

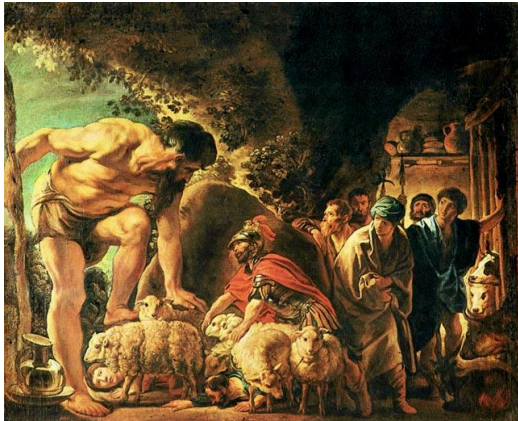
ADULT FICTION

POETRY – ENGLISH & OTHER

THE ODYSSEY

STORY BACKGROUND:

A total of nine recorded versions of Homer's *The Odyssey* have been found: five in English, three in French, and one in German. The earliest known recording seems to be the German version dated to around 1965. Two of the English readings were released by Naxos Audiobooks and two of the French readings by Frémeaux & Associés; both of these companies are well-renowned and reliable audiobook publishers.



All of these versions will include the famous scene in the Cyclops Cave from Book 9. The painting here, "Odysseus in the Cave of Polyphemus." is by the Flemish painter Jacob Jordaens, from the first half of the 17th century. Some of these readings also include the scene in Book 5 where Odysseus lives with Calypso in her cave and the one in Book 11 where he visits the Underworld and the scene in the next book where the six-headed Scylla attacks from its cave.

In addition to these nine versions there were eight much abbreviated versions in French and German on LPs for children. These will all be found in the Children's Fiction section.

In the paper I presented on "Caves in *The Odyssey*" at the 2005 UIS Congress in Kalamos, Greece, I exposed the various ideas about the possible location of the caves that Odysseus visited during his long voyage returning home to Ithaca after the Trojan War.

Down through the centuries Homeric scholars, explorers, and navigators have debated if the places Odysseus¹ visited could ever be located. Two schools of thought developed for interpreting the events described in Homer's epic poem. The literary scholar's approach claims that all the incidents following the moment when Odysseus passed Cape Malea must be purely mythical and imaginary. Whereas the historic geographer's approach sees plenty of evidence that whole sections of this work incorporate ancient Phoenician and Greek pilot's instructions for known coastlines plus tales based on authentic experiences of those ancient mariners. By careful study of *The Odyssey* text, the latter school has put forward many theories as to where to look in the Mediterranean area for the nine caves that Homer described.

CALYPSO'S CAVE (Book 5)

"Calypso was the daughter of Atlas, who "with his own shoulders supports the great columns that hold the earth and sky apart."(c.I-v.53-54) The Atlas Mountains are in Morocco and the "great columns" are the Rock of Gibraltar on one side and Mount Acho on the other, so Bérard searched along the Moroccan coast and found Perejil Island, whose name means "parsley." There he discovered a "vaulted cave" some 50 meters long and, over on the African

mainland, another cave with four springs. Throughout his investigation Bérard persists in ignoring that Perejil Island is situated close to the mainland, not in “the middle of the seas,” and it is far too distant, almost 2000 kilometers, from the Strait of Messina for someone drifting on a mast-keel raft, with a speed of at best one knot, to be able to reach in nine days.

“As early as the 3rd century B.C., the director of the library at Alexandria, Callimaque, had proposed the Isle of Gozo, just northwest of Malta, as Calypso’s Ogygia Island. An old engraving shows this cave as an arched opening at the north end of a limestone escarpment above Ramla Bay. In the 1920s, Halliburton estimated the cave at thirty feet (10 m) square and ten feet (3 m) high and “hung with beautifully shaped stalactites.” There were “signs of the chisel everywhere,” indicating that some portions of the cave were artificial. Later massive collapse of the entrance overhangs may have occurred due to local quarrying. In 1951, Shaw mapped the cave at nearly 75 feet (25m) long and wrote that “the interior of the cave consists of a series of low crawlways between shattered chambers floored with angular fragments of rock.”(Shaw, 1952) He estimated that “this shattering is probably due to the stress set up by the undermining of the subjacent beds of marl and clay and the consequent collapse of the edge of the limestone in the vicinity of the cave.”(Shaw & Mech, 1951) While visiting this cave in 1986, I found it much the same.” (Brisson 2005)

