M. L. WEST

The Making of the Odyssey

OXFORD

THE MAKING OF THE ODYSSEY

This page intentionally left blank

The Making of the Odyssey

M. L. WEST

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP,
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries.

© M. L. West 2014

The moral rights of the author have been asserted

First Edition published 2014
Impression: 1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in
a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the
prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted
by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the appropriate reprographics
rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the
above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the
address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2014947487

ISBN 978–0–19–871836–9

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Links to third party websites are provided by Oxford in good faith and
for information only. Oxford disclaims any responsibility for the materials
contained in any third party website referenced in this work.

To
Stephanie

This page intentionally left blank

Preface

After writing *The Making of the Iliad* (Oxford 2011) I started making notes for a parallel work on the *Odyssey*. I soon realized that it was necessary first to make a more thorough study of the Cyclic poems, with which the *Odyssey* has such manifold links. This led me to write *The Epic Cycle: A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics* (Oxford 2013). After completing that I continued with the *Odyssey* project.

This then is the sister volume to *The Making of the Iliad*, but it is not a twin sister; perhaps a prettier one. Each chapter is longer than the one before. The first is a summary of my conclusions, which I put here because people signing up for tours usually like to know in advance where they are going. Any who prefer mystery tours, or who find it more satisfactory to apprehend a book's argument gradually in the course of reading it, are of course free to start at Chapter 2. The last chapter, 'Proof of the Pudding', which makes up more than half of the whole work, corresponds to the Analytical Commentary in the *Iliad* book, though it is not written in commentary format but as a continuous read.

In the *Iliad* book I referred to the poet as P. To differentiate the *Odyssey* poet I shall call him Q. No one, I am sure, will confuse him with the gospel source known as Q to New Testament scholars, or with MI6's inventive quartermaster in the James Bond films.

As in the *Iliad* book, I make more reference to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship, and less to more recent work, than is fashionable. Many contemporary writers on Homer seem to cite nearly everything they have read, but to have read little that is more than thirty or forty years old. There is much intelligent and valuable criticism to be found in the older literature, and I have tried to seek it out and to give credit for significant insights where it is due. These are ghosts who deserve their sip of blood (or ink) so that their voice can be heard again. Or as Friedrich Hebbel put it in his *Requiem*,

Seele, vergiß sie nicht,
   Seele, vergiß nicht die Toten!

Sieh, sie umschweben dich,
Schauernd, verlassen,
Und in den heiligen Gluten,
Die den Armen die Liebe schürt,
Atmen sie auf und erwarmen,
Und genießen zum letzten Mal
Ihr verglimmendes Leben.

I should like to thank the staff of Oxford University Press for the care and professionalism that they have devoted to the production of the book.

I dedicate it to my wife, who is the author of the best commentary on any four books of the *Odyssey* and who, patient as Penelope and rather more acute, has supported my Homeric and other studies for over half a century.

M.L.W.

Oxford
2014

Contents

Abbreviations xi

1. Conclusions 1

2. Resourceful Odysseus 5
   Odysseus' name and nature.—The Cyclops.—The incontinent heron.—The Returning Husband. The archery contest.—A north-east wind?—A proto-*Odyssey*

3. The *Odyssey* in Context 24
   Relationship to the *Iliad*. Relationship to the Cyclic epics. Non-Trojan epic. Hesiodic poetry. Elegy, iambus.—The contemporary world; dating.—Early reception

4. The Poet and his Art 44
   Values.—The gods; destiny.—Poetic merits.—Narrative technique. Typical scenes. Transitions. Similes. Dialogue.—Weaknesses and inconcinnities.—Q as wordsmith. Adaptation of other poets' verses. Re-use of own verses. Brachylogy; unclarity; metre.—Geography.—Where did Q live?

5. The Poem in the Making 92
   The overall organization of the poem.—Backgrounds; the Ithacan setting.—The domestic situation.—Telemachos' journey.—Odysseus' wanderings.—The visit to Hades.—Calypso.—The Phaeacians.—The homecoming; Odysseus' battle plan.—The morning after.—Below the surface

6. Proof of the Pudding 143

Bibliography 307
Index 311

This page intentionally left blank

Abbreviations

AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
arg.	argument (in citations of Cyclic poems)
Cl. Ant.	*Classical Antiquity*
CQ	*Classical Quarterly*
Ep. adesp.	Epica adespota, ed. West
FGrHist	F. Jacoby and others, *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*
Jb. f. cl. Phil.	*Jahrbücher für classische Philologie*
Kl. Schr.	*Kleine Schriften*
Mus. Helv.	*Museum Helveticum*
NJb.	*Neue Jahrbücher für das Klassische Altertum*
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*
PCPS	*Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society*
Phil.	*Philologus*
PMGF	M. Davies, *Poetarum Melicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*
Q	the poet of the *Odyssey*
RE	*Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*
REG	*Revue des Études grecques*
Rh. Mus.	*Rheinisches Museum*
RPh	*Revue de philologie*
SBAW	*Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München*
SIFC	*Studi Italiani di Filologia Classica*
TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
TrGF	B. Snell, R. Kannicht, S. Radt, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*
Wien. St.	*Wiener Studien*
ZPE	*Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*
ZVS	*Zeitschrift für Vergleichende Sprachforschung*

The Epic Cycle and other fragmentary early epics are cited from my Loeb edition, *Greek Epic Fragments from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC* (Cambridge, Mass.–London 2003).

This page intentionally left blank

1

Conclusions

The *Odyssey*, like the *Iliad*, is an epic poem conceived on an exceptionally large scale, composed and set down in writing over many years. Even more than the *Iliad*, which a later hand augmented with the *Doloneia*, it is the work of a single poet ('Q'), free from major interpolations.

He was not the author of the *Iliad*. It is a different world that he portrays, and he sees it from a different perspective. The moral values are different. The gods appear as a much more unified body, supporting good conduct and punishing bad. Q himself is a very different kind of artist from the *Iliad* poet, with great virtues and many flaws. He is inventive and original, excellent at imaginative descriptions of landscapes and everyday activities, for which he has a pronounced taste. His characters are varied and individual, and their action and talk are naturalistically drawn; the dialogue often has a genuinely conversational quality. The treatment of typical scenes is free and flexible. Transitions are deft. On the other hand the similes are sometimes odd and incongruous. The narrative, while generally ample and leisurely, can on occasion be perfunctory, and it is riddled with inconsistencies and contradictions. Q's command of language does not match the fluency of his invention. Too often he takes the easy route of reproducing or adapting verses that he or another poet has used elsewhere, without harmonizing them completely with the new context. His diction can occasionally be seriously eccentric or obscure.

