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***THE ODYSSEY'S* NORTHERN ORIGINS AND A DIFFERENT AUTHOR THAN HOMER**

ABSTRACT

It has often been the opinion of scholars through the millenia that the author of the ancient Greek epic poem the *Iliad* did not write the *Odyssey*. Besides some discrepancies with the Aegean noted already in ancient times, in Roman times according to Tacitus, there was a widespread belief, from similarities in tales, that Odysseus travelled in the north. All evidence considered, the *Odyssey* was likely written when the *Iliad* was well known by a minstrel who gathered stories in the ancient Scandinavian north and adapted them for a Greek audience who were attuned to the *Iliad* and wished to hear more tales from the *Iliad* and its heroes. When viewed in this way many of the details in Odysseus' (or Ulysses') travels can be easily associated with locations along the Norwegian coast and islands north of the British Isles. The starkest northern location found in the *Odyssey* is the large whirlpool called *Charybdis*, identifiable with the famous Maelstrom off the Lofoten Islands. The significance of this is that the *Odyssey* is the earliest written witness into the North Atlantic setting.

1.

INTRODUCTION: THE TIMELESS DEBATE ABOUT THE *ODYSSEY'S* PROPORTED LOCATION

INTRODUCTION: GREEKS IN NORTHERN EUROPE AROUND 500BC?

The Greek epic poem the *Odyssey*, which deals with the adventures of Odysseus or Ulysses, one of the heroes of the Trojan war, has since ancient times been assumed by most of the public to have also been written by "Homer" as a sequel to his *Iliad*. But this assumption has been questioned by scholars from time to time beginning in ancient times. This article intends to highlight some of the debate, and add new information I have discovered, that helps confirm that the *Odyssey* was written by someone who spent most of his time in the north, in Scandinavia, and who simply transposed northern locations to the world of the *Iliad*, in order to satisfy a Greek public already celebrating the *Iliad*.

Since the *Iliad*, they say was written around 800BC, the *Odyssey* may have been written around 500BC about the same time that Greeks were aware of tin, amber, and other northern products that came – as Herodotus 440BC said 'from the ends of the earth'. There

is evidence that among the traders that visited British Isles there were the Phoenicians. And it follows that their rivals, Greek traders of the Mediterranean, were too.

In the Mediterranean before the rise of the Romans, Greek traders dominated the north side of the Mediterranean, while Phoenicians dominated the south side, the Iberian Peninsula (today's Spain and Portugal), and down the African coast. To avoid the Phoenicians at Carthage, the Greeks accessed the north via the Rhone and Rhine waterways, it appears establishing some colonies of their own people up there for better access to northern riches.

Since the Greeks established a major market at *Massilia* (today Marseilles) at the mouth of the Rhone, they would obviously have been receiving traders of northern origins who served the Brittany *Veneti*, coming south on the Rhone, after first travelling south on the Loire or Rhine. But some of them would venture north up the Rhone themselves, to establish their own people up there, to exploit the situation, much like how in recent North America it wasn't enough for the French or English to wait for the natives to bring furs east to Montreal or Orange/Albany, but entrepreneurial fur traders began to head out to the natives themselves, carrying goods to trade.

Thus it isn't difficult to imagine that around the time of Pytheas – a Greek merchant of *Massilia* – there was enough Greek awareness of the north to inspire Pytheas to take his journey north. Although his writing was lost, and we know of only parts of it from ancient Roman historians having seen it and referring to it, we can tell that around his time (320BC) there was considerable knowledge in the Greek world about the north. Even before Pytheas, the Greek historian Herodotus wrote about the 'tin islands' (*Cassiterides*), about the *Eridanus* by which amber came south, and about pairs of 'Hyperborean maidens' who made annual journeys to the temples of Apollo and Diana and Eilythia at Delos in the Aegean even before Herodotus' time (Meaning before the 5th century BC)

Thus we can believe that there were Greek traders here and there in the north, independent entrepreneurs who set up their own little bases of operation.

Such Greek colonies would not have cut themselves off from their Greek origins since they were engaged in sending northern wares south. They would have imported Greek cultural objects to their homes and welcomed Greek minstrels who were able to sing the songs of the *Iliad*. Such a Greek minstrel brought into the north would then have heard northern tales, and included them in his repertoire. It is generally acknowledged for example that the tale of the Trojan Horse, which is not found in the *Iliad*, but is recounted in the *Odyssey*, was such a borrowing as it occurs in a legend in the Baltic.

There has been speculation that Odysseus' travels in fact string together northern seafarer legends some of which can be connected with the Norwegian coast.

Let us investigate some of the debate and examples of evidence.

ULYSSES/ODYSSEUS VISITS THE NORTH?

To refresh our memory, ancient Greeks celebrated two epic poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The *Iliad* describes "the Trojan War" between Greek tribes and the Trojan tribes. The *Odyssey* purported to describe the adventures of one of the Greek heroes in the *Iliad*, Odysseus or Ulysses, on his way back to his home at "Ithaca".

First something about the names. "*Odysseus*" is the name in Greek – but has some variants in the form of *Olysseus*, *Oulixeus*, *Oulixes*. On the other hand *Ulysses* is the name

as used in Latin, and has another form too, *Ulixes*. In the following text, I will use the name *Odysseus* since it is the form used in the original poem in Greek, but it remains curious why Latin used *Ulysses*. There is no similarity between “Odysseus” and “Ulysses”. Do they actually originate from different heroes? Was “Ulysses” close to the name of the original northern hero? Was “Odysseus” substituted in the version that was adapted to the Greek world and to the *Iliad* tale? We note that the Romans also had different names for their deities – Jupiter instead of Zeus, Diana instead of Artemis, Mars instead of Ares, Venus instead of Aphrodite, etc. It is possible the Roman names came from Etruscan, meaning they were non-Indo-European names that may have come from the north. Herodotus wrote that the Greek names for the deities were adapted from Egyptian names, and that the original deities had no names. “No names” could mean that the original deities were simply personifications of nature. That means the minstrel who wrote the *Odyssey* transformed northern deities in the northern legends (mostly nature spirits), to Greek equivalents familiar to the Greek world..

Minstrels or poets had as their main purpose to entertain their audiences, and therefore they were not particularly concerned about telling the truth. This was always understood. Herodotus like other ancient historians mentioned Homer’s works with a clear understanding that he was a poet that used and adapted existing legends to create an entertaining epic. (It is only the dumber people of the world then and now who have approached the works as if they are historical records.) The songs of minstrels down through time, are more like modern historical fiction and movies. Ancient epics, like modern historical movies, used real geography, peoples, and established historical knowledge in order to create a sense of realism in a tale that is invented or distorted to be entertaining. Thus within historical drama, whether then or now, there will be a core truth that serves as a backdrop or context for the story placed on top.

Ever since ancient times, scholars have found geographic peculiarities in the *Odyssey* being claimed to occur in the Aegean, that have over time caused some to propose at least that the *Odyssey* was not written by the same person who wrote the *Iliad*.

The *Iliad* is believed to have been written around 800BC. The *Odyssey* would have been written later. Since Herodotus mentioned the *Odyssey* in his writing of the 5th century BC, if the *Odyssey* was written by another author as a sequel to a popular epic poem, it would have to have been written before Herodotus’ time.

The idea that the *Odyssey* occurred in the north was mentioned nearly 2000 years ago by Roman historian Tacitus, who wrote in his *Germania* of 98AD the following:

.. Besides there are some of opinion, that Ulysses, whilst he wandered about in his long and fabulous voyages, was carried into this ocean and entered Germania, and that by him Asciburgium¹ was founded and named, a city at this day standing and inhabited upon the bank of the Rhine: nay, that in the same place was formerly found an altar dedicated to Ulysses, with the name of his father Laertes added to his own...

Tacitus, *Germania*, Ch 3

Let us look at this more closely. Notably Tacitus suggests that Greeks were once in the north, at least at *Asciburgium* which was close to the mouth of the Rhine, and that a real *Ulysses* (*Odysseus*) was connected with it. The quote says that *Ulysses* founded *Asciburgium*. Since ancient minstrels often celebrated leaders, it is possible that much of

the *Odyssey* could have been inspired by actual songs at *Asciburgium* in which events and people were exaggerated for entertainment purposes.

If *Ulysses* indeed did found *Asciburgium*, then he and his people were not Greek.

In his geography of *Germania*, a short time after Tacitus, Ptolemy gives several town names with the ASCA- stem. *Asciburgium* is located near the Rhine, and up the Wesser River there is *Ascalingium*. Far to the east at the Vistula he gives a town named *Ascaucalis*.

The stem ASKA is Finnic (and we can find some more ASKA names in the east, such as *Askala* – place of ‘ASKA’ or ‘business’). It probably originates from ASI ‘thing, object’, and that ASKA literally means ‘pertaining to things, objects’. This is clearest in Finnish. It therefore names a marketplace, a businessplace where things were handled, traded back and forth. (Note that the word could be associated with magicians and sorcerers who were also handlers of objects. It makes us think of the snake oil salesmen of recent times. The peddler, the merchant, at the marketplace was always part magician.) Beginning with the Finnic word ASKA, the endings on the above three town names reflects the peoples who came to dominate the town.

Of the three ASKA names, the name close to the Rhine, *Asciburgium* has an ending BURG which was probably indicative of that market dealing with the Germanic language, as we would expect in that location on the Rhine. As for the other two ASKA names, the town south of the Jutland Peninsula has the LA- ending of Finnic but also the –ING ending which is common in Swedish today. It would have originated as purely Finnic *Askala* ‘place of business’ and received the additional Suebic ending –ing. The last of these three, *Ascaucalis*, located close to the Vistula. close to the Finnic east Baltic coast and the market of the *Aestii*. has a CALIS ending which reflects the Finnic word for ‘town’ which is *küla*, *kyla* *Askakyla* is entirely Finnic.

