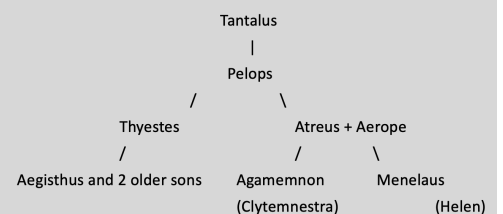


The Odyssey

- Odyssey = An epic abt. Odysseus' *Nostos* (a return home)
- Odysseus' Genealogy
 - Zeus → Hermes → Autolycus → Anticleia (mother) + Laertes (father) → Odysseus
 - Odysseus has divine blood in his veins (from tree above)
- Homer's Odyssey = An epic song about a household in crisis, an interrupted marriage, an absent father.
 - Odysseus is away from Ithaca for 20 years (10 fighting at Troy, 10 returning home)
 - Odysseus has many adventures and suffers many losses
 - Odysseus' wife Penelope defends the household and herself against many suitors while Odysseus is away.
 - Their son Telemachus comes of age w/in the 20 years
- Major Themes of the Odyssey:
 - Reckless and impulsive folly vs. self-restraint
 - *Xenia* (guest-friendship or hospitality), both good and bad models, expressed through:
 - Feasting + Sexual seduction + Wine + Song + Story-telling (both true and false)
 - Marriage (positive and negative examples)
 - Fathers and sons
 - Identity, disguise, and recognition
 - Endurance in hardship
 - Cunning Intelligence (*metis*)
 - Survival
- Agamemnon's *nostos* in the *Odyssey*:
 - While Agamemnon leads the Greeks at Troy, his wife Clytemnestra back home is seduced by Aegisthus, Agamemnon's cousin and enemy.
 - After ten years, a victorious Agamemnon returns home.
 - Aegisthus invites him to a feast and murders him in the dining hall.
 - Agamemnon's son, Orestes, later comes of age and kills Aegisthus.
 - This story gets told many times in the *Odyssey*.

Review: House of Atreus (at Argos)



- Important Characters in the *Odyssey*:
 - Calypso: A goddess who detains Odysseus
 - Circe: A witch, daughter of Helios, who detains Odysseus
 - Nausicaa: A Phaeacian princess, who would like to detain Odysseus
 - Arete (= "virtue"): The wise queen of Phaeacia (Nausicaa's mother)
 - The Sirens: A group of monstrous female characters who try to prevent sailors from getting home.
 - Anticleia: Odysseus' mother
 - Eurycleia: Odysseus' old nurse
 - Orestes: Son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra
 - Polyphemus: The Cyclops, a monstrous son of Poseidon
 - Tiresias: A dead prophet and priest of Apollo, now in the Underworld
 - Laertes: Odysseus' father
 - Eurylochus: One of Odysseus' companions
 - Eumaeus: Odysseus' faithful swineherd

The Telemacheia (The Odyssey bk. 1-5)

- Overview
 - First Greek word of the *Odyssey* is *andra* = 'man' / 'hero' / 'husband'
 - Odysseus is hidden by Calypso on her island in a hollow cave b/c Calypso yearns to marry Odysseus.
 - The suitors try to persuade Penelope to remarry.
 - Telemachus comes of age during this crisis.
 - The gods intervene (particularly Athena).
 - Telemachus begins a journey to find his father, Odysseus.
 - Hermes visits Calypso.
- Calypso
 - Calypso = 'conceal' / 'hide'
 - Calypso offers immortality to Odysseus if he will be her husband.
 - He refuses, preferring instead to get home to Ithaca and Penelope.
- Meanwhile in Ithaca...
 - Telemachus grows up.
 - No-one know where Odysseus is.
 - The suitors are consuming Odysseus' resources and trying to get Penelope to marry them. They are bad guests.
 - She uses a trick to put them off: she tells the suitors that she needs to finish weaving Laertes' (Odysseus' father) cloak for burial (before he dies) before she can chose her next husband from the suitors (i.e. buys time). At night she would unravel the weaving to extend the time she can buy until Odysseus is found.
 - One of Penelope's handmaidens reveals her trick to the suitors
 - As Penelope's cloth is nearing completion, Telemachus begins to mature as well.
- Zeus intervenes:
 - Poseidon (who hates Odysseus) is away from Olympus.
 - Zeus sends Athena to Ithaca to inform Telemachus.
 - Zeus sends Hermes to Calypso to tell her to let Odysseus go. Calypso is upset but she obeys.
 - Odysseus builds a raft and sets sail for home but Poseidon sees him on his way back to Olympus and sends a storm to wreck his raft.