The poem dates from the last third of the seventh century BCE. We cannot pinpoint Q's homeland, but certain indications suggest Attica or Euboea as the likeliest regions. He had been to Delos and perhaps Crete, and he had sailed round as far as Ithaca, though his knowledge of the interior of the Peloponnese was poor. He had little contact with

the eastern Aegean, but he was well acquainted with some of its poetic produce, including the *Iliad*, which he constantly imitates and adapts (often infelicitously). He was familiar with much of the subject matter of the Cyclic epics, whether or not they had already been fixed in writing in the form in which they were current later. He knew poetry about Heracles' exploits, and an epic on the Argonauts' voyage, from which he adapted several episodes to extend Odysseus' adventures. He knew Hesiod's *Theogony* and *Works and Days* and some Ionian elegy and iambus.

Odysseus, or Olysseus as he was called in much of Greece, was a figure of ancient legend, at first probably not a warrior hero but a man celebrated for ingenuity and guile amusingly applied to diverse situations. As the tradition of the Trojan War developed, ingesting heroes from other legendary contexts, Odysseus became attached to it, specifically in the role of the man who devised the Wooden Horse and so brought about the Achaeans' victory. He was also made the protagonist of two folk-tale narratives that found their way to Greece from abroad, perhaps early in the seventh century from the Pontic area: the story of the Blinded One-eyed Ogre and the story of the Returning Husband. The first was a self-contained tale that had nothing to do with the Trojan War and needed no context. The second presupposed a man absent from home for many years, and for this the established tradition of the war provided a natural point of attachment. Such a contextualization, with Odysseus as the hero, invited treatment in a new epic poem. This was the first *Odyssey*.

Our *Odyssey* is descended from that proto-*Odyssey*. The interval between them was probably no more than one or two generations, and only a small number of poets need have been involved. An earlier version than ours, with Telemachos already playing a significant part, came to the attention of the *Iliad* poet.

Q was trained as an oral performer of epic, but he resolved to create an *Odyssey* that would emulate the *Iliad* in scale and be likewise stabilized in writing. What he produced was a structure with three major parts: the Telemachy (α–δ with part of ο), Odysseus' account of his wanderings (ε–μ), and the homecoming (ν–ω). In the proto-*Odyssey* the war might have been treated as sufficient to account for the hero's long absence from home. The poet who first added further wanderings very likely related them in the third person. Q or one of his predecessors restructured the story so that most of them were related by Odysseus himself, allowing the whole narrative to be concentrated in

a narrower time-frame. Telemachos' journey, in which he learns about other heroes' returns from Nestor and Menelaos, thus setting Odysseus' return more graphically in context, was Q's own innovation. His original idea was that the young man should go to Pylos and Crete, but before coming to the Cretan visit he abandoned the idea and substituted Sparta.

He took pains to fill out the context of the homecoming in other ways too: by giving Odysseus a more complete family and background, and by situating his household within a civic society. This Ithacan community remains in the background, but its existence made it necessary to add a further episode at the end in which Odysseus could reach a settlement with the suitors' families.

In the course of composing the wanderings Q drastically changed and extended them. Initially they lasted no more than three years, and they took Odysseus by way of Crete into the eastern Mediterranean, to Phoenicia, Egypt, and Libya. Then Q became aware of the need to give Menelaos seven years of wandering with Helen, to account for his absence from the story of Agamemnon's murder and Orestes' revenge. He transferred to Menelaos Odysseus' eastern adventures (including an encounter with Proteus) and shifted Odysseus' itinerary further west to avoid overlap. At the same time he had to make his wanderings last much longer so that he did not reach home before Menelaos. He achieved this by marooning him for seven years on Calypso's isle.

After tracing the trajectory of Odysseus' peregrinations round the uncharted waters of the western Mediterranean, he spoiled their geographical coherence by importing a series of additional adventures adapted from the story of the Argonauts, one of which was explicitly located at the sunrise, while others carried the imprint of Pontic scenery. In the middle of them he set a journey to Hades, where Odysseus was to consult the soul of Teiresias. In an earlier version this consultation had taken place in Thesprotia shortly before Odysseus arrived back in Ithaca.

After bringing his hero home, Q vacillated over how he was to overcome the suitors; he had probably recited different versions at different times. Originally the suitors numbered only twelve, and after Odysseus had strung the great bow (a motif that came to Greece as part of the Returning Husband story) he could have dispatched them with it. But Q, given as he was to carefree inflation, had seen fit to increase their number to 108; and there had to be a heroic role for

Telemachos. This called for a regular spear-fight, with support from loyal herdsmen. Until the last quarter of the poem it is the spear-fight that Odysseus seems to be anticipating, and the existence of the bow is never mentioned. In the event he begins by shooting the suitors, and when his arrows are expended a spear-fight develops.

We can see from this example (among many others) that Q worked forward from α towards ω without having worked out in advance exactly how the narrative was to go. Like the *Iliad* poet, he made many insertions in what he had already written, in a few places adding a whole scene. Recognition of this fundamental fact about the Homeric epics is the key to solving many of the critical difficulties that scholars have identified over the last two centuries.

Such is my view of the *Odyssey* in outline. The detail will be progressively filled in over the following chapters.

2

Resourceful Odysseus

We know Odysseus principally from the Homeric poems. The *Odyssey* tells the story of his return home after the Trojan War. In the *Iliad* we see him during the war, recognized by all as one of the leading Achaean heroes. At *A* 138 he and Ajax are the first to come to Agamemnon's mind as major warriors who, like Achilles, have won rewards for their prowess. He plays a prominent role throughout, and while he defeats no adversary of great note, in *Λ* he is one of three champions who have to be disabled as the precondition for the Trojan advance to the ships. In the Cyclic poems too he appeared regularly as a major figure at Troy. He was sent on important missions, or undertook them on his own initiative; he and Ajax together recovered Achilles' body from the battle as it raged around them, and he was adjudged, fairly or no, to have played the greater part in that achievement. He captured the Trojan seer Helenos, went into Troy in disguise on a spying expedition, and again with Diomedes to steal the Palladion. He conceived the stratagem of the Wooden Horse, led the special force that hid inside it, and killed Hector's son at the sack.