CYCLPOPS CAVE (Book 9)

“Seeing the smoke from the fires in the neighboring land of the Cyclops, Odysseus decided to take his flagship and investigate. Sailing ‘no great distance to the mainland coast... as we approached its nearest point, we made out a cave there, close to the sea, with a high entrance overhung by laurels. Here large flocks of sheep and goats were penned at night, and round the mouth a yard had been built with a great wall of stones.’ (c.IX-v.182-187) Various extravagant ideas have been put forward to localize the Cave of Polyphemus, some even as improbable as the Canary Islands. Bérard puts the cave at Posillipo near Naples, but this is an entirely artificial tunnel dating to Roman times and never visible from the sea. Several researchers, starting with Butler in 1897, locate this cave not far from Favignana Island, about five kilometers northeast of Trapani near Pizzolungo Point in western Sicily. Halliburton hiked out there in the 1920s and took shelter from the rain in a walled-in sheep pen cave near the coast called Grotta di Polifemo, which he estimated to be fifty feet (17 meters) square and thirty feet (10 meters) high. Thirty years later Bradford checked out this same cave and agreed that ‘a band of men could easily be trapped’ here.” (Brisson 2005)

CAVE ENTRANCE TO THE UNDERWORLD (Book 11)

“Next Odysseus must visit Hades, the Underground-Cavern of the Dead, and Circe tells him that the North wind will blow him to a “wild coast and to Persephone’s Grove.” Homer puts the entrance to Hades’ Kingdom where “the River of Flaming Fire and the River of Lamentation, which is a branch of the Styx, unite around a pinnacle of rock to pour their thundering streams into Acheron.”(c.X-v.509-516) Traditionally there are at least four entrances to Hades: two in Greece and two in Italy. At the southernmost point of Greece, near the tip of the Mani peninsula in the Peloponnese, different authors have suggested three different caves as the entrance that Orpheus used when he went to bring Eurydice from the Underworld. In Epirus of northwestern Greece at the confluence of the Acheron and the Cocytus, the River of Woe and the River of Wailing, is a rock where another entrance can be found. In central Sicily, near Enna, a cave on the south shore of Lake Pergusa is where Hades came out of the Underworld, kidnapped Persephone, and took her back underground to be his bride.(del Salvio et al. 1989) But the traditional location in Italy, for consulting the oracle of the dead and entering Hades, was at the Lake Avernus, north of Baiae and west of Naples. Many think that the latter location is where Odysseus went to dig a trench and offer sacrifice so as to be able to converse with the dead spirits that came forth to meet him. But, as Severin points out, the entrance to Hades in Epirus fits better with the directions given in Homer and, based on this assumption, Severin adjusts his

entire proposed route to revolve around this geographic site which is located only 80 kilometers north of Ithaca.” (Brison 2005)

CAVE OF SCYLLA (Book 12)

“Returning to Circe’s Island, Odysseus is given precise sailing instructions that will get him back to his home in Ithaca. After safely passing the Sirens at the Galli Islands, he continues south and must pass through the Strait of Messina. Now the early Phoenician mariners knew the whirlpools of Charybdis on the Sicilian side and the headland at Scylla in Calabria. The strait is from three to four kilometers wide, but in Mycenaean times the dangerous currents and whirlpools of Charybdis must have been quite formidable for a war galley. So Circe warns him to hug closely the high rock promontory of Scylla and beware that, “halfway up the crag there is a misty cavern, facing the west and running down to Erebus, past which, my lord Odysseus, you must steer your ship. The strongest Bowman could not reach the gaping mouth of the cave with an arrow shot from the ship below. It is the home of Scylla, the creature with the dreadful bark...she has twelve feet, all dangling in the air, and six long necks, each ending in a grisly head with triple rows of teeth.”(c.XII-v.79-92) The monster could well be a hybrid mythical creature composed of elements of giant squid, dog’s heads, and shark’s teeth. The 18th-century Italian natural historian, Lazzaro Spallanzani, reported that several small caves and a large one called, Dragara, could be found at the base of this 75-meter-high limestone headland and that the waves crashing into these caves produced strange sounds. In 1912, Bérard spotted a retaining wall, halfway up the rock, that seemed to conceal a fissure cave entrance and he tried to explore it but was stopped by the Italian Coast Guard. Several observers have surmised that the earthquake of 1783 destroyed any cave that was there.” (Brison 2005)

