mythology the gods depend for their youthfulness on the golden apples that belong to the goddess Iðunn. The giant Thiazi, in the form of an eagle, carried her off, apples and all, and she had to be recaptured by Loki, flying in the form of a falcon.[19]

## CIRCE

Both Circe and her island bear in the *Odyssey* the epithet *Aἰαίη*. This at once relates them to Aea, the goal of the Argonauts' journey, and the poet puts the connection beyond question when he introduces Circe as 'own sister to baleful Aeëtes; they were both born of Helios who shines for mortals, and of Perse, daughter of Oceanus' (10.137–9; cf. Hes. *Th.* [956–7]). Later on (12.3–4) we learn that Circe's island is located in the furthest east,

> ὅθι τ' Ἠοῦς ἠριγενείης
> οἰκία καὶ χοροί εἰσι καὶ ἀντολαὶ Ἠελίοιο,

where are early-born Dawn's chambers and dancing-floors, and the risings of the Sun.

This is in keeping with the geography of the early *Argonautica*, but surprising in terms of the geography of the *Odyssey*. Granted, the poet is not plotting Odysseus' itinerary on a map. But he does have some sense of direction. When Menelaus' ships were blown off course at Cape Malea (3.286ff.), they were carried south and east: some of them reached Crete, others Egypt, and before he got home Menelaus also visited Cyprus, Phoenicia, and Libya (4.83–5). This eastern sector of the Mediterranean is within the poet's known world, though he attaches some fabulous details to the real countries.[20] When Odysseus' ships are blown off course at the same point (9.80–1), they do not arrive at any of those regions, or at Sicily, which is also a land within the poet's ken (20.383; 24.211, 307, 366, 389). Evidently we are to think of them as sailing in the uncharted regions west of Cyrenaica. The Lotophagoi are possibly based on dim reports of some north African people.[21] But nothing hangs on this. What is more significant is that Aeolus sends Odysseus homeward on a west wind that blows steadily for nine days and brings him within sight of Ithaca (9.20–9). At a later stage of his adventures he is marooned on Calypso's island: she is the daughter of Atlas (1. 52), who in early literature is located in the far west (Hes. *Th.* 517–18, etc.), and when she finally sends Odysseus on his way he steers an eastward course, keeping the Great Bear on his left (5.270–7). This brings him on the eighteenth day to within sight of Scheria, still far from home, but presumably in the right general direction.

[18] J. Colarusso, *Nart Sagas from the Caucasus* (Princeton, 2002), 13–15, cf. 50–1, 183.

[19] Thiodolf, *Haustlǫng* 1–13; Snorri, *Skáldskaparmál* 1. Meuli refers also to Grimm, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* no. 97, in which a prince obtains the water of life from a castle but loses a piece of his heel to the falling portcullis.

[20] Egypt lies beyond an immense ocean (3.318–22); it is a place of abundant riches (3.301; 4.125–35), and a source of wonderful drugs and expert healers (4.220–32). Pharos is visited by Proteus at midday (4.384ff.). In Libya the sheep lamb three times a year and there is never any shortage of dairy produce (4.85–9).

[21] For various theories and botanical information, see Page (1973), 8–14. It may be remarked that '-eater' names are typical of Greek ethnography, not of mythology; cf. the Ἱππημολγοὶ γλακτοφάγοι of *Il.* 13.5–6, the Scythian Androphagoi (Hdt. 4.18.3), the Ethiopian Ichthyophagoi (Hdt. 3.19, etc.), Strouthophagoi (Agatharchides 57), and Acridophagoi (Diod. 3.29.1), etc.

To this extent the poet appears faithful to the conception that Odysseus is roaming the great western sea, even if he never mentions mythical features of the extreme west such as the Hesperides or the Pillars of Heracles.[22] So what brings the hero to Circe's Aeaean isle, next to the house of Dawn and the risings of the sun? This is not the only point at which the poet seems to have eastern geography in mind. The Clashing Rocks were not necessarily thought of as in the east, as they had not yet been located at the Bosporus and we do not know how far the Argonauts travelled in the pre-Odyssean version; yet the Argonautic association itself makes us think of the eastern sea. We shall see that the Laestrygonian episode also has a strong Pontic connection. And when Odysseus sails over to Hades he approaches the caliginous land of the Cimmerians, who belong by the Sea of Azov.

Unless we want to suppose that the poet had no concern for geography at all and simply threw material from diverse sources together at random, there are two possible lines of explanation for his use of eastern beside western points of reference. He may have wanted to extend Odysseus' travels as far round the world as possible. Or the eastern geography may just be the consequence of his decision to draw on the *Argonautica* as a source of material.

In favour of the first alternative one might cite the analogy of Heracles' wanderings, which Pherecydes in particular extended to cover the whole world, and the later versions of the Argonaut story such as that of Apollonius. But if that had been the *Odyssey* poet's intention, he would surely have been more explicit about how Odysseus got from west to east and back again, and he would have brought him within hail of such celebrated outlanders as the western and eastern Aethiopes (ἔσχατοι ἀνδρῶν, 1.22–4) and the Hyperboreans. The second explanation therefore seems preferable, and it is the one that scholars have favoured. They have sometimes supposed that the transition from west to east is mediated by Aeolus' floating island, arguing that it might have moved to a quite different position by the time Odysseus landed on it for the second time.[23] But the poet gives no hint that this was in his mind. If he was conscious of creating a geographical muddle, he thought it best to keep quiet about it.

To return to Circe: is she linked to Aea and identified as Aeëtes' sister because she herself played a role in the Argonaut saga? Or is this a new combination by the *Odyssey* poet, to make another node between Odysseus' itinerary and Jason's? It is hard to see what the point would be in the latter case. The likelihood is that Circe did belong to the Argonautic sphere. Certainly there is not much trace of this in the later tradition. In Apollonius Circe is relocated to Italy, because (in spite of the unequivocal Homeric statement that her island was in the east) all of Odysseus' adventures had come to be placed in the west. The Argonauts visit her, but evidently only because Apollonius wants to fill out their western peregrinations with material from the *Odyssey*.[24] She purifies Jason and Medea from the murder of Apsyrtus and then, after hearing their whole story, sends them on their way, declining either

[22] The Pillars are almost certainly a post-Odyssean addition to Greek mythology. Cf. West (1997), 464.

[23] Baer (1873), 51; Wilamowitz (1884), 164; Meuli (1921), 116 = (1975), 675; Finsler (1924), 1.25. This interpretation is rejected by Berger (1904), 31; Drerup (1921), 181–2; D. L. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* (Oxford, 1955), 18, n. 3.

[24] Cf. Meuli (1921), 26, 54 = (1975), 611, 628. They also pass by Calypso, the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, the Planctae (now distinguished from the Clashing Rocks), and Thrinacia, and they seek asylum with the Phaeacians (Ap. Rhod. 4.573–1222). At 3.309–13 it is explained how Circe came to reside so far away from Colchis.

to help or hinder further (4.659–752). This encounter cannot be taken as an echo of anything in an early *Argonautica.*

There are, however, two pieces of evidence that point to a role for Circe in pre-Alexandrian Argonautic tradition. The territory of the Greek colony at Phasis contained a Plain of Circe, *Κίρκαιον πεδίον*.[25] It seems unlikely that the inhabitants named it merely on the strength of the Homeric statement that Circe was Aeëtes' sister. Rather they did so because she came somehow into the Argonaut legend. This is after all what the Homeric statement itself suggests. And the fifth-century mythographer Pherecydes (fr. 100 Fowler) said that the Golden Fleece was kept on the *Αἰαίη νῆσος*, which was in the river Phasis. The fragment does not mention Circe, but he cannot have used the expression 'Aeaean isle' without reference to the one famous in the *Odyssey*, and Circe must surely have resided on it.

What part might she have played in the pre-Odyssean *Argonautica*? We should guess that it was one favourable to the Argonauts' purpose. She might have assisted her niece Medea with *materia magica*; but Medea seems from the extant versions to have been fully competent in that department in her own right. What Circe was perhaps better qualified to do was to give Jason advice on the route back to Greece, which was to take him through the Clashing Rocks and other regions of which he knew nothing.[26] The Argonauts certainly needed such advice from someone before they left Aea, and Circe seems the ideal person to have given it. In this case the role that she plays in the *Odyssey*, advising Odysseus where his course will take him next and how he can best surmount the dangers he will face, is adapted from her role in the early *Argonautica.*

## THE SIRENS

When Odysseus sails on after his stay with Circe, the first thing he will come to, she tells him, is the isle of the Sirens (12.39), and next after that he will face the choice of ways between the Clashing Rocks and Scylla/Charybdis. The Sirens, then, are sandwiched between the two elements in the poem most clearly labelled as Argonautic.[27] They themselves appear at least in later versions of the *Argo* story. The Argonauts countered their seductive singing by a means not available to Odysseus. They had on board a wonderful singer of their own, usually identified as Orpheus, and when they came within earshot of the Sirens he struck up his lyre and upstaged them. The episode is related by Apollonius (4.891–919), and although it there forms part of an 'Odyssean' series of adventures (see above), it is more integrated than most into the plan of his epic, particularly if we accept Meuli's perception that it was for this that Orpheus was made an Argonaut in the first place. Meuli saw the myth against the background of the *Helfermärchen*, the type of story in which a band of people embark on a dangerous journey or quest, having among them certain individuals with exceptional abilities, and each of these individuals enables them to overcome a particular danger.[28] Orpheus occupies the first place in Apollonius' catalogue of Argonauts (1.23–34), and it is explained that Jason enlisted him as

[25] Timaeus, *FGrH* 566 F 84; Ap. Rhod. 2.400, 3.199–203.

