Literary anthroponymy:
decoding the characters of Homer's Odyssey

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Abstract. Over the generations, people never cease to be fascinated by the epic journeys of Odysseus. Scholars seem to be divided by the vivid descriptions of Odyssey's exotic unknown lands, extreme nature's forces, encounters with gods, semi-gods, unusual people and mythic monsters. The present paper examines the ancient texts and demonstrates a number of original tables in order to support the etymological and grammatical analysis of the characters. Aim of this research paper is to provide a highly original and yet accurate Linguistic and Etymological Analysis of the names of the main Heroes and Peoples of Odyssey.

Then Autolycus said:
"My daughter's husband and my daughter,
give him whatsoever name I say.
For I have been angered with many over the fruitful earth,
therefore let the child be named "Odysseus".
Odyssey, Rhapsody 19, Vss 407-410

1. Introduction

The most skeptical researchers consider that Odyssey is an imaginary Epic, yet written in a distinguished, articulate manner.

Other researchers set their faith in Homer, and initiate a number of researches, both in ancient texts, and excavations, in a way similar to the German Archaeologist, *Heinrich Schliemann (1822-1890)* who as a young boy, decided to visit Asia Minor to excavate Troy, and thus confirm the reality beneath Homer's epic writings.

Finally, a third group of researchers is skeptical about the ancient epics, but would be willing to change their mind should tangible evidence be found, either in the form of archaeological findings or logical conclusions from historical evidence.

In the present paper the author aims to shed some light in Odyssey's interpretation by analysing the etymology of Characters (Anthroponymics) that played a significant role in Homer's epic.

1. ODYSSEUS

Etymological Analysis

The hero of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey was described as a highly intelligent, yet often cunning and crafty warrior. The etymology of his name derives from the verb «Οδύσσ+ ομαι», *(pronounced "odyssome")* whereas the «ομαι» prefix indicates the passive voice, and means "I am enraged" against someone. *(Stamatakos, 1994)*, possibly implying "wrath or hatred" *(Stanford, 1952)*. The etymology of his name is analysed herebelow:

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Odysseus	Οδυσ(σ)εύς	*Οδύσσομαι (odyssome)* *Οδύνη (odini)*	I am enraged I feel pain I suffer
Other names: Olys(s)eus Olyt(t)eus Olyt(t)es Olys(s)eidas	Ολυσ(σ)εύς, Ολυτ(τ)εύς, Ολύτ(τ)ης, Ολυσ(σ)ειδας,	*Όλλυμι (ollymi) verb*	I am ruined

The Latin words **"odi" and "odium"** also mean **"rage" and "anger"**. However, the greek word *«Οδύνη» (odini),* which obviously relates to the aforementioned words, means **pain, sadness, emotional and/or physical suffering**.

Hence, the name of the hero suggests feelings of rage and suffering.

Several other types of the name are encountered in archaeological finds i.e. amphoreus and inscriptions (i.e. epigrammata):

"Ολυσ(σ)εύς, Ολυτ(τ)εύς, Ολύτ(τ)ης, Ολυσ(σ)είδας.

Grammatical analysis

Some interesting linguistic and grammatical points are encountered, which are highlighted below:

1) "S" is replaced by "T": This is a usual phenomenon of the Ancient Greek Language, i.e. both Thalassa and Thalatta mean "Sea".
2) "S" and "T" are spelled either with double or single characters. This confirms the point where two single words are merged to create a composite one. Some ancient writers considered that both words' meaning was fully expressed by a single "s" or "t", whereas others wished to emphasise by using double characters, so that the first and second words are duly expressed without losing their initial meaning.
3) Letter substitution, i.e. the phenomenon of "anomiosis" is hereby encountered, where one letter is replaced by another: In the aforementioned name types, the letter **"D"** is replaced by letter **"L" (e.g. O<u>d</u>ysseus ➔ O<u>l</u>ysseus).**

Hence, the verb **«Ὄλλυμι»** (pronounced "ollymi"), is a root word which precisely describes the life of Odysseus: In a passive voice, it means "I lose myself", "I am ruined", "I am close to death", whereas in the active voice it may be interpreted as "I ruin", "I bring someone to their end".

This ambiguous meaning between actively destroying and passively destroyed expresses the extreme circumstances where Odysseus was found: For approximately twenty years his life was in danger and the challenges he had to withstand involved his suffering, the destruction of his fellow warriors or his enemies.

2. TELEMACHUS, TELEMACHOS

Etymological Analysis

Telemachus was the son of Odysseus and Penelope. During his father's absense of twenty years, Telemachus was favored by Athena, Goddess of Wisdom.

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Telemachos Telemachus	Τηλέμαχος	Τηλε + Μάχη pronounced: tele + mache	Afar + Battle

The name derives from "Afar" and "Battle", literally meaning that "battles take place at a distance". This implies that
a) there was a distance at a physical level, or
b) enemies did not confront Telemachos in a direct manner, but fought him indirectly.