Ref: Atsma, Aaron J. 2011, Polyphemos & Odysseus, [theoi](#)

Bérard, Victor & Boissonnas, Frédéric 1933, *Dans le sillage d’Ulysse*, Armand Colin

Bradford, Ernie 1963 (2004), *Ulysses Found*, Hodder & Stoughton, London

Brison, David 2005, Caves in *The Odyssey*, Acts of 2005 UIS Congress

Butler, Samuel 1897, *The Authoress of the Odyssey*, Jonathan Cape, London

Halliburton, Richard 1927, *The Glorious Adventure*, Garden City Pub. Co., New York,

Homer, *The Odyssey* (translated by E.V. Rieu, 1946), Penguin Classics, London

Homer 8 BC, *The Odyssey*, Book IX, [poetryintranslation](#)

Homer 8 BC, *The Odyssey*, Translated by Samuel Butler, Book V, [classics.mit](#); Book IX, [classics.mit](#);

Book XI, [classics.mit](#)

Homer 8 BC, *The Odyssey*, Synopsis, [Wikipedia](#)

Del Salvo, Elena; Ferrari-Bravo, Anna; & Lissini, Marco 1989 (2000), *Sicilia*, Guida d’Italia, Touring Club Italiano, Milan, p. 295-296, 503

Shaw, T.R., The Caves of Malta, *The American Caver*, NSS Bull., n. 14, Sept.1952, p. 39

Shaw, T.R. & Mech, G.I., The Caves of Gozo, *Cave Science*, British Spel. Ass’n, n. 16, April 1951, p. 342 (map), 344-354

Spallanzani, Lazzaro 1792-1797 (translated from Latin by Angelo Faboni, 1825), *Viaggi alle due Sicilie e in alcune parti dell’Appennino*, Tomo II, Milan, p. 443-444 ; (translated into French by G. Toscan, 1797)

Voyage dans les deux Siciles, Tome IV, Maradan, Paris, p. 113-114

PERFORMED IN ENGLISH

In chronological order

SWA-OY1 United States 1969

THE ODYSSEY

SW – Fiction – Epic Poetry

Scr: Richmond LATTIMORE (Based on Books 9 – 12 of HOMER's epic poem "The Odyssey")

Perf: Anthony QUAYLE (reader)
Prod. Co: Caedmon Records; New York, NY
Time: (?)
LP: THE ODYSSEY

Caedmon 3001 (mono)
3X 12" 33rpm

Notes: A dramatic reading of the complete Book 9 of "The Odyssey" where Odysseus and his men are held captive in the cave home of the Cyclops.

"Contains selections from book 9, lines 19 to conclusion, all of book 10, lines 1-228, and 328 to conclusion, and all of book 12." (Worldcat) For many years Caedmon Records was probably the finest spoken word record company in the English speaking world.

Record not seen or heard.

Ref: Anthony Quayle, Actor, britmovie.co.uk

Anthony Quayle, Bio, Wikipedia

The Odyssey, Caedmon LP, worldcat



Anthony QUAYLE

WA-OY2 United States ca.1980s

THE CYCLOPS' CAVE

SW – Fiction – Epic Poetry

Scr: Bernard EVSLIN (Based on epic poem
"The Odyssey" by HOMER)

Mus: MEDIA COUNTERPOINT

Perf: Richard KILEY (Odysseus – Ulysses)

Paul HECHT (The Cyclops)

Prod: Natalie Slohm

Prod. Co: Spoken Arts; New Rochelle, NY

Liner Notes: Dorothy Evslin

Time: 11:29

LP: HEROES OF THE GREEK MYTHS

Spoken Arts SA 1134

2X 12" 33rpm (Disc 2 – Sd 1) (Gatefold cover)

Notes: Another important US spokn word label.

This LP has not been seen or heard.

Ref: Richard Kiley, Bio, Wikipedia

Paul Hecht, Bio, Wikipedia



Richard KILEY



Paul HECHT

SWA-OY3 United Kingdom 1995

THE ODYSSEY

SW – Fiction – Epic Poetry

Selections:

CD One – 4. IMPRISONED ON CALYPSO'S ISLE – 14:45/ 9. ESCAPE
FROM THE CYCLOPS - 11:16

CD Two – 4. SHADES OF THE UNDERWORLD – 12:57

Scr: Perry KEENLYSIDE (Based on epic poem by HOMER)

Perf: Anton LESSER (reader)

Prod: Nicolas Soames

Prod. Co: Naxos AudioBooks Ltd.