I suggest that since the Finnic northern world was dominated by boat use (ever since the dugouts of the “maglemose” culture) traders along rivers and coasts were Finnic and they were the ones to establish the markets for the surrounding sedentary farming settlements (Germanic ‘burgs’). It can also be argued that the word for southern Sweden, Scandia, developed from an original ASCA-NDI of an original western Finnic now vanished. If something in the north was associated with trade, chances are high that the name for it was originally established by the Finnic traders of the Bronze Age.

But Tacitus only mentioned *Asciburgium* but the above information suggests it began as *Aska-kyla*, and then *kyla* was replaced by *burg* as a result of dealing with Germanic speakers. It follows that perhaps if Ulysses founded the place, he was a Finnic trader, a seafarer who travelled far and wide in the rounds of long distance traders.

We can even find a meaning for the word *Ulysses* in Finnic. In Finnic, the prefix YLI, ÜLI means ‘above’. If we regarded the ending –SES as a case ending, we could interpret YLISES as ‘(person) in the above, on high; chief, leader’). If this is correct then the original *Ulysses* was simply the chief, the lord, of *Askala-kyla* or *Asciburgium*. Being important, he was worthy of legends about him, and so northern minstrels liked to create entertainment featuring him. Perhaps a visiting Greek minstrels associated with northern minstrels singing in Finnic, and learned the tales about the great leader.

International trade centers in the ancient world were open to anyone, and any trading people who came there regularly could establish a colony nearby where their people could stay. I expect *Asciburgium* could have been one. Even if the Greek visitors were few, they

could find free land and establish themselves in a mini-colony. Archeologists have (particularly in the Mediterranean) been able to establish the identities of traders frequenting an international trade center from their cultural and religious objects at their colonies. Thus any colonies of Greek traders would furnish their quarters with Greek cultural objects, and entertain themselves with Greek song – notably the *Iliad*. And that means they would welcome getting a Greek minstrel who knew the *Iliad*.

But, as I say, once a Greek minstrel was there, he would hear native minstrels singing about this heroic person who founded *Asciburgium*, and they would translate the songs to Greek. Then years later, returning to the Aegean, this one minstrel would adapt the songs to the Aegean world, and attach it to the popular story in the *Iliad*. Is it possible that this minstrel decided to identify the northern Ulysses with the Odysseus of the *Iliad*, even though the names are so different, purely because “Odysseus” was still closest to “Ulysses” (both end in *ysses*)

Tacitus wrote some more about evidence of Greeks having been in the north. He mentions Hercules having been in the north, and that there were monuments with Greek characters:

They have a tradition that Hercules also had been in their country, and him above all other heroes they extol in their songs when they advance to battle. upon the confines of Germania and Rhaetia are still extant certain monuments and tombs inscribed with Greek characters. Traditions these which I mean not either to confirm with arguments of my own or to refute. Let every one believe or deny the same according to his own bent.

Tacitus, *Germania*, Ch 3

All the above information taken together makes it believable –not that a Greek hero travelled north, but that a Greek minstrel ‘borrowed’ northern legends about an ‘Overman’ named Ulysses, who experienced entertaining adventures.

Where did our minstrel who later developed the *Odyssey* stay when in the north. It could obviously have been a Greek household in *Asciburgium*. But not necessarily. Greek traders could have followed the traders who came there from the sea, to other trade centers in the north and established themselves in some other good location.. Today’s Copenhagen for example is probably on the site of an ancient major trade center. Ships crossing from the Baltic to the North Sea and vice versa would have to pass through the channel there.

Another northern trade center would have been the original *Londinium* which was located a short ways up the Thames – which Ptolemy called *Tamesa*. I believe *Tamesa* is actually mentioned in the *Odyssey* in the following passage: *And now am I come to shore, as thou seest, with ship and crew, sailing over the wine-dark sea, unto men of strange speech, even to Temesa, in quest of copper, and my cargo is shining iron.*

Regardless of the actual location where the minstrel stayed, he would have been hired as an entertainer for the household of a wealthy Greek merchant. While I proposed in my *LYCIA AS THE LOCATION OF MOST OF THE ACTIONS OF THE “TROJAN WAR” OF THE ILIAD BY “HOMER”* that the minstrel who created the *Iliad* was probably a soldier-minstrel whose job was to entertain troops during down time, since his descriptions of the war are so vivid, in the case of the *Odyssey*, the minstrel lacks any warrior spirit, and I think he hung around the household and entertained guests with verses from the *Iliad*, or his own inventions.

Over time, this minstrel adapted his verse to the *Iliad* theme and to the Greek world at

the Aegean and he did it so well, the Greek public came to think of it as a sequel written by the same author that wrote the popular *Iliad*.

What kinds of stories could be found in the northern legends? They would have been exciting and entertaining. We might wonder about epic poetry traditions in the Finnic world. The tradition is epitomized by the Finnish folk poetry epic *Kalevala*. The *Kalevala* was compiled from rural epic storytelling verse being still sung in the 19th century in hinterlands of Finland. Being created by ordinary people, it is easy to accept that in ancient times, when the Finnic language was still found in southern Scandinavia (That would be before the Germanic – Gothic – military expansions into the Jutland Peninsula and southern Sweden), then such epic song would have been quite common, and some of it would extol the greatness of a man named Ulysses, associated with *Asciburgium* (according to Tacitus)

THE ILIAD AND THE ODYSSEY BY DIFFERENT AUTHORS

There is already some evidence in the extensive descriptions of *Odysseus*' family life on "Ithaca" that suggest the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* had different authors. The *Iliad* being filled with the violence of war, its author would have found the lengthy descriptions of family life wimpish. The author of the *Odyssey* was obviously an artistic person, a lover of the arts, who was happy to exploit his musical and poetic ability to have a decent life in Greek households and observing the family dramas going on.

In the *Iliad*, we learn all about how war was waged in those times, including scenes of spears slicing into bodies, splitting heads apart, disemboweling, amputating, etc. Furthermore, in the Catalogue of Ships in the *Iliad*, the detailed information about the participants, their leaders, their backgrounds seems genuine, and not made up. The author obviously was part of the Achaeans attacking Troy. This is proven by the fact that there is much less information about the allies of Troy? The *Iliad* "Homer" was clearly a soldier who had eventually achieved a high rank so as to become knowledgeable about all the Greek peoples in the Greek mainland and peninsula. He had himself witnessed war, and could write about combat in gruesome detail.

While the overall tale of the *Iliad* was fiction – an exaggerated idealized war describing the Greek vs non-Greek tension and conflict in Aegean history in general – the reality is that Homer could not make up this amount of detail about war without having experienced it himself. The author of such a vivid account, must describe a real war somewhere, a real event with boats landing on a beach, a real alluvial plain, a real river, a real fortress, mostly drawing from his own real experience.

But we should not forget that the *Iliad* was developed to entertain an audience. We must not seek the complete truth in the overall tale in the *Iliad*, and instead try to identify the truths in the content that the author used. Where was this beach? Where was the citadel? Where was the alluvial plain? Where was the river? The evidence seems to point to the core of the war scenes having occurred in Lycia.² This is the subject of my other paper - *LYCIA AS THE LOCATION OF MOST OF THE ACTIONS OF THE "TROJAN WAR" OF THE ILIAD BY "HOMER"*

Similarly we can determine the nature of the author of the *Odyssey* from what parts of it present realistic detail. And that detail is in his depictions of the household and its drama at "Ithaca". Events among the Phaeacians also ring true. And that detail, including detail in gatherings in which a minstrel performs, seems to suggest the author of the *Odyssey* was an

artistic roving minstrel who travelled the north and paid his way by offering performances to wealthy households. Who in the north would not appreciate the entertainment provided by minstrels showing up at their doorstep! Accordingly we can tell that the author of the *Odyssey* must have been a minstrel who was hired to serve in a Greek household in the north and perhaps had some personal experiences outside of the household, coming or going.

Epic verse is one of the oldest forms of entertainment as well as for preserving a tribe's sense of its past. The preservation of historical tales in this form was so important that the art of singing the tales was passed down from generation to generation. Among the Finno-Ugric Hanti peoples of the Ob River even today, long chanted epic verse has been passed down for many generations and one can only imagine how old the tales might be. Closer to continental Europe, there is the Finnish epic folk poetry collected in the 19th century from the remote parts of Finland. With several of the long epic poems tied together, with some bridging poetry they were compiled into what is known as *Kalevala*. It became very popular to Finns, and was compared to Greek epic poems like the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Clearly the skill of creating long storytelling epics dates to ancient times in all cultures, but in order to do it easily, the language has to be very syllabic so that it is easy to create lines and stay within the same meter. The clean syllabic language in Finnish made it easy to do so. In fact the manner of singing it, with a pause between each line as listeners repeated it, was enough time for the singer to formulate the next line. He could steer the tale in whatever way he wanted, departing from the tale he or she had learned..

In this light, and considering that the Finnic languages once found as far west as the extent of the archeological "Maglemose" culture, we refer to Tacitus mention of ballads in *Germania*.

In their old ballads (which amongst them are the only sort of registers of history) they celebrate Tuisto, a God sprung from the earth, and Mannus his son, as the fathers and founders of the nation. To Mannus they assign three sons, after whose names so many people are called; the Ingaevones, dwelling next the ocean; the Herminones, in the middle country; and all the rest, Istaevones. Some, borrowing a warrant from the darkness of antiquity, maintain that the God had more sons, that thence came more denominations of people, the Marsi, Gambri, Suebis, and Vandali, and that these are the names truly genuine and original..

