

To this conclusion there is, however, a grave objection: ornithological authorities make it clear that only one species of Pelican feeds by diving from a height, and that that species is confined to the New World. For instance, one of them² describes the Pelican family's method of feeding thus: 'Pelicans . . . are highly gregarious, and when fishing they may sweep the shallows in line with flapping wings; or a compact party may swim quietly about . . . dipping their heads under water in unison. In one species, as will be noted later, the method of fishing is quite different'; and later he says (608): 'The New World has two species . . . [One of these] is the Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* . . . which . . . catches fish by plunging from the wing, often from a considerable height.'³ Clearly, only this species could be caught by Dionysius' method: it would not work for catching Pelicans in the Old World.

The statement that Terns are too small to be worth catching is also highly questionable. At the present day, birds smaller than Terns—Thrushes, Larks, Warblers, Finches, etc.—are regularly shot and trapped for food in Mediterranean countries, as British conservationists frequently complain.⁴ Ancient Greeks and Romans shared this taste for small birds: Thrushes (*turdi*, κίχλαι) they regarded as a delicacy,⁵ some Romans also ate Blackbirds and Nightingales;⁶ and Dionysius himself describes how to capture all three species,⁷ and a variety of other small land-birds.⁸ At the present day, 'Terns are trapped for food . . . along most of the west coast of Africa from Senegal to Angola'.⁹ Whether it would be possible to catch Terns by the method Dionysius describes I do not know, but there is no reason to assert that the ancients would not have thought them worth catching.

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² *A New Dictionary of Birds*, ed. by Sir A. Landsborough Thomson (London 1964) 607.

³ For similar accounts see, for instance, W. B. Alexander, *Birds of the Ocean* (revised edn, London 1955) 172, 177; K. M. Bauer and U. N. Glutz von Blotzheim, *Handbuch der Vögel Mitteleuropas* 1 (Frankfurt am Main 1966) 279. With my quotation compare Dionysius' statement (*op. cit.* ii 7) that Pelicans (πελεκίνοι), when feeding, 'do not dive completely under water, but dip their necks' (J. Pollard's translation, *Birds in Greek Life* [London 1977] 75): he clearly does not believe that they dive from a height.

⁴ See the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds magazine *Birds* iv (1972/3) 290; v 1 (1974) 8; vi 1 (1976) 35; vi 4 (1976) 34–6: on the destruction of small birds in Cyprus, France, Malta and Italy.

⁵ See Sir D'A. W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds*² (London 1936) 149 (s.v. κίχλη): J. M. C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (London 1973) 277 f. and nn. A wall-painting of food from Herculaneum includes Thrushes: see *Pompeii A.D. 79* (catalogue of exhibition at the Royal Academy, London 1976–7) item 255.

⁶ Toynbee *op. cit.* 276 f. and nn.
⁷ *Ix*. iii 13. For further references, from other authors, see D'A. Thompson *op. cit.* s.v. ἀηδών, κόσσυφος. A mosaic from Piazza Armerina shows two men trying to catch Thrushes (reproduced by K. Lindner, *Beiträge zur Vogelfang und Falknerei im Altertum* [Berlin 1973] 31).

⁸ See, for instance, *Ix*. iii 2–5, on the capture of Larks (κορύδαλοι), Sparrows (στρουθοί), and other, presumably similar, birds. (On the identification of these birds see D'A. Thompson, *op. cit.*, and A. Garzya's notes in his 1963 Teubner edition of Dionysius. The small size of στρουθοί is confirmed by *Ix*. ii 16 τῶν βραχυράτων στρουθῶν κτλ.) Further references to the killing and eating of small birds are cited by Pollard *op. cit.* 104–7 (he regards Cataractes in *Ix*. iii 22 as a Tern: *op. cit.* 106).

⁹ S. Cramp, W. R. P. Bourne and D. Saunders, *The Seabirds of Britain and Ireland* (London 1974) 145.

Polyphemos and his Near Eastern Relations

(PLATE VIIIb)

A number of studies of the Cyclops episode of *Odyssey* ix have described modern folktales which resemble it to a varying degree.¹ Most writers have concluded that few of the tales actually derive from the *Odyssey*; rather they are related to it as independent variations of the same tale. Hitherto there has been no basis for conjecture about the origin of the tale, and speculation has ranged widely but inconclusively.²

Perhaps speculation is all we can ever hope for in such questions. But it may help if we can find possible references to a version of the tale earlier than Homer, and the purpose of this note is to draw attention to such a possibility.

One-eyed but otherwise human figures are found, though not often, on cylinder seals from Mesopotamia. Edith Porada describes and illustrates three examples.³ The earliest of these (PLATE VIIIb) dates from around 3000 B.C., and shows the one-eyed figure nude, curly-haired and bearded, holding up two lions by the hind legs. The rest of the scene includes an enclosure of some sort, a grotesque man(?) apparently bending a stick(?), two creatures that look like sheep, and two lion-headed birds (the personified storm-cloud?).⁴

The second representation is from Fara (ancient Shuruppak) on a sealing of about 2600–2450 B.C. Here the cyclopic figure is one of eight assorted contesting creatures, their bodies criss-crossing each other. His body is crossed with that of a bull-man.

