



**LIBERAL ARTS
AND SCIENCES**

Department of Classics
and Mediterranean Studies

THE ODYSSEY PASSAGE SUMMARIES

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN HOMER-ATHON,
CO-HOSTED BY THE NATIONAL HELLENIC MUSEUM AND UIC
DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS AND MEDITERRANEAN STUDIES.

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



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Institute for the Humanities



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School of Literatures,
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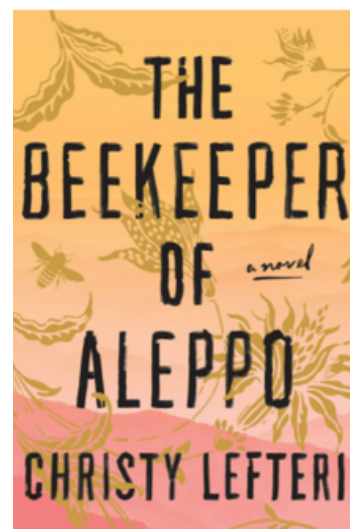
ARTOPOLIS
BAKERY, CAFE & AGORA

UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

UIC Event

The Classics and Mediterranean Studies Department at UIC is co-sponsoring a concert for Chicagoland high school students at Loyola University campus on April 29 at 4:30 PM. Local artist Joe Goodkin will be performing his *The Blues of Achilles*, inspired by Homer's *Iliad*, followed by a talkback and Q&A about the relevance of Classics to today's youth. For more information, please visit: www.facebook.com/uiccamstudies/

National Hellenic Museum Events



April Virtual Book Club

The Beekeeper of Aleppo by Christy Lefteri

Thursday, April 21st at 7:00 PM via Zoom

Free Registration at nhmapr.eventbrite.com



UPCOMING PROGRAMS & EVENTS

National Hellenic Museum Events



Classical and Modern Mies

Thursday, May 19th at 6:00 PM

Join the Mies van der Rohe Society, IIT and The National Hellenic Museum as we explore the blend of classical influences and constructivist form in Mies van der Rohe's architecture, with a special focus on how he folded the two together at the Illinois Institute of Technology Campus which houses the largest collection of his buildings.



May Virtual Book Club

Ariadne by Jennifer Saint

Thursday, May 26th at 7:00 PM via Zoom

Free Registration at nhmmay.eventbrite.com





A HISTORY OF THE ODYSSEY

We are reading Stanley Lombardo's translation of Homer's Odyssey from Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000 edition.

A HISTORY OF THE ODYSSEY

The Odyssey is one of the oldest extant works of literature in the world. It was derived from a much older oral tradition that stretched as far back as 3,000 years ago, the date at which the current text came together remains a source of considerable disagreement among Classicists.

Used as a school text throughout antiquity and the Byzantine Middle Ages, The Odyssey was a widely copied and available book. The first print edition of The Odyssey was printed in 1488 in Milan, Italy by a Greek printer named Antonios Damilas. The text had been prepared by the Greek scholar Demetrios Chalkokondyles. Both Damilas and Chalkokondyles who had fled to Italy after the fall of Constantinople.

The first English translation of The Odyssey was made by George Chapman in 1614. Over four hundred years later, in 2017, Emily Wilson became the first woman to publish a translation of The Odyssey in English. It remains a school text in the United States and Europe, and is still foundational to literature and culture around the world.

THE ODYSSEY

Who Was Homer?

This question has puzzled and excited people since ancient times. In Antiquity, when the vast majority of people believed Homer to be a single, historical person, people would search for clues about his biography. Since the 19th century, however, most have agreed that Homer never existed, and if such a person did exist, he was certainly not the sole author of the poems that now bear his name.

Due to the groundbreaking work of the American Classicist Milman Parry, since the early twentieth century most people have come to believe that The Odyssey belongs to ancient oral tradition passed down by singing bards (rhapsodes). Each recitation was an act of both imitation and creativity. In a real sense, Homer is all Greek people, speaking together with one voice across the centuries. Witnessing the poem read aloud today, in a festive setting, is very close to the way ancient audiences once experienced this timeless work.



What is a *nostos*?