[26] Cf. Meuli (1921), 100–13 = (1975), 663–73; Merkelbach (1969), 202–3. Danek (1998), 213, thinks that it might have been Medea who advised the Argonauts on the route to take, Circe taking over her role in the *Odyssey*.

[27] Cf. Kullmann (1992), 125; Danek (1998), 252–3.

[28] Meuli (1921), 2–24 = (1975), 594–610; on Orpheus, 23, 92 = 610, 657; cf. J. R. Bacon, *The Voyage of the Argonauts* (London, 1925), 85–91; Davies (2002), 8–15.

ἐπαρωγὸν ἀέθλων on the advice of Chiron. This detail, which the scholiast informs us came from Herodorus, implies that Orpheus' role was to be of some importance.

He had indeed been an Argonaut long before Apollonius. The evidence goes back to at least the middle of the sixth century.[29] None of the earlier sources mentions the Sirens. But it is tempting to combine a fragment of Simonides which seems to describe the calm that accompanied the Sirens' song (cf. *Od.* 12.168–9), *PMG* 595

οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐννοσίφυλλος ἀήτα
τότ' ὦρτ' ἀνέμων, ἅτις κ' ἀπεκώλυε
κιδναμένα⟨ν⟩ μελιαδέα γᾶρυν
ἀραρεῖν ἀκοαῖσι βροτῶν,

for not so much as a leaf-shaking breath of wind was there then, that could have stayed that spreading honeysweet music from lodging in mortal ears,

with the same poet's description of Orpheus' singing at sea, *PMG* 567

τοῦ καὶ ἀπειρέσιοι
ποτῶντ' ὄρνιθες ὑπὲρ κεφαλᾶς, ἀνὰ δ' ἰχθύες ὀρθοὶ
κυανέοι' ἐξ ὕδατος ἄλλοντο καλᾶι σὺν ἀοιδᾶι.

Numberless birds flew about over his head, and the fish leapt straight up from the darkling water at his lovely singing.[30]

Other fragments (*PMG* 544–8, 576) indicate that Simonides wrote of the Argonauts' expedition at some length. It is hard to see where else but on the *Argo* Orpheus would have charmed the fishes, or in what context but that of the Sirens Simonides would have described his singing for the Argonauts. The epic poet, to be sure, could describe it on other, more quotidian occasions; Apollonius indeed uses the motif of the delighted fish at the first opportunity, as soon as the ship sets out to sea (1.572–4). But the lyric poet will have been telling of a song at a significant juncture.

A further argument may be adduced for the antiquity of the Argonauts' encounter with the Sirens. According to some authors, Proteus had told the Sirens that if ever they failed to enchant someone with their singing, they would die; when Odysseus passed them by, they threw themselves off their cliff.[31] The earliest evidence is a striking red-figure stamnos in the British Museum, dating from *c.* 470 B.C. It depicts Odysseus' ship, with himself bound to the mast, being rowed forward between two

[29] Sculptured metope from the Sicyonian Treasury at Delphi (*Fouilles de Delphes* 4, pl. 4; *LIMC* Argonautai no. 2 = Orpheus no. 6), cf. I. M. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1941), 1–2, and Kullmann (1992), 128, n. 108; 'Eumelus', *Corinthiaca* fr. 22* W., cf. West (2002), 122; Ibycus *PMGF* 306? (cf. Linforth, 3); Simon. *PMG* 567; Pind. *Pyth.* 4. 176–7; Eur. *Hyps.* 260–6, 1619 ( = frs. 752g. 8–14; 759a.98); Herodorus frs. 42–3 Fowler. Pherecydes (fr. 26 F.) said that the Argonauts' singer was Philammon, not Orpheus. The Delphic metope may have shown both of them (Robert [1920–3], 416, n. 6). K. Ziegler, *RE* XVIII(1).1254, takes this to be a compromise between the two versions, and argues that Philammon was the Argonauts' original singer. He allows, however, that Philammon may have been added to Orpheus on this monument because of his importance at Delphi. Cf. A. Kossatz-Deissmann in *LIMC* viii(1).982.

[30] F. G. Schneidewin, *Simonidis Cei carminum reliquiae* (Braunschweig, 1835), 27–9, combined 567 + 595 + 508 as one fragment, taking the μελιαδὴς γᾶρυς of 595 to be Orpheus', not the Sirens' (who refer to their own μελίγηρυν ὄπα, *Od.* 12.187). If 508 does come from the same context, and if two dactyls are missing, 508.2–5 (χειμέριον - ἐπιχθόνιοι) might stand in responsion to 595.

[31] 'Epimenides' fr. 8 Fowler; Lyc. 712–16; Strab. 6.1.1; Apollod. *Epit.* 7.19; Hyg. *Fab.* 125.13, 141.2; Serv. ad *Aen.* 5.864; *Myth. Vat.* 1.186, 2.101; sch. *Od.* 12.39; Eust. 1709.48.

overhanging cliffs, on each of which perches a bird-bodied Siren. A third Siren has keeled over and is plunging paralysed towards the sea.[32] Now, the motif of the failed singer's death typically occurs in stories where there is a contest or challenge. The Sphinx dies when someone appears who can answer her riddle. Calchas dies when Mopsus proves himself the superior seer.[33] Homer dies when he cannot solve the fisher-boys' conundrum. There are analogous stories in Indian and Nordic literature.[34] The Sirens' suicide, therefore, would seem more appropriate to an occasion when a better singer appeared than to one when they were simply frustrated by a bound captain and a deaf crew. We may suspect that it originated in the Argonautic tradition. If the *Odyssey* poet knew it in that tradition, he had to suppress it so that the Sirens could still be there for his hero. After that the fame of the *Odyssey* made it impossible to reattach it to the Argonauts.[35]

The same Argonautic tradition may have been responsible for the characterization of the Sirens as creatures with the heads of women and the bodies of birds, something not mentioned in the *Odyssey* narrative, and for the naming of their island as Anthemoessa, if indeed it is meant as a name.[36]

No weight can be put on the fact that Circe does not mention to Odysseus in the case of the Sirens, as she will do in the case of the Clashing Rocks, that the Argonauts got past them safely. She could hardly have done so without explaining about their singer, which would have been awkward and unhelpful to Odysseus. It is enough that she refers to the *Argo* once in another context.

There may be some reluctance to believe that Orpheus appeared in a seventh-century *Argonautica*, because we have no evidence for him in any connection before the sixth century (the Delphic metope, and then Ibycus). When he does appear, however, it is first as an Argonaut. As we have no earlier sources for the Argonaut story apart from the brief allusions in Hesiod, Mimnermus, and the *Odyssey*, there is no reason why Orpheus should not have played his part in it from the beginning.

## TELEPYLOS AND THE LAESTRYGONIANS

The Telepylos episode (10.81–132) is perhaps the most intriguing of all. It immediately precedes Odysseus' arrival at Circe's island. The topography is described in detail, with an abundance of proper names. It is introduced as the town of Lamos, Laestrygonian Telepylos; its current ruler is Antiphates, and it draws its water from the fountain Artacia. It is a place where the days are so long that evening and morning twilight run into each other, 'for the paths of night and day are close

[32] London E 440; Beazley, *ARV* 289 no. 1; J. Boardman, *Athenian Red Figure Vases: The Archaic Period* (London, 1975), pl. 184. 1; *LIMC* Odysseus no. 155.

[33] 'Hes.' fr. 278; Pherec. fr. 142 F.

[34] *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 3. 9. 26; *Mahābhārata* 3.133–4; *Vafþrúðnismál* 7, 19.

[35] Cf. Franz Müller, *Die antiken Odyssee-Illustrationen* (Berlin, 1913), 39–40; Robert (1920–3), 824. Only in the late Orphic *Argonautica* (1284–90) do we find the Sirens' suicide in the Argonautic context. It is possible that pseudo-Epimenides' reference to their suicide when Odysseus passed came in the Argonautic poem that went under Epimenides' name. In telling how the Argonauts overcame the Sirens the poet might have looked forward to their subsequent fate.