Tacitus, *Germania*, 2

These ballads, from the obvious Finnic names, were obviously in the Finnic character. Some of the coincidences with Finnic: *Tuisto* resembles Estonian *tuisik* 'storm', *Mannus* could ultimately come from *maan* 'of the land'. *Ingaevones*, *Herminones*, and *Istaevones*, when the Latinization is reversed are identifiable with INGE, HERMIN, and ISTE which simply sound like a high vowel dialect of Finnic (Estonian) *õngav*, *harjamaan*, and *ostav* meaning respectively 'those who angle', 'those who cultivate', and 'those who purchase (merchants)' Other peoples too had their ballads, but with the evolution of languages away from the simply syllabic form, it became more difficult to keep to the meter and to be spontaneous..

It is likely that the tribes in the region of *Germania*, whose largest portion were the *Suebi* tribes, had countless ballads. These were the entertainment in evenings and winter

months. As for subject matter, wars could provide stories to peoples who went to war; but if they were not involved in wars, tales would come from seafarers venturing into unknown places and the wondrous things they discovered there.

It is therefore likely that the author of the *Odyssey* heard northern ballads about seafarer adventures as they ventured into unknown places. While the events at the household at Ithaca and with the Phaeacians may have come from the minstrel's own experience, the tales of Odysseus' adventures with *Circe*, *Charybdis*, etc would have come from such tales. The wild tales would have originally featured many different adventurers, but perhaps at *Asciburgium* a minstrel could make the hero of all the tales be a single person that the audience wished to celebrate in this case, YLISES, the founder of the place. It is worth noting that the *Kalevala* celebrates some ambiguous ancestor called *Kaleva*, and that reflects how ancient peoples liked to celebrate an important ancestor in the past. Estonia, south of Finland, lacked the remote places where the ancient epic poetry could survive, but collectors were able to find some pieces, but also legends told in prose form. In imitation of the *Kalevala*, an epic poem was developed from the collected material called *Kalevipoeg* ('son of Kaleva'). It begins with a legend of how *Kalev(a)* had three sons, one being ancestral to the Finnic peoples of the Estonia-Finland area, another ancestral to the Finnic merchants, the Votes, who travelled the rivers of Russia, and a third who went to Norway to be a soldier (which seems to reflect the historical period during which the Kingdom of the Danes was waging military campaigns into southern Norway and it went on for centuries. The *Kalevipoeg* is interesting in that it was not confined to existing epic verse like the *Kalevala*, but included legends converted into verse, legends that could be a millenium old older. For example there is a voyage to a sparkling island where they visit volcanoes. This appears to be a real expedition that probably went up the Tornio River, crossed to the Lofoten Islands at today's Narvik, and then continued to Iceland.

The minstrel practice of taking many heroes in many tales and attributing all the tales to one hero or ancestor was what 19th century poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow did in his epic poem "Hiawatha". He takes many actual Ojibwa native legends, and placed the hero Hiawatha into all that he could, to make all the tales about this single hero.

The fact is that the epic songs were not just *registers of history* as Tacitus wrote, but also entertainment. It is when entertainment takes over that minstrels become imaginative.

To engage the audience well, there had to be plenty of real places and names about which the audience was aware. And if you were using a hero purportedly from the Trojan war, it was necessary to refer to peoples and places in the Aegean. But if the minstrel of the *Odyssey* did not know the Aegean as intimately as the soldier who wrote the *Iliad*, then he would make mistakes, and these are the mistakes that were already noticed by ancient scholars. Significant discrepancies for example have been pointed out in respect to the "Ithaca" in the *Odyssey*, compared to the real *Ithaca* in the Greek world. The real "Ithaca" is a rugged island, but the one in the *Odyssey* is quite pleasant and pastoral. There are other peculiarities when compared to the real Aegean that even ancient writers have pointed out. The reader can find some of them if interested. By purpose in this paper is to offer NEW observations that place the sources of the *Odyssey* in the north, in this case noting how the information in the *Odyssey* agrees with northern realities, including some obvious Finnic place names.

Let us try to identify some notable actual northern circumstances depicted in the *Odyssey* itself, that I have discovered.

2. EVIDENCE IN THE *ODYSSEY* OF NORTHERN LOCATION

TWO PARTS OF THE ODYSSEY – THE REALITY AND THE TALL TALES

The *Odyssey* can be divided into two parts – the story of *Odysseus* travelling home after the end of the Trojan War which takes him from one fabulous adventure to another, and the goings on in his household at “Ithaca” while he was away in his voyages. The household drama is not particularly interesting, but clearly the author didn’t know anything else.

The other part – *Odysseus*’ travels and adventures - lacks detail and clearly the author has experienced none of it (other than perhaps the account of *Odysseus*’ visit with the *Phaeacians* which has more realistic detail) and each tale seems as if they could have been originated from exaggerated tales by northern sailors.

The *Odyssey* begins with *Odysseus* being stranded on an island called *Ogygia*, and being subjected to the demands of a goddess named *Calypso*. Finally he manages to build a raft and leave the island. He travels east with the prevailing winds and comes to a coast called *Scheria* where he meets a people called *Phaeacians*.

Odysseus then leaves the *Phaeacians* and continues onward and finally arrives back to his home island identified as “*Ithaca*”, employing that name because it is referenced in the *Iliad* as the home of *Odysseus* in the Mediterranean.

Here at *Ithaca* the poet addresses a situation that has developed out of the household drama and the story is brought to a conclusion.

As I said, the descriptions of the household at “Ithaca” is very detailed and realistic, and there is also considerable detail about the *Phaeacians*. These may be the only circumstances the minstrel personally experienced so as to be able to write detailed, realistic descriptions. If the *Phaeacians* were a real people the minstrel encountered, as a minstrel he would be a welcome guest, since a minstrel brought entertainment. If he had managed to stay with these *Phaeacian* people for some time, could it have been from them that he heard some of the tall tales from their voyaging up and down the Norwegian coast.

If there is anyone who was free to wander the world, it was the minstrel/balladeer/ poet. People would welcome him into their homes, wine him and dine him, and be entertained by them. Such a man could live in one place a while, hitch a ride with a ship heading somewhere, and endear himself to another people elsewhere. It was a great way of seeing the world in ancient times. All peoples would have seen a minstrel as being harmless as well as a source of amusement.

OGYGIA “FIVE DAYS SAIL FROM BRITAIN TOWARDS THE WEST” –PLUTARCH (46-120BC)

Let us begin our comments on details in the *Odyssey* with *Odysseus* time on *Ogygia* an island “*far off in the sea*”.

Already in ancient times, Greek scholar Plutarch (46-120BC) in his essay *De facie quae*

in orbe lunae apparet quotes the line from the *Odyssey* “A certain island, *Ogygia*, lies a long way off in the sea...” and commented that *Ogygia*, *Calypso*’s island, was situated “five day’s sail from Britain, towards the west” He continued to say there were other islands that lay further away near “the great continent, which surrounds the ocean.” He also noted that on the external islands the summer sun “disappears for less than an hour per night..” which proves the high latitude.

The combination of the island being a long way out in the sea, evidence of *Odysseus* traveling east, and evidence of a high latitude suggests that *Ogygia* was one of the Faeroe Islands.

What can we make of this name *Ogygia* and if it was located in the Faeroe Islands, which one of the islands was it?

To answer this question we have to realize that the only people who would have lived on such remote islands at this early time must have been from the North Atlantic seagoing peoples of the sort that later were called “Picts” in northern British Isles, or “Finns” in Norway. These were seagoing aboriginal peoples who traveled in skin boats, set up camps on remote islands and fished the waters nearby; and then after a while they moved on to the next area, and continued this in an annual pattern. Archeology has found rock carvings made by such people in the islands off the arctic coast of Norway. They were seagoing people, unafraid of the open sea, and harvested the bounty of sea life found in the North Atlantic Drift that came up to the west of the British Isles, past the Faeoes and ending up in arctic Norway from the Lofotens northward. They would have been called “Seagoing Lapps” just a half century ago. Earlier the “Lapps” were called “Finns”. Today the term “Saami” is used, but only the reindeer “Saami” survive today as a distinct culture of aboriginal origins. The forest Finns/Lapps and seagoing Finns/Lapps of Norway have all assimilated into Norwegian culture now.

Two millenia ago, before the Germanic military expansions into Scandinavia, the entire Scandinavia was a land of only the aboriginal hunter-gatherers – there “Finns”. The language used would have been Finnic in nature – the language of the aboriginal peoples across the original northern Europe, descended from the archeological “Maglemose” culture.

