

## From Scheria to Ithaca

The *Odyssey* makes a clear distinction between an underworld and an upperworld. When Odysseus is put ashore in Ithaca and wakes from his death-like sleep he is once again in the world of human beings, a world that he left ten years before. After he left Troy he and his ships entered an imaginary world marked by death in many forms, including the kingdom of Hades itself. All the encounters that he experiences between Troy and Ithaca are in one way or another variations on this central encounter with the world of the dead. Odysseus's companions all succumb to a literal death during the voyage, and he alone finally returns to the world of living human beings.

The notion of a *nostos* as a "return to life" is deeply imbedded in the *Odyssey*. I have traced its origins to the Indo-European twin myth, which is still fully alive in Greek myth. I do not propose to deal today with this myth's significance for Homeric epic, or for the *Odyssey* in particular. Instead I want to focus on Odysseus's *nostos* as taking place in a wholly imaginary world. For however deep the roots of Greek *nostos* in Indo-European myth, the *Odyssey* stands out in making Odysseus's return an exclusively imaginary voyage. Upon leaving Troy Odysseus's first deadly encounter is with the Thracian Kikones, who as Trojan allies in the *Iliad* are real enough, and he is still in the real world when hit by a storm at sea, the Aegean sea, and carried off by winds at Cape Malea, the southeastern tip of the Peloponnesus. But while these dangerous winds carry other returners off course to Crete or Egypt, they blow Odysseus straight into the world of make-believe, beginning with the Lotus-eaters nine days away by sea.<sup>1</sup> From then until he is back in Ithaca ten years later none of the places he comes to can be located on a map, nor were they intended to be.

The *Odyssey* stands out with its imaginary world insofar as a *nostos* might also be simply an ordinary homecoming in the real world. The *Odyssey* is well aware of what a *nostos* ordinarily was. Telemachus hears of the homecomings of various Greeks from Troy when he visits Nestor in *Odyssey* 3, and none involves imaginary places. Especially important

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. W.J. Woodhouse, *The Composition of Homer's Odyssey* (Oxford: 1930) 134.

is the homcoming of Menelaos, who, like Odysseus, suffered years of delay when he was blown off course by winds at Cape Malea, but in his case, significantly, the winds blew his ships to real places, some to Crete, the rest to Egypt. When Menelaos speaks for himself in *Odyssey* 4, he tells Telemachus how he wandered for seven years gathering treasure, and the places he names are a veritable gazetteer of the southeast Mediterranean: Cyprus, Phoenicia, the Egyptians, the Ethiopians, the Sidonians, Libya, and one obscure name among them, the Eremboi (4.81–85). Libya, mentioned last, is described with evident epic exaggeration—lambs there are born already horned and sheep bear lambs three times a year such that there is never a lack of cheese, meat, or milk for the new born. However exaggerated, this account is still in direct contrast to Odysseus’s Lotus-eaters and their wondrous food in terms of realism: Libya, meaning Africa, is one thing, the land of the Lotus-eaters is quite another. Later in *Odyssey* 4 Menelaos presents Telemachus with a prize possession, a silver and gold mixing bowl given to him by the king of Sidon when he was a guest in his house. Again there is nothing in this that could be called imaginary, except that the bowl’s fashioning, again with epic exaggeration, is attributed to Hephaestus (4.613–619). Where Menelaos’s account verges on an imaginary world like that of Odysseus’s *nostos* is, significantly, when it actually touches on the world of Odysseus’s *nostos*. It requires the old man of the sea, the shape-shifting Proteus, to tell Menelaos of Odysseus’s fate, namely to be held by Calypso on an island in the middle of the sea. Proteus belongs both to the real world of Menelaos’s *nostos* in Egypt and to the imaginary world of Odysseus’s *nostos*. Being protean, he can cross over between the two worlds.