Time: (CD 1) 78:14; (CD 2) 78:50; (CD 3) 78:43; & (Total) 3:55:38

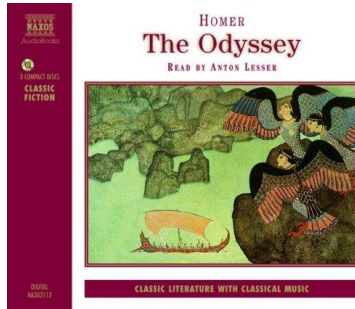
CD: THE ODYSSEY (Abridged)

Naxos AudioBooks NA 303112 (3XCDs) (3/1995)

Notes: A dramatic reading of an abridged version of Homer's classic by Anton Lesser, who is a leading classical actor in Britain.



Anton LESSER



This was the first abridged 3 CD Naxos release of the Lesser reading. It was followed in June 2007 by an unabridged 10 CD Naxos set (12h 45m) and in September 2007 Naxos by another abridged 4 CD set (4h 36m), both of these later sets had the text translated by Ian Johnston.

There is also two abridged sets of 3 CDs or 4 CDs.

The story starts with Odysseus in the cave of Calypso. Later is the scene with Polyphemos in his cave.

Ref: Anton Lesser, Bio, [naxosaudiobooks](#)

Anton Lesser, Bio, [Wikipedia](#)

Homer, *The Odyssey*, Read by Anton Lesser, 2007 Abridged CD, First part, [naxosaudiobooks](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Homer, *The Odyssey*, 1995 Abridged Naxos CDs, [naxos](#)

Homer, *The Odyssey*, 2007 Unabridged Naxos CDs, [naxos](#)

Homer, *The Odyssey*, 2007 Abridged Naxos CDs, [naxos](#)

SWA-OY4 United Kingdom 1997

THE ODYSSEY

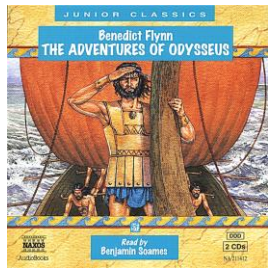
SW – Fiction – Epic Poetry

Selections:

CD One – 4. POLYPHEMUS, THE CYCLOPS – 8:17/ 9. THE UNDERWORLD – 7:26

CD Two – 2. SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS – 3:36/ 4. CALYPSO – 4:32

Scr: Benedict FLYNN (Based on the epic poem by HOMER)



Perf: Benjamin **SOAMES** (reader)

Prod: Anton Lesser

Prod. Co: Naxos AudioBooks Ltd.

Liner Notes: Benedict Flynn (3-page foldout)

Time: (Total) 2h 25m

CD: THE ADVENTURES OF ODYSSEUS

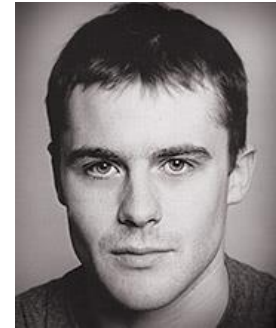
Naxos AudioBooks NA 211412 (2X CDs)

Notes: Another dramatic reading of an unabridged version of Homer's classic rewritten by Benedict Flynn and released by Audiobooks.

Ref: The Adventures of Odysseus, Read by Benjamin Soames, Unabridged CD, [naxosaudiobooks](#) (◀AUDIO SAMPLE)

Benjamin Soames, Bio, [naxosaudiobooks](#)

Flynn, Benedict, The Adventures of Odysseus, [naxos](#)



Ben SOAMES

SWA-OY5 United Kingdom 2004

THE ODYSSEY

SW – Fiction – Epic Poetry

Scr: Simon ARMITAGE

(Based on epic poem by HOMER)

Mus: Gary YERSON

Perf: Tim **McINNERNY** (Odysseus)

Barrie **RUTTER** (Cyclops)

Adjoa **ANDOH** (Calypso)

RADIO DRAMA COMPANY

Prod: Janet Whitaker

Prod. Co: BBC Audiobooks Ltd.