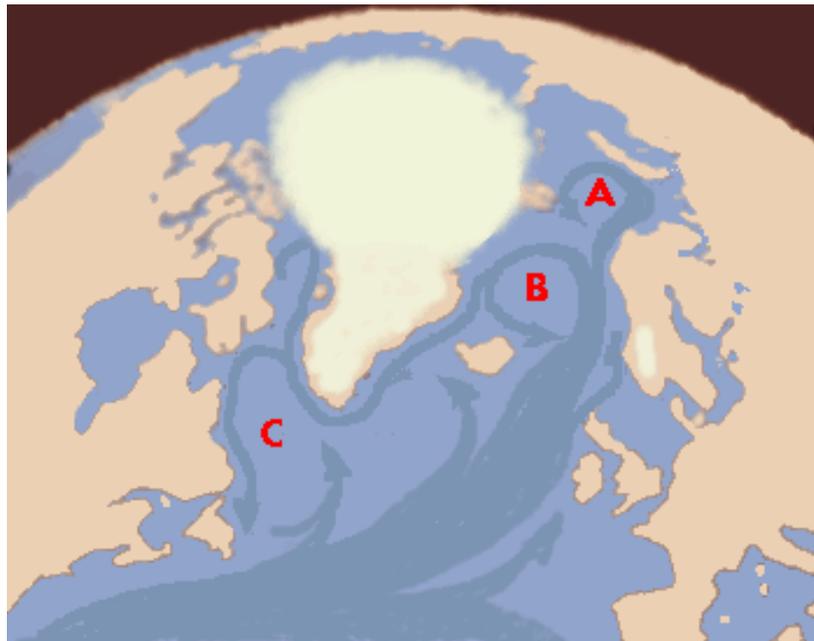
According to archeology, the ocean-going skin boats were in the north Atlantic as early as about 4000BC, and the people being nomadic – moving from one fishing site to another in an annual cycle – there was nothing to prevent them exploring further west, until of course the locations further west became ‘taken’ territories to be fought over.

My own lengthy study of seagoing aboriginals of the north Atlantic, proposed that these oceanic people were divided according to circuits of ocean currents – it was easy to pursue a circuit that went with the current. The following is an illustration I created that shows the North Atlantic currents and probably circuits, each circuit having a particular ‘tribe’ of these seagoing “Finns”.

These north Atlantic aboriginals who would have been found on Atlantic islands would have been cousins of the seagoing skin-boat aboriginals further west in northern North America, today represented by the Inuit. It is a little-studied fact that many basic words in Inuit language – words that tend to be preserved generation after generation – have Finnic parallels. Such parallels serve as proof the North Atlantic seagoing aboriginals were Finnic from earliest times. It is generally believed that the Inuit, archeologically the “Thule” culture came from the west and displaced the original Tunit or “Dorset” culture. But I

believe that the “Thule” originally spread from east to west in a warmer time, and then a colder climate closed the passage. Finally there was a warming again and there was a backward flow through straits opened again. Thus in my opinion the displacement of “Dorset” by “Thule” was more or less the displacement of an older skin boat people by a newer one with some advantageous developments and it would be wrong to imagine that the “Dorset” and “Thule” were from different origins. They both originated from the arctic skin boat traditions which can be traced back to the rock carvings of skin boats harvesting whales at the White Sea. The language of the “Dorset” culture is unrecorded, but it is unlikely to have been different from the surviving Inuit.

Figure 1



NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN CURRENT CIRCUITS AND TRIBES

*This map shows the direction of currents. The people who left rock carvings on the north Norwegian coast and the White Sea would have belonged to the circuit A. The people who travelled the Labrador coast and back to the south end of Greenland, were whale hunters originally of the archeological “Dorset” culture. But the circuit applicable to the Odysseus’ adventure at **Ogygia** would be B. This circuit would have taken them to the east side of Iceland, and across the the Faeroe Islands. Both the current and prevailing winds would have driven any sailor east to the lower coast of Norway (the white area which represents the snow covered mountains).*

One of the remarkable similarities in Inuit words to Finnic languages is the Inuit *aqqunaq* 'storm' which is reminiscent of another of their words - *akka* for 'paternal uncle'. The word compares to the Finnic storm god *Ukko*. In Finnish *ukko* also means 'old man'. But Inuit also has *aggu* 'wind side', which implies the side facing the storm. In Estonian/Finnish *kagu/kaako* means 'south-east'. Prevailing winds travelled from the north-

west to the south-east; thus the word may originate in a relationship to wind.

I will pay most attention to the Estonian/Finnish *kagu/kaako* because we only need an added initial vowel for it to have the pattern we see in *Ogygia*.

Given the meaning of *kagu* as ‘southeast’, *Ogygia* could have been an island in the Faeroe islands that lay to the southeast, and in the shadow of prevailing wind – an ideal place for a camp for the seasonally nomadic seagoing aboriginals.

We have to bear in mind that early peoples did not give complex meanings when they named places. All names were simple, direct, descriptions. Everything had to have an obvious name according to what it was. Only by being an obvious description would the name be preserved at a time before writing, maps, and official names. For example Iceland, with live volcanoes, would be universally recognized in the prevailing language as the land of fire mountains (Estonian *tule-* ‘of fire’). It is only when foreigners came along with their foreign language that they found no meaning. But the foreigner wrote it down and it was remembered that way.

And so, *Ogygia*, distorted of course from endless copying down through the ages, probably simply meant – the ‘southeast island’ or ‘island in the lee of the wind’. What about the initial vowel. Here is a possibility: If in Finnic *ukko* meant ‘storm’ then we could add it as in UKKU-KAGU, etc which might have meant ‘in the (south-east) lee of sea-storms’. With so many K’s, a foreigner would dispose of the ones at the front, and it became UK-KAGU, which is now close to *Ogygia*.

CALYPSO: A CHIEFTESS OF SEAGOING FISHING PEOPLES

At *Ogygia*, Odysseus falls under the care and authority of a woman named *Calypso*. Let us now consider the possible reality behind *Calypso*.

Nomadic aboriginal hunting peoples did not travel in entire tribes, but as extended families. Each extended families would have their own fishing territories and campsites. Then once a year, 4-5 extended families would congregate at a particular place to socialize, exchange news, find mates, etc. In this case *Calypso’s* peoples were from among the seagoing hunters-fishers and this *Ogygia* would have been a campsite of her extended family. They favoured places with caves carved out by the sea.

In practice, the women would have stayed at the campsite and carried out shore activities such as cleaning and drying fish, skinning and preparing seals, preparing food, taking care of children and elderly. In the meantime the men would be out in the adjacent seas harvesting the sea.

With men out in the sea, that meant that the campsite would have been ruled by the chief matriarch of the extended family. That is why *Calypso* is a woman. The minstrel does not give enough detail for us to believe he experienced this himself! But he probably heard a seafaring account by someone who was stranded. This foreigner then, for whom the minstrel substituted his hero, Odysseus, became stranded on this island and might have been the only man around the encampment of women for most of the time. This man was possibly shipwrecked and injured and was tended to by the women there, and then was helped to leave when he was well.

We can only imagine the original events from which the story developed. But considering the exaggeration in tales, *Calypso* was probably not beautiful and the seven years Odysseus stayed, described in the *Odyssey*, may in reality have been only seven

daysd. The exaggeration inherent in telling tales would have added size and drama to the actual experience even before the minstrel adapted it with his own additional ideas.

The author of the *Odyssey* was writing for a Greek audience and to entertain. Thus he portrayed *Calypso* as being beautiful and like a goddess who had *Odysseus* captive (not really! He simply had no vessel for departing and her people needed their own skin boats with fishing!)

We note that *Calypso* lives in a cave. That would be correct. These people tended to find shelter in seaside caves carved out by waves. They were nomadic, staying in one location for a limited time, according to their established pattern of movements over the seas from one harvesting area to another. They had no need for permanent buildings, but once they found good natural places to camp they remembered them and even marked their locations with rock pillars visible from the sea. Remains of such pillars have been found on both the Norwegian coast and the Labrador coast.

In spite of the embellishments for his audiences, here is a line in the *Odyssey* that slips in something more realistic – The goddess *Athene*, appearing as a stranger to *Odysseus* son, *Telemachus*, revealed to him what had happened to his father.

He may be penned within some surf-beaten islet ringed by the wide sea; or some rude tribe of savages may hold him in durance.

This is the only location where there is reference to *savages* (wild people, ‘Finnic’ aboriginals). This tends to confirm my view that we are dealing with aboriginal people and that perhaps it was an accidental slip of the truth by the minstrel who otherwise had romanticized *Calypso*’s world. But here he actually states the truth! *Ogygia is a surf-beaten islet ringed by the wide sea, and he is also dealing with a ‘tribe of savages’.* This is exactly what an island of the Faeroes – one lying in the southeast – would have been. Furthermore the south-east faces the North Atlantic Drift and the rocky shelves out towards the southeast would have been the fishing-grounds to which the men went.

It all makes sense. From Plutarch’s statement, to the Finnic term for south-east, to the characteristics of the seagoing “Finns” seems to make *Ogygia* quite certainly a southeast island in the Faeroe Islands. Not a large one but one that is out in the sea, close to the fishing grounds bathed by the North Atlantic Drift. Further investigation of sea life and the North Atlantic Drift may discover the most ideal location, considering these seagoing peoples had to base themselves as close to their fishing grounds as possible..

Now that the *Odyssey* has admitted by using the term “savages”, that *Calypso* was aboriginal, hence Finnic-speaking, if the word *Ogygia* was based on something like the Inuit *aggu* or Estonian *kagu* then we should find a very plain descriptive meaning for the word *Calypso* as well. What are the possibilities?

If we used Estonian for ideas, we could come up with a name *Kala-püüso* ‘Fish-catcher (woman)’ or ‘Fisher-(woman)’. (*Kala* ‘fish’, and *püü-* is stem for ‘catch’ –*se* ending creates a name from the preceding, so that *Kala- püü - se* is a valid name for someone who catches fish.)

