

CLCS4009

READING ANTIQUITY: A SURVEY
OF ANCIENT LITERATURE



Lecture 3: Greek
Epic, Travel and
the Ordinary
Man: Homer's
Odyssey and
Hesiod's *Works
and Days*

Homer's *Odyssey*: Summary

- Books 1-4: Telemachus
- Books 5-8: Odysseus among the Phaeacians
- Books 9-12: Odysseus' narrative to the Phaeacians: *Apologoi*
- Books 13-16: Return home and reunion with Telemachus
- Books 17-20: Insulted by suitors with increasing violence
- Books 21-24: Revenge, reunion with Penelope and Laertes

Hesiod's *Works and Days*: Summary

- Invocation of Zeus and the Muses
- Instruction of Perses: work hard, don't go to town and mess with the aristocracy (i.e. the gift-devouring judges)
- picture of everyday life for a farmer
- Aetiologies
 - Aetiology of working for a living, ills for humankind, sacrifice, and fire
 - Aetiology of women: Pandora
 - Aetiology of ills for humans

Hesiod's *Works and Days*: Summary (2)

- Myth of the races: anthropology
- Hawk and Nightingale
- Further moral instruction for Perses: rights and wrongs: violence v. non-violence, oath-keeping v. oath breaking, bribe-swallowing/crooked verdicts v. straight justice, honouring visitors ...
- DAYS: Agricultural advice tied to the calendar with interspersed moral advice along the same lines as the WORKS portion.

Hesiod's Audience

Perses, lay up these things in your heart, and do not let that Strife who delights in mischief hold your heart back from work, while you peep and peer and listen to the wrangles of the court-house. [30] Little concern has he with quarrels and courts who has not a year's victuals laid up betimes, even that which the earth bears, Demeter's grain. When you have got plenty of that, you can raise disputes and strive to get another's goods. But you shall have no second chance [35] to deal so again: nay, let us settle our dispute here with true judgement which is of Zeus and is perfect. For we had already divided our inheritance, but you seized the greater share and carried it off, greatly swelling the glory of our bribe-swallowing lords who love to judge such a cause as this. [40] Fools! They know not how much more the half is than the whole, nor what great advantage there is in mallow and asphodel.

Hesiod, *Works and Days* 27-41

Hesiod's Ages of Man

Gold

- Paradisiacal: live like gods with no labouring.
- No ageing and die in sleep: are now holy spirits above ground.

Silver

- 100 year childhood; short stressful adulthood.
- Lack of wits, refusing to honour the gods “like men ought to, wherever and whenever”: Zeus destroys them.
- Are now blessed underground mortals.

Bronze

- Terrible, bellicose and mighty; made of ash trees, eat nothing.
- Destroyed themselves: nameless in Hades.

Hesiod's Ages of Man (2)

Heroes

- Demigods: valiant in war, live off the land.
- Died in Thebes and Troy: Isles of the Blessed, ruled over by Cronos.

Iron

- Current generation: troubled by toil and misery.
- Family against family, father against son, guest against host ...
- Zeus will destroy these too.
- Criteria: Death/Labour/Quality of Life/Distance from gods

Odyssean Heroes

- From *Iliad* to *Odyssey*.
- *Iliad* 1.1-4: Sing goddess of the anger of Peleus' son Achilles and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaeans, hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls of heroes.
- *Odyssey* 1.1-5: Tell me Muse of the man of many ways, who was driven far journeys, after he sacked Troy's citadel. Many were the cities he saw, whose minds he learned of, many the pains he suffered in his spirit on the wide sea, struggling for his own life and the homecoming of his companions