[36] 'Hes.' fr. 27, *νῆσον ἐς Ἀνθεμόεσσαν, ἵνά σφισι δῶκε Κρονίων*; Ap. Rhod. 4. 891–2, *νῆσον | καλὴν Ἀνθεμόεσσαν*. In both places the word can be taken as a descriptive epithet; cf. the Sirens' *λειμὼν ἀνθεμόεις* in *Od.* 12.159.

together' (86), though this curiosity turns out to have no bearing on the narrative. What does, is the configuration of the harbour (87–90),

ὃν πέρι πέτρη
ἠλίβατος τετύχηκε διαμπερὲς ἀμφοτέρωθεν,
ἀκταὶ δὲ προβλῆτες ἐναντίαι ἀλλήλῃσιν
ἐν στόματι προύχουσιν, ἀραιὴ δ' εἴσοδός ἐστιν.

It is surrounded by high cliffs on both sides; projecting headlands jut forward opposite one another at the mouth, and the entrance is long and narrow.

All the ships except Odysseus' own sail in and are able to moor in close order, because the water within the harbour is completely calm, never disturbed even by small waves (93–4). The canny Odysseus keeps his ship outside, fastening a line to a rock at the entrance. He then climbs one of the rugged headlands to a viewpoint. No farmlands are to be seen, but rising smoke betrays the position of a settlement. Three men are sent to investigate. They follow a road used by wagons to bring timber down from the mountains, and on it they meet the daughter of Antiphates, who has come out on an errand to the fountain.

What follows is more routine. The Laestrygonians turn out to be man-eating giants. They pelt the eleven ships in the harbour with huge rocks and destroy them, seizing the men as snacks (118–24). These are motifs repeated from the Polyphemus episode. The poet is not here concerned with novelty of incident, but with disposing of the fleet, so that from now on he will have only one ship to deal with. The rest have in fact been an encumbrance from the start. They contributed nothing to the Lotus-eater and Aeolus episodes, and they had to be parked out of the way for the Polyphemus story (9.172–3, 543–4). They might better have been blown out of sight by the Malea storm—unless the poet was set on having them demolished by giants in an enclosed harbour.

It has long been observed that this event is oddly analogous to what Apollonius' Argonauts experience at Cyzicus in the Propontis.[37] They enter the more northerly of two harbours on the west side of the isthmus, the one known as *Καλὸς λιμήν*, and they deposit an unwanted anchor-stone at the fountain Artacia. They receive a friendly welcome from the Doliones who live on the isthmus and landward of it. The next morning some of them climb Mount Dindymon on the peninsula of Arctonnesos to get a view of the seaways, while others move the *Argo* to the more southerly harbour, the *Χυτὸς λιμήν*. At this juncture the six-armed giants who inhabit the peninsula rush out of the hills and start hurling rocks to block off the harbour and trap the ship. But Heracles is there and starts shooting them down with his arrows, while some of the others, returning from the mountain, join in the battle, and soon the giants are all dead.

Kirchhoff argued that the Odyssean adventure must be secondary to the Argonautic, the latter being a Cyzican foundation myth and Artacia being a real place in Cyzican territory. (The date of Cyzicus' foundation, therefore, would give us a *terminus post quem* for our *Odyssey*.) Meuli added the observation that the giants' hurling of rocks into the harbour exit was the mythical *aition* of the break-water, built of massive blocks, that gave the *Χυτὸς λιμήν* its name. The *Odyssey*

[37] Ap. Rhod. 1.936–1011; R. H. Klausen, *Die Abenteuer des Odysseus* (Bonn, 1834), 23–6; Kirchhoff (1879), 287–8.; Kranz (1915), 103; Meuli (1921), 89–91 = (1975), 655–6; Finsler (1924), 2.326–7; Lesky (1948), 54 = (1966), 58; Kullmann (1992), 127; Danek (1998), 197–9.

poet, he thought, adapted the story for his own purposes and was forced to make substantial changes in it.[38]

From the scholia to Apollonius we know that he was drawing material from local historians of a century or more before his time, such as Deiochos or Deilochos of Cyzicus (*FGrH* 471) and Herodorus of Heraclea (*FGrH* 31; Fowler, *Early Greek Mythography*, 232–57). Herodorus in a work devoted to the Argonauts (F 7) had mentioned the giants of Arctonnesos and their battle with Heracles.[39] Deiochos (F 7) attributed the attempted blocking of the harbour to Pelasgians who had been expelled from Thessaly and who were therefore hostile to the Argonauts. The Cyzican myth, then, was established in some form by *c.* 400 B.C.

It is true, moreover, that Apollonius' Artacia reflects a real toponym of the area, though only he and his scholiast use this form of the name and say it was a spring.[40] The actual name was Artace, and it denoted a town (the modern Erdek), a wooded hill, and a small offshore island.[41] Apollonius has assimilated it to the Homeric *κρήνη Ἀρτακίη*.

Hölscher mounted a spirited attack against the hypothesis that the Cyzican aetiological legend lay behind the Laestrygonian episode of the *Odyssey*.[42] The Argonautic model, he argued, would have had to contain in combination the rock-throwing giants, the spring Artacia, and the wondrous long days. But the spring has no organic part to play in the story, and the long days, a fabulous element that must echo a rumour from northern Europe, cannot possibly have been associated with Cyzicus: the shores of the Propontis were by no means *terra incognita.* No one ever associates the Laestrygonians with that region.

There are other things in the Odyssean narrative that the Cyzicus hypothesis cannot account for. The physical description of the Laestrygonian harbour, which is not merely decorative but essential to the story, does not in the least fit Cyzicus, which has two open harbours, not one enclosed one. It was observed long ago (though the fact has been sunk in oblivion for the last seventy years) that there is another place in the Pontic area, and only one—a place that Greek mariners must have reached before the end of the seventh century—that fits the Homeric description extraordinarily well. That place is Balaclava in the Crimea.

The accompanying views (Figures 1 and 2) will give an idea of its situation. The harbour is enclosed by steep rocky hills. The entrance, not easily seen from the seaward side, is narrow and winding, and the town is hidden from view until one emerges into the main part of the inlet. The harbour is so sheltered by the surrounding hills and by the bends of the entrance channel as to be practically wave-free.

The discovery is due to the Swiss geologist and botanist Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux. In the sixth volume of his *Voyage autour du Caucase* (Paris, 1843), 111 ff., he writes:

> Si j'avais une description à donner de la baie de Balaklava, à peine pourrais-je en faire un tableau plus vrai et plus clair que celui que je viens d'emprunter au vieil Homère. . . . En quelqu'endroit qu'Ulysse ait abordé, à droite ou à gauche du port de Balaklava, d'affreux rochers

[38] Cf. Merkelbach (1969), 202.

[39] This is problematic, because according to fr. 41 Herodorus denied that Heracles sailed with the Argonauts. For another variant of the myth cf. Agathocles, *FGrH* 472 F 2.

[40] Sch. Ap. Rhod. 1.955–60c, with the information that it was mentioned by Alcaeus (fr. 440 Voigt) and Callimachus (fr. 109 Pf.). [Orph.] *Arg.* 494 copies Apollonius.

[41] Hdt. 4.14.2; 6.33.2; ps.-Scylax 94; Strab. 12.8.11; 14.1.6 (from Anaximenes of Lampsacus, *FGrH* 72 F 26); St. Byz. s.v.; cf. Soph. fr. 917, Demosth. Bith. fr. 6 Powell.

[42] Hölscher (1988), 172–3.

FIG. 1. View of Balaclava harbour, southern end (by kind permission of Irina Shvayakova and Andrew Karpov).

bordent la rive; en les escaladant, il ne pouvait voir comme aujourd'hui qu'un sol aride, que des roches jurassiques dont les tristes fragments semés de genevriers noirs ne laissent voir ni la trace de l'homme, ni celle de bœuf, ni celle de son labeur. Des tourbillons de fumée pouvaient seuls lui indiquer la ville des Lestrigons, cachée par les rochers.

Le héraut et les deux compagnons qu'Ulysse envoie … devaient déboucher dans la large vallée crayeuse de Balaklava où ils trouvaient la grande route par laquelle on exportait, comme on le fait encore aujourd'hui, les dépouilles des forêts qui recouvrent les montagnes voisines, tandis que Balaklava et ses alentours sont nus. En suivant cette route, ils arrivent à la tête du port, où est encore actuellement la seule source d'eau de Balaklava, la fontaine de la nymphe *Artacie*, ouverte à tous les citoyens.

We must pardon the intrusion of Dubois's *interpretatio Homerica*; he does not mean to say that the spring bore the name of Artacia in his time. And it is not exactly at the head of the port, but in a defile some 2 km away. The English made grateful use of it in the Crimean War.

Before climbing to his vantage point Odysseus moors his ship at the very entrance to the harbour, fastening cables from a rock (10.95–6):

> αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν οἷος σχέθον ἔξω νῆα μέλαιναν,
> αὐτοῦ ἐπ' ἐσχατιῆι, πέτρης ἐκ πείσματα δήσας.