In the Epic of Homer, Odysseus' son was highly concerned about his father and wished to meet Odysseus' fellow warriors of Troy. He traveled to the palace of King Nestor in Pylos and Sparta in search of his wandering father. He learned of his father's misfortunes, and hence his life revolved around fights that took place in distant lands. However, he was the sole heir to the throne and therefore his life should not be exposed to danger.
Another issue that preoccupied Telemachus, was the numerous Suitors ("mnesteres") who had invaded the palace. Telemachus was not seeking direct confrontation for the following reasons:
a) for social reasons, as the throne was an issue concerning the whole kingdom, and after 20 years of Odysseus' absence a new King was necessary,   and
b) due to the large number of the odious suitors. Homer reports 108 suitors, while Apollodorus reports 136 *(Pseudo-Apollodorus, 7:26)*
Hence, Penelope and Telemachus were forced to deal with them in a secret, indirect manner.

3. PENELOPE

Etymological analysis

In this name, numerous different words of similar roots, fully describe the life of Odysseus' noble wife:

English Name: Penelope Ancient Greek Name : Πηνελόπη				
Etymology *(English Pronunciation)*	Meaning +	Etymology *(English Pronunciation)*	Meaning	Composite Meanings
Πήνη *(Pene)* Πηνίον*(Penion)* Πένεσθαι *(Penesthe)*	**Thread** **Bobbin** **Work hard**	Λέπω *(Lepo)*	**Weaving**	* Weaving with Threads * Weaving with Bobbins * Works hard Weaving

		Λοπός, λώπος, Λοπίον (Lopos. Lopion)	**Peeling, processing**	*** Peeling to make Threads** *** Bobbins Procession** *** Works hard by Peeling**
Φηνός (Fenos) ή Πηνός (Penos)	**Bright** **or** **Shiny**	Όπη (Ope)	**Face**	*** Bright, Shiny Face** *** Bright Personality**

The name means the woman "weaving", "processing handicrafts", "filling or weft using threads". Penelope's weaving was an indirect way of avoiding confrontation with her suitors, and hence played a significant role in Homer's Epic Poem. Nevertheless, Penelope became legendary through the ages for the brightness of her character and appearance as well as for the depth of her love and devotion. Hence, Bright Personality or Bright Face also seem to be appropriate etymologies as ancient Greeks believed that personality and innate trends are reflected on a person's face.

(See "Physiognomic Theory" by Pythagoras, Aristotle "Prior Analytics" (2.27), Corpus Aristotelicum Phil., "<u>Physiognomonica</u>*" 0086.032) Bekker pp. 805, and Zopyrus).*

4. LAERTES

Etymological Analysis

Odysseus' elderly father, who lived isolated on a small farm of Ithaca island. Despite his old age, he retained his agility and energy, while hoping for his son to return.

English Name(s): Laertes, Laertis Composite of a) ➔ **Laa + Er + Te** or/and				
Ancient Greek Name : Λαέρτης		b) ➔ **Laa + Eryo**		
Etymology *(English Pronunciation)*	**Meaning**	**Etymology** *(English Pronunciation)*	**Meaning**	**Composite Meanings**
Λάα, Λάας, Λας (Laa, Laas, **Las**)	**Stone, Rock** **(*Pa**<u>lace:</u> i.e. Rock castle)	Έρ *(Er)* + Τη, τήκος (**Te**, Tecos)	**Earth** **He, Him** **(Man)**	**Stone + Earth + Man** Declares man's origins **Castle + Earth + Man** Declares a male descendant of a Royal Family. Possibly roots go back in time.
		Έρρω Δυνητική μετοχή: ερρέ**τ**ω *(Erro)*	**Walk slowly or with difficulty**	Declares origins from a rocky area where walking is difficult**.** **The word also means Castle or Palace made of stones.** **Laertes' old age could also be indicated due to his "walking with difficulty"**
		Ερύω (Eryo) 3rd singular: Ειρία**τ**αι Eiriatai	***Pull,** ***Guard** ***Keep enemies away,** ***Protect**	**Declares the Protector or Guard of the Castle.**
		Ερώ (Ero)	**Say *Promise *Order	Rock + Order

		Ἕρση (Ersi)	Rain drops Or Ionian type of Ἄρση (Arsi), meaning "to carry"	Rock + wet + drops *** the Ionian type meaning "to carry", is connected to the verb Ἕρρω (erro), as above.**

Although it is easy to confirm the first word, i.e. "las", there are many words resembling the sound and meaning of "Ἕρρω" (pronounced "erro"). The above table demonstrated a chain of interrelated words, describing an elderly noble person, who despite his walking difficulties employs all his inner strength to protect the castle. The etymology clearly depicts a Male Royalty, whose life purpose is to keep enemies away from the Rock Palace.

5. ODYSSEUS' NURSE(S): EURYNOME AND EURYCLEIA

Historical / Mythological Analysis

The names of Eyrynome and Eurycleia are mentioned as in the Odyssey as nurses and servants of the palace. Despite the brief reference to them in the Epic, their names reveal wisdom, open mind and grace. They both play a significant role, the former as a faithful servant and the latter as Telemachus' confidante the first female in the palace who recognised Odysseus upon his return to Ithaca.