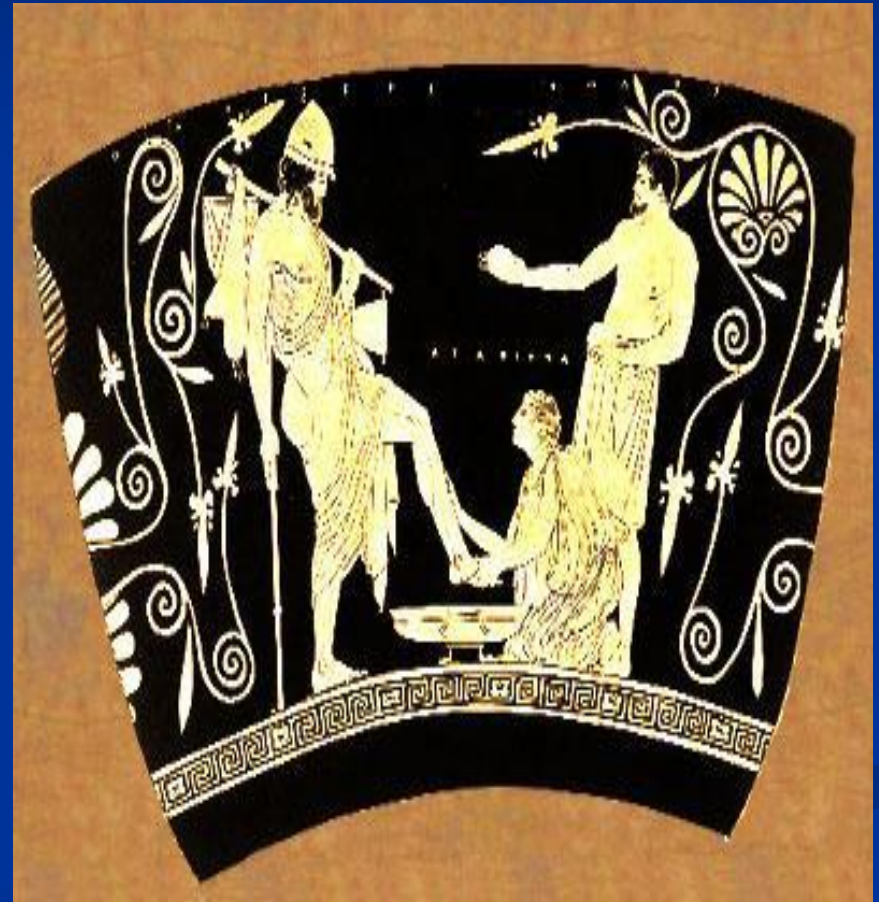
Odyssey

- Book 8 (Demodocus): The Trojan War
- Book 11 (the *Nekyia*): Teiresias/ Achilles

Identity in the *Odyssey*

“I am Odysseus, son of Laertes, known before all men for the study of crafty designs, and my fame goes up to the heavens”.

[Homer, *Odyssey*, 9.19-20]