Νόστος (*nostos*) is the Greek word that means, broadly, “a return home.” The word first appears in Greek in *The Odyssey* and here seems to mean specifically “a return home from Troy by sea.” It did not take long though for the word to come to have a much broader meaning and refer to all journeys home, whether or not they result in a safe arrival.

The English word *nostalgia*, first coined in the 17th century means literally “a longing for home.”

Today we celebrate a kind of homecoming here at the National Hellenic Museum, by reciting this ancient tale of homecoming.



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The Odyssey: A Brief Summary of Each Book

The Odyssey is divided into twenty-four books, corresponding to the number of letters in the Greek alphabet. The division was most certainly made at a date after the time of composition, but is generally accepted.





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Book 1: On Olympus, the gods discuss the fallout from the Trojan War. Athena urges Zeus to not to forget about Odysseus, who has been trapped on Calypso's island for seven years, and Zeus promises to free him. Meanwhile, Athena heads to Ithaca. There disguised as Odysseus's friend Mentor, she finds Odysseus's son Telemachus and inspires him to go on a journey in search of his father.

Book 2: Telemachus calls an assembly of Penelope's suitors and tells them how much trouble they are causing him. Antinous, one of the leading suitors, says it is not their fault, but Penelope's trick on the loom that is drawing out the process. Two eagles sent by Zeus attack the crowd of suitors and there is a prophecy that Odysseus is on his way home. Athena, still disguised as Mentor, equips Telemachus with a ship and supplies. He sets sail in search of his father.

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PENELOPE AND THE SUITORS BY JOHN WILLIAM WATERHOUSE, 1912



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Book 3: Telemachus reaches the home of King Nestor in Pylos. Nestor tells him the story of the Greek victory at Troy and describes the scattering of the Greeks on their homeward journey. Hearing how perilous the journey was, Telemachus worries his father is dead. Nestor tells Telemachus the story of Agamemnon's murder. He then suggests Telemachus travel to Sparta to visit Menelaus, who has only recently returned himself.

Book 4: Telemachus travels over land to the palace of Menelaus and Helen. There they grieve together over the absence of Odysseus, and Menelaus tells Telemachus of his own difficult journey home from Troy. Meanwhile, back in Ithaca, the suitors plot to kill Telemachus upon his return, and Penelope, overcome by grief over Odysseus, is comforted in a dream by Athena.

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Book 5: Zeus sends Athena to protect Telemachus in Ithaca and Hermes to free Odysseus from Calypso. Odysseus leaves Calypso's island to sail for home, but is spotted by Poseidon. Poseidon stirs up a storm. Odysseus's raft is torn to pieces and he clings on to the shreds for dear life. Fortunately, he is rescued by a sea goddess, and Athena lays him at the mouth of a gentle river on the island of the Phaeacians to rest.

Book 6: Athena appears in a dream to the Phaeacian princess Nausicaa, encouraging her to visit the river where Odysseus has washed ashore. Nausicaa and her maidens go down to the river and discover Odysseus, whom Nausicaa provides with supplies and directions as to how to find her parents' palace.



CALYPSO AND ODYSSEUS BY SIR WILLIAM RUSSELL FLINT, 1907



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Book 7: Odysseus arrives at the palace of King Alcinous and Queen Arete and asks for help, but hides his true identity. They welcome him lavishly and provide him with a place to sleep for the night.

Book 8: Alcinous holds a feast to welcome their anonymous guest. During the feast the poet sings about the quarrel between Achilles and Odysseus, which moves Odysseus to tears. Alcinous suggests they hold games to amuse their guest. The poet then begins to sing about the adulterous affair between Aphrodite and Ares, then the Trojan war. Odysseus breaks down again, and admits his true identity. At Alcinous's urging, he agrees to tell his story

Book 9: Odysseus tells the Phaencians about his harrowing encounter with the man-eating Cyclops, Polyphemus. He also recounts that following his escape, the Cyclops calls upon his father, Poseidon, to curse Odysseus.



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Book 10: Odysseus continues his story. He tells how he arrived on the island of the immortal sorceress, Circe. Circe initially turns Odysseus's men into pigs, but Odysseus forces her to turn them back. They stay with Circe a year and ask her for help returning home. She tells them that first they must visit the land of the dead and hear the prophecy of Tiresias.

