

“I will send him to Crete, and sandy Pylos”: Fragments of the *Cypria* in the Homeric Scholia?

At *Odyssey* line 1.93 Athena tells Zeus “I will send him [Telemachus] to Sparta and sandy Pylos” (πέμψω δ’ ἐς Σπάρτην τε καὶ ἐς Πύλον ἡμαθόεντα). An HM scholion to *Od.* 3.313 reports that Zenodotus endorsed a variant line according to which Athena says “I will send him to Crete and sandy Pylos” (πέμψω δ’ ἐς Κρήτην τε καὶ ἐς Πύλον ἡμαθόεντα). Similarly, at 1.285, Athena instructs Telemachus to go to Nestor in Pylos “and from there to Sparta and blonde Menelaus” (κεῖθεν δὲ Σπάρτηνδε παρὰ ξανθὸν Μενέλαον) but the scholiast reports a Zenodotean variant “from there to Crete and lord Idomeneus” (κεῖθεν δ’ ἐς Κρήτην τε παρ’ Ἴδομενῆα ἄνακτα). These variants have been called the most puzzling in the textual tradition of Homeric epic (e.g., by Heubeck et al. on 1.87, West 1996: 27, Tsagalis 31-16), because they are preserved on the authority of Zenodotus yet wholly contradict the story of our *Odyssey*: Telemachus goes to Sparta from Pylos, and never visits Crete.

It has been argued that the lines derive from another version of the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus spent his travels on or around Crete and Telemachus went in search of his father there (Woodhouse 16-36, Reece 159-60, West 1981, Heubeck et al. on 1.87). This “Cretan *Odyssey*” is thought to have left its mark on our *Odyssey* in the so-called “lying tales” told by Odysseus on Ithaca, all of which have something to do with Crete (Burkert 127-35, Danek 48-49, Tsagalis 313-16). Verses from the Cretan *Odyssey* could have found their way into the rhapsode’s copy that Zenodotus probably used and then were misinterpreted as an editorial choice of Zenodotus (so West 2003: 305).

This amounts to saying that our verses constitute fragments of a lost Greek epic. The major obstacle to this theory is that there is no evidence that the Cretan *Odyssey* ever existed, in performance or in textual form. This is hard to understand if the poem was sufficiently well-

known for our *Odyssey* to allude to it ironically through Odysseus's lying tales, and had remained sufficiently vigorous (as performance tradition if not text) to create confusion in a manuscript possessed by Zenodotus.

In fact there is a well-attested epic poem that was widely read down to Hellenistic times, and that featured a hero traveling to Crete, most probably at divine behest, on a journey very like to include a stop-over in Nestor's Pylos: The *Cypria*. This lost epic poem narrated the elopement of Helen with Paris, to whom she had been promised by Aphrodite. Naturally this required that Menelaus be gotten out of the way, and according to Proclus's summary of the *Cypria* and other accounts (esp. Apollodorus, *Epit.* 3.3) he traveled to Crete to perform obsequies for his dead grandfather. Proclus tells us that Menelaus had an important meeting with Nestor on the way home, and it is probable that he stopped at Pylos on his journey out. Menelaus's departure for Crete at this crucial juncture will not have been mere coincidence. Given that the abduction of Helen was, according to the *Cypria*, the result not of one divine plan but of two – that of Aphrodite and that of Zeus – it seems highly likely that Menelaus's inopportune journey was arranged by a god: "I will send him to Crete, and sandy Pylos." Such a line could be spoken by Aphrodite, explaining to her protégé Paris how the obstacle would be removed, or perhaps by Zeus to some other divinity, explaining how he plans to aid Aphrodite's efforts. "From there to Crete, and lord Idomeneus" would naturally derive from a context in which the god's instructions were communicated to Menelaus.

I will conclude with some ideas as to how the contamination occurred, drawing especially on van Thiel's theory that many Zenodotean "readings" originated as marginal *comparanda*.

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