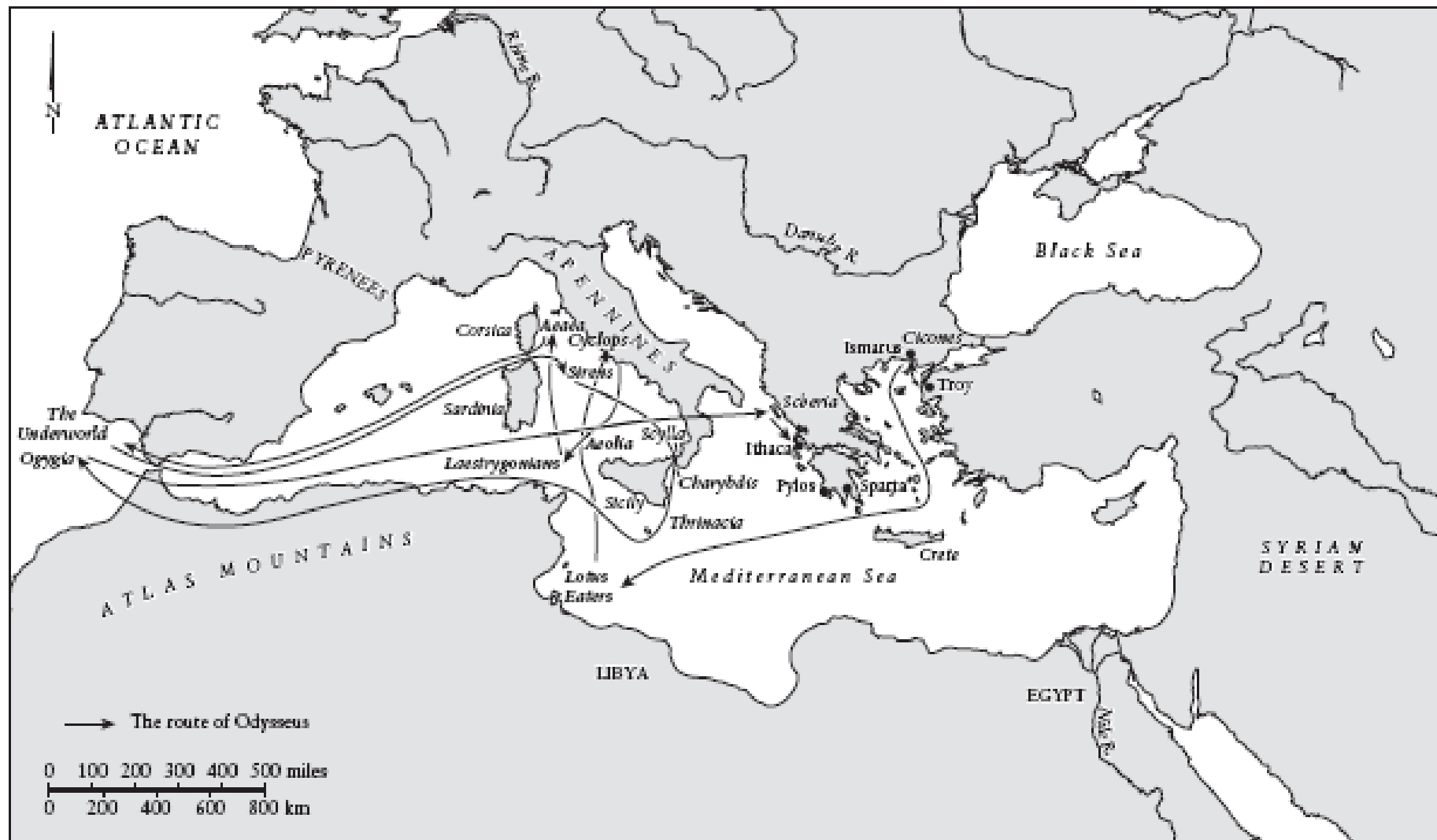


- The *Apologoi*
- Cicones
- Lotus-Eaters
- Cyclops
- Aeolus
- Laestrygonians
- Circe
- Underworld
- Circe
- Sirens
- Scylla
- Thrinacia(Helios)
- Charybdis
- Calypso

Identity in the *Odyssey*



Mapping the *Odyssey*



Odyssean Women

“Homer wrote a sequel of songs and rhapsodies, to be sung by himself for small earnings and good cheer, at festivals and other days of merriment; the *Ilias* he made for men, and the *Odyssey* for the other sex.”

R. Bentley, *Remarks upon a Discourse of Free-Thinking*,
quoted in Clayton (1994: 1)

Odyssean Women

- The Seductress/Almost Wife
- The Goddess/Helper
- The Good Wife
- The Bad Wife

- Penelope
- Athena
- Nausicaa
- Circe
- Calypso
- Helen
- Clytemnestra
- Arete
- Sirens



Hesiod's Women: Pandora

- Pan-dora: “all-gifts” (given all gifts, is a gift, gives gifts)
- Fashioned out of clay by Hephaestus, given grace, desire and anguish by Aphrodite, knowledge of embroidery and weaving by Athena, a bitchy mind and cheating heart by Hermes. Given to Epimetheus (“afterthought”).
- Exchange for Fire
- Deceptive gift
- Procreation
- Punishment
- Hope?
- Why is it there?
- Is it a blessing or curse?