The Phaeacians, who bring Odysseus back from the imaginary world to the real world, have the same boundary crossing ability as the old man of the sea. Scheria, the Phaeacians’ land, is, like other places in Odysseus’s wanderings, unlocatable on a map. The most that can be said is that it seems to lie in the direction of Calypso’s island, Ogygia, but closer to the real world. When Odysseus sails his raft from Calypso’s island he keeps the north star to his left, hence he travels from west to east—from beyond the pillars of Herakles, it may be, if it is relevant to think of a map at all for the location of Calypso’s island. But the point about Calypso’s island, the name of which means

“primeval,” is that it is meant to be in the middle of nowhere—it is at the navel of the sea according to the *Odyssey*, but where would that be? It is not for nothing that Homer’s description of Calypso, the “Enshrouder”, and of her island, Ogygia, closely resembles Hesiod’s description of the goddess Styx and of her abode, where forsworn gods are sent for a term of imprisonment, “enshrouded” by a deep sleep.<sup>2</sup> Of the Phaeacians’ homeland we may say that it lies on the way back from the farthest point in the imaginary world of Odysseus’s travels, Ogygia, but only part way back. They are still in the imaginary world, but they cross the boundary to the real world when they take Odysseus home. The *Odyssey* knows of only one other voyage made by the Phaeacians, and that was to take Rhadamanthys—whose abode was in the Elysian Field according to *Odyssey* 4.563–564—to Euboea to see the hoary Tityos. This too would have been a voyage from an imaginary world—the Elysian Field—to the real world—the island of Euboea. The Phaeacians’ nature, which is close to human but not quite, is in accord with their location, which is imaginary but bordering on the real.

I now wish to probe further the two kinds of *nostos* which the *Odyssey* shows us, that of the hero of the poem, through an imaginary world, and that represented by Menelaos, whose voyage takes him to distant places, but always in the known world. What interests me is the tradition behind the *Odyssey*, and what can be said of that. I take it for granted that the *Odyssey* always concerned the return of Odysseus to his home in Ithaca, and that he very likely always returned alone and in disguise to reclaim his wife and kingdom from pretenders to his rightful place. But in earlier phases of the tradition, did he—here is my question—always travel from Troy to Ithaca by way of lands filled with one-eyed monsters, giants, men turned into pigs, and the like? The key to this question is for me the Phaeacians, the fabulous people whose magic ships are needed to bring Odysseus back from the imaginary world of his travels to the real world of his home and people. The question is whether or not the Phaeacians were always part of the story of Odysseus’s return, for their presence implies an imaginary world. For me the case against this seems

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<sup>2</sup>Hesiod, *Theogony* 775–806. The parallels between Calypso and the death goddess Styx are detailed in Note 3 of my *Myth of Return in Early Greek Epic* (New Haven: 1978) 166–169.

decisive, as I will try to explain, but there is also a case for their role as being highly traditional that must be confronted.

At first blush my case against the Phaeacians as being a deeply traditional element in the *Odyssey* seems to run counter to my own analysis of the *nostos* tradition in terms of Indo-European myth. They fit perfectly the myth of a “return from death” when they carry Odysseus, sunk in a death-like sleep, back home, where he wakes to a renewed life among his very human family and people. The Phaeacian king, Alcinous, whose name means “he who brings back with his might,” perfectly fits the Indo-European twin pattern, which in my view is the basis of the *nostos* myth as a return to life. Alcinous is in fact modeled directly on Nestor, king of Pylos, whose name, similar to Alcinous’s name, means “he who brings back,” and whose origins in Indo-European myth are the subject of my book *Hippota Nestor*.<sup>3</sup> But here is the rub. Nestor himself belongs very much to the epic traditions of Ionia, and of the city of Miletus in particular. As the son of Neleus, the founder of Pylos, Nestor is the epic hero of the kings of Miletus, the Neleids, who traced their origins to Nestor’s father Neleus. The Phaeacians, who take no one home besides Odysseus, are a creation of the *Odyssey*—the *Odyssey* gives them the function of bringing strangers home and it takes it away, and this shows that they belong, wholly and completely, to the *Odyssey* alone. The Phaeacians in the *Odyssey*, besides taking Odysseus home, are most importantly Odysseus’s audience when he tells the story of his voyage through imaginary realms. They thus mirror the Homeric audience itself, which hears Odysseus’s tale at one and the same time with the Phaeacians, the poem’s internal audience. The mirror which the Phaeacians hold up to the Homeric audience serves to identify what this audience was.<sup>4</sup> Miletus must have been the prime mover in the formation of the Ionian dodecapolis—the twelve cities which considered themselves to be the only true Ionians—, for the ideology of the Neleids became the ideology of the entire dodecapolis. The Neleid ideology was that they came originally from Pylos, became kings in Athens next, and from there founded Miletus. These three stages are

<sup>3</sup>*Hippota Nestor*, Hellenic Studies 37, Cambridge, MA and Washington, DC, 2009 (online version <http://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/4101>).