Book 11: Odysseus journeys to the Underworld to consult with Tiresias's ghost. There he also encounters many other ghosts, including Odysseus's mother and many other mythic women. He also speaks to Achilles who regrets having died for honor and sees the ghost of Ajax, who will not speak to him. Having seen the misery of the dead, he returns to his ship.



LE CYCLOPS BY ODILON REDON CA. 1914.



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Book 12: Back on Circe's island, Circe informs Odysseus of the dangers he will encounter. Odysseus and his men depart. They sail past the Sirens. Odysseus, who is tied to the mast of the ship, is the only one who hears their song. Next, they sail between six-headed Scylla and Charybdis, the whirlpool. Scylla eat's six of Odysseus's men. Afterward, they arrive on the island of Helios, the sun god. There Odysseus warns his men not to eat any of the cattle on the island. Of course, they kill and eat the cattle. Thus, after they leave, Zeus wrecks every ship. Odysseus washes up on Calypso's island, the sole survivor.



CIRCE OFFERING THE CUP TO ODYSSEUS,
JOHN WILLIAM WATERHOUSE, 1891

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ULIXES MOSAIC IN THE BARDO NATIONAL MUSEUM, UNKNOWN AUTHOR, 3RD CENTURY



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Book 13: Having ended his tale, Phaeacians convey Odysseus to Ithacha, laying him, asleep, near the cave of the Nymphs. Athena approaches him in the guise of a young man and warns him about the suitors. She disguises Odysseus as a beggar and then goes to get Telemachus from Sparta.

Book 14: Odysseus visits the swineherd Eumaeus. He tells Eumaeus a convoluted lie about his history to test his loyalty.

Book 15: Athena has arrived at the palace of Menelaus. She finds Telemachus and urges him to return to Ithaca. Telemachus meets Theoclymenus, who is exiled for murder but has the gift of prophecy. Theoclymenus joins Telemachus's ship.

Book 16: Odysseus and Telemachus are reunited at Eumaeus's cottage. When news reaches the palace that Telemachus has returned, the suitors are angered that their plan to kill him has been foiled.



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Book 17: Telemachus returns to the palace where he is greeted by his mother. Odysseus, still in the guise of a beggar, is recognized by his dog Argos, but not by Penelope, who tries to invite the supposed beggar inside.

Book 18: Odysseus is taunted by various people who do not recognize him. He warns a kind suitor that there will be blood so that the man can flee. Penelope announces that she will soon marry one of the suitors and receives a large number of gifts from them.

Book 19: Still disguised as a beggar, Odysseus comforts Penelope. He is recognized by his old nurse. Penelope reveals to him her plan to hold the bow contest to determine which of the suitors she will marry.



BONAVENTURA GENELLI, ODYSSEUS SITS BY THE FIRE AS EUMAEUS
DISCOVERS TELEMACHUS AT THE ENTRANCE OF HIS HUT. CIRCA 1829

Book 20: Odysseus rejoins the suitors, still unrecognized. The suitors reconsider their plan to kill Telemachus. A prophet foretells the death of the suitors and then leaves the house. Telemachus and Odysseus bide their time.

Book 21: Penelope retrieves Odysseus's bow and challenges the suitors to string it. Everyone fails to string the bow, except for the mysterious beggar.

Book 22: After Odysseus reveals his identity, he and Telemachus kill nearly all the suitors with the aid of Athena, in the guise of Mentor. Telemachus hangs the house maids who slept with the suitors.



Book 23: Odysseus's old nurse tells Penelope that the old beggar is Odysseus. Penelope is reluctant to believe this. After asking the nurse to bring his bed out of storage, a horrified Odysseus demands to know how the bed could have been moved when he knew that it was literally rooted to the ground. Penelope recognizes her husband and they go to bed together.

Book 24: Hermes leads the spirits of the dead suitors to the Underworld. Odysseus is reunited with his father. A mob angry about the murder of the suitors gathers. Half the crowd agrees Odysseus should be King of Ithaca. Odysseus, his father, his son, and Athena in the guise of Mentor arm and fight those angry at Odysseus. Athena intervenes to prevent a slaughter.



LYING IN BED, ULYSSES TELLS PENELOPE HIS ADVENTURES, NO. 48
FROM THE LABORS OF ULYSSES, THEODORE VAN THULDEN, CIRCA 1632



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