

THE ISLE OF CALYPSO - GOZO?

By JOSEPH BUSUTTIL

ODYSSEUS, the king of Ithaka, was destined to spend some time on the 'tree-clad' island of Ogygia on which he had been washed in one of his many wanderings after the sack of Troy. The island was inhabited by the nymph Calypso, the daughter of Atlas, who kept Odysseus in her beautiful cave and allured him with her charms. At the instigation of the goddess Athene, Zeus, the father of the Gods, sent his messenger Hermes to the little island to urge Calypso to release Odysseus. The nymph obeyed but with the greatest reluctance. Odysseus was released and left the island for good.

A fragment of the poet Callimachus preserves the unfinished sentence 'the little islet of Calypso - Gaudos'.¹ Furthermore, Strabo asserts in two different passages² that Apollodorus took Callimachus to task for maintaining that Gaudos (Gozo) was the island of Calypso and Corcyra Scleria. The legend or tradition that Gozo is the island of Calypso goes back to at least Callimachus's days (310-325 B.C.).

Eratosthenes (born c. 284 B.C.), the geographer and astronomer, who was the pupil of Callimachus, had attacked those scholars who held the view that Odysseus's wanderings had been in the neighbourhood of Sicily.³ He seems to have been in favour of the opinion that they had taken place in the outer Ocean.⁴ This opinion was also shared by the disciples of Eratosthenes.⁵ On the other hand Callimachus and other writers like Polybius were of the view that the wanderings took place in or around Sicily.

Apollodorus (C. 180 B.C.), the grammarian, made a distinction between the journeys of Odysseus and the account given of them by Homer. Apollodorus maintains that Odysseus really wandered around Sicily; but, he states, Homer gives a fictitious account and transposes the real places visited by

¹ Cf. Appendix 1.² Cf. Appendix 2 and 3.³ Strabo 1, 21; H. Berger, *Die geographischen Fragmente des Eratosthenes*, Amsterdam 1964, p. 25 f.⁴ Strabo, 1, 44.⁵ Ibid.

Odysseus to the outer ocean. For this reason Apollodorus censures Callimachus for failing to see through Homer's plan. On the other hand he does not say where the wanderings had taken place.

Strabo, the geographer, criticises Apollodorus because the latter had not stated where exactly Odysseus went to and because the regions round Sicily commanded greater credibility.

In ancient times the island of Ogygia was identified with at least twelve different islands.⁶ Recently L.G. Pocock has tried to prove that Odysseus journeyed around Sicily;⁷ but following Bérard he identifies Ogygia with Perejel, an island near Tangier.⁸ It is interesting to note that the Greek word Calypso is connected with⁹ *καλύπτω* (I hide) and that *Ogygia* is 'the mysterious island'.

APPENDIX

I

Callimachus, Fragment 524:

ὀλίγην νησίδα Καλυψοῦς - Γαῦδον.

The little islet of Calypso, Gaudos.¹⁰

II

Strabo, 1, 44.

Ἀπολλόδορος δὲ ἐπιτιμᾷ Καλλιμάχῳ συνηγορῶν τοῖς περὶ τὸν Ἐρατοσθένη, διότι, καίπερ γραμματικὸς ὢν παρὰ τὴν Ὀμηρικὴν ὑπόθεσιν καὶ τὸν ἑξαιεανισμόν τῶν τόπων, περὶ οὗς τὴν πλάνην φράζει, Γαῦδον καὶ Κόρκυραν ὀνομάζει. ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν μηδαμοῦ γέγονεν ἡ πλάνη, ἀλλ' ὅλον πλάσμα ἐστὶν Ὀμήρου τοῦτο, ὄρθη ἡ ἐπιτίμησις. ἢ, εἰ γέγονε μὲν, περὶ ἄλλους δὲ τόπους, δεῖ λέγειν εὐθὺς καὶ περὶ τίνας, ἐπανορθούμενον ἅμα τὴν ἀγνοίαν. μῆτε δὲ ὅλου πλάσματος εἶναι πιθανῶς λεγόμενου, καθάπερ ἐπεδείκνυμεν, μῆτ' ἄλλων τόπων κατὰ πλῆθος μετὰ δεικνυμένων, ἀπολοῦιτ' ἂν τῆς αἰτίας ὁ Καλλιμάχος.