<sup>4</sup>For the full presentation of this argument see *Hippota Nestor*, Parts 2–4; for a condensed version see “New Light on the Homeric Question: the Phaeacians Unmasked” <http://chs.harvard.edu/CHS/article/display/4453>.

represented in the Phaeacian royal family, starting with the king, who is modeled on Nestor, king of Pylos. Athens is represented by the queen, Arete, who has much to do with Athena Polias, the city goddess of Athens.<sup>5</sup> Miletus is represented by the royal prince, Laodamas, who has the same name as the last Neleid king of Miletus. It was this Leodamas, to use the Ionic form of his name, who must have been the driving force in the creation of the dodecapolis, at whose common festival, the Panionia, the Homeric poems would, I believe, have been created. The Phaeacians are said to have had twelve kings, with king Alcinous as the thirteenth, an apparent first among equals. This is a mirror of the dodecapolis, which had twelve cities, but in which one of the twelve stood above the rest. The twelve cities were unified by the idea that their founders, like the founder of Miletus, came from Athens and were part of the same Athenian family.<sup>6</sup> This was the unifying fiction of the dodecapolis, a fiction attributable to Miletus. King Leodamas, to whom I ascribe a foundational role with respect to both the Ionian dodecapolis and the creation of the Homeric poems, belongs to the time of the Lelantine war, in the late eighth and early seventh centuries BC, and this would have been the time when the Homeric poems were created in substantially the form that we know them. The Phaeacians, as the mirror of the Panionian audience that participated in the creation of these poems, must belong to the same era. They cannot, in my view, be older than the final phase in the creation of the Homeric poems.

This is one argument, but there is a counter-argument. On the island of Ithaca, where we are today, there was found, on the island's northwest coast at Polis Bay, a substantial deposit of tripods, or more precisely, fragments of tripods.<sup>7</sup> Since the time of their discovery these tripods, with obvious reason, have been seen in connection with the return of Odysseus to Ithaca in the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus finishes his wonder-filled tale to the Phaeacians, king Alcinous, to honor the tale's teller, calls on the Phaeacian leaders each to give a tripod and a cauldron to the hero about to board their ship for

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<sup>5</sup>This point was elaborated in my lecture for the Center for Odyssean Studies, "Athena among the Phaeacians", April 2015, Athens: <http://cods.upatras.gr/images/lectures/en%20athena%20among%20the%20phaeacians.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>The Codrids.

<sup>7</sup>A single tripod was found in 1873, the rest in 1930–32; see S. Benton, "Excavations in Ithaca III," *Annual of the British School at Athens* 35 (1934–35) 45–73.

home. The Phaeacians load these and an earlier round of gifts aboard the ship, and when they arrive in Ithaca they unload the entire treasure on the shore together with the sleeping Odysseus. When he wakes, fearing the Phaeacians may have cheated him, Odysseus counts his treasure and it is all there. With the help of Athena, who soon appears on the scene, all of Odysseus's Phaeacian treasure is stowed in a cave—the cave of the nymphs, which has been minutely described when the Phaeacian ship first approaches the harbor of Phorkys, as their landing point is called. The deposit of valuable dedications at Polis Bay, an out of the way location in Ithaca, must be connected with the *Odyssey*, but what is the connection? This I cannot answer with certainty, but I like Irad Malkin's idea that Greek proto-colonial explorers—the hardy traders who made their way west before colonies were established there—had Ithaca on their route and made tripod dedications on the shore where they believed Odysseus—the greatest explorer of them all—had once landed with his tripods.<sup>8</sup> This idea fits the date of the tripods, which were deposited at different times from the early ninth century until the late eighth century BC, which would be a very early date for an actual hero cult of Odysseus, but is in accord with the proposed period of proto-colonial exploration. The number of tripods found at Polis Bay has also figured in the discussion of a Homeric connection, but without any consensus.<sup>9</sup> In the *Odyssey* the number of tripods and cauldrons given to Odysseus is not specified, but earlier it was the twelve Phaeacian kings, with Alcinous as the thirteenth, who were called on each to give the stranger a robe, a tunic, and a gift of gold. It is certainly plausible that the same group of leaders was called on for the tripods and cauldrons, but a point is not made of it. To me the number of tripods is a secondary matter. The dedications at Polis Bay were made over a span of at least 150 years, and no

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<sup>8</sup> Irad Malkin, *The Returns of Odysseus* (University of California Press: 1998) 94–119, esp. 98.

