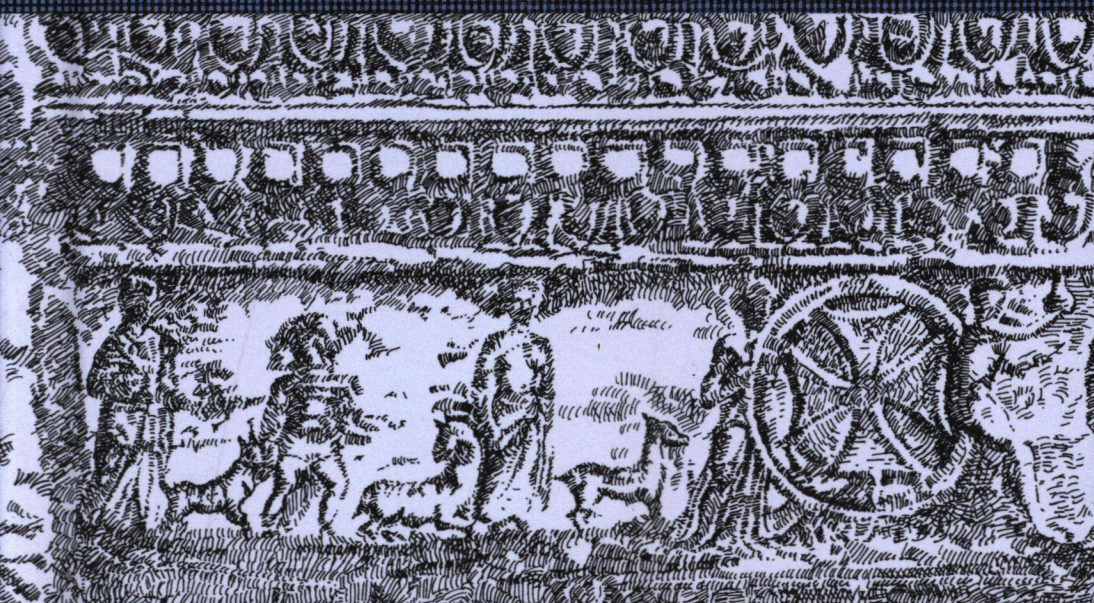


Black Ships and Sea Raiders

The Late Bronze and
Early Iron Age Context of
Odysseus' Second Cretan Lie

Jeffrey P. Emanuel



Greek Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches
 Series Editor: Gregory Nagy, Harvard University

"Black Ships and Sea Raiders: The Late Bronze and Early Iron Age Context of Odysseus' Second Cretan Lie is a tour de force that picks up the story of the Trojan heroes where Homer's *Odyssey* and Old Testament tales of the Philistines leave off, giving us new answers by redirecting emphasis to maritime technology and culture along with an astounding collection of Bronze Age textual sources. In doing so, it redirects us from the lopsided attention on the Philistines to the Sherden and other 'Sea Peoples.' While many questions continue to make the Bronze Age collapse a topic of intense fascination, Jeffrey P. Emanuel has written a page-turner from start to finish."

—**Louise A. Hitchcock**, University of Melbourne

"In this broad-ranging and well researched monograph, Emanuel illuminates the archaeological and historical realities of the 'Sherden,' one of the main groups of the 'Sea Peoples' of the Late Bronze and early Iron Ages of the central and eastern Mediterranean. In doing so, he masterfully interweaves the Homeric epic, the ancient near eastern (and in particular Egyptian) written sources, and the archaeological evidence from various regions of the eastern Mediterranean. The result is commendable indeed and is recommended for all those interested in the history and culture of the Bronze and Iron Age Mediterranean."

—**Aren Maeir**, Bar-Ilan University

"Emanuel brings together a wide range of evidence from the Mediterranean and Near East, combining this with an in-depth study of ships, shipbuilding, and maritime routes in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age. The result is an engaging book—well researched, well written, and presenting some dramatic new ideas about Mediterranean mobilities."