Apollodorus, however, siding with Eratosthenes and his school, cri-

⁶ Cf. W.W. Hyde, *Ancient Greek Mariners*, O.U.P. 1947, p. 86.⁷ Cf. *The Sicilian Origin of the Odyssey*, Wellington, 1957.⁸ Id. pp. 62, 72.⁹ Cf. E. Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Heidelberg 1950.¹⁰ Cf. P. Pfeifer, *Callimachus*, Oxford, 1949.

ticipes Callimachus, because, though a *grammaticus*, Callimachus names Gaudos and Corcyra (as the regions) round which he says the wanderings of Odysseus had taken place – contrary to Homer's plan and the *exoceanismos* of the (Homeric) places. But if the wanderings did not take place anywhere, and the story has been completely invented by Homer, then the criticism is fair; or if they had taken place, but around different regions, then Apollodorus should also tell us straightaway where (they took place), thus correcting at the same time Callimachus's mistake. But since Homer's story cannot convincingly be said to be wholly fictitious, as we have shown above, and since no other regions are shown to command greater credibility, Callimachus might be absolved from censure.¹¹

III

Strabo VII, 299.

Ἐπιτιμᾶ δε (Ἀπολλόδαρος) καὶ τοῖς περὶ Σικελίαν τὴν πλάνην λέγουσι καθ' Ὅμηρον τὴν Ὀδυσσεύως. εἰ γὰρ, αὖ χρῆναι τὴν μὲν πλάνην ἐκεῖ γεγονέναι φάσκουσιν, τὸν, δὲ ποιητὴν ἔξωκεανικένας μυθολογίας χάριν. καὶ τοῖς μὲν ἄλλοις συγγνώμην εἶναι, Καλλιμάχου δὲ μὴ πάνυ, μεταποιουμένῳ γε γραμματικῆς, ὅς τὴν μὲν Γαυδὸν Καλυψοῦς νῆσον ψησι, τὴν δὲ Κόρκυραν Σχερίαν.

(Apollodorus) criticises also those who maintain that the wanderings of Odysseus in Homer's account took place around Sicily; for in that case, (he says) they should say that the wanderings did take place there, but that the poet (Homer) placed them in the ocean for the sake of mythology; the others can be excused, but certainly not Callimachus: he pretends to be a *grammaticus* and says that Gaudos is the island of Calypso and Corcyra Scheria.¹²

¹¹ H. Berger, op. cit., p. 26.

¹² Ibid.

HECATAEUS AND GOZO

By JOSEPH BUSUTTIL

THE first reference to the island of Gozo occurs in a fragment of Hecataeus (560-480 B.C.) preserved in the epitome of the work of Stephanus of Byzantium.¹

Hecataeus, called a *λογοποιός* by Herodotus,² was an active figure in his native city Miletus. He was a historian and improved the first map of the then known world drawn up by Anaximander with detailed information collected on his own travels. Among other things he wrote a work entitled *περίοδος Γῆς* or a description of the world. He divided the inhabited world into two parts: Europe and Asia, the latter including Libya.³ The *Periodos*, which was written before 500 B.C., is in reality a 'periplus' or a description of the coasts of the Mediterranean and adjoining seas.⁴ The fragment of the *Periodos* which mentions Gozo is the following:

Γαυλὸς νῆσος πρὸς τῇ καρχηδονί. Ἑκαταῖος περιηγήσει ὁ νησιώτης Γαυλίτης.

Gozo: an island close to Carthage. (mentioned by) Hecataeus in the *periegesis*. Gaulites is (the name of) the inhabitant of the island.

Hecataeus, therefore, mentions Gozo and presumably Malta in the *Periodos*. The fact that he places the island in the proximity of Carthage indicates that he included it in the *περιηγήσεις τῆς Λιβύης* that is, that part of his work which deals with Libya and Carthage.

¹ Cf Stephan of Byzantium, *Ethnika*, Graz, 1958; also J. Nenci, *Hecataei Milesii Fragmenta*, Florence, 1954, p. 98, No 358.

² Cf Herod. 11, 143; V, 36, 125; also W.W. Hyde, *Ancient Greek Mariners*, O.U.P., 1947, p. 9.

³ Cf R.E. Vol. 14, 1912, p. 2703; also J.O. Thompson, *History of Ancient Geography*, 1948, p. 47.

⁴ Cf R.E. op. cit. p. 2670; and E.H. Bunbury, *A History of Ancient Geography*, New York, 1959, Vol. 1, p. 134-135.