<sup>9</sup> The number has been put at thirteen, but this is disputed; see Malkin, *ibid.* 98. Cf. also Heubeck and Hoekstra, *A Commentary on Homer's Odyssey*. Vol. 2. *Books 9–16* (Oxford: 1989) on *Odyssey* 13.217–218; Wace and Stubbings, *A Companion to Homer* (London: 1962) 418–419. Anthony Snodgrass, after inspecting the tripods in the Stavros museum in 2004, formed the opinion that the fifteen tripod-legs on display are from thirteen different tripods (two pairs of matching legs from two tripods, eleven legs from eleven different tripods, for a total of thirteen tripods), and that the tripod found in 1873, which was not preserved, makes a total of fourteen tripods. Snodgrass's views are reported by R. Bittlestone, *Odysseus Unbound: The Search for Homer's Ithaca* (Cambridge: 2005) 278 n. 10.

fixed number of tripods can have been in the minds of those who started the dedicatory practice in the ninth century BC. If the number of tripods was deliberately brought to thirteen in the late eighth century, that is a different matter entirely, and the number reached would have definite implications for the *Odyssey*. But I am not aware that the material evidence would support that argument, or even suggest it.<sup>10</sup>

What matters to me is the mere existence of the tripod dedications at so early a date, the ninth century BC. If these tripods were to honor what Odysseus had once done, does that not mean that from the same early date there were also Phaeacians in Odysseus's tradition? This is a natural assumption, which Malkin, among others, makes,<sup>11</sup> but for me, with my analysis of the Phaeacians as belonging to the last phase of Homeric composition, it poses an obvious problem. For me Phaeacians do not go back to the ninth century, but belong to the late eighth century at the earliest.

If Odysseus's tradition was always that he came home alone, laden with tripods, someone had to bring him, so if not the Phaeacians, who? I come back to the two kinds of *nostos*, that of Odysseus on the one hand, and that of Menelaos on the other. A *nostos* set in the

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<sup>10</sup>It is at least possible that the dedications at Polis Bay were not made piecemeal in the ninth and eighth centuries, despite reliable dating of the tripods to that period, but that later, ca. 700BC, a number of already existing tripods were "repurposed" for dedication as a group. If this was the case we would expect a close coherence between the dedication and the account in the *Odyssey*, as this account would have been the dedication's inspiration. There are two aspects of the account in the *Odyssey* which, in my view, do not favor so close a connection between the *Odyssey* and the archaeological remains. In the *Odyssey* the tripods, and all of Odysseus' treasure, is hidden away in a cave, but no such cave, it is now well established, ever existed at Polis Bay (for the results of the geological investigations of C. Morgan and A. Soteriou regarding this point, see A.J.M. Whitley, *British School at Athens Archaeological Reports* 49 for 2002–2003, pp. 43–44 and 50 for 2003–2004, pp. 38–39. If the *Odyssey* inspired a dedication of tripods, surely a cave would have been chosen for its site. On the other hand, an open-air site, long in existence and well known to the Homeric poets, could easily be reimagined as a cave to fit the purposes of the *Odyssey*. Another problem is the number of tripods, which I think can safely be put at no less than fourteen (see n. 9 above). While the *Odyssey* does not make a point of the number of tripods, the number thirteen does suggest itself, and a dedication that was based on the *Odyssey* might have been expected to reflect that number. On the other hand, if the dedications began early, the number of tripods, for reasons already given, would not enter into consideration as a relevant fact. █

<sup>11</sup>Malkin, *ibid.* 98, 110.

