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filmproduktion, A

JOURNEY TO THE CRADLE OF EUROPE

(Reise zur Wiege Europas)

TREATMENT FOR A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY

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Synopsis

Originally the director of the documentary wanted to take a research voyage to the Odyssey with his friend and archaeologist, but when they reached the Lycia of antiquity, the tomb of a Lycian prince in Trysa opened up a chapter of Austrian archeological history that turned out to be as exciting as a thriller.



THE DOCUMENTARY FILM INVESTIGATES THE CRADLE OF EUROPE ON TWO LEVELS

1) Which of the adventures of Odysseus might have a historical background – on the other hand, which seem to have been taken from older texts where they experience child gods of creation.

2) The exciting research into the Austrian expedition from 1882-84: because of it, the Lycian tomb, »Heroon of Trysa », with its 211 meter-long frieze of reliefs came to Vienna to the Kunsthistorisches Museum; on it are 600 figures in lively scenes taken from Greek heroic mythology – The Iliad, The Odyssey and local tales. In 1993 the then Turkish cultural minister, on a visit to Vienna, brought up the question of the legality of this acquisition. It was agreed that an exact reconstruction of the procedure would be made in cooperation with Turkish specialists. In 2006 the more than 700 page study was completed, documenting the legally correct division of the finds.



Three people lead through the film:

1) The archeologist Jürgen Borchhardt: for more than 30 years, Borchhardt was head of the Austrian Lycian excavations in Turkey, found and uncovered the ancient city of Limyra in the overgrown swamp region, along with a temple on the mountain above the city; he is a Homer specialist and an impressive storyteller; he represents the current scientific position: the work of Homer is great poetry and reflects the wars in the second millennium B.C. in Asia Minor, although concrete places such as Troy or specific historical personages are difficult to make out.



2) The Archaeologist Hubert Szemethy, co-worker of J. Borchhardt: it took him years of research to find original documents and photos relating to the discovery and acquisition of the Heroon of Trysa; in 2006 he also published a detailed study about it.

3) The director of the film who questions the existence of Odysseus: the film maker is supposed to write a script about the Odyssey for a US television station in the style of a feature documentary film, a trend in style he does not like, and the scenes he has drafted for the story board are in places animated in an ironic way.



1. FILM LEVEL:

Sarpedon, son of Zeus and Europa, was expelled from the island of Crete by his brother Minos, and founded Lycia near today's Antalya. In the Trojan War, he appears as a confederate of the Trojans with an array of Lycian soldiers, and dies heroically in battle. Lycia's most famous hero, however, is Bellerophon who defeated the Chimera (a beast with the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a snake), who had ravaged the land with her fiery breath. The archaeology professor Jürgen Borchhardt tells this story to his friend, a Viennese film maker, at the »burning stones« of Yanartas where, according to legend,

Bellerophon locked up the Chimera in such a way that only her fiery breath escaped the stony prison. In that place, methane gas comes out of the earth and burns.



The director is supposed to write a script about Odysseus, but he is in doubt whether the heroic deeds are not chimeras (illusions) originating from early childhood when the child has to learn to distinguish between the worlds of animals and humans. It is no surprise there are humanized animals and fictional creatures made up of parts of several animals in every child's room.

The Lycian Zeus and weather god was called Trqqas, akin to the Hittite Luwian Tarhunt, whose son was Telipinu. Here in the Middle East the child god Telipinu was worshipped for centuries. In his infantile wrath, he wants to destroy the world. Is this the way Odysseus got his name »the wrathful«?



Or did his name come from his grandfather, who was a thief and a seller of stolen goods, and »at whom many people were therefore very angry« (Borchhardt)?

Just like with hungry, crying babies, Telipinu's wrath could only be soothed with milk and honey. Even today, the so-called »Adonis rose« is related to Telipinu in Turkey. This plant is used to make a sweet paste, which is given to the bridegroom on the wedding night. Also the roots of the Mesir Festival celebrated in Manisa, where chewy Mesir candies are distributed, can be traced back to Telipinu.

The film director has withdrawn to his house on the south of Peloponnes to work on a film manuscript about Odysseus and the Austrian Lycian expedition of 1882-84. On his laptop he looks through material that was already filmed in Lycia. He is constantly annoyed by scorpions, mice and strange dropouts who pay him

unwanted visits. They have chosen a nature paradise to live in that they are only able to endure with the help of alcohol or strictly regulated everyday rituals.