So far as we can see, he was well established in the tradition about the war. In the cases of certain other heroes such as Achilles, Sarpedon, and Glaukos, there is reason to think that they were brought in at a comparatively late stage in the evolution of the saga.[1] In Odysseus' case there are no obvious signs of this. He has a role in the story as far back as we can see.

We know from the oral traditions of other peoples, however, that the legend of a great enterprise, such as the Achaean expedition against Troy, is liable to draw in famous figures from other stories,

[1] West 2011*a*: 42–7 (Achilles); 64 f. (Sarpedon and Glaukos).

men who, where historical evidence is available, sometimes turn out to have lived in an earlier or later century than the one in which the enterprise is set.[2] Of the Homeric heroes who fight at Troy, the Salaminian Ajax and the two Cretan leaders, Idomeneus and Meriones, seem from various indications to belong to a distinctly earlier time than the last phase of the Mycenaean age when the war takes place.[3] It is likely enough that Odysseus too was brought in at some stage from a different channel of story tradition. He is not, after all, a typical epic hero in the mould of Achilles, Diomedes, or Hector, whose appearance strikes terror into the enemy lines and whose onset is more or less irresistible. Odysseus has intellectual qualities that match and complement his fighting ability. There are tales and traditions about him that point away from the field of blood. He recedes under scrutiny into a misty and mysterious prehistory. He has been called an 'enigmatic figure', 'probably the most problematic of all Homeric heroes'.[4]

ODYSSEUS' NAME AND NATURE

His name suggests a considerable antiquity, firstly by its *-εύς* ending, which is common in mythical names and those found in the Linear B tablets but is no longer productive in the historical period; secondly by its obscurity; and thirdly by its currency in several puzzlingly divergent forms. The *d* alternates with *l*, the *y* with *i*, the *ss* with *s* or *t* or *tt* or *x*, and the *-eus* with *-es*. With the various permutations of these variants the name appears in more than a dozen different spellings. *Ὀδυσσεύς* (with the metrical alternative *Ὀδῠσεύς* in poetry) is the normal form in literature, except that *Ὀλίξης* is attested for Ibycus (*PMGF* 305). In vase inscriptions spellings with *λ* are the norm in the earlier period, starting in the late seventh century; those with *δ* begin to appear after about 540, no doubt under the influence of the epics. Three Corinthian vases, dating from 620 to 560, all have *Ολισευς*, though another has a woman named *Ολυττοι*, i.e. *Ὀλυττῴι*. Latin has *Ulixes*, very much as Ibycus heard the name

[2] See C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry* (London 1952), 519–36.
[3] West 2011*b*: 48 f.
[4] Schwartz 183; P. Philippson, *Mus. Helv.* 4 (1947), 9.

in sixth-century Calabria, though with a genitive *Ulixei* beside *Ulixi* and *-is*. A *d*-variant, on the other hand, appears to underlie the Etruscan forms *Utuśe, Utuze, Uθuse*, etc.[5]

As regards the distribution of *d* and *l* forms, we can sum up the situation by saying that *d* is peculiar to the (Aeolic–)Ionian epic tradition and those dependent on it (including the Etruscans), while *l* is at home everywhere in mainland Greece and the west apart from Etruria. But the divergence is not explained by any normal dialect development, and it is often thought to indicate that the name is not Greek in origin. Kretschmer thought that the *l* might represent an Illyrian or Epirotic mutation.[6] He later compared Odysseus' name to Carian *Λύξης*, while more recent scholars have referred to evidence of variation between *d* and *l* in Anatolian languages, and to *da-pu*$_2$*-ri-to-jo* = *λαβυρίνθοιο* at Cnossos.[7]

No form of Odysseus' name is found in the Linear B tablets, but the general opinion that it is old and pre-Greek seems justified. The etymological association with *ὀδύσσομαι* 'be hated', which is stated in *τ* 406–9 and played on in *α* 62, *ϵ* 340, 423, *τ* 275, must be secondary, as it leaves the widely current *l* forms unaccounted for. We must accept that the meaning of the name is lost in antiquity, and that we cannot even say whether its first consonant was originally *d* or *l* or some un-Greek phoneme that was neither the one nor the other.

We can however draw one important conclusion from the divergence of forms: that Odysseus was not a figure known only to heroic epic. He must have been famous in other kinds of tradition, and for many centuries. It has long been inferred that his connection with the Trojan War is secondary and that he was earlier known for other things.[8]

What sort of things? There are two lines of approach to the question, and they do not clearly lead in the same direction. The first is based on local traditions, some of them going back to the sixth

[5] For details of the vase inscriptions see F. Brommer, *ZVS* 96 (1982/3), 88–92; for *Ολυττοι*, O. Masson, *REG* 94 (1981), 544. E. Wüst, *RE* xvii. 1906–10, gives a fuller survey of forms and scholars' attempts to explain them. The *Οὐλιξεύς* noted by Herodian i. 14. 14 L. (where *Οὐ-* represents *Ŭ-*) is probably constructed to account for the Latin genitive *Ulixei*, cf. Plut. *Marc.* 20. 4; Prisc. 6. 92 (ii. 276. 4 Keil).

[6] Kretschmer 280–2.

[7] P. Kretschmer, *Glotta* 28 (1940), 253 f.; Germain 482 f.; A. Heubeck, *Minos* 5 (1957), 151 f. = *Kl. Schr.* (Erlangen 1984), 513 f.; id., *Lydiaka* (Erlangen 1959), 20 f.; id., *Praegraeca* (Erlangen 1961), 24–7; Marzullo 74 f.