Broadcast Dates: BBC Radio 4 – 28 & 29 Aug. 2004

Liner Notes: (6-page booklet)

Time: (Total) 3h 50m

CD: THE ODYSSEY

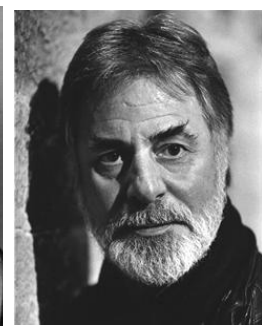
BBC Audiobooks ISBN 0563 525495 (3X CDs)



Adjoa ANDOH



Tim McINNERNY



Barrie RUTTER

Notes: A BBC Radio 4 dramatic performance of Homer's classic.

Ref: Adjoa Andoh, Bio, [Wikipedia](#)

Barrie Rutter, Bio, [Wikipedia](#)

The Odyssey on Radio 4, [bbc.co.uk](#)

The Odyssey, BBC Audiobooks America, [worldcat](#)

Tim McInnerny, Bio, [Wikipedia](#)



Classics Illustrated, No. 81 - 1964

PERFORMED IN FRENCH

In chronological order

SWA-OY6 France ca.1970-1971

L'ODYSSÉE: LE CYCLOPE

SW – Fiction – Epic Poetry

Scr: (?) (Excerpts from Books 6, 9 & 23 of HOMER's epic poem "The Odyssey")

Perf: (?) (in French)

Prod. Co: Librairie Hachette

Liner Notes: Emile Mireaux

Time: (?)

LP: HOMERE

L'Encyclopédie Sonore Hachette 320E923

12" 33rpm (Sd 2 – Bd 2)

Notes: Excerpts in French from Homer's "The Iliad" (Side 1) and "The Odyssey" (Side 2). The longest selection from the latter epic poem is from Book 9, the encounter between Odysseus and the Cyclopes in the cave.

A booklet giving the printed text is provided with the disc.

L'Encyclopédie Sonore was a sublabel of Hachette.

Record never seen or heard.

Ref: Anon., *Films et Documents*, n. 312, Mai-Juin 1976, Paris, p. 37



SWA-OY7 France 2000

ULYSSE

SW – Fiction – Epic Poetry

Selections:

1. CALYPSO – 5:06/ 3. L'ÎLE DU CYCLOPE – 5:23/ 4. MON NOM EST "PERSONNE" – 7:37/ 7. LE PAYS DES MORTS – 5:55/ 8. TIRÉSIAS ET LES OMBRES – 5:31/ 9. DE CHARYBDE EN SCYLLA – 4:59/ 11. ITHAQUE – 7:07

Scr: Oliver COHEN (Excerpts from the epic poem "The Odyssey")

Mus: Jean-Francois ALEXANDRE

Perf: Jean-Pierre CASSEL (Ulysses)

Prod. Co: Le Proscenium; Kos & Co. & Frémeaux & Associés S.A.; Vincennes

Illus: Bernard Pons

Liner Notes: (32-page booklet) Oliver Cohen

J.-F. CASSEL

Time: (See above)

CD: ULYSSE

Frémeaux & Associés FA 805



Notes: Dramatic readings in French of several important episodes from *The Odyssey*. Only the episodes including scenes in caves have been listed and considered here.

In French Odysseus is referred to as Ulysses (his Roman name) because this is the way the name was given in the famous French translation by Victor Bérard in the 1924 (Éditions Les Belles Lettres, Paris).

For some reason Frémeaux & Associés decided to release two different readings of this classic in 2000 (see also the next entry).

The illustration showing the Cyclops holding an entire tree that he has uprooted and standing in a field in front of his cave was on the back page of the liner notes.

Ref: Jean-Pierre Cassel, Bio (in French), [Wikipedia](#) & (in English), [Wikipedia](#)
Ulysee d'après Homère CD, Frémeaux & Associés, [fremeaux](#)

SWA-OY8 France 2000

L'ILLIAD ET L'ODYSSÉE

SW – Fiction – Epic Poetry

Selections:

CD 8 – **DE LA TERRE DES MONSTRES AU ROYAUME DES MORTS** [Chants IX à XI]