Even this detail is realistic. According the *The Black Sea Pilot* (London, 1884[3]), 59,

A vessel about to enter the harbour should steer for the ruined towers on the eastern point, and on a near approach, the entrance, which is about $1\frac{1}{4}$ cables wide, and bordered by steep rocks, will open out to port. Before entering, a boat is generally sent to make a hawser fast to the rocks at the western point of the entrance.

FIG. 2. View of Balaclava (by kind permission of Konstantin Khromov).

Dubois notes that the Crimea was in antiquity the home of the savage Tauroi, notorious for their murderous reception of strangers.[43] Strabo tells us that Balaclava itself, anciently *Συμβόλων λιμήν*, was the centre of their piratical operations, where they attacked those who took refuge in the harbour.[44] Dubois found it all too easy to picture the Laestrygonians' bombardment of Odysseus' ships:

> Celui qui connait le port de Balaklava, se représentera facilement cette cruelle destruction et jugera s'il y a rien d'amplifié dans le récit d'Homère, rien qui ne s'accorde strictement avec les localités, comme si Homère avait été sur place pour décrire le combat.[45]

Another nineteenth-century traveller with knowledge of the Crimea confirmed Dubois's observations and quoted with approval his declaration that the *Odyssey* could hardly be bettered as a description of Balaclava. The biologist Karl Ernst von Baer, the discoverer of the human ovum, emphasized the singularity of the physical geography of the place: Greek coasts had nothing like it, and Homer's description could not have been the product of his imagination; he must have heard an account of Balaclava and of its barbarous denizens who attacked sailors.[46]

The peculiarity of the long hours of daylight, which makes no sense in relation to Cyzicus, is more intelligible in a north Pontic context. A Milesian in the Crimea, at 45° N, would have found that the midsummer sun was in the sky for an hour longer than at home, and that the twilight was noticeably more prolonged. But this is not the answer. As many scholars have seen, the lines in the *Odyssey* (10.82–6) must reflect knowledge, or rather rumour, of a much more northerly latitude such as the Baltic region. Such rumour would have come down by way of one of the amber or other trade routes, either to the head of the Adriatic or down one of the great Russian rivers such as the Dnieper.[47] When we find it attached to a topographical description that must be based on Balaclava, it is natural to suppose that two separate tales brought back from the northern Euxine by Ionian sailors have been run together. The poet who first enshrined them in an epic narrative was presumably aware from what quarter of the earth they came, and he is much more likely to have been a poet concerned with the adventures of the Argonauts, whose journey lay in that direction, than one concerned with Odysseus' wanderings in the western sea. The inference

[43] Hdt. 4.103, Eur. *IT* 34–41, Diod. 3.43.5, Mela 2.11, etc. The land of the Tauroi appeared as Iphigeneia's final destination already in the *Cypria*, if Proclus' summary is to be trusted.

[44] Strab. 7.4.2, *εἶθ' ἡ παλαιὰ Χερρόνησος κατεσκαμμένη, καὶ μετ' αὐτὴν λιμὴν στενόστομος, καθ' ὃν μάλιστα οἱ Ταῦροι, Σκυθικὸν ἔθνος, τὰ ληιστήρια συνίσταντο, τοῖς καταφεύγουσιν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἐπιχειροῦντες· καλεῖται δὲ Συμβόλων λιμήν*. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.17; Arr. *Peripl. M. Eux.* 19; Anon. *Peripl.* 55 (*GGM* 1.416: *λιμὴν ἄκλυστος*); Baer (1873), 23, 'die Bucht von Balaklawa ist wie geschaffen für Seeräuber'; Maass (1915), 17, n. 2.

[45] Dubois (1843), 114.

[46] Baer (1873), 19, 23; (1878), 5. Cf. F. Rühl, *Jahrb. f. cl. Phil.* 109 (1874), 517–26; Berger (1904), 26; E. Oberhummer, *RE* IVA.1091; A. Herrmann, *RE* VA.22. Carpenter (1946), 107–8, claimed that the description of the Laestrygonian harbour was based on Bonifacio, and this identification is now a commonplace of guidebooks to Corsica. Bonifacio has some of the right characteristics, but its long harbour is no narrower at the entrance than further in; contrast the *ἀραιὴ εἴσοδος* of *Od.* 10.90.

[47] Cf. Gladstone (1858), 324–5, 343 (rumour brought by Phoenicians); Baer (1873), 29; Wilamowitz (1884), 168, 'von diesem Phaenomen hatten die Griechen Kenntnis, seit sie bis Olbia fuhren. … Und will man durchaus Mittelmänner, so dürften sich die Anwohner des Dniepr, die im sechsten Jahrhundert griechische Werkstücke bis in die Lausitz trugen, … eignen'; Drerup (1921), 180; Finsler (1924), 1.26; Page (1973), 44–7. By Herodotus' time (3.115) there were definite notions of a northern sea from which amber came, as well as of Isles of Tin, *scil.* Britain.

is that the Laestrygonians may be added to the elements that the *Odyssey* poet borrowed from the *Argonautica.*

We reach this conclusion without reference to Artacia. The relationship between the Ithacans' adventure at Telepylos and the Argonauts' at Cyzicus remains unclear. If the Laestrygonian episode (or its Argonautic antecedent) originated as an epicized account of an unpleasant experience of Greek seamen in the bay of Balaclava, it cannot also be derived from an aetiological myth relating to a breakwater. The parallelism between the two stories seems the less impressive the longer one contemplates them. Artace is a genuine Arctonnesian toponym. But similar names probably occurred elsewhere. They may have been Thracian, though the evidence is equivocal.[48] There is a river Artek in the Crimea, ten miles from Yalta and about forty from Balaclava. One possibility, then, is that the name appeared in the Argonautic episode based on Balaclava, or another episode located in the northern Euxine, and that the Cyzicans subsequently transferred the story to their own Artace, adapting it to their own purposes. Another possibility is that the Cyzican Artac(i)a was the only one that ever appeared in the Argonaut legend, that it did so already before the *Odyssey*, and that the *Odyssey* poet, remodelling the Argonautic Balaclava story and wanting a name for a fountain, borrowed the name Artacia from a different episode in the same poem. In any case the name comes from somewhere in the north-east, not from the western Mediterranean.

## CIRCE REVISITED

Escaping from Telepylos with his one ship, Odysseus arrives, apparently the same day, at the Aeaean isle where Circe lives (10.133–9). Now it is a curious fact that less than four miles along the coast from Balaclava there is a prominent cape, the name of which is Aia. I quote again from *The Black Sea Pilot*, 60:

> CAPE AIA. The coast from the entrance of Balaklava curves to the southward, its appearance being that of a long wall of gigantic rocks about 1,500 feet in height, with a flat and wooded surface, the perpendicular extremity of which is cape Aia, which bears S.E. $\frac{3}{4}$ E. 8 miles from Feolent point, and is remarkable for its height, steepness, and reddish appearance.[49]

There is actually a cape on Circe's island: it is chosen as the site for Elpenor's tomb, which is marked with a stele and oar for future men to see (11.76 *καὶ ἐσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι*; 12. 11 *ὅθ' ἀκροτάτη πρόεχ' ἀκτή*). Several scholars have inferred that this was a real landmark on some known shore.[50]

[48] Cf. A. Herrmann, *RE* Suppl. VA.22, 'ein in thrakischen und verwandten Sprachgebieten wiederholt vorkommender Name'; D. Detschew, *Die thrakischen Sprachreste* (Vienna, 1957), 28 (*Ἀρτάκη*, *Ἀρτάκιοι*, *Ἄρτακοι*), 535 (*Ἄρτακος* or *Ἀρτάκης*); K. Alpers in the *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos*, 1.1355; Hölscher (1988), 173, 337, who refers *inter alia* to Hesych. *Ἀρτάκη· πολίχνιον Ἑλλησπόντου. καὶ ὑπὸ Ἀρμενίων κρήνη*, and to the Hittite noun *artahhi* 'water conduit'.

[49] The same source advises that there is good anchorage in Laspynskaa Boukta, a bay to the east of the cape. There is a fuller description of Cape Aia in Dubois (1843), 105–6.

[50] Wilamowitz (1884), 145, 167, 'wenn die Geschichte aetiologisch ist, eine Parallele zu Palinuros und Misenos, oder auch dem Heros von Temese, so hat sich der Dichter das Cap von Aiaia als noch zugänglich gedacht, und ist dasselbe an der Südküste des Pontos wirklich zu suchen'; Maass (1915), 21; Meuli (1921), 91, n. 1 = (1975), 656, n. 2; Merkelbach (1969), 204, 'auf dem äußersten Kap von Aiaia liegt ein Hügel mit einer Grabsäule. Diese Lokalität muß irgendwo im Pontos gezeigt worden sein.'