The house lies isolated on a bay only a few kilometres from Cape Malea. According to Homer, Odysseus came southward through the Aegean to this place from Troy with a stormy wind.

Today there is still a sailing phenomenon that occurs at Cape Malea. Just at the Cape there is practically no wind, but if one sails around it, a very strong wind suddenly begins to blow. Experienced sailors use less sail rather than more despite the calm so as not to be carried off course. But that is exactly what appears to have happened to Odysseus. He tried to sail around Cape Malea towards Ithaca, was driven across the Mediterranean for nine days and ended up in North Africa »where he finds the land of the Lotus Eaters,« as Homer describes it.

Here, however, doubt seems appropriate. About 1000 years before, the child-god Indra, son of the Sun God, also experienced adventures centered on the lotus in the Rigveda that were very similar to those of Odysseus after his arrival in the land of the Lotus



Eaters. Odysseus' relation to the sun god, who has connections with the child-gods of the east – with the Indian Indra and the Iranian Mithra – and the story of his odyssey correspond to the sagas in which Mithra moves through the 12 months. Many of the adventures attributed to Indra and Mithra are also experienced by Odysseus. The question arises, did Odysseus exist as a historical figure at all?

Mithra is mentioned already more than 3,500 years ago in a treaty between the king of the Hittites with the neighboring Mitanni, drawn up on clay tablets from Hattussa. Not far from

this former capital of the Hittite kingdom there is a holy rock with 12 gods who all, like Mithra and often Odysseus as well, wear a pointed cap (cf. the book/film »Gods with Pointed Caps« by Petrus van der Let). Borchhardt, who wrote his dissertation on ancient headgear, considers such connections as quite possible.



Also, in the Rigveda the infant Indra has to free himself from the cave of blurred vision experienced during the first months of life, by overcoming the monster Vrtra (literally, the one who blocks).

The Iliad gives the Lycians an excellent role to play. This leads to the conclusion that the work may possibly have been commissioned by Lycian princes. The Odyssey was written about 40 years after the Iliad and gives the princes of the Peloponnes (Pylos, Sparta, Mycenae) a prominent role. In any case close family, cultural and economic ties existed for centuries between the Lycians and the Peloponnesian princes. And of course every bard tried to include places in his works that were known to his particular audience. Thus, Poseidon sees Odysseus from Mount Tartali (near Olympus/Lycia – along with Cape Malea, Sparta and Mycenae, one of the few exact place names in the Odyssey) and becomes enraged with divine fury when Odysseus blinds his son, Polyphem. The cave of the one-eyed Cyclops, Polyphem, is possibly located in Cappadocia where giants were supposed to have ruled before the Amazons.

But why does »kyklops« also mean round-cheeked, like babies? There are, in fact, a number of portrayals of monsters with children's faces, such as the Gorgon in the Acropolis Museum in Athens.

But this locked up dragon is overfed, lazy and unable to move about, like an infant; and we see that Indra has to overcome his fat-cheeked alter ego in order to leave the visual cave of the first few months of his life. Was Odysseus perhaps only a small child experiencing the change from blurred to clearer perception, and the single eye of the giant merely the eye on an amulet, like those still worn today in Greece to ward off the evil eye?

The American speech researcher, Calvert Watkins, shows in his study, »How to Kill a Dragon« (1995), how the battle between Indra and Vrtra became the Indo-European archetype of the »hero defeats snake (dragon)«, which also influenced Homer's texts, even into his verse meter. Psychohistorians such as Lloyd deMause think that the umbilical cord is the archetype of the snake, which – due to the infant's



shortage of oxygen during birth, is always depicted as a strangling monster – a female strangler (Greek = Sphinx).



The land of the Laestrygians is described by Homer in the *Odyssey*: two steep tongues of land lie opposite one another and in between is this narrow passage not two hundred meters wide. The harbor at the end of the channel is »encircled all around by rocks reaching into the sky.« But a harbor that looks very similar is also found at Ithaca, the supposed island home of Odysseus.

On the other hand, Homer describes the island as being west of four other islands, which Ithaca is not. Therefore the Greek archaeologist L. Kolonas and English colleagues suspect that the western part of the island Kefalonia was a separate island of its own in antiquity and was only later pushed into the eastern part of Kefalonia by an earthquake (»*Odysseus Unbound*« by Robert Bittlestone and James Diggle, 2004).

