

Identification of Ancient Locations in Sicily: Scylla, Charybdis and Sirens

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ABSTRACT

An analytical description of ancient locations being identified through the ancient Orphic Texts with the assistance of Google Earth.

INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this work is to present unknown ancient places with their contemporary names.

SCYLLA, CHARYBDIS AND SIRENS

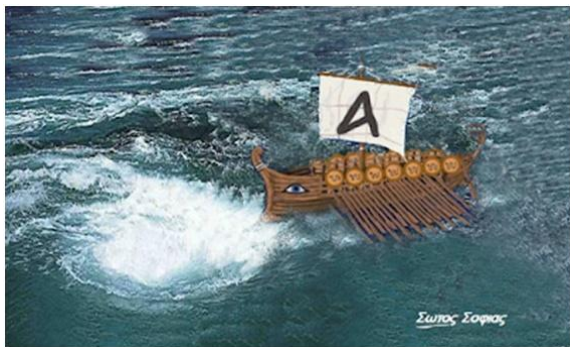


Figure1. Charybdis in an artistic illustration designed by me

Charybdis almost swallowed Argo, as the ancient text says (i.e. in verses 1265-1269), but the ship was saved at the last minute thanks to the divine intervention of Thetis, wife of Argonaut Peleus (i.e. Achilles' father).

Of course, Thetis did not emerge from the seabed and rescued the ship, as the ancient text says, but Orpheus' description simply emphasizes the Argonauts' faith in divine intervention. That is, they were not saved by chance, but thanks to the help of the gods. They were met by Charybdis somewhere out of the coast of Sicily, shortly after the Strait of Messina, so it was almost impossible to be determined as a location. According to the

description of Orpheus, the Argonauts stopped in front of a small island in Sicily, near Etna volcano (verses 1257-1259), and somewhere along this route they met Charybdis (verses 1260-1269). The description of the phenomenon shows that it was an underwater whirlpool and as will be proved below it was not just one. According to testimony given to me by Captain Andreas Bobos, sometime in the early 2000s, returning from Italy with a yacht where he was captain, suddenly in the middle of the night and being in the straits of Messina, the sea swirling with dreadful hum and the advanced technology craft, almost stuck. The frightened crew went out on the deck, trying to figure out what had hit the boat. It was such a mess that the captain was afraid of losing the boat. After regaining the control of the boat, they managed to escape. What had hit them? Charybdis, which eventually was an eruption of a submarine volcano from the many active ones that exist in the area. In the time of Orpheus (i.e. the 19th century BC according to my historical study ORPHEUS & THE ARGONAUTS), the passing-by ships through the straits of Messina (i.e. Lilybeon Straits are mentioned in the ancient text), if they had the misfortune to pass over Charybdis, exactly the moment of the volcano eruption, they would have sunk. The Argonauts met the "monster" out of the coast of Sicily while Captain Bobos met her just before entering the Messina straits. It is therefore confirmed that Charybdis - which still exists today - was not one, but more, exactly as the active underwater volcanoes in the area are.

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SCYLLA

The only geographical area of the entire Argonauts' journey that I had not identified was Scylla. I was convinced that I could not locate her, since I had never studied so closely the ancient text. Was she a "monster" as Homer says? Of course not.

After several weeks of painstaking research in Google Earth, I was able to identify Scylla under its current name. Of course it is located in Italy and in Sicily in particular.

The ancient text says in the verses 1257-1274: "We stopped at the triangular island of Enceladus (i.e. Sicily) with Etna's flame stopping his rage (i.e. lyrical description). Next to a small peninsula, we stopped not far from a reef pier (i.e. that is translated as a small island connected with a strip of land with the coast). At the edge of the nearby small peninsula the rock is cut from top to the bottom (i.e. means almost vertically). From the rock two caves sprout up to the sea, and the cheerful waves was buzzing in them".

Searching -with the help of Google Earth- thoroughly the east coast of Sicily and near Etna, I identified the locations described in the ancient text. The answer is the present day city of Taormina, the ancient Greek colony named Tavromenion!

Incredible precision of the description of the ancient text as shown in the below illustration. In front of Argo (as I have designed it) and at its right there is a small peninsula where its edge looks vertically cut. At its left stands the small islet, the present Bella Isola.



Figure2. At the right side, the islet with the pier where the Argo moored (in my own artwork). Present Bella Isola .Up above, the small peninsula with the vertical rock



Figure3. Indeed, the edge of this small peninsula has been cut off and vertically cracked. It literally looks like someone has cut the rock with a knife!!!

Continues the ancient text: "Two caves are leading on the inside of the rock (i.e. thus meaning not only caves but sea caves) and the waves are echoing inside the blue caves".

THIS EXACT DESCRIPTION OF THE ANCIENT TEXT EXISTS TODAY

Grotta Azzura (The Blue Cave) of TAORMINA turns out to be the area of Scylla. It fits perfectly with the ancient description, even though thousands of years have passed. So Scylla was not a monster that used to destroy the ships, as Homer says. Scylla was a miracle of nature, just as Orpheus mentions. An incredible sight from the ancient times that the Argonauts visited in order to admire. A region of Greater Italy is directly linked to the ancient Greek history.



Figure4. External view of Grotta Azzura. The famous Scylla was an amazing sight of the ancient times and remains still today



Figure5. The interior of the magnificent Grotta Azzura (BlueCave), Orpheus' Scylla, is in absolute accordance with the description of the ancient text and it is accessible inside by small boats.

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If somebody goes to YouTube at the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JO3EU6OwgP0> he can watch videos from inside the magnificent blue cave, which is echoing.

Scylla probably the cave was named after the ward “scylla”, which in Greek means female dog. The echo inside the blue caves sounds indeed like dogs’ growling!

SIRENS

The next hill, according to the description of the ancient text, was the hill of Sirens. The Sirens were not monsters who, according to Homer, ate humans, but the “hot” erotic women (Sirius means hot in ancient Greek), the ancient prostitutes who seduced the sailors with their erotic songs and did not kill them. Indeed, Orpheus says that due to the fact that the Argonauts did not stop at their ports, Sirens threw their lotus and lyres into the sea and were turned into rocks (i.e. a literal exaggeration in order to emphasize their anger of losing potential “clients”).



Figure6. The present Cape of Taormina, a tourist resort in the region. Orpheus calls the “Sirens’ Hill” as the one that protrudes from the land, which we observe perfectly in compliance with the features of the particular hill. Even the rocks - the “petrified” Sirens - still exist at the edge of the hill today as a confirmation of Orpheus’ lyrical description!



Figure7. An incredible aerial view from Google Earth verifies the ancient text and its precise description for this particular location, after 4000 years!

CONCLUSIONS

The correct interpretation of the ancient texts in combination with Google Earth, can give extraordinary results. Especially the ancient Greek texts written, in Attic or Ionian dialect, by great historians, philosophers, poets, geographers etc. can easily be comprehended by those who speak the Greek as mother language.

Few years ago it was almost impossible to identify any place on earth without in situ visiting. Today thanks to Google Earth and other similar applications all the geographical characteristics or places referred in the ancient texts can easily be identified. Also the global information is now available in Internet and the communications with the authorities is very easy.

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