The name Aia occurs elsewhere in the Crimea, especially for mountains. There seems to be no record of it in this region in antiquity, and its origin is obscure. At any rate it is not the product of modern antiquarian fancy, since no one after the sixth century B.C. ever located the Argonautic Aea anywhere but at Colchis, or the Odyssean Circe anywhere but in the western Mediterannean. Some have connected it with a Tatar word for 'bear'. Dubois, rejecting this explanation, took it to be from Greek ἄγιος; he imagined that it went back to the time when the Tauroi had their sanctuaries on cliff-tops, convenient for throwing the bodies of their sacrificial victims into the sea.[51] This will clearly not do.

One cannot in honesty put much weight on the existence of an Aia so close to Balaclava. It should probably be set aside, with regret, as a merry coincidence, together with the fact that fourteen miles further along the coast there is a Cape Kirkin or Kirkip.

## HADES

From Circe's island, and on her advice, Odysseus makes an excursion to Hades, where he meets a series of dead people and descries others. There is no evidence for a corresponding episode in any version of the Argonaut story, even if it is sometimes held to be in origin some sort of 'Jenseitsreise'.[52] However, some of the associated topography has or may have Pontic and thus Argonautic connections.

To reach Hades Odysseus has to cross the river Oceanus (10.508, 511; 11.13, 21, 158, 639; 12.1; cf. 24.11). We have it on Mimnermus' authority that the Argonauts reached Oceanus. According to most early versions they reached it by sailing up the Phasis or Tanais, and then followed it round in a long arc until, by way of the Nile, or the Straits of Gibraltar, or an overland route, they were able to re-enter the Mediterranean.[53]

Odysseus' ship, after sailing all day, arrives at the πείρατα Ὠκεανοῖο.

> ἔνθα δὲ Κιμμερίων ἀνδρῶν δῆμός τε πόλις τε,
> ἠέρι καὶ νεφέλῃ κεκαλυμμένοι· οὐδέ ποτ' αὐτούς
> Ἠέλιος φαέθων ἐπιδέρκεται ἀκτίνεσσιν,
> οὔθ' ὁπότ' ἂν στείχῃσι πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀστερόεντα
> οὔθ' ὅτ' ἂν ἂψ ἐπὶ γαῖαν ἀπ' οὐρανόθεν προτράπηται,
> ἀλλ' ἐπὶ νὺξ ὀλοὴ τέταται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.
> νῆα μὲν ἔνθ' ἐλθόντες ἐκέλσαμεν.

There is the people and community of the Cimmerians, veiled in mist and cloud: never does the shining Sun look upon them with his rays, neither when he goes up to the starry heaven nor when he turns back from heaven to earth, but baleful night extends over those wretched folk. There we arrived and beached the ship. (11. 14–20)

The Cimmerians were a real people, as the Ionians learned all too well in the mid-seventh century when they came rampaging through Asia Minor. 'Now the fierce Cimmerian horde is advancing', exclaims Callinus at Ephesus (fr. 5). But on what shore of Oceanus did these unwelcome visitants have their home? Antiquity's answer is unanimous: they lived to the north of the Black Sea, east of the Sea of

[51] Dubois (1843), 20–1, 108.

[52] Meuli (1921), 15–16 = (1975), 604; Kullmann (1992), 128; M. Davies, 'Stesichorus' *Geryoneis* and its folk-tale origins', *CQ* 38 (1988), 282 with n. 29; id. (2002), 15–16.

[53] Mimn. 11.4, 11a.3; 'Hes.' fr. 241; Hecataeus fr. 18 Fowler; Pind. *Pyth.* 4.26, 251; Antimachus fr. 76 Matthews; Timaeus *FGrH* 566 F 85; Scymnus fr. 5 Gisinger (*RE* IIIA.666).

Azov and around to what was commonly known as the Cimmerian Bosporus, that is, the straits of Kerch.[54] Strabo concluded:

> Moreover, he [Homer] knows the Cimmerian Bosporus, as he knows the Cimmerians. He does not, presumably, just know their name and not the Cimmerians themselves, seeing that in his time, or shortly before, they overran the entire territory from the Bosporus as far as Ionia. Anyway he even hints at the clime of their country, which is dark and, as he says, 'veiled in mist and cloud' (etc.).[55]

The benighted Cimmerians of the *Odyssey*, who live just across the Oceanus from Circe, must again be taken from an Argonautic tradition that incorporated the latest reports and rumours from the northern Euxine.[56] Gladstone suggested that the strong current that flows out from the Sea of Azov, giving the straits 'the character of a vast marine river', was taken to be the Oceanus itself; he notes that Odysseus sails upstream to reach Hades' shore, downstream in returning to Circe (11. 21, 639).[57]

In her instructions to Odysseus for the Hades expedition (10.504–40) Circe does not mention the Cimmerians. She tells him to land at the place

> ἔνθ' ἀκτή τε λάχεια καὶ ἄλσεα Περσεφονείης
> μακραί τ' αἴγειροι καὶ ἰτέαι ὠλεσίκαρποι,

where are the low shore and the groves of Persephone, tall poplars and wasting willows.

After beaching his ship he should proceed towards the house of Hades, and wilder scenery will meet his eyes (513–15):

> ἔνθα μὲν εἰς Ἀχέροντα Πυριφλεγέθων τε ῥέουσιν
> Κωκυτός θ', ὃς δὴ Στυγὸς ὕδατός ἐστιν ἀπορρώξ,
> πέτρη τε ξύνεσίς τε δύω ποταμῶν ἐριδούπων.

There, flowing into Acheron, are Pyriphlegethon and Cocytus, which is a branch of the Water of Styx, and a rock, and the meeting of the two noisy rivers.

Baer claimed to have found the inspiration for these scenes precisely at the Cimmerian Bosporus. On both sides of the strait there are hellish vistas of mud volcanoes with eruptions of naphtha, while at Achuyevo on the east shore of the Sea of Azov a very shallow landing-beach gives access to broad meadows and a forest of tall, dark poplars.[58]

[54] Hdt. 4.12.1, 28.1, 45.2, 100.1; [Aesch.] *PV* 729–30; Posidonius fr. 44a Theiler = 272 Edelstein–Kidd; Strab. 11.2.5; Dion. Per. 167–8, etc.

[55] Strab. 1.1.10, cf. 1.2.9; 3.2.12. For the late dating of Homer here presupposed, cf. *Mus. Helv.* 52 (1995), 204, n. 4. For the climatic interpretation of the Cimmerians' perpetual darkness, cf. Gladstone (1858), 294; Baer (1878), 8; Maass (1915), 24, 'über der heutigen Halbinsel Taman ... lagert bei Windstille, wie Reisende versichern, eine eigentümlich trübe Luft, "ein Heerrauch, der einem dicken Nebel gleicht". Er stammt von den häufigen Schlamm- und Bergquellen jener Gegend.' Others take it as the obverse of the Laestrygonians' perpetual daylight: Gladstone (1858), 343; Berger (1904), 15; Minns (1913), 436; Drerup (1921), 180; Finsler (1924), 1.26; Heubeck (1989), 79.

[56] Cf. Baer (1873), 15; (1878), 8–9; Wilamowitz (1884), 165, 'die Kimmerier ... sind ein skythisches Volk, dessen reale Wohnsitze genau da liegen, wo der Zusammenhang der Dichtung sie ansetzt. Ob der Dichter die Kimmerier von ihren Raubzügen her kennt, oder woher sonst, ist dafür ganz gleichgiltig, da er sie eben in ihren heimischen Sitzen anführt'; Maass (1915), 23.

[57] Gladstone (1858), 288, 294–5; similarly Baer (1878), 10.

[58] Baer (1873), 33–7, with a graphic description of the mud volcanoes' activities; (1878), 9–11. Cf. Minns (1913), 436, 'A clear case [of an Odyssean adventure bearing every mark

If these equations are to be taken seriously, the inference, in line with the previous argument, would be that the Argonauts of the pre-Odyssean poem, while they did not stop to parley with ghosts, nevertheless got a view of these other-worldly landscapes as they sailed by on Oceanus' stream. With that model before him, we could understand how the *Odyssey* poet came to use this setting for what was in the first instance a consultation of a famous dead seer, such as would more naturally be performed at a central Greek *nekyomanteion.*[59]

## THE PARTING OF THE WAYS. THE SUN'S CATTLE. THE PHAEACIANS

Odysseus returns to the Aeaean isle, buries Elpenor, takes further instruction from Circe, and sails away. After passing the Sirens successfully he reaches the place where he has the choice of ways, through the Clashing Rocks or between Scylla and Charybdis. The Clashing Rocks mark the way that Jason went; Scylla and Charybdis, then, are the way he did not go, the way Odysseus goes. Here he diverges decisively from the Argonauts' track,[60] and none of the ensuing adventures has an evident Argonautic or Pontic connection. Apollonius' Argonauts, of course, do pass by Scylla, Charybdis, Thrinacia, and Calypso's isle, but avoid engagement with any of them. They are all firmly located in the west and come from the *Odyssey*, not from older Argonautic tradition.