This agrees with geological examinations made on Kefalonia which has suffered frequent devastating earthquakes. The African continental plateau pushes against the European here, a situation that has led to repeated earthquakes and tsunamis. The most recent was in 1953 when the island was totally devastated by an earthquake. 2,400 years ago the land level of Lycia was 8 meters below what it is today. For that reason many ancient settlements near the coast lie under water.

Homer's description of the island of Odysseus fits Kefalonia better in many ways. Kolonas made an archeological investigation of the Drakena cave and found proof that it was used as a cult cave for divine worship already in 5000 B.C. Almost all the gods of antiquity were born in caves – first and foremost Zeus who, as Zeus Meilichoios in the Cretian variant, remains a one year-old, since he dies each year and is reborn. His symbol is – not incidentally – the snake.

A small child must slowly learn to separate the world or people and animals from the optical chaos of his first few months of life. The transitions performed by the enchantress, Circe, who turned Odysseus' companions into swine, could fall into this period: animalized people and humanized animals are a normal feature of every child's room. (Compare with the childlike Kirke and Polyphern in the State Antiquities Collection in Munich).



In central Europe, caves were also the first sites of cultic worship. In 2006 Ingrid and Heinrich Kusch found a cultic site that stems from the early Stone Age in a side wing of the Lur Grotto near Peggau in the Austrian province of Styria. Since one can only view it through a tiny hole, it is currently being measured with the help of mini-cameras and a computerized reconstruction program. Apparently, a female deity was worshipped here, as in Catal Hüyük.

In his bestseller, »Mutterrecht und Urreligion« (Mother Law and Primal Religions), Johann Jakob Bachofen presumed in the mid 19th century that Lycia was a matriarchy. However this is not provable archeologically, as Jürgen Borchhardt demonstrates with Lycian graves.

Nonetheless, the philosopher Parmenides, the precursor of Plato, descends into the underworld to the great goddess. Parmenides referred to a group of doctors in antiquity. The healers of this school bore the epithet aithrobates. This translates as skywalkers (also

the name of the family in the Star Wars epic). They meditated in caves and pursued a therapy we would call re-birthing today: the patient entered a cave and was put into a state of lessened consciousness through the monotony of a poem sung by the healer. This made it possible to flee from the unsatisfying reality to earlier phases of life, during which satisfaction was experienced. For that reason, only females appear in Parmenides' poem; even the animals are all female. In a state of semi-sleep, the patient is thus drawn to the mother's breast again, as it were.

But the Odyssey also shows the tissue of fear, especially connected with men experiencing the overpowering mother at the beginning of their lives. The monster, Skylla, has 6 heads and devours 8 of Odysseus' companions. The demonization countering the heroization of woman also shaped Vienna during the second half of the 19th century, in which the second level of the film plays.



2. FILM LEVEL:



Sarpedon's death in Troy is also depicted on the tomb of the Lycian prince who, in 4th century BC, saw himself as the descendant of the founder of Lycia.

Julius August Schönborn, originally from Posen, was a high school teacher and undertook research expeditions. On December 20, 1841, he discovered in an impassable mountain area of Lycia, the Heroon of Trysa, a graveyard surrounded by numerous reliefs. He also discovered other significant finds like the remains of an ancient settlement and numerous sarcophaguses, and one of the most important testimonies of antiquity, the Heroon of Trysa, a graveyard walled in by numerous friezes in relief. Schönborn tried to get the sculptures of the monument for the Royal Museum in Berlin, but he failed. After his death, the Heroon of Trysa fell into oblivion. Alone, Carl Ritter's work on »Erdkunde von Asien« (Asian geography) mentioned it.

Otto Benndorf was inspired by this book and »Mutterrecht und Urreligion« (Mother Right and Primeval Religions) by Johann Jakob Bachofen, who suspected Lycia was a matriarchy. He suggested to Carl Ritter von Stremayr, who at that time was professor at the Vienna University for classical Archeology and Minister for Culture and Education, that he undertake an expedition to Lycia. He wanted to find out if the sculptures of the Heroon were worthy enough, to diplomatically suggest their acquisition for the imperial-royal collection in Vienna.