Hesiod's Women: Pandora

■ *Theogony*

Prometheus

- 25 lines for sacrifice trick
- First Sacrifice
- 10 lines for stealing of fire
- Punishment

Pandora

- 15 lines for Pandora creation
- Deception, irresistible to men, “from her is the race of women”
- 22 lines for evil of women

Works and Days

Prometheus

- 3 lines for sacrifice trick
- Alluded to rather than named
- 4 lines for stealing of fire
- Punishment

Pandora

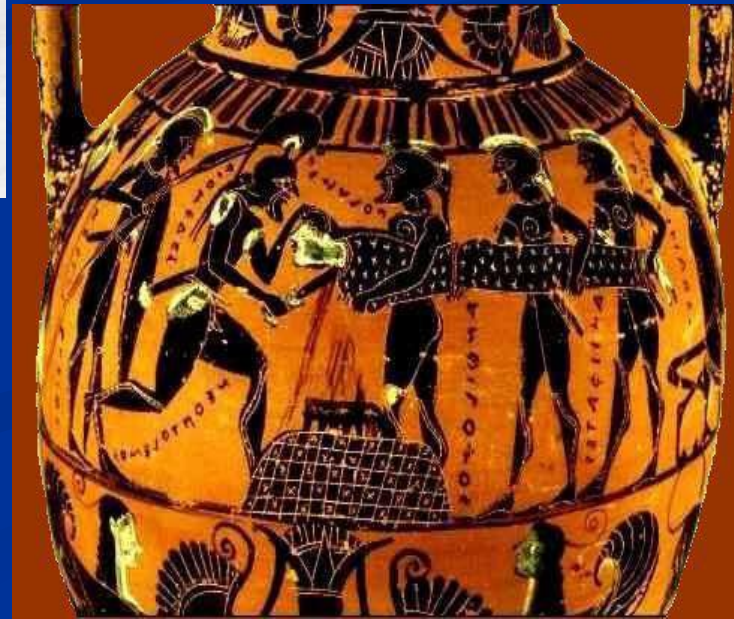
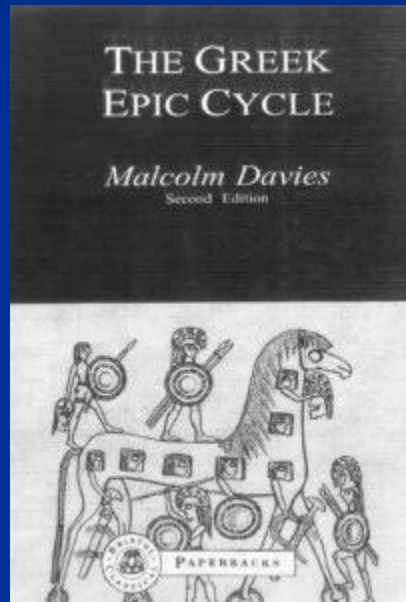
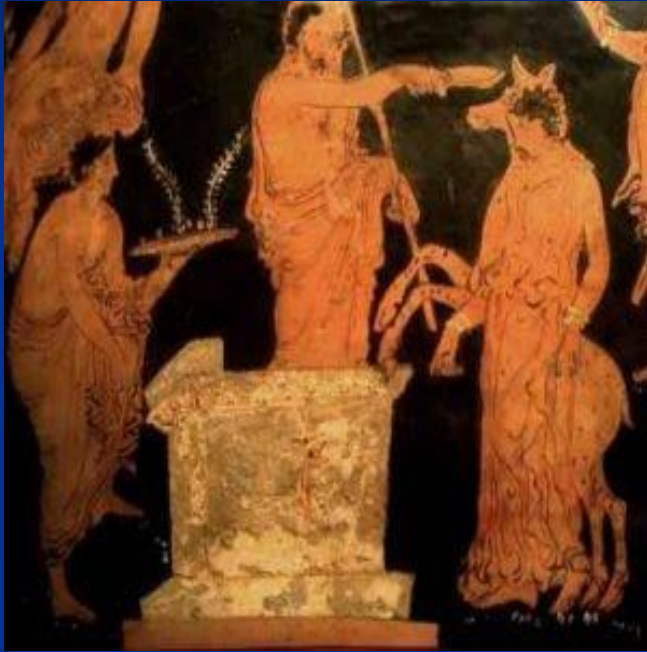
- 26 lines for Pandora creation
- More details for qualities: beauty, embroidery, weaving, desire, bitchy, cheating heart, lies, wheedling words.
- 14 lines for Pandora's jar
- Bringing of sickness and pain to Earth; role of Hope