[8] Wilamowitz 1884: 113, cf. 1927: 184.

century BCE, about Odysseus in north-west Greece. In the Cyclic *Telegony* he married a Thesprotian queen and had a son whom he left to rule over her people. Sixth-century Thesprotians, in other words, claimed that their kings were descended from Odysseus.[9] A similar legend made him go to Aetolia, marry the daughter of Thoas, and father a royal son on her (Apollod. epit. 7. 40). Others made him the founder of the obscure town Bounima in Epirus, while at Trampya, not far away, he was venerated as a hero who could be summoned up from the dead to give oracles. He had another such oracle among the Eurytanes of Aetolia.[10] These myths and institutions were variously connected with the mysterious mission laid upon Odysseus by Teiresias in *λ* 119–34, that he was to journey inland to people who knew nothing of the sea and there plant an oar in the earth and make sacrifices to Poseidon. On the basis of all this some scholars have supposed that, as Hartmann puts it,

> this Odysseus of the mainland genealogies and traditions was not imported through epic but existed independently of epic as a very old indigenous figure in north-west Greece. This Odysseus seems to have been a figure something like Amphiaraos, distinct from the sacker of Troy, from the wandering seafarer, and from the returning hero who slays the suitors and frees his wife. . . . Perhaps we have come close to the point from which the real nature and origin of the Odysseus figure might be explained if we had but more exact information.[11]

Bethe (iii. 180–8) went further, finding traces of Odysseus' cult over a much wider area, in Arcadia, Sparta, Argos, and Boeotia, his adherents presently spreading the faith to Thrace and Italy too.

But why should we believe that all these local traditions are of great antiquity? Certainly the Teiresias mission presupposes an inland cult

[9] Cf. West 2013: 297 f. Lysimachus, *FGrHist* 382 F 15, gave variant versions with different names for the queen and the son.

[10] Lyc. 799 f. with sch.; St. Byz. *β* 147; Arist. fr. 508; Nic. fr. 8; Eust. 1675. 35; Hartmann 92 n. 101, 139 f., 150 f.

[11] Hartmann 228 f., 'Dies alles scheint mir dafür zu sprechen, daß dieser Odysseus der festländischen Genealogien und Überlieferungen nicht durch das Epos importiert wurde, sondern unabhängig vom Epos als sehr alte einheimische Figur in Nordwestgriechenland existierte. Dieser Odysseus scheint eine Gestalt wie etwa Amphiaraos gewesen zu sein, verschieden vom Trojazerstörer, vom Seefahrer, der durch die Meere irrt und vom heimkehrenden Helden, der die Freier erschlägt und die Gattin befreit. . . . Vielleicht sind wir hier dem Punkt nahe gekommen, von dem aus das eigentliche Wesen und der Ursprung der Odysseusfigur sich erklären ließe, wenn wir genauere Kunde hätten.' Cf. Schwartz 183 f.; K. Meuli, *Hermes* 70 (1935), 167 = *Gesammelte Schriften* (Basel 1975), ii. 869; Merkelbach 224–6.

site of Poseidon, said to have been established by a retired seafarer, and that seafarer had been identified with Odysseus before our *Odyssey* was composed. But that is to say that it presupposes an Odysseus famed for his wanderings at sea, not one who held sway or gave oracles in the interior. If towns or tribes here and there in the north-west claimed Odysseus as their founder or as the ancestor of their rulers, it is simply that these communities, which were comparatively late to enter into the spirit of pan-Hellenic culture,[12] became eager to acquire a respectable antiquity by linking themselves up with a Homeric hero, and Odysseus was the only one in hailing distance. As for the *nekyomanteia*, these were a feature of the region. Herodotus refers to one in Thesprotia.[13] Typically it was famous seers from the past such as Teiresias or Trophonios or Amphiaraos who were consulted at them. Was Odysseus then originally a seer? There is no hint of it in the tradition, and it seems altogether more likely that the Eurytanes and the denizens of Trampya assigned oracular functions to him because he was a hero of repute who had already found a place in local mythology and who had in his own lifetime visited Hades and obtained wisdom from a seer there.

The other line of approach starts from that aspect of Odysseus' Homeric *persona* which is not characteristically heroic. I have mentioned his intellectual side. In the *Iliad* he is portrayed as a wise adviser, a steadying influence. People speak of his good counsels (*βουλαὶ ἀγαθαί*, *Β* 273), and in *λ* 512 he ranks himself with Nestor in this regard. He knows what to do in a crisis. But he is also noted for resourcefulness of an underhand variety, for deception and trickery. Helen characterizes him to Priam as 'knowing all kinds of tricks and intricate wiles' (*Γ* 202). A Trojan addresses him as *δόλων ἆτε*, 'insatiable in tricks' (*Λ* 430). He is not ashamed of it; he identifies himself to the Phaeacians as a man famous for it (*ι* 19 f.):

> *εἶμ' Ὀδυσεὺς Λαερτιάδης, ὃς πᾶσι δόλοισιν*
> *ἀνθρώποισι μέλω, καί μεο κλέος οὐρανὸν ἵκει.*

The first person he meets on Ithaca he tries to deceive with a false story, 'ever plying a crafty mind in his breast' (*ν* 255). He does not know that it is Athena. She is amused and says, 'it would take a

[12] Even in the late fifth century the Eurytanes were, according to Thucydides (3. 94. 5), 'the largest group among the Aetolians, but the most incomprehensible of speech, and said to be eaters of raw meat'.

[13] See p. 123.

cunning man to surpass you in all your trickery. Even now when you are back in your own land you keep up your deceits and frauds that you are so fond of' (291–5). We do not see him being actively deceitful in the *Iliad*, but in the *Odyssey* it is what enables him to escape from the Cyclops' cave, and later to enter his own palace unrecognized and get the suitors into his power. In the Cycle he tried to avoid recruitment for the war by feigning insanity, though he was outwitted by Palamedes (*Cypria* arg. 5b). He entered Troy in disguise and came to a secret agreement with Helen (*Little Iliad* arg. 4b–d, frr. 8–9). Above all, he was the author of the great trick by which the Achaeans finally overcame the Trojans, the Wooden Horse. So it was said of him that he took Troy *βουλῆι καὶ μύθοισι καὶ ἠπεροπηΐδι τέχνηι* (Ep. adesp. 11, cf. *α* 1 f., *χ* 230).

This side of him is reflected in some of the epithets attached to him in Homer. On the one hand he is *πτολίπορθος*, 'sacker of strongholds', but this is a generic epithet in the *Iliad*, also used of Ares, Enyo, and several heroes whose names scan ⏑ – – (Achilles, Oïleus, Otrynteus). He is also *πολύτλας*, *πολυτλήμων*, *τλήμων*, usually understood as 'much-enduring' but perhaps originally 'much-daring'.[14] On the other hand he is the *ἀνὴρ πολύτροπος* (*α* 1, cf. *κ* 330), an adjective also applied to the deceitful Hermes (*Hymn. Herm.* 13, 439). He is *πολυμήχανος* (*α* 205, and twenty-two times in the formula *διογενὲς Λαερτιάδη, πολυμήχαν' Ὀδυσσεῦ*). Even more frequently he is *πολύμητις*; *μῆτις* means 'resourcefulness' in general, the ability to apply one's mind to a practical problem and find a way to solve it. Zeus himself is *μητιόεις*, and Odysseus rivals him in this, being *Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντος*. The scansion of this formula suggests that it is of Mycenaean vintage, going back to **Diwei mētin ḥatalantos*.[15] In Homer it is used mostly of Odysseus,[16] though it would be unsafe to infer that it was already applied to him in Mycenaean verse.

