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Mapping Homer's Odyssey

Abstract

Homer's *Odyssey* should be seen as one of the very oldest subjects for historical maps, since Ortelius included this topic –besides a map of the journeys of St Paul and Aeneas– in his Parergon, late in the 16th century. From then until now more than 30 attempts have been made to trace the journey of Ulysses on a map. Among the authors were translators of the Odyssey (Johann Heinrich Voss, Samuel Butler, Victor Bérard), other classical scholars (Germain, Moulinier, Pocock), archaeologists (Dörpfeld), historians of geography (Forbiger), geographers (Herrmann), cartographers (Spruner), historians (Wolf) and sailors (Bradford, Severin), as well as scientists (von Baer), jurists (Steuerwald), ethnologists (Pellech) and amateurs. Some of the maps can be discussed as serious attempts at reconstruction while others are merely odd, taking Ulysses to, for instance, Florida or China. Some of the maps used geographical maps of their own time, others drew more or less imaginary maps trying to reconstruct the world of Homer. The paper is based on a collection of such maps gathered over the last 40 years. Fundamental problems of tracing Homer's *Odyssey* are raised. In the two books, which I have published on Homeric geography (Die wirkliche Reise des Odysseus. Zur Rekonstruktion des Homerischen Weltbildes, 3rd ed. 1990, Hatte Homer eine Karte?, 1997) I have developed a new method of reconstructing the Homeric world. This paper analyses the different types of other attempts to map Homer's Odyssey.

Over the last forty years I have collected in all roughly 80 theories on the geography of Homer's Odyssey. About 30 of them were illustrated by maps. Only these are the basis of my present article, but within this small space I can do no more than classify various types of these maps and present the most important ones in detail.[1]

In antiquity there existed various identifications of the places of the adventures of Ulysses, but no original map has been

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