—**Naoise Mac Sweeney**, University of Leicester

The end of the Bronze Age in the Eastern Mediterranean was a time of social, political, and economic upheaval—conditions reflected, in many ways, in the world of Homer's *Odyssey*. Jeffrey P. Emanuel examines the *Odyssey's* Second Cretan Lie (xiv 191–359) in the context of this watershed transition, with particular emphasis on raiding, warfare, maritime technology and tactics, and the evidence for the so-called "Sea Peoples" who have been connected to the events of this period. He focuses in particular on the hero's description of his frequent raiding activities, on his subsequent sojourn in the land of the pharaohs, and on connections between Odysseus' false narrative and the historical experiences of one particular Sea Peoples group: the "Sherden of the Sea."

Jeffrey P. Emanuel is associate director of Academic Technology and Center for Hellenic Studies fellow in Aegean archaeology and prehistory at Harvard University.



LEXINGTON BOOKS
 An imprint of
 Rowman & Littlefield
 800-462-6420 • www.rowman.com

ISBN 978-1-4985-7221-7



Emmanuel Black Ships and Sea Raiders



Black Ships and Sea Raiders

**The Late Bronze and
Early Iron Age Context of
Odysseus' Second Cretan Lie**

Jeffrey P. Emanuel

LEXINGTON BOOKS

Lanham • Boulder • New York • London

Published by Lexington Books
An imprint of The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Inc.
4501 Forbes Boulevard, Suite 200, Lanham, Maryland 20706
www.rowman.com

Unit A, Whitacre Mews, 26-34 Stannary Street, London SE11 4AB


Copyright © 2017 by Lexington Books

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without written permission from the publisher, except by a reviewer who may quote passages in a review.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Information Available

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data Available

ISBN 978-1-4985-7221-7 (cloth : alk. paper)
ISBN 978-1-4985-7222-4 (electronic)

 The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992.

Printed in the United States of America

Black Ships and Sea Raiders

Greek Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches

Series Editor: Gregory Nagy, Harvard University

Executive Editors: Corinne Pache, Emily Allen Hornblower, and Eirene Visvardi

Associate Editors: Mary Ebbott, Casey Dué Hackney, Leonard Muellner, Olga Levaniouk, Timothy Powers, Jennifer R. Kellogg, and Ivy Livingston

On the front cover: A calendar frieze representing the Athenian months, reused in the Byzantine Church of the Little Metropolis in Athens. The cross is superimposed, obliterating Taurus of the Zodiac. The choice of this frieze for books in *Greek Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches* reflects this series' emphasis on the blending of the diverse heritages—Near Eastern, Classical, and Christian—in the Greek tradition. Drawing by Laurie Kain Hart, based on a photograph. Recent titles in the series are:

Dramatic Action in Greek Tragedy and Noh: Reading with and beyond Aristotle, by Mae J. Smethurst

Greek Heroes in and out of Hades, by Stamatia Dova

Becoming Achilles: Child-sacrifice, War, and Misrule in the Iliad and Beyond, by Richard Kerr Holway

Chronos on the Threshold: Time, Ritual, and Agency in the Oresteia, by Marcel Widzisz

Disguise and Recognition in the Odyssey, by Sheila Murnaghan

Choral Identity and the Chorus of Elders in Greek Tragedy, by U. S. Dhuga

Light and Darkness in Ancient Greek Myth and Religion, Edited by Menelaos Christopoulos, Efimia D. Karakantza, and Olga Levaniouk

When Worlds Elide: Classics, Politics, Culture, Edited by Karen Bassi and J. Peter Euben

Archaeology in Situ: Sites, Archaeology, and Communities in Greece, Edited by Anna Stroulia and Susan Buck Sutton

The Philosopher's Song: The Poets' Influence on Plato, by Kevin Crotty

Under the Sign of the Shield: Semiotics and Aeschylus' Seven Against Thebes, by Froma I. Zeitlin

Metrical Constraint and the Interpretation of Style in Tragic Trimeter, by Nicholas Baechle

Diachronic Dialogues: Authority and Continuity in Homer and the Homeric Tradition, by Ahuvia Kahane

Fighting Words and Feuding Words: Anger and the Homeric Poems, by Thomas R. Walsh

The Visual Poetics of Power: Warriors, Youths, and Tripods in Early Greece, by Nassos Papalexandrou