Before he was incorporated as a warrior hero in the Trojan saga, then, Odysseus may have been essentially a trickster figure. This is a well known category in folk-tale studies. But the folk-tale trickster is usually a prankster, a man who plays mischievous tricks on other

[14] Marzullo 23–6, 59–67; Hainsworth 320. *τλῆν* is to dare, to venture, to bring oneself to do something daunting, dangerous, or diagreeable.

[15] Cf. West 2011*b*: 46.

[16] *Β* 169, 407, 636, *Κ* 137; also of Hector, *Η* 47 = *Λ* 200. A secondary adaptation of it, *θεόφιν μήστωρ ἀτάλαντος*, is used of Priam, Peirithoos, and Patroklos.

people for his own advantage or amusement and who sometimes gets into trouble as a result and comes to a bad end. The infant Hermes plays this kind of role in the Homeric Hymn. There were also the Cercopes, a pair of rascally brothers who were 'liars, tricksters, schooled in mischief, deceivers; they used to travel far abroad and trick people, always roaming'; Heracles put paid to them.[17] The Kobaloi were impish demons of similar character, associated with Dionysus. Odysseus belongs rather with certain mythological figures who were admired for the ingenious quality of their bamboozlings. At the divine level there was Prometheus, who benefited mankind by stealing fire from heaven and devising a way to transport it, and by tricking Zeus over the division of the sacrificial victim between gods and mortals. On earth there was the master thief Autolykos, a son of Hermes, who would change the colour of the horses he stole so that they could not be identified ('Hes.' fr. 67). There was Sisyphos, cleverest of men (*Z* 153, 'Hes.' fr. 43a. 51, Alc. 38. 6), who found a way of (temporarily) overcoming death and who outwitted Autolykos. Odysseus was brought into connection with both of these tricksters. His mother Antikleia was identified as a daughter of Autolykos (*λ* 85, *τ* 394–412); and some said that when she married Laertes she had already been made pregnant by Sisyphos, who was thus Odysseus' real father.[18] In this version (of which there is no hint in the *Odyssey*; it may be of later origin) Hermes, Autolykos, and Sisyphos have all contributed to Odysseus' genes.

THE CYCLOPS

All the examples of Odysseus' μῆτις that we know about were manifested in the course of the Trojan War, or in the preparations for it (his attempt to avoid being drafted), or in its aftermath (his wanderings and homecoming). Whatever exploits he was known for before he was drawn into the Troy saga have either been forgotten or adapted to fit somewhere within that saga.

[17] 'Homer', *Cercopes*; see my *Homeric Hymns, Homeric Apocrypha, Lives of Homer* (Cambridge, Mass. 2003), 228, 252–5.

[18] For these various stories see Gantz 173 f.

One of his major adventures, his encounter with the Cyclops Polyphemos, has a good claim to belong under the latter heading. It has nothing to do with the Trojan War. When Odysseus tells Polyphemos that they are Achaeans who have just come from sacking Troy under Agamemnon, whose fame is now world-wide, it means nothing to the ogre: he lives in a different world (ι 259–78). There is a functional mismatch between the twelve ships that Odysseus has brought and the single one that is all the adventure requires; the eleven surplus ones are just set aside, parked at an offshore island to be collected afterwards. But even a single ship's crew are far too many for the story, and once they have reached the shore Odysseus selects twelve men to go with him while the rest stay at the ship.

Of all the episodes that make up his wanderings, this is the only one in which he overcomes an adversary rather than just escaping from danger. It is also the one which stands out as a self-contained story that needs neither a post-Trojan nor any other context. Of all classical myths, it is the one that a modern child is most likely to be told.[19] The poet has made links with prior and later events: Odysseus brings strong wine with him from a previous adventure, and by blinding Polyphemos he incurs Poseidon's wrath, which will trouble him later, though it is brought into play only intermittently and is not integral.

It has long been recognized that the story is a folk-tale, one recorded in numerous versions from all over Europe as well as Syria, Turkey, Armenia, the Caucasus, Turkestan, Mongolia, and north Africa.[20] The essence of it is that a small group of men enter the dwelling of a one-eyed giant. He seizes, cooks, and eats them one after another. When he falls asleep the last survivor drives a spit or stake into his eye and blinds him. But escape is problematic, as the exit is blocked by a massive stone. The giant opens it a little to let his sheep out, checking

[19] My wife once related it to two small Oxford boys, one of whom observed seriously: 'There's an Australian version of that.'

[20] W. Grimm, *Die Sage von Polyphem* (Berlin 1857) = *Kleinere Schriften* iv (Gütersloh 1887), 428–62; O. Hackman, *Die Polyphemsage in der Volksüberlieferung* (Helsinki 1904); see further e.g. G. Krek, *Einleitung in die slavische Literaturgeschichte* (Graz 1887), 665–752; J. G. Frazer, *Apollodorus. The Library* (Cambridge, Mass. 1921), ii. 404–55; A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, ii (Cambridge 1925), 988–1003; Germain 55–129; Page 1955: 1–20; Hansen 289–301 (with full bibliography). I use the concise and familiar term 'folk-tale' for what some, perhaps more aptly, call an 'international tale' (as in the subtitle of Hansen's book) or 'migratory oral narrative'.

them by feel. The hero kills a ram, covers himself with its skin, and makes his way out on all fours, eluding the giant. He then taunts him, which brings him into renewed danger.

Some of the versions undoubtedly derive from the *Odyssey* or have been modified under its influence,[21] but that cannot be true of them all. This was not a story invented by a Greek epic poet, nor can it have originated in Greece; it is of a quite different character from the normal run of Greek myths. It must have been imported from abroad.