⁵ Cf R.E. op. cit. p. 2728: So gehören an die Küste im Herrschaftsbericht der Karthager die *περὶ καρχηδόνα* oder *πρὸς καρχηδόνι* legenden Städte, *καυθήλια* (fr 308), *ὕβελι* (fr 310) und die Inseln *Εὐδείπη* (fr 313), *Γαυλός* (fr 314) *φοινικουῦσσα* (fr 315).

Why should Hecataeus put it near Carthage? The answer is that the prepositions *πρὸς* (near) and *περὶ* (around) used with towns and islands are not employed by Hecataeus to denote strict topographical proximity but are used to indicate political possession or political control.⁵ In other words Hecataeus places Gozo near Carthage because that island was in the Carthaginian sphere of influence, as he does with many other islands and towns. This is of great historical interest. Gozo (and presumably Malta) was already in the Carthaginian sphere of influence in the sixth century B.C. Likewise Ps. Skylax, writing some two centuries after Hecataeus, groups Malta and Gozo in that section of the *Periplus* dealing with Libya and Carthage.⁶

Hecataeus calls the island *Gaulos*. The letters *GWL*. are found in the Phoenician inscriptions which refer to Gozo.⁷ Whether Hecataeus is here reproducing the grecised form of the Phoenician name of Gozo is not clear. The Phoenician inscriptions are of a much later date.⁸ The Romans adopted the Greek name of Gozo without bothering, with some few exceptions, to change the final *-os* into *-us*.⁹ On the other hand there was another Greek form of the word already employed by Callimachus in the third century B.C. – *Gaudos* – which has ultimately given rise to the words *Għawdex* and *Gozo*, the two present names of the island. An inhabitant of Gozo was called *Γαυλίτης* by the Greeks since the sixth century before our era. Gozitan coins of the Roman period bear the Greek legend *τῶν Γαυλίτων* (*Gaulitwn*, of the Gozitans).

To sum up: Gozo was already known to the Greeks of the sixth Century by the name *Gaulos*, and a Gozitan by the name *Gaulites*. The fragment also shows that in the sixth century B.C. Gozo was in the Carthaginian sphere of influence.

LYCOPHRON AND MALTA

By JOSEPH BUSUTTIL

THE poet Lycophron, born about 330-325 B.C., was a native of Chalcis in Euboea and spent most of his life at Alexandria in Egypt. He was the natural son of Socles and the adopted son of the historian Lycus of Rhegium. In the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-247 B.C.) he was commissioned to arrange the Comic Poets in the Royal Library in Alexandria. He wrote a number of tragedies and was given the name *πλειας* by the later Alexandrine scholars.¹

Only a few fragments of Lycophron's tragedies have come down to us; the *Alexandra*, however, a work in 1474 lines of iambic poetry, has been preserved in its entirety. It deals with the prophecies uttered by *Alexandra* or *Cassandra* and it relates in a prophetic vein the later fortunes of the Greek and Trojan heroes. It was written purposely in an enigmatical style and for this reason *Suidas* calls it *τὸ σκοτεινὸν ποιήμα* (*The Obscure Poem*). It was certainly written after 309 B.C. and most probably after 295 B.C.² The poet tries to show that what Troy lost in the East was balanced by the success of Troy's descendants, the Romans, in the West.³ From a historical point of view it reflects the great impression which the Roman military victories had made upon the contemporary Hellenistic world.⁴

Cassandra, opening her 'inspired Bacchic lips'⁵ enumerates the various islands and places which will be inhabited by the Greeks and Trojans. In verses 1027-1029 she says:

Ἄλλοι δὲ Μελίτην νῆσον. Ὀθρωνοῦ πέλας
πλάγιοι, κατοικησουσιν, ἦν πέριξ κλύδων
ἔμπλην παχυνου Σικανὸς προσμασσεται.

¹Cf Lycophron, *Alexandra*, translated by A.W. Mair, Loeb Edition, p. 311; *Suidas Lexicon*, Halis 1853, sub voce *Lycophron*.

²Cf Lycophron, op.cit., p. 307; *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Edizione 1949, Vol. XXI, p. 95.

³Cf vv 1226 f.

⁴Cf *Enciclopedia Italiana*, op.cit. p. 94.

⁵Cf v 30.

⁶Cf C. Muller, *Geographi Graeci Minores*, Hildesheim, 1965, Skylax III.