Homeric Megathemes: War-Homilia-Homecoming, by D. N. Maronitis

A Penelopean Poetics: Reweaving the Feminine in Homer's Odyssey, by Barbara Clayton

The Poetry of Homer: New Edition, Edited with an Introduction by Bruce Heiden, by Samuel Eliot Bassett

The Other Self: Selfhood and Society in Modern Greek Fiction, by Dimitris Tziouvas

The Usable Past: Greek Metahistories, Edited by K. S. Brown and Yannis Hamilakis

Tragedy and Athenian Religion, by Christiane Sourvinou-Inwood

Imagining Illegitimacy in Classical Greek Literature, by Mary Ebbott

Acknowledgments

My deepest gratitude goes to Gregory Nagy, a peerless teacher, friend and mentor whose guidance helped achieve the convergence of Homeric and archaeological scholarship that resulted in this book. Without his support and inspiration, the project would neither have gotten off the ground nor reached its current state.

I am also indebted to Shelley Wachsmann, a giant in the field of Mediterranean seafaring and ship construction. For several years now, I and my research have benefited from his encouragement, insightful feedback, and willingness to share information.

I would also like to thank Kevin McGrath and Jacob Damm for several years of formal and informal conversations about many of the topics presented in this book, which have influenced its direction and progress more than they know. Likewise, the constant encouragement and unflagging support provided by Shaughn Casey and Jim Anderson has been more valuable to this project than I could ever express.

Reaching farther back in time, the introduction to Classical Archaeology as a discipline that I received from Naomi Norman as an undergraduate at the University of Georgia, and the love of history that was imparted in me by my high school World History teacher, Joseph Jarrell, were foundational experiences that many years ago helped set me on my present course.

Finally, and most importantly, I offer my love and gratitude to my family: my parents, Paul and Gail, who have been a source of unwavering encouragement throughout my life and academic career; Katie Emanuel, my wife and the love of my life, who has not only endured the years of research and scholarship that culminated in this book, but who has provided steadfast support and inspiration every step along the at-times-tortuous path; and my children, Jack, Kristen, and Connor, who have been as patient and supportive

as possible throughout (not to mention endearingly excited that some of the illustrations in this volume are my own artwork!).

As with any work that whose creation and evolution spans several years, more debts of gratitude have been incurred than I could possibly repay. To everybody who has provided support, feedback, or constructive comments, or who has served—knowingly or unknowingly—as a sounding board for the ideas presented in this book, I am sincerely grateful. As always, the content itself, including any remaining errors or omissions are solely my own.

Contents

Acknowledgments	vii
1 Epic, Oral Tradition, and Archaeology	1
2 Structure and Methodology	11
3 Raiders, Traders, and Sea Peoples in the Late Bronze Age and Beyond	25
4 Mycenae, Aḡḡiyawa, and the Collapse of the Late Bronze Age Order	41
5 The Sea Peoples and the Egyptian Records	61
6 The Changing Face of War and Society	79
7 Hedgehog Helmets, Sea Peoples, and Ship-to-Ship Combat	97
8 Mariners and Their Ships: Vessel Types, Capacity, and Rigging	117
9 Αἴγυπτόνδε: Life, Prosperity, and Health in the Land of the Pharaohs	151
Notes	163
Bibliography	179
Index	211
About the Author	219

Chapter One

Epic, Oral Tradition, and Archaeology

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν:
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,
πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,
ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ:
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο

Tell me, O Muse, of the man of many devices, who wandered full many ways after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy. Many were the men whose cities he saw and whose mind he learned, aye, and many the woes he suffered in his heart upon the sea, seeking to win his own life and the return of his comrades. Yet even so he saved not his comrades, though he desired it sore, for through their own blind folly they perished. . .

Odyssey i, 1–7¹

So begins the Homeric epic about the hero Odysseus, the πολύτροπος ‘many-sided, much-traveled, versatile, ingenious’ man, and his decade of wanderings following the Achaean sack of Troy. These wanderings took the hero to places like the city of the Kikones, the land of the Cyclopes, Phaiakia, and even Hades itself, with myriad stops in between—including, via false *ainos*, Crete, Egypt, Lebanon, and Libya—before finally returning him to Ithaka, ten years after he first set sail for home and twenty after his initial departure.

