

CAPE GALLANT (SVYATOY NOS)—SCYLLA OF THE KOLA PENINSULA

- original in the English language:

<https://new-etymology.livejournal.com/466128.html>

- in the Italian language:

SVYATOY NOS O SANTO NASO, LA SCILLA DEL NORD

<https://www.larazzodeltempo.it/2022/svyatoy-nos/>

- in the Russian language:

Мыс Святой нос – Сцилла Кольского полуострова. Древнейший описанный в литературе волок.

<https://new-etymology.livejournal.com/466301.html>

Not undermining the good placement by Andres Pääbo¹ and by Felice Vinci² of Maelstrom whirlpool as Charybdis with regards to the rest of the Nordic places of Ulysses's adventures, the *Odyssey* epic was likely influenced by the tales of seafarers of a one more Scylla and Charybdis of the North, located on the continuation of the same ancient seaway along the River Ocean (Gulfstream). In its very end by the coast of Kola Peninsula, the warm Gulfstream collides with the oncoming cold waters of the White Sea, forming a strong suvoy (sula)—*a constant trembling of the sea waters, reminiscent of boiling*, going as a straight line away from the shore, dividing the Barents Sea and the White Sea, the latter differing from each other also by color.

On land this border commences by a sharp-pointed rocky Cape Gallant (Svyatoi Nose ('Saint Cape'), or Terski Nose in Russian, Nyargai in Lappish, Vegestad ('Way Rock') in Norwegian), 15 km in length, with heights reaching 179 m. Since ancient times the passage of this point was connected with great risks to seafarers, and has given birth to many fearful legends.

According to the ancient coast-dwellers (Pomorians) and Lappish tradition, *a feminine deity of the sea lived inside the rock of the cape*, and *huge worms overturned boats at the edge of Cape Gallant*. According to another version, *an unknown monster lived in a cave at the very tip of Cape Gallant*, and it was *necessary to appease the monster in order to safely pass by around the cape*. Yet another Pomorian legend tells of *a sea monster that lived near the cape*, and *"seethed the ocean"*. Few ships dared to sail past it. The *deity (or a monster) who lived inside the rock (in a cave in the rock)*, which *needed to be appeased*, and the *sea monster that "seethed the ocean"* so much resemble the Homeric *Scylla* and *Charybdis*!

*Inside of that vaulted cave dwells Scylla, velping terribly.
Her voice is indeed but as the voice of a new-born whelp.
but she herself is an evil monster. nor would anyone be glad,
at sight of her, no, not though it were a god that met her. (Odyssey 12.85–88)*

*For on one side lay Scylla and on the other divine Charybdis
terribly sucked down the salt water of the sea.
Verily whenever she belched it forth, like a cauldron on a great fire
she would seethe and bubble in utter turmoil. (Odyssey 12.235–238)*

¹ A.Pääbo, *The Odyssey's Northern Origins and a Different Author than Homer*.

<https://independent.academia.edu/APaabo>

² F.Vinci, *The Nordic Origins of the Odyssey and the Iliad: the Migration of Myth*.

<https://independent.academia.edu/FeliceVinci>

In 1496 the Russian ambassador to Denmark, Grigory Istoma traveled along the coast of the Kola Peninsula; later he gave the details of this journey to the ambassador of the German emperor, Sigismund von Herberstein, who set out this story in his book *The Notes on Muscovy* (1556):

"Cape Svyatoi Nose is a huge rock protruding into the sea, like a nose; a whirlpool cave is visible at the bottom of the rock; every six hours the cave absorbs water and with great noise spews back this abyss. Some call it the sea navel, others call it Charybdis. He [Grigory Istoma] said that the power of this abyss is so great that it pulls ships and other objects that are nearby, twists them and absorbs them—and that they [his crew] have never been in a greater danger. For when the abyss suddenly and strongly began to pull the ship on which they sailed, they barely escaped, with great difficulty, leaning on the oars with all their might."

