

# The Odyssey

Ὀδύσσεια *Odýsseia*



## How The Odyssey Is Seen By An Artist's Eyes

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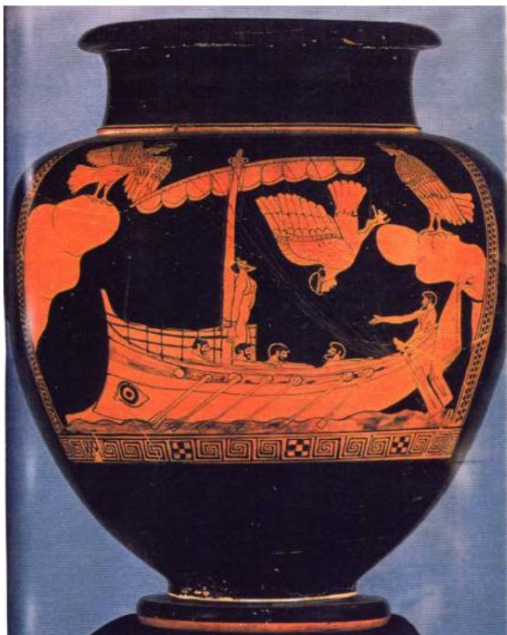
KRISH NAGPAL

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Although this picture isn't physically a vase portrait of Odysseus's situation of when he hears the sirens song, I think that this portrait inside of the vase is an accurate depiction of what actually happened to Odysseus. Odysseus wants to hear the sirens song because he thinks that if he follows Circe's advice by blocking his men's ears with wax and having them lash him to the ship's mast, he will be the only man to experienced the joy of listening to the Sirens and lived to tell about it.

I think that the color scheme used in this portrait is interesting. I think that the color Orange signifies joy, sunshine and happiness, and I think that this color scheme accurately depicts what is going on. In this picture, you can see that Odysseus is stuck to the ship's mast and you see a goddess and other figurative pieces of the art coming down towards the ship. I think that by having a goddess come down towards the ship like that symbolizes harmony, peace

and joy all around, especially because of their distance to Siren's Island, which is giving off the jubilant siren vibrations.



Odysseus hears the Sirens song (XII. 185-200)

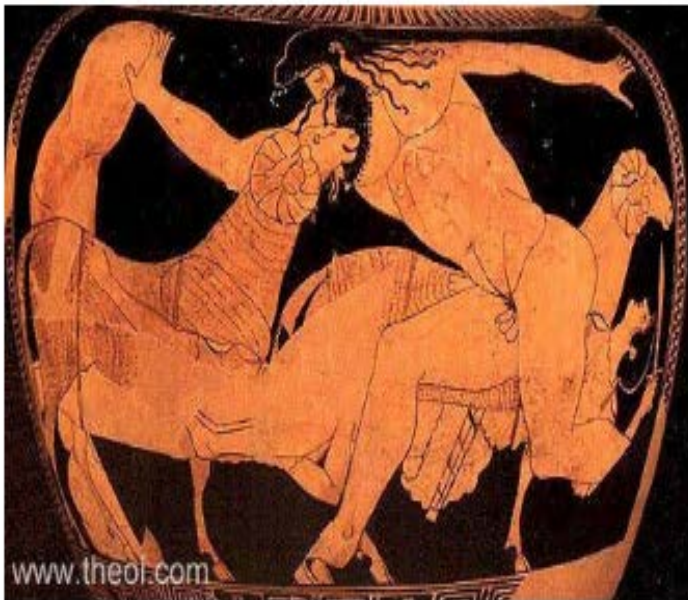
I think that this picture correlates a lot to what the text has to offer. In both the picture and the text, it describes what is happening to Odysseus and in the picture Odysseus is physically latched to a pole so he can hear the sirens, where as the text physically describes what is happening to Odysseus that allows the reader to create a picture in his/her mind.

Although, both the text and picture offer very similar situations that are going on, I think there are two differences between the two. Firstly, you cant really tell that the wax is on the men's ear because of how small the men are in this picture and because the

picture doesn't really hone in on this detail. And secondly, in a picture, you have the ability to invoke your own personal emotions to it and thus make different assumptions to what is actually going on. Had I wrote about this picture before reading the scene in the book, I think I would have had a very different outcome of what happened in the picture.