⁷Cf M.G.G. Amadasi, *Le Iscrizioni Fenicie e Puniche*, Roma 1968, passim.

⁸Ibid, p. 25.

⁹Cf Pliny, N.H., 111, 92; *Silius Italicus, Pun.*, XIV, 259.

Others, wandering in the neighbourhood of Othronus, will inhabit the island of Melite, round which the Sicanian surf laps near Pachynus.⁶

Cassandra says that others will inhabit the island of Melite. Which Melite does Lycophron have in mind? Cassandra adds three small details: (a) Melite is washed by the Sicanian Sea; (b) it lies near Pachynus; (c) it is in the neighbourhood of Othronus, modern Fano.⁷ The Sicanian or Sicilian Sea washes Malta and not the Adriatic island of Melite, modern Meleda.⁸ Cape Pachynus, which is far from Fano, is that point in Sicily that is nearest to Malta. On the other hand Othronus is an island near Meleda in the Adriatic. The Scholiast of Lycophron does not help us much to solve the problem. 'Othronos', says the Scholiast, '(is) an island between Epirus and Italy; the island of Melite lies close to it. Othronus is an island to the South of Sicily and it lies before the promontory of Pachynus in Sicily. Othronos lies close to the mouth of the Adriatic'.⁹ The Scholiast contradicts himself. If Melite lies between Epirus and Italy it cannot lie in the south of Sicily. Stephanus of Byzantium says: 'Othronos: a city: according to some an island to the south of Sicily; according to others, the island of Malta'.¹⁰

It would seem, therefore, that in ancient times Lycophron's passage was interpreted differently by different commentators: some thought that by Melite he meant Meleda, others maintained that he was referring to Malta. Those who held that Lycophron was alluding to Malta postulated the existence of an Othronos near Sicily. In actual fact no island bearing that name ever existed to the south of Sicily. The only explanation appears to be that Lycophron (and his Scholiast) mixed up the two

⁶Cf Lycophronis Alexandra, edidit Lorenzo Mascialino, Teubner, MCMLXIV, p. 46, vv 1027-1029.

⁷Cf R.E. Vol. 36, 1942, pp. 1870-1871.

⁸F. Abela, Descrizione di Malta, Malta 1647 calls Malta l'isola del mar siculo.

⁹Cf. Schol. Lycophron 1027: 'Οθρωνός νῆσος μεταξύ Ἑπείρου καὶ Ἰταλίας. ταύτη δὲ νῆσος παλαιεῖται Μελίτη. Ὀθρωνός νῆσος πρὸς νότον Σικελίας, ἣτις προβεβλήται τοῦ παχυνου ἀρωτηρίον Σικελίας, ἣ δὲ Ὀθρωνός πρὸς τῷ στοματι τοῦ Ἀδρίου.

¹⁰Cf. Stephan von Byzanz, Ethnika, Graz, 1958: Ὀθρωνός. πόλις, οἰδὲ νῆσον πρὸς νότον Σικελίας. ἄλλοι δὲ Μελίτην νῆσον.

¹⁰Cf Stephan von Byzanz, Ethnika, Graz, 1958: Σικελίας, ἣ δὲ Ὀθρωνός πρὸς τῷ στοματι τοῦ Ἀδρίου.

Melite. Lycophron's geography is hazy elsewhere. In lines 1030-1033 the poet expatiates on the legends connected with Pachynus. He mentions the western point which was called after Ulysses (1.030), the river Helorus (1.1033) and the shrine of Athena (1.1032). Hence there can be no doubt that, although he places Melite near Othronos, the poet had in mind the island of Malta. At that time interest in the history of Sicily had revived. Timaeus wrote the *Σικελικά* at the end of the fourth century B.C. and influenced the poet Callimachus, who wrote much about Sicily, Lycus, who wrote a history of Sicily, and Lycophron himself.

Cassandra does not say who the 'others' are. Doubtlessly they are Trojan or Greek heroes and they are few in number. Thucydides in the sixth book of the Peloponnesian Wars says that Sicily and the neighbouring islands had been inhabited by Trojans.¹¹ Of course, the presence of Trojans in Sicily and Malta belongs to the realm of mythology. However, from a historical standpoint one can say that in the eyes of the Alexandrine poet Malta was inhabited by people of Trojan stock. Moreover the author connects the inhabitants of Malta with those of Sicily, Southern Italy and of Rome itself.

¹¹v 1, 2.