There is indeed a huge cave at the tip of Cape Gallant, into which water "enters" and "gets out" every six hours. Due to good acoustics, a rumble is heard similar to an angry growl of a huge unknown beast. This latter detail is a probable clue to the kenning with the six heads of Scylla, repeatedly catching the six sailors: Circe warns that, if Ulysses stays by the cliff "to combat" Scylla, the latter would attack again, capturing six more sailors:

*She has <...> six enormously long necks,
with a horrific head on each of them. (Odyssey 12.89–91)*

*<...> No sailors
can yet boast they and their ship sailed past her
without getting hurt. Each of Scylla's heads
carries off a man, snatching him away
right off the dark-prowed ship. (Odyssey 12.96–100)*

*If you linger by the cliff <...> she'll jump out once more, attack you
with all her heads and snatch away six men,
just as before. (Odyssey 12.120–123)*

This allegorical kenning might indicate the six-hour periodicity of swallowing water by the grotto of Cape Gallant—just as the 350 solar bulls of Thrinacia figuratively indicate the number of days in a year when the sun rises above the horizon on this polar island (with the exception of 15 days of the Polar Night); just as the nest with the 9 sparrows indicates the 9 years of the Trojan War (according to the *Odyssey*); and just as the 20 geese, making their annual migrational flight from the north to the south and back—correspond to the 20 years during which Penelope was waiting for Ulysses.

In another line of verse Circe mentions that "Charybdis sucks down the black water. Thrice a day she belches it forth, and thrice she sucks it down terribly." (*Odyssey*, 12.104–106)—which is not inconsistent with the above kenning: considering the long days during the period of summer navigation, the light-day easily lasts for 18 hours during three tides, with the fourth swallowing of water happening during the short night hours. This is not consistent, however, with the only two times a day periodicity of a similar tide phenomenon at Maelstrom.

The length of the grotto at Cape Gallant is still unknown, the cave looks as a dark long mouth—therefore, when it opens to "swallow water", "Not even a man of might could shoot an arrow from the hollow ship so as to reach into that vaulted cave" (*Odyssey*, 12.83–84).

At a distance of approx. one cable (185.2 m) northwest of the tip of Cape Gallant lies the Voronukha stone (the Homeric "lower rock") covered with algae (Homer's "fig tree with rich foliage"), at "the distance of a bow shot" (*Odyssey* 12.102). Like in *Odyssey*, seafarers sailing around Cape Gallant had to pass between "the high rock" and the "lower rock".

In the past, Cape Gallant (Saint Nose) was a place of frequent shipwrecks. According to the guidance from the 18th century, it is a place "on which there stay many memorial crosses." The fishermen bypassing this cape, repeated to themselves: "Saint Nicholas, protect us."

Yet another evidence by British seafarers of the 16th Century documents their trip around Cape Gallant as follows:

загнать отъ острова Соемсуа). From the 8 to the 10 contrary winds. From the 10 to the 13 extreme fog so that in 4 or 5 dayes we went but 10 leags a head. Of Cape Gallant (Снтрой Носъ) we wear afraid of being brought upon a rock (шпротно, Канва Дероньа) but thank be to God it proved beter. The 14 daye being Fridaye we sawe mani whales whear the owner of shis (Нельсона)

The Pomorians preferred to cross the peninsula by land—by *dragging* their vessels from the Volokovaya Bay to Lapskoe Stanovishche Bay, Nataliy Navolok. Along the on-land 2-km dragging way ('volok', or 'navolok' in Russian) the Pomorians laid *wooden rollers* upon which the ships were dragged between the White Sea and the Barents Sea, avoiding the risk of crossing the "boiling" border of the seas near Cape Gallant.

Yet, disembarking to the place of portage was also fraught with dangers, especially in conditions of poor visibility, incessant fog, constant winds, storms, strong currents, underwater reefs and coastal rocks. Sailing in fog, rain and blizzard is considered as the most dangerous, especially near to the rocky coast. Accordingly, each time the sailors had to determine for themselves the safest way: to go around the cape, sailing through the junction of two seas and currents, or to take the risks of landing in rocky bays and dragging their ships along the portage. This, in fact, is what Circe advises Ulysses of:

<...> *You shall see two roads;
I cannot tell you which one to follow on your route
For you yourself will have to trust your heart.
But I'll describe you both ways. (Odyssey 12.56–58)*

Circe describes the path through the *dragging portage* as a road near "wandering" or "walking" rocks ("Planctae"):

<...> *For on the one hand are beetling crags, and against them
Roars the great wave of dark-eyed Amphitrite;
the Planctae do the blessed gods call these. (Odyssey 12.59–61)*