real world, like that of Menelaos, is the rule in Greek epic. A *nostos* made through an imaginary world is the exception. Should we assume that Odysseus's *nostos* was always an exception, or was it rather the case that there were many tales about Odysseus's return, and that our monumental *Odyssey* has replaced them all with a singular tale set in an imaginary world and told by the returner himself as sole witness? Odysseus's lying tales in the second half of the *Odyssey* give an idea of what his earlier traditions may have looked like.<sup>12</sup> These tales are all set in the real world, namely in Crete, Egypt, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Thesprotia. Odysseus tells his first lying tale to Athena when he wakes on the shore of Ithaca with his Phaeacian treasure beside him. To explain his odd situation, alone as he is on the shore with all this treasure, he tells the disguised Athena that he is a refugee from Crete, where he killed a man, and that he won the treasure at Troy. To escape from Crete he paid Phoenician sailors to take him to Pylos or Elis, but they were blown off course and left him here with his treasure when he fell asleep. In key points this tale resembles what Odysseus has just experienced, except that Crete has taken the place of Scheria as his point of departure, and Phoenicians have taken the place of Phaeacians as his transport. In four of his five lying tales Odysseus calls himself a Cretan, a clear indication that Crete must have figured in Odysseus's pre-*Odyssey* traditions.<sup>13</sup> So too, I think, must Phoenician sailors have figured in these traditions.<sup>14</sup> From the tenth century BC, and from one end of the Mediterranean to the other, the Phoenicians were *the* masters of the sea. Furthermore, Ithaca lay on the Phoenicians' shortest route from Crete, a primary transit point in their Mediterranean trade, to Italy and Sicily, where they had early and numerous outposts.<sup>15</sup> In the *Odyssey* the Phoenicians figure not only in

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Woodhouse (n. 1 above) 132–136.

<sup>13</sup>Note that Crete should have been Odysseus's landfall when he was swept away from Cape Malea to the imaginary land of the Lotus-eaters. In *Odyssey* 14.378–389 Eumaeus tells of an Aetolian wanderer who claimed to have seen Odysseus in Crete repairing his ships and set on returning home by summer or autumn. What is represented as the Aetolian's lie in the *Odyssey* may have been a bona fide tradition for the hero's return; see Woodhouse 134–135.

<sup>14</sup>The role of Phoenicians in the tradition behind the *Odyssey* attracted the attention of Victor Bérard, *Les Phéniciens et l'Odyssee*, a two-volume work published in 1902–1903, and W.J. Woodhouse (see n. 12 above). Bérard went so far as to identify Odysseus as a real Phoenician sailor, whose story was told by the Greek poet Homer.

<sup>15</sup>For Crete as a primary transit point for Phoenician Mediterranean trade by the ninth century, see Glenn E. Markoe, *Phoenicians* (U. California Press: 2000) 33, 122, and 172. For the Phoenicians' likely route past Ithaca, see Markoe 174–175; for their presence in

Odysseus’s lying tale to Athena, but also in his lying tale to Eumaeus (14.287–309), and even more prominently in Eumaeus’s own tale of being kidnapped and brought to Ithaca and sold there by Phoenician seamen (15.415–484). The role of Phoenicians in Odysseus’s first lying tale to Athena looks like a commonplace feature. I propose that this lying tale contains the truth of Odysseus’s pre-*Odyssey* tradition, and that when his tripods were sung of in the ninth century BC, they were said to have arrived on a Phoenician ship, just as Odysseus pretends to his disguised protectress.

In Greek the Phoenicians are *Phoinīkes*, a name with the same metrical shape as *Phaiēkes*, “Phaeacians.”<sup>16</sup> I propose that the name *Phaiēkes* was patterned on the name *Phoinīkes* when the *Odyssey* created imaginary seafarers, the Phaeacians, to take the place of real seafarers, the Phoenicians, in the story of Odysseus’s return. Besides being metrically equivalent, the two names, *Phoinīkes* and *Phaiēkes*, have another characteristic in common. The name *Phoinīkes*, although it designates a non-Greek people, is in fact Greek—Canaanites is what the Phoenicians called themselves—and the Greek name has a meaning: the *Phoinīkes* were the “red people,” so called either from their skin color, or perhaps because of their trade in the famous Tyrian red dye.<sup>17</sup> The name *Phaiēkes* too has a meaning: they are the “gray people,” their name being derived from the adjective *phaiós*, “gray.” The “gray people,” whose color seems to match their twilight nature, should, I think, be seen as having replaced the “red people,” the Phoenicians, in providing Odysseus’s transport back to Ithaca.<sup>18</sup> In the *Odyssey* the Phaeacians are represented as

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Sicily before the period of Greek colonization, see Markoe 175–176 on Thucydides 6.2.6.

<sup>16</sup>*Phaiēkes* is the Ionic form of the name; *Phaiākes* is the non-Ionic form, as in Sophocles’ lost play of the name.

<sup>17</sup>Note the parallel formation and meaning of *Aithīkes*, the name of a Thessalian tribe (*Iliad* 2.744, etc.) derived from the adjective *aithos*, “red-brown.”