5A. EURYNOME

Historical analysis

In Odyssey, Eurynome was the head maid and housekeeper in the palace. *Berg* argues that Eurycleia appears as a woman of great age, a trusted member of the Laertis Palace and the head of the servants, whereas Eurynome is a "poor and transparent copy of the faithful and trusted Eurycleia". *(Scott, 1918)*
In the *"Griechische Literaturgeschichte"* (Vol. I., 708, 7-9, 710, 715) Berg rejected all verses in the Odyssey pertaining to Eurynome as a nurse, servant or attendant of Odysseus.

a) Eurynomos (masculine version of Eurynome)

In Ancient Greek Mythology, Eurynomos was the servitor of Hecate, the Goddess of **Wilderness, Fertility and Childbirth**. Gradually, these ancient deities were encountered in the **Underworld,** representing the **secret, underlying forces of nature,** or human psyche.

b) Eurynome

"Eurynome" was the Mythological daughter of the **Ocean** and a name (prosonym) for Artemis, Goddess of the **wilderness, Enlightment** (twin sister of Apollo, God of Light), **Virginity (Purity), Fertility and Childbirth**.
Both the masculine and feminine versions of the name represent nature and fertility, the masculine side representing darkness, the non-visible side, whereas the feminine side representing the light, the visible side of creation.
As of the aspects of creation and fertility, an in-depth etymological analysis shall reveal further aspects of the name:

Etymological Analysis

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology *root word expansion	Meanings
Eurynome	Ευρυνόμη	**Ευρύ (Εύρος) +** ον νους νόησις νομίζω * γνώμη ** νόμος νομές, μερισμοί E.g. "νομέας της ζωής"	**Broad, Wide (Breadth, Width) +** (human) being mind notion, perception to think, to perceive opinion the law shares, providing, distributing E.g. God is called "provider of life"

The above table reveals the two composites of Eyrynome. The first composite word is an adjective i.e. "wide", whereas the second composite seems to evolve and transmute into a chain of relative meanings, starting from "existence", and developing into "mind", "perception", "opinion", "justice", "law" and "providing".

In the Greek word for perceiving (* Noμίζω, (pronounced: nomizo)), the letter **"M"** is added in order to express the **"visible, tangible nature"** of perception. (See words **m**otion, **m**ovement, **m**ountain, **m**ould, which also indicate the visibility of an object or action).

Furthermore, in the Greek word for opinion (** Γνώμη, [pronounced: gnome]), the letter **"Γ"** (Engl. **"C"** or **"G"**) added in the word, provides the element of "**g**rasping the truth and **g**enerating, **c**ultivating, **c**reating (ideas, knowledge, innovation etc).

"**G**aea" or "**G**round" are synonyms representing the letter's nature, as it provides a **solid** <u>**ground**</u> **for any idea or opinion to be** <u>**c**</u>**reated or generated.** (See words **g**enesis, **g**nostic, i**g**nition, which also describe the usage of letter **"Γ"**.

The word "**law**" is thus created, to establish the creation of ethical or social rules under the condition of sound judgement. Law is thereby transmuted into "sharing, dividing, providing" within a "frame of fairness".

Hence, Eurynome means "Broad Minded" or "Person with Objective Perception". It is worth noting that Pausanias *(Arcadika VIII)* describes the Temple of Eurynome located in Fygalia, and the Goddess' wooden statue, tied in golden chains. This can be interpreted as mortals' desire to capture the gift of ***"Open Mindness", "Knowledge", "Sound Judgment.***

5B. EURYCLEIA

Historical analysis

Euryclea is refered to as daughter of Ops, elderly nurse of Odysseus and Telemachus. and later their palace servant. She hides from Penelope Telemachus' journey to Pylos and is the first woman in the palace to recognize Odysseus, by a deep scar from a boar's tusk on his leg.

Etymological Analysis

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Eurycleia	Ευρύκλεια	Ευρύ + Κλέος pronounced :Euri + cleos	Wide + Glory

6. ARGOS

Historical analysis

Argos was Odysseus' dog who waited for his owner to return from Troy and his Epic journey. After 20 years of absence, Odysseus eventually returned to Ithaca where Argos, over twenty years old was the first to recognise him. The dog was lying in a manure pile sick and neglected, but immediately recognised his master under the ragged clothes of a beggar. Overjoyed by his master's return, Argos wagged his tail, and being too weak to stand, finally allowed himself to die.

Argos is a common name for Homeric "hunting dogs", meaning "bright", "lively", "energetic".*(Stamatakos, 1994)*

Argos derives from the following root-words *:*

> Ar = voice (***Stroumboulis Dictionary, 1998***)
> Arago = I move with energy (see English verb "drag").
> Gow= Making loud noises, Barking. .*(Stamatakos, 1994)*

7. CALYPSO

Historical analysis

Calypso was the daughter of Atlas, or Oceanus and Tithea (Sea Goddess) or Nireus and Doris. In Greek Mythology one frequently encounters the descendants of Sea Gods and Goddesses inhabiting islands or remote sea coasts. The children of Atlas are said to inhabit the Atlantic Ocean, whereas the children of Oceanus traditionally live nearby "vast seas", like the Mediterranean sea, the Black Sea etc.

Etymological analysis

The following etymological analysis confirms Calypso's role to cover and protect Odysseus from the bad weather and the mythical monsters, but she also hid him, preventing him from returning to his homeland.