Trials like these were not unique to Odysseus: other tales of suffering in the aftermath of the Trojan War can be found amidst the “framework of heroic portraits” that make up the epic tradition, from Menelaos’ eight-year journey home (*Odyssey* iv, 81–85) to Agamemnon’s murderous reception at the hands of his wife’s lover, Aigisthos (*Odyssey* xi, 409–411).² A major aim of this

study is to chip away at one such individual story—Odysseus' Second Cretan Lie—for the purpose of shedding light on the interplay between a Homeric individual and the historical and archaeological background. As we shall see, at least some of the wanderings and sufferings of Homer's epic heroes in general, and of Odysseus in particular, are not out of place when viewed against the larger tapestry of the chaotic transition from the Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age in the years surrounding the beginning of the 12th century BCE.

TWO TAPESTRIES: EPIC AND HISTORY

Before we begin, it is necessary to cover some background on epic and oral tradition, and on their tangled relationship with that modern invention which we call "history." Unfortunately, the largest and most tantalizing question—when and where did the characters and events of epic originate, and what relationship do they have with people that actually lived and events that actually happened?—is, on the whole, unanswerable. Myth and oral tradition occupy a unique space within human communication, vested as they are with motifs, artifacts, content, and meaning that is simultaneously reflective both of years long past and of the present.

However, epic and oral tradition also can—and almost certainly do—transmit some measures of historical truth within the received fiction. This does not mean that exact historical connections should be sought between characters, events, and descriptions contained in myth, and it certainly does not mean that epic works should be treated as historical texts. Such a search is bound to end in futility, in no small part because epic is the product of such a lengthy compositional process that single characters, events, or even objects can simultaneously represent analogues that are centuries apart in historical time. A classic example of this is the shield of the Trojan hero Hektor, which Homer first describes as a tower shield of the type seen in iconography from the Bronze Age shaft graves at Mycenae (Fig. 1.1):



Figure 1.1. Battle depicted on the "Warrior Krater" from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae. Blakolmer, F. 2007. "The Silver Battle Krater from Shaft Grave IV at Mycenae: Evidence of Fighting 'Heroes' on Minoan Palace walls at Knossos?" In Morris, S. P. and Laffineur, R., eds. *EPOS: Reconsidering Greek Epic and Aegean Bronze Age Archaeology*. Liège. Plate LVIII.

ἀμφὶ δέ μιν σφυρὰ τύπτε καὶ αὐχένα δέρμα κελαινὸν
 ἄντυξ ἥ πυμάτη θέεν ἀσπίδος ὀμφαλοέσσης

. . . the black rim of hide that went round his shield beat against his neck and his ankles

Iliad VI, 117–118³

Scarcely one scroll later, this object has leapt forward in time nearly half a millennium, becoming the circular shield known from the end of the Bronze Age and the succeeding Iron Age (Fig. 1.2):