Although both the book and the picture share relatively the same information they can be interpreted in different manners. Throughout the Odyssey, Odysseus's journey has been a very long and stressful journey, which entailed many struggles. For example, he has observed many men die recklessly, and travelled through treacherous storms. He suffered the wrath of gods like Poseidon and a series of unfortunate events for Odysseus as a whole in the book. In the book and the picture, the siren actually praises Odysseus the warrior like no other character has done so far, which actually shows for once that good vibrations are coming down on Odysseus rather than the usual stress that he has to receive. This interpretation of good vibrations can be interpreted in many different ways depending on if you actually read the story or if you are looking at the picture without reading the story. Overall, the extolling tone that is brought upon Odysseus in this situation contrasts with the ample amounts of gloom that Odysseus has received throughout the rest of the story.

A picture is always more than the sum of its parts. Art moves us. Whether it makes us feel joy, sorrow or revulsion, art has the power to effect on us and express ideas that transcend rational thought and language. They say a picture is worth a thousand words. A picture can tell a story. I see my picture as a figurative art representing Cyclops, a big and strong man. In this picture he is pushing away a rock that stands in front of the cave. The cave is big and dark which represent something that is unknown, deep and scary mystery. Also, I see couple of rams,



"My poor ram, why are you leaving this cave," says the Cyclops (IX 445-460).

men tied to their belly. One of the men is holding a sword. It is a passage of the Odyssey in Greek vase painting. The Odyssey is a classic example of an epic.

This scene looks like the second plan of Odyssey's is being played. After he has given wine to Polyphemus and drunk him, he also blinded and now is trying to escape from the cave. The light colors give me the idea that everything is going

according to the plan. Polyphemus is about to roll away the rock and led out the rams. He is not able to see the men tied up around their bellies, even though he touches their backs (according to the passage). In the background I see Odysseus' men tied up good and holding around the rams. The positive space gives me an excellent idea of what is going on in the cave: the movements, the people, the plan. It is a smooth surface that makes it able for me to understand it. The bright

tone is a significant figure of 'morning time' (about time to leave the rams outside the cave).

The vase painting is a perfect response to the text. The image represents the passage as a figurative art with people, place, space and objects that are real. It is an amazing relationship between the passage and the vase, everything expresses Odysseus' plan. And, as we all know,



the plan works out. Everyone gets out of the cave and escapes to their ship. The poor Polyphemus had been blinded and fooled.

A good artist knows how he wants to make his audience feel. The artist who made this jar constructs the painting in such a way that it take us to feel this underworld scene. His choice of which colors and size to use for the objects gets our attention and interest from the first look. He uses the color brown to make it more appealing to our eyes when he could have easily used black and white. This painting represents a figurative art. To make us feel the scene when Odysseus went to the underworld, the artist used the black color to tell us that this the world of death. When you look closer, you

can see how the artist uses the negative space to distance the still alive person (Odysseus) from the dead Elpenor. Odysseus is placed in the middle of the painting to show his power and importance.

On this jar, Odysseus is seated on a rock having a conversation with the ghost of Elpenor while Hermes is standing behind him. Homer tells in the *Odyssey* about this scene and Odysseus's journey to the realm of the dead to learn and get an idea on how to return to his homeland of Ithaca from a blind prophet called Tiresias. The first person to meet with Odysseus is Elpenor who died after falling from the roof and broke his neck on the island of the witch-goddess Circe. Elpenor didn't receive a proper funeral rite on the island. Therefore, he comes to Odysseus and asks him to give him a proper burial. "Do not leave me unburied, unmourned, when you sail for home,"

The artist painted this jar according to the scene details from the *Odyssey*. Colors, space, and the order of the figures are represented in a way that shows the underworld. Odysseus is concentrating on the words of Elpenor. While Odysseus and Hermes' bodies are fully painted, Elpenor is missing his feet; his left arm is being raised. The purpose of this setting is to differ between the human body from the spirit.