The third (c. 2500 B.C.) again shows contesting animals, battled by a bull-man and the cyclopic figure.

Porada is cautious in interpretation. She agrees with Frankfort that the hero-and-bull-man association may have been felt to reflect the joint exploits of Gilgamesh and Enkidu⁵ but remarks that 'no mention is found in Mesopotamian literature to the effect that Gilgamesh was one-eyed—like the Cyclops of Odysseus'.⁶

Karl Oberhuber has recently argued that indeed Gilgamesh was originally a one-eyed creature, on the basis of etymological connections of his name.⁷ He believes the title/first line of the epic (*Gilgamesh*) *ša nagba imuru* was translated and deviously Graecised to become Πολύφημος Κύκλωψ. I am not qualified to discuss his Sumerian and Akkadian linguistic arguments, and can only remark that the expression Πολύφημος Κύκλωψ is unheard of in Homer.

But whether or not the one-eyed figure of the Mesopotamian seals has anything to do with Gilgamesh, it seems a distinct possibility that he reflects a story related to those that gave rise to Polyphemos. The Cyclops adventure in

¹ One of the best and most recent is by J. Glenn, *TAPA* cii (1971) 133–82. Other interesting discussions are those by D. L. Page, *The Homeric Odyssey* ch. 1, and G. S. Kirk, *Myth, its Meaning and Functions* 162–71. Further references are given in Glenn's paper.

² Glenn *op. cit.* 142.

³ 'Sumerian Art in Miniature', in *The Legacy of Sumer*, ed. D. Schmandt-Besserat (*Bibliotheca Mesopotamica* iv: Malibu 1976) 107–18, esp. 112–13 and 115–16 and figs 14, 16, 18.

⁴ On this cylinder see also E. Porada, *Mesopotamian Art in Cylinder Seals of the Pierpont Morgan Collection* 16, and B. L. Goff, *Symbols of Prehistoric Mesopotamia* 69, 214 and fig. 283. I am grateful to the Pierpont Morgan Library for the photograph which appears as PLATE VIIIb and for permission to reproduce it.

⁵ *Cylinder Seals* 62–7. Cf. also Goff *op. cit.* 241–52.

⁶ *Mesopotamian Art in Cylinder Seals* . . . 16.

⁷ *Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft* xxi (1974) 147–53.

the *Odyssey* contains elements from more than one tale;⁸ we are concerned here with the one which tells of a hero's escape by blinding a giant. In 74 out of 125 modern versions, the giant has only one eye, and in many of the remainder he has some other defect of vision.⁹

Interestingly, Porada suggests that 'perhaps the rather frequent third hollow on the forehead of the hero with upright curls in cylinders of the Fara style . . . was meant to indicate a third eye'.¹⁰ We may compare Servius *ad Aen.* iii 636, 'multi Polyphemum dicunt unum habuisse oculum, alii duos, alii tres . . .'.¹¹

It is tempting to see in the first seal described above a portrayal of a Cyclops victorious against lions who might have threatened his sheep in their enclosure. An enclosure of some sort (hut, house, cave, castle etc.) features in most modern versions of the tale, and sheep are more often than not involved.¹²

It would be tempting also to find some hint of our hero preparing his weapon, in the figure brandishing a stick. However, the stick shown in the seal is curved or bent, and it is hard to connect it with any of the weapons commonly used in more recent versions (spit, boiling liquid, staff or stake).¹³

We are well into the realm of speculation now, and using even cuneiform sources (let alone Homer!) to interpret scenes in cylinder seals is notoriously hazardous. There is a long gap of time and place between Mesopotamia in 2500 B.C. and the *Odyssey*; a gap which at present can only be bridged by postulating persistent oral traditions and possible transmission via, say, Ugarit.¹⁴

Yet such transmission is not inherently improbable, and the 1500-year gap between the *Odyssey* and the earliest modern versions of the tale, as well as its extremely wide geographical distribution¹⁵ testify to its enduring appeal. It may well be that the Cyclops should join the ranks of Greek monsters who have oriental ancestry.

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⁸ Glenn *op.cit.* 143–4.

⁹ *Ibid.* 154–5.

¹⁰ 'Sumerian Art in Miniature (n. 3) 115–16. The cylinders she refers to date from the Early Dynastic period, in the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. See Frankfort, *Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient* pl. 39A for a particularly clear example.

¹¹ The three-eyed giants of modern Cretan folktales, however, are not a convincing parallel, since their third eye was apparently at the back of their head: Faure, *REG* lxxviii (1965) xxvii–xxviii.

¹² Glenn, *op.cit.* 152 and 167.

¹³ *Ibid.* 164–5.

