

## Trinacria/Sicily: The Land of Cyclopes and Laestrygonians

Euripides and Thucydides identified Sicily / Trinacria with the land of Cyclopes and Laestrygonians, whereas Thucydides considered one of the Lipari Islands as the island of Aeolus.

Ulysses and his companions, on their way to the land of the Cyclopes, who «neither assemblies for council have they, nor appointed laws, but they dwell on the peaks of lofty mountains in hollow caves, and each one is lawgiver [115] to his children and his wives, and they reck nothing one of another», they made a stop on a small island close to the Cyclopean shore: there they had a short rest before their conflict with the monstrous giants, before the conflict of the civilised against the barbarians.

The music is from the album *Musique de la Grèce Antique*, by Atrium Musicæ de Madrid, Gregorio Paniagua.



**Homer, *Odyssey*, book IX, 116-151**

116 νῆσος ἔπειτα λάχεια παρὲκ λιμένος τετάνυσται,  
γαίης Κυκλώπων οὔτε σχεδὸν οὔτ' ἀποτηλοῦ,  
ύληεσσ': ἐν δ' αἶγες ἀπειρέσiai γεγάασιν  
ἄγρiαι: οὐ μὲν γὰρ πάτος ἀνθρώπων ἀπερύκει,  
120 οὐδέ μιν εἰσοιχνεῦσι κυνηγέται, οἳ τε καθ' ὕλην  
ἄλγεα πάσχουσιν κορυφὰς ὄρέων ἐφέποντες.  
οὔτ' ἄρα ποιμνησιν καταἴσχεται οὔτ' ἀρότοισιν,  
ἀλλ' ἦ γ' ἄσπαρτος καὶ ἀνήροτος ἤματα πάντα  
ἀνδρῶν χηρεῦει, βόσκει δέ τε μηκάδας αἶγας.  
125 οὐ γὰρ Κυκλώπεσσι νέες πάρα μιλτοπάρηoi,  
οὐδ' ἄνδρες νηῶν ἐνι τέκτονες, οἳ κε κάμοιεν  
νῆας ἐυσσέλμους, αἳ κεν τελείοιεν ἕκαστα  
ἄσπε' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπων ἰκνεύμεναι, οἳά τε πολλὰ  
ἄνδρες ἐπ' ἀλλήλους νηυσὶν περώωσι θάλασσαν:  
130 οἳ κέ σφιν καὶ νῆσον ἐνκτιμένην ἐκάμοντο.  
οὐ μὲν γὰρ τι κακὴ γε, φέροι δέ κεν ὥρια πάντα:  
ἐν μὲν γὰρ λειμῶνες ἀλὸς πολιοῖο παρ' ὄχθας  
ὑδροηλοὶ μαλακοί: μάλα κ' ἄφθιτοὶ ἄμπελοι εἶεν.  
ἐν δ' ἄροσις λειή: μάλα κεν βαθὺ λήιον αἰεὶ  
135 εἰς ὥρας ἀμῶεν, ἐπεὶ μάλα πῖαρ ὑπ' οὔδας.  
ἐν δὲ λιμὴν εὐορμος, ἴν' οὐ χρεῶ πείσματός ἐστιν,  
οὔτ' εὐνάς βαλέειν οὔτε πρυμνήσι' ἀνάψαι,  
ἀλλ' ἐπικέλσαντας μείναι χρόνον εἰς ὃ κε ναυτέων  
θυμὸς ἐποτρύνη καὶ ἐπιπνεύσωσιν αἴηται.  
140 αὐτὰρ ἐπὶ κρατὸς λιμένος ῥέει ἀγλαὸν ὕδωρ,  
κρήνη ὑπὸ σπείους: περὶ δ' αἶγειροι πεφύασιν.  
ἐνθα κατεπλέομεν, καὶ τις θεὸς ἠγεμόνευεν  
νύκτα δι' ὄρφναίην, οὐδὲ προυφαίνετ' ἰδέσθαι:  
ἄηρ γὰρ περὶ νηυσὶ βαθεῖ' ἦν, οὐδὲ σελήνη  
145 οὐρανόθεν προύφαινε, κατείχετο δὲ νεφέεσσιν.  
ἐνθ' οὐ τις τὴν νῆσον ἐσέδρακεν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,  
οὔτ' οὐν κύματα μακρὰ κυλινδόμενα προτὶ χέρσον  
εἰσίδομεν, πρὶν νῆας ἐυσσέλμους ἐπικέλσαι.  
κελσάσῃσι δὲ νηυσὶ καθείλομεν ἰστία πάντα,  
150 ἐκ δὲ καὶ αὐτοὶ βῆμεν ἐπὶ ῥηγμῖνι θαλάσσης:  
ἐνθα δ' ἀποβρίξαντες ἐμείναμεν Ἡῶ δῖαν.

**English translation**

116 "Now there is a level isle that stretches aslant outside the harbor, neither close to the shore of the land of the Cyclopes, nor yet far off, a wooded isle. Therein live wild goats innumerable, for the tread of men scares them not away, [120] nor are hunters won't to come thither, men who endure toils in the woodland as they course over the peaks of the mountains. Neither with flocks is it held, nor with ploughed lands, but unsown and untilled all the days it knows naught of men, but feeds the bleating goats. [125] For the Cyclopes have at hand no ships with vermilion cheeks, nor are there ship-wrights in their land who might build them well-benched ships, which should perform all their wants, passing to the cities of other folk, as men often cross the sea in ships to visit one another — [130] craftsmen, who would have made of this isle also a fair settlement. For the isle is nowise poor, but would bear all things in season. In it are meadows by the shores of the grey sea, well-watered meadows and soft, where vines would never fail, and in it level plough land, whence [135] they might reap from season to season harvests exceeding deep, so rich is the soil beneath; and in it, too, is a harbor giving safe anchorage, where there is no need of moorings, either to throw out anchor-stones or to make fast stern cables, but one may beach one's ship and wait until the sailors' minds bid them put out, and the breezes blow fair. [140] Now at the head of the harbor a spring of bright water flows forth from beneath a cave, and round about it poplars grow. Thither we sailed in, and some god guided us through the murky night; for there was no light to see, but a mist lay deep about the ships and the moon [145] showed no light from heaven, but was shut in by clouds. Then no man's eyes beheld that island, nor did we see the long waves rolling on the beach, until we ran our well-benched ships on shore. And when we had beached the ships we lowered all the sails [150] and ourselves went forth on the shore of the sea, and there we fell asleep and waited for the bright Dawn.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography\\_of\\_the\\_Odyssey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geography_of_the_Odyssey)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeolian\\_Islands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeolian_Islands)