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Multiple Meanings for one word:
Caly**ps**o	Καλυ**ψ**ώ	 Καλύπτω *(verb)* κάλυ**ψ**α *(past tense)* κάλυ**ψ**ις *(noun)* pronounced : *kalypto* *kalypsa* *kalypsis*	<u>Verbs</u>: to cover, to hide, to protect, to provide shelter <u>**nouns:**</u> cover shelter hide-out from the enemy.

An alternative etymological analysis could also be considered:

Καλέω – Καλώ (Calo)	**I call, I invite, I seek for someone** (e.g. **for help**)	Verb
Ὑψωμα (Ipsoma)	**Height**	Noun or
Υψόω (Ipsoo)	**to elevate, to raise up**	Verb

This may refer to the scene where Calypso saved Odysseus' life: she heard him calling for help, took him out of the water and brought him back to life.
Finally, with the help of Hermes, God of Intelligence, Communication and Transportation, Calypso had a change of mind, as she urged Odysseus to build a ship and return to his homeland.
Nevertheless, Calypso did not stay alone on her island as Odysseus was the father of her two sons:.

8. CALYPSO'S SONS: NAUSITHOOS AND NAUSINOOS

Quite often a child's name reveals the creative forces, the purpose or destiny hidden beneath the **parents' union**. Since no other evidence is known apart from the names of Odysseus' and Calypso's sons, an analysis will reveal their personalities or talents:

8A. NAUSITHOOS
Etymological analysis

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Nausithoos	Ναυσίθοος	Ναυς + Θόω pronounced: *Naus + Thoo*	vessel + quick, agile

8B. NAUSINOOS
Etymological analysis

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Nausinoos	Ναυσίνοος	Ναυς + Νόησις pronounced : *Naus + Noisis*	vessel + intelligence, → thought, → perception, idea

Based on the above analysis **Nausithoos** was able to navigate as well as build fast and agile ships, i.e. he excelled in maritime practices, whereas **Nausinoos** was able to think, innovate and perceive new navigation techniques, i.e. he excelled in maritime theories, ship designs etc.

9. KIRKE or KIRKI

Historical / Mythological Analysis

Kirke was the Daughter of the Sun and Persi or Persiis, or Hyperion and Asteropi. She lived on a desert island allegedly near Italy. She was an infamous witch and gave birth to Odysseus' son, Telegonos.

Etymological Analysis

> **Κίρκος** (Kirkos)= type of Hawk, which **flies in circles** (cycles). Ιέραξ, ιερό.
> The etymology of Hawk bird, is **"Holly" and "flying in circles".**
> Kirkoo (verb, Κιρκόω) means to **tie down, secure by circles**.

This etymology suggests that Kirke was a Priestess that "tied down" her victims, hence, she practiced witchcraft.
It should be noted that Kirki's father was either:
a) the Sun, i.e. God of **Light**, or
b) Hyperion, i.e. God of **Light**, father of the **Sun and the Moon**.
Kirke's mother was either :
a) Persi, Persiis, an Oceanis and name ("prosonym") to Hecate, Goddess of the **Underworld** or
b) Asteropi, literally meaning "**Star-faced**".
Hence, Kirke was created or conceived by divine, **heavenly forces of both Light and Darkness.**

10. TELEGONOS, SON OF KIRKE

Etymological Analysis

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Telegonos	Τηλέγονος	Τηλε + Γόνος pronounced: tele + gonos	Afar + Birth, Descendant, Child

The etymological analysis of Telemachos, indicated that the main characteristic of Odysseus' eldest son was the challenge of "fighting from afar", or waiting for his father's distant fights to end.

Kirke's son shares a similar name as to the distance involved. The etymology of **Telegonos** derives from **"Afar"** and **"Birth or Child",** literally meaning that "distance was involved with childbirth". The name explains that Telegonos was destined to live his entire life separated from his parent.

11. SCYLLA

Etymological Analysis

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Scylax (noun)	Σκύλαξ	Σκύλλω pronounced: Scyllo (verb)	Dog-like in terms of barking, making ugly noises, Hawling, Furiously attacking
		Σκύλευμα pronounced: Skylevma (noun)	Destroying, attacking, breaking into pieces Loot, receiving treasures from the destroyed enemies.

Historical Analysis

The above etymological analysis is in agreement with the ancient texts pertaining to a mythical monster who made ugly noises and destroyed into pieces.

According to the myth, Scylla was a beautiful nymph. When Glaucos fell in love with her, he asked for a love philter from Circe the Witch. However, as Circe fell in love with him, she felt jealous of Scylla., the magic potion she gave to Glaucos changed Scylla into a monster with twelve stubs for feet and six heads of long necks. Thus, Scylla became a monster who lived in ocean straits and would destroy all forthcoming vessels.

(An interesting comparison may be made by Scilla, the daughter of Nissos, who betrayed her father to Minos of Crete, and as a punishment she was thrown into the sea. Both women were connected to the sea).

An examination of Scylla's parents will reveal her origins, generation and nature: Scylla was the **daughter of Tornado** (Typhonas) or **Forky** (see words forked; furcated and fury).   Tornado was a Giant with one hundred heads, breathing fire. Zupiter destroyed him just like the Titans and other mythical monsters.