We must pause over Thrinacia, as some have thought that the solar cattle and Helios' wrath should belong in the story of the journey to the sunrise and the encounter with the Sun's children.[61] The principal argument is, as Meuli puts it, that 'der Zorn des Helios steht als eine auffällige Motivverdoppelung neben dem die Erzählung sonst beherrschenden Zorne des Poseidon'. Poseidon in 9.536 hearkened to his son Polyphemus' prayer that Odysseus should reach home, if at all, ὀψὲ κακῶς, on someone else's ship, having lost all his comrades. It is Poseidon who destroys the craft that he built on Calypso's isle and makes him swim for his life (5.282ff.). Why is a different god brought in to wreck the ship and drown the crew? The motif of Helios' wrath would have had a natural place in the Argonaut saga, where his son Aeëtes was robbed, his granddaughter Medea abducted, and his grandson Apsyrtus murdered.

On the other hand, given these sufficient reasons for Helios to persecute the Argonauts, an episode in which they violated his cattle would be superfluous. And if it had occurred, the outcome could not have been as it is in the *Odyssey*, since it is certain that the *Argo* was not wrecked in a storm. Indeed, while Jason and his men saw wonders and faced dangers on their homeward journey, there is no evidence in the tradition that they suffered any serious mishap, and they reached Iolcus safe and sound. In view of these considerations Von der Mühll and Merkelbach conclude that the *Odyssey* poet took only the motif of Helios' wrath from the *Argonautica*, while the

of a Pontic setting] is that of the Cimmerians. Their place was on the Cimmerian Bosporus, a land weird enough with its mud volcanoes and marshes to supply the groundwork for a picture of the Lower World.'

[59] Cf. E. Norden, *P. Vergilius Maro. Aeneis Buch VI* (Berlin, 1926[3]), 200, n. 2; E. Bethe, *Homer. Dichtung und Sage* (Berlin, 1914–22), 2.132; A. Hartmann, *Untersuchungen über die Sagen vom Tode des Odysseus* (Munich, 1917), 212–13; Merkelbach (1969), 219–30; Heubeck (1989), 75–6.

[60] Kullmann (1992), 125.

[61] Meuli (1921), 94–7 = (1975), 659–61; Von der Mühll (1940), 730–1; Merkelbach (1969), 206; Danek (1998), 252–3, 262; questioned by Wilamowitz (1924), 2.236, n. 3. Undecided: Kullmann (1992), 128.

cattle came from some other source. Herds sacred to the Sun, after all, were to be found in various places: Tainaron, Apollonia, Gortyn.[62]

The Cattle of the Sun in the *Odyssey*, however, are something more than ordinary beasts enjoying protected status.

> ἑπτὰ βοῶν ἀγέλαι, τόσα δ' οἰῶν πώεα καλά,
> πεντήκοντα δ' ἕκαστα· γόνος δ' οὐ γίνεται αὐτῶν,
> οὐδέ ποτε φθινύθουσι· θεαὶ δ' ἐπὶ ποιμένες εἰσίν.

Seven herds of cows there are, and the same number of flocks of sheep, with fifty in each. They have no young, and they never perish; they have goddesses to herd them. (12.129–31).

It looks as though the poet has here incorporated an old cosmological riddle of a familiar Indo-European type.[63] As Aristotle (fr. 175) understood, the 350 cows and 350 sheep evidently stand (or had stood in some pre-Odyssean version) for the days and nights of the lunar year; no wonder it would be calamitous if anyone harmed any of them.

These animals one would not expect to find grazing in Crete or the Peloponnese. If they were to be seen anywhere on earth, it would presumably be by Oceanus, where Helios himself has his estates. It is possible, therefore, that the Argonauts beheld them in those regions—beheld them, but sailed on, having been warned by Circe, perhaps, to steer well clear of them. If so, the *Odyssey* poet had a good starting-point for what he needed to accomplish before his hero reached Calypso, namely the elimination of the crew. The motif that Odysseus fell asleep, allowing the others to get up to mischief (12.338), is repeated from the Aeolus story (10.31).

It remains to speak of the Phaeacians, who play an important role in Apollonius' Argonautic narrative (4.768–9, 982–1222). This was not his own invention, for Timaeus at least (*FGrH* 566 F 87) had placed Jason's and Medea's first sexual union in Corcyra, and Corcyra had long been identified with the Homeric Scheria. The Argonauts' appearance here is the result of Corinthian myth-making as seen in the fragments of 'Eumelus' and the *Carmen Naupactium*.[64] There is no reason to think that the Phaeacians of the *Odyssey* had made any appearance in an earlier *Argonautica*.[65] The obscure reference in *Od.* 7.323–6 may suggest that they came from some poem involving Rhadamanthys.

## THE PRE-ODYSSEAN *ARGONAUTICA*

The following episodes and elements in the *Odyssey* have been found to have Argonautic or Pontic connections: the Laestrygonians; Circe; the entry into

[62] O. Jessen, *RE* VIII 71. Note the suggestion of Wilamowitz (1884), 168, that Thrinacia 'Trident-land' (*θρῖναξ*) originally referred to the three prongs of the southern Peloponnese, where Tainaron is. Others have connected it with Chalcidice, where Heracles killed the giant Alcyoneus who had stolen Helios' cattle from Erythea (sch. Pind. *Isth.* 6.47a, Apollod. 1.6.1): Kranz (1915), 101; Von der Mühll (1940), 730. See also Meuli (1921), 96–7 = (1975), 660.

[63] Cf. *A.P.* 14.40–1, 101; *Rigveda* 1.164.11, 48; *Atharvaveda* 10.8.4–5; *Mahābhārata* 1.3.60 ff., 150; 3.133.21; A. Schleicher, *Litauische Märchen, Sprichworte, Rätsel und Lieder* (Weimar, 1857), 201–2; K. Ohlert, *Rätsel und Gesellschaftsspiele der alten Griechen* (Berlin, 1886), 122–8; W. Schultz, *Rätsel aus dem hellenischen Kulturkreise* 2 (Leipzig, 1912), 28–9; id., *RE* 1A.76, 82, 90. The *Rigveda* (1.92.2, 124.11) speaks of Ushas (Dawn) yoking oxen (figurative ones, not as in Hes. *Op.* 581), and Zarathustra in his *Gāthās* uses the phrase 'bulls of days', apparently meaning new dawns (*Yasna* 46.3, cf. 4; 50.10).

[64] Above, p. 40. Cf. Wilamowitz (1924), 2.240–1; Merkelbach (1969), 206.

[65] Against H. Mühlestein, *Antike und Abendland* 25 (1979), 166–73.

Oceanus; the Cimmerians, and perhaps other features of the approach to Hades; the Sirens; the Clashing Rocks; perhaps the Cattle of the Sun. As the Argonauts' voyage was directed towards the east, and Odysseus' wanderings were in principle in the west, we assume that where the latter's adventures seem to have a Pontic setting, this indicates Argonautic provenance.

The Pontic reference points are clustered in a particular sector in the north: the Crimea; the straits of Kerch; perhaps the interior of the Sea of Azov. The pre-Odyssean Argonautic poem must date from a time when that sector was the frontier zone of Greek (essentially Milesian) exploration: tentatively prospected, but not yet colonized. The mythical Aea will have been located at the eastern extremity of this zone, the Phasis being probably identified with the Tanais.

The earliest Greek finds at the main sites in these regions, according to the most recent surveys, are dated as follows.[66]

(Dnieper estuary)
Berezan: *c.* 640 (Tsetskhladze); or 610–600 (Solovyov, Boardman).
Olbia: *c.* 600 (Vinogradov); or *c.* 560 (Tsetskhladze, Solovyov [2001]); after 550 (Solovyov [1999]).

(Crimea)
Chersonesos: late sixth century (Boardman).

(Kerch straits)
Panticapaeum: late seventh century (Boardman).
Nymphaeum, Phanagoreia: mid sixth century (Boardman).

We cannot make any nice calculation on this basis, but it would be reasonable to think of the mid part of the seventh century as the time when this area was being sporadically traversed and when rumours of what it contained were coming back to Greece. A date around 700 would be implausibly early.

It has usually been assumed that the poem was produced by a Milesian or in the Milesian sphere.[67] Among other epics known to the poet of the *Odyssey* were a *Memnonis*, which was a pre-form of the Cyclic *Aethiopis*, and something resembling the Cyclic *Iliou Persis*.[68] These Cyclic poems were attributed to a Milesian, Arctinus. Interest in the Black Sea is reflected in the myth of Achilles' posthumous translation to the White Island, which appeared in the *Aethiopis*. If Arctinus was a real person, he might also have composed the *Argonautica*; or it might have been the work of another poet from the same milieu.