The most common changes when Greek or Latin interprets a Finnic word, is to drop vowels and remove the syllabic character. Germanic and Celtic are worse – rendering the original word practically unidentifiable as we see for example when Celtic interprets *Venedi* as *Gwenyd*. Thus if we drop vowels from KALAPÜÜSE to suit the character of

ancient Greek, we can easily arrive at KALIPSE, KALIPSO

There may be some relevance in the fact that female chiefs figure strongly in the *Odyssey*. History records that the Picts of northern Britain were matrilineal. Matrilineality develops when men are at sea and women manage a settlement and the operation of the settlement, and its facilities would then be ideally passed from mother to daughter – patrilineality being pointless if the men were engaged at sea and not responsible for anything on land like gardens. We see the dominance of women especially in the description of the *Phaeacians*. See later.

Scholars have noted that *Odysseus* learns on *Ogygia* how to build a raft. In reality, I expect the stranded sailor already knows about such rafts and set about building it without any help. *Calypso*'s tribe's boats would have been made of skins, and to create such a boat required the skins of walrus. Rafts were useless to fishing peoples as they were heavy and not manouverable. This raft described is something that was used in the Atlantic from earliest times, during the same time as the skin boats. It was difficult to manoeuvre because it was very heavy, but once momentum was built up, it was fine for straight line long distance travel even in high waves.. Its principle was basically to use logs as flotation, and build a scaffolding above it with a deck, to keep passengers and goods considerably above the waves.

The raft's logs could be made of anything that floats. This does not require *Odysseus* have good stands of wood to build with. The flotation logs could have been shapeless driftwood or wood from his own shipwreck. What counted was the scaffolding above the flotation material. All it needed was small trees – such as will still grow on a windswept island – for creating the wicker deck above the flotation logs.

The scaffolding and platform built on top, when loaded, would submerge the flotation logs. Submerged logs reduced the drag of waves on the flotation logs. The taller the scaffold and the deeper the flotation logs were pushed, the more stable the craft in ocean waves.

The actual description of the craft, as described by *Calypso* is: *..fell yourself tall tree-trunks and carpenter them with metal tools into a great raft, substantial enough to carry an upper deck clear of the water, on which you may journey over the misted sea.*

Later there is some more description.: *To carry his upper deck he set up many ribs, closely kneed and fitted, and he united the heads of these with long rubbing-strakes, for gunwales. He put a mast into his craft, with a yard in proportion: also stern sweep with which to steer her. To defend himself from breaching seas he fenced in the sides of the raft with wicker work, wattling it cunningly all of osiers like a basket and adding a lavish reinforcement of stanchions. Calypso came again with a bolt of cloth for sails, which he stitched strongly. Then he set up stays and sheets and halyards, and at last with levers he worked the raft down into the sacred sea.*

With so much detail such as given here, the author of the *Odyssey* must have seen or experienced such a craft himself. But it is doubtful the author himself visited such an island and had this experience. He combined a seafarer's tale with his own knowledge about ocean-going raft-ships, to move his hero from *Ogygia* to what could only be the Norwegian coast.

SOLYMI: = SELJAMAA, THE ORIGINAL FINNIC NAME FOR NORWAY

And so continuing the tale in the *Odyssey*, *Odysseus* set out on such a raft, leaving behind the small camp of aboriginals inhabiting a cave, saying goodbye to the female chief and heading eastward from the vicinity of the Faeroes towards the coast of Norway.

After a considerable time, *Odysseus* sees a mountainous shore – obviously Norway with its mountain range running up its western side,

“mighty *Poseidon*....saw him [*Odysseus*] from the distant *Solyimi* Mountains..” (*Odyssey*, 5.278-80)

Estonian legends (such as in *Kalevipoeg*) indicate that Norway was known as *Seljamaa*³, which literally means – ‘the land of the backbone’ which regarded the mountain range like a backbone. This was what Norway was called in the Finnic world before it was conquered by Germanic Norse by the tenth century, and became “Norway”.

Thus it is believable, because it is so descriptive, that already several centuries BC, Norway was descriptively known by indigenous Finnic seafarers as ‘the backbone land’. It follows that *Solyimi Mountains* literally meant ‘the mountains of Norway’ and *Solyimi* had a broad meaning, referring to the entire mountainous coast visible from the sea, and it was not local or specific.

Poseidon subjected him to a storm as he approached the coast and he spent the next day’s drifting down the Norwegian coast naked except for a shawl-like affair around his chest that functioned presumably much like a life preserver today. As he swims and drifts, he finds nothing but rocks and sheer cliffs and fails to find a place to land, until the rising tides propel him into the mouth of a river where he manages to come ashore and find a place to sleep. He is then found by the daughter of the king of the *Phaeacians*. She then introduces him to the *Phaeacians*.

THE ADVENTURES OF ODYSSEUS: THE STORY AROUND CHARYBDIS

Before we look more closely at the *Phaeacians*, let us look at the most identifiable geographic feature on the Norwegian coast, which is described in one of the adventures he experienced before ending up at *Ogygia*, which he recounted while with the *Phaeacians*. This geographic feature, the whirlpool called today the Maelstrom, occurs before *Odysseus* reached *Ogygia*, but the descriptions of it in the *Odyssey* further proves that *Odysseus*’ adventures involved travelling down the Norwegian coast, and therefore he would have obtained the information from traders who travelled up and down that coast, collecting the exotic wares available in arctic Norway such as walrus skins, reindeer products, and fish.

It is counterproductive to try to analyze all the tales of *Odysseus*’ adventures unless the evidence is compelling. Otherwise the result is vicious debate. I select this adventure in which *Odysseus* has to get past the Maelstrom, because it is one instance with strong proof that it occurred in the north. Other scholars have already argued this truth in other ways, but I will add to the proof, how the name of the whirlpool, *Charybdis* interprets with Estonian.

Odysseus’ adventures do not have the degree of realism that suggests the minstrel/author experienced them directly. Indeed, the author attributes the stories to his characters: *Nestor*, *Menelaus*, and *Odysseus*. They are even quoted from these characters and not told directly

by the narrator. Perhaps this is both to explain the sometimes fantastic events, and to acknowledge real men from which the author obtained the stories.

In order to draw the truth out of these tales we have to understand how storytellers exaggerate and embellish them in order to impress their audiences. The long distance seafarer who visits distant places, can even invent fantastic creatures and situations for their audiences. It is something we know well – the fisherman with his tall tale about the enormous fish he caught – the fish increases in size with every new telling. But at the core of every tale is some truth that inspired the story. Thus we have to try to imagine what kind of real events occurred to inspire the tall tale.

The most likely aspects of a tale to remain unchanged are geographical names. In ancient times names became established from constant use. For a name to be constantly used, the name had to be descriptive and suitable in the language of its users. Geographical names with good descriptive meanings can last a very very long time as long as the language in which the name was created was still in use. I already pointed out how the descriptive name for Norway, used by Estonians up until relatively recently, can be found in *Solymi*.

It is true that an established geographical name may still be preserved if the language of its users change, however the meaningful description is gone, and that allows it at least to be modified by speakers of other languages to sound more suited to that language, even if there was no meaning any longer.

Obviously *Seljamaa* (SEL-YA- MAH) did not agree with the Greek language, so Greek users modified it to *Solymi*. We can see this in North America, where the names of most major geographical features are of Native origins and then are modified to agree with the modern English-speaking users. But ever since writing and maps, names became standardized and that helped prevent them changing further. In that case a name can endure long after the language in which it was created is gone. .

One of the major geographical features found in the *Odysseus*' adventures in the *Odyssey* is *Charybdis*. This is the name given in the *Odyssey* for a large whirlpool in the sea. It has been widely believed in more recent times, that it named the “Maelstrom” occurring off the coast of the Lofoten islands, Norway. No such whirlpool has ever been found in the Mediterranean but there has always been one, caused by tidal currents, at the tip of the island of Moskenesøy between the southern point of the island called Lofotodden and the small island of Mosken.

It has been recognized that to avoid the whirlpool and its danger, sailors should keep close to Lofotodden and use a strait called Reidsundet, between Lofotodden and a small oblong islet or rock called Rödöya.

As the tale is told in the *Odyssey*, *Circe* the chieftess in his earlier adventure, advises *Odysseus* exactly this - to sail through the strait so as not to be sucked under the whirlpool beyond the islet. She said “*sail quickly close to Scylla's Rock*”. This rock is identifiable with the rock at the tip, Lofotodden.

Can we detect some meaning in the name *Scylla*?

If we explore Ptolemy's geography of Britain (*Albion*) will find that Ptolemy recorded the name *Uxella* for the seafarer's route that was a doorway to a destination like a port. It could be a wide river able to be navigated by an ocean ship. It resonates with the Finnic word for ‘door, port’ (Today *uks* is used for ‘door’ and adding *-la* for ‘place’ *uksela* means ‘place of the port, door’) This word *Uxella* has survived in the modern name “Scilly

Islands” at the southwest tip of Britain. *Uxella* occurs in Ptolemy more than once, which tends to confirm it is descriptive.

Figure 2



I propose that the word in the *Odyssey* *Scylla*, comes from the same source, an original UKSELA. word. If you say “*Uxella*” quickly it sounds like “*Scylla*”. This is very believable since the meaning of *Scylla* – the location of a passageway to get past the whirlpool – is the same. . Thus *Scylla*’s Rock can be considered to have originated from a Finnic “UKSELA”’s Rock literally meant ‘the rock of the passageway’.

In the *Odyssey*, the whirlpool is called *Charybdis*. If we are correct that the names are of Finnic origins, will *Charybdis* also translate in a meaningful way?

Having been able to derive plain descriptive meanings so far when viewed from a Finnic perspective, we might wonder what Finnic word is suggested by *Charybdis*.