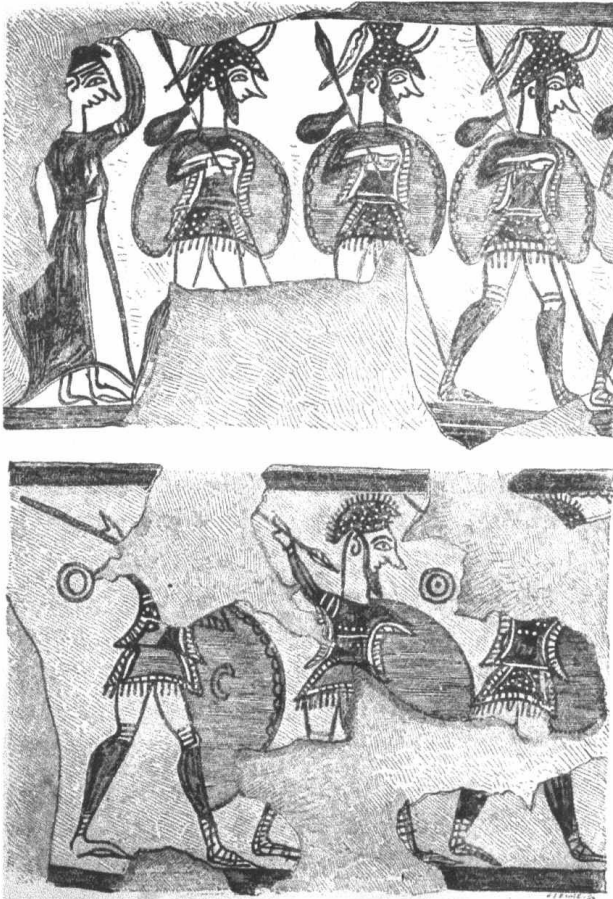


Figure 1.2. LH IIIC 'Warrior Vase' from Mycenae, featuring parallel processions of armed men in 'hedgehog'-style helmets and in helmets with horns and plumes

Tsountas, Ch. and Manatt, J. I. 1897. *The Mycenaean Age: A Study of the Monuments and Culture of Pre-Homeric Greece*. London. Plate XVIII.

Αἴας διογενὴς προΐει δολιχόσκιον ἔγχος,
καὶ βάλε Πριαμίδαο κατ' ἀσπίδα πάντοσ' εἵσθη

Then Ajax threw in his turn,
and struck the round shield of the son of Priam

Iliad VII, 249–250

As archaeologist Susan Sherratt asked, “So where is history in all this? I have no doubt that something (or perhaps many things) that we might just call real history in some sense of the word is there, lurking in the palimpsest of Homeric oral prehistory. But the question of whose history, and when and where, is something we can probably never untangle.”⁴

Whatever measures of truth may be contained in the Homeric epics cannot truly be accessed without peeling back the layers of the received text. These layers are abundant: a characteristic of oral tradition is composition-in-performance, which lends itself, over time and a broad geographic area, to many slightly different versions of a single story.⁵ Add to that the agglutinative nature of epic poetry, which has among its progenitors “a vast reservoir of inherited myths, legends, and tales, the conflation of which has left traces and sometimes, at least by literary standards, rather glaring anomalies of structure and detail.”⁶ A potential example of such an “inherited myth” is the set of false *ainoi* in Homer’s *Odyssey* known as the “Cretan Lies.” The length and detail of these micronarratives, writes classicist Steve Reece, combined with “the remarkable contrast of our poet’s vague notion of the topography of the Peloponnese to his quite detailed knowledge of Crete,” may mark these false *ainoi* as remnants of an alternative version of the epic in which they were presented as truth rather than fiction.⁷

While this is probably the case, as other studies have also shown, the specific circumstances of the composition and incorporation of this and other variants will never be fully understood.⁸ It is clear, though, that Homeric poetry overall is simultaneously *expressive* of Indo-European themes that predate the Greek language itself; *reminiscent* of the earliest phases of Greek prehistory and before, like the 16th century BCE Shaft Grave culture of Mycenae and the settlement of Akrotiri; and *reflective* in many aspects of the beginning of the watershed Archaic period in the eighth century (and beyond).⁹ This is compounded by the necessary disconnection, or poetic distance, between the performance of Homer’s epics and the age(s) and events they purport to recount, which further precludes simple one-to-one identifications of these passages with archaeological remains or other material evidence of historical peoples and events.¹⁰

These issues begin to illustrate the problematic nature of attempting, in the words of one scholar, “to create a serious history out of fantasy and folklore.”¹¹ However, interwoven into this complex tapestry are details of varying size

and import which can be seen as reflecting the world of the Late Bronze Age and the early years of the Iron Age, or roughly the 14th through 12th centuries BCE. Familiar personal names and toponyms like *Alaksandu*, *Attarissya*, *Mopsos*, *Wiluša*, and *Aḫḫiyawa* peek out at us from ancient texts, reminding us, respectively, of Alexander, Atreus, Mopsus, Ilios, and Achaea. The general geopolitical makeup of the world described in the *Iliad* also seems to accurately reflect the historical presence of a Mycenaean coalition on the western side of the Aegean and an Anatolian power to the east, with whom they had frequent tension.¹² However, the eastern power at this point in history was not Trojan at all; instead, it was the Hittites who ruled much of Anatolia and northern Syria from their seat at Ḫattuša (modern Boğazköi). Interestingly, documentary evidence shows that some of the historical tension between Mycenaeans and Hittites in the Late Bronze Age did, in fact, focus on Troy.