What can we say about its content? Jason reached the Phasis, Aea, and Aeëtes' realm, where the Sun's rays are stored in a golden chamber by the shore of Oceanus (Mimn. 11a). He succeeded in obtaining the Golden Fleece, no doubt with the help of Medea.

[66] Y. G. Vinogradov, *Olbia. Eine altgriechische Stadt im nordwestlichen Schwarzmeerraum, Mnemos.* Suppl. 149 (Leiden, 1995); G. Tsetskhladze (ed.), *The Greek Colonisation of the Black Sea Area*, Historia Einzelschr. 121 (Stuttgart, 1998); id., *Die Griechen in der Kolchis* (Amsterdam, 1998); J. Boardman, *The Greeks Overseas* (London, 1999[4]); S. L. Solovyov, *Ancient Berezan, Colloquia Pontica* 4 (Leiden, Boston, and Cologne, 1999); id. in G. Tsetskhladze (ed.), *North Pontic Archaeology. Recent Discoveries and Studies*, Colloquia Pontica 6 (Leiden, etc., 2001).

[67] Cf. Wilamowitz (1884), 167; (1924), 2.237; Friedländer (1914), 300; Kranz (1915), 111; Merkelbach (1969), 201.

[68] See West (2003), 12–13.

He took a different route home, probably following directions given him by Circe. Mimnermus lays emphasis on his reaching Oceanus: he is likely to have done so by sailing up the Phasis–Tanais, as in most early versions. On the way the Argonauts perhaps saw the Cattle of the Sun peacefully grazing, and further on they passed the dark land of the Cimmerians and the dramatic scenery of the approaches to Hades. They passed the Sirens—they must have been forewarned of the danger—and the crooning enchantresses were outsung and deposed. Presently they had to pass through the Clashing Rocks; probably they witnessed the flight of doves bringing ambrosia for Zeus from its trans-Oceanic wells. Presumably Circe had told them what to expect, and advised them of a tactic that would give them their best chance of getting through. With Hera's help they made it.

This brought them back into the Oikoumene. Whereabouts? In most later versions (references in n. 53) they returned to the Mediterranean by way of Africa or Gibraltar, after sailing half-way round the circumference of the earth. But those versions dated from times when it was known that the Black Sea was enclosed; there might perhaps be a way out through the Tanais, but once this exit had been taken there would be no other way of getting back in. When the pre-Odyssean *Argonautica* was composed, on the other hand, it was not yet established that the eastern sea was land-locked. We cannot exclude the possibility that the passage through the Clashing Rocks brought the Argo back into the same sea, which they could then leave as they had entered it, by way of the Bosporus and Dardanelles.

## EARLIER *ODYSSEYS*

Here is the register of Odysseus' adventures after he is blown off course at Cape Malea and before he arrives back in Ithaca:

1. The Lotus-eaters.
2. Polyphemus.
3. Aiolos and the bag of winds.
4. The Laestrygonians.*
5. Circe.*
6. Hades.* (Then back to Circe.)
7. The Sirens.*
8. (Clashing Rocks* avoided.) Scylla. (Charybdis avoided.)
9. The Cattle of the Sun.*
10. Charybdis.
11. Calypso.
12. The Phaeacians.

The asterisked items are the ones we have found to be adapted from, or in some way inspired by, the voyage of the Argonauts. It will be seen that they make an almost continuous series, as if they had been imported *en bloc.* Was there an earlier form of the story that lacked them? It would not be surprising if Odysseus' adventures grew by stages rather than all being invented at once. His encounter with Polyphemus, after all, is illustrated on vases from *c.* 675 B.C.,[69] whereas the *Odyssey* as we have it must be dated towards the end of the century, if not still later.[70]

[69] A. Snodgrass, *Homer and the Artists* (Cambridge, 1998), 89–100; *LIMC* Odysseus nos. 88, 94, Odysseus/Uthuze no. 56.

[70] Carpenter (1946), 90–102, 111; S. West (1988), 33–4; M. L. West (2003), 13.

When Odysseus' men release the pent-up winds from the big oxhide bag, the result is a storm, *κακὴ ἀνέμοιο θύελλα* (10.48, 54), that drives the ships helplessly off the course they have set. When at the end of the Argonautic sequence they slaughter some of Helios' cows, the result is again a storm (12.403–17; *ἀνέμοιο θύελλα*, 409). The first of these two storms, though disheartening, is more of a setback than a disaster, as it simply blows the ships back to Aeolus' island, where they had been before, and cancels the advantage that his help had given them. The second storm is a real catastrophe: the last ship is destroyed and the men perish, except for Odysseus. Now, take out the Argonautic adventures, and the two storms become one. The windy tumult released from Aeolus' bag smashes the ships[71] and drowns everybody; Odysseus alone clings to wreckage and is eventually washed up on Calypso's shore. Poseidon's anger at the blinding of Polyphemus is vented in a final storm after Odysseus leaves Calypso. His wrath is no longer in competition with Helios'.

In the Nekyia, it was observed, the necromantic consultation of Teiresias has been transplanted to a new and inappropiate setting. It would naturally have been undertaken at one of the sites in central Greece that were dedicated to such purposes. The seer's advice falls into two parts. The first part (11.100–17), designed for its present position in the middle of Odysseus' wanderings, is a warning against harming the Cattle of the Sun; this is strictly superfluous, as it will later be repeated by Circe. The second part (118–37) concerns the journey that Odysseus must undertake much later, after he has got home and killed the suitors. We may suspect that in an earlier *Odyssey* the hero obtained this guidance at a time nearer to when he would need it. Some scholars think that it originally stood not in the *Odyssey* at all, but in the *Thesprotis* that was later absorbed in the Cyclic *Telegony*.[72] But it could have been accommodated in a narrative in which Odysseus was not conveyed straight from Scheria to Ithaca. There are hints in the later part of the *Odyssey* of a version in which he reached home by way of Thesprotia, and indeed undertook divination at Dodona (14.321–30; 17.525–7; 19.270–307). These are ingredients in the series of Odysseus' false tales, but they suggest the context in which the consultation of Teiresias may originally have had its place.[73] The river-names Acheron and Cocytus (10.513–14) are at home in Thesprotia, as Pausanias observed (1.17.5); the third name, Pyriphlegethon, is the one that the naphtha discharges of Kerch might have suggested.

As for Scylla and Charybdis, these are independent mariners' tales. If they had a place in the earlier series of Odysseus' adventures, we cannot say where they fitted in. Their arrangement on either side of a narrow strait is an artificiality, evidently answering the need for an alternative to the Clashing Rocks in their present context.[74] Charybdis—not a whirlpool, as sometimes described, but a place where the sea rises and falls by a spectacular amount three times a day—is no doubt based, as Posidonius supposed (fr. 1 Th. = 216 E.–K.), on rumours of Atlantic tides.

One can speculate about other early versions of Odysseus' travels. There may be something to be said for the theory[75] that they were at first located in the eastern

[71] Or perhaps the single ship, if in an earlier version the rest had disappeared in the Malea storm.

[72] Schwartz (1924), 141–50; Wilamowitz, *Die Heimkehr des Odysseus* (Berlin, 1927), 79–80; Von der Mühll (1940), 724; cf. Merkelbach (1969), 229.

[73] Woodhouse (1930), 144–51.

[74] Kranz (1915), 105; Meuli (1921), 89 = (1975), 654; Von der Mühll (1940), 729.

[75] Woodhouse (1930), 126–36; cf. S. West, 'An alternative nostos for Odysseus', *LCM* 6(7) (July 1981), 169–75, and 'Crete in the *Aeneid*: two intertextual footnotes', *CQ* 53 (2003), 303–

Mediterranean, with seven years spent in Egypt instead of with Calypso, and that this was all transferred to Menelaus as an answer to the problem raised by Telemachus at 3.249: where was Menelaus all the time that Aegisthus and Clytemnestra were lording it at Mycene? Certainly Menelaus' extraordinary adventure with Proteus, who gives him advice on how to get home and what he will find there, looks more suitable for Odysseus.

Menelaus is assisted by Proteus' daughter, Eidothea, whose heart he stirs (4.364–6). Perhaps in an early version it was Proteus' daughter, not Atlas', who detained Odysseus and then helped him on his way. Calypso, who is clearly to some extent a doublet of Circe, has often been seen as a figure invented by the poet of the *Odyssey*; she has no part to play in any other context. The lines in which she is introduced (1.52–3),

> Ἄτλαντος θυγάτηρ ὀλοόφρονος, ὅς τε θαλάσσης
> πάσης βένθεα οἶδεν,

seem to combine elements of Eidothea's particulars (4.365 + 385–6, *Πρωτέος ἰφθίμου θυγάτηρ . . . ὅς τε θαλάσσης | πάσης βένθεα οἶδε*) and Circe's (10.137, *αὐτοῦ κασιγνήτη ὀλοόφρονος Αἰήταο*). It is clear why Aeëtes deserves the adjective *ὀλοόφρων*, not quite so clear why Atlas does,[76] and while the *ἅλιος γέρων* Proteus of course knows all the deeps of the sea, it has always been something of a puzzle why the upholder of the sky's pillars (1.53–4) should be equally familiar with them. There is no trace of this marine competence in other Classical references to Atlas. It is customary to compare the giant Ubelluri in the Hittite *Song of Ullikummi*.[77] The hypothesis that the Atlas of the *Odyssey* is a substitute for Proteus offers a more satisfactory explanation.