Scylla's mother was Hekate, Goddess of the **Underworld.**

In examining Scylla's parents, a series of natural forces of phenomena are revealed:

Tornado + Underworld =	Whirlpool, Underwater Tornado Natural Phenomenon that destroys, breaks into pieces while making horrifying sounds.

This analysis obviously pertains to geophysical disasters and prehistoric cataclysms mentioned in the ancient texts of all prehistoric civilizations *(M.George-Kokkinaki, 2004).*

12. CHARYVDE or CHARYBDE

Historical Analysis

Sea monster located opposite from Scylla. According to Greek Mythology, **Charyvde** was the daughter of **Poseidon** and **Gaia** (Earth). Zeus changed her into a marine pit where three times per day it swallowed great quantities of water, as well as ships and fish.

Etymological Analysis

A common root with **Char**os, i.e. **Death,** son of Darkness and Night is strongly suggested. The first composite of the name reveals that the energies of Charybdis are fatal, i.e. they cause death. The nature of these energies is further revealed by the following etymological analysis:

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Charivdis Charyvdios	Χάρυβδις (**female**) Χαρύβδιος	Charos (**death**) + Yvos (**under, below**)= Death from below	**Vortex, Maelstrom,** Insatiable.
Compare with Charyvdis (male)	Χάρυβδης (**male**)		The Stynx Straits. Also called "death straits", "Charos", due to the Tides and/or waves' ferocity.
Charadra➔ Charasso➔	**See also :** Χαράδρα ➔ Χαράσσω➔	Gorge, Canyon Carve, Grave, Engrave	Undercurrent, Sea Torrent, Water flowing from mountain towards the sea.

Charyvdis' Suggested meaning:	
The **"Vortex"** Phenomenon	The Scandinavian "**Maelstrom" phenomenon** "Olaus Magnus's *Carta" Marina* Maelstrom (1539).]

13. THE SIRENS

Historical Analysis

The Sirens were sea-nymphs with beautiful voices that had the power of charming all who heard them. Seafarers were condemned to destruction as they would cast their ships into the sea. Circe advised Odysseus to place wax into the ears of his seamen; whereas to get himself bound to the mast in order to hear the beautiful song of the Sirens without risking his life.

Based on the geophysical phenomena described with Scylla and Charybde above, the Sirens are likely to represent similar oceanic phenomena, whose nature will be further described in the following analysis.

Etymological Analysis

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Siren	Σειρήνα	Σείω + Ροή pronounced : Sio + Rhoe	**Shaking, moving + Flow** = **Shake with flow or speed** = **Heatwave**
		Σειρός pronounced : Siros	**Extremely Hot, Burning**
		Σείριος pronounced : Sirios	**Burning Star,** Sun, Sun-Like

Taking into consideration the fact that
➔**Scylla** represents disastrous tides or a whirlpool   and
➔**Charybde** represents a Vortex or Maelstrom,
➔**the Sirens** describe an extreme geophysical phenomenon, which is spectacular to hear and see, but once seafarers would approach, they would not be able to withdraw but would be condemned to death.
A series of natural phenomena were duly examined in order to identify which are the ones that make the most distinctive, pleasant sounds and may be considered as the Sirens' enchanting song :
● The sound of a **waterfall** with the distant sound of tropical birds. Yet, the element of danger suggests that a destructive phenomenon also took place in the vicinity, like a **sea torrent**.   In certain waterfalls, the erosive water force is high and stream courses may be subject to catastrophic change. Sudden geological processes like landslides, or **volcanic action** may be described in Odyssey
● **Lava flowing into the sea**. Lava makes a distinctive noise as it flows into the sea. A skin of glass is formed after it cools and the glass keeps on breaking whereas the lava flows underneath.
● A **Burning Comet** falling into the sea.

The etymology of Sirens includes : **Liquid flow + Speed + Heatwave, Burning (Star)**.
Consequently, natural phenomena of spectacular sight and vision could have been perceived as the beautiful Siren's song.
Among numerous researches and scholarly approaches, the metaphysical aspect was also mentioned. Horkheimer and Adorno consider the song of the Sirens as a forbidden knowledge of everything, whereas the Sirens represent man's enlightenment. *(Schmidt 1998), (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1998 p.48).*
However, this metaphysical dimension is plasmatic, as the Odyssey is an Epic describing the voyage of a real historical person into "*Terrae incognitae*" *i.e.* unknown lands.
Despite the characters' analysis and philosophical conclusions, these writings should mainly be approached from a historical and scientific (geographical, astronomical etc.) point of view. Although there are numerous ancient religious or spiritual texts (see Orphic Hymns, Hermes the Trismegistus), no spiritual or metaphysical dimensions should be attributed to Odyssey.

14) POLYPHEMOS AND THE CYCLOPS

Historical analysis

"At last, the Cyclops came, "hideous and huge, tall as a great mountain crag" *(Hamilton 1982).*

"Polyphemus responded to Odysseus' declarations of good intentions with mockery and even rambled off about how he was bigger than Zeus. Polyphemus then proceeded to eat one of Odysseus' men and closed the cave with a "huge stone before the door, and if the horrified men had been able to summon courage and strength enough to kill him they would have been imprisoned in there forever" *(Hamilton 1983).*

Etymological analysis

Cyclops = Κύκλωπες = Κύκλος + Ώψ = **Cyclical + Eye.**
The giants with one "round" eye.