When it was imported, its hero had to be given a Greek identity, just as the one-eyed ogre received a Greek name.[22] He may have been identified as Odysseus from the beginning, for it would scarcely have been possible to transfer the story to him if it had once gained currency with a differently named protagonist. Why Odysseus? Not, surely, because a warrior making his way home from Troy needed an extra adventure to delay him; his sojourn with Calypso serves that purpose by adding seven years to the duration of his wanderings, while the Cyclops episode is over in two days. No, rather because Odysseus was a figure known for his clever tricks and ability to outwit others who seemed to have the advantage.[23]

Probably, then, the story of Odysseus' encounter with Polyphemos was current not only before the composition of our *Odyssey* but before Odysseus had become attached to the Trojan War, when his fame was as a trickster. It was incorporated in the tale of his return from Troy not because it had a logical place there but because it was firmly attached to his name and could now be given what it had hitherto lacked, a context.

[21] See Hackman (as n. 20), 169, 181–8; Meuli 69 f. = 639 f.

[22] Cf. Hölscher 1988: 226, 'Bei den Griechen aber scheint es das eigentliche Märchen, mit seiner Zeit- und Ortlosigkeit, seinen namenlosen Figuren ohne Umwelt, nicht gegeben zu haben, es wurde ihnen unwillkürlich zum Mythos, zur Geschichte bestimmter Personen der Vergangenheit . . . Es gab—wenn wir von der Parabel absehen—nicht die fiktive Erzählung als solche; das Märchen wurde episch.' In general on the epicization of folk-tales cf. ibid. 159–69.

[23] Cf. Hennings 599, 'Daß die Überlistung des dummen Riesen gerade dem Odysseus beigelegt wurde, erklärt sich aus dem Ruhme seiner Klugheit, durch den er sich vor allen trojanischen Helden auszeichnete'. Only the field was not limited to heroes who fought at Troy.

THE INCONTINENT HERON

It is typical of the trickster or cleverboots that after all his unheroic successes at the expense of others he finally gets his comeuppance. He is undone in a comical fashion, or condemned to suffer some unusual torment. The Cercopes were seized by Heracles and hung upside down from a pole on his shoulder as he carried them away, so that they realized that this was the Black-arse their mother had warned them against. Sisyphos, after cheating death once, was doomed to roll a rock uphill for all time without ever reaching the top. Prometheus was fastened to a rock-face with an eagle lunching daily on his liver.

According to a legend used by Aeschylus in his *Psychagogoi* (fr. 275), Odysseus, after coming safely through all the perils that beset him on sea and land, perished at last in a droll manner. There fell on his bald pate the droppings of a passing heron that had eaten a stingray. The residual poison from the fish seeped into his scalp, and his aged constitution succumbed to it. I have argued elsewhere (2013: 307–15) that this was originally the 'gentle death from the sea' that Teiresias prophesied would visit him in his old age (*λ* 134–6). Its bizarre nature is to be explained in terms of a particular type of folk-tale: someone enjoys a set of immunities that appear to protect him from every eventuality, until a particular combination of circumstances is brought about that circumvents their seemingly comprehensive provisions. In Odysseus' case they would have been something like, 'he is not vulnerable to any living creature on land or sea or in the air, or to any of the diseases that roam the earth, or to shipwreck at sea'. These immunities might have been bestowed on him at birth by Hermes, or there might have been a tale in which he constrained a superhuman figure to confer them on him, for example by making him drunk and tying him up.[24]

This story about his death is another one that has nothing to do with the Trojan War; it is even less appropriate to a warrior hero than the Cyclops episode. It was given a more heroic twist in the *Telegony*, where Odysseus died in combat with Telegonos, his unrecognized son by Circe, who was fighting with a stingray spear. The original version with the incontinent heron can best be envisaged as the amusing closure to the career of a serial trickster.

[24] This is itself a widespread folk-tale motif, cf. Meuli 71–3 = 641 f.

THE RETURNING HUSBAND

The main plot of the *Odyssey* is based on another widespread folk-tale, that of the Returning Husband.[25] The essence of it is that a man goes on a journey to a distant land and does not return for many years. Meanwhile his wife, having received a false report of his death, or because the agreed time has expired, or simply under pressure from others, is about to take a new husband. The hero reappears, unrecognized, in the nick of time, at the wedding feast, and reclaims her.

Many features of Odysseus' return are paralleled in some of the folk versions. The hero's absence is sometimes prolonged by his being held imprisoned, and this is analogous to Odysseus' seven-year detention on Calypso's island. Sometimes his journey home is effected with miraculous speed, with a supernatural helper transporting him overnight as he sleeps, or his horse covering leagues with each leap:[26] Odysseus similarly is carried back to Ithaca sleeping on the Phaeacians' magic ship. The hero typically conceals his identity under the guise of a lowly traveller, a minstrel or a beggar, but he may be recognized by one of his animals, a horse, a camel, or a dog, as Odysseus is recognized by his old hound Argos. When the time comes for the returning hero to prove who he is, it may be done by means of a birthmark or scar, as with Odysseus, though more often he carries a token such as a wedding ring. In the South Slavic tradition he often has one surviving parent at home, though it is regularly the mother, not the father as in Odysseus' case.[27] On the other hand he does not normally have a son, so Telemachos' role in the *Odyssey*

[25] W. Splettstösser, *Der heimkehrende Gatte und sein Weib in der Weltliteratur* (Diss. Berlin 1899); W. Crooke, *Folk-Lore* 19 (1908), 154 f.; Radermacher 47–58; J. Tolstoi, *Phil.* 89 (1934), 261–74; Lord 121, 242–65; O. Holzapfel, in Kurt Ranke *et al.* (edd.), *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, vi (Berlin 1990), 702–7; Danek 10, 275; id. *Wien. St.* 109 (1996), 5–30; Hansen 201–11 with bibliography. G. K. Gresseth, *TAPA* 109 (1979), 63–85, discusses an example embedded in the *Mahābhārata* (3. 50–78) and compares it with the *Odyssey*.

[26] G. Huet, *Revue des traditions populaires* 32 (1917), 97–109, 145–63; Hölscher (1988), 104 f.; Danek 331 f. Usually this motif is associated with the hero's learning that his wife is on the point of remarrying (Hansen 208).