1. SUR LE RIVAGE DE LA TERRE DES CYCLOPES (Chant IX – Vers 1 à 500) – 3:45/ 2. FACE AU MONSTRE (Vers 252 à 286) – 1:57/ 3. LA BRUTE ET LA RUSÉ (Vers 287 à 370) – 4:48/ 4. LA VENGEANCE (Vers 371 à 414) – 2:21/ 5. L'ÉVASION (Vers 415 à 479) – 3:17/ 6. MENACE (Vers 480 à 566)/ - 4:45 7. LA SACRIFICE AUX MORTS (Chant XI – Vers 1 à 50) – 3:08/ 8. UN COMPAGNON OUBLIÉ (Vers 51 à 83) – 1:52/ 9. LE DEVIN TIRÉSIAS (Vers 84 à 151) – 4:02/ 10. MA MÈRE ! (Vers 152 à 234) – 4:44/ 11. VOICI AGAMEMNON (Vers 328 à 466) – 7:53/ 12. PAUVRE ACHILLE ! (Vers 467 à 542) – 4:05

Scr: Lecomte DE LISLE (Translation in French of the epic poem "The Odyssey" by HOMER)

Perf: Michel LONSDALE

Jean-Pierre MICHAEL

Claude LESKO

SAPHO

Prod: Claude Colombini & Raymond Jaquenod

Prod. Co: Frémeaux & Associés S.A.; Vincennes

Liner Notes: (Booklet) Raymond Jaquenod

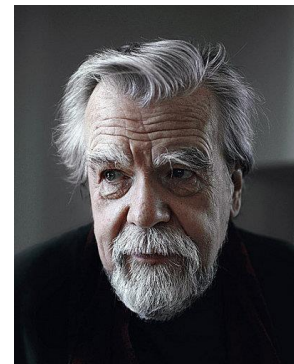
Michel LONSDALE

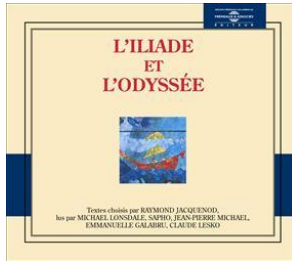
Time: (See above)

CD: L'ILLIAD ET L'ODYSSÉE

Frémeaux & Associés FA 8014 (10XCDs) (Disc 8 – Tks 1 to 12)

Notes: Dramatic (unabridged) readings in French of several important episodes from *The Illiad* and *The Odyssey*. Only the episodes in *The Odyssey* that include scenes in caves have been listed and considered here, that is, the encounter with the Cyclops & the Cyclops Cave and the visit to the Underworld.





For some reason Frémeaux & Associés decided to release two different readings of this classic in 2000 (see also the preceding entry). This version has not been heard, but to learn more you are referred to the track summaries on the [Frémeaux](#) site.

Ref: Frémeaux & Associés, Catalogue 2009-2011, p. 50
L'Illiad et L'Odyssée CD, Chronology of *The Illiad & The Odyssey* & Summary of Tracks (in French), [Frémeaux](#)
L'Illiad et L'Odyssée CD, Track listings presented incorrectly, [Frémeaux](#)

PERFORMED IN GERMAN

SWA-OY9 West Germany ca.1965

HOMER AUS DER ODYSSE

SW – Fiction – Epic Poetry

Scr: (?) (Based on epic poem by HOMER)

Perf: Mathias **WIEMAN** (reader in German)

Prod. Co: Deutsche Grammophon GmbH

Liner Notes: (Booklet in German)

Time:

LP: HOMER AUS DER ODYSSEE

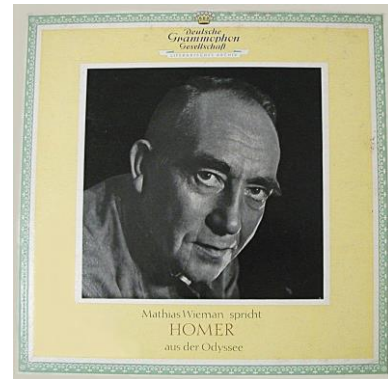
Ser: Gesellschaft Literarisches Archiv
Deutsche Grammophon 43 033/4 LPMS (mono)
Boxed Set 2X12" 33rpm

Notes: Possibly the first known commercial recording of *The Odyssey*.

Excerpts from "The Odyssey" are given a dramatic reading in German. In a 3-record LP set like this, it is quite certain that it includes the very popular Book 9, where the Cyclops holds Odysseus and his men prisoners in the cave.

This record has never been seen or heard.

Ref: German eBay postings



(For 8 other readings of this work see Spoken Word – Children's Fiction)

caveinspiredmusic.com