The literal explanation of the Cyclops' Myth, pertaining to giants does not seem to hold strong grounds. Furthermore, the etymology does not provide enough information to establish a sound and solid theory on the Cyclops. However, the following historical and mythological analysis will highlight several points:

Historical, Mythological and Etymological analysis

Homer (Z 106-115) describes the Cyclops as tall, uncivilised men that lived in caves, on top of high mountains. They had no Laws, no social life, but each Cyclop took care of his own wife and children. Their limited and rather primitive activities did not involve team-work. They did not cultivate their land, and, despite the fact that they were Poseidon's sons, they lived up on the mountains instead of the coast, and their activities did not involve maritime or ship-building.

The fact that they were Poseidon's sons, without any relation or reference to the sea, needs to be duly analysed. The answer lies in the most ancient *Hymns of Orpheus:* In the *Hymn to Poseidon, (xvii),* among the God's names, there are two prosonyms, the only ones that do not pertain to his sea nature. He is called **heavy-sounding** *"βαρύκτυπος"* and **shaking the earth** *"εννοσίγαιος» (pronounced variktypos and ennosigaios).*

"Βαρύ + κτύπος"	literally means *"heavy + sounding".*
"Εννοσίγαιος» «έννοσις + γαια»	means *"moving, shaking the earth".*

Furthermore, **"Earthshaker"** is another name of Poseidon (see Odyssey, Rhapsody L, Line 415).

The theory that the Cyclops are directly related to geological phenomena, is also confirmed by other significant Historians:

In *"Theogony" of Hesiod (144)*, three Cyclops are mentioned: Vrondis, Steropis and Argis, the sons of Uranus and Earth.

When Jupiter decided to fight the Titans, Goddess Gea (Earth), predicted that "whosoever ruled the Cyclops, who were imprisoned in the depths of the Earth by God Cronus (or Chronos, i.e. Eternity, Endless Time), would become the "Father of Gods" and would rule over planet earth". *(Hesiod texts) and (Helios Encyclopaedia, Athens, 1944).*

This can be interpreted in the following manner : Whichever Godly (or natural) force would be able to **release and yet harness** the destructive geophysical forces which initiated from the great depths of Earth, this force would be worshipped by humans.

The etymology of the Cyclops' names reveals the nature of their force, and how their services were offered at Zeus' disposal:

Vrondis' etymology comes from the verbs "Βρέμω, Βρυμώ», which means "Scream" and "Thunder" (Stamatakos, 1994). His role was to create Thunders and provide them to Zeus.

Steropis' name derives from "Στεροπή", which means shiny, bright. He offered a shiny Trident *(Anc.Grk. "Τρίαινα")* for Poseidon to "Stir" the seas.

Argis "Άργης" also means shiny and bright. He offered a shiny helmet to Aidoneus, one of the Gods of the Underworld.

The third group of Cyclops also lived in the "center of the earth", and were employed under the services of Hephaestus, God of Crafts, since they were famous masons and craftsmen. They usually lived under Mount Aetna, Sicily (an area with intense volcanic activities), and occasionally in the areas where Hephestus lived, i.e. under Mount Olympus and Lemnos island.

In contrasting and comparing the three groups of Cyclops within the Greek Theogony and Mythology, the Cyclops seem to represent natural forces, either disruptive or creative. Hence, an examination of the Odyssey texts may now be interpreted in a more objective and broad manner:

In Odyssey, *Polyphemos* locked the entrance to the cave with a huge rock that no human could move. Hence, Odysseus' companions could not escape. Every day Polyphemos would davour several of Odysseus' companions. And yet, being "davoured by fire" or lava, is an expression frequently encountered.

If Polyphemos was indeed as tall as 6 men, a normal-sized Amphoreus of wine would not contain sufficient quantity of wine for Polyphemus to drink. Taking into consideration the rituals and ceremonies with wine used for calling the Gods *(Anc.Grk."σπονδαί", pronounced "sponde")* , wine was possibly used as a religious ritual for the geophysical phenomena to stop. Hence, the "mountain" kept on devouring Odysseus' companions, until it "slept", after the wine ritual.

Geological analysis

The Orphic Hymn to Poseidon suggests that **Poseidon, the God of the Seas, is also in charge of Earthquakes and Volcanoes** *(original ancient text published by I. Passas, 1960), (English translation by Bell Thomas, 1792).*

This suggested interrelation between **Sea-floor, Movement of Teutonic Plates** and **Volcanic Activities** was confirmed by esteemed 20th century geologists:

1) Alfred Wegener (1880–1930) was the first scientist to perceive the idea of **"continental displacement"** which was announced in 1912, and was later called **"continental drift"**. After his death his theories were vindicated by other significant scientists. *(USGS, 2003), (WGBH, 2008).*

2) Arthur Holmes (1890–1965) supported Wegener's theory of continental drift by establishing the **"power of convection"**. According to this theory, heat currents and thermal expansion in the Earth's mantle tend to force the continents either toward or away from one another, hence creating new ocean floor and mountain ranges. *(NASA 2003), (USGS 2003).*