- Athena at Ithaca:
 - Athena, disguised as an old friend, Mentos, visits Telemachus on Ithaca. Telemachus offers her perfect hospitality (shows his maturity).
 - “My mother says that I am [Odysseus’] child; but I do not know this, for never yet did any man know his parentage of his own knowledge.”
 - Telemachus despairs about the situation at home, and about his father’s return.
 - Athena (disguised) urges him to go on a voyage to find news of his father. She tells him he is not a child anymore & reminds him of how Orestes avenged his father.
 - Telemachus scolds his mother when she tells the bard to sing a different song; he tells her to go back to her weaving (i.e. displays his maturity and authoritative figure in the household).

Odysseus and the Phaeacians

- Odyssey bk. 6:
 - Odysseus is shipwrecked and almost drowned; washed ashore on the utopian island of Phaeacia.
 - At Phaeacia, Odysseus meets the princess Nausicaa, who is on the shore with her friends (see next sec.).
- Athena in disguise comes to Nausicaa in a dream and tells her:
 - “Nausicaa, how comes it that your mother bore you so heedless? Your bright clothes are lying uncared for; yet your marriage is near at hand, when you will need not only to be dressed in beautiful garments yourself, but to provide others like them for those who escort you. It is from things like these, you know, that good report arises among men, and the father and honored mother rejoice. Come, let us go to wash them at break of day, for I will go with you to help you so that you may make yourself ready without delay; for you shall not long remain a maiden. Even now you have suitors in the land, the noblest of all the Phaeacians, from whom is your own lineage also...”
 - Nausicaa and her friends go to the seashore to wash the clothes for her marriage (and others attending)
 - While leaving the clothes to dry, Nausicaa and her friend play a game and accidentally discover Odysseus laying unconscious in the bushes. Her friends run away but she stays w/ the body.
- Odysseus supplicates Nausicaa for a favour:
 - Odysseus respectfully asks Nausicaa, “Show me the way to the city, and give me some rag to throw about me, if perhaps you had any wrapping for the clothes when you came here. And for yourself, may the gods grant you all your heart desires, a husband and a home, and may they bestow on you as well oneness of heart in all its excellence. For nothing is greater or better than this, than when a man and a woman keep house together sharing one heart and mind, [giving] great grief to their foes and joy to their friends; while their own fame is unsurpassed.”
 - Nausicaa takes Odysseus to Phaeacia and helps him
 - The Phaeacians welcome Odysseus, bathe him, invite him to dine, entertain him with the songs of the bard (including the story of the adultery of Aphrodite and Ares, and of the Trojan horse). — displays Phaeacian society as a miraculous utopia and a model of *xenia*.
 - When hearing the story and Troy (the Trojan horse), Odysseus weeps.
 - Only then does King Alcinous ask him who he is: “Who are you? Who is your father? What land are you from?”
- Odysseus as the bard (storyteller):
 - After being asked about his identity by the King of Phaeacia, Odysseus tells his own story to the Phaeacians.
 - Odysseus provides a flashback to the action before Odysseus landed on Calypso’s island, including his adventures with his companions and how they were all lost on the way home from Troy.
 - As a result, the Phaeacians give him many precious gifts and take him home on one of their ships and leave him asleep on the shore of Ithaca.

Odysseus and the Cyclops Polyphemus (Odyssey bk. 9)

- The Lotus eaters:
 - Odysseus and his men arrive at a new island.
 - He sends a few men ahead to find out what it's like, whether it's safe, how the people behave.
 - One of them returns with a concerning report: The companions who tasted the lotus fruit don't care about anything else and have forgotten about returning home. Odysseus therefore has to wrestle them back onto the ships.
- The *Cyclopeia* (Cyclops Polyphemus):
 - Odysseus and his men arrive at a new island (2 island opposite to each other
 - One island is deserted, where they leave their ship and feast on the goats there
 - The other island has smoke rising from it, so Odysseus and his men go to investigate.
 - On the second island, Odysseus and his men encounter the Cyclops Polyphemus (= Cyclopeia)
 - Odysseus uses several tricks (displays his cunning intelligence / "*Metis*") to defeat Polyphemus, incl.:
 - Introducing himself as "Nobody" / "Noman"
 - His use of powerful wine (convention of exchanging gifts w/ the host), getting Polyphemus drunk
 - His technological strategy (applying fire to olive wood) for blinding Polyphemus
 - The trick with the sheep (i.e. hiding under the Cyclops' sheep)
- The Cyclopes (described by Odysseus):
 - Polyphemus is one of the cyclops living on the island, and is a giant monstrous cave-dweller & a son of Poseidon
 - Odysseus describes the Cyclopes as: "[having] neither assemblies for council have they, nor appointed laws, but they dwell on the peaks of mountains in hollow caves, and each one is lawgiver to his children and his wives, and they have no regard for one another."



