

I've Got a Feeling We're Not in Troy Anymore: New Evidence for Homer's Western  
Localization of Kirke in the *Odyssey*

Much ink has been spilled over the geography of Homer's epics, particularly the *Odyssey*. Within the larger discussion, the most debated locale is Kirke's island. While an exact reconstruction of the travels of Odysseus is likely impossible, one can produce a generalized sketch of this journey. Many scholars have done just that, but what seems to be a painfully simple question, whether Kirke is found in the far East or far West, remains a thorn in the side of casual readers and literary cartographers alike. The *Odyssey* seems to state overtly that Kirke is in the distant East, but contextually she is surrounded by Western locations (Crane, 1987). The matter is further complicated by the fact that Homer's literary descendants placed Kirke in the West, apparently divorcing themselves from Homeric tradition. As such, modern scholars have argued from a variety of angles: that Homeric geography takes place in a world outside the bounds of reality or consistency (Page 1973, Malkin 1998), that it is an unmappable traditional reference point held over from oral composition and performance (Foley 2005), alternately for either an Eastern (West 2005, Louden 2011) or a Western (Pocock 1957) localization, and that Kirke is found in both geographic extremes simultaneously (Nagy 1990, Burgess 1999).

While the discussion may never be fully settled, the text has not been exhausted of evidence. This paper explores the possibility of a critical yet unnoticed formula in the Homeric corpus that combines adjectival place-names and localizing adverbs to reference the principle geographic realm rather than what is described with the adjective derived from it (e.g., "Aian island" referring to Aia, not the island, and "Laistrygonian Telepylos" referring to Laistrygonia, not Telepylos). This paper offers a complete picture of this new evidence and its appearances throughout the Homeric corpus and reevaluates previous theories about the geography of the

*Odyssey* in light of it. Through an examination of internal context, Homeric formulaity, and this key linguistic marker tied to the name of Kirke's island never before considered, this paper ultimately demonstrates that there is more support than previously has been thought for the Western localization of Kirke's island in the *Odyssey*. This paper will then show how Homer's Western localization for Kirke's island is corroborated by other mythographers, as it matches the account of his near contemporary Hesiod and is further clarified by his literary descendants, especially Apollonius.

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