Using Estonian we can see *keera* ‘turn (around), spin’. With the *-v* on the end we have the present gerund *keerav* ‘turning’. To this we can add the word *veed* ‘waters’ giving us *keerav veed* ‘turning waters’. Ancient Finnic often converted a descriptive phrase into a place name by adding *-is*. That gives us *keera(v)-veedis* ‘turning waters’, which is now a very perfect word, even usable today, to name a whirlpool. And *Charybdis* is a predictable

interpretation of the word when Greek or Latin interprets Finnic with a reduction that eliminates its syllabic quality. Hence *keerav* >**charyb** and *veedis*>**bdis** But most compelling is the resulting meaning ‘turning waters’. How could the descriptive meaning be any better!!

Figure 3



photo from internet

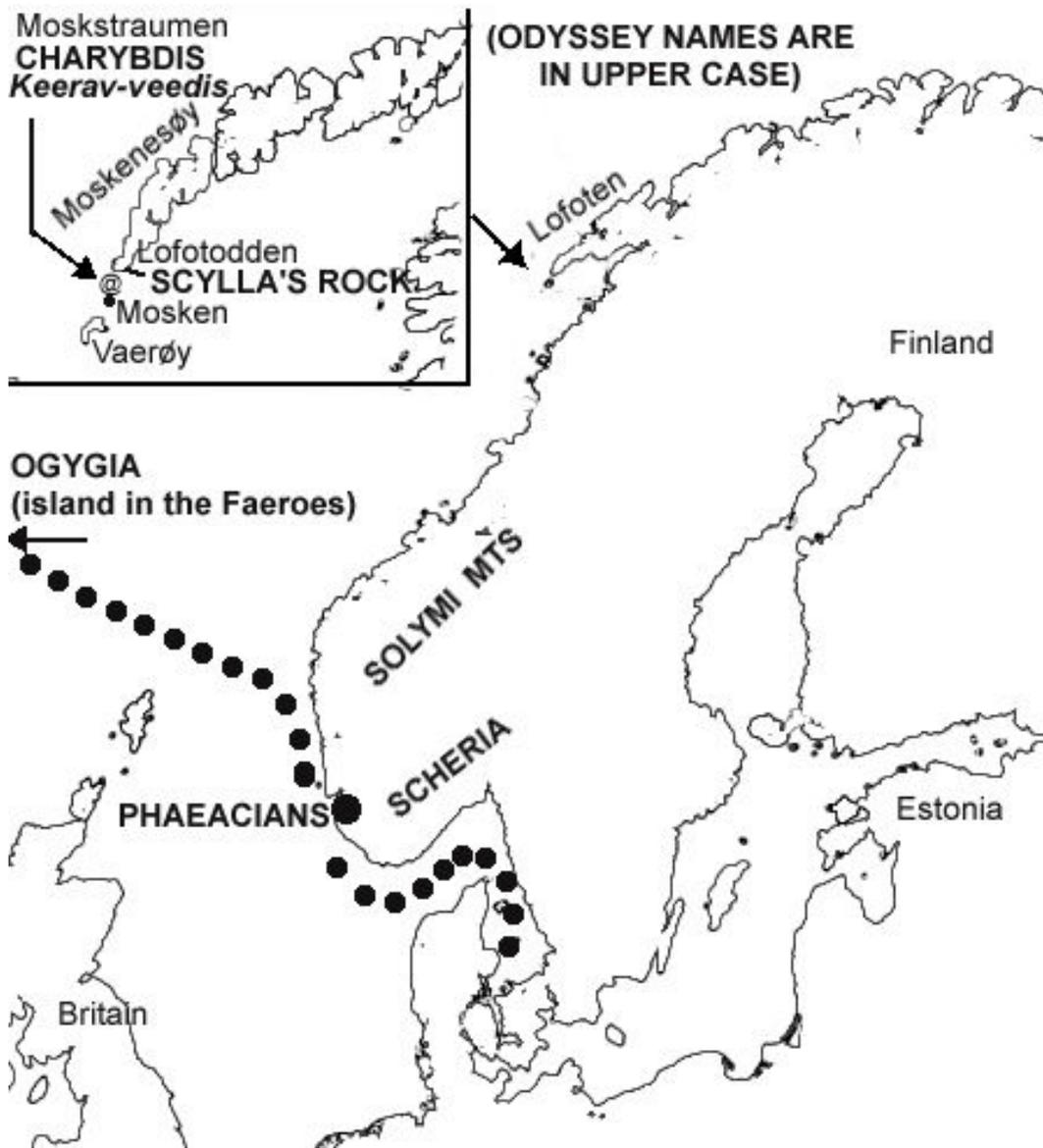
CHARYBDIS - KEERAV –VEEDIS – ‘TURNING WATERS’

CIRCE FROM LEGEND OF GODESS WITH BOARS?

It is possible to go further and find a few more words in the *Odyssey* adventures that interpret in appropriate, descriptive, ways with Finnic. I mentioned how *Calypso* was probably a matriarch, chieftess, of her clan. That may also be the case for *Circe* in another adventure if that word came from something analogous to Estonian *kõrge* ‘high’, which could have been used in the sense of ‘chief’. It would be analogous to the English expression “Your Highness.” It suggests *Circe* was a queen of her people – ‘Her Highness’. Given that tale involves pigs, it is possible the Circe story may actually be an ancient version of the Germanic tale of *Freya and Her Boars*, where *Freya* actually came from *Rhea*, the universal mother goddess of Europe. (Roman historian Tacitus wrote in the first century that the *Aestii* (=ancient Estonians) worshipped *Rhea* (‘Mother of the gods’) through boars, and the custom was apparently also in the Jutland Peninsular too. But in the *Odyssey* story with *Circe*, *Rhea* is not explicitly mentioned and this is many centuries before the arrival of Germanic Scandinavians who converted “*Rhea*” to “*Freya*”.

It is possible to explore other sources for the other tales, and others have made attempts to do so (Do an internet scan); but our purpose in this paper, however, not to do an exhaustive analysis of the tales and names in the *Odyssey* which is not always this easy, since the *Odyssey* also contains Greek names – for example the name *Nausicaa* comes from Greek.

Figure 4



CHARYBDIS AND ODYSSEUS' TRAVEL FROM OGYGIA

The region in the lee of the Jutland Peninsula is a good candidate for the location of a Greek trader clan at which the author of the Odyssey may have stayed, and which he later developed into his "Ithaca"

3. INTERPRETING SOME ASPECTS OF THE *ODYSSEY* IN TERMS OF ANCIENT HISTORY

THE “PHAEACIANS” – THE EARLIEST REFERENCE TO “VIKINGS”??

Poseidon subjected *Odysseus* to a storm as he approached the *Solyimi* (= *Seljamaa*) coast and he spent the next days drifting down the Norwegian coast naked except for a shawl-like affair around his chest that functioned presumably much like a life preserver today. As he swims and drifts, he finds nothing but rocks and sheer cliffs and fails to find a place to land, until the rising tides propel him into the mouth of a river where he manages to come ashore and find a place to sleep. He is then found by *Nausicaa*. She is the daughter of the king of the *Phaeacians*.

The name *Nausicaa* comes obviously from Greek *nausiklytoi* ‘seafarers’⁴; but what is the meaning of “*Phaeacians*”, in Greek written *Phaiekes*? Did the author record an actual name and not invent one from Greek in this case? Are we looking at the earliest manifestation of the word “Vikings”? If we say *Phaeacians* fast, or the original *Phaiekes*, we appear to hear the stem of “Vikings”. Can we arrive at “Vikings” if we add the –ING suffix common in Scandinavia. PHAEAC-INGS? It does sound like “Vikings”.

Although today we associated the word “Viking” with Norse seafarers, the actual origins of the word – other than the Scandinavian ending –ing – has always been a mystery.

If we are correct in saying the original Scandinavian seafarers were Finnic, we can note that in Estonian, *vii* means ‘carry’, and can be nominalized to *viik* ‘thing carried, ware’. (Today with lower vowels as in *vea* it has a meaning more like ‘transport’.) Thus there is a strong possibility that the Greek word *Phaiekes* is a Greek accent distortion of something like VIIGIS, VEAGIS, VIIGES, etc the significant pattern being V+long higher vowels+G,K + higher vowel + S. Thus for example *Phaiekes* = VIIGIS ‘(people) of the shippings,shippers’ or better still VEAGIS. Thus the word *Phaeikes* is not from Greek, but an interpretation of the name of a people who in their own language said VIIGIS or VEAGIS ‘people of the carryings’. In that case the term “Viking” too ultimately came from the Finnic.

But why the “PH”? Note too that Greek did not have the “V” sound. For example, they used “*Eneti*” for *Veneti*, and “*Ouenedi*” for *Venedi*. It follows that the PH was a Greek interpretation of the strong initial V in VIIGIS OR VEAGIS. Indeed the V in these words does sound much like an “F” because it is followed by a strong vowel sound, as we also see in *Phaeikes*.

The fact that *Odysseus* observes a people with numerous boats for their way of life, makes us conclude that they were either traders or fishermen. The fact they display a great amount of variety and wealth in their environment, means they have to be primarily traders. Throughout history trade produces wealth. It is certainly possible that the *Phaeacians* endured into the Roman era, and were then subject to the military expansion of the Goths. At that time, the Danish Goths, after having established a kingdom in the Jutland

Peninsula in the late Roman era, began to attack the wealthy communities in southern Norway. Academics viewed these communities as being independent communities run by “plutocrats”.