A contemporary of Benndorf's – the writer **Leopold von Sacher-Masoch** – was also a Bachofen fan and connected the idea of a coming matriarchy with the vision of the »United States of Europe.« Lycia's constitution was so advanced that even George



Washington had studied it. Sacher-Masoch was a lecturer for history at Graz University before he lived in Vienna and Bruck an der Mur as a free lance writer. The house in Graz where the Sacher-

Masochs lived still stands. The singer Marianne Faithful is a proud descendant of the family because her ancestor was very active in promoting women's rights.

The son of Otto Benndorf – Hans Benndorf – was a professor at the Technical University in Graz. His grandson, Gottfried was director of the university library and his great-granddaughter still lives in Graz as an art restorer.

One of Otto Benndorf's expeditions, commissioned by the ministry in 1881, in which **Felix von Luschan from Hollabrunn** also took part (he would later advance to the position as

head of the ethnological museum in Berlin), succeeded in rediscovering this Lycian tomb on April 17, 1881.



»Your Majesty! During the course of the last hundred years, great Museums of Antiquity have been created in London, Berlin, Paris and Petersburg. With steadily increasing investment and vigorous competition, they are committed to finding the still obtainable remains of art from the world of classical antiquity and taking them into possession. Your Majesty's capital and residence, Vienna, does not yet have a collection of sculptures to show the development and importance of Greek art to the world of today.«

Such was the pleading of the representatives of the new Society for Archeological Research in Asia Minor founded for the Turkey expedition for obtaining classical sculptures. The letter dated January 1, 1882, was soon followed by an audience with Franz Joseph I. With imperial blessing, the diplomatic and bureaucratic procedure began that would bring the relief frieze from the ancient mountain city of Trysa (today Gölbashi) in the southwest of Turkey to Vienna.

The idea of a second expedition, again under the direction of Otto Benndorf, found enough



went over the steep Demre Valley and passed through a river bed that was dried out in summer. The stone plates were taken down to the valley on specially constructed sleds.

After diplomatic negotiations with Adalia, Smyrna and Constantinople, the first division of

support among Viennese art-lovers (among them the **Drasche Family from Ebreichsdorf**) that in 1881 the »Gesellschaft für die archäologische Erforschung Kleinasien« (society for archeological exploration of Asia Minor) was founded. They started the excavation of the frieze, which was supposed to be offered as a dedication to the emperor. The reliefs were taken down and, to make them easier to transport, they were cut down to a thickness of 20-25 cm and packed in iron-reinforced wooden crates. The technical head of the expedition, Gabriel Knaffl Ritter von Fohnsdorf, had to construct a 22 kilometer-long path down to the sea. It had 17 curves,

the find on September 4, 1882, provided the society the approval to take 79 boxes, that included all the Western and Southern reliefs.

Other negotiations followed in Constantinople and Vienna, resulting in a new directive by the imperial Ottoman government. It could be interpreted in such a way that artworks which belonged together should not be separated. On this basis a second division of the find was undertaken on September 12. The Turkish excavation commissioner, Suleiman Effendi, agreed in writing to turn over possession of all 168 crates to the society. The customs officer of Dembre declared, in front of witnesses, that the embarkation would be allowed in exchange for 12 Lira. Only the colossal gate, the Dereimis and the Aischylos sarcophaguses and the dolphin sarcophagus had to be left in the area of the Heroon.



The Monument finally was supposed to be transported to Vienna in a third expedition under the command of Gabriel Knaffl. In return for the pieces left behind in 1882, the Turkish interior minister, Edhem Pascha, insisted that the society have the dolphin-sarcophagus sent to the newly built Museum of Constantinople.

On April 30, 1884, the dolphin sarcophagus was handed over to the Turkish authorities of Constantinople; the remaining pieces of the find were brought to Vienna. In May they arrived at the »Kunsthistorisches Museum« (Museum of Art History) in Vienna, where they are still kept today.

The only problem was that in 1990, these facts were only sketchily outlined at the **big Lycian exhibition at Schallaburg (Gods, Heroes and Lycian Rulers)**. At that time the University of Vienna received a letter from the granddaughter of Benndorf in Seattle, USA, in which she wrote that she found documents in her

cellar about the Austrian expedition to Lycia in 1882.

Dr. Szemethy went to the USA, but the document turned out to be copies, not originals. However, they gave him hints of where he might find descendants who would possibly have originals. And indeed later he found original documents in the possession of a great-granddaughter of Benndorf's in Graz. The documents were mainly letters to Benndorf's wife, giving many details on the course of the expedition. A great number of photos were found, amongst them many by Felix Luschan, which were presented in an exhibition in Hollabrunn in 2005.