3) Harry Hess, (1906 – 1969)

In 1953 a volcanic valley was discovered flowing along the mid-ocean ridges, and was named the **"Great Global Rift"**. Between 1960 and 1962 Hess established the hypothesis that the sea-floor was spreading from vents in the Rift, as hot magma oozed up. **(*Tilling, Heliker and Wright, 1987), (USGS, 2003).*

As the magma cooled the existing sea-floor was forced to move away from the Rift on both sides. *(Hamilton, 1976), (WGBH, 2008)*

The **"Seafloor spreading"** theory describes the mid-ocean ridges where new oceanic crust is created by volcanic activity. This actually supports the **"continental drift"** in the **"plate tectonics"** theory.

If the geological explanation is well founded, the Cyclopean "single eye" most probably represents the mountain top where lava was coming from. Possibly Odysseus' companions used a large object to cover the mountain top, in order to temporarily prevent the lava from coming out. However, although this action saved their lives, they felt that Poseidon might have been upset from this interference, as he was the creator and protector of Volcanoes.

Polyphemus' name and genealogy reveals quite substantial information, and verifies the above mythological and historical analysis:

Poly + femi = Πολύ + Φημι, (verb φασι), meaning "**Loud Sound**". This should be compared with the synonym *"Βαρύκτυπος" "heavy + sounding",* which is Poseidon's prosonym, as explained above.

Hence, the aforementioned etymological and mythological analysis strongly suggests that Polyphemus and the other Cyclops of Odyssey represented volcanic eruptions.

15) THE PHAEACIANS

Historical and Etymological Analysis

In Z5 Rhapsody, The God-like Phaeacians claimed that they used to live in Hyper+gea, close to the Cyclops, but due to the problems caused by the latter they had to leave for another land, i.e. towards the south.

Their leader **Nausithous** relocated them to the new lands. The means of their relocation is explained by the etymology of **Naus + thous**:

> Naus = *(Η Ναυς, της Νηός)* meaning "**vessel**".
> Thous = *(Θους, Θοός, Θέω) meaning* "**fast, agile, in great haste**".

The name of their leader, Nausithous, who decided and arranged their relocation suggests that a **fast ship took them away from their previous land**, literally **"in great haste"**. The hypothesis of extreme geophysical phenomena is strongly suggested as a cause of their hasty departure. The etymological analysis on "Cyclops" associates the mythical monsters with Volcanic eruptions.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Phaeacian leader had the same name as the son of Odysseus with Calypso, possibly suggesting the element these two men had in common: They would build and operate extremely fast ships and may well have introduced new shipbuilding technologies that were quite advanced compared to the existing technology.

The Myth of the "Grey Phaeacians" as ferrymen to the underworld

The false presumption that Phaeacians were "dark-skinned" is widely accepted by distinguished scholars like *Jessen* (2213-14, 2219), *Merkelbach* (206), *Holscher* (Epos 173-85) and is refered to the majority of research papers, books and internet sites pertaining to Odyssey and the Phaeacians.

Even Shamanistic connotations were supported by **K. Meuli** (Hermes 70, 1935, p. 121-76), **Carpenter** (131-50), **Thornton** (23-37), **Erbse** (30), **Heubeck** (p.155, 158, 159) and other scholars.

Scholars like *Welcker (Rh.M., 1832),* propounded this theory and stated that Phaeacians were identical with the "Grey Men", the ferrymen of the Norse mythology who act as the ferrymen of the dead into the other world *(Procop.Hist.of the wars 8.20.48 -58)*.

Furthermore, *Merkelbach* (173, 218-22), **W.F.Jackson Knight** (ed.J.D.Christie, London 1968, p.123) considered that the Phaeacians with their ship carried Odysseus from the underworld to his homeland.

Nevertheless, these theories were superseded as they do not stand on a firm logical or scientific ground. In Odyssey, the Phaeacians are described as vivid, joyous, unwarlike, skillfull people. *The* Phaeacian *women* exceeded by far all other women in household arts and the Phaeacian mariners exceeded the others in the shipbuilding and ship-operating activities. Odysseus appreciates their character and in the Epic he positively comments on their hospitality and exceptional entertaining and dancing skills. Therefore, the description of the "Grey Men of the Underworld" does not seem to fit with the joyful Phaeacian characteristics.

Phaeacians: The white-skinned people living in a dark (grey) land

The presumption that the Phaeacians were "dark-skinned" derives from the simplistic translation of the Greek word *phaios* (φαιός) meaning *grey*.

Thus, scholars failed to analyse the meaning of the composite word **"Grey Land"** (Φαια + Γαία), and wrongly presume that grey refers to their skin colour.

The texts of Odyssey explicitly and repeatedly describe the "grey mountains" and "white-skinned" Phaeacians.
Homer's Rhapsody E', lines 279-281, describes Odysseus' arrival to the island:

Ancient Greek text	English Translation
"πτ δ κα δέκα μν πλέεν ματα ποντοπορεύων, κτωκαιδεκάτ δ **φάνη ρεα σκιόεντα γαίης Φαιήκων,** θι τ γχιστον πέλεν ατ: εσατο δ ς τε ινν ν εροειδέι πόντ.	He sailed for seventeen days on the water and on the eighteenth day **the shadowy (dark) hills of the Phaeacian land appeared**, like a shield riding on the misty sea, lay very close to him.

