



Final notes on: Response to Galassi et al. concerning the paper by Turgut et al. “Three mythic giants for common foetal malformation called ‘cyclopia’: Polyphemus, Tepegöz and Grendel”, *Child's Nervous System*, DOI 10.1007/s00381-019-04,207-y

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Dear Editor,

We would like to thank Turgut and his colleagues for accepting our remarks and for further stimulating the debate on the historical and palaeopathological aspects of cyclopia, as a way of both enriching the known record on this condition and supporting a broader, humanities-inclusive form of medical education.

May we just conclude this exchange by clarifying that in our response [1]:

1. When we asserted that Tepegöz is less universally known than Polyphemus or Grendel, by no means did we admit — as the authors in their reply seem to imply — our ignorance or limited knowledge on that mythological figure. It was a general statement based on a very simple check using the search tool of the search engine *Google.com* (USA), yielding the following results (dated 27 November 2021):

– *Polyphemus*: 1,880,000 results (0.77 s)

– *Grendel*: 9,350,000 results (1.02 s)

– *Tepegöz*: 563,000 results (0.57 s)

These figures are to be attributed to the fact that Polyphemus is a key figure to classical culture, most importantly in the West, as well as Grendel is, thanks to its belonging to Anglo-Saxon mythology and the Old English language from which its contemporary counterpart stems.

Additionally, searching for the more general word *Cyclops*, 28,800,000 results (0.83 s) are obtained, which clearly demonstrate the universal or quasi-universal knowledge of the Cyclops-Polyphemus topic. This reasoning can also be further corroborated by the fact that in the Turkish language, the word *Tepegöz* indicates, much more generally, a *cyclops*, hence not a specific character with a given name, it probably literally meaning “eye (*göz*) of the high hill (*tepe*)”, possibly — but not exclusively — describing a superior position of a single eye, for example in the frontal bone along the midline course of a closed metopic suture.

This may not only be a merely linguistic aspect, since it can also suggest a chronological sequence. The legend of *Tepegöz* is to be found in the epic cycle entitled *Dede Korkut*, which can be dated back to the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries AD (but likely based on original versions already present in the ninth-eleventh centuries AD), hence during the Middle Ages and much more recently than the Homeric Epic (eighth to seventh centuries BC and describing events as early as potentially occurring in the twelfth century BC). According to Mundy, a weak derivation of the *Tepegöz* story from the Polyphemus one can be postulated, while Meeker concludes that basic cultural differences between eastern Turkish views and western Greek ideals exist in the two epics, in that the former favours a submission of the individual to the society he belongs to, whereas the latter extols individualism [2].

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2. We stressed — and hereby wish to reiterate — that gigantic bodily proportions and an extended life span are hardly attributable with genetic cyclopia, hence making a monocular morphology less probable, while a functional one [3] would explain much of what is still shrouded in mystery.

Finally, we wish to thank the Editorial Board of this journal for allowing this transdisciplinary discussion to take place, since it stressed the importance of ancient literary and artistic sources in the reconstruction of the antiquity of disease and humankind's efforts to counter its negative outcomes [4].

Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References

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