One might then envisage three major phases in the evolution of Odysseus' exotic travels:

1. The Malea storm blows him into the eastern Mediterranean. He spends time in Egypt and the Levant. He is marooned on an island with the daughter of Proteus; he engages with Proteus himself and obtains advice about his homeward journey.
2. All of that is transferred to Menelaus. The Malea storm blows Odysseus into the western Mediterranean. After several adventures (Lotophagoi, Polyphemus, Aeolus), he is marooned on an island with the daughter of Atlas (a figure symbolic of the west). Perhaps he engages with Atlas and obtains advice from him.[78] He reaches Thesprotia and consults the dead Teiresias, who gives him essential information for the next stage.
3. A new series of adventures, inspired by the *Argonautica*, is inserted between Aeolus and Calypso. Calypso takes on some aspects of Circe. The consultation of Teiresias is transferred to a site on the far shore of Oceanus, at the mid point of the wanderings and the furthest point from home.

4; S. Reece, *AJP* 115 (1994), 157–73; P. Grossardt, *Die Trugreden in der Odyssee und ihre Rezeption in der antiken Literatur* (Bern, 1998), 37–43. These writers point out that *Od.* 1.3, *πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω*, is better suited to a tour of the Levant than to the content of the poem we have.

[76] See my commentary on Hes. *Th.* 509.

[77] See West (1997), 149, 295–6.

[78] Cf. M. Nagler, *Archaeological News* 6 (1977), 79; West (1997), 418.

## *ODYSSEY, ARGONAUTICA*, AND *GILGAMESH*

The picture is complicated by the existence of significant parallels between Odysseus' experiences in the course of his homecoming and those of Gilgamesh as related in the epic that we name after him.[79] The most striking are a series of parallels between the Circe and Calypso episodes and Gilgamesh's encounter with the divine alewife Shiduri. There are also some similarities between Odysseus' stay with the Phaeacians and Gilgamesh's with Ut-napishtim and his wife. While one may quibble over details, it seems unquestionable that the *Odyssey* narrative shows the influence of the Babylonian poem. The question now arises, to what extent this influence may have been mediated by the *Argonautica.*[80]

I will take first the Circe–Calypso–Shiduri parallels, dividing the narrative into segments and commenting on each in turn.

**1.** Gilgamesh reaches Shiduri after entering the portal by which the rising sun emerges and passing through a long dark tunnel. It brings him out into a shining garden, and there he is seen by Shiduri, 'a tavern-keeper who lived by the seashore. . . . Potstands she had, and [vats all of gold,] she was swathed in hoods and [veiled with] veils.'

Odysseus reaches Circe's island from Telepylos 'Distant Portal', where the paths of day and night are close together. Her island is itself located at the sunrise. She gives her visitors wine with various additives.

We have seen that both Telepylos and Circe come from the *Argonautica.* The name of Aea, the sunrise land where the Golden Fleece was kept, coincides with the name of the Babylonian Sun-god's wife Aya, a goddess of dawn. If Circe, like Shiduri, was 'veiled' in the Argonautic poem, this might have inspired the *Odyssey* poet to give his parallel creation, the daughter of Atlas, the name Calypso.[81]

**2.** Shiduri asks Gilgamesh why his cheeks are so sunken and why he appears so dejected. He answers, how could it not be so? His great friend Enkidu, with whom he went through every danger, has died; it was too much to bear. Will the same not happen to him?

Circe, after taking Odysseus to her bed and providing him with every other comfort, asks why he is so downcast and will not eat or drink. He replies, how could any reasonable man bring himself to do so before he had got his comrades released (that is, from the spell under which she had put them)?

We cannot infer that the Argonautic Circe had taken Jason to bed or turned his companions into pigs. But she might well have welcomed them with drinks of some kind, and Jason might well have been downcast on account of some misfortune suffered by his men, or because he could see no means of escape from Aeëtes.

**3.** Gilgamesh wants to know how to cross the sea to reach Ut-napishtim, the man who survived the Flood and was granted eternal life by the gods. Shiduri tells him that no one has ever made that crossing; only the Sun-god does so. It means crossing the Waters of Death.

[79] Noted by various scholars from 1902 onward; fullest treatment in West (1997), 402–17, to which the reader is referred for more detailed documentation of what follows. For the Babylonian poem see now A. George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (London, 1999) (translation); id., *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic* (Oxford, 2003) (bilingual edition with commentary). My quotations are from his 1999 translation.

[80] Cf. W. Kullmann, *Realität, Imagination und Theorie* (Stuttgart, 2002), 148, n. 6, 'Perhaps the relation of the Argonaut legend to oriental sources was more direct than that of the *Odyssey*'.

[81] Hesiod gives this name to one of his Oceanids (*Th.* 359), but she can hardly be relevant.

Odysseus pleads with Circe to send him home. She tells him he must first go to the house of Hades. He protests, 'but who will show me the way on that journey? No one has ever reached Hades by ship.'

Jason might have shown a similar reaction if Circe told him he must sail out to Oceanus, especially if she told him he must pass by the purlieus of Hades and the river Pyriphlegethon.

**4.** Shiduri tells Gilgamesh to go into the adjoining forest. There he will find Ur-shanabi, Ut-napishtim's boatman, who will perhaps take him over the water. Gilgamesh rushes there and impetuously destroys Ur-shanabi's 'Stone Ones', the rowers who alone can propel his boat, impervious as they are to the Waters of Death. In order to make the journey it is now necessary for him to chop down a large number of trees and make them into punt-poles, each of which will be used once and discarded after contact with the lethal water.

The Homeric parallel appears when Odysseus is with Calypso, not Circe. When the time comes to send him on his way, she tells him to go into the forest and cut down enough trees for the building of a raft on which he can sail.

There is no difficulty in supposing that the poet of the *Odyssey* transferred to Calypso a scene that in his model had been associated with Circe. On the other hand, it is hard to envisage what function it might have had in the *Argonautica.* How could Jason's sailing have depended on a quantity of trees being felled? Clearly he did not need a raft. Did the Argo, like Ur-shanabi's vessel, have to cross a stretch of water so noxious that it could only be negotiated with single-use punt-poles? Did rollers have to be made to transport it over a neck of land? These are theoretical possibilities, but no more. If there was nothing of the kind in the *Argonautica*, we shall have to suppose that the *Odyssey* poet was in a position to draw independently on a version of the Gilgamesh epic.

Now for the Gilgamesh parallels in the Phaeacian narrative.

The Babylonian poet lays emphasis on Gilgamesh's wild and worn-down appearance when he arrives at Shiduri's establishment. 'He was clad in a pelt, and fearful [to look on].' He looks so disreputable that at first she bars her door. After the developments summarized above, he reaches Ut-napishtim's shore. He asks to hear Ut-napishtim's story, and Ut-napishtim, in an extended first-person narrative (197 verses), relates the events of the Flood and his own salvation. After this Ut-napishtim's wife proposes sending Gilgamesh home. 'The way he came he shall go back in well-being.' The boatman Ur-shanabi is instructed to take him, but at the same time forbidden ever to return. Before they leave, Gilgamesh is cleaned up and provided with fresh royal clothing; he throws his pelts in the sea. Ur-shanabi then accompanies him home to Uruk.

When Odysseus reaches Scheria, he throws back into the sea the *κρήδεμνον* of Ino-Leucothea that has kept him afloat (5.459). When he approaches Nausicaa, his wild appearance frightens her maids and they run away. She lets him clean himself up and provides him with clean clothes. At Alcinous' house he is asked about his experiences and relates them in a lengthy first-person narrative. Alcinous and his wife both give him gifts, and rowers are instructed to take him home. They bring him to Ithaca in a wondrous ship that knows its own destination and travels invisibly, faster than any hawk (8.556–63, 13.86–7), but they never again set foot on Scheria (13.125–87).

The parallels are apparent, and here there seems no possibility of an Argonautic intermediary. We have seen that there is no ground for positing a Phaeacian presence in the *Argonautica*, and none of the above subject-matter would seem to have any place in the Argonaut story.

The conclusion must be that the poets of both the *Argonautica* and the *Odyssey* knew and were independently influenced by a version—surely a Greek version—of the Gilgamesh epic. To this extent the *Odyssey–Argonautica* relationship is like the *Odyssey–Iliad* relationship. In the *Iliad* too the *Gilgamesh* influence is manifest. The *Odyssey* poet knows and draws upon the *Iliad*, while using *Gilgamesh* motifs that the *Iliad* did not supply.

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