¹⁴ See for example M. Schretter, *Alter Orient und Hellas* (Innsbruck 1974) 7–15; J. T. Hooker, *Mycenaean Greece* ch. 6, esp. 117–18.

¹⁵ Glenn, *op.cit.* 134–5.

AP ix 272 (Bianor) and the meaning of φθάνω

Καρφαλέος δῖμει Φοίβου λάτρις εὖτε γυναικός
εἶδεν ὑπὲρ τύμβου κρωσσίου ὄμβροδόκην,
κλάγξεν ὑπὲρ χείλους, ἀλλ' οὐ γένυς ἤπτετο βυσοῦ·
Φοίβε, σὺ δ' εἰς τέχνην ὄρνι ἐκαιρομάνεις·
χερμάδα δὲ ψαλμῶν σφαιρονί, ποτόν ἀρπαγι χεῖλει
ἔφθανε μαιμάσσω †λαοτίτακτον† ὕδωρ.

In verse 6 Professor Giangrande (*JHS* xcv [1975] 36–7) would read λαοτίταντον, saying that it means 'expanded

by the stones'.¹ But τιταίνω does not mean 'expand' in volume; it ordinarily means 'extend', 'stretch' in length, and -τίταντον has no real claim to be regarded as suitable here. Besides, Giangrande's whole approach is based on the assumption that we have in this epigram exactly the same version of the story as is found in e.g. Pliny *NH* x 125, where the bird uniformly raises the level of the water by dropping stones into the vessel and can then drink at leisure. But some of the wording here suggests snatching haste; in particular ἔφθανε suggests that the bird 'caught' water splashed by the dropped stone(s) 'before it got away', i.e. before it fell back to the bottom of the vessel (*cf.* Gow–Page, *The Garland of Philip* ii 203 *ad loc.*).² Salmasius' λαοτίτακτον ('stone-shaken'; LSJ should indicate s.v. that it is a conjecture), very widely accepted and not mentioned by Giangrande, fits well with this interpretation (though there may be some doubts about the complete suitability of τινάσσω as a word for disturbing water; λαοτάρακτον, which I have not seen suggested, perhaps deserves a place in the apparatus).

To suit his view Giangrande gives φθάνω a new meaning, saying that ἔφθανε means simple 'reached', 'got at', and in support of this he cites a number of occurrences of φθάνω in the *Anthology*, to wit *AP* 384.3; *AP* vii 183.2; ix 252.5; ix 278.6. Anyone who thinks that φθάνω is devoid of the notion of anticipation in *AP* 384.3 (τοὺς τρεῖς ἐνίκα, πρῶτος αἰθέρα φθάνων) should think again, about πρῶτος: what justification can there be for creating a new meaning for φθάνω on the basis of this verse, in which πρῶτος and φθάνων, with its true and expected sense, reinforce each other in expressing the clearly paramount notion of anticipation, of victory? *AP* vii 183.2 (Ἔιδης τὴν Κροκάλης ἔφθασε παρθενίην) is part of an epigram of which the first verse is lost, but the sense is clear and it is quite certain that ἔφθασε does not simply mean 'reached', 'got at'; it means 'took' her virginity 'before her husband could': she died on her wedding day before consummation of the marriage. In *AP* ix 252.5–6 (ἔφθανε δ' ἄνδρα / νηχομένων θηρῶν αὐτοδίδακτος ἀρης) the ingenious wolves caught, overtook, their quarry before he could escape. In *AP* ix 278.6 (Bianor) (αὐτὸς ὑπὸ βλοσυροῦ χεύματος ἔφθάνετο) the boy was carried off by the flood before he could gain the shore: it is ludicrous to suggest that ἔφθάνετο means 'was reached'—he was already in the flood (χεύμα δ' ἀναιδὲς / εἰσέθορεν, 3–4). The boy (ix 278), the man pursued by the wolves (ix 252), and the water (ix 272) are all prevented from doing what they are trying to do or would naturally do; the subject of φθάνω is in each case too quick for the object and gets ahead of it, as it were, and stops it.

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¹ In the *Liverpool Class. Month.* ii (1977) 91 Professor Giangrande puts forward this supposed corruption of λαοτίταντον to λαοτίτακτον against me as an example of confusion of K and N.

² The doubts expressed in Gow–Page on whether Bianor quite knew what he was about are without justification; Professor Page's conjecture in v 5 (χερμάδι δ' ὑψηλῶν, the participle being a neologism) fits better with the usual version of the story.

Fulvio Orsini and Longus

H. van Thiel demonstrated only 16 years ago that the text of Longus's novel rests on two manuscripts, Laur.



(a) Statue base at south-west corner of Agora, Oenoanda. Inscription no. 7.



(b) Cylinder seal with Cyclopic figure, c. 3000 B.C. (Courtesy, Pierpoint Morgan Library.)

DIOGENES OF OENOANDA (a)
POLYPHEMOS (b)