Homer's lack of awareness of the Hittites seems troubling at first blush, particularly when it comes to efforts to draw even modest parallels between the narratives of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* on one hand, and our current information about the events and individuals of the Bronze Age on the other. This may be partially explained by the "bricolage" nature of the epic composition, of course, but it may also result from the radical changes that swept the Eastern Mediterranean in the years surrounding 1200 BCE. The chaos and disorder of the *Odyssey* also seem reflective of this late second millennium transition from the Late Bronze to the Iron Age, which was characterized by the threats, marauding, and rending of the social fabric governing society itself. Each of these is a hallmark of the Late Bronze Age's *terminus* in the years surrounding 1200 BCE in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, with its palatial collapses, movements of peoples, and disruption of the international trading networks that had fostered widespread communication and fueled generations of elites' conspicuous consumption and display. As we shall see further below, the collapse of civilizations at the end of the Bronze Age did not just affect Greece, where the palatial system and Linear B writing were permanently lost and a post-Mycenaean "Dark Age" several centuries long was ushered in. The Hittite empire was also largely extinguished at this time, and seems to have been lost from memory in the Aegean region altogether—perhaps part of the reason for its absence from the world of Homer.¹³

Not all events in the years surrounding the Late Bronze–Early Iron Age transition were negative, particularly if one considers the situation from the point of view of those outside Eastern Mediterranean society's topmost stratum. Among the positive, forward-looking developments at this time was an acceleration in maritime innovations—particularly tactics and technology. Groundbreaking developments in ship design and construction provided sailors with an engine of raiding, warfare, and transportation the likes of which had never been seen, allowing naval operations to be conducted more effectively than ever before. This is among the more granular topics that will be addressed in this study, along with

the conduct and expansion of piracy and coastal raiding, as well as the movements and experiences of specific peoples associated with these actions.

ODYSSEUS' SECOND CRETAN LIE

ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι σύ, γεραιέ, τὰ σ' αὐτοῦ κήδε' ἐνίσπες
καί μοι τοῦτ' ἀγόρευσον ἐτήτυμον, ὅφρ' ἐὺ εἰδῶ:
τίς πόθεν εἶς ἀνδρῶν

But come . . . tell me of thine own sorrows, and declare me this truly, that I may know full well. Who art thou among men, and from whence?

Odyssey xiv, 185–187

This question, posed to Odysseus by Eumaios the swineherd, prefaces the portion of Homer's *Odyssey* that will serve as the lens for this study. The hero's 'Second Cretan Lie,' found in *Odyssey* xiv, 191–359 and retold in part at xvii, 424–441, will be analyzed here with a focus on interpreting the details and identifying parallels to this myth within the historical and archaeological records. We shall consider three elements of Odysseus' story in particular within the setting of the Late Bronze–Early Iron Age transition (the late 13th and early 12th centuries BCE). My aim is to demonstrate these elements' consistency *generally* with the historical reality of this period, and *specifically* with the experiences of the so-called *Š3rd3n3 n p3 ym* 'Sherden of the sea' (fig. 1.3), one of the groups identified with the so-called 'Sea Peoples' who are best known from their portrayal in Egyptian records as foreign invaders who laid waste to empires across the Near East during this tumultuous period.

These elements are:

1. Odysseus' declaration that he led nine successful maritime raids prior to the Trojan War (*Odyssey* xiv, 229–233);
2. His ill-fated assault on Egypt, separately recounted to Eumaios (xiv, 245–272) and to Antinoos (xvii, 424–441); and
3. His claim not only to have been spared following his disastrous Egyptian raid, but to have spent a subsequent seven years in the land of the pharaohs, during which he gathered great wealth (xiv, 285–286).

A secondary purpose of this study, carried out in service of the first, is to examine these tales of Odysseus and the evidence for the Sherden within the context of the Late Bronze–Early Iron Age transition and the Sea Peoples phenomenon, with particular emphasis on the development, spread, and utilization of maritime tactics, technology, and capabilities at this time.