Why do academics use the term “plutocrats”? Note that the south coast of Norway was a stepping stone for traders heading across to Britain. The “plutocrats” were therefore colonies of long distant trader peoples. If some of them were descended from the *Phaeacians*, converting them to Danish-Gothic authority and language by the end of the Roman period, these *Phaeacians* would still have retained their sea-trade ways, but were now the “Norse” and identifiable with the Germanic language of the Danish Gothic kingdom. The Germans (Goths) originated from the interior of Germany, with origins in farming, and had no original seagoing heritage. They acquired it all by conquering the Finnic Scandinavians and converting them to Germanic culture.

That is my theory of what became of the peoples the *Odyssey* portrays in the *Phaeacians*. They were conquered by Danish Goths, and from that point on the world has regarded the “Vikings” as Germanic, even though Germanic culture never had seagoing traditions or skills.

What more can we learn about the *Phaeacians* from the *Odyssey*?

The location of *Phaeacia* has been proposed to have been near Stavanger, where the coast begins to be smoother. But it makes sense also from it being the closest location for a crossing to northern Britain - Scottish Rattray Head, the point north of Aberdeen. It was an ideal location for a trading port and settlement of long distance traders travelling from as far as the Baltic to the coast of Britain, and vice versa.

SCHERIA – THE WORLD OF TRADERS?

The land of the *Phaeacians* was, according to the *Odyssey*, called *Scheria*. This land would have referred to the smoother coast and land that follows the south of Norway

Can we find another amazingly suitable meaning for *Scheria* via Finnic?

One of the common place names in the Finnic world was based on ASK- such as *Askala* ‘place of *ask*’ We discussed it above. The word ASK has something to do with the word for ‘thing’ which is in Estonian *asi*. The -K ending is an ending to name something. ASI ‘thing’>ASIK ‘object’ >ASK ‘object’. It suggests the ultimate source of the meaning is the act of being busy with objects, things. In modern Estonian, *ask* means ‘sorcery’; but another word *askelda* means ‘busy oneself, bustle, rustle’. It suggests the ‘sorcery’ meaning comes from the person manipulating things. Further clues come from Finnish. In Finnish (which often retains older meanings and forms) there is the word *askare* which means ‘business, job, chores, work’. Based on the highly developed region in which the *Phaeacians* lived, it is very believable that “*Scheria*” came from something like the Finnish *askare*, and that it meant ‘(region) of business’. It would have referred to the business going on along the south Norwegian coast among the colonies there serving the long distance seatriade across the northern seas. We note that in Viking times there was a large market on the south Norwegian coast which was probably always there going back a millenium.

As usually happens – Greek or Roman interpretations of Finnic words generally reduce the syllabic nature of Finnic by dropping vowels. If we drop the initial ‘A’ we get SKARE, reducing a three syllable word to two! The dropping of an initial vowel was common and

we saw it also above with *Scylla*. The force behind dropping vowels was to reduce the number of syllables. Three syllables became two if it could be done. In the case of *Ogygia*, I proposed that it was originally UKKU-KAGU. If it had been originally UKAGU well then it would have lost the initial U.

Thus the word Scheria looks strongly like in the original form it was ASKARE and then it was adapted to Greek.

Another word in history that relates to ASKA would be *Scala*. This looks like it originated from ASKA-LA ‘place of business’. Once again we simply drop the initial vowel to arrive at SKALA.

Or *Scandia* (southern Sweden) could have originated from ASKA-ND-I this time using –ND as the namer. It speaks of the same thing – being busy. In all cases the revision is by a language that finds the initial A unnecessary.

But neither Scala or Scandia occurs in the *Odyssey* so this is tangential information.

Phaeacia described the world of traders, while *Scheria* referred to the settled, developed, business area of that coast in general – obviously referring to other “plutocratic” trader tribes who had set up their colonies. All being long distance traders, they could do business with each other midway between the origins and destinations of their trade routes.

There is plenty of evidence in the *Odyssey* that the *Phaiekes* were seafarers.

Nausicaa describes her land to *Odysseus* “...A good haven lies on either hand and the fairway between them is narrow, for it is lined by the swelling hulls of ships berthed or drawn up high and dry in spaces allotted each shipowner for his vessels... Hereabout they manufacture tackle for the black ships, cables and canvas: also they shave down the blades of oars. For know that amongst us, Phaeacians the bow and the quiver get no honour. All delight is in masts and ships’ oars and trim vessels in whics to cross the foaming sea.”

There are plenty further references to the extent to which these people, notably the male portion of them, are seafarers. In book seven we read how their life is divided between the genders: *For just as the seamen of Phaeacia are the skillfullest of human kind in driving a swift ship through the water, so are their women marvelous artists in weaving....*

So maybe that is where *Calypso* obtained the bolt of cloth for *Odysseus*’ sail – from the *Phaeacian* ‘Viking’ traders?

Again and again, the unique nature of the *Phaeacians* as seafarers is repeated.

In Chapter 8 the king *Alcinous* makes a speech that includes this observation that *Odysseus* was built for combat and describes how the *Phaeacians* are not: *..for my part I confess that we are not polished fighters with our fists, nor wrestlers: but we can run swiftly on our feet and are experts on shipboard: we love eating and harp-playing and dancing and changes of clothes and hot baths and our beds.*

In spite of such a focus on ships there is little evidence of fishing activity. There is a great deal of wealth apparent everywhere in the *Phaeacian* settlement. We note the description of King *Alcinous* renowned dwelling. (*Alcinous* and other people names are not worth trying to interpret since we will not be able to judge the results if there is no obvious description.. Moreover the author could have invented a Greek name as he obviously did for *Nausicaa*. Unlike place names, proper names of people could be fanciful)

There is in *Odyssey* something about attitudes towards the merchantmen, the peddlars of the world. *Euryalus* believing *Odysseus* is a merchant, makes comments that reveal how some people disliked peddlars. *Truly, stranger, I do not reckon you a man good at games,*

like the generality of real men: but rather a master of peddling sailors, one who traffics up and down in a heavy merchantman [heavy ship designed to hold wares] mindful always of cargo and husbanding freights, with a sharp eye on gain.’ *Odysseus* obviously is not that, nor the minstrel author, but is assumed to be because he was reluctant to show any skills. The author of the *Odyssey* was probably reflecting Greek valuing of strength and power, and belittling the plain merchant. Greeks and Indo-European cultures in general – as we see in the *Iliad* – worshipped the warrior because the highest purpose of men in those cultures was to conquer other men and rob the defeated of their wealth and land. The *Phaeacians* are again and again pictured as being very different from this in their way of life. The author of the *Odyssey*, being a minstrel, does not display the disdain, since as a minstrel, he himself is far from the ideal of being a warrior.

In my view, it makes no sense that the sentiment that looks on merchants, traders, with derision was really spoken by a *Phaeacian* in this way, because, unless the *Phaeacians* were all fishermen, there is no other way of life they could have been followed, to obtain that amount of wealth. Thus *Euryalus* was probably a man invented by the author for raising a popular criticism of merchants. A criticism we can still level today, where a businessman is entirely obsessed with doing deals and making money and bypasses the finer things in life. But clearly the *Phaeacians* were merchant-people. But perhaps being very successful they did not need to be obsessed with making their sales. Or perhaps the women and their different activities, supplied the balance.

There are further indications in the *Odyssey* of how *Phaeacians* were a completely different kind of people than what Greeks were used to. In Chapter 8, as *Alcinous* entreats *Odysseus* to tell them about himself, he adds: *Understand that the Phaeacians do not carry steersmen or steering oars, like ordinary ships. Their vessels know what men think and purpose. They know the cities and rich lands of every people and swiftly cross the ocean-gulfs, through the thickest veils of rain-cloud or mist. Nor are they troubled by panic or disaster, ever...*

This suggests a light ship manoeverable by oarsman acting in harmony to achieve what is required, perhaps a skin ship or one with a wood skin on frame - light ships perhaps descended from northern Norwegian skin ships, designed not to use sails, hence not needing ballast to keep them erect or a strong keel and rudder to steer. (The more ballast you have the more inertia will develop in the ship and the more difficult it will be to steer without using the water flow against a rudder.)

According to the rock carvings of arctic Norway, the prehistoric skin boats included the head of the animal from which the skin came on the prow. In later historic times the masterfully made Vikings ships of the south Norwegian coast offered finely carved dragonlike heads on the prow, and were intrinsically made on the principle of a skin on a frame, even if the skin was now wood planks. This dragon on the prow proves the ultimate origin in the arctic skin boats with the head of a reindeer or moose on the prow.

FEMALE AUTHORITY IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

For just as the seamen of Phaeacia are the skillfullest of human kind in driving a swift ship through the water, so are their women marvelous artists in weaving....

As we learn more about the *Phaeacians*, it becomes apparent that women are strong in the community. This is easily explained. In farming peoples where men’s activities in

tending to fields and domestic animals were located in the same place as women's activities, male and female roles overlapped. But in societies in which men were elsewhere for much of the time, there was no such overlap. In long distance sea trading people, when men were away for weeks at a time, the women dominated the settlement. This is the reason Romans observed the Picts were matrilineal. Matrilineality meant women owned land property and passed it down to daughters.

Accordingly, it would not be surprising that the chieftess, the Queen *Arete*, was the most important figure in the settlement. She was loved and acknowledged by everyone throughout the settlement. *Nor is she less gifted in qualities of mind. She will resolve the disputes of those for whom she was countenance, even when the affair is the affair of men. If she can be brought to look kindly upon you, then may you entertain real hope of seeing your friends, your lofty house and native land.*

(For that matter, ALL the Finnic peoples Odysseus met were dominated by women. The men, seafarers or traders, were always away at sea, sometimes for weeks at a time. The settlement operations and associated activity like gardens and farm animals, were under the authority of the women. The mermaid myths, it is believe originated from young women sitting on rocks combing their hair waiting for their menfolk to return.)