[27] Lord 177. She usually dies after the recognition.

is probably a development independent of the folk-tale.[28] The killing of the rival suitor or suitors is likewise not an essential element of the traditional story.[29]

When the folk-tale reached Greece it was necessary for the hero to assume a Greek identity, as with the tale of the Blinded Ogre. In this case the Trojan War, which kept the Achaeans abroad for years, provided a natural context (Hansen 205). Of those who fought at Troy, Odysseus was the most suitable candidate. He had the furthest to go to reach home, which made diversions and delays more plausible. More importantly, he had the necessary combination of toughness to endure the tribulations abroad and guile to re-enter his house unrecognized and overcome the obstacles to regaining his wife. So whereas Odysseus may have been the man who outwitted the Cyclops before he was associated with the war, he was probably linked with the war before he took on the role of the Returning Husband.

The archery contest

In the *Odyssey* the returning husband's final recovery of his wife and discomfiture of his rivals involves a contest with a bow. Penelope announces that she will marry the man who can string Odysseus' bow and perform a feat of archery that he used to perform. The motif that contenders for a woman's hand must compete in a contest or test of skill is found in several story traditions. In the Indian epics it sometimes takes the form of stringing a powerful bow and performing a difficult feat of archery, such as hitting a target through holes in a revolving disc.[30] Germain (49) cites a Russian *bylina* in which an ostensible suitor for a princess is required to prove himself among the

[28] Cf. Bethe ii. 97, iii. 171; Lord 160 f., 'In the South Slavic traditions the role of the son is highly variable. Most frequently he is not present at all in the story . . . The evidence of traditional patterns, therefore, points in the direction of a story of the return of Odysseus in which Telemachus played no vital role as son, even though he might be present.'

[29] Merkelbach 218 n. 2, 'Daß der heimgekehrte Ehemann die Freier tötet, ist keineswegs selbstverständlich. In den meisten Parallelerzählungen tritt der neue Bräutigam ohne weiteres zurück, als der heimgekehrte Gatte sein Recht geltend macht.' But there are certainly some versions in which he kills his rivals, cf. Tolstoi (as n. 25), 263.

[30] *Mahābhārata* 1. 175–9; *Rāmāyaṇa* 1. 65 f., 2. 110. 37–52; cf. W. Crooke, *Folk-Lore* 9 (1898), 132; 19 (1908), 154; Germain 14–25, 30–4; Page 1973: 106–8, 133 f.; S. W. Jamison, *Cl. Ant.* 18 (1999), 243–58; West 1997: 433; 2007: 433 f.

nobles of the court by shooting an arrow through a gold ring against a knife-edge so that it splits into two equal parts.

A more striking parallel with the *Odyssey*, however, is provided by the story of Alpamysh, which is widely current among the Turkic peoples of central Asia, often in the form of a heroic poem.[31] Here we find the archery contest in conjunction with the Returning Husband theme. The hero, Alpamysh, is a chieftain of the Kungrats. He wins his wife Barchin by excelling in a series of contests. He goes on an expedition to the land of the Kalmucks, where he is captured and spends seven years in captivity. After escaping and killing the Kalmuck khan he sets off to return home. On the way he learns that his illegitimate brother Ultontoz has usurped power and is preparing to marry Barchin against her will. As he proceeds, an old camel of his picks up his scent from a long way off and canters up to meet him. He arrives in the course of the extended wedding celebrations, disguised as a shepherd. He sees his aged father and mother compelled to do menial tasks, and his young son begging. Ultontoz invites him to take part in a contest for archers, who are shooting at a pumpkin and all missing. Alpamysh takes up a bow but when he draws it, it breaks. After he has broken a couple more bows, he calls for the mighty old bow of Alpinbiy, Alpamysh's grandfather, that resides in Alpamysh's old yurt. His son brings it for him. He alone is able to draw it, and to the general astonishment he shoots a branch off a distant tree. In a competitive exchange of improvised wedding-songs he signals his identity to Barchin, and soon everyone rejoices at the realization that it is Alpamysh who has returned. He kills Ultontoz and is reunited with his wife.

A NORTH-EAST WIND?

The tale of Alpamysh can be traced back for many hundreds of years. Of all the Returning Husband stories it is the one closest to the

[31] V. Zhirmunsky, 'The Epic of "Alpamysh" and the Return of Odysseus', *PBA* 52 (1966), 267–86; H. B. Paksoy, *Alpamysh: Central Asian Identity under Russian Rule* (Hartford, Conn. 1989); K. Reichl, *Turkic Oral Epic Poetry: Traditions, Forms, Poetic Structure* (New York–London 1992); id., *Das usbekische Heldenepos Alpomish* (Wiesbaden 2001). A version by the Uzbek singer Fozil Yo'ldosho'g'li (1872–1955), in 13,715 verses with interspersed prose passages, was set down in writing in 1928. Reichl 2001 gives the text and translation of a shorter version (1,655 verses plus prose).

Odyssey, but there is no likelihood that it somehow derives from the Greek epic. So far as we can see, it is indigenous to the steppes. The bow so strong that it takes great strength to string and draw it is the composite or Asiatic bow that is at home above all among the steppe nomads.[32] It is remarkable that such a bow should play a crucial part in the story of Odysseus, seeing that in the *Iliad* he is portrayed as a normal spear-warrior, not an archer, and in the *Odyssey* a special explanation has to be given of how he acquired the bow and why he did not take it to Troy (*φ* 11–41). Indeed, until we reach *τ* there is no hint that he owns a bow or will use one against the suitors: before that point he seems to have been thinking in terms of a pitched battle with spears and swords (see pp. 136 f.).

If these considerations suggest the possibility that the Returning Husband story may have reached Greece from the Pontic area, perhaps from early contacts with Scythian peoples, certain others might lead us to suspect that the tale of the Blinded Ogre came from a similar direction. There is no trace of it in the Near Eastern literary traditions—Mesopotamian, Levantine, Hurro-Hittite—from which the Greeks received so many mythical motifs and poetic techniques.[33] It is unlikely to have come from the west, or to be indigenous; I have noted that it is of a character quite untypical of Greek myth. On the other hand it sits naturally in the mythical world of the north-east Pontic and Caucasus regions. North Caucasian mythology is transmitted in stories and ballads and takes the form of self-contained episodes, not long connected sagas.[34] Its heroes are the Narts, a people

[32] For the Greeks it was the 'Scythian bow' (Agathon *TrGF* 39 F 4. 3; Strab. 2. 5. 22; Eust. on Dion. Per. 157). On its construction and diffusion see Lorimer 276–89. For Odysseus cf. Germain 48 f., 'Nous sommes ainsi ramenés à ce que nous pourrions appeler *le monde de l'arc*, dans lequel entrent: 1) Les nomades des steppes: Turco-Mongols, Iraniens nomades dont les Scythes sont les mieux connus; 2) Les Iraniens fixés en Iran et les Aryas de l'Inde. En fait, de ces deux catégories de peuples, c'est peut-être aux nomades qu'il y a lieu d'attribuer, en même temps que l'invention de l'arc, la conception première de notre thème.'