Another issue to consider is the skin paleness or whiteness of the Phaeacians. Indeed, **it is a paradox that the theory of the "dark-skinned Phaeacians" has prevailed, since Homer makes such a frequent reference to their paleness or "white skin" :**

Odyssey references to the white-skinned, fair-haired Phaeacians
Book L
L126 : **White-Armed** Nausica
L 168 : The **fair-haired** girls (Nausica's attendants)
L240 : **White-Armed** Nausica
L286 : Odysseys was ashamed to stand in front of the **fair-haired** girls...
L305 : Nausica spoke to her **fair haired** attendants...
L306 : Listen to me, my **white-armed** followers...
L320 : **White-armed** Nausica thought of something else...
Book M
M013: Eurymedusa had raised **white-armed** Nausica in the palace...
M286 **White-armed** Arete spoke first...
M417 **White-armed** Arete commanded her attendants to set a bed outside...
(c) Conducted by the author.

The repeated description of the Pheacians as **"fair haired"**, **"white-skinned"** people is a pattern that can only be compared with the persistent repetition of **"blue-eyed or bright-eyed Athena", "long-suffering Odysseus"** and **"inventive Odysseus"**. It should also be highlighted that in the numerous voyages of Odysseus there is no other reference to a person's or people's whiteness of skin, suggesting that the Phaeacians skin was extremely pale.
The following etymological analysis confirms the hypothesis that the etymology of "Phaeacians" does not mean dark-skinned:

Etymological analysis

English Name	Ancient Greek	Etymology	Meaning
Phaeacian(s)	Φαί**η**ξ Φαί**η**κες	**A)** Φαια + Γαία + *ᶾ**Ηξα** **Past tense** of Verb "A**go**" ➔ to **Go** Ἄ**γω** / Ἄγνυμι / Ἄσσω "to guide, to move". pronounced : *Phaea + Gaea + Exa* **B)** Φαια + Γαία + **ᶾᶾΗκω** "Eco" ➔ Having Arrived	**A) Dark + Land + Moving towards,** Leading to destination **B) Dark + Land + Arrived**

The etymological analysis establishes the hypothesis of a **Phaeacian migration towards a "Dark Land" due to disastrous geophysical phenomena, possibly volcanic eruptions.**

16. THE KIMMERIANS
Historical Analysis
According to Homer, the Kimmerian land was covered by clouds and the sun never seemed to shed its rays. It was always dark as night. *(Odyssey, Rhapsody L. 14,16,19).*

Although the historic books do not actually mention the migration of the Kimmerians, it is the etymology that reveals a part of their history.

The constant darkness suggests that the Kimmerians were located in the vicinity of the North Pole, i.e. Northern Europe (Russia or Scandinavia) or Asia (Paleo-Siberians or Ancestral Mongols).

Established and confirmed scientific evidence suggests that the northern civilisations were forced to frequent migrations, due to radical climate changes.

Grammatical analysis

According to the ancient Greek grammar when two words are merged to form a composite word, when the first word ends with "n" and the second word starts with "m", for sound purposes the **"nm"** may be transformed into **"mm",** i.e.

Παν + Μέγας (Pan+megas= Very Big =Vast) becomes Pammegas (***Παμμέγας)***.

Παν + Μήτηρ (Pan + Mitir = All + Mother = Mother of All) becomes Pammitir (***Παμμήτηρ).***

Etymological Analysis

Κιν + μέρος
kin + meros =
      κινέω, κινώ: **to move, mobility + place = moving. settlement.**
Or
Κίω + μέρος
Κιο + meros   =   **To migrate, to change location.**

* (see kinetics)

Another example of the "kin" etymology lies in analyaing the word "China", (Anc. Gr : "Kina"): the ancient Greek etymology describes the Chinese as "forced to frequent migrations" possibly due to sea level changes or heavy climate.

Etymology reveals that the ancient Chinese and the ancient Kimmerians were subject to frequent mobility. Taking into consideration the Northern location of the Cimmerians, we cannot exclude the possibility of an ancient Chinese tribe (ancestral Mongols) located in the Asian part of modern Russia, to relate to the ancient Kimmerians.

In order to establish this theory, further research is required in the fields of Anthropology, Genetics, Archaeology and Geology.

CONCLUSIONS

In the present research paper, a grammatical and etymological analysis was used in order to critically evaluate the ancient texts of Odyssey.

The ancient Greek language is based on specific "root" words, i.e. basic meanings, where each letter added offers a new dimension, a more specific meaning.

For this reason, the possibility of error is quite limited. Indeed, after researching the etymology of the above Anthroponyms, only one or two meanings correspond to each word, and these meanings are either synonyms or belong to the same root-word.

The present paper is mainly focused on etymological and grammatical analysis. In order to further confirm the present hypotheses and analyses, further research needs to be carried out, based on archaeological findings, ancient texts, as well as modern historical and scientific texts.

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