The dragging portages were not widely used in Greece, thus the bard, who recited the epic on the shores of the Mediterranean, probably lost the original meaning of this word. **It is interesting to compare the Homeric *Planctae* with the probable name of the wooden rollers used for dragging portage of ships:** Ital. *palo, palanca* – "a pillar, large pole; pile, support"; Ital. *palancola* – "a crossbar, walkways"; Lat. *pālus* – "a stake, pillar"; Span. *palo* – "a stick"; Sumerian [*bal, bala*] – "a rod; cross beam; chopped dried firewood"; Sanskrit [*phalaka(m)*] – "board"; Rus. *планка, палка, балка* [*planka, palka, balka*] – "a plank, stick, pole"; Eng. *pole* – "a pole, axis"; Udmurt. *pool* – "a board"; Erzya. *pāl, pal* – "a timber, log, pole, stake"; Fin. *paalu* – "pile, pillar, stake"; Est. *palk* – "a log"; Est. *pulk*, Fin. *pulkka*, Lappish *paalah* – "a stick"; Est. *malk*, Fin., Karel., Livonian, Latvian, Lithuanian *malka*, Lappish *balka* – "a stick, pole, log"; Karel., Fin. *pulikka* – "a stick for rolling dough"; Fin. *pulkka* – "runners, sledges"; etc.³

Compare also the Greek *πλαγκτος* [*planktos*] – "wandering" – with Eng. *walk* – "to go by feet"; Old Eng. *wealcan*, past *weolc*, Old Norse *valka* – "to move, to be dragged, pulled"; Old Eng. *wealcian* – "to roll"; Eng. *pull*, Slavic *волоок, волочить, влачить* [*volok, volochit', vlachit'*] – "to drag, pull"; Latin *volvo* – "to roll, to turn"; etc.⁴

There is only *one* dragging portage at Cape Gallant, and Circe tells Ulysses of only *one* alternative route—while between the islands of the Lofoten archipelago, identified by Felice Vinci as the place of Scylla and Charybdis, there are several number of narrow straits which allow seafarers to bypass the Maelstrom whirlpool (Charybdis per Felice Vinci). However, Circe only speaks of *one* alternative route—and, very likely, of the *dragging portage* and not of any water strait!

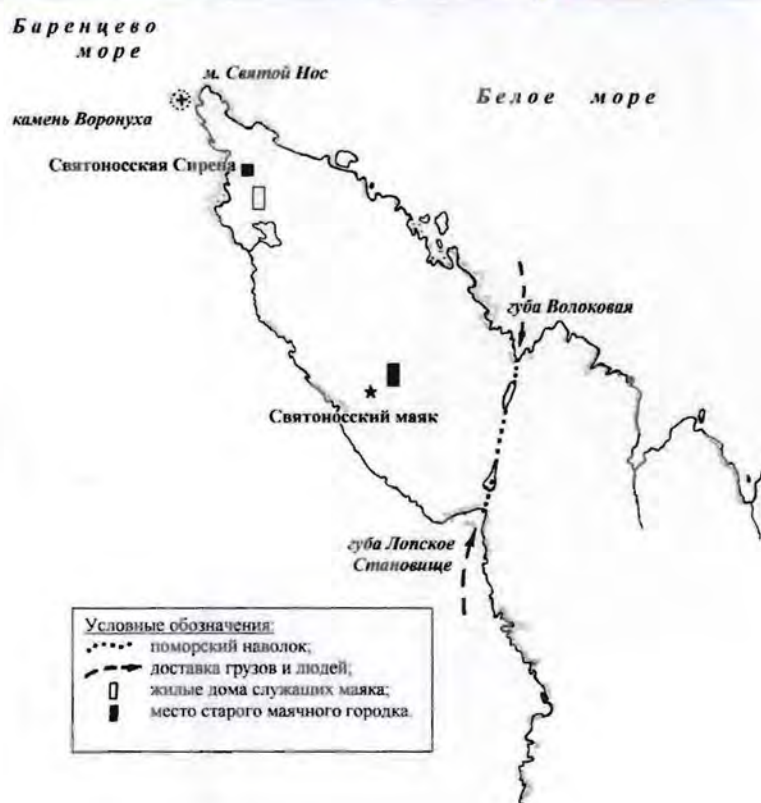
³ see <https://anti-fasmer.livejournal.com/413645.html>

⁴ see <https://new-etymology.livejournal.com/165880.html>

To ensure the safety of coastal navigation in the fog, various sound means are created to signal a navigational danger, the presence of a lighthouse, indicate the entrances to the port, the location of the coastline, etc. At first, these were simple bells, installed in most cases at the lighthouse, on the piers of entrances to ports, at moorings, etc. In 1828, M.F. Reinecke, the founder of many lighthouses on the Kola Peninsula, installed a “white tower” at the tip of Cape Gallant (Svyatoy Nos), a 45-foot-high lighthouse, which was later equipped with a *siren*, and the village was called *Svyatonosskaya Sirena*. Indeed, an Irony of Fate!

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