

## HOMER AND THE ENNEAGRAM

The Enneagram styles are very old. **Homer** (ca. 750 B.C.E.) knew the nine basic themes essentially as they are today. **Odysseus** travels through each of the Enneagram domains in *exact reverse numerical order*. Here is his itinerary:

2. **Calypso**, the Two nymph who offers Odysseus every worldly good and even immortality if he will but stay with her.
1. The **Phaeacians**, perfect Martha Stewart One hosts, where honor, respect, fair play, and courtliness count most, along with beautifully prepared meals.
9. The Land of the **Lotus Eaters**, dreamy, forgetful Nines.
8. The **Cyclops**, powerful, vengeful giant Eights; "Each one dwells in his own mountain cave, dealing out rough justice to wife and child, indifferent to what others do."
7. **Aeolia**, a Seven island that floats whimsically on the sea, relocating with the wind, where the Seven residents feast and party.
6. The paranoid **Laestrygonians**, Sixes who attack Odysseus without provocation.
5. The solitary **Circe**, the cunning Five sorceress.
4. The visit to Hades, the psychic underworld. The **Sirens**, Fours who bewitch passing mariners to tragedy with melodious song.
3. **Scylla and Charybdis**, a monster and a whirlpool, a rock and a hard place, where skillful sailing full speed ahead is the only way through.

Homer must have known something of the relationships among the Enneagram types as well, because he knew the critical order. He was likely associated with long-established civilizations to the east, the Chaldeans, and the Persians, who had developed elaborate cosmologies. Centuries later, Pythagoras (ca. 550 B.C.E.) traveled east and studied these ancient traditions and perhaps the Babylonian Hebrew as well. As philosopher Oscar Ichazo has noted, the Enneagram symbol itself is one of the geometric "seals" Pythagoras, and later the Platonists, used to show the special qualities and relationships among numbers.

With the extraordinary spread of Neoplatonism, the material entered the Catholic and Orthodox churches through the early church fathers and eventually traveled east into Sufism and west to reconnect with the Jewish Kabbalah in France and Spain. The basic themes of the Enneagram -- including the balancing of a formal series of opposites as a pathway to development -- came to a full flower in **Kabbalah**, the central works of Jewish mysticism.

Notes from Michael J. Goldberg, *Getting Your Boss's Number: and Many Other Ways to Use the Enneagram at Work*, San Francisco: Harper, 1996, p. 276-277

See new book by Michael Goldberg: *Travels with Odysseus: Uncommon Wisdom from Homer's Odyssey*, 2005.