[33] One-eyed figures can be found on early Sumerian seals. (West 1997: 424), but there is nothing to suggest a myth of their blinding. For the myth of a one-eyed monster slain by Nergal, and a clay plaque of the early second millennium apparently depicting the event, see A. R. George, *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 69 (2012), 422–5.

[34] See G. Dumézil, *Légendes sur les Nartes* (Paris 1930); id., *Le Livre des héros. Légendes sur les Nartes* (Paris 1965); id., *Mythe et épopée*, i (Paris 1968), 441–575; A. Sikojev, *Die Narten. Söhne der Sonne. Mythen und Heldensagen der Skythen, Sarmaten und Osseten* (Cologne 1985); J. Colarusso, *Nart Sagas from the Caucasus* (Princeton 2002).

supposed to have formerly lived high in the mountains. Their exploits are characterized by both intrepidity and cunning. Usually they do not act in concert but an individual hero goes off on a solitary quest and finds himself in strange places where giants or other fabulous beings are encountered. The giants are generally conceived as one-eyed.

The Cyclops story appears in this part of the world in several versions.[35] In a Circassian account the ogre lives in a hollow tree; there are no sheep, but after he has eaten two of the hero's comrades the survivor blinds him with a spit and escapes over a glacier, while the giant hurls rocks after him. In an Abaza version the hero, Sosruquo, comes to a cave and finds there the ogre, his sheep, and two captive men whose companions have already been eaten. As the ogre snores they explain the situation to Sosruquo. He heats a spit in the fire and drives it into the ogre's eye. The men escape by suspending themselves each between two sheep, which the ogre lets out of the cave. He pursues them, hurling huge stones in their direction.

In an Ossetic version it is said explicitly that the giant blocks the cave entrance with a massive stone. On the first evening he cooks a sheep and shares it with the hero, Urysmag. The next day he goes off with his flock, leaving Urysmag in the cave. When he returns in the evening he announces that guests only receive hospitality on the first night: tonight Urysmag must make the meal. He drives an iron spit through Urysmag's knee, hangs him above the fire, and falls asleep. Urysmag struggles free, heats the spit in the fire, and blinds the ogre. He, unable to locate Urysmag, pretends to tire of life and throws him the ring which, he says, contains his whole strength. But when Urysmag puts it on it begins to cry out: 'He's here! He's here!' And it will not budge from Urysmag's finger. He sees an axe, seizes it, and chops his finger off.[36] In the night, when the frustrated giant has fallen asleep again, he kills the ram and removes its skin, horns and all. In the morning the giant shifts the door-stone and calls on the ram to lead the flock out, while he keeps guard. Urysmag escapes wearing the ram's skin. He then discards it and shouts mockingly at the ogre,

[35] Frazer (as n. 20), 448–52; Colarusso (as n. 34), 163, 200 f.; Sikojev (as n. 34), 54–60.

[36] The ring (or less often some other article that behaves in the same way) is a feature of the Blinded Ogre story all over Europe, but it normally comes into play after the hero has escaped from the giant's dwelling.

who rushes out, forgetting that his cave is on the edge of a chasm. He falls into its depths, while Urysmag drives the sheep back to Nartsville.

The Caucasus is an ethnic patchwork, and the Nart legends are common to Circassians, Abkhaz, Ubykhs, Ossetes, and others. The Ossetes are descendants of the Alans, and some of their mythology is probably Scythian in origin. It was from somewhere beyond Scythia that Aristeas of Proconnesus brought to Greece the rumour of a one-eyed people, the Arimaspians.[37] It is a plausible speculation that the Cyclops story too came from the north-east, whether by way of Scythia or along the southern shores of the Black Sea.

Another myth with a strong link to the Caucasus is that of Prometheus, who stole fire for men and was punished by being shackled to a pillar or a rock face, where an eagle came and feasted on his liver. This corresponds to the Caucasian and Armenian myth of a giant who is fettered to a pillar or in a mountain cave as a punishment for his lawlessness or impiety, and whose struggles are the cause of earthquakes. His offence, in many versions, was to try to steal the water of life. Sometimes the water flows just out of his reach (Tantalos motif). Often he has an eagle or vulture pecking at his bowels. In a Circassian tale it was a one-eyed warrior giant who tried to learn the secrets of God and found his way to the mountain spring whose water gives eternal life.

> God did not tolerate such impudence from a mortal man and chained him to this rock by the neck. Many years passed, so that the warrior grew old and his beard turned as white as the glaciers of Wash'hamakhwa and reached to his knees. His once proud face grew wrinkled. To further punish him for his insolence, God sent a bird of prey. This eagle pecks at his heart every day. When the sufferer bends down to drink from the spring, the bird swoops down before him and drinks all the water itself, down to the last drop.[38]

In another one an evil demon called Paqua, who falsely claims to be God, deprives the Narts of fire. Nasran goes to get it back, but Paqua

[37] Hdt. 3. 116. 1; 4. 13, 27. The name looks genuinely Iranian. Cf. Strab. 1. 2. 10 *τάχα δὲ καὶ τοὺς μονομμάτους Κύκλωπας ἐκ τῆς Σκυθικῆς ἱστορίας* (*Ὅμηρος*) *μετενήνοχε· τοιούτους γάρ τινας τοὺς Ἀριμασπούς φασιν, οὓς ἐν τοῖς Ἀριμασπείοις ἔπεσιν ἐκδέδωκεν Ἀριστέας ὁ Προκοννήσιος*. Ukrainian folklore knows of one-eyed cannibals to whom the Tatars would sell captured children: Krek (as n. 20), 751 n. 1.

[38] Colarusso (as n. 34), 170; previously in A. Olrik, *Ragnarök. Die Sagen vom Weltuntergang* (Berlin–Leipzig 1922), 151 f.; Charachidzé 78.