Accordingly, *Nausicaa*, Arete's daughter, instructed *Odysseus*, to go to her immediately whenever in the presence of both her and king *Alcinous*. The general impression is that the women ran the settlement, and the leading woman, the Queen, was the ultimate authority at the settlement – and *Odysseus* should always bear it in mind.

The men, on the other hand, ran the activity on the sea away from the settlement. Around the settlement they do not do much, as they are having a break before heading out to sea again.

One cannot help thinking that what is being described is the Odyssey's author's own experience in arriving as a stranger, among such people. The more detail is given the more we are being given the author's own experience – albeit shaped and exaggerated here and there for the minstrel's audiences. If he were a minstrel, he would have been welcomed with open arms for the entertainment he could provide. By making the visitor Odysseus, I think it loses something. Why would the king and queen be interested in a nobody. On the other hand a minstrel from a foreign land would have been a great subject of curiosity and source of entertainment.

WAS THE ODYSSEY CREATED BY OLEN?

There may be a clue as to who was this minstrel who knew the northern world well, and yet also the Greek world enough to modify northern tales to suit the Greeks.

In ancient times, the population of Europe was only a tiny fraction of what it is now. If there was a special person of note then chances are that the person would receive attention and would be mentioned in ancient texts.

When Odysseus encounters *Nausicaa* for the first time, his conversation with her includes the following:

Your presence awes me. Yet perhaps once, in Delos, I did see the like – by the altar of Apollo where had sprung up but a slip of a palm tree. For I have been at Delos, in my time,

...

There may be some significance in his saying he had been to *Delos*. It seems the minstrel-author is possibly modeling *Nausicaa* from maidens visiting *Delos* from the northern world, which were known as the “*Hyperborean Maidens*” – young women from people in the north beyond the North Wind – described in some detail by ancient Greek historian Herodotus of the 5th century BC.

According to Herodotus these maidens came annually to *Delos* carrying the first fruits of the harvest to the temple of Athena. Herodotus described it in detail. He finished his description in this way:

In this way, then, these maidens are honored by the inhabitants of Delos. These same Delians relate that two virgins, Arge and Opis, came from the Hyperboreans by way of the aforesaid peoples to Delos earlier than Hyperoche and Laodice; ... For the women collected gifts for them, calling upon their names in the hymn made for them by Olen of Lycia; it was from Delos that the islanders and Ionians learned to sing hymns to Opis and Arge, calling upon their names and collecting gifts (this Olen, after coming from Lycia, also made the other and ancient hymns that are sung at Delos).

[Herodotus, *The Histories*, 4, 33-34]

The poet *Olen*, came from Lycia, which was in southwest Turkey, so maybe *Olen* went north and returned. *Olen*, being of Lycia would also have been well-versed in the story of the *Iliad*, since – as I analyze in my article *LYCIA AS THE LOCATION OF MOST OF THE ACTIONS OF THE “TROJAN WAR” OF THE ILIAD BY “HOMER”* - the description of the war in the *Iliad*, appears to have been based on an actual war that took place in Lycia. *Olen*, must have been an expert on the *Iliad* and therefore in a good position to imitate it, or be inspired by it, in order to develop the *Odyssey*. Was *Olen* a protégé of Homer? Was he inspired as a result to write a sequel to the *Iliad*?

Still, another candidate for writing about the north is a man named *Abaris*, that Herodotus does not describe in detail nor does he mention him being a poet/minstrel. He wrote: [4.36] *As for the tale of Abaris, who is said to have been a Hyperborean, and to have gone with his arrow all round the world without once eating, I shall pass it by in silence.* At least this additional reference demonstrates to us that it was possible for a man to travel around the known world, not with an arrow, but with a musical instrument – music being the universal entertainment – and never having to procure food as food would be given to him by the people being entertained. Maybe *Olen* was inspired to travel by the *Abaris* tale?

Since he makes no mention of *Abaris* being a poet, I tend to think that the author of the *Odyssey* may indeed have been *Olen*. Creating ‘hymns’ to the Hyperborean Maidens *Opis* and *Arge*, meant he was able to develop original song. And having contact with the fame of the Hyperborean Maidens at *Delos*, he would have developed an interest to travel north to see *Hyperborea* (lands beyond the north wind). He could easily have returned north with them. Since Herodotus wrote around 440BC and recorded events that occurred centuries earlier, it would agree with the time period the *Odyssey* was written (after 800BC and before Herodotus who mentioned the *Odyssey* in his writing). And in that context when in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus associates *Nausicaa* with *Delos*, and the altar of *Apollo*. (*Delos* produced the legend of *Apollo* being born of *Leto*, which probably came from the southeast Baltic where Pytheas identified *Abalus* which as *ABALA* referred to the lagoon behind the

sandbars following the coast.

I am speculating about Olen being the author. After all he had to be an accomplished writer of songs in order to be capable of writing the *Odyssey* so much have been well known. Herodotus also shows that the northern world was not too far away for those in the Greek world wishing to visit it. Or even for northerners (like *Abaris*) to come south to explore the Mediterranean world.

4.

WHERE WAS *ODYSSEY'S* "ITHACA"?

THE GREEK MERCHANT HOUSEHOLD DESCRIBED SHOULD BE IN A LOCATION HANDY TO TRADE ROUTES

As I said at the start, beyond the adventures, and the visit with the Phaeacians, the *Odyssey* is mostly about the affairs at Odysseus' household. The details of life of the household seem realistic and sometimes mundane, suggesting the minstrel who wrote the *Odyssey*, was a minstrel in such a household.

But was that household one of the Greek traders who established colonies on the tradeways at the north end of the Rhone-Rhine axis. There exists one researcher. F. Vinci.⁵ who became inspired as well by the history of debate about the *Odyssey* occurring in the north. He used valid evidence from ancient and recent debate (not any additional Finnic evidence such as I present here) of the *Odyssey* being created in the north, but he in my opinion ruined the valid theory by assuming one person wrote both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and proposed the Trojan War occurred in southwest Finland, and that there was a massive Greek migration south and a transposing of Baltic names into the Aegean. His theory becomes increasingly fantastic, and in the end, his theory sounds like someone trying to convince the public the moon is made of green cheese.

But he does – probably at the beginning of his pursuit, before spinning it off on wild imaginings – do some quite good analysis to suggest the actual household portrayed in the *Odyssey* was located in the sheltered islands to the lee of the Jutland Peninsula.. What is significant to me is that this island and other islands at the Jutland Peninsula were handy to the trade route between the Baltic and North Seas. Trading ships have to navigate through the islands, and a major market was found there.

In an email I pointed out to him that it was not necessary to create an elaborate fantasy about a huge migration south. All that was necessary was that the *Iliad* was written by one author and actually took place in the Aegean world, while the *Odyssey* was written by a later author and took place in the north, the latter author simply changing northern names to names familiar to his Greek audiences. I said "It is easier for one man to change names so as to make the north play the role of the Mediterranean, than to have thousands of men migrate south in a fantastic behaviour of which there is not a shred of evidence."

It is easy for scholars to sometimes get an impression that Finnic northerners travelled to the Aegean because in fact archeology has shown there was amber trade to southeast Europe beginning as early as 3000BC (from archeology finding Baltic amber in tombs of Babylon). With amber travelling south for thousands of years, aspects of the north travelled south, and the traders who carried the wares south would have established colonies there.

The peoples ancient historians called *Veneti* or *Eneti* probably began as amber traders. It is not surprising that ancient Greeks identified the *Eneti* at the Adriatic as the source of amber ‘from the ends of the earth’.

Other scholars too have investigated apparent the northern origins of content in the *Odyssey*. Some have investigated surviving northern myths and legends that appear to have similarities with what is presented in the *Odyssey*. The purpose of this paper was not to investigate this entire subject but to add to the discussion by introducing my own discoveries, in this case offering new insights into words in the *Odyssey* from the perspective of Finnic languages.

¹ See discussion of ASK- later in this chapter, suggesting it means ‘business-town’

² I present my theory and analysis in my paper: *LYCIA AS THE LOCATION OF MOST OF THE ACTIONS OF THE “TROJAN WAR” OF THE ILIAD BY “HOMER”*

³ See the Est. compilation of verse and stories *Kalevipoeg*, and the introduction in which one of the sons of Kalev goes to Norway (*Seljamaa*) to be a soldier (obviously dating to the time when the Germanic kingdom of the Danes was trying to conquer the many independent trader tribes along the south Norwegian coasts)

⁴ The name *Nausicaa* appears to be based on the Greek word for ‘seafarers’, which is *nausiklytoi* and therefore here is an instance in which the Greek author makes up a name from Greek instead of expressing an actual northern word. This is the nature of historical fiction – the story and individual characters will be made up, while the background is real in order to situate the drama in a realistic geographical and historical framework.

⁵ This concept of some of the geography described in the *Odyssey* really being in the north, but assigned names in the Aegean, has been pursued by an author, Felice Vinci, in his book *THE BALTIC ORIGINS OF HOMER'S EPIC TALES: THE ILIAD, THE ODYSSEY, AND THE MIGRATION OF MYTH*. While some of his early arguments are very believable, he, in my opinion then gets carried away as he goes, when he proposes a very extreme point of view that the geographical names of the Baltic Sea was transferred to the Aegean as a result of an early migration of Greeks from the Baltic to the Aegean. I was disappointed by this extreme interpretation when the easiest interpretation is the one offered here, that a Greek minstrel visited a northern Greek family, returned to Greece, and he himself introduced Greek parallels to tell the northern tales. .