- The Cyclops' (Polyphemus') cave:
 - Odysseus and his men arrive at the Cyclops' cave and enter to explore.
 - The cyclops is not home, so Odysseus and his men wait for him to return in hopes to get a gift of *xenia*.
 - The Cyclops returns with his flocks and seals the cave with a boulder; Odysseus supplicates the cyclops, asking for *xenia*.
 - The Cyclops responds by saying he does not fear any gods and eats two men "like a lion".
 - Odysseus thinks to kill him with his sword but realizes they would all be trapped forever, so he has to think of another strategy: applying fire to a club of green olive wood => creating a burning sharp weapon
 - Odysseus offers him a gift of unmixed wine; the cyclops likes it and keeps drinking it (until he passes out).
 - When asking for *xenia* in return, the cyclops (Polyphemus) says he will eat him last after his comrades as his gift.
 - Odysseus and his men blind Polyphemus (while he is passed out) using the burning sharp weapon they created
- The Cyclopes to Polyphemus:
 - When blinded, Polyphemus cries out to the other cyclopes on the island, who come to his cave (blocked by a boulder) to see what is wrong.
 - The cyclopes ask Polyphemus, "What sore distress is this, Polyphemus, that you cry out thus through the immortal night, and make us sleepless? Can it be that some mortal man is driving off your flocks against your will, or killing you yourself by guile or by strength?"
 - Polyphemus answers them from inside the cave, "My friends, it is Nobody that is slaying me by guile and not by force."
 - The cyclopes reply, "If, then, nobody does violence to you all alone as you are, sickness which comes from Zeus there is no way you can escape; you must pray to our father the lord Poseidon."
- Odysseus' escape:
 - In the morning, Polyphemus opens the cave for his sheep flocks to go out into the pasture
 - Odysseus and his men tie themselves to the bottom of one of the sheep so Polyphemus can't sense them escaping as he lets his flocks out
 - Because he is blinded, Polyphemus fails to prevent Odysseus and his men from escaping his cave using the sheep.
 - Odysseus and his men also steal Polyphemus' sheep as they sail away from the island.



- Odysseus' big mistake (desire for *Kléos* / glory):
 - As he is sailing away from the island, Odysseus makes a mistake by telling Polyphemus, "Cyclops, if any one of mortal men shall ask you about the shameful blinding of your eye, say that Odysseus, the sacker of cities, blinded it, the son of Laertes, whose home is in Ithaca"
 - Polyphemus then prays to Poseidon for revenge.
- Polyphemus' curse:
 - "Hear me, Poseidon, earth-bearer, dark-haired god, if indeed I am your son and you declare yourself my father; grant that Odysseus, the sacker of cities, may never reach his home, the son of Laertes, whose home is in Ithaca; but if it is his fate to see his people and to reach his well-built house and his native land, late may he come, and in distress, after losing all his comrades, in a ship that is another's; and may he find trouble in his house"

Odysseus Tells More Stories

- Odysseus continues to tell the Phaeacians about his adventures
- These stories explain how Odysseus ended up shipwrecked and alone after leaving Troy with several ships full of companions.
- They also offer the Phaeacians examples of good and bad *xenia*.
 - *Xenia* = reciprocal relations of hospitality
 - Expectations of a good guest = Reciprocal hospitality + a gift + self-identification + stories
 - Expectations of a good host = A bath + A meal + Clothing + A gift + Stories + Conveyance home
- Circe the Witch on the island of Aeaea:
 - Circe = A daughter of Helios; a singer and weaver.
 - She turns Odysseus' men into pigs.
 - Hermes helps Odysseus, by giving him a special plant, so that Circe's magic doesn't work on him.
 - Circe is amazed and invites him to her bed. He makes her change his men back first.
 - They all stay with Circe for a year.
- Necromancy = ritual (chronic sacrifice of animals) for calling up the ghosts of the dead from the Underworld
- Sirens' song:
 - "Come this way, honored Odysseus, great glory of the Achaians, and stay your ship, so that you can listen here to our singing; for no-one else has ever sailed past this place in his black ship until he has listened to the honey-sweet voice that issues from our lips; then goes on, well pleased, knowing more than ever he did; for we know everything that the Argives and Trojans did and suffered in wide Troy through the gods' despite."
- The Cattle of Hyperion (Helios)
 - Tiresias' warning: "do not eat the cattle of Hyperion on the island of Thrinacia."
 - The ships are becalmed – the men are hungry.
 - Odysseus hunts and kills a deer but falls asleep before bringing it back to camp.
 - Eurylochus persuades the men to slaughter the cattle of Hyperion.
 - There is reckless feasting, accompanied by strange portents of doom.
 - Helios is angry, causes a storm at sea. All the companions are lost.
 - Odysseus, alone, is washed ashore on Calypso's island.

Odysseus Reaches Ithaca

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