<sup>18</sup>Note that the adjective *phoinix*, “red,” is derived from the adjective *phoinos*, “blood-red,” which has a single occurrence in Homer (*Iliad* 16.159). The adjective *phaios*, “gray,” does not occur in Homer but is well attested later (Plato, *Timaeus* 68c, calls the color *phaios* a mixture of black and white and says again, *Republic* 585a, that *phaios* is the shade between black and white). The parallelism between the adjectives *phoinos* and *phaios* underscores the parallelism between the names *Phoinīkes* and *Phaiēkes*. If indeed the name *Phaiēkes* (originally *Phaiākes*) is based on the name *Phoinīkes*, as I propose it is, the difference in suffix, *-āk-* vs. *-īk-*, deserves comment, and two points can be made. First, the suffix *-āk-* is productive in Greek, whereas forms in *-īk-* are rare and non-productive (see P. Chantraine, *La formation des noms en grec ancien*, §§313–315, pp.

“famous” seamen—their characteristic epithet is *nausiklutoi*, “famous for ships.” In Eumaeus’ story of youthful abduction, it is the Phoenicians, his abductors, who have this epithet.<sup>19</sup> The Phoenicians were the real “famous” seamen of the late eighth and early seventh centuries BC, as they had been for centuries before.<sup>20</sup>

With the Phaeacians, the “gray people,” we thus seem to have a new version of Odysseus’s tradition, fashioned for a Panionian context. But a new version did not automatically drive out older versions, which once they were in circulation continued to circulate. To establish itself as the true story of Odysseus, the new version, our *Odyssey*, recast existing versions as lies. This leads to a paradox, for in the new version the Phaeacians, who really bring Odysseus home, are imaginary, and the Phoenicians, who are real, bring him home only in a lying tale. This, I think, speaks volumes about the different aims that the Homeric poems set for themselves as compared with what preceded them.<sup>21</sup>

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380–382); thus the formation *Phaiākes*, in itself, causes no surprise as it follows a productive pattern. Secondly, as Charles de Lamberterie has suggested to me, it is possible that a form *\*Phaiīkes*, if it was the original form, would have undergone vowel dissimilation (–iīk– > –iāk–), as has happened in the parallel case of a patronymic like *Asklēpiadēs*, where *\*Asklēpiidēs* (stem *Asklēpi-*, of *Asklēpios*, followed by the patronymic suffix –idēs) underwent dissimilation: –iid– > –iad–. (Note that the suffix –iadēs itself then became productive, as in the patronymic *Laertiadēs*, where the regular suffix –idēs would have resulted in a form, *\*Laertidēs*, not admissible in dactylic hexameter).

19<sup>□</sup>*Odyssey* 15.415: ἔνθα δὲ Φοίνικες ναυσίκλυτοι ἤλυθον ἄνδρες.

Compare 7.38: τὸν δ’ ἄρα Φαίηκες ναυσίκλυτοι οὐκ ἐνόησαν

and 8.191 (= 8.369, 13.166): Φαίηκες δολιχῆρετμοι ναυσίκλυτοι ἄνδρες.

20<sup>□</sup>Phaeacians and Phoenicians also share the generic epithet of commendation *agauoi*, “noble, illustrious,” used four times of the Phaeacians (7.55, 13.71, 13.120, 13.304), once of the Phoenicians (13.272).

21<sup>□</sup>Carol Dougherty, *The Raft of Odysseus* (Oxford: 2001), ch. 5, explores the symbolic relationship between Phaeacians and Phoenicians in the *Odyssey*. In contrast to my approach, which views the relationship between the two diachronically, distinguishing the *Odyssey* from earlier tradition behind the *Odyssey*, Dougherty’s approach is synchronic, taking at face value the relationship between Phaeacians = and Phoenicians = as it presents itself in the poem. The contrast drawn by Dougherty between deceitful Phoenicians and trustworthy Phaeacians seems to me to have value, but it fails to explain the most important occurrence of the Phoenicians in the poem, namely in Odysseus’ lying tale to Athena (cf. Dougherty’s remarks on p. 120 about this context). In this tale, as I

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suggested above, Odysseus presents what had been the traditional story of his return. In the traditional story he pretended to be a Cretan, as he continues to do in our *Odyssey*, but the rest of the story, that Phoenicians brought him and his treasure from Crete, was what really took place in his earlier tradition. The scene with Athena turns that part of the story on its head. The presence of Athena is important in that it divinely sanctions the new version of the story, featuring Phaeacians, while invalidating the old story, featuring Phoenicians.