Near Eastern Influences

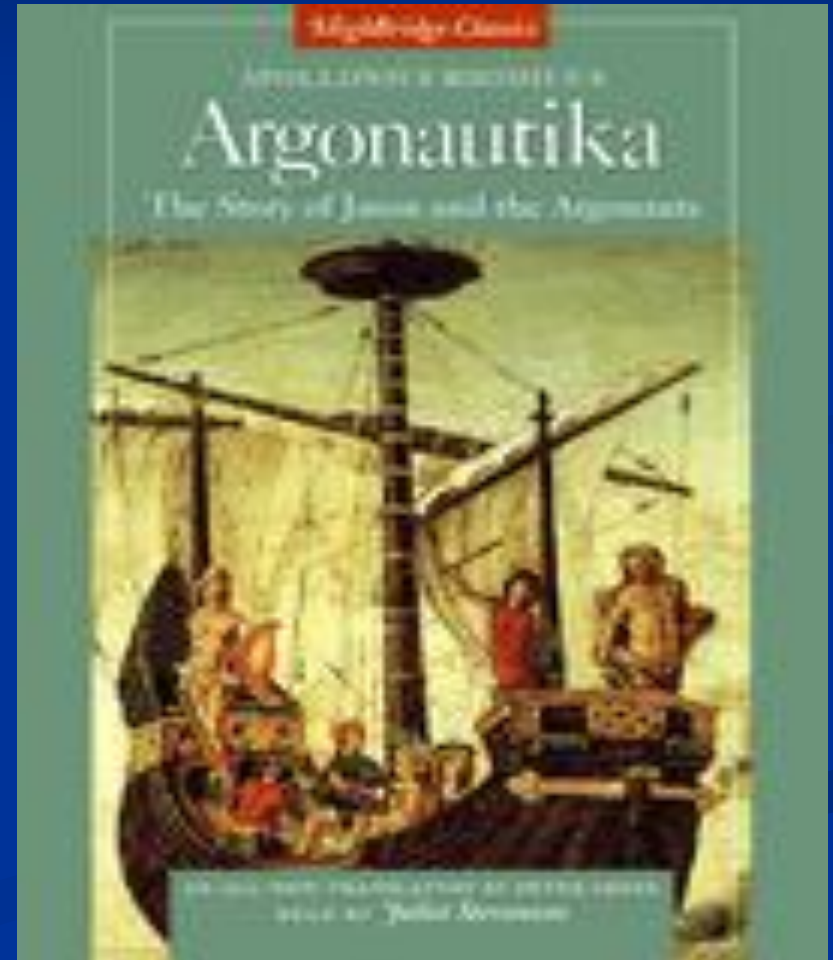
- Hesiod's ages of man
- Gilgamesh
 - Gilgamesh
 - Enkidu



Contemporary Epics



Later (Greek) Epics



Questions?



Follow up Reading

- Clay, J. S. *Hesiod's Cosmos*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, chapters 2 and 5.
- Dougherty, C. *The Raft of Odysseus: the Ethnographic Imagination of Homer's Odyssey*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- □ Fontenrose, J. 'Work, Justice and Hesiod's Five Ages', *Classical Philology* 69, 1974, pp. 1-16. [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/268960>]

Preliminary Reading

- For an understanding of what happens in a symposium and the type of things discussed read:
- Plato, *Symposium* 172a-178a and 212d-end
[<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.01.0174%3Atext%3DSym.>]
- Xenophon, *Symposium*
[<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus:text:1999.01.0212:text=Sym.>]