The film re-enacts the research of Dr. Szemethy. The overlapping two levels of the film in the 90 minute version can also be divided into two TV- Formats of 45 min. The expedition to the Heroon of Trysa would be one part and the Odyssey the other.



FILMING LOCATIONS:

Türkey: Ankara, Hattuscha, Yazilikaya, Alaca Hüyük, Üchisar, Ihlara-Tal, Catal Hüyük, Beysehir, Olympos, Limyra, Trysa, Myra, Kas, Saklikent, Tlos.

Greece: Peloponnes: Monemvasia/Cape Malea, Sparta, Mykene, Tiryns, Korinth; Kefalonia, Ithaka.

Austria: Vienna, Graz, Peggau, NÖ;



Petrus van der Let born in Vienna, film maker – during the last years a number of documentaries on the roots of Nazism and racism (as executive producer, director and author for the George Weiss Film Company):

Adolf Lanz - Mein Krampf Hitler Stole My Ideas (50min. ORF, Channel 4),

Herrn Hitlers Religion Religion – Mr. Hitler's Religion (45min. ORF, 3sat, KRO, BRTN),

Wagnerdämmerung – The Wagner Dynasty (50min. ORF, 3sat, AVRO, NPS, Eurimages),

Erlöser – Messiahs (45min. ORF, 3sat, TV2 Denmark),

Rasse Mensch – The Human Race (45min. ORF, 3sat), which have been shown in more than 20 countries.

- 1998 **Angstfleisch – Fleischangst** – Meat of Fear – Fear of Meat (45min. ORF, 3sat, YLE TV2, Media 2).
- 1999 **Ware Kind Kind** – Kids for Sale (45min. ORF, 3sat).
- 2000/1 **Mein Kopf gehört mir: Frauen in Wien und Istanbul** – My Head Is Mine: Women in Vienna and Istanbul (70min. ORF, 3sat)
- 2001 founding of the Petrus van der Let Film Company for the realization of international documentary film projects.
- 2002/3 **Woher die Götter stammen – oder: Warum Indra mit dem Dreirad zur Hochzeit fuhr** – Where The Gods Come From (91min. ORF, Austrian Ministry of Education and Science, Filmfonds Carinthia, Lower Austria, Styria); First screening: 11. 11. 04 New York International Independent Film & Video Festival – 45min. BR-Alpha-version with the titel Zipfelmützensgötter – First screening: International Documentary Film Festival of Scientific Exploration and Adventure, January 05 Bari/Italy;
- Gesang als Weg – Singing As A Path – From The Life of the Soprano Hilde Zadek** (59min. WDR, SWR, ORF, Vienna Filmfonds, 3sat, Nik-Media, CoBO-Fonds, NI, BR-Alpha, NHK, Japan);
- 2004 **Naher Osten – Hoffnung und Trauma der Jugend** – Hoffnung und Trauma der Jugend – Middle East – Trauma and Hopes of the Young (59min. ORF, 3sat, BR-Alpha, Ministry of Education, Filmfonds Carinthia, RTR-Fonds).
- 2005 **Unerwünschtes Kino** – Unwanted Cinema (90min. Uj Budapest Filmstudio, Filmfonds Vienna, ORF, NIK-Media, NI).
- 2006 **Posse und Prophetie** – Punch & Prophecy (45min. ORF, 3sat, Bayern Alpha, Filmfonds Austria, City of Vienna, Ministry of Education);
- Schattenrand** (Regie: Walter Wehmeyer; Insert-Film, FS DRS, TSR, KTO, Fernsehfonds Austria).

BOOKS: **Rasse Mensch** – The Human Race (ed. with Christian Schüller), Aschaffenburg 1999;

Ware Kind – Kids for Sale (with Guido and Michael Grandt), Köln, 1999.

2004: »ZIPFELMÜTZEN-GÖTTER (Gods with Pointed Caps) Aschaffenburg.

Jürgen Borchardt born in Lower Silesia. Studied in Berlin and Heidelberg. Since 1982 professor for Classical Archaeology at the University of Vienna. Since 1969 head of the excavations in Limyra.

BOOKS: **Die Steine von Zémuri**, Wien 1993

Der Fries vom Kenotaph für Gaius Caesar in Limyra, Wien 2002

More than 200 articles in Austrian, German, Italian, French and Turkish